

BEMIDJI CHARTER COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, November 5, 2025

Council Chambers
City Hall – 317 4th Street NW
6:00 PM



I. Call to Order

II. Attendance

III. Approve Agenda

IV. Approve Minutes

- a) April 16, 2025

V. Public Comment

Please state your name and address; please use appropriate language and no derogatory comments towards any individuals; please keep your comments limited to 3 minutes or less; and the chair may limit speakers and times accordingly.

VI. Business

- b) Discuss Merit Hearing Board
- c) Discuss Charter Amendments
 - 1. Section 6.01
 - 2. Section 6.02
- d) Discuss Independent Legal Counsel
- e) Discuss Governance Model
- f) Discuss Future Meeting Schedule

VII. Commissioner Reports

VIII. Next Meeting

IX. Adjourn

DRAFT

Charter Commission Meeting

April 16, 2025 – 6:02 p.m.

Members Present: Albrecht, Dodds, Blashill, Faver, Heinonen, Meuers, Schaefer

Members Absent: Reitmeir

Staff Present: City Clerk Michelle Miller

Chair Albrecht noted a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Meuers, seconded by Schaefer approving the agenda as presented. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment

C.T. Marhula, 4524 Birchmont Dr NE, expressed strong support for the proposed Section 12.17 emphasizing the need for consequences for charter violations. Advocated for the commission to have an independent attorney, citing potential conflicts of interest with the current city attorney. Concerns were raised about ongoing conflicts of interest involving council members, and the speaker noted that state laws and city policies regarding gifts and purchases are routinely ignored without consequence. Referenced past discussions about councilmember terms and urged the commission to be proactive and assertive in holding public officials accountable, describing the commission as the "judicial deciders" for the city.

Business Items

Addition of Section 12.17 to Charter

The commission discussed adding Section 12.17 to the city charter, which would address violations of the charter by council members or city employees, referencing Minnesota statute 609.43 (misconduct of a public official).

Commissioners discussed whether the statute was the right fit, with some concerned it might be redundant since criminal misconduct is already covered by state law. There was discussion about the process for reporting violations—whether through the police, city manager, or county attorney—and whether all violations should rise to the level of a gross misdemeanor.

The group distinguished between criminal misconduct and violations of the code of conduct, noting that the latter may not be covered by the statute. Some members felt the charter should clarify consequences for violations and provide a process for addressing them, while others worried about overcomplicating the language. The discussion also touched on the legal review process and the importance of clear language in the amendment.

Members discussed the fact that if the council does not approve the amendment by ordinance the charter commission could send the amendment to the voters on a ballot to decide.

Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Meuers to send Section 12.17 (Charter Violations) to City Council for recommendation to enact a charter amendment by ordinance. Motion carried by the following roll call vote: Yeas: Blashill, Schaefer, Meuers, Heinonen, Dodds, Albrecht, Faver.

Commissioner Reports

- Most commissioners reported having nothing new to share.
- Dodds raised a question about the status of meeting minutes, emphasizing the importance of keeping minutes up to date for accountability and public review. Dodds highlighted the commission's strengths, noting the group's diversity and effectiveness.
- Albrecht noted upcoming filing period for commission positions, with James Dodds and Mary Ann Reitmeir needing to reapply by April 25th if they want to renew their terms.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for June 18, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. (Annual Meeting) in City Hall Council Chambers.

Adjourn

With no further business, a motion by Heinonen, seconded by Blashill, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk

From: ctm@gra.midco.net
To: [Michelle Miller](#)
Subject: Merit Board/Civil Service
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 1:00:07 PM

[EXTERNAL]

Michelle:

Please forward to Charter Commission members.

Members: For your review. Let's be honest. Bemidji's employment system is broken, especially for nonunion employees. The City, despite using a consultant, blatantly, with knowledge IMO, violated both affirmative action and veteran's preference when they hired a city manager. Nothing against Rich. How many other violations are occurring we don't hear about?

CT

https://library.municode.com/nd/grand_forks/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTICICO_CHVICISESY

Section 6.01 THE CITY MANAGER. The manager shall be the chief administrative officer of the city. He/She shall be chosen by the council solely on the basis of his/her training, experience, executive and administrative qualifications. The manager need not be a resident of the city. The city council shall appoint the manager for an indefinite term and may remove him at any time by a majority vote of its members. At least thirty days before such removal becomes effective the council shall by majority vote of its members adopt a preliminary resolution stating the reason(s) for removal. If the manager has served for one year, he/she may request, prior to the effective date of his/her removal, a public hearing, which shall be held during a regularly scheduled council meeting not later than thirty days after the filing of such request. After such hearing, if one is requested, the council by majority vote of its members may either reinstate the manager or may adopt a final resolution of removal. By the preliminary resolution the council may suspend the manager from duty and shall pay any remaining balance due of his/her salary and benefits for the month.

CITY OF BEMIDJI

ORDINANCE NO. , 3RD SERIES

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF BEMIDJI COUNCIL-MANAGER CHARTER AMENDING CHAPTER 6 (ADMINISTRATION OF CITY AFFAIRS)

THE CITY OF BEMIDJI DOES ORDAIN:

SECTION 1. The City of Bemidji Council-Manager Charter, Chapter 6 entitled "Administration of City Affairs", is hereby amended to read as follows:

CHAPTER 6

ADMINISTRATION OF CITY AFFAIRS

Section 6.02 POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE CITY MANAGER. The manager shall be responsible to the council for the administration of the city's affairs. He/She shall have the powers and duties set forth in the following subdivisions:

Subd. 1. The manager shall see that this Charter and the laws, ordinances, and resolutions of the city are enforced.

Subd. 2. The manager shall appoint and may suspend and remove, upon the basis of merit and fitness and subject to applicable personnel rules, the city clerk, all heads of departments, and all subordinate officers and employees except for personnel who are governed by appropriate civil service commissions and/or other relevant boards as provided by statute.

Subd. 3. The manager shall direct and supervise all departments, officers, and agencies of the city, except as otherwise provided by law or Charter.

Subd. 4. The manager shall attend all meetings of the council and may take part in discussion but not vote; but the council may, in its discretion, exclude the manager from any meeting at which the manager's removal is considered.

Subd. 5. The manager shall recommend to the council for adoption such measures, as he/she deems necessary for the welfare of the people and for the efficient administration of the city's affairs.

Subd. 6. The manager shall keep the council fully advised on the financial condition and needs of the city, and shall prepare and submit to the council the annual budget and capital program.

Subd. 7. The manager shall submit to the council and make available to the public a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the city at the end of each fiscal year.

Subd. 8. With the approval of the council, the manager may designate a properly qualified person or persons to perform the duties of the manager during his/her absence or disability or while the office is vacant.

Subd. 9. If the manager cannot or will not designate a properly qualified person or persons to perform the duties of the manager during his/her absence or disability or while the office vacant, the council may designate a properly qualified person or persons to perform said duties of the manager during

his/her absence or disability or while the office is vacant.

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall become effective ninety (90) days after its passage and publication according to law.

Yeas:

Nays:

Absent:

Public Hearing:

Adoption:

Attest:

Approved:

Michelle R. Miller, City Clerk

Jorge S. Prince, Mayor