



CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION AGENDA:

April 29, 2026

Courthouse

4:30 PM

Mayor Michael Smith, Council Rep.

Carla Blackmar

Vice Mayor Alex French, Council Rep.

Kevin McKeehan

Alan Kyger

STAFF

Douglas Elliott, Jr., City Manager

Chris Conard, Law Director

Jessica Greene, Assistant City Manager

Heather Barbour, City Clerk

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes from the April 9, 2026, Charter Review Commission Meeting.

Old Business

New Business

1. Further Discussion of Section 2.11(4) with Sam Perry, Community Development Director
2. Review proposed language for Articles I through V
3. Discussion of Articles VI through XI

Public Comments

Future Meeting Dates

Adjournment



MINUTES OXFORD CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

Municipal Building 15 South College Ave. Oxford, Ohio 45056 Second Floor Conference Room

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026 AT 4:00 PM

Call to Order

Ms. Greene called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. Members in attendance were Kevin McKeehan, Alan Kyger, Carla Blackmar, Alex French, and Michael Smith, who arrived at 4:10 p.m. Staff members in attendance were Chris Conard, Jessica Greene, and Heather Barbour. Douglass R. Elliott Jr. was excused. Members of the public were Steve Chaffin and Aidan Cornue.

Approval of Agenda

Motion – To Approve the Agenda
(Voice Vote) 1st Ms. French 2nd Mr. McKeehan
AYE # 4
NAY # 0
ABS # 0

New Business - Charter Review

1. Elect Chair

Motion – To Nominate Alex French as Chair.
(Voice Vote) 1st Ms. Blackmar 2nd Mr. McKeehan
AYE # 4
NAY # 0
ABS # 0

2. Introduction of Members and Overview of the Charter Advisory Commission.

Ms. Greene began with a round of introductions. Ms. Greene then provided an overview of the City of Oxford's charter, its history, and the Commission's role in reviewing and recommending amendments for potential placement on the ballot.

3. Summary of Oxford Charter (Eleven Articles).

The Commission reviewed several proposed charter updates. A primary discussion focused on Section 2.11, which restricts multi-unit dwellings in the mile square. Staff recommended removing outdated language, noting that zoning regulations now address these issues. Members discussed the historical purpose of the restriction and changing housing needs, expressing interest in additional information before making a final decision. The group also considered revisions to Section 2.12 to allow the city to recover unpaid utility bills from property owners rather than tenants. While members recognized financial impacts to the city, they also noted potential political opposition and pending state legislation, suggesting the issue may need to be addressed separately. Additional discussion included modernizing ordinance publication requirements, reconsidering city manager residency language (with a preference for contractual flexibility), and addressing outdated or inconsistent charter provisions, including references to the civil service commission and bonding requirements. The Commission also discussed the possibility of stipends for boards and commissions and raised questions about election timing and petition procedures.

Mr. Conard asked if anyone from the public would like to make a comment. Mr. Chaffin highlighted the need to clarify election certification timing and streamline petition filing responsibilities.

The Commission identified follow-up items, including gathering data on utility losses and requesting additional staff input on zoning impacts and legal language. The next meeting was scheduled for April 29 at the courthouse, with plans to include public comment.

4. Review Process to Amend Charter.

Ms. Greene explained the charter amendment process, noting that the Commission will review the document and develop recommended changes for City Council. Council may then adopt legislation to place proposed amendments on the ballot, after which the county and state review ballot language. The final decision rests with voters, and the city conducts public education to explain proposed changes. Amendments may be presented individually or bundled, depending on the Commission's recommendations.

5. Discussion of Articles I, II, III, IV, & V.

Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the Charter Review Commission will be held on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at the Courthouse at 4:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion – To Adjourn at 5:19 p.m.
(Voice Vote) 1st Ms. French 2nd Ms. Blackmar
AYE # 5
NAY # 0
ABS # 0

**CHARTER
OF THE
CITY OF OXFORD, OHIO**

PREAMBLE

We, the people of the City of Oxford, Butler County, Ohio in order to secure for ourselves the benefits of local self-government under the constitution of the State of Ohio, do ordain and establish this Charter for the government of the Municipality of Oxford.

**ARTICLE I
INCORPORATION, FORM OF GOVERNMENT, POWERS**

SECTION 1.01 INCORPORATION.

The present municipality, as its limits are now or may hereafter be established, shall be and continue to be a municipal corporation of the State of Ohio in perpetuity, under the name of the City of Oxford. Each provision of this Charter shall apply with equal force to this municipality.

SECTION 1.02 POWERS.

Except as prohibited by the constitution of this state or restricted by this Charter, the City of Oxford shall have and may exercise all municipal powers, functions, rights, privileges and immunities of every name and nature whatsoever. The enumeration of particular powers in this Charter shall not be deemed to be exclusive. No act of the municipality shall be invalid or limited by reason of failure to enumerate a particular power in this Charter. The municipality shall have and may exercise any and all powers, either expressed or implied, which it would be competent for this Charter to enumerate, as fully and completely as though such powers specifically were included herein.

SECTION 1.03 MANNER OF EXERCISING POWERS.

All powers of the corporation shall be vested in an elected Council which shall enact local ordinances and resolutions, adopt budgets, determine general policies and appoint a City Manager, who shall see that the policies and legislation adopted by the Council are enforced. All powers of the corporation shall be exercised in the manner prescribed by this charter, or if the manner be not prescribed, then in such manner as may be prescribed by ordinance or by general law.

SECTION 1.04 FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

The form of government provided under this charter shall be known as the Council-Manager Plan.

ARTICLE II THE COUNCIL

SECTION 2.01 NUMBER, SELECTION AND TERM.

The City Council shall consist of seven members, elected at large, for four year overlapping terms. Except as provided in Section 2.03, all members of Council shall be elected to a full term of office. All elections of Council members shall be on a non-partisan ballot.

SECTION 2.02 QUALIFICATIONS.

