

Cities, Organization

CHAPTER 410

CLASSIFICATION; CHARTERS

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410.01 CITIES, CLASSES.

Cities are hereby divided, for legislative purposes, into classes as follows:

First class – Those having more than 100,000 inhabitants provided that once a city is defined to be of the first class, it shall not be reclassified unless its population decreases by 25 percent from the census figures which last qualified the city for inclusion in the class;

Second class – Those having more than 20,000 and not more than 100,000 inhabitants;

Third class – Those having more than 10,000 and not more than 20,000 inhabitants, and

Fourth class – Those having not more than 10,000 inhabitants.

Changes in classification resulting from any future national census shall take effect upon the filing of certified copies of the census in the office of the secretary of state as provided in section 600.18. Meanwhile the council or other governing body shall take measures for the election of proper officials and for dividing the city into wards, if necessary, and otherwise prepare for the coming change.

History: (1265) RL s 746; 1951 c 348 s 1; 1959 c 510 s 1; 1978 c 489 s 1

410.015 DEFINITIONS RELATING TO CITIES.

The term "statutory city" means any city which has not adopted a home rule charter pursuant to the Constitution and laws; the words "home rule charter city" mean any city which has adopted such a charter. In any law adopted after July 1, 1976, the word "city" when used without further description extending the application of the term to home rule charter cities means statutory cities only.

History: 1976 c 44 s 19; 1976 c 155 s 3

410.02 [Repealed, 1949 c 114 s 1]

410.03 EXISTING CHARTERS PRESERVED.

Until otherwise provided in accordance with this chapter, all cities existing at the time of the taking effect of the Revised Laws 1905 shall continue to be governed by the laws then applicable thereto.

History: (1267) *RL s 747*

410.04 HOME RULE CHARTERS; PATROL LIMITS.

Any city in the state may frame a city charter for its own government in the manner hereinafter prescribed; provided, that in such cities having patrol limits established by charter, such limits shall not be altered unless the charter proposing such alteration be adopted by a three-fourths majority.

History: (1268) *RL s 748; 1907 c 375 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7*

410.05 CHARTER COMMISSION.

Subdivision 1. **Appointment.** When the district court of the judicial district in which a city is situated, deems it for the best interest of the city so to do, the court, acting through its chief judge, may appoint a charter commission to frame and amend a charter. Upon presentation of a petition requesting such action, signed by at least ten percent of the number of voters of the city, as shown by the returns of the last regular city election, or upon resolution of the governing body of the city requesting such action, the court shall appoint a charter commission. The commission shall be composed of not less than seven nor more than 15 members, each of whom shall be a qualified voter of the city. The size of the commission shall be determined within the above limits by the court, except that where the commission is appointed pursuant to a petition of the voters or resolution of the governing body of the city, the size of the commission shall be as specified in such petition or resolution. Any city may by charter provision fix the size of the charter commission at a figure which shall not be less than seven nor more than 15 members, and such charter provision shall prevail over any inconsistent provisions of this subdivision. Except as otherwise provided in the charter, no person shall be disqualified from serving on a charter commission by reason of holding any other elective or appointive office other than judicial. The charter may provide that members of the governing body of the city cannot serve on the charter commission.

Subd. 2. **Commission members; terms, vacancies.** Charter commission members shall hold office for the term of four years, and until their successors are appointed and qualify, except that of members initially appointed after July 1, 1967, eight shall be appointed for two-year terms and seven for four-year terms. Vacancies in the commission shall be filled by appointment of the chief judge for the unexpired terms. Upon the expiration of each term, the chief judge shall appoint new commission members. If the chief judge fails to appoint new commission members within 30 days then thereafter the governing body of the city shall, appoint new commission members, unless within the 30-day period the chief judge indicates in writing to the governing body an intention to appoint new members, in which case the chief judge shall have an additional 60 days within which to make the appointment. Appointments shall be made by order filed with the court administrator of the district court. An appointee who neglects to file with the court administrator within 30 days a written acceptance and oath of office shall be deemed to have declined the appointment and the place shall be filled as though the appointee had resigned. The charter commission, within 30 days after the initial appointment of the commission, shall

make rules, including quorum requirements, with reference to its operations and procedures. The commission shall submit to the chief judge of the district court, on or before December 31 of each year, an annual report outlining its activities and accomplishments for the preceding calendar year. The commission shall forward a copy of the report to the clerk of the city. Any member may be removed at any time from office, by written order of the district court, the reason for such removal being stated in the order. When any member has failed to perform the duties of office and has failed to attend four consecutive meetings without being excused by the commission, the secretary of the charter commission shall file a certificate with the court setting forth those facts and the district court shall thereupon make its order of removal and the chief judge shall fill the vacancy created thereby.

