



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council Work Session

September 26, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Supple called the work session to order at 5:45 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

Council Members Present: Mary Supple, Mayor; Sean Hayford O'leary; Ben Whalen; Simon Trautmann; and Sharon Christensen

Council Members Absent:

Charter Commissioners Present: Martin Kirsch, President; Reed Bornholdt; and Bill Bullock

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Dustin Leslie, City Clerk; Chris Swanson, Management Analyst; Jay Henthorne, Police Chief

ITEM #1	THIRD DISCUSSION ON THE CHARTER COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE CURRENT CITY CHARTER
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City Manager Rodriguez introduced the conversation and the Charter Commission members to Council.

City Attorney Tietjen gave the presentation including the background and reviews of the proposed Charter amendments. She also gave context into the conversations regarding Mayoral emergency powers.

Council Member Whalen spoke about the chain of command in emergencies. He also spoke about updated language in the FEMA proposed language to make it more flexible – specifically changing “will” to “may.” City Attorney Tietjen stated that language could provide more flexibility.

Council Member Hayford O'leary stated the new language proposal had clear chain of command language which he liked.

Council Member Whalen asked if having a list on the FEMA proposed language limits the city in how they can respond. City Attorney Tietjen stated it would not as the list is not something that needs to be completely checked off in an emergency.

Council Member Trautmann stated he was not comfortable with eliminating the checks and balances of the charter with these changes.

Police Chief Henthorne outlined the emergency management process and how he, as Emergency Management Director, would support affected departments during an emergency.

Council Member Hayford Oleary stated the current language was not consistent and should be changed to be more direct.

Council Member Trautmann stated there could be consequences of giving the Mayor more powers without consent of the Council in emergencies.

There was a conversation between staff, Council, and the Charter Commission members about past conversations with how they came to language choices and the pros and cons of each.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked what would happen if they kept the original language in the charter. City Attorney Tietjen stated the whole Council would have to vote on declaring a situation an emergency.

Police Chief Henthorne spoke about difficulties another city experienced because of similar language and stated he did not want the same to happen Richfield.

Council Member Trautmann stated he would support language that gave the Mayor the ability to remove staff members not willing to perform during an emergency. City Attorney Tietjen stated that would implicate other parts of the charter and give Council Members the ability to remove staff which they cannot do now.

Council Member Trautmann suggested the following language which the Council agreed to: "In time of public danger or emergency the Mayor may, as needed, direct the City manager, and the designated Emergency Director as part of the emergency response system to maintain order and enforce the law and to respond to the emergency including, but not limited to, requesting assistance from federal, state, and local agencies as may be needed."

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Supple adjourned the work session at 6:45 pm.

Date Approved: October 10, 2023



Dustin Leslie
City Clerk



Mary B. Supple
Mayor



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager