



City of Battle Creek
Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee
Department of Public Works
Multi-Purpose Room
150 South Kendall Street
Battle Creek, MI 49037
April 11, 2018
5:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER - ATTENDANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from March 21, 2018

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

PRIOR MEETING BUSINESS

Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee Public Survey
Additional Consideration/Discussion of Charter Amendments

1. Selection of Mayor and Vice Mayor
2. Changing the Size of the Commission
3. Staggering Commission Terms
4. Length of Commission Terms

NEW BUSINESS

Other Relevant Charter Amendments

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

NEXT MEETING: TBD - April _____, 2018 at 5:30 pm, DPW Multi-purpose Room

ADJOURNMENT

PARKING LOT/FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Number and Characteristics of Wards

- One Ward - All At-Large
- All Wards - All Ward Council
- Combination - Ward and At-Large

BLUE RIBBON ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 21, 2018
5:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Drozdowski, Schwarz, Hanner, Champlin, McIlroy, Antaya, Helmboldt, Burleson, Burton, Whitfield, Weaver, Tomak, Johnson, Moreno, Squires, Godfrey and Fukuyama (arrived at 5:36 p.m.)

Committee Members Absent: Settles

Others Present: Jill Steele, City Attorney: Rebecca Fleury, City Manager: Michelle Coats, City Clerk's Office

Call to Order: Dr. Schwarz called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Drozdowski, supported by Mr. Burleson, made a motion to approve the March 7, 2018 meeting minutes. All yes, none opposed. Motion approved.

Prior Meeting Business

A. **Survey Update:** Ms. Fleury reported the next time an insert can be placed in water bills is May 4, and then it will take the full month of May to distribute based on the billing cycles. Results would be available in June. The survey can be made available online prior to May. The committee consensus is to make it available online right away and distribute with the bills in May.

Ms. Fleury followed up on potential live streaming of BRC meetings. AccessVision can live stream; however, the meeting would need to be held in City Hall Commission Chambers where their equipment is located. Comm. Gray's "Keeping You Informed" segment would be affected as it takes place in the same timeframe.

Ms. Fleury provided an update on how social media is being utilized. The Blue Ribbon logo is included on all social media, all meetings are on the calendar, announcement blasts done 10-days prior to meeting, press releases are issued, and information is on the web.

Abi Fukuyama arrived at 5:36 p.m. Mr. Helmboldt and Dr. Schwartz welcomed Abi Fukuyama to the committee.

New Business

A. Consideration of Charter Amendments

1. Selection of Mayor and Vice Mayor

Dr. Schwartz summarized the options: directly elected by voters or election by the commission. The size of the commission is also impacted, especially if the voters directly elect the Mayor/Vice Mayor.

The committee discussed feedback they have received from people in the community expressing a desire to vote for these positions. Discussed the manner of election, whether based on highest number of votes received by an at-large candidate or specifically running for the position of Mayor/Vice Mayor. Consensus was for candidates to run for these specific offices.

When discussing duties and responsibilities of the Mayor, Attorney Steele referenced information provided by the Clerk's office and noted some responsibilities are unique to the mayoral position in the City's charter and ordinances. Attorney Steele stated other responsibilities are established under

state and federal law, such as receiving federal WARN act notifications, serving on the Planning Commission, and is the chief executive officer of the city under Michigan's Home Rule City Act..

Mr. Burleson read the core of Shanay Settles' email message expressing her comments and support of voter elected Mayor and Vice Mayor for the benefit of the public. Copies of the full message were distributed to committee members.

Mr. McIlroy stated voters essentially decide upon the Mayor/Vice Mayor since they vote upon whom is elected to commission. If moving to direct election, the Committee needed to consider adjusting the number of at-large commissioners.

Further discussion on the merits of direct election in comparison to election from among commissioners. Committee members reviewed the history of mayoral selections, how many were selected from ward versus at large, and the occasional dissention that has occurred during that process.

Dr. Schwartz stated, based upon the discussion so far, there appears to be a leaning towards directly elected Mayor and Vice Mayor.

2. Changing the size of the Commission

Committee members began consideration of the size and nature of the commission. Members support continuation of ward representation, indicating the importance of representing particular ward needs. Discussion of increasing the number of ward commissioners with a suggestion by Mr. Champlin to add two more wards, having seven wards and two direct elected commissioners.

Attorney Steele informed the committee that the State statute is very specific on how ward boundaries are determined and that they must be based on population. Wards may not be representative only of neighborhood boundaries.

Dr. Schwartz surveyed committee members on the following conceptual ideas:

- Commission size: 9 members
- 2 directly elected as Mayor and Vice Mayor
- 7 Ward commissioners

A majority of members seem to be in favor of this conceptually.

3. Staggering Commission Terms

4. Length of Commission Terms

Committee members expressed community feedback has been in favor of 2-year terms. Discussion of advantages/disadvantages of non-staggered versus staggered terms: the ability of voters to effect change if dissatisfied with representation, fact that an entire commission could be unseated, increased expense associated with annual election under staggered terms, and lower voter turnout during odd-year elections.

Mr. Helmboldt left at 6:48 p.m.

Dr. Schwartz recapped where the committee is conceptually so far and charged committee members to further reflection until the next meeting. If rejecting these concepts, come back to the next meeting with alternatives.

- Directly elect Mayor and Vice Mayor
- 9 member commission – with 7 from Wards

- Length of Term: 2 years, non-staggered terms (all positions up every 2 years)

Attorney Steele reported data requested by the committee. Of 161 cities, 121 are the council-manager form of government. In 86 cities, the people vote for the mayor. In some of those mayoral elections, the person is determined based on number of votes, but more are candidates running directly for the office of mayor. In 35 cities, the city council elects who the mayor is. In reference to wards, the Home Rule Cities Act says that wards have to be “as nearly of equal population as is practicable and contiguous and compact.”