Any qualified elector who has lived in the municipality for one year prior to filing a petition of candidacy shall be eligible to serve as a member of Council, when elected as hereinafter provided.

The Council shall be the judge of the election and qualifications of its own members. The seat of any member may be declared vacant by resolution of Council, five (5) members concurring.

Council shall declare vacant a seat of any member for the following reasons:

1. One who persistently fails to abide by the rules of Council.
2. One who is absent without justifiable excuses for three (3) consecutive regular meetings.
3. One who shall cease to be a qualified elector and resident of the municipality as required by the Charter unless special circumstances have been approved by five (5) members of Council concurring.
4. One who enters upon the performance of the duties of an incompatible public office.
5. One who shall hold any appointed office or employment with the municipality for which compensation is authorized.
6. One who shall violate any expressed provisions of this Charter.
7. One who shall be convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or any felony.
8. One who shall be convicted of any other provision of the State laws as applicable to public officials for which the penalty includes forfeiture of office.

SECTION 2.03 VACANCIES, FILLING OF.

Vacancies in the office of Council members shall be filled within thirty (30) days by vote of a majority of the remaining members of Council, by the selection of a qualified elector who has resided in the municipality for at least one year immediately preceding such appointment. If Council fails to make this selection within thirty (30) days, the Mayor shall make the appointment. Such person so chosen shall serve until the next regular City Council election, occurring not less than 100 days after selection. At such election, a successor shall be elected to serve for the unexpired term, if any; if not, for a full term.

SECTION 2.04 TERM OF OFFICE.

The term of office of Council members shall begin on the third Monday following the regular City Council election. City Council election shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in the odd numbered years. No member of Council shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

SECTION 2.05 SALARY.

The salary of Council members, other than the Mayor, shall be at a rate established by Council, until changed by ordinance adopted by Council. No increase in salary shall ever take effect during the term of a Council member in office at the time the ordinance is adopted.

SECTION 2.06 ORGANIZATION AND MEETINGS.

Following each municipal election Council shall meet within five days after the beginning of the term of office of the newly-elected members of Council for the purpose of organizing. At such meeting, the newly-elected members of Council shall take the oath of office and the Council shall proceed to elect a Mayor and a Vice-Mayor and may transact such other business as may come before it. Thereafter, regular or special meetings shall be held as prescribed in the Council rules, and regular meetings shall occur not less frequently than once each month. All meetings of Council and its Boards and Commissions shall be open to the public except Executive Sessions as provided for by Ohio statute. A majority of the members elected shall constitute a quorum at all meetings.

SECTION 2.07 MAYOR AND VICE-MAYOR.

The Council shall select biennially from among its own members one to serve as Mayor and one as Vice-Mayor for a term of two years and until their successors are chosen and qualified. The Mayor shall preside at Council meetings, when present, and shall have a vote on all matters which come before Council, but shall exercise no administrative authority. The Mayor shall be the ceremonial head of the municipality, but shall exercise no administrative authority. The Vice-Mayor shall

preside over the meetings of the Council when the Mayor is absent and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by Ordinance.

SECTION 2.08 SALARY OF MAYOR.

The Mayor shall be paid a salary at a rate established by Council, until changed by ordinance adopted by Council. No increase in salary shall ever take place during the term of the Mayor in office at the time the ordinance is adopted.

SECTION 2.09 CLERK OF COUNCIL.

There shall be a Clerk of Council, elected by vote of majority of the members of Council from outside its membership, to serve until a successor is chosen and enters upon the duties of the Clerk's office. The Clerk may be appointed to serve full time or part time and the Council may assign the duties of the Clerk of Council to any employee of the Municipality as an additional duty. The Clerk shall give notice of Council meetings, keep the journal, advertise public hearings, record in separate books all ordinances and resolutions enacted by Council and have the same published in the manner provided by this Charter. The Clerk shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by this Charter or by ordinance.

SECTION 2.10 RULES AND JOURNAL.

The Council shall determine its own rules of procedure in conformity with the provisions of this Charter, and shall keep a journal of its proceedings which shall be a public record.

SECTION 2.11 POWERS OF THE COUNCIL.

Among other powers the Council shall have authority to:

- (1) Adopt ordinances and resolutions on any subject within the scope of its powers and to provide penalties for the violation thereof;
- (2) Establish the internal organization, staffing and compensation of the departments, boards and commissions created by this Charter; set up such additional departments, boards or commissions as it may deem necessary and determine their powers and duties;
- (3) Adopt and modify the master plan and official map of the municipality;
- (4) Regulate the use of private real estate in the municipality by establishing zones, limiting the uses in each zone and limiting the height of buildings and the intensity of land use. Structures containing more than three dwelling units, as defined within the most current edition of the Ohio Building Code, are prohibited within the incorporated area as described:

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Situated in the City of Oxford, Butler County, State of Ohio, bounded and described as follows: Beginning at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Patterson Avenue; thence northwardly with the centerline of Patterson Avenue to a point, which was the 1976 North Corporate line; thence with the 1976 North Corporate line to a point in the centerline of Brown Road; thence southwardly with the centerline of Brown Road to a point in the centerline of Sycamore Street; thence westwardly with the centerline of Sycamore Street to a point in the centerline of Locust Street; thence with the centerline of Locust Street southwardly to a point in the intersection of the centerline of Chestnut Street and Locust Street; thence with the centerline of Chestnut Street eastwardly to the place of beginning; excepting the following area described as beginning at the intersection of Church Street and College Avenue; thence southwardly with the centerline of College Avenue to a point in the intersection of the centerline of Walnut Street and College Avenue; thence eastwardly with the centerline of Walnut Street; thence northwardly with the centerline of Campus Avenue to a point in the intersection of the centerline of Church Street; thence westwardly with the centerline of Church Street to the point of beginning.

