



CITY OF KENT

City Council Special Meeting

319 S. Water St., Kent, OH 44240

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

7:00pm

AGENDA-Amended

1. ROLL CALL

2. DISCUSSION

Review suggested Charter amendments proposed by Charter Review Commission:

2.1 PREAMBLE – Removal of the phrase “to Almighty God” to reflect separation of church and state, and avoid possible offense to residents. Amended to read:

We, the people of the City of Kent, Ohio, grateful for the freedoms we enjoy, pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution of the State of Ohio, extending to municipalities the privilege of “Home-rule” in order to secure for ourselves and posterity practical and efficient methods in administering the affairs of the City, to protect the interests and insure the continued welfare of the community and to enjoy all the privileges of local self-government, do adopt this Charter.

Approved by commission vote: 9-5-0

2.2 5.01 COUNCIL & MAYOR – Number, Selection, Term: Updates to reflect size of Council and reference to ward boundaries. Amended to read:

*Until enlarged by the procedures established by the general laws of the State of Ohio, the Council shall be composed of **nine** members, three of whom shall be elected at large and **six** of whom shall be elected from wards.*

During the years 1964 and 1965, the Council shall be composed of the seven members elected to Council at the November 5, 1963, regular municipal election, or any successor appointed to fill a vacancy.

At the regular municipal election to be held in the year 1965, four members shall be elected from wards, one from each ward, for a two-year term expiring December 31, 1967. At the regular municipal election to be held in the year 1965 and every fourth year thereafter, members elected at large shall be elected for four-year terms. At the regular municipal election to be held in the year 1967 and every fourth year thereafter, members shall be elected from wards, one from each ward, for four-year terms.

If the city changes ward lines following a decennial census or by ordinance for another reason, a council member who was elected from one ward, but now resides in another, shall complete the remainder of their council term. In the election

following the member's four-year term, said member must run in the newly drawn ward in which they reside.

All members of Council shall assume office on the first day of January next following their election.

Approved by commission vote: 12-1-0

**2.3 5.03 REMOVAL – Addition of the phrase “as defined by the Ohio Revised Code.”
Amended to read:**

*The Council shall be the judge of the election and qualifications of its own members. It may remove any member for gross misconduct, or malfeasance in or disqualification for office, or for conviction while in office for a crime involving moral turpitude *as defined by the Ohio Revised Code*, or if adjudicated legally incompetent, or for a violation of the oath of office or persistent failure to abide by the rules of Council, or absence from three consecutive regular meetings of the Council unless one or more of such absences shall have been excused by the Council; provided, however that such removal shall not take place without the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the remaining members of Council nor until the accused member shall have been notified in writing of the charge or charges against him or her at least fifteen days in advance of a public hearing upon such charge or charges and the member or member's counsel shall have been given an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and examine, under oath, all witnesses appearing in support of such charge or charges. The accused member shall not vote on the question of removal. (Amended 11-7-95)*

Approved by commission vote: 11-3-0

2.4 5.15 RECALL PETITION AND ELECTION: Updated by adding time frame to ineligibility for office after removal, and expanding the ineligibility to include all offices of the City. Amended to read:

The electors shall have the power to remove from office by recall election any elected officer of the City. If an elected officer shall have served for six months of a term, a petition demanding such officer's removal may be filed with the Clerk of Council who shall note thereon the name and address of the person filing the petition and the date of such filing. Such petition shall be signed by at least that number of electors which