5. Other Relevant Charter Amendments – Not discussed

Public Comment:

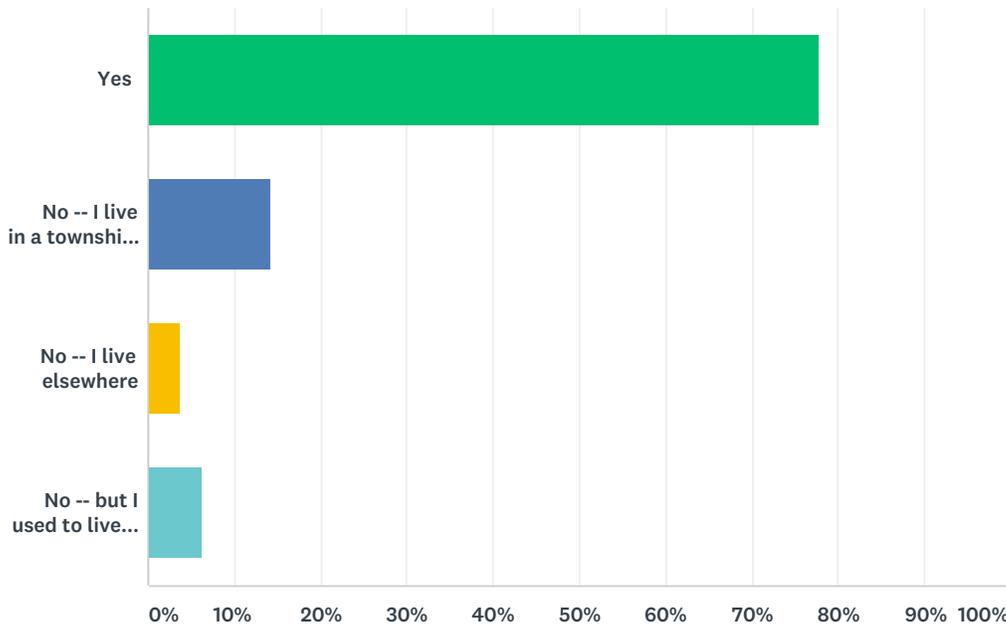
Kristin Blood expressed her excitement with the committee’s progress, looks forward to the survey, and expressed her appreciate for the committee’s work.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at DPW Multi-purpose Room, at 5:30 pm.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Q1 Do you live in the city limits of the City of Battle Creek? (Choose all that apply.)

Answered: 162 Skipped: 0



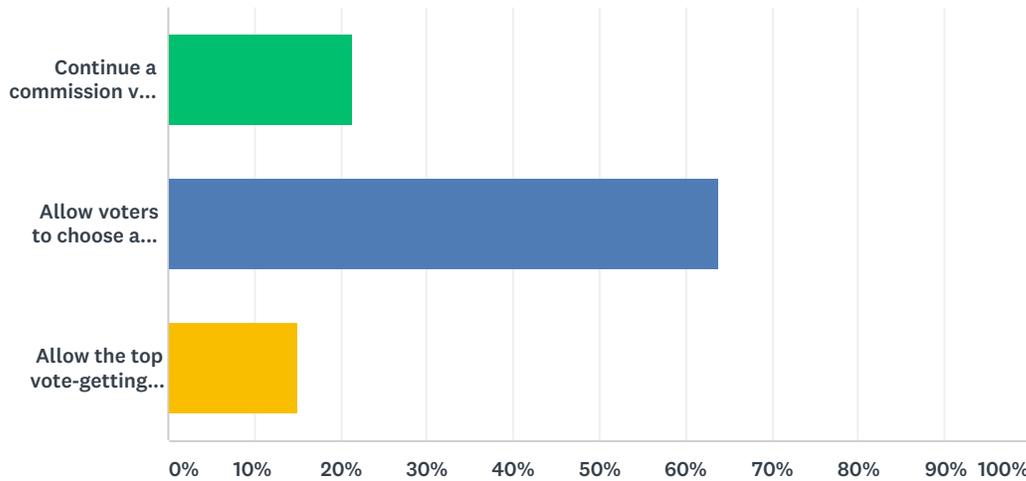
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	77.78%	126
No -- I live in a township in the Battle Creek metro area	14.20%	23
No -- I live elsewhere	3.70%	6
No -- but I used to live in Battle Creek	6.17%	10
Total Respondents: 162		

#	IF OUTSIDE OF BATTLE CREEK, WHERE DO YOU LIVE?	DATE
1	Ceresco	3/28/2018 12:53 PM
2	Springfield	3/27/2018 9:07 PM
3	Newton Township	3/27/2018 6:57 PM
4	Emmett Township	3/27/2018 4:23 PM
5	Bedford	3/27/2018 1:46 PM
6	Newton township	3/27/2018 8:35 AM
7	Leroy	3/27/2018 4:41 AM
8	Z	3/26/2018 11:20 PM
9	Johnstown Twp	3/26/2018 5:59 PM
10	Hastings	3/26/2018 5:38 PM
11	Live in Delton, work on Battle Creek	3/26/2018 2:24 PM
12	Augusta	3/26/2018 1:43 PM

13	Pennfield	3/26/2018 12:03 PM
14	Leroy Township	3/26/2018 11:31 AM
15	Emmett Township	3/25/2018 7:50 AM
16	Commerce, MI	3/23/2018 9:43 AM
17	Bedford Township	3/23/2018 9:00 AM
18	I work in the City, live in Marshall	3/23/2018 8:21 AM
19	Bedford Township	3/23/2018 3:58 AM
20	Pennfield Township, but within Battle Creek Public School District	3/22/2018 7:49 PM
21	Bedford Township	3/22/2018 5:14 PM
22	I wish I lived outside of Battle Creek	3/22/2018 4:26 PM
23	Emmett	3/22/2018 4:12 PM
24	Emmett Township	3/22/2018 4:09 PM
25	Bedford Township	3/22/2018 4:00 PM

Q2 Currently, the mayor and vice mayor are chosen by the City Commission, from among its members, at the November organizational meeting. What are your thoughts on this issue?