This prohibition shall not apply to existing structures containing more than three dwelling units which shall be permitted to continue as nonconforming as long as said use is continued, but the same shall prohibit the future construction or establishment of structures containing more than three dwelling units;

(5) Adopt a subdivision platting ordinance and approve subdivision plats which conform thereto;

(6) Enact a comprehensive building code;

(7) Authorize the levy of taxes and the issuance of bonds as provided in this Charter;

(8) Adopt an annual appropriation ordinance based upon the annual budget;

(9) Appoint and remove the City Manager, establish the Manager's salary and appoint an acting City Manager when necessary;

(10) Appoint and remove the Director of Finance and establish such Director's salary;

(11) Appoint and remove the Director of Law and establish such Director's salary;

(12) Inquire into the conduct of any municipal officer or employee in the performance of public functions of such officer or employee;

(13) Make investigations of any office, department or agency of the municipality;

(14) Grant public utility franchises by vote of 2/3 of the members of Council;

(15) Employ a public accountant to make an audit of the financial affairs of the City whenever such an audit is deemed necessary;

(16) Provide for the employment of engineering and other professional services on a consulting basis when deemed necessary;

(17) Issue subpoenas for witnesses and to require the production of books and papers which may be necessary in the conduct of any hearings or investigation.

(18) Council shall have the power to appeal the decisions of its boards and commissions on an affirmative vote of five (5) members of Council.

SECTION 2.12 UTILITY USERS LIABLE FOR OWN USES AND NOT FOR OTHERS.

Tenants and property owners shall be liable only for their own utility use unless they have made an agreement between themselves to the contrary. New tenants and new property owners shall not be liable for the utility services provided to other prior tenants or owners or provided to other existing tenants unless they have made an agreement between themselves to the contrary.

ARTICLE III ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

SECTION 3.01 ACTION OF COUNCIL.

The action of Council shall be by ordinance or resolution. On all matters of a general or permanent nature, or granting a franchise, or levying a tax, or appropriating money, or contracting an indebtedness, or issuing bonds or notes, or for the purchase, lease or transfer of property, action shall be taken formally by ordinance in the manner hereinafter provided. Action on all other matters of a temporary or informal nature may be taken by resolution.

SECTION 3.02 ENACTMENT OF ORDINANCES.

Each proposed ordinance shall be introduced in writing by a member of the Council and in the form required for final adoption. The enacting clause shall be "The Council of the City of Oxford, Ohio, hereby ordains that..." Prior to introduction, a written copy of each proposed ordinance shall be provided to all members of Council and any member of the public requesting a copy.

The action proposed to be taken shall be fully and clearly set forth in the body of the ordinance. Each ordinance shall contain one subject only which shall be stated clearly in the title. No ordinance shall be passed without the concurrences of a majority of all members elected to Council, except that emergency ordinances, as hereinafter provided, shall require concurrence of 3/4 of all members elected to Council for passage. Ordinance shall be read by title only on two different days before they may be enacted. Council on motion adopted may require the second reading of a proposed ordinance in full. However, if an emergency is declared as hereinafter provided, or if by 3/4 vote of all members elected to Council, the reading by title on two different days is dispensed with, in which cases such ordinances may be read one time by title only and passed on the day of such reading. Final passage of all ordinances and resolutions shall be certified by the Mayor or Vice-Mayor and the Clerk of Council.

SECTION 3.03 EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ordinances providing for appropriations for current expenses of the municipality, or for public improvements petitioned for the owners of a majority of the foot frontage of property benefited and to be specially assessed for the cost thereof, or for raising revenue, or ordinances wherein an emergency is declared to exist, shall become effective immediately upon passage or at such later date as may be provided therein, and such ordinances shall not be subject to referendum. All other ordinances shall take effect 30 days after passage. An emergency ordinance as referred to herein is one which must be passed and made effective at once or in less than 30 days to meet an emergency in the operation of the City government, or which is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, morals or welfare. Each emergency ordinance must contain therein a separate section setting forth the reason for the emergency. No ordinance granting a franchise or fixing a rate to be charged by a public utility shall be passed as an emergency measure.

SECTION 3.04 PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCES.

All ordinances passed by the Council shall be published except as otherwise required by law, as used in this Section "published" shall mean to post copies thereof, or a summary of such adopted legislation, on the City's website and in not less than three of the most public places in the City, as determined by the Council for a period of not less than ten days and to take such other actions as provided by Council. Failure to publish as required by this Section shall not invalidate any ordinance.

SECTION 3.05 INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM.

The initiative and referendum powers, reserved to the people under the Ohio Constitution, shall be exercised in the manner provided by the Ohio Constitution, the laws of the State of Ohio and this Charter, except: that any initiative or referendum petition filed with the Auditor of the City of Oxford shall contain the signatures of not less than ten percent of the voters who voted at the preceding election for the office of Governor; that when a petition having the required number of signatures is filed with the City Auditor, it shall be held in the Auditor's office for a period of 15 days before certification of the text of the proposed ordinance is made to the Board of Elections; that the committee designated by the petitioners to file said petition shall consist of five members. In all other respects, the procedure with reference to initiative and referendum petitions shall be the same as that provided by the Constitution, laws of the State of Ohio and this Charter. Whenever the Council is required to pass more than one ordinance to complete the legislation necessary to complete and pay for any public improvement, the referendum shall apply only to the first ordinance to be passed and not to any subsequent ordinance in the series relating thereto. Resolutions are not subject to referendum.

SECTION 3.06 ADOPTION OF STANDARD CODES BY REFERENCE.

The Council may adopt model or standard codes prepared and published by public or private agencies on such matters as building construction, plumbing, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, electric wiring, smoke regulation, fire prevention and other similar regulatory subjects by reference to the date and source of the code without reproducing the same in full in the ordinance. In all cases in which such a code shall be adopted by reference, publication of the code, at length, by the City, shall not be required. One copy of all such adopted codes shall be available for viewing at City offices.

ARTICLE IV CITY MANAGER

SECTION 4.01 APPOINTMENT OF CITY MANAGER.

