



The City of **WORCESTER**



CHARTER OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER

WORCESTER HOME RULE CHARTER

AS AMENDED THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1, 2022

ARTICLE ONE

INCORPORATION: SHORT TITLE;

POWERS: DEFINITIONS

Section 1-1 Incorporation.

The inhabitants of the city of Worcester within the territorial limits established by law, shall continue to be a municipal corporation, a body corporate and politic, under the name "city of Worcester".

Section 1-2 Short Title.

This instrument shall be known and may be cited as the Worcester home rule charter.

Section 1-3 Distribution of Powers.

The administration of the fiscal, prudential and municipal affairs of the city of Worcester, with the government thereof, shall be vested in an executive branch headed by a city manager, and a legislative branch to consist of a city council.

Section 1-4 Powers of the City.

Subject only to express limitations on the exercise of any power or function by a municipal government in the constitution or general laws of the commonwealth, it is the intention and the purpose of the voters of Worcester through the adoption of this charter to secure for themselves and their government all of the powers it is possible to secure as fully and as completely as though each such power was specifically and individually enumerated herein.

Section 1-5 Construction.

The powers of the city of Worcester under this charter are to be construed liberally to its benefit and the reference to any particular power herein shall not be construed to limit the general powers of the city as stated in section 1-4.



Section 1-6 Intergovernmental Relations.

Subject only to the express limitations in the constitution or general laws of the commonwealth, the city of Worcester may exercise any of its powers or perform any of its functions, and may participate in the financing thereof, jointly or in cooperation, by contract or otherwise, with the commonwealth or any agency or political subdivision thereof, or with the United States government or any agency thereof.

Section 1-7 Definitions.

The following words and phrases as used in this charter shall, unless the context requires otherwise, have the following meanings.

(a) Charter - The word "charter" shall mean this charter and any amendment to it hereafter adopted.

(b) City - The word "city" shall mean the city of Worcester.

(c) City Agency - The words "city agency" shall mean any multiple member body, department, division or office of the city.

(d) City Bulletin Board - The words "city bulletin board" shall mean the bulletin board in city hall on which the city clerk posts official notices of meetings and upon which other official city notices are posted. It shall also mean any other bulletin boards as may be designated "city bulletin boards" by the city council.

(e) City Officer - The words "city officer" when used without further qualification shall mean a public officer as defined by law, and shall also mean a person having charge of an office or department of the city who in the exercise of his/her powers or duties exercises some portion of the sovereign power of the city.

(f) Emergency - The word "emergency" shall mean a sudden, unexpected, unforeseen happening, occurrence or condition necessitating immediate action or response.

(g) Full Council, Full Multiple Member Body - The words "full council" or "full multiple member body" shall mean the entire authorized complement of the city council, school committee or other multiple member body notwithstanding any vacancy which might exist.



(h) general laws - The words "general laws" (all lower case letters) shall mean laws enacted by the general court which apply alike to all cities and towns, to all cities, to all towns, or to a class of two or more cities and towns of which Worcester is a member.

(i) General Laws - The words "General Laws" (initial letter of each word in upper case letters) shall mean the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a codification and revision of statutes enacted on December 22, 1920, and including all amendments thereto subsequently adopted.

(j) Initiative Measure - The words "initiative measure" shall mean a measure proposed by the voters through the initiative process provided under article seven of this charter.

(k) Local Newspaper - The words "local newspaper" shall mean a newspaper of general circulation within the City, with either a weekly or daily circulation.

(l) Majority Vote - Unless otherwise specifically provided within this charter or by law, ordinance or the rules adopted by a multiple member body, the words "majority vote" shall mean a majority of those members present and voting of a multiple member body, provided a quorum is present.

(m) Measure - The word "measure" shall mean any ordinance, order, resolution, or other vote or proceeding adopted, or which might be adopted by the city council or the school committee.

(o) Multiple Member Body - The words "multiple member body" shall mean any board, commission, committee, sub-committee or other body consisting of two or more members whether elected, appointed, or otherwise constituted but not including the city council or the school committee.

(p) Referendum measure - The words "referendum measure" shall mean a measure adopted by the city council or by the school committee which is protested in accordance with the referendum procedures provided under article seven of this charter.

(q) Voters - The word "voters" shall mean registered voters of the city of Worcester.



ARTICLE TWO

CITY COUNCIL

Section 2-1 Composition, Term of Office, Legislative Powers

(a) Composition - There shall be a city council of eleven members which shall exercise the legislative powers of the city. Six of these members, to be known as councilors at-large, shall be nominated and elected by and from the voters at large. Five of these members, to be known as district councilors, shall be nominated and elected by and from the voters of each district; one such district councilor to be elected from each of the five council districts into which the city is divided in accordance with section 7-6 of this charter.

