CITY OF FAIRBORN
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
January 20, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.
Police Training Room

COUNCIL MEMBERS	Present	Absent
Dan Kirkpatrick, Mayor	☒	☐
Clint Allen, Councilman	☒	☐
Sylvia Chess, Councilwoman	☒	☐
Brian Dodd, Councilman	☒	☐
Rodney McCubbins, Councilman	☒	☐
Mary Reaster, Deputy Mayor	☒	☐
Tana Stanton, Councilwoman	☒	☐

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Bertles, E. Gay, Gebhart, Penrod, Schell, Taylor, and Williams.

2026 DEPUTY MAYOR DISCUSSION

Mayor Kirkpatrick explained he has spoken to the Councilmembers who have expressed an interest in the Deputy Mayor position. He opened the floor for discussion.

Mike Gebhart, City Manager, stated he would like to see someone nominated tonight so that on the February 2, 2026, agenda they can go ahead and include that on there for the official selection of the Council member for the position.

Mayor Kirkpatrick stated the Deputy Mayor position is to primarily to fill in when the Mayor can't attend something or to represent the City in the absence of the Mayor. It also includes attending things such as Police swearing in ceremonies and Fire swearing in ceremonies and promotion ceremonies. It is good to have as many City Council members as possible to attend those things. They encourage the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to attend. During the summer, the Mayor attends MVRPC meetings as the city representative every month. There were a couple of times during the summer where the Deputy Mayor filled in for him as he had another commitment for some of those meetings.

Two people who expressed an interest were Rodney McCubbins and Mary Reaster.

Deputy Mayor Reaster stated she would love to continue as the Deputy Mayor, but she is not opposed to Rodney McCubbins taking the position. Mr. McCubbins stated he would not fight Mary for the position. Mayor Kirkpatrick asked if Mr. McCubbins was comfortable and that he would be able to make the commitments. Councilman Dodd asked if they could do it in such a way that if they voted Rodney as the Deputy Mayor and if later on down the road, he realizes he cannot make all the commitments they could revisit this. Mayor Kirkpatrick stated that is always an option.

Councilman McCubbins stated one of the nice things they have going for them is that Clint Allen has been the Deputy Mayor before and Mary Reaster has been the Deputy Mayor before. He envisions it as building a breath of experience across the board. If an instance came up that the Deputy Mayor was out also there would be other people available to fill in as well.

Mayor Kirkpatrick stated at the next City Council meeting they will have a motion and a second and a Council vote. The understanding is that Rodney McCubbins will step up to be the Deputy Mayor.

Councilman Dodd stated they don't vote tonight. Mayor Kirkpatrick explained they can only vote at the Council meeting. Mike Gebhart, City Manager, stated they would advertise it like they do everything else for the February 2, 2026, agenda.

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Mike Gebhart, City Manager, explained that Mr. McNamee was supposed to put on this presentation, but since he has Covid Mr. Gebhart worked to put this presentation together. He explained the last time a Charter Review Committee convened was in 2018. They started to work in 2019. That particular group was Joan Dautel, Laurel Mayer, Craig Fourman, Rodney McCubbins, Marilyn McCauley, Mike Mayer, as our legal counsel at the time and Rob Anderson as the City Manager. They placed those items on the General Election ballot for November of 2019. The primary one that came out of that was the amendment that changed the Mayor from a maximum of two two-year consecutive terms, and it went to two consecutive terms of four years. There were other items there. Every five or six years we should do a Charter Review Committee. Essentially, that is what needs to be done moving forward.

Our Emergency Ordinance is only good for six months. Other communities have an Emergency Ordinance that once it is passed it is effective for perpetuity. So that is one of the strange things in our Charter.

He reviewed the attached memorandum explaining the process of forming a Charter Review Committee.

Deputy Mayor Reaster asked if the goal is to have this on the November ballot. Mr. Gebhart stated unless Council says otherwise the goal is to have this group convene in March, April, and May. Come in June and make a recommendation to Council at the work session. There will be discussion amongst Council. What he wants to get to is that there is plenty of time in July for Council to pass an Ordinance for whatever needs to be passed to get it to the County for the deadline which is August 3, 2026.

