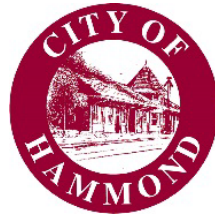


**Hammond City Council Members**  
**Councilman Kip Andrews - President**  
**Councilman Sam DiVittorio - Vice President**  
**Councilman Devon Wells**  
**Councilwoman Carlee Gonzales**  
**Councilman Steve Leon**

**City Council Clerk, Lisa Cockerham**  
**City Attorney, Andre Coudrain**



**HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL SESSION MINUTES  
312 EAST CHARLES STREET  
HAMMOND, LOUISIANA  
AUGUST 3, 2022  
12:00 P.M.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER: Councilman Kip Andrews**

**II. ROLL CALL: Councilman Andrews (P), Councilman DiVittorio (P), Councilwoman Gonzales (P), Councilman Leon (P), Councilman Wells (Absent)**

**III. PRAYER: Councilman Kip Andrews**

**IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** All veterans and active military, please render the proper salute.

**V. Review and consideration of the report of the Hammond Charter Review Committee.**

City Council reviewed each recommendation of the City Charter Review Committee's recommendations.

**Proposal # 1 (20211213) Section 3-06 – Mayors Salary**

**Councilman DiVittorio**, asked if it was too late to be on the ballot for this year.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated that it was too late for the November ballot but December is a possibility only if the Bond Commission waives their requirements for notice.

**Nick Gagliano**, 902905 West Colorado Street, Charter Review Member, stated that he printed the election schedule from the Secretary of State website for the 2022 and 2023 elections. He passed those out.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, asked about the cost to the city to be on the ballot.

**Lacy Landrum stated**, there is a cost to add item and you pay per item on the ballot. The cost depends on what else is on the ballot. The spring ballots are more expensive than the fall ballots because there is usually fewer things on the spring ballot.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** stated that in addition to cost we have to look at turn out.

**Councilman Wells** enters the meeting.

**Councilman Wells**, stated that it depends on what's on the ballot and what's important to the people. If it's not important to the people they don't vote. Councilman Wells asked if the upcoming election cost the city anything.

**Lacy Landrum**, proceed to review the election schedule for 2023. She stated that every time the city has something on the ballot there is a cost.

**Councilman Andrews** stated that it was clear that the 2022 election cycle was not an option.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** stated unless they got a waiver from the bond commission for the December election.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated that you would have to introduce this next week because it has to be adopted by an ordinance. It would require approval of the bond commission to waive their requirements

**Lacy Landrum**, stated that she did not know if the bond commission would waive a charter revision, their deadline is August 16<sup>th</sup>. To make the December ballot.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, noted for the record that the Charter Review Committee hired a consultant to give some recommendation on the charter based on other municipalities and they put that in their slide show which is linked on the agenda item. The recommendation fall in to the information the consultant gave them based on other municipalities.

**Councilman Andrews**, asked to return to proposal # 1

### **Proposal #1 (20211213):**

Section 3-06: Revise to provide that effective January 1, 2023 a newly elected mayor's salary would be fixed at \$95,000.00 with 2% annual increases, with the salary reverting back to \$95,000 upon the election of a new mayor.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, stated that increasing the salary is a good idea and having an annual increase is a good idea, the Mayor is an important job and the mayor can have no other job and this would be the person's sole job so increasing the salary would open the field for having a more competitive race and more people interested in it.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, asked when the last time the salary was adjusted.

**Lacy Landrum** stated, over ten years ago it was raised to &75,000. She stated that the council has the authority to raise the mayor and the council member's salary by ordinance.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated that would only be effective for the next incoming term. The language talks about the election of a new mayor. The language needs to be clear, so that every four years the way this is proposed will revert back down. It needs to be clear as to whether it's a new term or re-election.

**Nick Gagliano**, stated that the intention was it would be after twelve years, for a new mayor. If someone is elected for three terms then the new mayor elected would receive a two percent raise up to twelve years. After the term ends it goes back to the original amount of \$95,000. Basically it's when a new person starts and the same thing for the council.

**Councilman Andrews**, asked if we are to take a vote.

**Andre Coudrain** stated, it was up to the council what they would like to do. He could draft what might be the language and have council look at it.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, stated it would be helpful if the council gave some indication of whether they want to have all nine of the items put on an agenda or a couple of them for the public comment or if there is an addition to the nine.

### **Proposal #2 (20211213):**

Section 2-04: Revise to provide that effective January 1, 2023 a newly elected councilperson's salary would be fixed at \$15,000.00 with 2% annual increases, with the salary reverting back to \$15,000 upon the election of a new council person.

**Councilman Andrews** asked if that was the same as the previous, meaning a new person.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, asked if the last charter review voted on council salaries but that didn't pass.

**Andre Coudrain** stated that was his recollection that did not pass.

**Lacy Landrum**, stated it didn't pass to increase the salary just for the president. She stated that the council have the authority to raise the council or mayors salary by ordinance to be effective in the next term.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** asked if with the authority to do a raise for the mayor and the council with an ordinance and not by charter can they include a two percent as recommended.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated that the 2.04 is the reference section that deals with council members. He read from section 2.04 and he stated that no ordinance changing the compensation of a council member shall be adopted during the last year of a term of office and no such ordinance shall become effective during the term of the council adopting the ordinance.

**Proposal #3 (20211213):**

Section 2-08: Revise to provide the Council shall appoint, remove, direct and supervise an employee of the City who shall have the title of Clerk of the Council who shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, ask to clarify to serve at the pleasure of the council. She believe that when the council hires the clerk the council can terminate the clerk and it's up to the council because the clerk serves under the council. She then ask if they were a city employee.

**Andre Coudrain** answered yes and proceeded to read from section 2-08. He stated that there was a companion section of the charter which says except as otherwise specifically provided, the council does not involve itself in personnel matters. He stated that should be discussed about what would be proper for the council clerk.

**Councilman Andrews**, asked Andre if the only way the person can be terminated it would have to be done through the city administration, no one on the council would have the authority to do that.

**Andre Coudrain**, answered, correct.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, asked if they recommend any amendment to clear that up.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated that it's the council's clerk and if the council hires the person, generally they should have the authority to fire the person. It's worthy of further review and discussion.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, stated that is sounds like it does need some cleaning up but he's not sure of what.

**Councilman Wells**, asked if the council clerk work for the councilmen.

**Andre Coudrain** stated that the clerk has a list of responsibilities in the ordinance, about forty two specified items by ordinance of the council clerk's duties. The duties are primarily the councils business. He state that was in section 2.24 the clerk of the council duties, it's not in the charter that's by ordinance. They can be revised by the council by an ordinance. The part about firing and supervision would require a charter change.

**Proposal #4 (20211220):**

Ethics Section 7-03: Revise the first sentence to add "all officers, officials, and employees of the City whether elected or appointed, paid or unpaid, shall be subject to and comply with all State ethics laws, codes, and regulations." Eliminate the second, third, and fourth sentence of Section 7-03.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** stated that the charter provides for an ethic board that has never been formed or formed in a long time. This is just cleaning it. The state's ethics laws codes and regulations would govern everyone in the city.

**Proposal #5 (20210221):**

Section 4-01: Revise to provide All department heads during their term of office shall live within the Parish of Tangipahoa, but no farther than two miles from the nearest point of the City Limits.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** asked if the charter review determined whether they should use the word domicile or reside for this item.

**Frank DiVittorio**, stated that they reviewed the charter and they went with the original language which states live.

**Andre Coudrain** stated that there was a distinction in law between domicile and residence.

**Marcus McMillian**, asked if they would consider whether this is going to be eagle view which is an aerial view from center points for directions or street by street. He then asked what are the guidelines. He asked if current department heads are grandfathered in or is it for new hires.

**Frank DiVittorio**, stated when they were looking at this they used the most expansive version, two miles used as the crow flies from the nearest point. They had some at length discussions about this.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, asked Frank DiVittorio to speak as to why two miles was the distance.

**Frank DiVittorio**, stated that is where they unanimously landed.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, asked Andre Coudrain, Hammond City Attorney, if the charter currently reads five miles for all department heads.

