

06/4/2022

# FINAL

CHARTER COMMISSION OF  
THE CITY OF MORGAN'S POINT RESORT, TEXAS

PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER



As of [DATE]

## **PREAMBLE**

We the people of the City of Morgan’s Point Resort, Texas, under the constitution and laws of the State of Texas, in order to secure the benefits of local self-government and to provide for an honest and accountable council-manager government, do hereby adopt this Charter and confer upon the City the following powers, subject to the following restrictions, and prescribed by the following procedures and governmental structure. By this action, we secure the benefits of home rule and affirm the values of representative democracy, professional management, strong political leadership, citizen participation, diversity and inclusiveness, and regional cooperation.

## **ARTICLE I. FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND BOUNDARIES**

### **Section 1.01 Form of Government**

- (a) The City shall have a “Council-Manager” form of government.
- (b) All powers of the City shall be vested in the Council, hereinafter referred to as the “City Council,” which shall enact local legislation, adopt budgets, determine policies, and appoint the City Manager. The City Manager shall answer to the City Council for the execution of the laws and the administration of the government of the City.

### **Section 1.02 Boundaries**

The boundaries of the City shall be the same as existed prior to the adoption and ratification of this Charter and as are more fully set out and described by the official city map of the City.

### **Section 1.03 Extension of Boundaries, Annexation**

The boundaries of the City shall be the same as existed prior to the adoption and ratification of this Charter and as are more fully set out and described by the official city map of the City.

### **Section 1.04 Extension of Boundaries, Dis-annexation**

Any area of the City may be disannexed pursuant to any procedure allowed under state law and whenever, in the opinion of the City Council, there exists within the corporate limits of

the City a territory not suitable or necessary for City purposes, the City Council may discontinue said territory as part of the City by ordinance after conducting a public hearing on the matter.

## **ARTICLE II. POWERS OF THE CITY**

### **Section 2.01 General Powers**

The City shall have the power of local self-government to the fullest extent permitted by law, and shall have all powers possible for a city to have under the constitution and laws of the State of Texas as fully and completely as though they were specifically enumerated in this Charter, with all of the implied powers necessary to carry into execution those powers and those express and implied powers necessary for the government, interests, health, welfare, and good order of the City and its inhabitants.

### **Section 2.02 Intergovernmental Relations**

The City may exercise any of its powers or perform any of its functions, and may participate in the financing thereof, jointly or in cooperation, by contract or otherwise, with the Government of Texas or any agency thereof, with the federal government or any agency thereof, or with the government of any county, city or political subdivision to accomplish any lawful municipal purpose.

### **Section 2.03 Authority to Grant Franchises**

(a) The right of control and use of the public streets, highways, sidewalks, alleys, parks, public squares, and public places of the City is hereby declared to be inalienable by the City, except as may be provided by this Charter or other law, and no act or omission by the City Council or any officer or agent of the City shall be construed to grant, renew, extend, or amend by estoppel or indirection any right, franchise, or easement affecting said public streets, highways, sidewalks, alleys, parks, public squares, public places and other real property.

(b) To the full extent allowed by law, the City may require that any person, utility, or company making use of City streets, highways, sidewalks, alleys, parks, public squares, or other public places of the City to provide any service to the public first obtain the written consent of the City by license, permit, franchise, ordinance, or otherwise, which may be subject to certain terms and conditions at the discretion of the City Council.

(c) To the full extent allowed by law, the City may regulate the rates, charges, fees, operations, and services of any person, utility, or entity providing water, wastewater, electricity, natural gas, telephone, telecommunications, cable television, taxicab, bus, solid waste, transportation, or similar service to the public within the City.

(d) The vote required to grant a franchise shall be a majority of the entire City Council. A franchise may not be granted for more than twenty (20) years.

### **ARTICLE III. THE CITY COUNCIL AND MAYOR**

#### **Section 3.01 Qualifications**

The Mayor and each Council Member shall meet and maintain the following qualifications to be eligible for office:

- (a) Be a United States citizen;
- (b) Have resided continuously in the corporate limits of the City for the previous 365 days at the time of filing for office;
- (c) Be a registered voter in the City;
- (d) Be at least 21 years of age at the time of filing for office;
- (e) Not be indebted to the City; and
- (f) Satisfy any other eligibility requirements prescribed by this Charter or other law for the office for which they are a candidate.

#### **Section 3.02 Judge of Qualifications**

The City Council is the final judge of all city elections and of the qualifications of its members and of any other elected officials of the City.

#### **Section 3.03 Number, Selection, and Term**

The membership of City Council (members of City Council) shall be composed of six (6) Council Members plus the Mayor. Each Council Member shall be elected by place and by a plurality vote from the candidates running for that place, to serve for two (2) year staggered terms. The Mayor shall be elected by plurality vote.