Subd. 3. Commission appointments; nominees. A city council, a charter commission, or the petitioners requesting the appointment of a charter commission may submit to the court the names of eligible nominees which the district court may consider in making appointments to the charter commission.

Subd. 4. Commission meetings. The charter commission shall meet at least once during each calendar year, and upon presentation of a petition signed by at least ten percent of the number of voters of the municipality, as shown by the returns of the last annual municipal election, or upon resolution approved by a majority of the governing body of the city requesting the commission to convene, the commission shall meet to consider the proposals set forth in such petition or resolution.

Subd. 5. Discharge. (a) A charter commission in a statutory city may be discharged as follows:

(1) if the charter commission of a statutory city determines that a charter is not necessary or desirable, the commission may be discharged by a vote of three-fourths of its members; or

(2) if a petition signed by registered voters equal in number to at least five percent of the registered voters in the city requesting a referendum to discharge the charter commission is filed with the city clerk, an election must be held on the issue at a general election or a special election pursuant to section 205.10. If a majority of the votes cast support the referendum, the charter commission shall be discharged.

(b) Another commission may not be formed sooner than one year from the date of discharge.

History: (1269) RL s 749; 1909 c 423; 1913 c 535 s 1; 1949 c 210 s 1; 1959 c 305 s 5; 1961 c 608 s 1; Ex1967 c 33 s 1; 1971 c 208 s 1-3; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1976 c 44 s 20; 1979 c 330 s 3; 1986 c 444; 1Sp1986 c 3 art 1 s 82; 1987 c 51 s 1; 2004 c 197 s 1,2; 2008 c 331 s 6

410.06 COMPENSATION; EXPENSES.

The members of such commission shall receive no compensation, but the commission may employ an attorney and other personnel to assist in framing such charter, and any amendment or revision thereof, and the reasonable compensation and the cost of printing such charter, or any amendment or revision thereof, when so directed by the commission, shall be paid by such city. The amount of reasonable and necessary charter commission expenses that shall be so paid by the city shall not exceed in any one year the sum of \$10,000 for a first class city and \$1,500 for any other city; but the council may authorize such additional charter commission expenses as it deems necessary. Other statutory and charter provisions requiring budgeting of, or limiting,

expenditures do not apply to charter commission expenses. The council may levy a tax in excess of charter tax limitations to pay such expenses.

History: (1270) *RL s 750; 1907 c 216 s 1; 1947 c 406 s 1; 1959 c 305 s 5; 1961 c 608 s 2; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1994 c 505 art 3 s 8*

410.07 DETERMINATION OF DESIRABILITY; FRAMING CHARTER.

As soon as practicable after such appointment, the charter commission shall deliver to the clerk of the city either (1) its report determining that a home rule charter for the city is not necessary or desirable, or (2) the draft of a proposed charter, in either case signed by at least a majority of its members. Such draft shall fix the corporate name and the boundaries of the proposed city, and provide for a mayor, and for a council to be elected by the people. Subject to the limitations in this chapter provided, it may provide for any scheme of municipal government not inconsistent with the constitution, and may provide for the establishment and administration of all departments of a city government, and for the regulation of all local municipal functions, as fully as the legislature might have done before home rule charters for cities were authorized by constitutional amendment in 1896. It may omit provisions in reference to any department contained in special or general laws then operative in the city, and provide that such special or general laws, or such parts thereof as are specified, shall continue and be in force therein, including any such special or general law authorizing the city to incur indebtedness or issue its bonds for municipal purposes. It may prescribe methods of procedure in respect to the operation of the government thereby created, and the duties thereunder of all courts and officers of the district and county in which the city is situated, which duties such courts and officers shall perform. By such charter the city may be authorized to acquire, by gift, devise, purchase, or condemnation, any property, within or without its boundaries, needed for the full discharge of any public function which it is permitted to exercise.