**Andre Coudrain** proceed to read from section 4.01 of the charter "all department heads during their term of office shall live within the limits or within a five mile radius of the nearest point of the corporate limits."

**Joe Mier**, 44065 High Oaks Trail, he asked if these were hired position versus elected. He stated you should want to hire the best person for the position no matter where they live. He asked the council to consider striking this proposal.

**Chief Edwin Bergeron**, stated things for consideration, he stated five miles is ten minutes and it does lower your pool regarding the number of people you can hire or recruit to run the departments within the city. Two miles would be very limiting and unnecessary and he thinks that ten minutes and five miles give a very good response time.

**Councilman Wells**, asked Chief Bergeron if he live within the five mile radius.

**Chief Bergeron**, answered yes

**Councilman Wells**, stated that it's a good thing if a person live within a two mile radius because they would be invested in the area. His opinion is, anyone being hired needs to live within the two mile radius.

**Doug Johnson**, stated that this discussion took a lot of time, it was discussed at length by the committee. He stated it was a difficult discussion. They reached a consensus but this was not a simple subject.

**Councilman Wells**, asked how many current department heads lives in the city.

**Lacy Landrum**, stated that she thinks there are fifteen.

**Councilman Wells**, asked they all live within the five mile radius.

**Lacy Landrum**, stated that she did not know.

**Councilman Wells**, asked, in the process of being hired, what was the time frame given that they had to stay within the five mile radius.

**Lacy Landrum**, stated that they give transition time when they are hired. She stated that it depends on a case by case basis, from six months to a year.

**Councilman Wells**, stated if the rules was on paper when the department heads come before them they could ask them these questions. He stated when he apply for a job if they ask him to move he would move in that area if he wants the job. If he doesn't want the job he would tell them that he will not be able to move. He stated we need to have discussion about things that are wrong so we can make them right. The board was chosen to make Hammond better.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, stated that if there is no structure on paper, he stated that a lot of this would be cleared up if there was more structure on paper such as what's the standard procedure if someone lives outside of five miles.

**Lacy Landrum** stated that this proposal is ridiculous. She stated that this is about making Hammond better and recognizing the technology, recruitment and retention situations that we are in today. She stated they are different from when the charter was crafted. She asked why do we want to limit ourselves again when we make this change and reduce it from five miles to two miles. She talked about job performance and stated that proximity to where you live should not be a prerequisite to receiving the job and the capacity for doing that. She also stated that because other municipalities do not have the residency requirement, they can recruit and retain much faster and better then they can. She asked, do they really want that and is that's what's best for Hammond. In her opinion, she stated absolutely not.

**Ms. Knighten**, stated that they talked about this a lot, it was opened to the public for discussion and they weighed both sides trying to figure out what is in the best interest of the city.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** asked if something was broken and is it working at five miles. Is there a reason to make it smaller? She doesn't know or see a problem and doesn't understand why we are shrinking this if there isn't a problem.

**Doug Johnson**, stated that they looked at statistic and the affordability of housing. He stated that Dr. Landrum stated accountability and holding people responsible for performance is where the rubber meets the road.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** stated that wasn't addressed with changing the radius, that might be a problem but this is not the solution to the problem.

**Doug Johnson**, stated to answer her question is it broken, probably not.

**Councilman Leon** asked if during their discussion if certain department heads needed to be more in a closer radius than other department heads.

**Frank DiVittorio**, gave his take on the department head situation.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, asked it this would be simple to not make an aggressive charter change so that this is policies and procedures, ordinance change or review and restructure what are the department heads. Instead of putting this to citizens.

**Frank DiVittorio**, stated you can't deviate from the five miles because it's in the charter.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, stated right but going less to two.

**Andre Coudrain**, Hammond City Attorney, stated that the council could just not confirm that appointment if you felt the person had some requirement or lack of requirement. The council does have the authority for those department heads under the charter, they could just not confirm the appointment.

**Councilman Wells**, stated that when you don't confirm the appointment, you end up being punished. He stated if someone comes before him and he ask two questions the administration doesn't like, his district gets punished.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, asked what if they take away the five miles and created rules within each department based on the skills and competitiveness of the job.