#### **Section 3.04 Compensation and Expenses**

The Mayor and each Council Member shall be reimbursed for travel and out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties. The policy regulating payment of expenses incurred in performance of official duties shall be determined by the City Council.

### **Section 3.05 General Powers and Duties of the City Council**

- (a) The City Council shall confirm or refuse to confirm and may remove the members of all boards and commissions of the City.
- (b) All powers of the City shall be vested in the City Council, except as otherwise provided by law or by this Charter and the City Council shall provide for the exercise thereof and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed on the City by law or by this Charter. By way of illustration but not limitation, the powers and duties of the City Council shall include the following:
  - 1) The City Council shall have power to inquire into the conduct of any office, department, agency, officer, or employee of the city and to make investigations as to municipal affairs and for that purpose may subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and compel the production of books, papers, and other evidence. Failure to obey such subpoena or to produce books, papers or other evidence as ordered under the provisions of this section shall constitute a Class C Misdemeanor.

### **3.06 Prohibitions**

- (a) No member of City Council shall be employed in or appointed to the positions of City Manager, Acting City Manager, City Attorney, or Department Head until 365 days after the expiration of the term for which he/she was elected to the City Council and for any other compensated City position until 365 days after the expiration of the term for which he/she was elected to the City Council. This subsection shall not apply to a volunteer who receives a stipend that is the same as the stipend received by other similarly situated volunteers.
- (b) No member of City Council shall accept or admit liability or pay any claim for damages asserted against the City. City Council shall not accept or admit liability without first obtaining a written opinion from the City Attorney regarding the City's liability therein and only then upon a majority vote of the City Council.
- (c) Neither the City Council nor any Council Member shall in any manner control or demand the appointment or removal of any administrative officer or employee of the City whom the City Manager or any subordinate of the City Manager is empowered to appoint, but the City Council may express its views and fully and freely discuss with the City Manager anything pertaining to the appointment, removal, or both, of such officers and employees.

- (d) Except for inquires and investigations authorized by this Charter, the City Council and each Council Member shall deal with officers and employees of the City who are subject to the direction and supervision of the City Manager solely through the City Manager, and neither the City Council nor any Council Member shall give orders to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately.

### **Section 3.07 Powers and Duties of the Mayor**

Except as otherwise provided by this Charter or other law, the Mayor shall have the following powers and duties:

- (a) The Mayor shall annually address the City Council as to the State of the City.
- (b) The Mayor shall be the presiding officer of the City Council and shall be recognized as the head of the City government for all ceremonial purposes, for emergency management purposes and by the governor for purposes of military law.
- (c) The Mayor shall, when authorized as necessary by the City Council, sign all official documents.
- (d) The Mayor may debate and discuss any matters before the City Council and vote.
- (f) The Mayor shall nominate all members of boards and commissions.

### **Section 3.09 City Council Meetings**

- (a) The Mayor and the City Council shall meet on a regular monthly basis (regular meeting) at a time and place determined by resolution of the City Council.
- (b) The Mayor may call a special meeting and shall call a special meeting on the request of two (2) Council Members or the City Manager.
- (c) Four (4) Council Members or the Mayor and three (3) Council Members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transaction of business, and any action of the Council, except as provided in this Charter or other state statute, shall be valid or binding when adopted by a majority vote (at least 4) of the total City Council.
- (d) A supermajority vote shall be defined as a majority vote, defined below plus one extra vote.
- (e) Unless otherwise provided by this Charter or other law, each vote, order, decision, or other action taken by the City Council shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire City Council, provided that any abstention not required by law shall be counted as a vote against the matter under consideration. For purposes of this subsection, a

majority shall mean the next closest integer greater than one-half of the entire City Council, provided that any one or more Council Members required by law to abstain from voting on a particular matter shall be excluded for purposes of determining the majority.

- (f) The City Council shall adopt rules of procedure governing all meetings of the City Council, which shall provide for comments from the public at all regular meetings, subject to such limitations as may be imposed by the City Council.
- (g) Items may be placed on an agenda as follows:
  - Outside of meeting:
    - Mayor
    - City Manager
    - A council member with the concurrence of a 2<sup>nd</sup> council member
  - During a meeting, for a future agenda
    - Mayor
    - City Manager
    - A council member by motion with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by another council member
- (h) At the first regular meeting of the City Council after each general election, the City Council shall elect one Council Member to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore until the City's next general election. If the Mayor fails, is unable, or refuses to act, the Mayor Pro Tempore shall perform the Mayor's duties. If the Mayor and the Mayor Pro Tempore are both absent, any Council Member may be appointed to preside at the meeting.

