

Rules of Procedure for Grand Rapids Charter Commission

Chapter I - General Provisions

Quorum and majority.

Rule 1. A majority of the commissioners shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

There being a quorum, a majority of commissioners present shall be sufficient for the adoption of any motion or resolution or the taking of any action except where the affirmative votes of a greater number shall be required by these rules.

Bar of the convention - defined.

Rule 2. Any commissioner having answered roll call at the opening of any session, or having entered upon the floor of the commission after roll call, shall thereafter be deemed present until leave of absence is obtained from the commission. Any commissioner present at any session shall continue to be present if he shall be within the bar of the commission. The words "within the bar of the commission" means the space occupied and used by the commission or any committee or other room attached thereto and used in connection with conducting the business of the commission.

Chapter II - Officers and Employees

Officers of the Commission

Rule 3. The officers of the Commission shall be the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman each of whom shall serve for a term of six months commencing on April 21 and on October 21, whichever the case may be.

The Chairman

Duties of presiding officer.

Rule 4. The Chairman shall take the Chair each day at the hour to which the commission shall have adjourned or recessed. He shall call the commission to order and, except in the absence of a quorum, shall proceed to business in the manner prescribed by these rules.

Further duties of presiding officer.

Rule 5. The Chairman shall preserve order and decorum; may speak to points of order and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the commission. When 2 or more commissioners seek recognition at the same time for purposes of debate, the Chairman shall recognize the commissioner who is to speak first.

Appointment by the Chairman.

Rule 6. The Chairman shall nominate for commission approval the membership of all committees except where the commission shall otherwise order. All appointments shall be announced to the commission and entered in the minutes.

Naming of Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

Rule 7. When the commission shall have decided to go into the Committee of the Whole, the Chairman shall name a person to preside therein.

Voting.

Rule 8. The Chairman may vote in all elections, on all divisions called for by any commissioner and on all questions taken by yeas and nays, except on appeals from his decisions.

Vice-Chairman

Powers and duties.

Rule 9. In the temporary absence of the Chairman or his temporary inability to preside, the Vice-Chairman shall exercise the powers and perform the duties of the Chairman and shall preside over the commission.

Clerk

Roll call.

Rule 10. The Clerk shall call the roll at the opening of each session of the commission and announce whether or not a quorum is present.

Invocation.

Rule 11. The Clerk shall arrange for an invocation at the opening of each session of the commission.

Rule 12. The Clerk or secretary shall keep minutes of the proceedings of the commission in conformity with the rules and shall make such corrections as may be necessary. He shall furnish each commissioner with a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting.

Order of business.

Rule 13. The Clerk or secretary shall furnish each commissioner with a calendar of the business for each meeting.

Printing and care of commissioner proposals and committee reports.

Rule 14. The Clerk shall attend to the typing and copying of all commissioner proposals, committee reports, resolutions and documents ordered written by the commission. The Clerk shall give to each commissioner proposal when introduced a number, and the numbers shall be in numerical order. When proposals are reported by the Committee of the Whole, they shall be called committee reports, shall be typed and copied and shall be numbered in numerical order. The Clerk shall cause to be typed at the head of each committee report the character thereof and the number of any report of the committee reporting the proposal. The Clerk shall be responsible to the commission for the care and preservation of all proposals. Committee reports shall be kept on file in numerical order and such file shall be called the General Orders of the Day.

Responsibility for meeting room.

Rule 15. The Clerk shall exercise supervisory care and control of the meeting room of the commission and all other rooms and equipment. The Clerk shall purchase or rent all necessary equipment, supplies, and postage and arrange for postal, telephone, and telegraph service.

Incapacity of Clerk.

Rule 16. In case of the temporary inability of the Clerk, from sickness or other cause, to perform the duties of his office, the commission shall appoint an assistant Clerk who shall act as Clerk until the Clerk is able to assume his duties.

Employees.

Appointment.

Rule 17. The commission by resolution shall authorize employment of necessary personnel and provide salary scales.

Chapter III - Commissioners

Conduct in debate.

Rule 18. When any commissioner is about to speak in debate or present any matter to the commission, he shall respectfully address himself to "Mr. Chairman;" he shall not speak until recognized and when recognized he shall confine himself to the question under debate, and avoid personalities.

Commissioners called to order.

Rule 19. If any commissioner in speaking transgresses the rules of the commission, the Chairman shall, or any of the commissioners may, call him to order; in which case the commissioner so called to order shall close and refrain from further debate.

Conduct on the floor.