Answered: 160 Skipped: 2



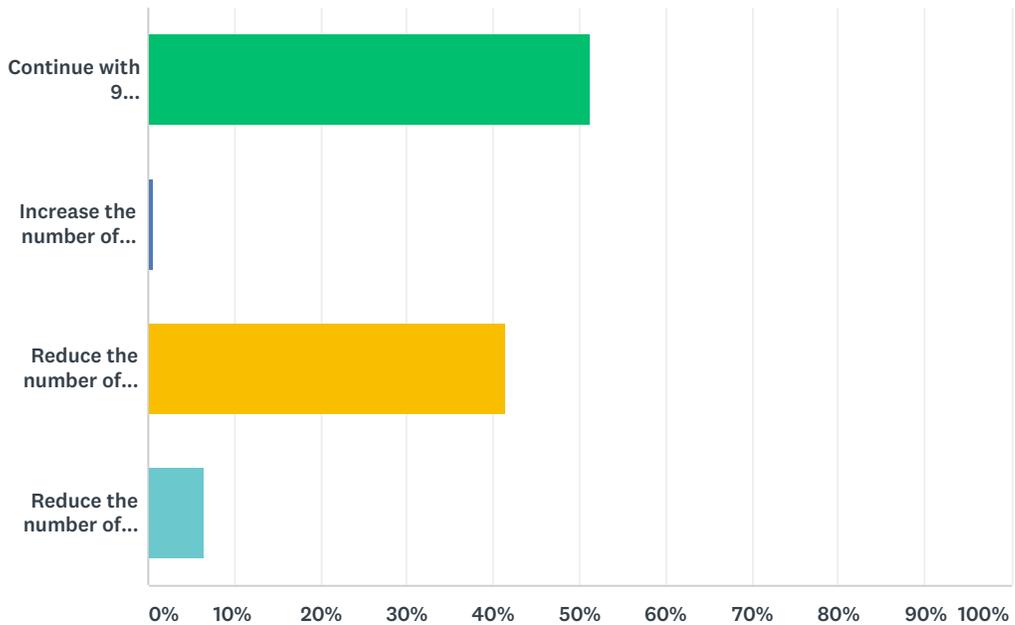
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Continue a commission vote on mayor and vice mayor	21.25%	34
Allow voters to choose a mayor and vice mayor as a separate ballot question	63.75%	102
Allow the top vote-getting commissioners on the ballot to become mayor and vice mayor	15.00%	24
TOTAL		160

#	COMMENTS AND OTHER IDEAS...	DATE
1	The Mayor and Vice Mayor have no additional voting rights than all of the other commissioners, therefore they should be chosen among their peers who have worked with them and know of their capabilities. Voters would simply choose someone based upon name recognition or a recent conversation.	4/5/2018 2:28 PM
2	It is my belief that the mayoral position is mainly to act as chairperson of the city commission, so having the commission choose the mayor and vice-mayor helps keep the process in line with the duties.	3/28/2018 12:15 PM
3	It should always be the people that decide who the leadership shall be. After all it is our community in turmoil. We need a Mayor and Vice Mayor we can trust.	3/27/2018 6:57 PM
4	I think the voters should appoint the mayor. I don't care how the vice mayor is selected.	3/27/2018 8:37 AM
5	Mayor should pick vice mayor.	3/27/2018 4:41 AM
6	Anyone running for mayor should have to run city wide, not just in a ward	3/26/2018 11:20 PM
7	It should be up to the voters!!!	3/26/2018 10:16 PM
8	The position is largely ceremonial and allowing the commissioners to choose saves time and money. I'm afraid we'd see vicious, partisan fights for the very few voters who show up.	3/26/2018 9:48 PM
9	This should be staggered or done in a way that doesn't require commissioners to lose their seat but could be a way to "upgrade"	3/26/2018 9:20 PM
10	Mayor is a ceremonial position in Battle Creek, not overly concerned about how they are selected as they don't really have say in day-to-day operations.	3/26/2018 5:38 PM

11	Under our current system for a commissioner to get the most votes they need to run at-large. I'd prefer an option to choose from any of the candidates in the running to be mayor/vice mayor, regardless of whether they are running in a ward or at large.	3/26/2018 1:15 PM
12	The fact that we don't get to vote on mayor is assinine. We the citizens should choose who we want for mayor!	3/26/2018 12:59 PM
13	My guess would be some areas have higher voter turn out than others so having the commissioner with most votes default as mayor does not give opportunity for a qualified candidate from a lower voter turn out ward to have the opportunity to serve.	3/26/2018 11:52 AM
14	I would also be in favor of electing just the Mayor directly and allowing the commission to select the Vice Mayor.	3/25/2018 2:44 PM
15	Would the ballot question be combined with another election after the commissioners were chosen? As long as this does not use up more resources, then I think a popular vote would be okay.	3/24/2018 1:42 PM
16	I would say allow the voters to choose, but to do that fairly would involve another election (with attendant costs). I do not feel it should go to top vote-getters, as it would be skewed to district voter turn out.	3/23/2018 2:37 PM
17	Either leave it or reconfigure the wards so everyone is at large and the vote by the people is fair. The top vote getter idea is not good, what if that person didn't want to be Mayor or have the time due to having a job.	3/23/2018 12:56 PM
18	Because Battle Creek is a council-manager government, it doesn't matter who occupies the positions of mayor and vice mayor. While issues of representation based on vote tallies is a valid concern, the city and past Blue Ribbon committees have explored this situation numerous times and ultimately have decided it isn't prudent. The city should spend more time finding ways to push progressive policies that will increase overall civic engagement instead of engaging in generally meaningless pursuits like this one, or like BC Vision, to name a few.	3/23/2018 10:17 AM
19	Unless there is some other changes made allowing voters to select a mayor and vice mayor means the south portion of town would essentially elect those positions.	3/23/2018 9:00 AM
20	Wouldn't at large candidates automatically receive more votes?	3/23/2018 8:21 AM
21	Just allow voting on Mayor. Commission can choose VM	3/23/2018 7:08 AM
22	Cuz mayor is pretty much same as a reg commissioner.	3/22/2018 10:51 PM
23	I also think the mayor could be the top vote getter, and the vice mayor be determined by the commission for balance of perspective of voters as well as the commissioners.	3/22/2018 7:49 PM
24	Move from a weak mayoral to a strong mayoral system, getting rid of the city Managers position, or greatly limiting its power and impact.	3/22/2018 7:38 PM
25	Mayor by vote of people and vice-mayor by Commission	3/22/2018 6:32 PM
26	I don't understand why we even need a "Mayor" since we hire "City Manager". If the Mayor is simply a figurehead, it makes no difference how the decision is made.	3/22/2018 6:09 PM
27	The top getting commissioners will always be at-large, and therefore ward commissioners will not be in the running. Typically at-large commissioners are from the south side of the city, Caucasian and affluent.	3/22/2018 5:57 PM
28	Provide a separate box to select mayor from the list of commissioners to vote from and have the runner up be vice-mayor.	3/22/2018 5:15 PM