History: (1271) *RL s 751; 1921 c 120; 1921 c 343; 1959 c 305 s 1; 1961 c 608 s 3; 1971 c 71 s 4; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7*

410.08 [Repealed, 1953 c 278 s 1]

410.09 REGULATION OF FRANCHISES.

Such proposed charter may provide for regulating and controlling the exercise of privileges and franchises in or upon the streets and other public places of the city, whether granted by the city, by the legislature, or by any other authority; but no perpetual franchise or privilege shall ever be created, nor shall any exclusive franchise or privilege be granted, unless the proposed grant be first submitted to the voters of the city, and be approved by a majority of those voting thereon, nor in such case for a period of more than 25 years.

History: (1283) *RL s 753; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7*

410.10 CHARTER ELECTION.

Subdivision 1. **Timing; procedure; recall.** Upon delivery of such draft, the council or other governing body of the city shall cause the proposed charter to be submitted at the next general election thereafter occurring in the city within six months after the delivery of such draft, and if there is no general city election occurring in the city within six months after the delivery of such draft, then the council or other governing body of the city shall cause the proposed charter to be submitted at a special election to be held within 90 days after the delivery of such draft. The council or other governing body may call a special election for that purpose only at any time.

If the election is held at the same time with the general election, the voting places and election officers shall be the same for both elections. At any time before the council has fixed the date of the election upon the proposed charter, the charter commission may recall it for further action; and the council may authorize recall of the charter by the commission at any later date prior to the first publication of the proposed charter.

Subd. 2. **Election notice; publication.** The notice of election shall contain the complete charter and shall be published once a week for two successive weeks in the official newspaper of the city, or if there be none, in a legal newspaper of general circulation in the city. In every city of the first class, the publication shall be made in a newspaper having an aggregate regular paid circulation of at least 25,000 copies. The governing body may in addition thereto publish the notice in any other legal newspaper published in the city.

Subd. 3. **Ballot words, form.** The ballot shall bear the printed words, "Shall the proposed new charter be adopted? Yes.... No....," with a square after each of the last two words, in which the voter may place a cross to express a choice. If any part of such charter be submitted in the alternative, the ballot shall be so printed as to permit the voter to indicate a preference in any instance by inserting a cross in like manner.

Subd. 4. **Rejection; later proposals.** If any charter so submitted be rejected the charter commission may propose others from time to time until one is adopted.

History: (1284) RL s 754; 1909 c 214 s 1; 1959 c 305 s 5; 1961 c 608 s 4; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1986 c 444

410.11 ADOPTION; NOTICE, EFFECTIVE DATE.

If 51 percent of the votes cast on the proposition are in favor of the proposed charter, it shall be considered adopted; and, if any provisions thereof are submitted in the alternative, those ratified by a majority of the votes cast thereon shall prevail. If the charter is adopted, the city clerk shall file with the secretary of state and in the city clerk's office a copy of the charter accompanied by a certificate attesting to the accuracy of the copy and giving the date of the election and the vote by which the charter was adopted and record a certified copy with the county recorder of the county in which the city lies. The charter shall take effect 30 days after the election, or at such other time as is fixed in the charter, and shall then supersede all other charter provisions relating to such city. Thereupon the courts shall take judicial notice of the new charter and, upon the election of officers thereunder, the officials of the former corporation shall deliver to them the records, money and other public property in their control.

History: (1285) RL s 755; 1959 c 305 s 2; 1969 c 1027 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1976 c 181 s 2; 1986 c 444; 2005 c 4 s 104

