



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
northfieldmn.gov

Meeting Minutes - Draft Charter Commission

Thursday, July 10, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Lance Heisler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- Present:** 5 - Commissioner C C Linstroth, Commissioner Jack Hoschouer, Commissioner James Prichard, Vice Chair Scott Oney and Chair Lance Heisler
- Absent:** 2 - Commissioner Scott Jensen and Commissioner Amy Gernon

Also present: Meeting Associate Kirsten Fjeld Zillmer.

COMMISSION ABSENCES

3. [25-365](#) Excuse meeting absences.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jack Hoschouer, seconded by Commissioner James Prichard, to approve excusing Commissioner Amy Gernon and Commissioner Scott Jensen. The motion carried by the following vote:

- Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Linstroth, Commissioner Hoschouer, Commissioner Prichard, Vice Chair Oney and Chair Heisler

Enactment No: M2025-082

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. [25-368](#) Approval of July 10, 2025 Meeting Agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner CC Linstroth, seconded by Commissioner Jack Hoschouer, to approve the agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

- Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Linstroth, Commissioner Hoschouer, Commissioner Prichard, Vice Chair Oney and Chair Heisler

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. [25-364](#) Approval of May 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

A motion was made by CC Linstroth, seconded by Commissioner Jack Hoschouer to approve the minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

- Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Linstroth, Commissioner Hoschouer, Commissioner Prichard, Vice Chair Oney and Chair Heisler

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. David DeLong was in attendance but declined to speak.

OLD BUSINESS

4. [25-366](#) Discussion on Status of Charter Section 3.5.

Status of Charter Section 3.5. Chairman Heisler said that he had formulated the Commission's proposed changes to the section in ordinance form and will forward them to the City Council for action. Heisler said that he had amended the proposal to address the issues made by Mr. DeLong at the May meeting of the Commission. There were no objections or discussions.

NEW BUSINESS

5. [25-367](#) Discussion on Proposed Amendment to Charter Section 4.1.

Proposed change to Section 4.1 of the City Charter dealing with qualification of Council Members by taking the oath of office. Chairman Heisler said that he had conferred with City Administrator Martig, City Attorney Hood and Mr. DeLong and had drafted a proposed ordinance to allow administration of the oath of office to be administered prior to calling the first meeting of the session to order. This would ensure that all Council members would be sworn and qualified before the meeting begins.

Commissioner Oney made a point of order that the proposed amendment was being improperly initiated. Chair Heisler said that Oney's objections would be addressed in the discussion of the proposal.

The proposed ordinance would address the question of when a newly elected member of the City Council- to include the mayor- is qualified to act.

Commissioner Oney took issue with the language of the proposal. Commissioner Prichard said that he saw the swearing in as a procedural issue rather than an official act of the Council. Prichard noted that other city officials can be sworn in at various times so it does not have to take place at a formal Council meeting. He said that there is no statutory requirement that it be done at a designated meeting.

Commissioner Linstroth expressed gratitude that Mr. DeLong had raised the issue to allow the Commission to address and clarify the issue. She proposed deleting the word "immediately" and accepting the proposed language.

Chair Heisler commented that specifying a definite time for administering the oath ensures that it will get done before the Council does any business. This clarifies any question about when a person is fully qualified. The con side, he said, could be that it could be the case that a new member might have to miss the first meeting and thus would not be sworn before the meeting.

Heisler also questioned whether there could be a problem if a newly elected member takes the oath before the first council meeting when the previous member's term would end (assuming that the suggested changes to Section 3.5 are enacted). Would the previous member still be a legal member of the Council or would it be the newly elected, sworn

and now qualified member? Commissioner Linstroth said that she would like to get opinions from several lawyers, mentioning Commissioners Prichard and Gernon specifically.

Commissioner Prichard suggested ways to simplify the procedure, essentially removing the word "immediately" from the revised language.

Chair Heisler suggested that the discussion be tabled until the next meeting when Commissioners Gernon and Jensen will be present.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Scott Oney, seconded by Commissioner Jack Hoschouer to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Linstroth, Commissioner Hoschouer, Commissioner Prichard, Vice Chair Oney and Chair Heisler