Q3 Currently, the City Commission has 9 members - 5 ward commissioners (particular sections of the city) and 4 at-large (entire city). A majority of cities in Michigan have 7 commissioners, who are all at-large. What are your thoughts on this issue?

Answered: 152 Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Continue with 9 commissioners, as they are	51.32% 78
Increase the number of commissioners (please comment below with the number)	0.66% 1
Reduce the number of commissioners to 7	41.45% 63
Reduce the number of commissioners to 5 (this is the minimum allowed by the state Home-Rule City law)	6.58% 10
TOTAL	152

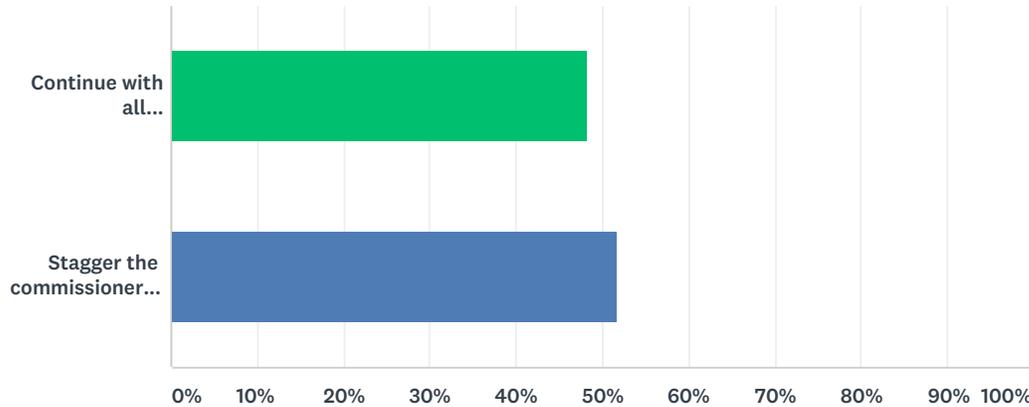
#	OTHER THOUGHTS REGARDING SIZE OF THE COMMISSION, WARD REPRESENTATION, AND AT-LARGE SERVICE:	DATE
1	Currently too many commissioners that represent special interest groups in their neighborhood or circle of friends; they should represent all of the residents of the city.	4/5/2018 2:28 PM
2	The present system for this works and is a good mix.	4/5/2018 1:44 PM
3	Reduce to 7. Continue with 5 ward commissioners, and have only 2 at-large	4/3/2018 2:27 PM
4	Ward commissioners ensure that all areas have a vote, and at-large commissioners make sure that voters have the strongest influence, so balancing the two places value on both factors.	3/28/2018 12:15 PM
5	7 ward commissioners and 2 at-large who would become your defacto mayor and vice mayor.	3/28/2018 7:56 AM
6	All at-large, eliminate ward commissioners	3/27/2018 9:25 PM
7	Make the city 4 wards. Have 3 at large seats. Total of 7. Right now we have too many seats and they are basically being used as resume building seats.	3/27/2018 6:57 PM
8	I think that it is essential to continue ward commissioners to represent specific areas	3/27/2018 1:46 PM

9	Continue as is, it is important to have the 5 different ward commissioners to represent the people that live in lower income neighborhoods.	3/27/2018 1:17 PM
10	7 at large commissioners	3/27/2018 11:08 AM
11	It would help to get educated answers. My only basis is if other cities of similar size are doing it with 7, why are we so inefficient? Who is the weak link?	3/27/2018 9:46 AM
12	keeping Mayor and Vice Mayor = 9 total	3/27/2018 8:30 AM
13	Reduce to all at large.	3/27/2018 4:41 AM
14	Eliminating wards will lead to most commissioners being from south side of city with little to no representation of the northside or minorities.	3/26/2018 11:20 PM
15	We don't need the extra two, that money could go elsewhere.	3/26/2018 10:16 PM
16	Make them all at large, most people don't even know what ward they're in. Fewer members make collaboration easier.	3/26/2018 9:48 PM
17	Either as 9 or 7, there should be all Ward seats and only 2 at large (vice mayor and mayor)	3/26/2018 9:20 PM
18	9 commissioners, 7 ward commissioners and 2 at-large that would be the mayor and vice mayor	3/26/2018 8:35 PM
19	15	3/26/2018 8:04 PM
20	Less personalities = less conflict, more work done	3/26/2018 5:38 PM
21	7 members but dedicated to specific sections of the city.	3/26/2018 2:02 PM
22	Have all 7 be At-Large.	3/26/2018 1:45 PM
23	Maintain current setup....5 ward, 4 at-large	3/26/2018 1:01 PM
24	Keep the 9 and let them all run at large!	3/26/2018 12:59 PM
25	I think we should keep 9 but have less at large commissioners and ensure better representation for areas of Battle Creek. Having possible 5 commissioners that reside in one ward is not a good representation.	3/26/2018 11:52 AM
26	Reduce the number to 7 and make them all at-large	3/26/2018 11:36 AM
27	I would like to see there be seven ward commissioners and 2 at large commissioners with those commissioners becoming your de facto mayor and vice mayor.	3/26/2018 8:36 AM
28	Drain the swamp	3/25/2018 6:19 PM
29	A city of this small size doesn't need 7 or 9 commissioners. As a compromise I'd go with 7 but all at-large.	3/25/2018 1:57 PM
30	How much do commissioners make? If we can save a substantial amount of money, then I would have the 5 ward commissioners and 2 at large.	3/24/2018 1:42 PM
31	The differing needs of particular sections is better represented by the ward system resulting in a more fair and balanced approach to the needs of our entire city.	3/23/2018 2:37 PM
32	Make them all at large...make Mayor and vm run separately	3/23/2018 12:56 PM
33	Reduce the number of commissioners making them all ward commissioners	3/23/2018 9:00 AM
34	Keep the ward representation to ensure representation of the entire city.	3/23/2018 6:24 AM
35	Keep the number of commissioners, but have 2 at large and 7 wards	3/22/2018 10:27 PM
36	Two direct elected, mayor and vice mayor 7 wards	3/22/2018 10:05 PM
37	All at large would put the commission at risk of being represented by people from one area versus the whole of the city.	3/22/2018 7:49 PM
38	This would eliminate the voter turnout discrepancy between the wards	3/22/2018 6:50 PM
39	The wards need to be redrawn. A ward should not be divided or split between different sections of the city.	3/22/2018 6:09 PM
40	The Ward system ensures neighborhoods are represented on the commission. In particular, low-income, minority neighborhoods. If the Ward system is dismantled, it is unlikely the city would have the diverse representation it currently has.	3/22/2018 5:57 PM