Mike McNamee, as the City Solicitor, will facilitate the meetings of the Charter Review Committee and go through each section of the Charter with the committee members. Ultimately, they would come to a Council Work Session on June 1, 2026, or June 15, 2026, to present their findings. If there are items to come forth to be placed on the ballot those Ordinances will come to Council at the June 15, 2026, or the July 6, 2026, meeting.

Councilman Dodd asked how they would reach out to citizens for application to serve on this committee. Mr. Gebhart explained they would ask for volunteers and ask them to submit an application and go from there.

Mayor Kirkpatrick asked on the structure of the committee can the Council member be any member of Council. Mr. Gebhart stated it could be the Mayor. It has been former Mayors in the past. It has been sitting Council members, so it does not necessarily have to be the Mayor. Second question, two at large Fairborn residents. Can it be people that are members of City committees and boards? Mr. Gebhart responded yes because this is not a board of adjudications.

Councilwoman Chess asked if more than one Council member could serve on the committee. Mr. Gebhart stated he would defer to Mr. McNamee on that. There is the potential for more than one Council member.

Councilwoman Stanton stated she is interested in receiving citizen input, other than the two people on the committee. She asked if they could have an online survey for people to put information in that could be reviewed. She asked if they could do an open house opportunity similar to the Land Use Plan open house. Mr. Gebhart stated they can set the meeting schedule any way that Council wanted to do that. Councilwoman Stanton would love to see a survey. Councilman McCubbins stated he likes surveys as well, but you must be careful of how they are worded so you are not steering people in a specific direction.

Councilman Dodd stated he believes Tana is talking about holding an open forum like they did with the Land Use Plan. Councilwoman Stanton stated they did a survey about ARPA money available, but she heard that citizens found that survey confusing. She would like to have an in-person forum to obtain citizens' input. Councilman Dodd stated they might get more input from a public forum. Mr. Gebhart agreed that anywhere they can get more citizens comments would be great. The Charter is not super long so he will work with Emily Gay to talk through how they could frame questions so that they were open ended and go from there. He would like Council to make some kind of decision so the group could start to meet in March. They could discuss this at the next work session, Any ideas that they have please shoot those to Emily Gay or himself. Emily will be the key for citizen engagement on this project moving forward. Ultimately, the goal is to have something ready by the end of July to go on the November 2026 general election ballot if there are changes to be made.

Councilwoman Stanton asked if it would be up to the committee itself to come up with the format for the open citizens meeting or is that something he would want Council to come up with first. Mr. Gebhart stated he would want input from the committee to help shape what that looks like.

Councilman Allen stated they are not starting from scratch they already have a template built and all they are looking at is how do they enhance and improve what they already have and is there any language that they need to consider. It is important to get comments, but it is critical that they have the right committee to put together the product. That is the critical piece.

Mr. Gebhart stated there were three proposed Charter amendments where they wanted to revise several sections 7.02(a), 7.02(b) the number of signatures need to run for Council, revised section 2.12 modifying the reasons for recessing to executive session and any reason consistent with the Ohio Revised Code and also to revise Section 2.15 by removing the language that requires Emergency Ordinances to be automatically repealed after 180 days. He knows that was rejected because that is not currently our practice. The third item which passed was the revision to Section 2.02 changing the term of the Mayor to four years and revision to Section 2.03 by modifying consecutive terms for Council and Mayor to be a maximum of two consecutive four-year terms before a two-year break is required. Those were the proposals that the last Charter Review Committee brought forward and Council had put on the ballot for that year. He agreed with Councilman Allen that it is not a full-scale change of the document it is where best practices might come in.

Mayor Kirkpatrick stated this will be open to the public. Mr. Gebhart stated they would establish parameters, but he does not see any reason why not.

Deputy Mayor Reaster asked when the deadline was to create this committee. Mr. Gebhart stated ultimately, he would like to give them as much of March, April, and May as possible. Then again work session sometime in June where the committee can share with Council their recommendations. Ultimately, there would be legislation to place the proposals on the ballot separately if there are any. So that has to take place in July for them to be on the ballot for August, 90 days prior to the general election. In this particular case the deadline is August 3, 2026. Council would have to take legislative action in July. Deputy Mayor Reaster stated in short, they would want the committee to be established by the end of next month so we could get started. Mr. Gebhart agreed.