Rule 20. While the Chairman is putting any question, or while the roll is being called or taken by the Clerk, no commissioner shall walk out of the meeting; nor in such case when a commissioner is speaking, shall any commissioner entertain private discourses or pass between the speaker and the Chair.

Chapter IV - Committees

Establishment and meetings.

Rule 21. Committees of the commission and their functions and membership shall be provided by resolution of the commission adopted by a majority of the commissioners.

Committees shall meet at the call of the Chairman or upon written request of a majority of the members.

A recorded roll call vote on any matter before a committee shall be taken on demand by any member of the committee.

Each committee shall maintain an action journal of all of its proceedings and a calendar, which shall be available to the public.

Rule 22. The first named member of any committee shall be the Chairman and the second named member shall be Vice-Chairman.

In case of a vacancy or the prolonged absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Chairman of the commission shall appoint a Chairman to act until the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall return.

Sitting of committees during sessions of the commission.

Rule 23. No committee shall sit during the sessions of the commission without special leave of the commission, by a majority vote of those present and voting.

Power to incur expenses.

Rule 24. No committee or commissioner shall incur any expenses, chargeable to the commission unless authorized by resolution of the commission.

Notice of reports without recommendation.

Rule 25. All committees before reporting without recommendation on any proposal shall notify commissioners who have introduced proposals on the same subject matter when and where they may meet such committee to explain the same before the committee reports: such notice to be given by mail or in person 24 hours before so reporting.

Chapter V - Committee of the Whole

General orders of the day.

Rule 26. All proposals made by a commissioner shall be referred to the Committee of the Whole and kept in the file called General Orders of the Day. No commissioner

proposal shall be considered by the Committee of the Whole until the third day following the day of its reference to the Committee of the Whole.

Consideration of the proposals.

Rule 27. When the commission shall have arrived at the General Orders of the Day, it shall go into a Committee of the Whole upon such orders, or a particular order designated by the Commission by a majority vote of those present and voting, and no business shall be in order until the whole are considered or passed over, or the committee rise. Unless a particular proposal is ordered up, the Committee of the Whole shall consider, act upon, or pass over all matters on the general orders according to the order of their reference.

Reading; debate; amendment.

Rule 28. In the Committee of the Whole proposals shall first be read through by the Clerk, and then read, debated, and acted upon by clauses. All amendments, shall be entered on separate paper and reported to the commission by the Chairman.

Motion that Committee of the Whole rise.

Rule 29. A motion that Committee of the Whole rise shall always be in order unless a member of the committee is speaking or a vote is being taken, and shall be decided without debate by a majority vote of those present and voting.

Reconsideration

Rule 30. A motion to reconsider shall be in order in the Committee of the Whole by a majority vote of those present and voting, before the committee shall rise.

Application of commission rules.

Rule 31. The rules of the commission shall be observed in the Committee of the Whole, so far as they may be applicable, except that it cannot adjourn the commission, the previous question shall not be ordered, the yeas and nays shall not be called, the vote of a majority of the committee shall govern its action, it cannot refer matters to any other committee, and a motion to postpone indefinitely or for a call of the commission shall not be in order. A commissioner may speak more than once in the Committee of the Whole.

A journal of the proceedings in Committee of the Whole shall be kept as in commission. When the committee of the whole reports to the commission, the actions of the Committee of the Whole shall be accepted.

Chapter VI - Transaction of Business

Order of Business.

Rule 32. The order of business of the commission shall be as follows:

1. Call to order
2. Invocation
3. Roll Call
4. Reading of Minutes
5. Reports of Committees
6. General Communications
 - a. Written correspondence
 - b. Receipt of Petitions
7. Second Reading of Proposals
8. Receipt of Testimony on Second Reading
9. Introduction of Proposals
10. Motions and Resolutions
11. Unfinished Business
12. Special Orders
13. General Orders
14. Third Reading of Proposals

15. Comments of visitors

Petitions

Printing in journal.

Rule 33. No memorial, remonstrance, or petition shall be read or written in full in the daily journal unless ordered read or written by a majority vote of those present.

Motions and Resolutions

Stating motions.

Rule 34. When a motion is made, it shall be stated by the Chairman; or, if in writing, it shall be handed to and read aloud by the Clerk before being debated.

Reduced to writing.

Rule 35. Every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Chairman or any commissioner shall request it, and shall be entered upon the journal, together with the name of the commissioner making it, unless withdrawn by the maker or ruled out of order by the Chairman.

When in possession; withdrawal.