The Council shall appoint, by majority vote of all members elected thereto, an officer to the City who shall have the title of City Manager. The City Manager shall be chosen solely on the basis of executive and administrative qualifications, as judged by the adequacy of training and experience. At the time of appointment the City Manager need not be a resident of the city or state, but during tenure of office the City Manager shall reside in the municipality. No council member shall be eligible for appointment as City Manager during the term for which elected, or for two years thereafter.

SECTION 4.02 CITY MANAGER'S DUTIES.

The City Manager shall be the chief executive and administrative officer of the municipality. The City Manager shall be responsible to the Council for proper administration of all affairs of the municipality, and to that end, subject to the provisions of this Charter, shall have authority and shall be required to:

(1) See that this Charter and the ordinances and resolutions of the City are faithfully observed and enforced;

(2) Appoint and remove all officers and employees of the City except those selected or appointed by Council, or as otherwise provided in this Charter;

(3) Insure the preparation of the tax budget and annual budget, submit them to Council for approval and administer the appropriations made by the Council;

(4) Prepare and submit monthly reports to the Council. Insure the preparation and submission to Council and the public annually, not later than March 31, a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the municipality for the preceding year; which report shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of Section 117.19, Revised Code of Ohio. Such annual report shall be published and distributed in the manner provided by ordinance;

(5) Formulate and arrange contract, franchises and agreements subject to the approval of Council. Sign as the official signatory of the City all legal documents on behalf of the City including, but not limited to all contracts, bonds and notes on behalf of the City;

(6) Attend all meetings of Council unless otherwise directed by Council, and shall have the right to take part in the discussion of all matters coming before Council in such meetings, but shall have no vote;

(7) Serve as an ex-officio member (without vote) of all boards and commissions authorized under this Charter, except the Civil Service Commission;

(8) Delegate to subordinate officers and employees of the municipality any duties conferred upon the Manager by this Charter or by action of Council and hold them responsible for the faithful discharge of such duties;

(9) Perform such other duties, not inconsistent with this Charter, as may be required by the Council.

SECTION 4.03 ABSENCE OR DISABILITY OF CITY MANAGER.

The City Manager may designate, by letter filed with the Clerk of Council, any qualified administrative officer of the City to perform the duties of the City Manager during the temporary absence or disability of the City Manager. If such designation has not been made, and the City Manager is unable to perform such duties or to make such designation, the Mayor on an emergency basis may appoint an acting City Manager until the next Council meeting. Council may thereafter appoint any qualified administrative officer of the municipality to perform the duties of the City Manager until the City Manager shall return or the disability ceases.

SECTION 4.04 REMOVAL OF THE CITY MANAGER.

The City Manager shall serve for an indefinite term, subject to removal by the Council at any time by a majority vote of all members elected thereto. At least 30 days before such removal shall become effective, the Council shall adopt a preliminary resolution stating the reasons for the removal. The Manager may reply in writing and may request a public hearing, which shall be held not earlier than 20 days nor later than 30 days after the filing of the request, before the full Council. After such public hearing, if one is requested, and after full consideration, the Council may adopt a final resolution of removal. The Council may, at the time the preliminary resolution is passed, suspend the Manager from duty and designate an acting Manager but shall cause forthwith the payment of any salary due the Manager to the date of suspension of the Manager. Unless such suspension and removal is for misconduct of the Manager involving moral turpitude, the Manager shall be paid a salary for the period of suspension and 30 days following the removal from office. In the case of voluntary resignation of the Manager, the Council and the Manager shall agree upon the effective date of the resignation.

SECTION 4.05 CONTRACT WITH THE CITY MANAGER.

Council shall have the right to negotiate and authorize the Mayor to sign on behalf of Council a contract of employment with the City Manager setting forth the terms of employment and separation from employment for the City Manager as deemed to be appropriate by Council. No term established herein shall establish an expectation of continued employment except as provided in the contract.

SECTION 4.06 RELATIONS BETWEEN COUNCIL AND MANAGER.

Except for the purpose of inquiry or investigation, the members of Council shall deal with the administrative employees of the municipality solely through the City Manager. No member of the Council shall interfere in the appointment or removal of officers or employees subordinate to the City Manager. In the event any member of Council is found by the Council to have violated this section, Council shall

declare that seat vacant.

ARTICLE V ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS

SECTION 5.01 CREATION OF DEPARTMENTS.

The administrative functions of the City shall be carried on by a Department of Finance, and Department of Law and such other departments as may be created by ordinance, after consultation with the City Manager.

SECTION 5.02 DEPARTMENT HEADS.

Each City department shall be headed by a full-time or part-time director. With the exception of the Departments of Finance and Law, the City Manager shall appoint all department heads. The heads of the Departments of Finance and Law shall be appointed by the Council, in accordance with the provisions of this Charter. Each department head shall be an administrative officer of the City. Two or more departments may be headed by the same person and the City Manager may serve as the director of one or more departments in addition to the duties as Manager, when approved by Council.

SECTION 5.03 PERSONNEL

The Council shall have the authority to adopt personnel ordinances or personnel rules and regulations which modify, supplement, or supersede the laws of the State of Ohio and which, in the case of conflict, shall prevail over the laws of the State of Ohio.

All appointments and promotions of City employees shall be made on the basis of merit and fitness demonstrated through a competitive selection process to the extent practicable and except as otherwise provided by Council.

Exempt Positions:

- (1) All elected officers.
- (2) The Clerk of Council.
- (3) The City Manager.
- (4) Assistants to the City Manager
- (5) The Directors of the departments.
- (6) Assistants to the Directors.
- (7) Chief of Police.
- (8) Fire Chief.
- (9) Members of boards and commissions appointed by Council.
- (10) Unskilled labor, as defined by Council.
- (11) Temporary employees of exceptional professional or scientific qualifications engaged as consultants for special work by the City.

(12) Seasonal and part-time employees.

Classified Service: The classified service shall comprise all positions not specifically included in this Charter in the unclassified service as exempt positions.