**Steve Leon**, stated for a charter change, you are giving the public an opportunity to say we bring the radius from five miles to two but we are not giving them an opportunity to choose, should there be a residency requirement at all. Maybe the charter change should be if the City of Hammond should have a residency requirement or not.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, stated that he believes certain department heads should live in the city for better performance.

**Lacy Landrum**, stated that as a performance issue, we are hearing discussion of people who are not department heads and she proceed to explain.

**Councilman Wells**, asked if the change was recommended by all the charter member.

**Frank DiVittorio**, explained the voting process of the member and they all agreed.

**Councilman Wells**, stated if all members agreed to this he is puzzled that the administration has so much rejection against it. If a person wants the job move to the area.

**Nick Gagliano**, stated that he felt they had to give the proposal to the council and the council would make the decision. Whatever they voted would be a recommendation.

**Marcus McMillian**, stated the Charter Committee did an excellent job. He asked, the current department heads that are here now that has met the obligation of the five miles, if it is change to two miles, what is expected of those department heads?

**Joe Mier**, asked from the recommendations that the council is getting, how does it help them make the city better? Why handcuff yourselves when you are looking for the key positions that are going to help make the city better?

#### **Proposal #6 (20220314):**

For department heads subject to confirmation by the Council, the Council Members shall receive at least 30-days prior notice to any Proposed Council Confirmation Hearing information and documentation concerning the potential candidate, including, but not limited to, the candidate's name, application, background check, criminal check, resume, references, and qualifications.

**Frank DiVittorio**, stated this is a good way to get some rules down and he doesn't remember any opposition to this item.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, stated that she did not recall, but asked if they passed an ordinance requiring certain things be given to them. She thinks they addressed this.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, stated that it may have been about a week or two and it was an appointment would be given to them a week or two before notice.

**Councilman Andrews**, stated that he thinks what they are referencing was sometime this year.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** stated, her point for bringing that up was, if they have already done it by ordinance if it needs to say thirty why doesn't it say thirty and why are they giving them things they can accomplish by ordinance, why would they put it on the charter. She stated there were a couple of things on the list that can be done by ordinance.

**Ms. Knighten**, stated although there were several things that could be done by ordinance, they decided to put it in as a charter amendment so it could be permanent and wouldn't be easily changed and they thought it was a political hot potato and would be better if the people voted on it and they did not see any action that the council had taken regarding those issues that they thought were important.

**Councilman Wells**, stated that he was glad that it was in the charter, because they are having a problem with the chief of police. Thirty days is enough time to know what the need to know about someone.

#### **Proposal #7 (20220321):**

Amend the Charter to provide for a Planning and Zoning Commission to consist of five (5) persons, each appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by the City Council. The Members of the Commission shall be chosen by the Mayor, one (1) from each Council District. Each Member shall be an elector or owner of real estate in the City (either as an individual or through a company).

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, asked if one from each council district means one who owns or is an elector from district two or district two's choice to choice from someone that does not live in district two. She understands it to mean an elector that owns property in her district and she wants to make sure. She asked is that the correct interpretation?

**Councilman Wells**, he proceeded to share a conversation that he had with a contractor. He stated we need to take this under consideration.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, stated this doesn't give them a choice, it's the mayor's choice they just have to be from your district and if his concern is not having input on the person from your district that's not as she read it what is says.

**Councilman Wells** stated he would like to be able to appoint someone.

**Lacy Landrum** stated that all those confirmations come before the council and they are contractors, developers, and architects and they all live in Hammond.

**Doug Johnson**, stated there was a lot of discussion about who should be on the board. He stated this was an attempt to give people who live in a district more of a voice in unison with their council person because they would choose them to represent the people.

### **Proposal #8 (20220321):**

To add to the Charter the formation of an Advisory Committee which could create a community forum for discussion of community concerns. The Committee would meet quarterly and take minutes of discussions, but not have any power of investigation or subpoena. The Committee would not take any votes but would keep Minutes and submit the notes from the Meeting to the Council and Mayor for review. The Committee shall consist of the following Members to serve for one (1) year terms: Members appointed by each Council Member, Members appointed by the Mayor, and one (1) Member appointed by each of the following groups: Tangipahoa Chamber of Commerce, local NAACP, Downtown Development District, and Southeastern Louisiana University. The Committee shall elect a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Secretary from among its Members, which shall all be electors of the City of Hammond. The Meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public, subject to reasonable rules of participation.

