



City of Battle Creek

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITY OFFICIALS

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Context for City Government

(Outline pages 1 – 3)

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- 10th Amendment to U.S. Constitution reserves rights to states.
 - Michigan's 1963 Constitution preserves "home rule" for cities.
 - ✓ Home rule was intended to limit state government.
 - ✓ Instead, the legislative trend seems to limit local government.
 - A city charter is like a city constitution.
 - ✓ Establishes the structure of city government.
 - ✓ Grants and limits the authority and duties of officials and bodies.
 - ✓ Often includes certain procedures to be followed.

 - Concept is that the people confer power on government.

Commission-Manager Form

(Outline pages 3-4)

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- Several types of local governments including:
 - ✓ Town hall.
 - ✓ Commission.
 - ✓ Strong mayor or strong executive.
 - ✓ Commission (or council) – manager.
 - Roles and responsibilities are shaped by the form.
 - Battle Creek has a commission-manager form of government.
 - ✓ City Manager is the chief administrative officer.
 - ✓ Commission is the policy making body.
 - ✓ Mayor is a member and presiding officer of the Commission.

City Manager

(Outline pages 4-5)

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- Serves at pleasure of Commission.
 - Chief administrative officer, controlling City administration.
 - All officers and employees, except Commissioners and attorney are accountable to the City Manager.
 - Recommends and implements budgets and policies.
 - Purchasing director.
 - Prepares agendas for and attends Commission meetings.
 - Enforces ordinances.
 - Accepts easements and enters into contracts.
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- City Charter provides very broad authority to City Manager.

Mayor

(Outline page 6)

- Selected by the Commission.
- Has an equal voice on Commission.
- Presiding officer of Commission.
- Ceremonial chief executive officer.
- Emergency powers under law.

Commission

(Outline pages 6-8)

- The body, not individual Commissioners, has authority.
- Commission acts through ordinances, resolutions and motions.
- Makes policy.
- Appoints City Manager and City Attorney.
- Adopts budgets.
- Approves contracts.
- Works through City Manager for oversight and accountability.
- As a legislative body, adopts laws (*i.e.*, ordinances).
- Fulfills other duties provided by law – *e.g.* debt, forming other bodies and entities, appointments, setting elections, etc.

Commissioners

(Outline pages 8-11)

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- Governed by Code of Ethics for City Commissioners that requires:
 - ✓ Act in the public interest.
 - ✓ Comply with laws.
 - ✓ Respect City processes.
 - ✓ Preparation, courtesy and attentiveness.
 - ✓ Share relevant information.
 - ✓ Disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
 - ✓ Maintain impartiality and appearance of impartiality.
 - ✓ Respect confidentiality.
 - ✓ Use public resources only for public purposes.
 - ✓ Don't advocate to City officials or bodies on behalf of private interests.
 - ✓ Carefully represent official policies, distinguishing personal opinions.
 - ✓ Comply with commission-manager form of government.
 - ✓ Support a positive, constructive environment.

Open Government

(Outline pages 11-13)

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- OMA, FOIA, and records retention requirements apply to you.
 - With limited exceptions, if it involves City business, it is public.
 - ✓ Exceptions are narrowly construed.
 - ✓ Generally apply only when the public (persons outside government) will benefit.
 - Electronic communications related to City business, even if on personal devices, are subject to required retention and disclosure.
 - ✓ So, what is written or recorded is generally recoverable.
 - ✓ Assume it will be published or broadcast.

Best Practices

(Outline pages 13-15)

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- As a City official, people perceive you as its representative.
 - Spokespersons should take great care.
 - Support policies, personnel and practices while appropriately ensuring accountability and, when needed, seeking changes.
 - For day-to-day matters, refer inquiries to appropriate staff.
 - Everyone gets the same information.
 - Commissioners advocate for policies not for persons or entities, and avoid making promises that require official action.
 - Be careful with electronic communication.
 - Assume everything may be recorded.

Questions?