The City Manager shall provide rules for the determination of merit and fitness as the basis for appointment and promotion of classified personnel

Appointments for all positions in the classified service shall be made by the City Manager based on a competitive examination and on the basis of experience, character, and conduct. Appointments shall be made from a list of the five candidates ranked highest on the eligibility list for that position, provided five candidates qualify to be placed on the list.

Promotions for all positions in the classified service shall be made by the City Manager based on competitive examination and on records of merit, efficiency, character, conduct and seniority. Promotional examinations may be restricted to current employees or the City Manager may open the exam to qualified candidates from outside the City service.

Promotion appointments shall be made from a list of the three candidates ranked highest on the eligibility list for that position, provided three candidates qualify to be placed on the list.

No officer or employee in the classified service shall be demoted or removed except for cause and after a hearing, and the Council shall provide by ordinance for the enforcement of this provision and also for appeals to the Personnel Appeals Board for suspensions, demotions and removals by the City Manager.

An original appointment of a new employee shall not be deemed complete until a period of probation not to exceed twelve months has elapsed; except that in the police division said probationary period for sworn officers, shall not exceed eighteen months. Such probationary employee may be discharged at any time within the said probationary period, upon recommendation of the head of the department in which said probationer is employed, with the approval of the City Manager.

SECTION 5.04 EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK.

An employee Handbook shall be distributed among all divisions of the City. Pending adoption of revisions to the Employee Handbook by Council, the City Manager may establish temporary provisions of the Employee Handbook.

Subject to the provisions of this Charter, and after consultations with the City Manager, the Council shall approve and adopt an Employee Handbook, which shall provide in detail the organization of the municipal government, define the powers and duties of each

organizational unit and determine the employee procedures to be followed. Amendments to, and revisions of, the Employee Handbook shall be made by Council only after consultation with the City Manager. Where the Employee Handbook is silent, the officers and employees of the City shall have and may exercise all powers and duties provided for similar officers and employees by the state law. However, provisions of the Employee Handbook shall supersede those of state law in cases of conflict.

SECTION 5.05 DEPARTMENT OF LAW.

The Director of the Department of Law shall be known as the City Attorney. The City Attorney shall be an attorney-at-law, admitted to practice law in the State of Ohio, and in good provisional standing. The City Attorney shall perform such duties as may be assigned to the office of the City Solicitor by law, as well as those imposed by the Charter and City Ordinance. The City Attorney shall be appointed by Council for an indefinite term of office.

SECTION 5.06 DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE.

The Council shall appoint a Director of Finance for an indefinite term of office. The Director of Finance shall be the fiscal officer of the City and shall be responsible for the accounting, collection and custody of public funds, and control over disbursements. The Director of Finance shall countersign all bonds and notes issued by the City and shall perform such other functions as may be assigned by ordinance or by order of the City Manager.

ARTICLE VI TAXATION AND BORROWING

SECTION 6.01 LEVYING TAXES.

The Council shall have the power to levy taxes, without a vote of the electors, for the current operating expenses and other lawful municipal purposes, in the manner provided by the constitution and general laws of Ohio, subject to the limitations provided therein.

The authority of the Council to submit additional levies to a vote of the people under authority of the constitution or laws of the State of Ohio shall not be deemed impaired or abridged by reason of any provision contained in this Charter.

SECTION 6.02 SUBMISSION OF EXTRA LEVY TO VOTE.

The Council may at any time prior to the 15th day of September in any year declare by resolution, adopted by a vote of 2/3 of all the members thereof, that the amount of taxes which may be raised within the limitations of this Charter will be insufficient to provide an adequate

amount for the necessary requirement of the City for current operating expenses, and other expenses payable from the general fund of the City, and such permanent improvements and equipment as shall have an estimated useful life of five years or more, and that it is necessary to levy taxes in excess of such limitation, in addition to the levies authorized and limited by this Charter, for the municipal purpose or purposes specified in such resolution. Such resolution shall specify the additional rate which it is necessary to levy, the purpose or purposes thereof, the number of years during which such rate shall be in effect and the date of the proposed election thereon. Such resolution shall be effective upon its adoption and shall be certified within five days thereafter to the election authorities, who shall place such question upon the ballot at the next succeeding November election. If a majority of those voting thereon vote for the approval of such additional levy, the Council shall, for a period not in excess of that prescribed in such resolution, make such levy, or such part thereof as it finds necessary, pursuant to such approval and certify the same to the County Auditor, to be placed on the tax list and collected as other taxes.

SECTION 6.03 POWER TO INCUR DEBT.

The Council may, by ordinance, issue general obligation bonds to an amount not exceeding that authorized by the general laws of Ohio, now in effect or hereafter enacted, for any purpose for which bond issues are authorized by state law. Issuance of general obligation bonds beyond the limitations imposed on Council by state law and the state constitution, shall be dependent upon the approval of such issuance by the voters, as provided by law. Mortgage revenue bonds, special assessment bonds and all other notes or bonds exempted by statute shall not be included in calculating the net debt.

SECTION 6.04 MORTGAGE REVENUE BONDS.

The Council may, by ordinance, issue mortgage revenue bonds for any purpose and in any total amount authorized by the state constitution or laws of Ohio.

SECTION 6.05 SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS.

Special assessments may be levied by Council to pay any part of the cost of any public work or improvement authorized by ordinance. Such assessments shall be made and levied in accordance with the provisions and subject to the limitations prescribed in the Revised Code of the State of Ohio.

SECTION 6.06 TAX ANTICIPATION NOTES.

The Council may, by ordinance, issue notes in anticipation of the collection of taxes on whatever conditions may seem reasonable. Such notes shall be paid from the tax receipts of the year in which they are issued.

SECTION 6.07 EMERGENCY BORROWING.

The Council may, by ordinance, borrow money and issue notes in case of public emergency as authorized by the Ohio Revised Code.

SECTION 6.08 PROCEDURE IN BOND ISSUES.

The procedure followed in authorizing and issuing bonds and notes and applying the proceeds shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Uniform Bond Law of the State of Ohio in effect at the time.