### **No Comments**

### **Proposal #9 (20220321):**

Charter Amendment to require Annual Evaluations for each Department Head designated in the Charter which shall be disseminated to the Mayor, the Council, and the Public.

**Marcus McMillian**, stated that Frank DiVittorio advised that all department heads were not in the current and he asked if that was correct. He asked if the new charter will consist of all department heads and if it does how they would do a public evaluation of each department head if they do not deal with the public daily.

**Ms. Knighten** stated if a department head doesn't deal with the mayor, city council or the public she's don't know what their duties would be. There is not a set evaluation in place.

**Lacy Landrum** asked for clarification, she asked it was for public input and that is different from what it reads in the report.

**Joe Mier** stated that this sounds like this could be a nightmare for confidentiality in human resources, department heads being put out as a public documents.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, asked if they would need to clean the language up and send it back to them.

**Joe Meir**, asked to address the council on a possible additional amendment to the charter. He proceeded to read from a prepared statement to the council. He asked that they would add one additional item to the possible amendments to the charter to clear the language up.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** stated she thinks it's important that people be domiciled within the districts in which they live or in the city if they want to be mayor.

**Doug Johnson**, stated that he agrees with Councilwoman Gonzales and the simplest way to address this in the charter would be to define domicile.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** stated that domicile is a legal term and she doesn't believe they would need to define it, but using it instead of residence cleans that up.

**Councilman Steve Leon**, asked what they would need to do today to clean that up.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated that would be a part of whatever the council decides after a public meeting and public consideration.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** stated that possibly a good way to make sure it is properly noticed to the public is to have agenda items with each of these issues.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated for clarification, the actual language is “actually residing,” is that different than residency? It uses actually residing. So as the potential drafter you need to be clear if you propose anything to the citizens, be clear about what the rules are for candidates.

## **II. A list of eight Recommendations to the Hammond City Council that either did not require amendment to the Charter or while unanimously recommended in part unanimity could not be reached on all terms.**

1. **Budget Review (20220210)**: Unanimous recommendation that the Council consider retaining a consultant to review the budget contents for compliance with the existing requirements of the Charter.

Based upon discussions that resulted from public input, the resulting analysis of the existing requirements currently contained in the Charter, and what was presented to the Committee as what is generally delivered to the Council as a prospective budget it was discovered that there does not seem to even be a dispute that what the Council has been receiving as a proposed budget does not meet the requirements contained in the Charter.

**Lacy Landrum** asked if that was meant to be a ballot item or direction to the council.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, asked if these were proposed possible ordinances.

**Frank DiVittorio**, stated that only proposed ballot items were the first nine and the rest of them are things that the council can do by ordinance.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, stated if they all agree they can address and vote on these in a regular council meeting.

**Frank DiVittorio** stated that they were not written in ordinance form but yes. These are things that can be done without being on a ballot.

2. **Department Organizational Structure (20220304)**: Unanimously recommended that the Council conduct a review of the current departments in relationship to the Charter which provides for certain department heads and a process under Section 4-10 for altering the organizational structure. The current organizational chart does not reflect the department heads listed in the Charter and were not adopted pursuant to a reorganization plan adopted pursuant to Section 4-10.

### **No Comments**

3. **Master Plan (20220323)**: Unanimously recommended the Council update the Hammond Master Plan and adopt an ordinance requiring the systematic and periodic review and update of the Master Plan in the future.

**Councilman Wells**, asked if anyone present was a part of the masterplan or knew anything about the masterplan.

**Lacy Landrum** stated that the master plan was adopted in 2011 by the city council. This is already a goal of the building department as a whole. It’s a matter of getting another committee together to review it and dedicating resource. The last masterplan there was a consultant hired to create the plan which was a 20 year document.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, asked if the company that did the previous master plan was still around.