(b) Term of Office - City councilors shall be elected for terms of two years each, beginning on the first secular day of January in the year following their election and shall serve until their successors are qualified.

(c) Eligibility - Any voter shall be eligible to hold the office of councilor at-large; provided, however, that he/she shall have resided in the city for a period of at least one year. A district councilor shall at the time of his/her election be a voter of the district from which he/she is elected and shall have resided therein for a period of at least one year. If any such district councilor shall, during the term for which he/she was elected, remove to another district in the city, or be so removed by a revision of district lines, such councilor may continue to serve for the balance of the term for which he/she was elected.

(d) Legislative Powers - The city council shall have and shall exercise all the legislative powers of the city, except as such powers are reserved by this charter to the school committee or to the qualified voters of the city.

Section 2-2 Organization, Mayor

(a) Organization - The city council, elected as aforesaid, shall meet on the first secular day of January, following the regular municipal election, and the members of the city council shall severally make oath, before the city clerk or a justice of the peace, to perform faithfully the duties of their respective offices, except that any member-elect not present shall so make oath at the first regular meeting of the city council thereafter which he/she attends. The organization of the city council shall take place as aforesaid, notwithstanding the absence, death,



refusal to serve or non-election of one or more of the members; provided, that a majority of all the members elected to the city council are present and have qualified. For the purposes of organization, the city clerk shall be temporary chair until the mayor or vice-chair has qualified.

(b) Selection of the Mayor and Vice-chair - All candidates nominated in the preliminary election for the office of councilor at large in accordance with section 7-4, shall appear on the ballot as candidates for councilor at large in the regular municipal election and shall also be listed on a separate portion of the ballot as candidates for the office of mayor. The candidate elected to the office of councilor at large and receiving the highest number of votes for the office of mayor shall be mayor. The candidate elected to the office of councilor at large and receiving the next highest number of votes for the office of mayor shall be vice-chair of the city council.

A candidate duly nominated and seeking election solely for the office of councilor at large may withdraw his/her name from nomination to the office of mayor in accordance with the procedures set forth in section 7-4 (e) but shall not be replaced by the candidate with the next highest number of votes in the preliminary election.

(c) Powers and Duties of the Mayor - The mayor shall be recognized as the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes and shall be recognized by the courts for the purpose of serving civil process and by the governor for military purposes. He/she shall be chair of the city council.

The mayor shall have no power of veto but shall have the same powers as any other member of the city council to vote upon all measures coming before it. He/she shall perform such duties consistent with his/her office as may be provided by this charter, by ordinance, or by majority vote of the city council.

The mayor shall serve as chair of the school committee. He/she shall have no power of veto but shall have the same powers as any other member of the school committee to vote upon all measures coming before it.

The mayor shall have no power of appointment except those powers specifically granted to the mayor in this charter and except as to the appointment of the secretaries, stenographers, clerks, telephone operators, and messengers connected with his/her office whose appointment shall not be subject to the civil



service laws. The mayor may remove said appointees without a hearing and without making a statement as to the cause of their removal.

(d) Council Vice-Chair - During the absence or disability of the mayor, or during the time such office is vacant, the vice-chair shall perform the duties of the mayor.

(e) Vacancies in the Office of Mayor or Vice-Chair - If the office of mayor or vice-chair become vacant, the vacancy shall be filled by the councilor-at-large receiving the next highest number of votes for mayor at the preceding regular municipal election, provided such person remains eligible and willing to serve. The board of election commissioners shall certify such candidate to the office of mayor or vice-chair to serve for the balance of the then unexpired term. If there be no candidate eligible and willing to serve to fill a vacancy in the office of mayor or vice-chair, the city council shall, by majority vote, elect one of its members to fill such office for the unexpired term. No vacancy in the office of mayor or vice-chair shall be filled so long as there is any vacancy in the council.

Section 2-3 Prohibitions.

Neither the city council nor any of its committees or members shall direct or request the appointment of any person to, or his/her removal from, office by the city manager or any of his/her subordinates, or in any manner take part in the appointment or removal of officers and employees in that portion of the service of the city for whose administration the city manager is responsible. Except for the purpose of inquiry and as otherwise provided in section 2-8 of this charter, the city council and its members shall deal with that portion of the service of the city as aforesaid solely through the city manager and neither the city council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinate of the city manager either publicly or privately.

Any member of the city council who violates, or participates in the violation of, any provision of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars, and upon final conviction thereof his/her office in the city council shall thereby be vacated.

Section 2-4 Salaries.