41	I like the idea of them all being at-large. Is the Mayor and Vice Mayor one of the seven or would there still be nine with them added?	3/22/2018 5:15 PM
42	Reduce the number to 7 commissioners, who are all at-large.	3/22/2018 4:52 PM
43	...and make them all at large.	3/22/2018 4:48 PM
44	Stick with 9, but this question doesn't work well with the last one. As I'd like 9 commissioners, 7 Wards and 2 at large bring directly elected Mayor and Vice Mayor	3/22/2018 4:26 PM
45	Keep the ward commissioners! It ensures representation from all areas of the city. Having 4 at-large balances the needs of wards with the needs of the city as a whole.	3/22/2018 3:36 PM

Q4 Currently, all 9 city commissioners are up for re-election at the same time. What are your thoughts on this issue?

Answered: 157 Skipped: 5



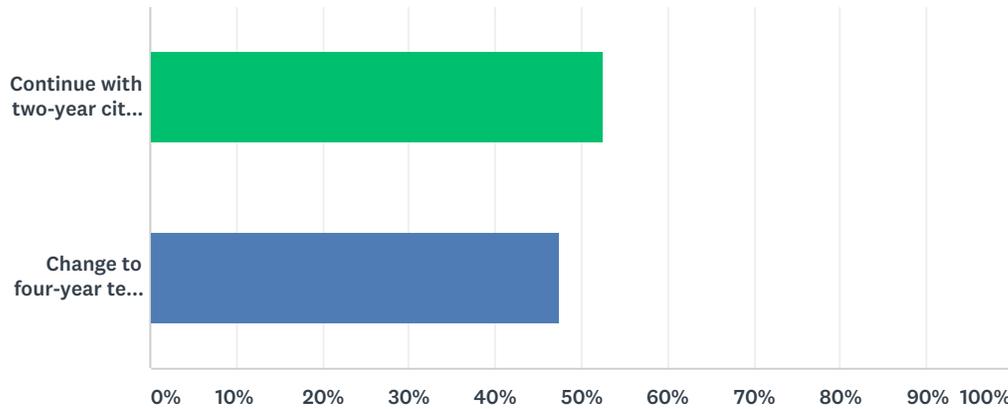
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Continue with all commissioners' terms expiring at the same time	48.41%	76
Stagger the commissioners' terms (for example, half could serve four-year terms, and half two-year terms)	51.59%	81
TOTAL		157

#	COMMENTS AND OTHER IDEAS...	DATE
1	Many cities stagger council terms, allowing the residents to make change when necessary, but not necessarily all at one. However would prefer all serve 4 year terms, with at large candidates elected during presidential election years and ward candidates, if kept, elected during governor election year.	4/5/2018 2:28 PM
2	Could this be done and still not cost the taxpayers more \$\$\$ w/ additional "dedicated" elections...be part of an upcoming vote that was scheduled? Something to be considered especially when the vote turnout is always so low?	4/5/2018 1:44 PM
3	The second option means that all the terms would expire every other time. Better maybe to have 4-year terms, with at-large commissioners voted on, and then 2 years later, ward commissioners.	3/28/2018 12:15 PM
4	Ward commissioners two year terms and At Large four years.	3/28/2018 6:58 AM
5	Staggering terms could prove beneficial	3/27/2018 9:25 PM
6	No commissioner should ever serve more than 2 year terms. It takes away power from residents when a commissioner is failing. Commissioners should be held accountable in short term intervals.	3/27/2018 6:57 PM
7	Ward - 4 years, at large - 2 years	3/27/2018 6:16 PM
8	It makes most economical sense to run these elections together	3/27/2018 1:46 PM
9	Stagger that commissioner terms are over not around the same year. Maybe two year terms for the 4 at large commissioners.	3/27/2018 1:17 PM
10	Stagger 4/3	3/27/2018 4:41 AM
11	Staggered terms as with school board members allows continuity of knowledge	3/26/2018 11:20 PM
12	Stagger if structure stays the same. If we change to 7 at-large positions, I say keep terms expiring at the same time...it will be more likely to have incumbents winning at least a few positions, maintaining continuity.	3/26/2018 2:38 PM
13	The continuity of leadership can be very important, but it is also important to bring fresh ideas and views to the table	3/26/2018 12:03 PM