In 2019 it was presented as an Emergency Ordinance. Deputy Mayor Reaster asked about the difference between the two. Mr. Gebhart stated an emergency ordinance is a one-time reading with no public comment period and an ordinance by submission could be as few as one and there is public comment on that particular item.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Mike Gebhart, City Manager, asked for suggestions from Council for suggestions for sessions for the retreat. They will start the morning off with the presentation from the Power a Clean Future Ohio presentation on sustainability. There will be department reports as they always do and the Council goal setting session. If they have anything other than that please let him know as soon as possible. Councilman Dodd would like to have an open session so they can ask questions in an informal setting. Councilwoman Stanton stated didn't they say they would discuss Council Rules as well.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Chess had no comments.

Deputy Mayor Reaster had no comments.

Councilman Dodd had no comments.

Councilwoman Stanton asked if it was already discussed about the formal answer about the recall process today. Mr. Gebhart stated he would update during the Council meeting. He will cover that then.

Councilwoman Stanton asked if the taxes on the properties to be discussed at the meeting tonight, is it possible to waive the taxes before the sheriff sale? Mr. Gebhart stated that has to do with the land bank and the county will not do a land bank. The county would take property, in wipe all the assessments and taxes clean and then move forward from there. The county does not want to have a land bank so that is why we go through the process we do of clearing the taxes. Normally, you would have a land bank doing that as the county commissioners can do that and in the past county commissioners have not wanted to do that. The first round of infill properties done last year were discussed and the improvements that are being made to the process this year were discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

Deputy Mayor Reaster moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Chess seconded. Yeas, seven: Reaster, Chess, Allen, Dodd, McCubbins, Stanton, and Kirkpatrick. Nays, none. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

MAYOR

CLERK, CITY OF FAIRBORN

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Kirkpatrick and City Council Members
FROM: Mike Gebhart, City Manager
RE: Charter Review Committee Creation
DATE: January 20, 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to outline the recommended process and timeline for establishing a City of Fairborn Charter Review Committee, should Council wish to consider any Charter updates for potential placement on the November 3, 2026, General Election ballot.

Background

The City Charter serves as the City's foundational governing document—often described as the City's "local constitution." It is best practice for charter cities to periodically review the Charter to ensure it remains aligned with current operations and community needs, consistent with changes in state law and legal standards, and clear, modern, and easy to administer.
The city last undertook a Charter review and requested/recommended changes to the electorate in 2019. Given the time that has passed, it is appropriate to initiate a new review process so that any recommended updates can be considered in a timely and deliberate manner.

Recommended Committee Structure (6 Members)

- One (1) City Council member
- One (1) member from the Fairborn City School District who resides in Fairborn
- City Solicitor
- City Manager
- Two (2) at-large Fairborn resident members

This structure incorporates elected leadership, legal counsel, administrative support, stakeholder input, and resident representation.

Proposed Process and Timeline

1. **Committee Meeting Period**
   March – May 2026: Committee reviews the Charter, identifies potential updates, and develops recommendations.

2. **Recommendation Presentation to Council**
   Council Work Session: Committee delivers its recommendations to City Council at either June 1, 2026, or June 15, 2026.

3. **Council Action (If Amendments Are Recommended)**
   If Council wishes to advance any Charter changes to voters, Council would need to adopt an ordinance prior to the election submission deadline.

   Ordinance deadline: Prior to August 3, 2026.

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Council may consider that ordinance at any of the following Council meetings:

- June 15, 2026
- July 6, 2026
- July 20, 2026

This schedule allows sufficient time for Council review, legislative preparation, and adoption while remaining on track for election submission.

Summary / Next Step

If Council wishes to proceed, the next step would be to:

- Formally establish the Charter Review Committee,
- Confirm appointments, and
- Set the committee's scope and meeting schedule so work can begin in March 2026.

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