The mayor and the members of the city council shall receive for their services such salary as the city council shall by ordinance determine, and they



shall receive no other compensation from the city. No increase or reduction in the salaries of mayor or city councilor shall take effect during the year in which such increase or reduction is voted, and no change in such salaries shall be made between the election of a new council and the qualification of the new council.

Section 2-5 General Powers.

Except as otherwise provided by general law or by this charter, all powers of the city shall be vested in the city council which shall provide for their exercise and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed upon the city by law.

Section 2-6 Exercise of Powers; Quorum; Rules.

(a) Exercise of Powers - Except as otherwise provided by general law or by this charter, the legislative powers of the city council may be exercised as provided by ordinance or rule adopted by it.

(b) Quorum - The presence of six members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a smaller number may meet and adjourn from time to time. Except as otherwise provided by general law or by this charter, the affirmative vote of six members shall be required to adopt any measure. A majority vote of those members present, however, shall be sufficient to adjourn any meeting of the city council.

(c) Rules of Procedure - The city council shall from time to time establish rules for its proceedings which shall be made available to the public and the press. Such rules shall include and be subject to the following.

(i) Regular and special meetings shall be held at a time and place fixed by ordinance.

(ii) The mayor or the vice-chair of the city council, or any five members thereof, may at any time call a special meeting by causing written notice, stating the time and place of such meeting and signed by the councilor(s) calling the same, to be delivered in hand to each member of the city council, or left at his/her usual dwelling place, at least twelve hours before the time of such meeting.

Except in the case of an emergency, notice of such special meeting, in accordance with chapter thirty-nine, section twenty-three B of the General Laws,



shall be posted on the city bulletin board at least forty-eight hours in advance of the time set for such special meeting.

(iii) Subject to the requirements of section twenty-three B of chapter thirty-nine of the General Laws, meetings of the city council may also be held at any time when all the members of the city council are present and consent thereto.

(iv) Except when meeting in executive session as authorized by section twenty-three B of chapter thirty-nine of the General Laws, all meetings of the city council shall be open to the press and to the public.

(v) At any meeting of the city council, the citizens and employees of the city shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard regarding any matter presently under consideration by the council.

(vi) Every matter coming before the city council for action shall be put to a vote, the result of which shall be duly recorded. All final votes of the city council on questions involving the expenditure of five hundred dollars or more, or upon the request of any member, shall be by roll call and the yeas and nays shall be entered on the record. A full, accurate and up to date journal of the proceedings of the city council shall be kept by the city clerk and shall be open to the inspection of the public, with reasonable promptness following each meeting.

(d) The mayor, if present, shall preside at the city council meetings and may vote. In the absence of the mayor, the vice-chair of the city council shall preside and, in the absence of both, a temporary chair shall be chosen, who shall serve during the absence of both the mayor and vice-chair.

Section 2-7 Access to Information.

The city council may, at any time, request from the city manager, specific information on any municipal matter within its jurisdiction, and may request him/her to be present to answer written questions relating thereto at a meeting to be held not earlier than one week from the date of receipt by the city manager of said questions. The city manager, shall personally, or through the head of a department or a member of a board, attend such meeting and publicly answer all such questions. The person so attending shall not be obliged to answer questions relating to any other matter. The city manager may attend and address the city council in person or through the head of a department or a member of a board, upon any subject and at any time.



Section 2-8 Officers Elected by the Council.

(a) City Clerk - The city council shall, by majority vote, elect a city clerk to hold office for two years or for such other term as provided by general or special law, and until his/her successor is qualified. The city clerk shall have such powers and perform such duties as the city council may require, in addition to such duties as may be prescribed by law. He/she shall be, ex-officio, clerk of the city council, and shall keep records of its proceedings; but in case of his/her absence or disability or of a vacancy in the office, the city council shall elect a temporary city clerk, who shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of his/her duties and shall act as clerk of the city council until the city clerk resumes his/her duties or a new city clerk is qualified.

(b) City Auditor - The city council shall, by majority vote, elect a city auditor to hold office for two years or for such other term as provided by general or special law, and until his/her successor is qualified. He/she shall keep and have charge of the accounts of the city and, from time to time, shall audit the books and accounts of all departments, commissions, boards and offices of the city, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as the city council may prescribe, in addition to such duties as may be prescribed by law. In the event of the absence or disability of the city auditor or of a vacancy in the office, the city council shall elect a temporary city auditor, who shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of his/her duties and shall act as city auditor until the city auditor resumes his/her duties or a new city auditor is qualified.