ARTICLE VII FINANCE

SECTION 7.01 ANNUAL TAX BUDGET.

In the form and at the time required by law, the City Manager shall submit to the Council a tax budget for the ensuing fiscal year. For that purpose, at such time as the City Manager shall determine, the City Manager shall obtain from the head of each department or agency of the City plans for the work to be undertaken by such department during the next fiscal year, together with estimates of the cost of performing such work. The Department of Finance shall gather data from all departments and supply the City Manager with estimates of available revenue. From these data, the City Manager shall prepare the consolidated estimates for the annual tax budget. The Council shall consider these estimates and adopt them, with or without amendments, as the tax budget of the City for the ensuing year, and transmit them to the County Budget Commission in the form required by law.

SECTION 7.02 PREPARATION OF ANNUAL CITY BUDGET.

The City Manager shall prepare and submit to the Council each year a budget estimating the total contemplated work program and expenditures from each fund during the ensuing fiscal year. Expenditures shall not exceed the total recommended appropriations from each fund and the total estimated resources certified by the County Budget Commission and the County Auditor. Council may request the City Manager prepare a five (5) year planning budget. Such budget shall serve as the basis for the annual appropriation ordinance.

SECTION 7.03 OTHER PROCEDURES.

In all other respects the procedure for the preparation, advertising, hearing and adoption of the budget and the appropriation of municipal funds shall be governed by the general laws of the State of Ohio pertaining to such matters. Amendment to the annual appropriation ordinance shall be governed by the general laws of the State of Ohio pertaining to such matters.

SECTION 7.04 FISCAL YEAR.

The fiscal year of the City shall be the calendar year, beginning January 1 and ending December 31 each year.

SECTION 7.05 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RESERVE FUND.

Council may create and maintain a Capital Improvement Reserve Fund, and may from time to time transfer or appropriate thereto all moneys accruing to any other fund of the municipality not needed for the purposes of such fund and available for transfer under general law.

The unencumbered balance remains in the general fund of the municipality at the end of any fiscal year may also be transferred. Moneys in the Capital Improvement Reserve Fund shall not be expended for any purpose except to purchase equipment, apparatus or other property, or to construct buildings, structures, roads and other property or public improvements, needed for the use of the municipality, or to pay bonded obligations of the municipality by means of transfer to its bond and interest retirement fund.

ARTICLE VIII BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

SECTION 8.01 PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

There shall be a Personnel Appeals Board consisting of three qualified electors of the City who shall be appointed by the Council for three year terms. Council shall fill vacancies by appointment for the unexpired term. Each member shall neither hold nor be a candidate for any other public office nor be employed by the City.

The City and the Personnel Appeals Board shall have no jurisdiction over, nor be obligated to perform any duties with regard to employees of the Talawanda City School District.

SECTION 8.02 POWERS AND DUTIES

The Board shall have the power to hear and determine appeals of disciplinary actions, suspensions, demotions or removal of nonexempt employees if such matters are not resolved upon a hearing and determination by the City Manager.

The Board shall serve without compensation and shall hear appeals from any nonexempt employee who has successfully completed a probationary period, or applicant for non-exempt position who has successfully completed a probationary period, upon such issues as may be subject to appeal as defined by rules established pursuant to this section.

The board shall have the power to subpoena witnesses and require the production of records. The decision of the Board shall be final.

PLANNING COMMISSION

SECTION 8.03 PLANNING COMMISSION.

There shall be a City Planning Commission consisting of seven members, two of whom shall be members of Council, elected by Council for a term of one year; and five citizen members, appointed by Council from among the qualified electors of the city. The five citizen members shall serve five year overlapping terms of office. Citizen members of the Planning Commission shall hold no other incompatible public office.

SECTION 8.04 POWERS AND DUTIES.

The Planning Commission may act as the Platting Commission of the municipality. As such, it shall provide for planning, zoning and regulations covering platting of all lands which are subject to control by the municipality, and shall cause an official map of such territories to be made. The Commission shall carry out the comprehensive plan and make such investigations, reports and recommendations relating to planning and the physical development of the City as it finds necessary and desirable.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

SECTION 8.05 BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS.

There shall be a Board of Zoning Appeals consisting of five electors of the city, appointed by Council to serve for a term of three years. The Board shall establish its own rules of procedure and keep a record of its proceedings in all matters coming before the Board. No resolution overruling an action under or interpretation of the zoning ordinance by any administrative officer of the City shall be adopted except by the affirmative vote of three members of this board.

SECTION 8.06 POWERS AND DUTIES.

The board shall have the power to hear and determine appeals from refusal of building permits and to permit exceptions to and variations from the zoning regulations in individual cases as may be required to afford justice and avoid unreasonable hardship to property owners. The standards in all instances to be applied by the board shall be established by ordinance of Council.

RECREATION BOARD

SECTION 8.07 RECREATION BOARD.

There shall be a Recreation Board appointed by Council consisting of five members. Appointments shall be made for a three-year term of office. The Recreation Board shall recommend to Council future plans and development of playgrounds, parks and recreational facilities and programs for the City. The Recreation Director shall be appointed by the City Manager.

OTHER BOARDS

SECTION 8.08 OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

In addition to the foregoing boards and commissions, Council may create and abolish such other advisory boards, commissions and committees as may be deemed necessary.

SECTION 8.09 CITY MANAGER EX-OFFICIO MEMBER.

The City Manager or designee shall be an ex-officio member without vote of all boards and commissions created by or under authority of this Charter, except the Personnel Appeals Board.

SECTION 8.10 REMOVAL FROM OFFICE.

Council shall declare vacant an appointed official's office by a majority vote of all members of Council for any of the following reasons.

1. One who is absent without justifiable excuses for three (3) consecutive regular meetings.
2. One who shall be convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or any felony.
3. One who shall be convicted of any other provision of the state laws as applicable to public officials for which the penalty includes forfeiture of office.

ARTICLE IX NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 9.01 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

The regular municipal election for the choice of members of the Council shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in the odd numbered years. The Council may, by resolution, order a special election at any time, the purpose of which shall be set forth in the resolution.