14	Same length of terms for each person, but expiring in different years	3/25/2018 11:00 PM
15	Have all commissioners serve four year terms with staggered elections. For example - elect all at-large commissioners at one time, then elect all ward commissioners at the staggered election	3/25/2018 2:44 PM
16	Need to have continuity and if all 9 were voted out that would upset that.	3/25/2018 1:57 PM
17	I think staggering would be too confusing and harder to keep straight in the public's eye. The way it is done now seems simple. Simpler is better.	3/24/2018 1:42 PM
18	Although this could impede momentum on some issues being addressed, I feel this would shorten the acclimation to new positions and allow for smoother transitions.	3/23/2018 2:37 PM
19	I guess I have no thoughts one way or the other	3/23/2018 8:21 AM
20	I am unfamiliar if the current practice is common or not. I like the idea of staggering terms but feel the terms should be equal. How would we determine who gets a two year term vs a four year term?	3/22/2018 8:32 PM
21	At-large commissioners should serve 4 year terms while ward commissioners should serve 2 year terms	3/22/2018 7:38 PM
22	I believe if you have staggered terms less will get done. You will spend too much time getting new commissioners up to speed and on board with certain topics.	3/22/2018 6:50 PM
23	Commissioners should serve four year terms. It is difficult to run for office, hold a full-time job, and have the extra hours of public meetings, attending events... when you are running and working full time.	3/22/2018 5:57 PM
24	Electing some to 4 year terms and some to 2 year terms seems confusing. I would like to see elections every other year to elect half of the new commissioners. So elect 4 new in 2018, and 5 new in 2020. All to 4 year terms. That keeps the board fresh, but with consistency.	3/22/2018 4:09 PM
25	Terms should be two years or preferably 4 years, expiring at the same time. Elections should occur concurrent with presidential elections, ensuring broad interest in local elections and a greater variety of views represented.	3/22/2018 3:36 PM

Q5 Currently, city commissioners serve two-year terms. (The current commission will serve three-year terms because of the change in city elections from odd to even years.) A majority of Michigan city commissioners serve four-year terms. What are your thoughts on this issue?

Answered: 158 Skipped: 4



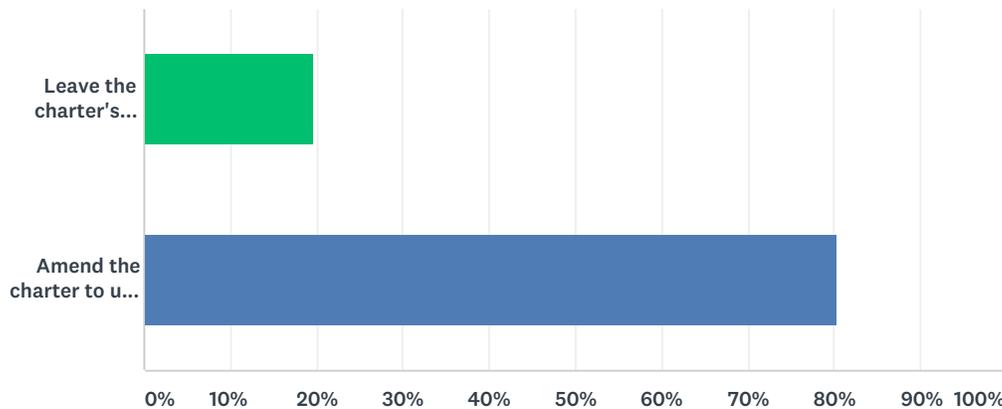
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Continue with two-year city commission terms	52.53% 83
Change to four-year terms (the maximum allowed by state law)	47.47% 75
TOTAL	158

#	SUGGESTED LENGTH OF TERMS AND OTHER COMMENTS...	DATE
1	Change to 4 year staggered terms, with half of the council elected in 2020, and the other half elected in 2022	4/5/2018 2:28 PM
2	4 Year Terms allow to much damage to be done by a commissioner who is ineffective or of questionable ethics and needs to be gone!	4/5/2018 1:44 PM
3	Four years of service is too long a term	3/31/2018 4:17 PM
4	Four years is too long especially if a ward commissioner proves to not represent the people in his or her ward on decisions accurately, but votes his or her own agendas. We need Accountability from our City Government with a Capital A and Transparency as well.	3/28/2018 6:58 AM
5	The size of this city and the lack of good leadership tells us all we must keep all leadership on their toes. We must hold them accountable and if need be vote them out. Never more than 2 year terms.	3/27/2018 6:57 PM
6	Leave two years and put a limit to terms. NO CAREER POLITICANS!!	3/26/2018 10:16 PM
7	More time needed to truly affect change - 2 years is short. Already thinking about re-election after 1 year, not focused on doing good civic work.	3/26/2018 5:38 PM
8	3 or 4 year terms. Reduces cost of elections.	3/26/2018 2:38 PM
9	I think changing to 4 year terms and aligning them to larger elections would result in better voter turn out	3/26/2018 11:52 AM
10	Can't screw up much more in four years than they can in two. Plus it would give members more time to become experienced (even though most are re-elected anyway).	3/25/2018 1:57 PM

11	Definitely 4 year terms. Less elections, less money spent, more time to create an impact. 2 years is hardly enough for someone new to learn the ropes, let alone carry forward with an agenda.	3/24/2018 1:42 PM
12	As two years can sometimes seem too short a time to see a project through to completion, I still feel the shorter term limit encourages better cooperation and efficiency for that very same reason.	3/23/2018 2:37 PM
13	Anyone with experience in city government will tell you it takes time to implement policies in a community. That can be frustrating to some, especially if they are not the right policies, but it takes a significant amount of time to get ultimately where you want to be. It might be valuable to lengthen the term so commissioners can focus on the wants and needs of the community and not so much looking ahead to the next election. Commissioners also should be subject to some sort of review during their term -- possibly by members of the local news media, but perhaps in a more formal forum -- so they're able to receive direct feedback about where they're falling short. It is not acceptable to read Scene Magazine or open mail during commission meetings, as does the city's current mayor, and that's the type of feedback that might be helpful to hear.	3/23/2018 10:17 AM
14	Four year terms would allow them to get more work done consistently. With only two year terms they are constantly 'up for re-election' and I fear their efforts lose focus to the city.	3/22/2018 8:32 PM
15	2 years is not enough time to master the responsibilities of the position before it's time to focus on reflection. Would prefer 3 tear terms.	3/22/2018 7:49 PM
16	We should blend the term lengths.	3/22/2018 7:38 PM
17	Three year terms. Two is too short, four is too long.	3/22/2018 6:32 PM
18	See question above.	3/22/2018 5:57 PM
19	3 years and a fortnight, with alternating Februarys off for good behavior.	3/22/2018 4:26 PM

Q6 Parts of the city charter presume the City Manager and City Attorney are men. Definitions indicate that these mentions also are extended to women. Other Michigan cities have amended their charters to use ungendered language (like "they") throughout. What are your thoughts on this issue?