* **(c) Citizen Complaints Officer** - The city council shall, by majority vote, elect a citizen complaints officer to hold office for two years and until his/her successor is qualified. The citizen complaints officer shall be responsible for processing citizen complaints and inquiries that are directed or referred to him/her. He/she shall investigate and analyze data on all citizen complaints received by him/her and shall regularly submit reports as directed by the city council. In the performance of his/her duties, he/she shall confer with and receive the cooperation of the city manager and the department heads and executive officers of the city agencies.

In the event of the absence or disability of the citizen complaints officer or of a vacancy in the office, the city council shall elect a temporary citizen complaints officer, who shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of his/her duties and shall act as citizen complaints officer until the citizen complaints officer resumes his/her duties or a new citizen complaints officer is qualified. .



*** Section 2-8(c) repealed by the citizens of Worcester, see Addendum**

Section 2-9 Ordinances and Other Measures.

(a) Emergency Ordinances - No ordinance shall be passed finally on the date it is introduced, except in cases of special emergency involving the health or safety of the people or their property.

No ordinance shall be regarded as an emergency ordinance unless the emergency is defined and declared in a preamble to such ordinance, separately voted upon, and receiving the affirmative vote of eight members of the city council.

No ordinance making a grant, renewal or extension, whatever its kind or nature, of any franchise or special privilege of any kind or nature, shall be passed as an emergency measure, and except as provided in sections seventy and seventy-one of chapter one hundred and sixty four and in chapter one hundred and sixty-six of the General Laws, no such grant, renewal or extension shall be made otherwise than by ordinance.

(b) Measures, In General - Excepting only proposed ordinances, appropriation orders and loan authorizations, the city council may pass any other measure through all of its stages at any one meeting, provided that no member of the city council shall object; but, if any single member objects, a vote on the measure shall be postponed to the next meeting of the city council.

On the first occasion that the question of adopting any measure is put to the city council, except an emergency measure as defined in section 2-9(a), if a single member objects to the taking of a vote, the vote shall be postponed until the next regular or special meeting of the city council. If when the matter is next taken up for a vote, four or more members object to the taking of the vote, the matter shall be further postponed for not less than an additional five days. This procedure shall not be used more than once for any measure, notwithstanding any amendment made to the original measure.

(c) Publication - Every proposed ordinance, or loan order, except emergency ordinances as provided in section 2-9(a) and revenue loan orders, shall be published once in full in at least one local newspaper, and in any additional manner as may be provided by ordinance, at least ten days before its final passage. After final passage, the ordinance as amended and completed, shall again be published once in the aforesaid manner; provided that if any ordinance or



proposed ordinance, or codification thereof, shall exceed in length eight octavo pages of ordinary book print, then there shall be no requirement to advertise as aforesaid if the same is published by the city council in a municipal bulletin or printed pamphlet, but otherwise in conformity with said provisions, except for zoning ordinances or amendments thereto, a summary of which shall be published at least two times in a local newspaper. The publication of such zoning summaries shall include a statement indicating where copies of the ordinance may be examined and obtained and a statement that claims of invalidity by reason of any defect in the procedure of adoption may only be made within ninety days after the posting or the second publication.

Emergency ordinances shall take effect on the date of their passage and shall be published at the earliest practicable moment.

Section 2-10 Filling of Vacancies

(a) Councilors-at-large - If a vacancy shall occur in the office of councilor-at-large, the vacancy shall be filled in descending order of votes received by the candidate for the office of councilor-at-large at the preceding regular municipal election who received the largest number of votes for the office of councilor-at-large without being elected, provided such person remains eligible and willing to serve. The board of election commissioners shall certify such candidate to the office of councilor-at-large to serve for the balance of the then unexpired term.

(b) District Councilor - If a vacancy shall occur in the office of district councilor it shall be filled in the same manner as provided in section 2-10(a) for the office of councilor-at-large, except that the list shall be of the candidates for the office of district councilor in the district in which the vacancy occurs, provided however, if there be no candidate on such list who remains eligible and willing to serve, the vacancy shall be filled at a special election called by the city council to be held within ninety days after the city council is notified by the board of election commissioners that the vacancy cannot be filled as aforesaid.



ARTICLE THREE

CITY MANAGER

Section 3-1 Appointment, Term of Office, Qualifications.

(a) Appointment - The city council shall appoint a city manager who shall be sworn to the faithful performance of his/her duties and who shall be the chief administrative and executive officer of the city responsible for the administration of all city agencies whether established before the adoption of this charter or thereafter, except that of the city clerk, city auditor, * **citizen complaints officer (see Addendum page 109)**, or any official appointed by the governor or any body elected by the voters of the city.

(b) Term - The city council shall enter into an employment agreement with the city manager for a term not to exceed five years; the city manager may, however, serve consecutive successive terms. The terms of the employment agreement shall be consistent with the provisions of this charter.