410.12 AMENDMENTS.

Subdivision 1. **Proposals.** The charter commission may propose amendments to such charter and shall do so upon the petition of voters equal in number to five percent of the total votes cast at the last previous state general election in the city. Proposed charter amendments must be submitted at least 17 weeks before the general election. Only registered voters are eligible to sign the petition. All petitions circulated with respect to a charter amendment shall be uniform in character and shall have attached thereto the text of the proposed amendment in full; except that in the case of a proposed amendment containing more than 1,000 words, a true and correct copy of the same may be filed with the city clerk, and the petition shall then contain a summary of not less than 50 nor more than 300 words setting forth in substance the nature of the

in which it is defective and shall at once notify the committee of the petitioners of the findings. A petition may be amended at any time within ten days after the making of a certificate of insufficiency by the city clerk, by filing a supplementary petition upon additional papers signed and filed as provided in case of an original petition. The city clerk shall within five days after such amendment is filed, make examination of the amended petition, and if the certificate shall show the petition still to be insufficient, the city clerk shall file it in the city clerk's office and notify the committee of the petitioners of the findings and no further action shall be had on such insufficient petition. The finding of the insufficiency of a petition shall not prejudice the filing of a new petition for the same purpose.

Subd. 4. **Election.** Amendments shall be submitted to the qualified voters at a general or special election and published as in the case of the original charter. The form of the ballot shall be fixed by the governing body. The statement of the question on the ballot shall be sufficient to identify the amendment clearly and to distinguish the question from every other question on the ballot at the same time. If 51 percent of the votes cast on any amendment are in favor of its adoption, copies of the amendment and certificates shall be filed, as in the case of the original charter and the amendment shall take effect in 30 days from the date of the election or at such other time as is fixed in the amendment.

Subd. 5. **Amendments proposed by council.** The council of any city having a home rule charter may propose charter amendments to the voters by ordinance. Any ordinance proposing such an amendment shall be submitted to the charter commission. Within 60 days thereafter, the charter commission shall review the proposed amendment but before the expiration of such period the commission may extend the time for review for an additional 90 days by filing with the city clerk its resolution determining that an additional time for review is needed. After reviewing the proposed amendment, the charter commission shall approve or reject the proposed amendment or suggest a substitute amendment. The commission shall promptly notify the council of the action taken. On notification of the charter commission's action, the council may submit to the people, in the same manner as provided in subdivision 4, the amendment originally proposed by it or the substitute amendment proposed by the charter commission. The amendment shall become effective only when approved by the voters as provided in subdivision 4. If so approved it shall be filed in the same manner as other amendments. Nothing in this subdivision precludes the charter commission from proposing charter amendments in the manner provided by subdivision 1.

Subd. 6. **Amendments, cities of the fourth class.** The council of a city of the fourth class having a home rule charter may propose charter amendments by ordinance without submission to the charter commission. Such ordinance, if enacted, shall be adopted by at least a four-fifths vote of all its members after a public hearing upon two weeks' published notice containing the text of the proposed amendment and shall be approved by the mayor and published as in the case of other ordinances. The council shall submit the proposed amendment to the people in the manner provided in subdivision 4, but not sooner than three months after the passage of the ordinance. The amendment becomes effective only when approved by the voters as provided in subdivision 4. If so approved, it shall be filed in the same manner as other amendments.

Subd. 7. **Amendment by ordinance.** Upon recommendation of the charter commission the city council may enact a charter amendment by ordinance. Within one month of receiving a recommendation to amend the charter by ordinance, the city must publish notice of a public hearing on the proposal and the notice must contain the text of the proposed amendment. The city council must hold the public hearing on the proposed charter amendment at least two weeks but not more than one month after the notice is published. Within one month of the

public hearing, the city council must vote on the proposed charter amendment ordinance. The ordinance is enacted if it receives an affirmative vote of all members of the city council and is approved by the mayor and published as in the case of other ordinances. An ordinance amending a city charter shall not become effective until 90 days after passage and publication or at such later date as is fixed in the ordinance. Within 60 days after passage and publication of such an ordinance, a petition requesting a referendum on the ordinance may be filed with the city clerk. The petition must be signed by registered voters equal in number to at least five percent of the registered voters in the city or 2,000, whichever is less. If the requisite petition is filed within the prescribed period, the ordinance shall not become effective until it is approved by the voters as in the case of charter amendments submitted by the charter commission, the council, or by petition of the voters, except that the council may submit the ordinance at any general or special election held at least 60 days after submission of the petition, or it may reconsider its action in adopting the ordinance. As far as practicable the requirements of subdivisions 1 to 3 apply to petitions submitted under this section, to an ordinance amending a charter, and to the filing of such ordinance when approved by the voters.