SECTION 9.02 CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS.

Both regular and special municipal elections shall be conducted by the Board of Elections of Butler County, Ohio, under the provisions of this Charter. Where the Charter is silent, the provisions of the state election law shall be followed.

SECTION 9.03 NOMINATIONS.

No primary election shall be held for the nomination of candidates for the Council. Nominations for the office of Council member shall be made by petition signed by not less than 50 nor more than 100 electors of the City. Petitions shall be the standard forms for the nomination of individual nonpartisan candidates for such office. Group petitions shall not be used. Petitions shall be filed with the Board of Elections in accordance with the current laws of the State of Ohio. An elector may sign only as many petitions as there are Council members to be elected at the municipal election for which the nominations are made.

SECTION 9.04 ACCEPTANCE AND VERIFICATION.

The signature of the candidate indicating acceptance of the nomination and willingness to serve if elected shall appear on each copy of the petition. The petition may be in a number of parts, but each part shall be verified under oath by the circulator, as required by law.

SECTION 9.05 BALLOTS.

The full names of all candidates nominated shall be printed on the official ballot without party designation. If two candidates with the same surname, or with names so similar as to be likely to cause confusion are nominated, the addresses of their places of residence shall be placed below their names on the ballot. The names of all candidates shall be rotated on the ballot as provided by law.

SECTION 9.06 WRITE-INS.

Only in the event that fewer candidates are nominated by petition than there are Council members to be elected at the ensuing election shall space be provided on the ballot for the writing in at the election of the names of additional persons.

SECTION 9.07 RECALL.

Members of Council may be removed from office before the expiration of their term by the qualified voters of the city. The procedure for such recall shall be that provided in the Ohio Revised Code.

**ARTICLE X
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

SECTION 10.01 OFFICIAL BONDS.

X All officers and employees of the City whose duties require them to handle municipal and other public money or property shall furnish a corporate surety bond issued by a company authorized to do business in Ohio, to protect the City against loss due to their acts. The amount of the bond in each case shall be determined by Council and the premium on such bonds shall be paid from the funds of the City. All such bonds shall be filed with the Clerk of Council.

SECTION 10.02 PERSONAL INTEREST.

No member of the Council or any officer or employee of the City shall have any financial interest, direct or indirect, in any contract with or sale to the City of any materials, supplies or services, or any land or interest in land. A person who knowingly and willfully violates this section shall be guilty of malfeasance in office and upon conviction thereof shall be removed from office.

Any contract or agreement made in violation of this section shall be voidable at the election of the Council.

SECTION 10.03 REMOVAL FROM OFFICE; DISQUALIFICATION.

Whenever, in this Charter certain acts on the part of City officials are described as constituting malfeasance in office, the procedure for complaint, trial and judgment thereon shall be that prescribed in the Ohio Revised Code.

SECTION 10.04 AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER.

This Charter may be amended as provided in Article XVIII, Section 9, of the Ohio Constitution, by submission of a proposed amendment to the electors of the municipality and approved by a majority of those voting on the question of its adoption.

Such amendment may be initiated by either a vote of at least five (5) members of Council, or by petition to the Council signed by ten (10) percent of the voters who voted at the preceding election for the office of Governor.

At the first meeting of the Council in January 1996 and every ten (10) years thereafter, Council shall appoint a commission of not less than five (5), nor more than nine (9) electors of the municipality, to include one (1) but no more than two (2) current City Council members. It shall be the duty of the commission to review the existing Charter and make such recommendations for revision as it may see fit. The City Solicitor shall provide advice and counsel as needed by the Commission. The Commission shall submit its written report to Council at an open meeting not later than December 31 of the same year.

Thereupon, the Council may take such action as it deems warranted with respect to such recommendations.

In the event two (2) conflicting amendments to the Charter are approved at the same election by a majority of the total number of votes cast, the one receiving the highest number of affirmative votes shall be the amendment to the Charter.

SECTION 10.05 SEVERABILITY CLAUSE.

If any section or part of section of this Charter shall be held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the remainder of this Charter, which would have been adopted without the invalid portion of such invalidity could have been known at the time of its original adoption.

ARTICLE XI TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 11.01 SUCCESSION AND VESTED RIGHT.

The City of Oxford, under this Charter, is hereby declared to be the legal successor of the Village of Oxford, under the general laws of the State of Ohio; and as such it has title to all property, real, personal, and mixed, owned by its predecessor, including all moneys on deposit and all taxes in process of collection together with all accounts receivable and rights of action. Adoption of the Charter or any amendments of it shall not impair rights vested in the City nor discharge any liability previously incurred by the City.

11/11/2020

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THE CITY OF OXFORD CHARTER

2026 CHARTER REVIEW
COMMISSION

Charter of the City of Oxford, Ohio

- Adopted by voters in 1960
- Adopted the Council-Manager form of government
- Prior to adoption of Charter, the village operated under the statutory Mayor-Council form of government with a Board of Public Affairs in charge of public utilities
- Reasons for City Manager form of government included growth and increasing complexity of village operations