equals 20% of the total number of votes cast at the next preceding regular municipal election in the City of Kent. In the case of a ward council person the required number of electors shall equal 20% of the total number of votes cast in that ward at the next preceding regular municipal election. Within ten days after the day on which such petition shall have been filed, the Clerk shall determine whether or not it meets the requirements hereof. If the Clerk shall find the petition insufficient, the Clerk shall promptly certify the particulars in which the petition is defective, deliver a copy of this certificate to the person who filed the petition, and make a record of such delivery. Such person shall be allowed a period of twenty days after the day on which such delivery was made in which to make the petition sufficient. If the Clerk shall find the petition sufficient, the Clerk shall promptly so certify to the Council, shall deliver a copy of such certificate to the officer whose removal is sought, and shall make a record of such delivery. If such officer shall not resign within five days after the day on which such delivery shall have been made, the Council shall thereupon fix a day for holding a recall election, not less than sixty nor more than seventy-five days after the date of such delivery. At such recall election this question shall be placed on the ballot: "Shall (naming officer) be allowed to continue as (naming the office)?" with provision on the ballot for voting affirmatively or negatively on such question. If a majority of the votes cast at such election shall be voted affirmatively, such officer shall remain in office. If a majority of the votes cast shall be voted negatively, such officer shall be considered as removed, the office shall be deemed vacant, and such vacancy shall be filled as provided in this Charter. ~~The officer removed by such recall election shall not be eligible for appointment to the vacancy created thereby.~~ An officer removed by recall shall not be eligible for appointment to the vacancy created by their own removal, nor shall they be eligible for appointment to any other vacant office of the City for a period of one year following the election in which they were recalled.

Approved by commission vote: 14-0-0

2.5 6.03 CITY MANAGER – Acting City Manager: Replacement of the word “disability” to reflect modern awareness. Amended to read:

By letter filed with the Clerk of Council, the Manager shall, within sixty (60) days of appointment, designate, subject to approval of the Council, a qualified City Administrative officer to exercise the powers and perform the duties of Manager during any absence or

inability to perform such duties. During such absence or inability to perform relevant duties, the Council may revoke such designation at any time and appoint another qualified City administrative officer to serve until the Manager shall return, is able to perform relevant duties, or a new manager is appointed.

Approved by commission vote: 13-0-0

2.6 6.04 CITY MANAGER – Powers and Duties: Addition of a requirement to provide an annual economic development strategic plan. Amended to read:

L) The City Manager will annually submit an economic development strategic plan to the council and the public, The plan will outline goals and objectives for achieving and maintaining a sustainable Kent economy, report on performance and metrics and resource needs for strategy implementation, include a 5 year forecast, and include any other section required by City Council.”

Approved by commission vote: 13-0

2.7 7.03(E) - DIRECTOR OF SAFETY: Addition of a section regarding complaint forms and reporting requirements. Amended to include:

(3) (A) Establishment of Complaint Forms

The Director of Public Safety shall be responsible for the creation, maintenance, and public availability of complaint forms for units within the Department of Public Safety, specifically including:

- 1. The Kent Police Department*
- 2. The Kent Fire Department including Emergency Medical Services (EMS)*
- 3. The Kent Communications Center*

Each complaint form shall be made available for download and electronic submission through the official website of the City of Kent. The electronic version shall include functionality to accept electronic signatures consistent with the requirements of Chapter 1306 of the Ohio Revised Code (Ohio’s Uniform Electronic Transactions Act). A unique case reference number will be issued for the tracking of said complaints and provided to the complainants.

(B) Physical Access and Submission

Printed versions of the aforementioned form shall be made available at City Hall, at no cost and without inquiry as to the reason for the request, to any person. The City shall accept submission of completed physical forms by:

- 1. United States Postal Service; and*
- 2. In-person delivery to City personnel designated by the City who are not directly employed by, or subordinate to, the Kent Police Department, Fire Department/EMS, or Communications Center.*

(C) Reporting to Council

The Director of Public Safety shall submit quarterly reports to City Council in Executive Session beginning April 1st of each year and an annual report to City Council no later than April 1st, detailing all public safety complaints received in the preceding calendar year relating to the Police Division, and Fire Division including EMS. The report shall also include updates on any investigations that remain open at the time of reporting.

The annual report shall include, at minimum:

- 1. A summary of the investigative findings for each closed complaint received;*
- 2. The names, titles, and/or ranks of all personnel identified in each closed complaint;*
- 3. The final disposition or outcome of each closed investigation, including any disciplinary actions taken; and*
- 4. The number of open investigations, listed with the case reference number and date of submission.*

City Council shall retain authority to request additional information, records, or supplemental reporting as may be necessary to ensure transparency and accountability within the Department of Public Safety.