(c) Qualifications - The city manager shall be appointed on the basis of his/her administrative and executive qualifications only and need not be a resident of the city or commonwealth when appointed; provided, however, that he/she shall become a resident of the city within six months after his/her appointment. No person, age seventy years or over, shall be eligible to serve as city manager.

No member of the city council shall during his/her term of office be chosen as city manager and no person who has within two years been elected to or served in any elective office in the city or in Worcester county shall be chosen as city manager.

Section 3-2 Power and Duties.

The city manager shall have and possess, and may exercise, all the power, rights and duties, other than legislative, commonly associated with municipal chief executive or administrative officers. The city manager shall be the chief administrative and executive officer of the city and shall be responsible to the city council for the proper administration of all city affairs properly entrusted to him/her by the city council or under this charter. The powers and duties of the city manager shall include, but shall not be limited to the following.



(1) To act as chief conservator of the peace within the city. He/she shall have all the authority and power conferred upon a city manager under section forty-two of chapter thirty-three of the General Laws.

(2) To supervise the administration of the affairs of the city.

(3) To ensure that, within the city, the general laws and the ordinances, resolutions, and regulations of the city council are faithfully executed.

(4) To make such recommendations to the city council concerning the affairs of the city as he/she may deem necessary and desirable.

(5) To make reports to the city council from time to time upon the affairs of the city.

(6) To keep the city council fully advised of the city's financial condition and its future needs.

(7) To prepare and submit to the city council budgets as required by general law and article five of this charter. He/she may require the submission by all city agencies under his/her jurisdiction of detailed estimates of the full amounts necessary to meet their expenses for the next fiscal year pursuant to section 31A of chapter 44 of the General Laws.

Section 3-3 Appointments and Removals.

(a) Department Heads, Officers, and Employees - Such officers and employees as the city council, with the advice of the city manager, shall determine are necessary for the proper administration of the city agencies for whose administration the city manager is responsible, shall be appointed and may be removed, by the city manager. The city manager shall report every appointment and removal made by him/her to the city council at the next meeting thereof following such appointment or removal. The city manager may authorize the head of a city agency, for whose administration he/she is responsible, to appoint and remove subordinates in such city agency. All appointments by or under the authority of the city manager, if subject to chapter thirty-one of the General Laws and the rules and regulations made under authority thereof, shall be made in accordance therewith, and all other appointments as aforesaid shall be on the basis of executive and administrative ability and training and experience in the work to be performed.



(b) Boards and Commissions - Every board and commission of the city shall be classified as executive, regulatory, or advisory by the city manager subject to approval, by majority vote, of the city council. Classification of boards and commissions shall be made in accordance with these definitions: boards and commissions classified as executive shall be those which set policy for a city department and/or act in the nature of city departments such as the airport commission, the board of trustees of the city hospital and the board of health; boards and commissions classified as regulatory shall be those which are administrative and/or adjudicatory in nature establishing policy in specific areas and/or applying laws and ordinances such as the conservation commission, the licensing commission and the zoning board of appeals; boards and commissions classified as advisory shall be those which provide information and advice to the city agencies, the city manager, the city council, or the school committee, such as the advisory committee on the status of women and the city manager's youth council.

(i) Appointment - Members of all boards and commissions classified as executive and regulatory shall be appointed by the city manager. Confirmation by the city council shall not be required for said appointments. Appointments to all boards and commissions classified as advisory shall be subject to confirmation, by majority vote, of the city council. The city manager shall follow open, fair and equitable procedures in making appointments to all boards and commissions in the city. The city manager shall not make or seek confirmation from the city council on any such appointments until he/she has received the list of names from the citizen advisory council in accordance with section 3-4. The city manager shall not be limited to those names submitted by the citizens advisory council in making appointments to boards or commissions.

(ii) Term - Members of boards and commissions shall serve such terms of office as are provided in this charter, or by general law or ordinance; provided, however, that no member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms or a maximum of ten consecutive years on the same board and commission.

(iii) Restrictions - Membership on boards and commissions classified as regulatory or advisory, consisting of five or fewer persons shall be restricted so that no more than one member shall reside in any one district; on boards and commissions consisting of six to ten persons, no more than two members shall reside in any one district; and on boards and commissions consisting of more than ten members, no more than three members shall reside in any one district. As used



herein, a district shall be one of the five districts created for the election of city councillors, in accordance with section 7-6 of this charter.

(iv) Eligibility - To be eligible for membership on a board or commission classified as regulatory or advisory, an individual must reside within the district from which he/she is appointed for a period of at least one year immediately prior to appointment.

