



Legislation Text

File #: Ord. 993, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: September 5, 2017

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Ben Martig, City Administrator

Consideration of City Charter Amendment to Section 3.8, Subd. 2.

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council is asked to consider the first reading of the attached Ordinance amending Section 3.8, Subd. 2 of the Northfield City Charter.

** Note this requires unanimous vote of seven (7) members of the City Council to pass.*

Summary Report:

The Northfield Charter Commission adopted the attached proposed changes to Northfield Charter Section 3.8, Subd. 2 at their May 25, 2017 meeting. Charter Commission Member Lance Heisler submitted the attached amendment and request that the proposed amendment be placed for consideration on an upcoming City Council agenda. Staff prepared the proposed amendment in ordinance form. The City Council received the amendment and adopted Resolution 2017-054 on Tuesday, June 20, 2017. The City Council adopted Resolution 2017-055 on Tuesday, July 11, 2017, calling for a public hearing on the proposed amendments. The public hearing was held on August 8, 2017.

This is the scheduled first reading of the ordinance. The council will need to consider the ordinance as proposed by the Charter Commission. There may be consideration of suggested amendments by the Council but only after consideration of the ordinance as proposed.

Please see attached Memorandum from City Attorney Hood dated August 30, 2017 that includes background and analysis of the Charter Commission's proposed amendment to the Charter Section 3.8.

City Administrator Martig is not recommending approval of this proposed charter amendment in consideration of the City Attorney's memo, particularly related to the "observations and comments to inform the City Council's consideration of the proposed Charter amendment," found on page 3 as summarized numerically 1 through 3.

In addition to the duplication of procedures of holding city government operations accountable through a financial audit as explained in City Attorney Hood's memo, there are best practices that can be codified in a more collaborative and specific manner through City Council actions as a whole rather than leaving it to the discretion of a Mayor without any guidance as proposed under the Charter recommendation. The City Council has adopted the Strategic Plan Summary (2018-2020) that includes a strategic initiative of "Operational

Effectiveness. A Community with a Government that Works.” I believe there are opportunities within this area for staff, the Mayor and Council to collaborate toward effective permanent policies that would get at the issues of efficiency and accountability more effectively and collaboratively than this proposed charter amendment. The following are some examples:

- A. Adoption of a policy for the 360 degree annual performance review of the City Administrator position. As the chief administrative officer, the council has worked to increase the professional review that includes not only council but a self-review, subordinate review, council review and opportunity for community review in the future. Staff supports initiating this into a formalized adopted policy.
- B. Adoption of a policy related to an all employee engagement survey used for the following purposes: 1) recognize skilled leaders who engage their people in a positive way; 2) improve our policies to make them more practical and effective; and 3) to fix problems that demotivate people, compromise customer satisfaction, or diminish performance. This process is currently under review for implementation within the upcoming months and will include independent and confidential reporting with a public communication of the results. This effort could be permanently established through the development of a permanent policy and enhanced over time.
- C. Department specific administrative audit to review staffing levels, operational process efficiencies, and other reviews on a determined basis. Cities do complete these types of audits but they are more generally targeted in a specific review and can include various types of focus. One of the strategic action plans being contemplated by staff within Operational Effectiveness would look at this type of study in departments over the next three years that would include outside independent review from a professional consultant. These reviews certainly engage employees in the process along with management and ultimate reporting to the City Council. In addition to current areas to be looked at in the strategic plan, staff supports pursuing a longer term perspective through policy development that would encourage or mandate this type of review on a rotating basis to be approved by the City Council as a whole.

The City has been successful in implementing a number of effective policies and procedures in recent years through completion of several financial policies. These include some of the following: investment policy; purchasing policy; conduit debt policy; fund balance policy and others. The shared policy model has worked well through staff and council development and believe this solution will more effectively get at the issue that has been articulated as a concern to “...help insure efficiency and operations of our city government” as expressed by Charter Chairman Heisler.

City Attorney Hood and City Administrator Martig will be in attendance at the meeting to present this item.

Alternative Options:

- Approve the language as-is.
- Following action on the proposed ordinance, Council could initiate action of the City Attorney by requesting “a motion to request City Attorney draft proposed charter language consistent with interpretations and analysis in the memo dated August 30, 2017.” There has been some alternate interpretations of this section and it may warrant a clarification of the charter language particularly as it relates to the language of reporting.

Financial Impacts:

Not applicable.

Tentative Timelines:

Item	Date	Timeline
Council receives proposed amendment - Res. 2017-054	6/20/2017	
Presentation & calling for public hearing - Res. 2017-055	7/11/2017	
Public hearing notice published	7/19/2017	Within one month after the City Council receives the proposed ordinance from the Charter Commission
Public Hearing	8/8/2017	At least two weeks, but not more than one month after the notice is published
First reading of ordinance	9/5/2017	Within one month of the public hearing (September 8, 2017).
Second reading of ordinance (if first reading is adopted unanimously).	9/19/2017	
Publication of ordinance (if second reading of ordinance is adopted unanimously)	9/27/2017	
Ordinance becomes effective	12/27/2017	Ordinance becomes effective 90 days after publication