### **Section 3.10 Vacancies**

- (a) The office of a Council Member or office of the Mayor shall become vacant upon death, resignation, removal from office by recall, forfeiture of his/her office or by failure to maintain residency within the city limits or any other qualification referenced in Article III above.
- (b) All vacancies shall be filled pursuant to state law. The City Council may appoint to fill a single vacancy. For more than one vacancy then the vacancies must be filled by a special election.
- (c) A person elected to fill a vacancy serves until the next regular election at which the affected office is to be elected (partial term). The original term of the vacant office shall not be altered.
- (d) If the Mayor or a Council Member is absent for three (3) consecutive regular meetings, then the Mayor's or Council Member's office, as applicable, is considered vacant, unless the absent Mayor or Council Member:

- 1) Was absent due to an illness and the absence is excused afterward by the Mayor or if the Mayor is absent, then by the Mayor Pro Tem; or
- 2) First obtained a leave of absence at a regular meeting from the Mayor.

#### **ARTICLE IV. CITY ADMINISTRATION**

##### **Section 4.01 City Manager Qualifications, Appointment and Compensation**

- (a) The City Council shall appoint, by a majority vote of the entire City Council, a City Manager who shall be chosen solely on the basis of executive and administrative training, experience, and ability. The City Manager may not be required to reside within the City.
- (b) The City Manager shall have an employment contract with the City of Morgan's Point Resort, which shall be approved by a majority vote of the entire City Council, shall be for an indefinite term, shall fix the compensation of the City Manager, and shall provide for review of the City Manager at least once but not more than twice per year.
- (c) The City Manager may be removed only by a super-majority of the entire City Council but only after an opportunity is given to the City Manager to present his or her side to the City Council.

##### **Section 4.02 City Manager Powers and Duties**

- (a) The City Manager shall be the chief executive officer of the City, responsible to the City Council for the management of all City affairs placed in the City Manager's charge by or under this Charter.
- (b) The City Manager shall:
  - 1) Appoint all department heads, subject to the approval of the City Council which approval shall only be necessary for the positions of Police Chief, Fire Chief, Finance Director, City Secretary;
  - 2) Appoint and suspend or remove all City employees and appointive administrative officers provided for, by, or under this Charter, except as otherwise provided by this Charter or other law. The City Manager may authorize any administrative officer subject to the City Manager's direction and supervision to exercise these powers with respect to subordinates in that officer's department, office, or agency;
  - 3) Direct and supervise the administration of all departments, offices, and agencies of the City, except as otherwise provided by this Charter or other law;

- 4) Attend all open meetings of the City Council. The City Manager shall attend closed executive sessions of City Council unless otherwise instructed by the City Council for instance a discussion covering his employment. The City Manager shall have the right to take part in discussion but shall not vote;
- 5) See that all laws, provisions of this Charter, and acts of the City Council, subject to enforcement by the City Manager or by officers subject to the City Manager's direction and supervision, are faithfully executed;
- 6) Prepare an annual budget designed to accomplish the goals and objectives established by the City Council, submit it to the City Council for approval and be responsible for its faithful administration after adoption;
- 7) Submit to the City Council and make available to the public a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the City as of the end of each fiscal year;
- 8) Make such other reports as the City Council may require concerning operations;
- 9) Keep the City Council fully advised as to the financial condition and future needs of the City;
- 10) Make recommendations to the City Council concerning the affairs of the City and facilitate the work of the City Council in developing policy;
- 11) Provide staff support services for the Mayor and Council Members;
- 12) Assist the City Council to develop long term goals for the City and strategies to implement these goals;
- 13) Encourage and provide staff support for regional and intergovernmental cooperation;
- 14) Promote partnerships among City Council, staff, and citizens in developing public policy and building a sense of community;
- 15) The City Manager shall have the authority to execute on behalf of the City, standard form documents, including but not limited to deeds, releases of liens, rental agreements, easements, right-of-way agreements, joint use agreements, and other similar documents.
- 16) Perform such other duties as are specified in this Charter or may be required by the City; and

- 17) Prepare the agenda of each meeting of the City Council in accordance with this Charter and the rules of procedure adopted by the City Council.

#### **Section 4.03 Acting City Manager**

- (a) The City Manager shall designate a qualified employee or officer of the City to be the Acting City Manager, who shall act as the City Manager in the absence of the City Manager.
- (b) Neither the Mayor nor any Council Member may be designated as the Acting City Manager.
- (c) If the City Manager's absence exceeds sixty (60) days, then the City Council may remove the Acting City Manager designated by the City Manager and designate a new Acting City Manager, who shall act as City Manager until the City Council, at any time thereafter, either designates a new Acting City Manager or appoints a new City Manager.

#### **Section 4.04 City Attorney**

- (a) The City Council shall appoint, by a majority vote of the entire City Council, a licensed attorney of the State of Texas to be the City Attorney, who shall be subject to the direction and supervision of the City Council.
- (b) The City Attorney may be removed by a majority of the entire City Council.

