

§2103. Charter commission, membership, procedure

1. Membership. The charter commission shall consist of several voters in the municipality, elected under paragraph A, and 3 members appointed by the municipal officers under paragraph B.

A. Voter members must be elected by one of the following methods:

- (1) Six voter members are elected in the same manner as the municipal officers, except that they must be elected at-large and without party designations;
- (2) One voter member is elected from each voting district or ward in the same manner as municipal officers, except that the voter member must be elected without party designation; or
- (3) Voter members are elected both at-large and by district or ward, as long as the number of voter members is the same as the number of municipal officers on the board or council of that municipality and the voter members are elected in the same manner as the municipal officers, except that they must be elected without party designation.

Election of voter members may be held either at the same municipal election as the referendum for the charter commission or at the next scheduled regular or special municipal or state election. The names of the candidates on the ballot must be arranged alphabetically by last name. If the elections are held at the same time, the names of the candidates must appear immediately below the question relating to the charter commission. [PL 2009, c. 52, §1 (AMD); PL 2009, c. 52, §2 (AFF).]

B. Appointive members need not be residents of the municipality, but only one may be a municipal officer. The municipal officers shall make the appointments in accordance with municipal custom or bylaws within 30 days after the election approving the establishment of the charter commission. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]
[PL 2009, c. 52, §1 (AMD); PL 2009, c. 52, §2 (AFF).]

2. Organization. Immediately after receiving notice of the appointment of the members by the municipal officers, the municipal clerk shall notify the appointed and elected members of the charter commission of the date, time and place of the charter commission's organizational meeting. The clerk shall set the date, time and place of the meeting and give at least 7 days' notice of the meeting.

The charter commission shall organize by electing from its members a chairman, vice-chairman and a secretary and shall file notice of these elections with the municipal clerk. Vacancies occurring on the commission shall be filled by vote of the commission from the voters of the municipality, except that a vacancy among appointive members shall be promptly filled by the municipal officers. Members shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed from the commission's account for expenses lawfully incurred by them in the performance of their duties.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

3. Regulations, staff. The charter commission may adopt regulations governing the conduct of its meetings and proceedings and may employ any necessary legal, research, clerical or other employees and consultants within the limits of its budget.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

4. Funding. A municipality shall provide its charter commission, free of charge, with suitable office space and with reasonable access to facilities for holding public hearings, may contribute clerical and other assistance to the commission and shall permit it to consult with and obtain advice and information from municipal officers, officials and employees during ordinary working hours. Within 20 days after the members of a charter commission are elected and appointed, the municipal officers shall credit \$100 to the charter commission account. A municipality, from time to time, may

appropriate additional funds to the charter commission account. These funds may be raised by taxation, borrowed or transferred from surplus.

A. In addition to funds made available by a municipality, the charter commission account may receive funds from any other source, public or private, except that no contribution of more than \$5 may be accepted from any source other than the municipality, unless the name and address of the person or agency making the contribution and the amount of the contribution are disclosed in writing filed with the clerk. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

B. Prior to its termination, the charter commission shall file with the clerk a complete account of all its receipts and expenditures for public inspection. Any balance remaining in its account shall be credited to the municipality's surplus account. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

5. Hearings, reports, time limits. The following requirements regarding hearings, reports and time limits apply to a charter commission.

A. Within 30 days after its organizational meeting, the charter commission shall hold a public meeting to receive information, views, comments and other material relating to its functions. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

B. The charter commission shall hold its public hearings within the municipality at the times and places set by the commission. At least 10 days before a hearing, the charter commission shall publish the date, time and place of the hearing in a notice in a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality. Hearings may be adjourned from time to time without further published notice. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

C. Within 9 months after its election, the charter commission shall:

- (1) Prepare a preliminary report including the text of the charter or charter revision which the commission intends to submit to the voters and any explanatory information the commission considers desirable;
- (2) Have the report printed and circulated throughout the municipality; and
- (3) Provide sufficient copies of the preliminary report to the municipal clerk to permit its distribution to each voter requesting a copy. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

D. Within 12 months after its election, the charter commission shall submit its final report to the municipal officers. This report must include:

- (1) The full text and an explanation of the proposed new charter or charter revision;
- (2) Any comments that the commission considers desirable;
- (3) An indication of the major differences between the current and proposed charters; and
- (4) A written opinion by an attorney admitted to the bar of this State that the proposed charter or charter revision does not contain any provision prohibited by the United States Constitution, the Constitution of Maine or the general laws.

Minority reports if filed may not exceed 1,000 words. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

E. The municipal officers may extend the time limits for the preparation and submission of preliminary and final reports of the charter commission for up to 24 months after the election of the commission if the extension is necessary to:

- (1) Properly complete the reports;
- (2) Have them printed or circulated; or
- (3) Obtain the written opinion of an attorney. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

6. Election. When the final report is filed, the municipal officers shall order the proposed new charter or charter revision to be submitted to the voters at the next regular or special municipal election held at least 35 days after the final report is filed.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

7. Charter modification summaries. When a proposed charter revision is submitted to the voters in separate questions as charter modifications under section 2105, subsection 1, paragraph A, and the municipal officers, with the advice of an attorney, determine that it is not practical to print the proposed charter modification on the ballot and that a summary would not misrepresent the subject matter of the proposed modification, a summary of the modification may be substituted for the text of the proposed modification in the same manner as a summary is substituted for a proposed amendment under section 2104, subsection 6.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

8. Termination. Except as provided in paragraph A, the charter commission shall continue in existence for 30 days after submitting its final report to the municipal officers for the purpose of winding up its affairs.

A. If judicial review is sought under section 2108, the charter commission shall continue in existence until that review and any appeals are finally completed for the purpose of intervening in those proceedings. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 737, §§A2,C106 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 104, §§C8,10 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 495, §1 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 52, §1 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 52, §2 (AFF).

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