The residence of a member of a board or commission shall be determined at the time of his/her most recent such appointment. If a member of a board or commission classified as regulatory or removed by a revision of district lines, such member may continue to serve for the balance of the term for which he/she was appointed. Ex-officio members of any board or commission, for the purpose of appointment under this section, shall be deemed to be resident of no district.

Section 3-4 Citizen Advisory Council.

To assist the city manager in making appointments to boards and commissions in accordance with the preceding section, a citizen advisory council shall be established as follows.

(a) Composition, Appointment –

The citizen advisory council shall consist of eleven members, appointed by the city manager, subject to confirmation, by majority vote of the city council.

(b) Term –

Each such member shall serve a term of three years and shall be restricted to serving two consecutive full terms.

(c) Restrictions -

Membership on the citizen advisory council shall be restricted so as to ensure that a minimum of two members thereof reside in each district. As used herein, a district shall be one of the five districts created for the election of city councilors in accordance with section 7-6 of this charter.

(d) Duties and Responsibilities –



The citizen advisory council shall be responsible for publicizing vacancies on boards and commissions, recruiting nominees for any such vacancy, and advising the city manager of candidates for appointment to boards and commissions.

The citizen advisory council shall submit two or more names to the city manager for every vacant position. Any such candidates submitted shall meet the requirements for appointment to boards and commissions contained in section 3-3. The citizen advisory council shall make every effort to seek applicants from underrepresented groups in the city and shall give equal consideration to applicants from all segments of the community in submitting names to the city manager for appointment.

Section 3-5 Regulations.

Officers and employees of the city appointed by, or under the authority of, the city manager shall perform the duties required of them by the city manager, under general regulations of the city council. Any violation of this section shall constitute sufficient grounds for removal of any such officer or employee.

Section 3-6 Compensation.

The city manager shall receive such compensation as the city council shall fix by ordinance.

Section 3-7 Evaluation.

The city council shall annually, in open session except as provided by section twenty-three B of chapter thirty-nine of the General Laws, conduct a general review and evaluation of the professional competence and job performance of the city manager.

Section 3-8 Removal.

Before the city manager may be removed prior to the end of the contract term, if he/she so demands, he/she shall be given a written statement of the reasons alleged for his/her removal and shall have the right to be heard publicly thereon at a meeting of the city council prior to the final vote on the question of his/her removal, but pending and during such hearing the city council may suspend him/her from office. The action of the city council in suspending or removing the city manager shall be final, it being the intention of this provision to



vest all authority and fix all responsibility for such suspension or removal in the city council.

Section 3-9 Acting City Manager.

(a) Temporary absence - The city manager shall, by letter filed with the city clerk, designate a qualified city officer or administrative employee to exercise the power and perform the duties of his/her office during his/her temporary absence. During the first fifteen business days of a temporary absence of the city manager, the city council may revoke such designation by two-thirds vote of the full council and may designate another qualified city officer or administrative employee to serve as a temporary city manager. After the expiration of fifteen business days, the city council may, by majority vote, designate an acting city manager to serve until the city manager shall return and resume his/her duties.

(b) Acting city manager - In the event of the suspension of the city manager or a vacancy in said office, the city council shall designate a qualified city officer or administrative employee to serve as acting city manager until the city manager is reinstated or a new city manager is appointed.



ARTICLE FOUR

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Section 4-1 Composition, Term of Office and Powers.

(a) Composition - The school committee shall consist of the mayor, who shall chair the committee, 6 district members and 2 members elected at-large.

(b) Term of Office - School committee members shall be elected for terms of two years each, beginning on the first secular day of January in the year following their election and shall serve until their successors are qualified.

(c) Eligibility –

(1) Any voter shall be eligible to hold the office of at-large school committee member; provided, however, that the person shall have resided within the city for 1 year immediately prior to the election.

(2) Any voter shall be eligible to hold the office of a district school committee member; provided, however, that the person shall have resided within the district for 1 year immediately prior to the election.

(3) For the 2023 school committee election only, if the school committee district boundaries have not been finalized by September 1, 2022, then the date by which a person shall have been a resident of the district shall be 60 days following finalization of the school committee district boundaries.

(4) In the event that a district school committee member relocates their residence to a different district within the city during their term of office, such school committee member shall be permitted to serve the remainder of their 2-year term but shall not be eligible for reelection in the same district.

(d) Powers and Duties - The school committee shall have all the powers which are conferred on school committees by general law and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by the charter, by ordinance, or otherwise. Its powers and duties shall include, but shall not be limited to the following.

(1) To take general charge of all the public schools in the city, including the evening schools and evening high schools, and all special programs conducted by the school department.