#### **Section 4.05 Municipal Judge**

The City Council shall appoint Municipal Judge(s) to serve a term of two (2) years unless removed by a unanimous vote of the entire City Council

#### **Section 4.06 Chief of Police**

The City Manager shall appoint and may remove the Chief of Police subject to the approval of the City Council. Said Chief of Police shall be subject to the direction and supervision of the City Manager.

#### **Section 4.07 Fire Chief**

The City Manager shall appoint and may remove the Fire Chief subject to the approval of the City Council. Said Fire Chief shall be subject to the direction and supervision of the City Manager.

#### **Section 4.08 City Secretary**

The City Manager shall appoint and may remove the City Secretary subject to the approval of the City Council, The City Secretary shall be subject to the direction and supervision of the City Council and City Manager

#### **Section 4.09 Chief Financial Officer**

The City Manager shall appoint and may remove the Chief Financial Officer of the City subject to the approval of the City Council, who shall be subject to the direction and supervision of the City Manager.

#### **Section 4.10 Boards and Commissions; Qualification**

Except as otherwise provided by this Charter, ordinance or other law, each candidate for appointment as a member of a board or commission shall have resided within the corporate limits of the City, or within territory annexed prior to the appointment, for at least one hundred eighty (180) days preceding the appointment.

#### **Section 4.11 Planning and Zoning Commission**

The City Council shall create a Planning Commission and a Zoning Commission, and may combine or, after being combined, separate the same at its discretion.

#### **Section 4.12 Administrative Departments**

This Charter authorizes such administrative departments as are required to be maintained by the Charter or as are established by ordinance including but not limited to Police, Fire, and the Board of Adjustment.

### **ARTICLE V. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Section 5.01 Fiscal Year**

The Fiscal Year of the City shall be from October 1 through September 30.

#### **Section 5.02 Annual Budget**

The City Manager shall submit the annual budget to the City Council, in sufficient detail so that the City Council may make an informed decision, no later than thirty (30) days before the beginning of the Fiscal Year. No transfers of appropriations between departmental budgets shall be permitted without the approval of the City Council.

### **Section 5.03 Capital Program**

- (a) The City Manager shall prepare and submit to the City Council a five (5) year Capital Program at least three (3) months prior to the final date for submission of the budget. The Capital Program shall include:
- (1) A clear general summary of its contents;
  - (2) A list of all capital improvements which are proposed to be undertaken during the five (5) fiscal years next ensuing, with appropriate supporting information as to the necessity of such improvements; and
  - (3) Cost estimates, method of financing, and recommended time schedules for each such improvement
- (b) The City Council shall give notice of a public hearing on the proposed Capital Program and shall hold said hearing in the same manner as for the annual budget. The hearing for the proposed Capital Program and the notice of same may be in conjunction with the annual budget. The City Council shall, by resolution, adopt the Capital Program with or without amendment after the public hearing and on or before the last day of the current fiscal year.

### **Section 5.04 Annual Audit**

The City Council shall provide for an independent annual audit of all city accounts and may provide for more frequent audits as it deems necessary. An independent certified public accountant or firm of such accountants shall make such audits. Such audits should be performed in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS) and Generally Accepted Governmental Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The Council shall designate no fewer than three of its members to serve as an Audit Committee. This Committee shall:

- (1) Lead the process of selecting an independent auditor;
- (2) Direct the work of the independent auditor as to the scope of the annual audit and any matters of concern with respect to internal controls; and
- (3) Receive the report of the internal auditor and present that report to the council with any recommendations from the Committee.

The council shall, using competitive bidding **for professionals**, designate such accountant or firm annually, or for a period not exceeding five years, but the designation for any particular fiscal year

shall be made no later than 30 days after the beginning of such fiscal year. The standard for independence is that the auditor must be capable of exercising objective and impartial judgment on all issues encompassed within the audit engagement. No accountant or firm may provide any other services to the city during the time it is retained to provide independent audits to the city. The city council may waive this requirement by a majority vote at a public hearing. If the state makes such an audit, the council may accept it as satisfying the requirements of this section. **The council also has a responsibility to and may institute performance and management audits to evaluate the operations of departments, services, and programs.**

*Commentary. [this commentary will be deleted in the final version.]*

*Since the value of independent audits is directly related to the caliber of those who conduct them, it is provided that certified public accountants be retained, except when a state audit is required. Selection of a professional accountant or firm does not lend itself to the usual requirement, however, of choosing the —lowest responsible bidder.¶ While the council should not disregard cost, this is a case where the factors of competence, reliability and reputation are more significant. For an audit to be most beneficial, some of it must extend over the entire year, which necessitates designation of the auditor during the first month. If the state conducts periodic audits of the city's finances that meet council-established requirements, the state audit may be an acceptable and money-saving substitute for an audit by a private firm. While the Model emphasizes financial audits, the council also has a responsibility to institute performance and management audits to evaluate the operations of departments, services, and programs.*

### **Section 5.05 Purchasing and Contracts**

All sales of City property, purchases made, and contracts executed by the City shall be made in accordance with the requirements of the constitution and laws of the State of Texas, as amended. The City Manager shall submit to the City Council for approval a financial purchasing policy that at least sets the limits of spending authority.