Rule 36. After a motion has been stated by the Chairman or read by the Clerk, it shall be deemed to be in the possession of the commission, but may be withdrawn at any time before being amended or put to a vote.

Precedence of motions.

Rule 37. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received but --

1. To fix the time to which to adjourn.
2. To adjourn.
3. To take a recess.
4. To reconsider.

5. To lay on the table.
6. For a call of the commission.
7. To limit debate.
8. For the previous question.
9. To postpone to a day certain.
10. To recommit.
11. To amend.
12. To postpone indefinitely.

Such motions shall take precedence in the order in which they stand arranged, and shall be decided by a majority vote of those present and voting, except the motion to postpone indefinitely, which shall be decided by a majority vote of the commissioners elected. When a recess is taken during the pendency of any question, the consideration of such question shall be resumed upon reassembling unless otherwise determined. No motion to postpone to a day certain, or to recommit, being decided, shall be again allowed on the same day and at the same stage of the question. Whenever a proposal is up for consideration at any stage of procedure, and a motion is made to postpone indefinitely, or to recommit, amendments to the proposal shall be in order before taking a vote on any such motion.

Motion not debatable.

Rule 38. A motion to adjourn shall always be in order except when a motion to fix the time to which to adjourn is pending. A motion to adjourn, a motion to lay on the table, and all matters relating to questions of order, shall be decided without debate. A motion for a recess, pending the consideration of other business, shall not be debatable.

Order of putting questions.

Rule 39. All questions shall be put in the order they were moved, except in the case of privileged questions.

Amendments to be germane.

Rule 40. No motion or proposition on a subject different from that under consideration shall be admitted under color of an amendment or substitute.

Division of question.

Rule 41. Any commissioner may call for a division of the question, which shall be divided if it comprehends propositions in substance so distinct that one being taken away a substantive proposition shall remain for the decision of the commission. A motion to strike out and insert shall be deemed indivisible.

Motions for the Previous Question

Method of ordering.

Rule 42. The method of ordering the previous questions shall be as follows: Any delegate may move the previous question and unless otherwise stated the motion shall apply to the pending question only. This being seconded by at least one commissioner, the Chair shall put the question. "Shall the main question now be put?" This shall be ordered only by a majority of the commissioners present and voting. After the seconding of the previous question and prior to ordering the same, a call of the commission may be moved and ordered, but after ordering the previous question nothing shall be in order prior to the decision of the pending question or questions, except demands for the yeas and nays, points of order, appeals from the decision of the Chair, and a motion to adjourn or to take a recess, which shall be decided without debate. The effect of the previous questions shall be to put an end to all debate and bring the commission to a direct vote upon the pending question or questions in their order down to and including the main question: Provided, however, that when the previous question shall be ordered, amendments then on the Clerk's desk shall be disposed of. When a motion to reconsider is taken under the previous question and is decided in the affirmative, the previous question shall have no operation upon the question to be reconsidered. If the commission shall refuse to order the previous question, the consideration on the subject shall be resumed as though no motion for the previous question had been made.

Motion for reconsideration.

Rule 43. Any commissioner may move for a reconsideration of any question at the same or next succeeding session of the commission or the committee on style and drafting may move for reconsideration on any subsequent day if one days' notice of its intention to do so is given in writing to the clerk, which shall be spread upon the journal. A motion to reconsider shall take precedence of all other questions, except a motion to fix the time to which to adjourn, a motion to adjourn and a motion to recess. No motion to reconsider shall be renewed on the same day.

Chapter VII - Proposals

Introduction.

Rule 44. All matters intended to become a part of the revised Charter shall be introduced by a commissioner in the form of a proposal and endorsed by the commissioners introducing them. One copy of any proposal shall be handed to the Clerk no later than 3 hours prior to calling the commission to order. All proposals shall be introduced in accordance with the form prescribed by the Clerk. Proposals shall be copied and distributed under the direction of the Clerk.

Order of consideration.

Rule 45. The regular order to be taken by proposals introduced in the commission shall be as follows:

1. Introduction, first reading by title, reference to the Committee of the Whole by the Chairman, and ordered written and distributed unless otherwise ordered by a majority of the commissioners present.
2. Consideration in Committee of the Whole in order of reference.
3. Report by the Committee of the Whole and reference to the committee on style and drafting.
4. Report of committee on style and drafting.
5. Second reading, receipt of testimony.
6. Reference to committee on style and drafting for incorporation in final draft and/or to the Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

7. Report of committee on style and drafting of any complete revision of or proposed amendment to the Charter.
8. Third reading and passage of any complete revision by article and as a whole or in the case of any amendment by sections and as a whole.