Answered: 158 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Leave the charter's language as it is	19.62% 31
Amend the charter to use ungendered language	80.38% 127
TOTAL	158

#	OTHER IDEAS...	DATE
1	Do not really care either way. Long standing practice among government and private industry. Seems we all feel everything needs to be politically correct.	4/5/2018 2:28 PM
2	Leave the verbage the same or I'm afraid we'll be getting into the depths of gaender definitions as in Washington and never accomplish anything positive for this city. Any voter w/ any education and common sense will vote their preference anyway....are we questioning all the voters or offending the ones that bother to even get off their duffs and actually vote....the %'s are already low....let's not overthink this, okay?	4/5/2018 1:44 PM
3	Why spend the time and money to amend unless it poses a legal problem? Anyone with common sense knows gender discrimination is not allowed.	3/28/2018 6:58 AM
4	It is 2018, non-gender is appropriate	3/27/2018 9:25 PM
5	We should conform to respectful language in the charter. We should also fire both our city manager and our city attorney.	3/27/2018 6:57 PM
6	Amend the charter to use NONgendered language.	3/27/2018 6:16 PM
7	If it is an easy process, then by all means, change to engendered language. But if it is an economic drain, then leave it.	3/27/2018 1:46 PM
8	Yes, change the language to create inexcusive evironments.	3/27/2018 1:17 PM
9	I'm tired of the pronoun debate. It's not a personal attack on anybody. Don't waste your time and money on meaningless tasks.	3/27/2018 9:46 AM
10	Its 2018 already, fix the language. I can't see why you would even ask.	3/27/2018 8:37 AM
11	I can't believe this needed to be asked, of course change it.	3/26/2018 11:22 PM

12	It's 2018...	3/26/2018 5:38 PM
13	Good grief. 1st world problems! Change it, leave it...I don't care, but it's a fool errand to try and include more than 2 actual genders. Biology has no time for 14 genders.	3/26/2018 2:38 PM
14	True inclusion should be the goal	3/26/2018 2:24 PM
15	This rather sexist, or gender-assuming, language should have been changed to ungendered decades ago!	3/26/2018 1:27 PM
16	also there are lots of people who don't use either male or female pronouns. Gender neutral is best.	3/26/2018 1:15 PM
17	Change the language to be inclusive.	3/26/2018 11:52 AM
18	I cannot stress to you how off-putting gendered language is. It's 2018 we must change this.	3/26/2018 11:35 AM
19	Whatever. PC it to death.	3/25/2018 1:57 PM
20	One definition of "man" is "human being of either sex" same with "he." In future charter changes use "she" to balance it out if you want. It is the intention of the communication, not the specific words that matter.	3/24/2018 1:42 PM
21	"They" is a plural; "he" has been considered gender neutral for years (and as long as defined to indicate both male/female, is entirely acceptable). there comes a time when PC is just unwieldy.	3/23/2018 2:37 PM
22	This should be a no-brainer, especially as some of the city's most effective leaders in recent years have been women. Battle Creek should be an inclusive and progressive community, which starts by acknowledging past shortcomings, such as the language used in the city charter.	3/23/2018 10:17 AM
23	Only if other parts of the charter are going to be amended. Since the definitions cover the subject money should not be allocated JUST to fix this portion of the charter	3/23/2018 8:21 AM
24	Gender equity requires this of us! 'They' assumes neutrality and allows for the most qualified persons to assume those roles.	3/22/2018 8:32 PM
25	If it's being amended for other things, these can be changed, but not the sole purpose of the amendment.	3/22/2018 6:32 PM
26	Instead of the pronoun, simply state the title. This wouldn't be any more redundant than repeating the pronoun.	3/22/2018 6:09 PM
27	When was the charter written? If changes are going to be made, its time for a full review and update.	3/22/2018 5:57 PM
28	It is only right to keep it ungendered as you do not know whom will be in that position. If it currently states men....I then think that charter must be very outdated and not current with the times.	3/22/2018 5:15 PM
29	Why not?	3/22/2018 4:48 PM
30	We need to be vocal about this when it's changed. People have lived under the shadow of the rule of men for far too long. Celebrate.	3/22/2018 4:26 PM
31	Yes, please!	3/22/2018 4:09 PM

Q7 The Blue Ribbon Committee may consider other issues related to the city charter. (You can see the current charter at the city's website, battlecreekmi.gov, I Want To... tab, then Find a City Ordinance.) Do you have any additional suggestions or comments to add to this process?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 103