### **Section 5.06 Exemptions from Garnishment**

The City's municipal funds shall not be subject to garnishment, and the City shall not be required to answer in garnishment proceedings.

### **Section 5.07 Borrowing Authority**

Debt issuances, including bonds or tax anticipation notes may be approved by the entire City Council with a supermajority vote.

## **ARTICLE VI. ELECTIONS**

### **Section 6.01 General Election Date**

All general elections of the City shall be held on the November uniform election date.

### **Sec. 6.02 Terms to be Staggered**

Terms of the City Council and Mayor shall be staggered as follows:

- (a) Three (3) Council Members (Place 1,3,5) and the Mayor shall be elected in odd-numbered years; and
- (b) Three (3) Council Members (Place 2,4,6) shall be elected in even-numbered years.

### **Sec. 6.03 Filing Fee**

(a) A candidate's application for a place on the ballot shall be accompanied by a filing fee in an amount to be established by an ordinance adopted by the City Council, which shall also prescribe an alternative procedure to payment of the fee.

- (b) A filing fee may not be refunded.

## **ARTICLE VII. INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM, AND RECALL**

### **Sec. 7.01 General Authority**

- (a) The registered voters of the City shall have the power to enact ordinances through the initiative process set forth in this Charter. Such power shall not extend to the enactment of ordinances relating to the adoption or amendment of the City budget or any capital expenditure; the appropriation of money; the levying of taxes; the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive plan; the adoption, amendment, or repeal of zoning districts or regulations; the annexation or dis-annexation of land; the setting of rates, fees, charges, or assessments; the setting of salary or compensation of officers or employees;

or the granting of franchises. No ordinance shall be subject to more than one initiative election per twelve (12) month period.

- (b) The registered voters of the City shall have the power to repeal ordinances through the referendum process set forth in this Charter. Such power shall not extend to the enactment of ordinances relating to the adoption or amendment of the City budget or any capital expenditure; the appropriation of money; the levying of taxes; the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive plan; the adoption, amendment, or repeal of zoning districts or regulations; the annexation or dis-annexation of land; the setting of rates, fees, charges, or assessments; the setting of salary or compensation of officers or employees; or the granting of franchises. No ordinance shall be subject to more than one referendum election per twelve (12) month period.
- (c) The registered voters of the City shall have the power to remove the Mayor or any Council Member from office through the recall process set forth in this Charter. Such power shall not be exercised within six months of the election of the person sought to be removed and no person shall be subject to more than one recall election per term.

**Sec. 7.02 Petitions for Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, Generally**

- (a) Any registered voter of the City may commence initiative, referendum, or recall proceedings by filing with the City Secretary a petition as required by this Article. The notice of intent to circulate a petition for recall required by this subsection may not be filed sooner than six months after the election of the person sought to be removed and must be filed prior to the date of signing of each signature contained in the petition.
- (b) At least one signer of the petition must swear or affirm before a notary public or other person authorized to administer oaths that each signature on the petition was made by the person whose signature it purports to be, and that oath must be memorialized on the petition.
- (c) A petition is valid if:
  - 1) The petition complies with the applicable requirements of this Article and Chapter 277, Texas Election Code; and
  - 2) The petition is filed after the notice of intent to circulate a petition is properly filed under subsection (a), if applicable.
- (d) The City Council shall adopt, by resolution or ordinance, a petition form or forms for initiative, referendum, and recall, which shall provide for all categories of information

required for a petition to be considered valid under this Article, provided that a petition that is otherwise valid shall not be considered invalid for failure to use such form.

- (e) Not later than the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) business day after the date a petition is filed, the City Secretary shall review the petition and determine whether the petition is valid. If the City Secretary determines the petition is valid, the City Secretary shall attach a certificate to the petition stating that the petition is valid and submit the petition and certificate to the City Council as soon as practicable. If the City Secretary determines that the petition is not valid:
- 1) The City Secretary shall attach a certificate to the petition stating the facts supporting the determination that the petition is not valid;
  - 2) The City Secretary shall notify the person who filed the petition of the City Secretary's determination;
  - 3) The City Secretary shall return the petition to the person who filed it; and
  - 4) The petition may be amended or supplemented and resubmitted not later than the tenth business day after the date of the certification under Subdivision (1). The City Secretary shall determine the validity of a petition resubmitted under this subdivision in the same manner as the original submission except that, if the City Secretary determines the petition is not valid, then the petition may not be further amended or supplemented.