Majority vote on proposals.

Rule 46. On the passage of every proposal, section, article and any complete revision of or amendment to the Charter, the vote shall be taken by yeas and nays, and entered on the journal, and no proposal, section, article or any such amendment or complete revision shall be declared passed unless a majority of all the commissioners to the commission shall have voted in favor of the passage of the same.

Special Orders

Unfinished special orders.

Rule 47. Any subject matter made the special order for a particular day, not having been reached on that day, shall come up for consideration under the order of unfinished business at the next succeeding session.

Limitation on debate and control of dilatory procedure.

Rule 48. The commission by resolution may limit the time of debate on any subject matter before the commission, designate a method of allocating the period allowed for debate among commissioners, and take appropriate action to control dilatory procedure.

Chapter VIII - Miscellaneous

Reading and Endorsement of Papers

Reading.

Rule 49. When the reading of a paper is called for and an objection is raised to such reading, the Commission by a majority vote of commissioners present and voting shall determine without debate whether or not the paper shall be read.

Presentation and endorsement of petitions.

Rule 50. Petitions received by any officer of the commission or by any commissioner may be initialed by the recipient, and by him handed directly to the Clerk. The Clerk, on behalf of the commission, shall give appropriate notice of the receipt of the petition.

Calls of commission - yeas and nays.

Rule 51. Upon calls of the commission, and in taking the yeas and nays upon any question, the names of the commissioners shall be called alphabetically.

Putting the question.

Rule 52. The Chairman shall distinctly put all question in this form: "As many as are in favor of (as the question may be), say 'aye' and after the affirmative vote is expressed, "as many as are opposed, say 'no'." If the Chairman doubts, he may order a division of the commission.

A division of the commission may be had on the demand of one commissioner, or a roll call on the commission may be demanded by a vote of one commissioner present on any pending question. When a division of the commission is ordered, a rising vote shall be taken and the Chairman shall declare the result. On a tie vote the question shall be deemed lost.

Recognition during roll call.

Rule 53. After a question has been stated by the Chairman, and the call of the roll has been started by the Clerk, the Chairman shall not recognize a commissioner for any purpose, except upon points of order, until after the announcement of the vote by the Clerk. The Clerk shall enter upon the journal the names of those voting "aye" and the names of those voting "no". Any commissioner is privileged to explain in writing his vote on record roll call votes. The written explanation shall be included in the journal if presented to the Clerk before the next session of the commission.

Roll Call.

Rule 54. At the roll call at the opening of each session and upon calls of the commission, the names of the members shall be called by the Clerk, and the absentees noted.

Abstaining from vote.

Rule 55. No commissioner shall be entitled to abstain from voting in any roll call unless he shall have stated his intention to abstain before the voting starts. He may voluntarily state his reasons for such abstention. Upon any announcement of intention to abstain, the commissioner making such announcement, upon request of 2 commissioners may be required to state his reasons.

Amendment or suspension of rules.

Rule 56. The rules of the Commission may be amended by a majority vote of the commissioners elected, but no rules shall be amended unless such amendment is in writing, has been considered by the committee on rules and resolutions and is in the possession of the commission 2 days prior to its consideration. A rule may be suspended by a vote of 2/3 of the commissioners shown to be present by the journal entries.

Appeals

Form of question.

Rule 57. On all appeals from decisions of the Chair, the question shall be "Shall the judgment of the chair stand as the judgment of the Commission?" which question shall be decided by a majority vote of those present and voting.

Debate on appeal.

Rule 58. No commissioner shall speak on the question for an appeal more than once without leave of the commission by a majority vote of those present and voting.

Tabling appeals.

Rule 59. An appeal may be laid on the table but shall not carry with it the subject matter before the commission at the time such appeal is taken.

Rule of Order. 60. In all cases not provided by these rules, the authority shall be Robert's Rules of Order.

Appropriations.

Rule 61. No motion or resolution calling for an appropriation or expenditure of money shall be acted upon by the commission without first having been referred to some appropriate committee for consideration and recommendation.

Miscellaneous Rules.

Rule 62. For the purpose of determining its compensation, the term "day" shall mean a period of time from midnight to midnight during which a public meeting of the commission is held at which a quorum is present.

Rule 63. During the proceedings of any meeting of the commission, public statements by individual citizens or representatives of interested groups of the community shall be limited to 5 minutes unless an additional period of time shall be allowed by a vote of a majority of the members of the commission present.