**Lacy Landrum** stated that this masterplan was developed post hurricane Katrina with special grant funding that came from the North Shore Foundation.

**Councilman Wells** asked when the plan was last updated.

**Lacy Landrum** stated in 2011 and adopted, that was the last official update. The Zemurray master plan was done since then and is a component of the larger master plan. She stated that a plan is typically not done every

year because it is meant to be a 5, 10 or 20 year plan. She stated what is updated annually and sometimes more is the unified development code which is the specific rules for implementing the masterplan.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, stated that it probably has to do with the percentage of growth.

**Lacy Landrum**, stated the other component of the master plan, the Downtown Development District did a huge re-visioning of their master plan so two large components have be done as part of the larger plan. Whenever there is growth it's a great time to look at the master plan.

**Councilman Wells**, stated that was his concern, he didn't see the growth in district three. He wants to make sure district three is a part of the master plan and he wanted someone to explain it to him.

**Councilwoman Gonzales** stated, she thinks the housing committee's findings would have a lot that can be added to the masterplan and that would be a good way of updating it at the same time.

**Lacy Landrum** stated that the masterplan is based on chapters that looks at parks and recreation services, housing chapter that looks at the housing component and thinks the housing committee and consultants will have changes and ideas, it looks at economic development and what's happening in different places and zoning. It's broken down into chapters by topics and not districts.

**4. Public Records (20211220):** Unanimously recommended that the Council consider action requiring all of its meeting minutes, ordinances, resolutions, codes, and technical regulations be available online in a searchable form for public access and review.

**Councilman Wells**, asked what is the timeframe or how many days does it take to get something for public records.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated that it depends on the request, but you should get a response within seventy-two hours of making that request. It really depends on what is being requested.

**Councilman Wells**, stated with it being online you can search and find information for yourself then he asked about document he and others received that was pertaining to Doctor Blvd and why they got different information.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated the same question ought to get the same response. He stated he cannot answer why it was different information.

**Councilman Wells** asked Lacy Landrum to respond.

**Lacy Landrum** stated, she did not see public records request related to that and she stated she don't know if the question was asked the same or if it was a different time period or wording, she does not know. It all depends on how the wording of the records request come in.

**Councilman Wells** asked, if you do not receive the information within the seventy-two hours, what would be the fine or penalty.

**Andre Coudrain** stated, there are penalties on the public records law if you don't respond and then he gave some examples. He stated you should receive an acknowledgement that your public request was received within the seventy-two hours. He also stated that if he or Councilman Wells just send an email to a department head that is not a public records request. He explained the public records request and stated that it was a formal process and you have to pay for the records.

**5. Department Heads (20210221):** The Committee unanimously agreed that, "All department heads shall be appointed by mayor and shall serve at the pleasure of the mayor subject to council approval. Said department heads shall be subject to reconfirmation upon the renewal of each mayoral term." However, the Committee could not reach a consensus on whether it should require a simple majority to reappoint or a minority (effectively a supermajority to terminate) a serving department head.

**Lacy Landrum** stated, there was a lot of discussion in the committee and the question becomes as to whether this authority is terminating a department head if someone is appointed by the council, then six months later there is a new election does the person come before the council again for reconfirmation. She stated that we do not have reconfirmation now that they serve at the pleasure of the mayor and their performance is reviewed by the mayor.

**Andre Coudrain**, stated this would require a charter change, this is not something that the council could do just by an ordinance. If there is a will to have it change to the reconfirmation of department heads that would need to be a charter change.



6. **Public Records** (20210128): Requiring the Independent Audit required by Section 2-07 be made available on the City website.

**Lacy Landrum** stated, this is already done. The audit for the last two to three years are already there as well as a link to the legislative audit.

**Frank DiVittorio**, stated that the charter gives you the right to conduct your own audit and you can set the criteria as to what is audited or not audited.

**Lacy Landrum** stated this is the annual legislative audit and this is exactly the same thing unless the committee had something different. She stated that this is the annual financial audit performed annually according to the state standards that the city council pays for and gets present to the council.

7. **Term limits** (20220210): Unanimous recommendation that they be left as they currently stand.