History: (1286) *RL s 756*; 1907 *c 199 s 1*; 1911 *c 343 s 1*; 1939 *c 292 s 1*; 1943 *c 227 s 1*; 1949 *c 122 s 1*; 1959 *c 305 s 3,4*; 1961 *c 608 s 5,6*; 1969 *c 1027 s 3*; 1973 *c 503 s 1-4*; 1986 *c 444*; 1998 *c 254 art 1 s 107*; 1999 *c 132 s 42*; 2005 *c 93 s 1*; 2008 *c 331 s 7*; 2010 *c 184 s 43*

410.121 SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUOR OR WINE; FAVORABLE VOTE.

If the charter which is to be amended or replaced contains provisions which prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquor or wine in certain areas, such provisions shall not be amended or removed unless 55 percent of the votes cast on the proposition shall be in favor thereof.

History: 1969 *c 1027 s 2*

410.13 [Repealed, 1959 *c 305 s 6*]

410.14 ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS.

In submitting a charter or an amendment to the voters any alternative section or article may be presented and voted on separately, without prejudice to other articles or sections of the charter or any amendments thereto.

History: (1288) *RL s 757*

410.15 SUCCESSION; SUBSISTING RIGHTS.

The new city so organized shall be in all respects the legal successor of the former corporation, and no charter so adopted, nor any amendment thereof, shall prejudice any subsisting right, lien, or demand against the city superseded, or affect any pending action or proceeding to enforce the same. All rights, penalties, and forfeitures accrued or accruing to such former corporation, all property vested therein or held in trust therefor, all taxes and assessments levied in its behalf, and all its privileges and immunities not inconsistent with the new charter, shall pass to its successor. All ordinances, resolutions, and bylaws in force at the adoption of such new charter, and not in conflict with its provisions, shall continue in force until duly altered or repealed.

History: (1289) *RL s 758*; 1973 *c 123 art 5 s 7*

410.16 FORMS OF GOVERNMENT INCORPORATED IN CHARTER.

The charter commission may incorporate as part of the proposed charter for any city the commission, mayor-council, council-manager form of city government or any other form not

inconsistent with Constitution or statute, and may provide that all elective city officers, including mayor and members of the council, shall be elected at large or otherwise.

History: (1290) 1909 c 170 s 1; 1959 c 305 s 5; 1961 c 608 s 7

410.17 [Repealed, 1973 c 503 s 6]

410.18 DISTRIBUTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS.

Such charter commission may also provide that the administrative powers, authority, and duties in any such city shall be distributed into and among departments and may provide that the council may determine the powers and duties to be performed by and assign them to the appropriate department and determine who shall be the head of each department and prescribe the powers and duties of all officers and employees thereof, and may assign particular officers or employees to perform duties in two or more departments, and make such other rules and regulations as may be necessary or proper for the efficient and economical conduct of the business of the city.

History: (1292) 1909 c 170 s 3; 1959 c 305 s 5

410.19 POWERS OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL.

The charter commission may incorporate in such charter provisions defining the powers and duties of the mayor and each member of the council, and may provide that each member of the council shall perform such administrative duties as may be designated in such charter.

History: (1293) 1909 c 170 s 4; 1959 c 305 s 5

410.191 CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS; CITY EMPLOYMENT.

Notwithstanding any charter provision, neither the mayor nor any city council member may be employed by the city. For purposes of this section, "employed" refers to full-time permanent employment as defined by the city's employment policy.

History: 2010 c 206 s 1

410.20 RECALL AND REMOVAL OF OFFICERS; ORDINANCES.

Such commission may also provide for the recall of any elective municipal officer and for removal of the officer by vote of the electors of such city, and may also provide for submitting ordinances to the council by petition of the electors of such city and for the repeal of ordinances in like manner; and may also provide that no ordinance passed by the council, except an emergency ordinance, shall take effect within a certain time after its passage, and that if, during such time, a petition be made by a certain percentage of the electors of the city protesting against the passage of such ordinance until the same be voted on at an election held for such purpose, and then such ordinance to take effect or not as determined by such vote.

