

City of Grand Ledge – Charter Commission Frequently Asked Questions

Revised: February 24, 2016

Q: Who may serve as a charter commissioner?

A: Any registered voter of the City of Grand Ledge (except city officers and/or employees, whether elected or appointed) who has resided in the City for at least three years may run for the office of charter commissioner.

Q: How do I seek the nomination?

A: By submitting to the City Clerk either (A) a nomination petition signed by 25 registered elector of the City, or (B) by submitting a \$100 filing fee. Please contact the City Clerk for forms.

Q: What is the deadline for filing a petition or a filing fee for the charter commissioner offices that will be on the ballot for the August 2, 2016 election?

A: 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 19, 2016.

Q: What exactly will be on the ballot for the August 2, 2016 election?

A: Voters in the City of Grand Ledge will have the opportunity to vote on (1) a proposal regarding whether the City's charter should be revised, and (2) candidates for nine seats for the City Charter Commission. IF the City's voters vote in favor of revising the City's charter, the nine (9) candidates for the charter commissioner seats shall take office.

Q: What is the charter?

A: This City of Grand Ledge's charter is a legal document that establishes a basic framework of law within the City. Over time, as the City changes and the needs of its residents and property owners change, that legal framework can become "stale." The City of Grand Ledge's current charter dates back to 1963, although it has been amended several times since then. Michigan law allows a city to organize a charter commission to perform a comprehensive update/revision to the City Charter to meet the current and future needs of the City.

Q: What are the duties and responsibilities of a charter commissioner and the charter commission?

A: In short, to revise and update the City's charter.

Q: What sorts of tasks will charter commissioners perform in revising the City’s charter?

A: Tasks that the charter commission and commissioners will need to perform include:

- Participating in meetings of the charter commission and committees (which meetings will be open to the public)
 - Organizing: (1) selecting officers (chairperson, secretary, etc.); establishing a meeting schedule and timetable; and establishing committees (optional)
 - Developing a strategy to accomplish the goal of revising the charter
 - Proposing, reviewing, studying and revising proposed changes or modifications to the charter
 - Gathering community and City officials’ input regarding proposed changes to the charter
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Q: How long will the Charter Commission be active (i.e., what kind of time commitment is involved)?

A: Revising a charter can be a lengthy process. It is likely that, from beginning to end, the entire process will take more than one year, and possibly up to three (3) years. The Charter Commission will meet periodically, and Michigan law authorizes charter commission members to be paid for up to ninety (90) meetings.

Q: Can Grand Ledge residents be involved in the Charter revision if they are not elected to the Commission?

A: Yes. At a minimum, all Charter Commission meetings will be open to the public, and consequently there will be at least one opportunity during each meeting for members of the public to provide comment. The Charter Commission may also allow other opportunities for public comment and input during its meetings. In addition to those opportunities, members of the public would be able to provide written comments to the Charter Commission regarding the Commission’s activities and/or proposed revisions to the Charter. There may also be opportunities for public input as the Charter Commission gathers facts regarding the revision process. The Commission may also welcome input from members of the public who express an interest in assisting the Commission with the revision to the Charter, and it is possible that the Commission may seek out the assistance of some residents with certain aspects of the revision process.

Q: Will the City Council, or other City officials, oversee the Charter Commission, direct the Commission’s priorities, or otherwise manage the Charter revision process?

A: Not in their official capacity. A charter commission is essentially an independent public body, separate from, and not directly subordinate to, a city council. However, just like all citizens and other members of the public, City Council members and other City officials will have the ability to comment on the activities of the Charter Commission, and provide input regarding the revisions to the Charter.

Q: If the City Council doesn’t oversee the Charter revision, who will ensure that the revision is sound and meets the intended objectives?

A: Initially, the responsibility for directing the content of the revised Charter falls to the Charter Commission. Then, once the Charter Commission completes its initial process of revising the Charter, it must be submitted for review by the Governor’s office, which will also involve review by the Attorney General’s office for legal compliance. Ultimately, the City’s voters will weigh in on whether the revised Charter is sound and in the best interests of the City, as the revised Charter will need to be voted on before it would become law.