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Would prefer the members assigned to the committee actually had knowledge of our city and government instead of trying to force their biased opinions on everyone. Would like to know their previous level of involvement with city issues.	4/5/2018 2:28 PM
2	Leave the mayor vote to the commission....mayor is only a ceremonial position anyway for goodwill and PR! However... voters should be able to have the final say regarding the vote on City Manager....when that position is open.....you have all these "Community Input Sessions"....make us believe you are listening to the majority of the educated voter and than don't follow up with hiring the right persons! How our city and finances are handled should be vote in by the taxpayers!	4/5/2018 1:44 PM
3	not at this time	4/2/2018 11:28 AM
4	How do citizens get a chance to work on or with the committee	3/31/2018 4:17 PM
5	No	3/28/2018 8:18 PM
6	Not familiar enough to answer	3/28/2018 12:15 PM
7	Commissioners should wear powdered wigs.	3/28/2018 7:56 AM
8	I watched the Blue Ribbon Committee meeting that aired March 27, 2018 on Access Vision and applaud John Godfrey, and Dr. Schwartz as they are representing my views beautifully thus far. I still do not agree with the appointment of a representative from the Youth Advisory board though.	3/28/2018 6:58 AM
9	Thank you for the survey opportunity.	3/27/2018 9:25 PM
10	This whole process is embarrassing. Real leaders would have stepped up and just made the charter language change. Its obvious that anyone against it has poor character. It is also insulting to ask residents if they think they should have a say in their own leadership as if they will say no thanks our future doesn't matter do what you want. Then letting commissioners hand pick people in their personal circle to be on this committee.	3/27/2018 6:57 PM
11	No	3/27/2018 6:16 PM
12	no	3/27/2018 4:23 PM
13	None	3/27/2018 3:29 PM
14	No	3/27/2018 2:42 PM
15	na	3/27/2018 1:46 PM
16	Assuring diversity is happening.	3/27/2018 1:17 PM
17	Update/expand/correct any language about excluding any person from any activity.	3/27/2018 11:08 AM
18	No at the present time.	3/27/2018 10:47 AM
19	No	3/27/2018 8:37 AM
20	No	3/27/2018 6:45 AM
21	No	3/26/2018 11:22 PM
22	No	3/26/2018 11:20 PM
23	No	3/26/2018 11:06 PM
24	Not at this time	3/26/2018 10:18 PM

25	I believe it's time to reexamine consolidation of some of the townships, much like BC Township in the 80's.	3/26/2018 9:48 PM
26	Perhaps look at Commission boundaries to see if they are divided up fairly?	3/26/2018 5:38 PM
27	No	3/26/2018 3:39 PM
28	Reduce regulations, or at least give more leniency. It's too hard for new businesses to open. It's absurd how bad the building dept can be...which squelches growth and annoys property owners. Spend less. Time to renegotiate contracts. I know for a fact you could reduce some city staff.	3/26/2018 2:38 PM
29	Give Youth Advisory Committee a portion of city budget to spend on Youth-planned projects.	3/26/2018 12:30 PM
30	No	3/26/2018 11:52 AM
31	The city income tax discourages those who are working from living in Battle Creek. How can portage and Kalamazoo survive without this tax while Battle Creek is unable to do so?	3/25/2018 11:00 PM
32	No. Reading the entire city charter would take days.	3/25/2018 1:57 PM
33	No	3/24/2018 11:10 PM
34	Develop a plan to eliminate the income tax and implement in the next budget cycle. This tax is an undo burden on the citizens of this town and contributes to people leaving the city. I am currently looking to relocate outside of the city, with this as one of the primary drivers.	3/24/2018 7:48 PM
35	Seems simple enough.	3/24/2018 1:42 PM
36	not at this time--thanks for asking!	3/23/2018 2:37 PM
37	Battle Creek has a long way to go, but likely not as far as it seems. It needs to be far more transparent in its economic and community development efforts, which starts with BCU and CCDC being more transparent in its respective pursuits. Quarterly progress reports or community engagement events, even on social media, would go a long way to informing the community of what's going on. The city also should be mindful of sharing these messages, as the Battle Creek Enquirer staff has dwindled to about nothing, the Shopper does not provide critical commentary or coverage of any sort and WWMT-TV only parachutes in for police coverage. Improved media literacy likely yields better civic engagement. Separately, the city should explore annexation of Springfield as well as Emmett and Bedford townships. These communities thrive in their own ways and with ongoing overlap and duplication of services, it makes little sense for them to operate as separate entities. A unification of all of these entities has the potential to yield better results in attracting companies, helping with community policing and ensuring Calhoun County walks in unison toward a brighter future. Battle Creek also should look to sever ties with BC Vision, as the effort has yielded far too insignificant of a result in about four years, even with the money the Kellogg Foundation provided to Battle Creek Public Schools. The effort has failed to properly explain what it is, what it does or why anyone should care about it, and it's far from the "community-driven" effort it always has claimed to be. It is not a good use of time or effort for city leaders to bang the drum for BC Vision. Battle Creek also needs to get a handle on what is going at Kellogg Co. so as to be able to better explain the situation to residents. There is a lot of misinformation floating around about what has gone on at Kellogg in recent years, leaving residents dejected and not optimistic about the company's future position in the community.	3/23/2018 10:17 AM
38	Term limits for city commissioners	3/23/2018 9:00 AM
39	no	3/23/2018 8:21 AM
40	No	3/23/2018 2:00 AM
41	Discuss putting in place term limits	3/22/2018 10:27 PM
42	Term limits	3/22/2018 10:05 PM
43	Thank you for taking on this work. It is so important to our city's success.	3/22/2018 8:32 PM
44	Open burning, trash burning, fetid smoke ordinance.	3/22/2018 7:49 PM
45	Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to take this on.	3/22/2018 7:49 PM
46	Not at this time	3/22/2018 7:34 PM
47	No	3/22/2018 7:31 PM
48	No	3/22/2018 7:07 PM

49	It is nice you are asking for input	3/22/2018 6:50 PM
50	If I took the time to review it, probably. But, I'm filling this form out, and am going to complete it now.	3/22/2018 5:57 PM
51	No	3/22/2018 5:42 PM
52	I believe this should be very clear for someone to be able to find an ordinance through the search section.	3/22/2018 5:15 PM
53	No	3/22/2018 5:14 PM
54	Residents wish to be more informed. The language used can be difficult to understand. It would be great to learn about previous laws in Facebook post.	3/22/2018 4:59 PM
55	Commissioners are too comfortable. Mandating the use of powdered wigs would be a great start and match our Greco-Roman dais. Making a recommendation to hire a civic engagement consultant to show the city how participatory civics works would be an awesome idea considering low voter turnout has been a problem since time immemorial. Kool aid in the drinking fountains at City Hall.	3/22/2018 4:26 PM
56	Please include a representative from an environmental and animal welfare agency and minority representation.	3/22/2018 4:12 PM
57	No.	3/22/2018 4:00 PM
58	No	3/22/2018 3:49 PM
59	no	3/22/2018 3:44 PM