### **Sec. 7.03 Petitions for Initiative, Specifically**

- (a) A petition for initiative must contain the signatures of at least ten (10) percent of the registered voters of the City and must set forth in full the text of the ordinance sought to be enacted.
- 1) Upon a valid petition and certificate being submitted to the City Council by the City Secretary, the City Council shall hold a public hearing on the matter as soon as practicable, at which any resident of the City may be heard. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the City Council shall either: Adopt the ordinance set forth in the petition without any change in substance; or
  - 2) Order an initiative election to be held on the first uniform election date that occurs seventy-eight (78) days after the date of the order.

### **Sec. 7.04 Petitions for Referendum, Specifically**

- (a) A petition for referendum must contain the signatures of at least twenty (20) percent of the registered voters of the City and must cite and attach the ordinance sought to be repealed and any and all amendments thereto.
- (b) Upon a valid petition and certificate being submitted to the City Council by the City Secretary, the City Council shall hold a public hearing on the matter as soon as practicable, at which any resident of the City may be heard. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the City Council shall either:
  - 1) Repeal the ordinance cited and attached to the petition and any and all amendments thereto; or
  - 2) Order a referendum election to be held on the first uniform election date that occurs seventy-eight (78) days after the date of the order.

**Sec. 7.05 Petitions for Recall, Specifically**

- (a) A petition for recall must contain the signatures of at least twenty-five (25) percent of the registered voters of the City, must state the full name and title of the person whose removal is sought, and must state the reasons for seeking removal.
- (b) Upon a valid petition and certificate being submitted to the City Council by the City Secretary, the City Council shall hold a public hearing on the matter as soon as practicable, at which only the person whose removal is sought may be heard. Unless the person whose removal is sought resigns prior to the conclusion of the public hearing, at the conclusion of the public hearing, the City Council shall order a recall election to be held on the first uniform election date that occurs seventy-eight (78) days after the date of the order.

**Sec. 7.06 Initiative, Referendum, and Recall Elections**

- (a) The ballot for an initiative election shall be printed to permit voting for or against the ordinance sought to be enacted and shall set forth the nature of the ordinance sufficiently to identify it. If less than a majority of the votes received at the initiative election are in favor of the ordinance, the ordinance is void. If a majority of the votes received are in favor of the ordinance, the ordinance shall be deemed enacted and become effective upon the passing of the resolution canvassing the election, and the City Council may only amend or repeal the ordinance after a three (3) year period from the date said ordinance became effective and then only upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3rds) of the entire City Council.
- (b) The ballot for a referendum election shall be printed to permit voting for or against the ordinance sought to be repealed and shall set forth the nature of the ordinance sufficiently

to identify it. If a majority of the votes received at the referendum election are in favor of the ordinance, the ordinance remains in effect. If less than a majority of the votes are in favor of the ordinance, the ordinance shall be deemed repealed and become void upon the passing of the resolution canvassing the election, and the City Council may only reenact the ordinance after a three (3) year period from the date said ordinance was repealed and then only upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3rds) of the entire City Council.

- (c) The ballot for a recall election shall be printed to permit voting for or against the removal of the person sought to be removed and shall state the full name and title of the person. If less than a majority of the votes received at the recall election are in favor of removal of the person named on the ballot, the person remains in office. If a majority of the votes received are in favor of the removal of the person, the person's office shall be deemed vacant upon the passing of the resolution canvassing the election, and the vacancy shall be filled in the manner prescribed by this Charter for filling such vacancy. A person removed by recall may not be appointed to fill the vacancy and may not be a candidate in any election called to fill the vacancy.

#### **Sec. 7.07 Relief by Writ of Mandamus**

If any officer or employee of the City fails or refuses to perform any duty required under this Article, any citizen may file with the appropriate court for a writ of mandamus to force the officer or employee to perform such duty.

### **ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Sec. 8.01 Construction**

This Charter shall not be construed as a mere grant of enumerated powers but shall be construed as a general grant of power and as a limitation of power on the government of the City in the same manner as the Constitution of Texas is construed as a limitation on the powers of the Legislature. Except where expressly prohibited by this Charter, each and every power under Article XI, Section 5 of the Constitution of Texas, which it would be competent for the people of the City to expressly grant to the City, shall be construed to be granted to the City by this Charter.

#### **Sec. 8.02 General Prohibitions**

- (a) No employee or official of the City, whether elected or appointed, shall orally, by letter or otherwise solicit or assist in soliciting any assessment, subscription, or contribution for any political party or political purpose whatever from any subordinate official or employee holding any compensated position with the City.