(2) To appoint a superintendent of the schools who shall be charged with the day to day administration of the school system, subject to policy directives adopted by the school committee. The school committee may award a contract to the superintendent of schools for a term not to exceed six years, in accordance with section forty-one of chapter seventy-one of the General Laws.

(3) To appoint all other officers and employees connected with the schools, define their duties, fix their compensation, makes rules concerning their tenure of office, and to suspend or remove them at pleasure, subject to any applicable provision of the general law.

(4) To make all reasonable rules and regulations consistent with general law, for the management of the school department.

(5) To take control of all school buildings and grounds connected therewith. No site for a school building shall be acquired by the city unless the approval of the site by the school committee is first obtained. No plans for the construction of or alterations, with the exception of ordinary repairs, in a school building shall be accepted, and no such work shall be commenced on the construction or alteration of a school building unless the approval of the school committee and the city manager shall have first been obtained.

(6) To provide, when necessary, for temporary accommodation for school purposes. The school committee shall furnish all school buildings with proper fixtures, furniture and equipment and shall provide ordinary maintenance of all school buildings and grounds.

Section 4-2 Organization - Mayor, Vice-Chair.

(a) Organization - The school committee shall organize on the first secular day of January, in accordance with the procedures set forth for the organization of the city council in section 2-2.

(b) Chair - The mayor shall serve as chair of the school committee and shall have the same power to vote on every matter coming before the school committee, as any other member.

(c) Vice Chair - Once the school committee shall have organized and at that meeting, the committee shall elect one of its members, by majority vote of all the members elected, to serve as vice-chair. The vice-chair shall preside at all meetings of the committee at which the mayor is not present.



Section 4-3 Conflict of Interest.

Except as otherwise authorized by law, no member of the school committee shall, while a member thereof, hold any other office or position in the school department, the salary or compensation for which is payable out of the city treasury.

Section 4-4 Salaries.

The members of the school committee, other than the mayor, shall receive as compensation for their services a salary equal to fifty percent of the salary established for members of the city council in accordance with section 2-4 of this charter.

Section 4-5 Meetings of the School Committee.

(a) Rules of Procedure - The school committee shall from time to time establish rules for its proceedings which shall include and be subject to the following.

(i) All meetings of the school committee shall be open to the press and to the public, except as otherwise provided by section twenty-three B of chapter thirty-nine of the General Laws.

(ii) The vote on any particular measure shall be by roll call when requested by any member and the yeas and nays shall be so recorded.

Section 4-6 Vacancies.

(a) At-large school committee member -

If a vacancy shall occur amongst the 2 at-large members of the school committee, said vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as provided in section 2-10(a) for the filling of vacancies in the office of councilor-at-large, from among the candidates for election to the office of at-large school committee members at the preceding regular municipal election.



(b) District school committee member -

If a vacancy shall occur in the office of district school committee member it shall be filled in the same manner as provided in section 4-6(a) for the office of at-large school committee member, except that the list shall be of the candidates for the office of district school committee member in the district in which the vacancy occurs; provided, however, if there be no candidate on such list who remains eligible and willing to serve, the vacancy shall be filled at a special election called by the city council to be held within 90 days after the city council is notified by the board of election commissioners that the vacancy cannot be filled as aforesaid.



ARTICLE FIVE

FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

Section 5-1 Submission of Budget.

Within the period prescribed by general law, the city manager shall submit to the city council an annual budget which shall be a statement of the amounts recommended by him/her for proposed expenditures of the city for the next fiscal year. The annual budget shall be classified and designated so as to show separately with respect to each city agency or undertaking for which an appropriation is recommended as follows.

(1) Ordinary maintenance, which shall also include debt and interest charges matured and maturing during the next fiscal year, and shall be subdivided as follows.

(a) Salaries and wages of officers, officials and employees other than laborers or persons performing the duties of laborers; and

(b) Ordinary maintenance not included under (a); and

(2) Proposed expenditures for other than ordinary maintenance, including additional equipment, the estimated cost of which exceeds one thousand dollars.

The foregoing shall not prevent the city, upon recommendation of the city manager and with approval, by majority vote, of the city council, from adopting additional classifications and designations.

Section 5-2 Action on the Budget.

(a) Public Hearing - The city council may, and upon written request of at least ten registered voters shall, give notice of a public hearing to be held on the annual budget, prior to final action thereon, but not less than seven days after publication of such notice in a local newspaper. At the time and place so advertised, or at any time or place to which such public hearing may from time to time be adjourned, the city council shall hold a public hearing on the annual budget as submitted by the city manager, at which all interested persons shall be given an opportunity to be heard for or against the proposed expenditures or any item thereof.



