



# City of Northfield

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

## Meeting Minutes - Final Charter Commission

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Thursday, May 9, 2024

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

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

*The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM*

*Also present: City Administrator Ben Martig, Meetings Associate Edward Malnar*

**Present:** 5 - Commissioner Scott Jensen, Commissioner Jack Hoschouer, Commissioner James Prichard, Commissioner Scott Oney and Commissioner Amy Gernon

**Absent:** 2 - Commissioner C C Linstroth and Lance Heisler

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. [24-292](#) Approval of May 9, 2024 Meeting Agenda.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Prichard, seconded by Commissioner Hoschouer, to approve the agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Jensen, Commissioner Hoschouer, Commissioner Prichard, Commissioner Oney and Commissioner Gernon

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. [24-293](#) Approval of March 14, 2024 Meeting Minutes.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Jensen, seconded by Commissioner Prichard, to approve the March 14 meeting minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Jensen, Commissioner Hoschouer, Commissioner Prichard, Commissioner Oney and Commissioner Gernon

### COMMISSION ABSENCES

3. [24-294](#) Excuse meeting absences.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Hoschouer, seconded by Commissioner Prichard, to approve excusing the absences of Commissioners Heisler and Linstroth. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Jensen, Commissioner Hoschouer, Commissioner Prichard, Commissioner Oney and Commissioner Gernon

### OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

*No one was present for public comment.*

## OLD BUSINESS

### 4. [24-295](#) Discussion on Charter Section 3.5.

*Commissioner Prichard recalled that the Commission has been working on Sections 3.5 and 3.9 of the Charter since 2023. Vice Chairman Approval Oney said that it is worth going back to Council meeting of November 22, 2022.*

*Commissioner Prichard passed on a suggestion from Mayor Pownell and Chairman Heisler that it might be beneficial before the full work session with the Council for the Commission subcommittee to meet with a few members of the Council to sound out perspectives and clarify what the issues are. Trying to schedule it in advance of the June work session. Vice Chair Oney asked if the results would be reported back before the work session. Commissioner Prichard said that might be a violation of sunshine laws.*

*Vice Chair Oney said that Special Elections are covered in Section 5.3 of the Charter. The Council can call a special election at any time, it doesn't have to be in November. There is no primary in a special election to replace a member of the Council or the mayor. Commissioner Prichard said that the situation is complex and there are a number of state statutes that [may be applicable]. Vice Chair Oney said that we cannot get into that as the Commission is not qualified to address that.*

*Oney asked if anyone has insight into what the Council may be thinking. Commissioner Gernon said that she took notes on the video of the December 5, 2023 Council meeting. She does not think that the Commission and the Council are far apart. More a matter of confusion of terms. A special election held in an off-year (not a normal election year) would be expensive whereas if held in a normal election year no additional costs would occur. The state statute is very complicated and it is better to anticipate issues rather than react when a vacancy occurs. The Council has some legitimate questions that need to be worked on together.*

*Vice Chair Oney noted that Section 3.5 was last changed in 2012 and asked if anyone had looked into the history. Commissioner Prichard said he thought that there had been a change to the statute at about that time and the change to 3.5 may have been in response to the revised statute.*

*Oney asked if there were any other suggestions. Commissioner Hoschouer suggested that the subcommittee meet at least once more and then meet with the whole Commission so that everyone understand what we are trying to do. Commissioner Gernon said that it would be difficult for her to make a meeting of the whole Commission. She asked what additional input Vice Chair Oney hopes to get. Oney said that he had shown Section 3.5 to several people who he said had no difficulty understanding it. Gernon asked if Oney is in favor of changing 3.5 or keeping it as it is. He is concerned that a revised 3.5 could be passed without people really understanding what it is.*

*Prichard noted that there is no urgency so the subcommittee has time to bring their suggestions to the full Commission to work through.*

## NEW BUSINESS

## ADJOURNMENT

**A motion was made by Commissioner Hoschouer, seconded by Commissioner**

**Prichard, to adjourn the meeting at 6:23PM. The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Jensen, Commissioner Hoschouer, Commissioner Prichard, Commissioner Oney and Commissioner Gernon