- (b) No person who holds any compensated position with the City shall solicit or receive any contribution to the campaign funds of any candidate for municipal office or take any part in the management, affairs, or political campaign of any municipal candidate.
- (c) No person who seeks appointment or promotion with respect to any position or office of the City shall directly or indirectly give, render, or pay any money, service, or other thing of value to any person for or in connection with his or her test, appointment, proposed appointment, promotion, or proposed promotion.
- (d) Any employee who is found to have violated any provision of this section shall be terminated or suspended, at the discretion of the City Manager, and any elected or appointed official who is found to have violated any provision of this section shall forfeit their office and be ineligible for election or appointment to any office of the City for five years.
- (e) Any elected or appointed official who is convicted of an offense under Section 36.02 of the Texas Penal Code shall be permanently ineligible for election or appointment to any office of the City.

#### **Sec. 8.03 Exemption from Bond, Undertaking or Security**

It shall not be necessary in any action, suit, appeal, or proceeding in which the City is a party for any bond, undertaking, or security to be executed by or on behalf of the City, but all such actions, suits, appeals, or proceedings shall be conducted in the same manner as if bonds, undertaking, or security had been given.

#### **Sec. 8.04 Liability Coverage for City Officials**

The City shall provide liability coverage to all officials and officers in an amount to be determined by the City Council to provide protection for any claim, judgment, or litigation arising out of the official's or officer's actual or alleged error or misstatement of fact or omission or neglect or breach of duty, including misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance, by the official or officer in the discharge of their duties with the City, individually or collectively, or any matter claimed against them solely by reason of their being or having been City officials or officers.

#### **Sec. 8.05 Severability**

If any section or part of a section of this Charter shall be held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the remainder of this Charter nor the context in which such section or part of a section so held invalid may appear.

#### **Sec. 8.06 Non-Substantive Revisions**

- (a) The City Council may, without approval of the voters, adopt an ordinance that makes the following types of revisions to this Charter:
  - 1) Renumbering, revising titles, and rearranging parts thereof;
  - 2) Correcting errors in spelling, grammar, cross-references, and punctuation; or
  - 3) Revising language to reflect modern usage and style.
- (b) A revision adopted under this section is not intended to and is not to be interpreted as making any substantive change in any Charter provision.

### **Sec. 8.07 Charter Review Commission**

- (a) Three (3) years after the adoption of this Charter and every six (6) years thereafter, the City Council shall appoint a Charter Review Commission composed of members from a pool of qualified applicants. Appointments shall be made at the first regular meeting following the anniversary date of the Charter's adoption. The Charter Review Commission shall serve for six (6) months, or a longer term if extended by the City Council and shall meet at least once each month during its term.
- (b) The Charter Review Commission must establish its own rules of procedure, which must require that a quorum consists of a majority of its members and that an affirmative vote of a majority of all members present is necessary to act.
- (c) The Charter Review Commission shall:
  - 1) Inquire into the operations of City government and review the Charter to determine whether it requires revision. Public hearings may be held, and the commission shall have the power to compel the attendance of City officers or employees and to require the submission of City records necessary to its inquiry and review;
  - 2) Propose any recommendations it deems desirable to ensure compliance with Charter provisions by City departments;
  - 3) Propose any Charter amendments it deems desirable to improve the effective application of the Charter to current conditions; and
  - 4) Make a written report of its findings and recommendations to the City Council.

- (d) The City Council shall receive and have published in the City's official newspaper the Charter Review Commission's final report. It shall consider any recommendations and, if any amendments are presented, shall order the amendment or amendments submitted to the voters of the City.

### **Sec. 8.08 Comprehensive Plan**

- (a) The City Council shall adopt and implement a comprehensive plan to guide, regulate, and manage the future development within the corporate limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City, and to assure the most appropriate and beneficial use of land, water, and other natural resources, consistent with the public interest.
- (b) The comprehensive plan shall be reviewed and adopted no less than every five (5) years.

### **Sec. 8.09 Disaster Clause**

In case of disaster when a legal quorum of the City Council cannot otherwise be assembled due to multiple deaths or injuries, the surviving persons of the City Council, or highest surviving City official, if no elected official remains, shall, within twenty-four (24) hours of such disaster, request the highest surviving officers of the Bell County Commissioners Court to appoint a number of residents of the City equal to the number necessary to make a quorum to act during the emergency as the City Council. The newly appointed City Council shall call a City election within fifteen (15) days of their appointment, or as provided in the Texas Election Code, for election of the vacant offices, if for good reasons it is known a quorum of the present City Council will never again meet. If it is determined that a quorum of the present City Council will meet again, the appointed Council Members shall serve in their position until such time as the present Council Members may begin serving.

