

MINUTES OF THE MISSION SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MAY 11, 2017

The Mission City Council met for a Special City Council Meeting at Mission City Hall on Thursday, May 11, 2017. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Steve Schowengerdt. The following councilmembers were present: Ron Appeltoft, Suzie Gibbs, Kristin Inman, Debbie Kring, Pat Quinn, Arcie Rothrock, Nick Schlossmacher. ABSENT: Tom Geraghty.

Charter Ordinance Exempting the City of Mission from the Provisions of K.S.A. 25-2108a Relating to Primary Elections

Ms. Smith provided background information on this issue, stating that after a third candidate filed for election in Ward IV, the City was contacted by the Johnson County Election Office with questions regarding our current code related to primary elections. Staff reviewed our code and confirmed that when we transitioned to November elections in odd-numbered years via Charter Ordinance 27, we also repealed Charter Ordinance 23 which outlines Mission's requirements for primary elections. At the time of transition, we followed direction provided by LKM that we could not exempt ourselves from the state's requirements as they were uniform. She stated that Mr. Martin has spoken with the League and we do have the ability to charter out of these requirement. Ms. Smith stated that the state's requirements would generate a primary when there are four or more candidates. She stated that staff's recommendation for a charter ordinance is not a strong one, and Council has three options available, which include:

- Do nothing, which would generate a primary if more than three candidates file of any position.
- Do nothing now, but consider revisions for future elections.
- Adopt a charter ordinance to trigger a primary when more than two candidates file for any position.

She stated that if Council chooses to adopt a charter ordinance, it must be published for two consecutive weeks and becomes effective 60 days after publication. There can be a referendum on a charter ordinances if 10% of the voters from the last election petition.

Councilmember Schlossmacher asked what the benefits would be of going back to having a primary if more than two candidates file. Ms. Smith stated that when we transitioned in 2015, we did not believe there was an option to maintain our previous practice. A primary narrows the field to two candidates ensuring one is elected by a majority, and would provide consistency with other Johnson County cities.

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Councilmember Gibbs requested information on the cost of a primary. Ms. Smith stated that some costs are static and some fluctuate. A typical primary in one ward would be approximately \$5,500 but would increase if multiple wards had primaries.

Councilmember Schlossmacher stated that in previous primaries the third candidate has only received 5-8% of the vote so there is minimal impact. He feels it is expensive to have a primary, and would be comfortable with staying with state statutes that would only generate a primary if there are four candidates.

Mayor Schowengerdt stated that he would prefer to have a primary and narrow the field of candidates to two. This would be consistent with many of the other Johnson County cities.

Councilmember Quinn stated that he is comfortable with either option. Ms. Smith stated that the perception by most is that three candidates generate a primary and even staff was under this impression.

Councilmember Inman stated that as a candidate, there are costs associated with having to campaign for a primary so she would be comfortable with doing nothing at this time. Councilmember Gibbs stated that she is "ok" with either doing nothing or the charter ordinance option, and discussed the benefits of campaigning to meet constituents.

Discussion continued on whether or not to move forward with a charter ordinance and all agreed that no motion is required as they prefer to not pass a charter ordinance and stay under the state statute. Mayor Schowengerdt noted that this can always be considered again at a later date, and Councilmember Quinn stated that he feels the November vote is a "truer" vote since there is generally greater turnout.

Sollie Flora, Mission resident and council candidate from Ward IV, stated that she agrees with keeping the primary under the state statute, particularly with the short time frame to consider and enact a charter ordinance.

No action was taken on the proposed charter ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Quinn, seconded by Gibbs to adjourn the meeting at 6:19 p.m. All present voted AYE. **Motion carried.**

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Respectfully submitted by Martha Sumrall, City Clerk.

Steve Schowengerdt, Mayor

Martha Sumrall, City Clerk