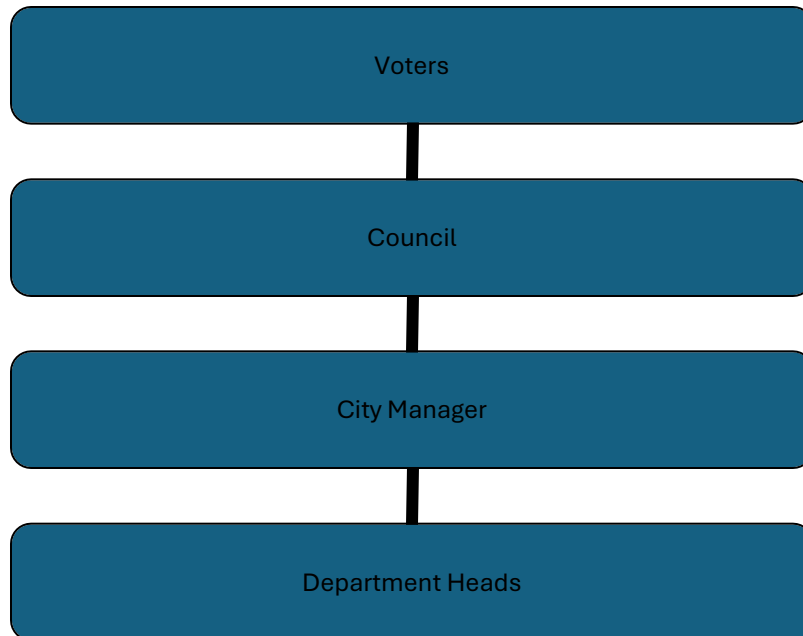
History of Council-Manager Form

- Born out of 1900's progressive reform movement
- Promoted by the National Civic League (formerly the National Municipal League) through the **Model City Charter** in 1915
- Staunton, Virginia, first community to appoint a City Manager in 1908
- Dayton, Ohio, first large city to adopt the Council/Manager (Commission/Manager) Plan in 1913

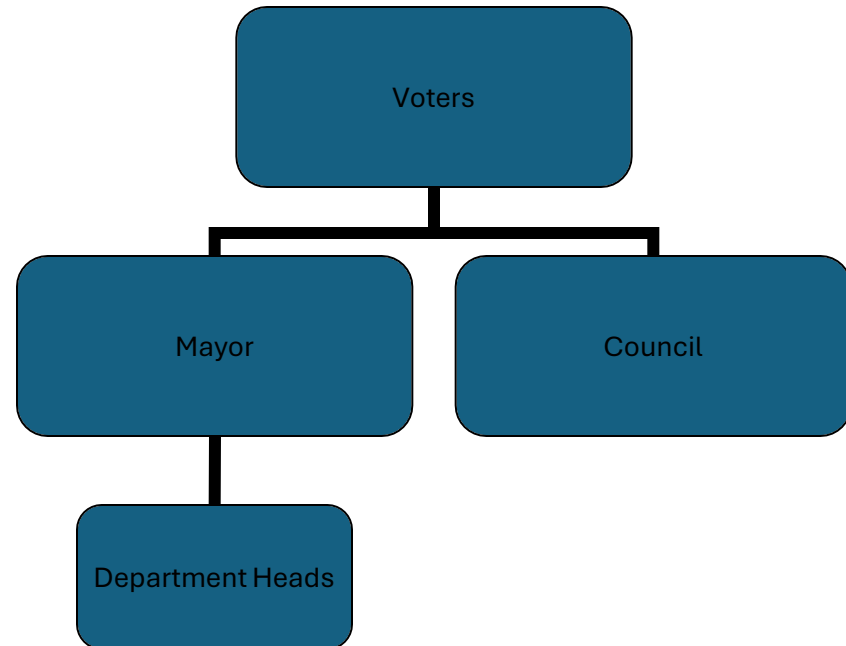
The Council-Manager Form

- Combines the political leadership of elected officials with the managerial experience of an appointed administrator.

Council-Manager Form



Mayor-Council Form



Council-Manager Form

- In Ohio...
 - 253 Total Incorporated Cities (municipalities with population over 5,000)
 - 61 Statutory Cities (e.g. Parma w/ pop. of 81,146)
 - 192 Charter Cities (e.g. Oxford)
 - 95 operate under the Mayor-Council form of government
 - 10 operate under the Mayor-Council-Administrator form of government
 - 87 operate under Council-Manager form of government

Council-Manager Form

- In Butler County...
 - 6 Incorporated Cities all with charters and Council-Manager form of government
 - Hamilton (1926)
 - Middletown (1913)
 - Fairfield (1979)
 - Oxford (1960)
 - Monroe (1974)
 - Trenton (1971)

What is a Municipal Charter?

- A municipal charter is the basic document that defines the organization, powers, functions, and essential procedures of the city government. It is comparable to the Constitution of the United States or a state's constitution. The charter is, therefore, the most important legal document of any city. Charters are granted either directly by a state legislature by way of local legislation, or indirectly under a general municipal corporation law following a referendum vote of the proposal by the affected population.
- Allows municipality to exercise powers of local self government (Home Rule) granted to it by the Ohio Constitution. "The right of the people...to control their own affairs."

Oxford Charter

- Consists of Eleven Articles
- Article I- Incorporation, Form of Government, Powers
- Article II- The Council
- Article III- Ordinances and Resolutions
- Article IV- City Manager
- Article V- Administrative Departments
- Article VI- Taxation and Borrowing
- Article VII- Finance
- Article VIII- Boards and Commissions
- Article IX- Nominations and Elections
- Article X- General Provisions
- Article XI- Transitional Provisions

Process For Proposed Charter Amendments

- Charter Review Commission submits recommendations to City Council.
- Work Session held with City Council to review recommendations.
- Council adopts ordinance to submit amendments of the charter to the electorate and to place on the ballot at the General Election (November 3, 2026).
- County Prosecutor and Ohio Secretary of State approve wording of proposed amendments.
- City publishes notice of proposed amendments.
- Electorate votes on proposed amendments.

Staff Suggested Items For Discussion

- Section 2.11(4) Eliminate restriction of more than 3 dwelling units in the Mile Square by removing all wording after first sentence.
- Section 2.12 Utility Users Liable For Own Uses And Not For Others eliminate this paragraph
- Section 3.04 Publication of Ordinances. Replace existing wording as follows: “The title of all ordinances passed by the Council shall be posted in the municipal building and on the City’s website for a period of not less than ten days and to take such other actions as provided by Council. Failure to publish as required by this Section shall not invalidate any ordinance.
- Section 4.01 Appointment Of City Manager residency requirement consider adding “...but may reside outside the City while in office only with the approval of the Council.”

Staff Suggested Items For Discussion

- Section 10.01 Official Bonds eliminate section