### **Sec. 8.10 Notice of Claim**

The City shall not be held liable on account of any claim for the death of any person or injuries to any person or damage to any property unless the person making such complaint or claiming such damages shall, within one hundred twenty (120) days after the time at which it is claimed such damages were inflicted upon such person or property, file with the City Manager a written statement, under oath, stating the nature and character of such damages or injuries, the extent of the same, the place where same happened, the circumstances under which same happened and the condition causing same, with a detailed statement of each item of damages and the amount thereof, giving a list of any witnesses known by affiant to have seen the accident.

### **Sec. 8.11 Power to Settle Claims**

The City Council shall have the power to compromise and settle any and all claims and lawsuits of every kind and character, in favor of, or against the City, including suits by the City to recover delinquent taxes, after consulting with the City Attorney.

**Sec. 8.12 Service of Process Against the City**

All legal process against the City shall be served upon the City Manager.

**Sec. 8.13 Public Hearings**

- (a) If any law requires that more than one public hearing be held on the same subject matter by the City Council or by any board, commission, or other body of the City, then the hearings must be conducted not less than twenty-four (24) hours apart unless otherwise prescribed by such law.
- (b) This section does not prohibit the City Council or any board, commission, or other body of the City from conducting joint public hearings.

**Sec. 8.14 Property Not Exempt from Special Assessments**

No property of any kind, by whomsoever owned or held or by whatsoever institution, agency, political subdivision or organization, owned or held, whether in trust or by non-profit organization, or corporation, or by foundation, or otherwise, (except property of the City), shall be exempt in any way from any special taxes, charges, levies and assessments except where required by state law.

**Sec. 8.15 Penalty Clause**

- (a) Criminal Penalty. Any person who by himself or with others violates any provision of this Charter shall, in addition to any other penalty, be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof may be punishable by a fine of not more \$500.00. City Council shall enact an ordinance enforcing this section.
- (b) Civil Penalty. Upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the City Council any person who by himself or with others violates any provision of this Charter shall be, in addition to any other penalty provided for herein, subject to a civil fine of not more than \$500.00.

**ARTICLE IX. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

**Sec. 9.01 Existing Ordinances and Resolutions**

At the time of initial adoption of this Charter, all existing ordinances, resolutions, regulations, and other prior actions of the City Council, not in conflict with this Charter, shall remain in effect without being subject to the provisions of this Charter for referendum.

### **Sec. 9.02 Officers and Employees**

- (a) Upon adoption of this Charter, the present persons filling elective offices on the City Council will continue to fill those offices for the terms for which they were elected.
- (b) Nothing in this Charter, except as otherwise specifically provided, shall affect or impair the rights or privileges of persons who are City officers or employees at the time of its adoption. Upon adoption of this Charter, the person presently serving as the City Manager shall be deemed to be the City Manager, subject to the provisions of this Charter.
- (c) Except as specifically provided by this Charter, if at the time this Charter takes full effect, a City administrative officer or employee holds any office or position which is or can be abolished by or under this Charter, he or she shall continue in such position or office until the taking effect of some specific provision under this Charter directing that he or she vacate the office or position.

### **Sec. 9.03 Pending Matters**

All rights, claims, actions, orders, franchises, contracts and legal administrative proceedings shall continue except as modified pursuant to the provisions of this Charter and in each case shall be maintained, carried on or dealt with by the City department, office, or agency appropriate under this Charter.

### **Sec. 9.04 Manner of Submission to Electors**

In preparing this Charter, the Charter Commission finds and decides that it is impractical to segregate each subject so as to permit a vote of "yes" or "no" on the same, for the reason that the Charter is so constructed that in order to enable it to work and function, it is necessary that it should be adopted in its entirety.

### **Sec. 9.05 Transition Elections**

In order to provide for a smooth transition from a five-member council, all elected in the same year to a six-member council, with staggered terms, as provided herein, the following election schedule shall be followed until such time as all Council Members are elected in accordance with this Charter:

- a) A term of any Council Member and the Mayor that ends in May 2023 is extended to the time the November 2023 vote is canvassed and the election winners are declared.

- b) The total positions up for election for the November 2023 election shall consist of the mayor and six (6) council members.
- c) For the November 2023 uniform election date, three (3) Council Members (Places 1,3,5) and the Mayor's term shall be for 2 years. The remaining three (3) Council Members (Places 2,4,6) term shall be for one (1) year. The places shall be determined by drawing lots at the first regular City Council meeting held after the election adopting the charter.
- d) For the November 2024 election, the three (3) Council Members places (Places 2,4,6), who had the one-year term shall be up for election for a two (2) year term.
- e) For the November 2025 election, the three (3) Council Members (Places 1,3,5) and the Mayor's position shall be up for election for a two-year (2) term.