History: (1294) 1909 c 170 s 5; 1959 c 305 s 5; 1986 c 444

410.21 APPLICATION OF GENERAL ELECTION LAWS.

The provisions of any charter of any such city adopted pursuant to this chapter shall be valid and shall control as to nominations, primary elections, and elections for municipal offices, notwithstanding that such charter provisions may be inconsistent with any general law relating thereto, and such general laws shall apply only in so far as consistent with such charter.

History: (1295) 1909 c 170 s 6

410.22 [Repealed, 1973 c 503 s 6]

410.23 [Repealed, 1959 c 305 s 6]

410.24 NEW OR REVISED CHARTER.

Any city having a home rule charter may submit and adopt a new or revised charter in the manner provided by law for the original adoption of such home rule charter.

History: (1298) 1909 c 236 s 2; 1961 c 608 s 8

410.25 [Repealed, 1959 c 305 s 6]

410.26 [Repealed, 1961 c 608 s 10]

410.27 [Repealed, 1973 c 503 s 6]

410.30 CITY MAY REVERT TO STATUTORY CITY; PROCESS; TRANSITION.

Any city of any class having a home rule charter may abandon such charter and become a statutory city. A proposal to abandon the charter shall be presented, adopted, and become effective in the same manner as a charter amendment, and all statutory provisions relating to home rule charter amendments shall apply to a proposal to abandon a charter. Such proposal shall include a schedule containing all necessary provisions for transition to a statutory city form of government, including such provisions with reference to terms of incumbent officers as are deemed appropriate to place the municipality on the regular statutory city election schedule as soon as practicable. The proposal may provide in effect for continuance of specified provisions of the home rule charter for an interim period and shall specify the standard plan or the optional plan under which the municipality is to operate as a statutory city.

History: 1965 c 561 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 503 s 5

410.31 [Repealed, 1973 c 503 s 6]

410.32 CITIES MAY ISSUE CAPITAL NOTES FOR CAPITAL EQUIPMENT.

(a) Notwithstanding any contrary provision of other law or charter, a home rule charter city may, by resolution and without public referendum, issue capital notes subject to the city debt limit to purchase capital equipment.

(b) For purposes of this section, "capital equipment" means:

(1) public safety equipment, ambulance and other medical equipment, road construction and maintenance equipment, and other capital equipment; and

(2) computer hardware and software, whether bundled with machinery or equipment or unbundled.

(c) The equipment or software must have an expected useful life at least as long as the term of the notes.

(d) The notes shall be payable in not more than ten years and be issued on terms and in the manner the city determines. The total principal amount of the capital notes issued in a fiscal year shall not exceed 0.03 percent of the market value of taxable property in the city for that year.

(e) A tax levy shall be made for the payment of the principal and interest on the notes, in accordance with section 475.61, as in the case of bonds.

(f) Notes issued under this section shall require an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the governing body of the city.

(g) Notwithstanding a contrary provision of other law or charter, a home rule charter city may also issue capital notes subject to its debt limit in the manner and subject to the limitations applicable to statutory cities pursuant to section 412.301.

History: *1983 c 361 s 1; 1988 c 702 s 2; 1988 c 719 art 5 s 84; 1989 c 1 s 4; 1990 c 612 s 15; 2003 c 127 art 12 s 15; 1Sp2003 c 21 art 10 s 11; 2005 c 152 art 1 s 8; 2008 c 154 art 10 s 15*

410.325 TAX ANTICIPATION CERTIFICATES.

Notwithstanding a contrary provision of other law or charter, a home rule charter city may issue tax anticipation certificates in the manner and subject to the limitations applicable to statutory cities under section 412.261. The certificates may also be issued in anticipation of federal and state aids, but the total amount of certificates issued against any fund for any year with interest on them must not exceed any limits in the charter relating to the total of the anticipated tax levy and the anticipated state aids for any fund not yet collected or received.

History: *1995 c 264 art 9 s 10*

410.33 SAVINGS CLAUSE.

If a city charter is silent on a matter that is addressed for statutory cities by chapter 412 or other general law and general law does not prohibit a city charter from addressing the matter or expressly provide that a city charter prevails over general law on the matter, then the city may apply the general law on the matter.

History: *1994 c 446 s 1*