Approved by commission vote: 13-0

2.8 8.07 CHARTER REVIEW: Full revision. Amended to read:

Beginning in 2030 and every five (5) years thereafter, the Council shall appoint a Charter Review Commission to review the provisions of this Charter and make such recommendations to the Council for its amendment as the Commission may deem appropriate. The Commission shall consist of nine (9) residents of the Municipality—

not holding any other elected or appointed office in the Municipality. Council shall endeavor to select a Commission that is a diverse cross section of the City keeping in mind age, race, gender, ethnicity, and ensuring each ward is represented. The term of the Commission shall end immediately following Council's final vote on the Commission's recommended amendments.

The President Pro-Tem of Council shall be responsible for launching the Charter Review process in the October preceding the year in which the review is to occur. The President Pro-Tem shall direct the Clerk of Council to create and publish an application for prospective Commission members by October 1st of the year preceding the review year with a submission deadline of October 31st; the Clerk of Council shall collect all completed applications and make them available to every member of Council for their review. All nine members of the Commission shall be formally appointed by Council no later than November 30th preceding the review year.

At its initial organizational meeting, the Commission shall elect from among its members a Chair and Vice-Chair, who shall preside over its meetings. Following the Commission's organizational meeting, the President Pro-Tem of Council shall work with the Chair and Vice-Chair to host an Introductory Meeting by February 1st of the review year that is open to the public and to which members of Council, city employees, and Charter Review Commissioners are invited. This meeting shall minimally provide information about the Charter, its role in governing the City, the Charter Review process, the roles of Commissioners, Council members, city employees, and members of the public throughout the process, and an established timeline. The Introductory Meeting shall be recorded and made publicly available no later than one week following its occurrence.

The Commission shall publicly meet at least once a month and shall provide an interim report of its progress to Council by April of the review year. During the Charter Review process, the Commission shall host at least one Town Hall meeting in addition to the Introductory Meeting to present proposed amendments and collect public feedback. All meetings shall be recorded and made publicly available no later than one week following its occurrence.

Following the second Town Hall meeting and no later than June 15th, the Commission shall report its final findings and recommendations to the Council. Upon receiving the Commission's report, Council shall publish it and consider its recommendations. Council may submit any proposed amendments to the electors in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the State of Ohio; should it submit

proposed amendments to the electors, Council will appropriate the requisite funds for associated ballot expenses. The Council shall appropriate sufficient funds to the Commission for staff help, costs related to copying, meeting space, or other related administrative expenses.

Approved by commission vote: 14-0-0

2.9 9.02 ELECTIONS – General Laws to Apply: Replacement in entirety with the following:

9.02 Nonpartisan Elections

All elections for the office of Mayor and members of City Council shall be conducted on a nonpartisan basis. No political party designation or affiliation shall appear on any nominating petition or ballot for any City elective office.

A primary election shall be held when more than two persons have filed valid nominating petitions for the office of Mayor or for a City Council ward seat. In such cases, all qualified candidates shall appear on a single, nonpartisan primary ballot, and the names of the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be certified to the general election ballot, regardless of political affiliation.

A primary election shall also be held when more than six persons have filed valid nominating petitions for the three at-large City Council seats up for election. In such cases, all qualified candidates shall appear on a single, nonpartisan primary ballot, and the names of the six candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be certified to the general election ballot, regardless of political affiliation.

If two or fewer candidates qualify for an elective office for which only one seat is to be filled, or six or fewer candidates qualify for the three at-large City Council seats, no primary election shall be held for that office or offices, and the names of all qualified candidates shall appear on the general election ballot.

The procedures for the conduct of such nonpartisan elections, including filing deadlines, ballot preparation, and canvassing of results, shall be in accordance with the general laws of the State of Ohio, except as otherwise provided in this Charter.

Approved by commission vote: 12-1-0

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION

3.1 Executive session consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official

4. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

5. ADJOURNMENT