

City of Lansing Charter Commission

Regular Meeting Agenda

Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers
Lansing City Hall, 10th floor
124 W. Michigan Avenue



June 24, 2025 at 6:30 PM

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Adopt the Agenda

4. Approval of Minutes

A. June 3, 2025, Minutes

5. Presentation

A. Legal Instructions on Commission's Ability to Inform

6. Public Comment

A. People wishing to share public comment virtually may do so. The deadline to register to comment this way is 6PM, 30 minutes before the start of the meeting. Sign up at this link: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/bd9122a8-e461-4aa5-b12f-d5a27ef99c54@87509dee-095b-4ff8-ba5a-0035cdfc715d>
People sharing public comment in person at the meeting may sign up when they arrive to the meeting.

7. Officer Reports

A. Chair

B. Vice-Chair

C. Clerk

8. Public Comment

9. Commissioner Remarks

10. Adjournment

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation to fully participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at (517) 483-4131 (TTY 711). 24 hour notice may be needed for certain accommodations. An attempt will be made to grant all reasonable accommodation request.

Minutes for the City of Lansing Charter Commission

Regular Meeting | Tuesday, June 3, 2025, 6:30 PM

Tony Benavides City Council Chambers,
Lansing City Hall, 10th floor, 124 W. Michigan Ave.

Present: Commissioners Adams Simon (6:31), Anderson, Bauer, Boyd, Dowd, Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee (6:31), Washington

Absent: none

Staff Present: City Clerk Swope, Deputy Clerk Drever, Attorney Rewa

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jeffries at 6:30 PM.

Roll Call

Clerk Swope called the roll of the Commission. A quorum was present.

Adopt the Agenda

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to adopt the agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Washington to adopt the May 20, 2025, minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Dowd to adopt the May 27, 2025, minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Public Comment

No comments.

Officer Reports

Chair

Chair Jeffries explained that if business wraps up tonight, that the June 10 and June 17 meetings will be cancelled. The Commission will meet on June 24 to receive an update on the next steps of the process.

Vice-Chair

No report.

Clerk

No report.

Old Business

A. Article 3 Chapter 4: Internal and External Audits

Attorney Rewa overviewed the May 30 legal opinion that addresses the Auditor. The recommendation is to move the language about the internal auditor to Article 7.

Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to move the Auditor language, 3-401 – 3-404 to a newly created Article 7 Chapter 6.

Motion carried. Chapter 6 of Article 7 now contains the approved language for the Internal Auditor.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to renumber 3-500 Council Staff to 3-400.

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Dowd to amend 7-601.4 to change “shall” to “may”

Motion carried. 7-601.4 now reads “The Internal Auditor **may** appoint a Deputy”.

B. Article 2, Chapter 2: Election of Officers

Attorney Rewa overviewed the May 31 legal opinion that addresses odd/even year elections.

Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to accept the language for 2-101.3 and 9-303 for odd year elections.

2-101.3 Elective Officers.

Membership of the City Council shall be comprised of one member elected from each ward and two members elected at large.

9-303 Election Transition Plan.

.1 In 2027, there shall be elections for Council members representing ward 1, ward 3, and two at-large members, for terms of two years each.

.2 Beginning in 2029, and every four years thereafter, there shall be elections for the Mayor, the City Clerk, and the seven members of City Council. The terms of such offices shall be governed by Section 2-101 of this Charter.

Commissioner Boyd expressed opposition to even year elections.

Commissioner Anderson expressed support for even year elections, so she will not vote for this motion.

Motion carried, by the following roll call vote

YEA (5): Bauer, Boyd, Jeffries, Qawwee, Adams Simon

NAY (4): Anderson, Dowd, Lopez, Washington

Moved by Qawwee to add 9-302.4

Motion carried. 9-302.4 now reads “If the wards are not yet apportioned in accord with this Section when a vacancy arises for the fifth ward member of any City board, the appointing authority may appoint a person from the City at large to fill the fifth ward seat.”

New Business

A. Commissioner Adams Simon Proposed Change: 2-410 Charter Revision Question.

Moved by Vice-Chair Adams Simon to amend 2-410 to bring the Charter revision question to the ballot every 16 years.

Commissioner Bauer expressed she is in favor of this motion, having changed her position from her previous vote to remove it.

Motion carried, by the following roll call vote.

YEA (8): Commissioners Bauer, Dowd, Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Washington, Adams Simon, Anderson

NAY (1): Commissioner Boyd

B. Commissioner Washington Proposed Change: 2-203 Wards.

Moved by Commissioner Washington to amend the structure of City Council to **seven wards and at two at-large**.

Amended by Commissioner Qawwee to structure City Council as **five wards and four at-large**

YEA (5): Commissioners Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Adams Simon, Bauer

NAY (4): Boyd, Dowd, Washington, Anderson

Motion carried, by the following roll call vote:

YEA (5): Commissioners Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Adams Simon, Bauer

NAY (4): Commissioners Dowd, Washington, Anderson, Boyd

The Commission took a recess to review the provisions affected by changing the City Council structure to 5 wards and 4 at-large.

Chair Jeffries called the meeting back to order at 7:59 PM.

Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to amend 2-101.1 to change the number of council members to nine.

Motion carried.

Moved by Vice-Chair Adams Simon to amend 2-101.3 to change the number of at-large council members to four.

Motion carried 5-4, with Commissioners Dowd, Washington, Boyd Anderson against.

Moved by Commissioner Bauer to amend 9-303.2 to change the number of council members to nine.

Motion carried 8-1, with Commissioner Boyd against.

C. Final Technical Review of Proposed Charter

Attorney Rewa overviewed the June 2, 2025, legal opinion that addresses typos and outstanding issues needing resolution. She started by reviewing the substantive matters.

Moved by Qawwee to strike “elected or” from 2-302.1

Motion carried. This language was previously added by this Commission, who moved to strike it due to unintended consequences.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to correct the reference in 3-207 and 5-201.2 to 5-103.12, which contains the requirements for training.

Motion carried.

Moved by Vice-Chair Adams Simon to remove “The Board of Review shall adopt rules for its conduct of business” from 7-205.6, because the language also appears in 7-205.7.

Motion carried.

Unanimously without objection 9-301 names the effective date for the Charter as January 1, 2026. Other language about filing the Charter is stricken.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to amend 9-302 to require the apportionment plan be approved by January 1, 2029.

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to approve the other changes as a slate.

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Anderson to enumerate dates with the month name, day number, and year where appropriate (ex: May 1, 2011); and where applicable the month, day number, and ordinal indicator (ex. May 1st).

Motion carried.

D. Resolution to Place Revised Charter on the November 4, 2025, Ballot

Chair Jeffries called for the vote on the resolution to submit the revised charter to the voters.

Commissioner Washington expressed she would vote against the resolution.

Motion carried, by the following roll call vote.

YEA (6): Commissioners Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Adams Simon, Bauer, Boyd

NAY (3): Commissioners Washington, Anderson, Dowd

Public Comment

Linda Appling spoke about resident oversight of the Board of Water and Light.

Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Anderson spoke about her no vote on the resolution, stating that she did not oppose everything the Commission did, and she did not take her vote lightly.

Commissioner Washington spoke about her no vote on the resolution, stating that she could not support the Council structure, but there are good things in the revised charter.

Commissioner Lopez spoke about the collective of the commission, and that Council is the protection for the BWL.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Jeffries at 8:28 PM.

**Campaign Finance Act
Dos and Don'ts**

**Lansing Charter
Commission**

1

**Section 57 (MCL 169.257)
prohibits public funds being used for
contributions and expenditures**

Contribution is
 "anything of ascertainable money value"
 "made for the purpose of influencing"
 "passage, or defeat of a ballot question"

MCL 169.204

2

**Section 57 (MCL 169.257)
prohibits public funds being used for
contributions and expenditures**

"Expenditure" is
 "anything of ascertainable monetary value for goods, materials,
 services, or facilities"
 "in assistance of, or in opposition to"
 "passage, or defeat of a ballot question"

MCL169.206

3

Rules for the Charter Commission as Public Body

4

The Commission Cannot

Cannot use Commission resources, or government property to expressly advocate a vote for or against a ballot question.

- "Expressly advocate" means to state support for the passage or defeat of a ballot question
 - "vote for", "elect", "support", "cast your ballot for", "vote against", "defeat", or "reject"
 - Highly situational and fact intensive, legal review recommended

5

The Commission Cannot

Cannot use public resources, or government property to expressly advocate a vote for or against a ballot question.

- Restriction applies broadly to municipal resources
- Includes gifts/donations to the public body
- Includes buildings, computers, phones, stationary, staff, intellectual property (logo)
- Don't put links on official commission website/social media that expressly advocates for one side of a ballot question

6

The Commission Can

- Issue communications using public dollars if the communications provide factual information in a neutral manner about the election, the ballot proposal, and what impact the passage or defeat will have
- Provide information on website, mailing, or "robocall" providing factual information so long as it does not contain express words of advocacy.
- Public facilities and resources may be used for public forums and public education on ballot questions so long as the public resources are not used to influence the outcome of the election and views of all sides are treated equally.

7

Rules for Commissioners as Elected Officials

8

A Commissioner Can

An individual commissioner has much more leeway as an elected official and individual under CFA and the First Amendment to express viewpoints


- Can provide factual information in any setting
- Can provide your opinion in any setting
- Can spend your own money, time to campaign/advocate
- Can join a committee to campaign/advocate

9

A Commissioner Cannot

Cannot use public resources or government property to expressly advocate a vote for or against a ballot question.


- Cannot use municipal office space, phone, computer, stationary, staff, logos
- Cannot use official email address to advocate for/against the ballot question
- Should not represent individual opinion as that of the entire Commission
- *"Opinions expressed are solely my own and may not express the views or position of the full Charter Commission"*



10

Key Tips And Takeaways


- Cannot use taxpayer dollars to influence the election
- The Commission can provide facts
- Commissioners can provide their individual opinions so long as public resources are not used to disseminate opinions



11

Thank you

Kristen Rewa
 Cummings, McClorey Davis & Acho
krewa@cnda-law.com



12
