

## **City Oversight: Your Voice Can Help**

On Tuesday, Aug. 8, 2017 at 6:00 P.M. in the council chambers at the Northfield City Hall there will be a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the Northfield City Charter. Currently Section 3.8 of the Charter contains the following directive to the mayor:

“The Mayor shall study the administration and operations of the city and shall report to the council any neglect, dereliction of duty, or waste on the part of any officer or department of the city”

The charter commission views this section as an important oversight and safeguard to help insure efficiency and accountability in the operations of our city government. However, it appears that historically the “study” and “report” required by this section have not occurred. This is likely due to the fact that there is no specific time or time frame within which this responsibility is to be completed. To address this concern, the charter commission proposes to add the following amendment to Section 3.8:

*The report required by this subdivision shall be communicated by the mayor to the council in writing once during each mayoral term, not later than the last day of the third year of the mayoral term.*

This simple addition will provide a defined framework for the mayor to fulfill this responsibility. By limiting the requirement to just one study and report each mayoral term, the fulfillment of this requirement should not be overly burdensome for the mayor. We anticipate that the mayor would engage the services of a professional to assist with the study and report that is required.

This section is viewed by some as requiring only that the mayor report any waste, neglect, or dereliction of duty in the city administration that comes to the mayor’s attention in the normal course of the performance of the mayor’s duties. It has also been suggested that the proposed amendment creates an obligation that is not a practical or appropriate function for the

mayor; that what is required is still not clearly defined; and that requiring the study and report once each mayoral term is too much or too little.

We would like to know what you think. You can share your opinion at the public hearing on Aug 8, or you can comment by clicking on the eComment tab on the City Council meetings page : [City of Northfield-City Council](#). Comments may be submitted until 12:00 noon on Aug. 8, 2017. Getting the best government we can get is everyone's responsibility. Thank you.

Lance Heisler

Chairman, Charter Commission