

Changes Proposed for the Charter of the City of Saginaw

**by the Ad Hoc Charter Review
Committee**

Remarks by the Chair of the Committee

Charter Time Line

- Charter of the City of Saginaw, effective January 6, 1936
- Charter Review Commission November 2004-January 2007
- Vote on proposed City Charter August 2007

Time Line of the Committee

- Ad Hoc Charter Review Committee established in September 2007
- The Committee spent September 2007- March 2009 going through the Charter and getting input from staff and the public
- Formal Public Meetings to gather input – April 2009
- Submission to City Council – May 2009

Time Line to November Ballot

- To Attorney General's office by June 25, 2009

Charge to the Committee

- Make recommendations to the City Council about changes that are needed in the City Charter
- Provide needed review of the Charter document
- To actively seek public and city staff input about the Charter
- Keep City Council informed about the progress

Members of the Committee:

Mr. Larry Coulouris

Mrs. Irene Hensinger

Mr. Henry Marsh

Mr. Lou Ognisanti

Mrs. Kathryn Rood

Mrs. Joyce Seals

Rev. Marvin T. Smith

Mr. Joe Turner

Mrs. Leola Wilson

Information about the Process:

- Total Amount of Time spent in meetings 25 hours, over 16 meetings
- Assistance to the committee from:
 - Michigan State University State & Local Government Team
 - MSU Extension – Saginaw County
 - Michigan Municipal League
 - Michigan Association of Clerks
 - State Tax Commission
 - City of East Lansing
 - City Staff

Highlights of Changes

- Change to the requirements for Removal of the City Manager
 - A two-thirds majority is suggested
- Change to the Purchasing Procedure of the City Manager (Section 33)
 - Raising the purchasing limit of the City Manager from \$2,000 to \$10,000 is suggested
- Changes to the Tax Limit
 - Removal of the Tax Cap and Dollar Cap

What are other proposed changes?

- Much of the Charter has not changed at all (42 of 113 sections were completely unchanged)
- Why were some changes made?
 - To comply with State Law and applicable case law
 - To remove outdated or unused provisions
 - To make government more efficient, giving flexibility where able
 - To maintain accountability for Council members and government
 - To make the Charter language more clear or to make it more inclusive

Changes for Legal Reasons:

For example:

- Michigan has State Laws that control election laws, including filing deadlines, and procedures for recall and initiative. [This is true for Sections 3-8, 10, and 77-82.](#)
- As a result of legal challenges, some portions of the 1936 Charter were no longer in effect and those sections were changed. [This is true for Sections 14 and 91.](#)

Changes because of Outdated Provisions:

For example:

- The Personnel Advisory Board is no longer needed because most staff members working for the City of Saginaw are part of collective bargaining agreements. Those not part of collective bargaining are contract employees. (Sections 38-40.)
- There is no longer a "Justice of the Peace" as outlined in Section 11.

Changes to Improve Efficiency & Flexibility in Government:

For example:

- Modifying the provision for City Council Meetings so that they are not required to take place on a certain day or time but rather allow meetings to be held twice each month. (Section 18)
- Changes that allow the City Manager to assign duties as needed to encourage efficiency. (Section 31)
- To allow for changes to the publication requirements in the Charter so that materials can be made available to the public at a lower cost (for example online). This affects Sections 21, 24, and 96.

Changes to improve accountability for government

For example:

- All elected or appointed officials will take the Oath of Office ([Section 89](#))
- Officials, whether elected or appointed, cannot hold their positions if they are in default to the city. This maintains consistency with the provision for candidates for those positions. ([Section 91](#))

Changes to add clarity and inclusivity

- Effort will be made in re-drafting the document to make language gender-neutral.
- For clarity, when re-drafting certain portions of the Charter, the committee revised language to remove unnecessary legalese in a preference for plain language. Examples: Section 16, 18, and 77.

What remains the same:

- The following sections have not been changed at all:

1	2	9	12	13	15
15a	20	22	25	26	28
29	30	34	35	41	42
44	44a	47	48	49	50
51	52	54	58	59	60
61	63a	63b	93	94	95
98	99	101	107	108	109

Changes proposed because of changes in Law

3	4	5	6	7	8
10	11	17	36	48	53
55	56	57	70	71	72
73	74	75	76	77	78
79	80	81	82	84	85
86	87	88	89	Ch 16	Ch 17
Ch 18					