



**Charter Commission
Minutes of Meeting
October 8, 2019**

1. Call to order.

Chair Sydney Hargroder called the meeting to order with a quorum present. Members absent include Brenda Dillon, Marge Madariaga, Bryan Owens.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Sydney Hargroder led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

3. Comments from the public.

Chair Sydney Hargroder called for comments from the public. There were none.

4. Approval of minutes of the September 23, 2019 meeting.

Rebecca Hester made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2019 meeting. Timothy Varlack seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

5. Discussion and possible action on the establishment of a Home Rule Charter

a. Form of Government.

Chair Sydney Hargroder called for members to discuss the Form of Government for the City of Iowa Colony.

Members spoke about their opinion regarding the form of government.

- Robert Wall, former Mayor. Spoke about a neighboring city as to how the system works, and the feedback was mostly about the importance of the selection of the city manager, versus the form of government. Felt a city manager is helpful when new council members take over. Mayor has another job and can't devote the time the management of the city requires.
- Michael Holton, former Mayor. From a big picture, most cities have a city manager. Most city council members cannot be involved on a daily basis. Need someone experienced to do that for them on a daily basis. This city is not going to find a professional Mayor. How we transition is a question, but city should lean toward a Council-Manager form of government. Felt a city manager is helpful to new council members and provides continuity. Council should provide direction to city manager. Would be better off investing in someone who will come and stay for a period of time.
- Diana Tahtinen. After reviewing the documentation, is in favor of a city manager. The city will grow and become more complex and needs a professional. The pool for a qualified mayor would be very small.
- Rebecca Hester. Expressed it as a pro and con list. The con list for Mayor led city was too great. The pool is small for a full-time mayor. They can be swayed politically over a city manager. People feel like they are better represented when it is Council led, versus Mayor led who may be too influential. Manager's sole focus is running the city.
- Rebecca Barnett. Less room for corruption with a city manager. Easier to change the city manager than the Mayor. She asked questions about part time versus full time city manager at this point in the life of the city.

- Sydney Hargroder. She is not fully decided on the issue. The system can fail both ways. We need to decide who drives the bus. With a manager, you don't have the opportunity to elect that person. Will Council members come together to remove a bad city manager? With a Mayor there is room for more corruption, and you have the voters to remove that person. Undecided.
- Timothy Varlack. From a functional administrative side, the Council-Manager is the best way to do it. But the strong Mayor has its advantages to impact the Council and decision making of the city in a more aggressive way. Concern is if a city manager has a particular vision will that change the character of the city. All for a city manager based on the growth we are having but need a system that gives the city council a very firm grasp on their activities and they have a system of accountability and vision that rests with the Council. Be careful to have controls in place to have the direct impact in the life of the city government.
- Brenda Ledbetter. Strongly for the city manager. But want to have a way to contact city council members. Don't have a way to make a point with our city council. Not an easy process for a citizen to complain direct to a city council. How does the Council really make a difference? Need to have a way for the community to input what the citizens want.
- Douglas Chumley. He believes we need to have a city manager with Council-Manager form of government. The mayor is elected whether he is qualified or not to run the city. Council will vet a qualified city manager, but that vetting does not happen at the ballot box if electing a strong mayor. City Manager should be loyal to the city and loyal to the leadership of the elected officials.

- Robert Perry. Believes the city manager is appropriate. Would like to know if area cities pay their mayor and council members.
- Steven Byrum-Bratsen. He can see both ways. For a strong mayor, we would have to go to a paid mayor, because you wouldn't have a city manager day in and day out. Would severely limit those who would run in our community. The transfer of power is a lot easier with a city manager. There needs to be checks and balances. He suggested a Council-Manager with significant checks from the citizens.
- Carol Wall. Does not believe the city manager should have complete control of the city. There should be checks and balances.

Michael Holton made a motion to include the Council-Manager Form of Government in the City Charter. Douglass Chumley seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

b. Mayor and City Council election and requirements

Elect by majority or plurality. Douglass Chumley made a motion to elect by plurality. Brenda Ledbetter seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Elect by at large, by place, or by district, or a combination of district and at large. The effort should be as uniting as possible. A concern was expressed about the ability to create districts now, perhaps tie it to a population threshold and look at districts then. One person said that voters might expect to see districts.

Staff was charged with bringing in legal representation to discuss the pros, cons, processes and legalities of districts.

Term. Discussion centered around 2 year or 3 year terms for all elected positions. Some discussion about a Mayoral term for 3 years.

Term limits. Deferred to next meeting.


Partisan vs nonpartisan elections. Recommended nonpartisan elections for Iowa Colony.

Number of positions. Mayor position elected at large by the citizens (not from among the Council); Councilmembers – to be determined. Deferred until next meetings.

c. Other Charter items – no other discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Passed and approved this 22nd day of October, 2019.



Rebecca Hester, Secretary.