No Comment

8. **Investigations** (20220210): Unanimous recommendation that Section 2-06 be left unchanged.

No Comments

**III. A list of three issues that the Committee unanimously agreed warranted further discussion, but were either unable to reach a consensus on or exceeded the ability of the Committee to complete a thorough review of with its resources and time available.**

1. Debt (20210325, 20210524): The issue of the City's ability to incur debt came up and was discussed at length. Initially the Administration offered substantial argument in favor of amending the Charter to allow the City to incur bonded debt without an election of the people. However, the Mayor's nominee to the Committee voiced strong opposition to the removal of the requirement that voters approve bonded debt. The Mayor himself also suggested that the requirement was fine as is. The only argument in favor of removing the requirement completely seemed to be a matter of convenience. There were examples made of when it could be beneficial for the City to incur smaller amounts of debt that the costs of holding an election would not justify. The possibility of a hybrid system where debt up to a certain threshold would be permitted without an election however fixing that threshold seemed somewhat arbitrary with the information available to the Committee so a proposal was not adopted, but it is believed that the issue warrants further consideration by the Council.

**Councilman Wells** asked if someone could explain.

**Lacy Landrum** stated that they asked the charter committee to review this because they had a lengthy discussion in public meetings about bonded debt. When bonded debt would follow the state laws verses local laws. The ability of the city to bond debt.

**Councilman Wells**, asked if as of right now it goes before the people.

**Lacy Landrum** stated that is correct.

2. Accountability of the Police Chief (20210628): Increasing accountability to public particularly came up regarding police chief. Ideas were discussed such as election versus appointment of the police chief, recall by public petition, etc.

**Councilman Wells**, stated that in his opinion the police chief should be elected by the people and not appointed by the mayor.

**Doug Johnson**, stated the mayor is the highest elected official in the city and he or she is elected by all the people and if there is an issue with any department head that's an administrative issue that needs to be addressed.

**Ms. Knighten**, stated there was a lot of input from the public for the election of a police chief. They looked at the election versus appointment of the police chief and decided that wasn't a decision they should make as a committee. There were people that was concerned about the accountability of the chief.

3. Community Policing (20210712): Calls for implementation of true community policing activities in compliance with national standards on a systemic citywide permanent basis were repeatedly communicated to the Committee by public input. The Mayor's Nominee repeatedly offered his lifelong experience as a city resident and his desire to achieve true community policing that City residents have long demanded. His calls for improvement were joined by the other members of the Committee.

**Doug Johnson**, shared his experience with community policing. He stated that this was an absolute need for this city and he is passionate about that.

**Lacy Landrum** stated what was mentioned in the committee meeting is that there are lots of definitions of this term. She stated that it is obvious that our police spend a lot of efforts in neighborhood meetings, homeowners association and public meetings and public outreach. What do we all envision as community policing.

**Councilman Wells** stated, his vision for community policing is police in the neighborhood or in the park.

**Chief Edwin Bergeron**, stated they do a lot of community policing and they are always open to for ideas. It is something that has evolved. He stated officers are assigned districts and neighborhoods in which they are to be patrolling and making contact with citizens.

**Councilman Andrews** stated he has been in contact with some people with the Baton Rouge Police Department to get some information and feedback on how they run some of their programs.

**Councilman Wells**, stated the stats shows from what he read, community policing reduce crime. He stated if you had that not just on paper or speaking about it, if you really had community policing it reduces crime.

**VI. ADJOURN:** there was a motion by **Councilwoman Gonzales** second by **Councilman Andrews** to adjourn. All members were in favor and the meeting was adjourned. 5-0

I LISA COCKERHAM, CLERK OF COUNCIL DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE  
AND FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECITATION OF THE BUSINESS  
TRANSACTIONED AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD AUGUST 3,  
2022  
BEING 8 PAGES IN LENGTH

---

LISA COCKERHAM  
HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL CLERK

---

PRESIDENT, KIP ANDREWS  
HAMMOND CITY COUNCIL

Persons needing accommodations or assistance should contact City Council Clerk Lisa Cockerham at **985-277-5610**. Request should be made at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