(b) Adoption - The city council may, by majority vote, make appropriations for the purposes recommended and may reduce or reject any amount recommended in the annual budget, but except on recommendation of the city manager, shall not increase any amount in or the total of the annual budget, nor add thereto any amount for a purpose not included therein, except as provided in section thirty-three of chapter forty-four of the General Laws. Except as otherwise permitted by law or by this charter, all amounts appropriated by the city council, as provided in this section, shall be for the purposes specified. In setting up an appropriation order or orders based on the annual budget, the city council shall use, so far as possible, the same classifications required for the annual budget. If the city council fails to take action with respect to any amount recommended in the annual budget, either by approving, reducing or rejecting the same, within forty-five days after its receipt of the budget, such amount shall, without any action by the city council, become a part of the appropriations for the year, and shall be available for the purposes specified.

If the city manager shall fail to submit the annual budget to the city council within the period prescribed by general law, the city council shall within thirty days upon its own initiative prepare the annual budget, as far as apt. Within fifteen days after such preparation of the annual budget, the city council shall proceed to act by voting thereon and all amounts so voted shall thereupon be valid appropriations for the purposes stated therein to the same extent as though based upon a city manager's annual budget, but subject, however, such requirements, if any, as may be imposed by law. If the city council fails to take action with respect to any amount recommended in the annual budget, either by approving, reducing, or rejecting the same, within fifteen days after such preparation, such amount shall, without further action by the city council, become a part of the appropriations for the year, and be available for the purposes specified.

Section 5-3 Supplementary Budgets, Other Appropriations.

Nothing in this section shall prevent the city council, acting upon the written recommendation of the city manager, from voting appropriations, not in excess of the amount so recommended, either prior or subsequent to the passage of the annual budget.

In case of the failure of the city manager to transmit to the city council a written recommendation for an appropriation for any purpose not included in the annual budget, which is deemed necessary by the city council, after having been so requested by majority vote thereof, the city council, after the expiration of seven



days from such vote, upon its own initiative may make such appropriation by a vote of at least two thirds of its members, and shall in all cases clearly specify the amount to be expended for each particular purpose, but no appropriation may be voted hereunder so as to fix specific salaries of employees under the direction of boards elected by the people, other than the city council.

Section 5-4 Transfer of Appropriations.

On recommendation of the city manager, the city council may, by majority vote, transfer any amount appropriated for the use of any department to another appropriation to the same department, but no transfer shall be made of any amount appropriated for the use of any department to the appropriation for any other department except by a two-thirds vote of the city council on recommendation of the city manager and with the written approval of the amount of such transfer by the department having control of the appropriation from which the transfer is proposed to be made. No approval other than that expressly provided herein shall be required for any transfer under the provisions of this section.

Section 5-5 Capital Outlay Program.

(a) Submission - The city manager shall prepare and submit to the city council a five year capital outlay program at least three months prior to the final date for submission of a proposed annual operating budget.

(b) Contents - The capital outlay program shall include:

(1) A clear general summary of its contents.

(2) A listing of all capital expenditures proposed to be made during the five fiscal years next ensuing, with appropriate financial and other details concerning each such expenditure.

(3) Cost estimates, proposed methods of financing, and a time schedule for each such expenditure.

(4) The estimated annual cost of operating or maintaining any facilities to be acquired or constructed.

The above information shall be revised and extended, annually; the foregoing shall not prevent the city, upon recommendation of the city manager



and with the approval, by majority vote, of the city council, from adopting additional classifications.

Section 5-6 Purchase or Taking of Land for Municipal and Other Purposes.

At the request of any department, and with the approval of the city manager and the city council, the city council may, in the name of the city, purchase, or take by eminent domain under chapter seventy-nine of the General Laws, any land within the city limits for any municipal purpose, and without the request of any department, but with like approval, the city council may, in the name of the city, purchase or take by eminent domain under said chapter seventy-nine, any land within the City limits for the purpose of conveying the same, with or without consideration, to the commonwealth for the use of a regional community college. Whenever the price proposed to be paid for land for any municipal purpose is more than twenty-five percent higher than its average assessed valuation during the previous three years, the land shall not be purchased but shall be taken as aforesaid. No land shall be taken or purchased until an appropriation by loan or otherwise for the general purpose for which land is needed has been made by the city council by a two-thirds vote of all its members; nor shall a price be paid in excess of the appropriation, unless a larger sum is awarded by a court of competent jurisdiction. All proceedings in the taking of land shall be under the advice of the law department of the city.

Section 5-7 City Manager to Approve Certain Contracts; Surety Bonds, etc.

All contracts made by any city agency where the amount involved is two thousand dollars or more shall be in writing, and no such contract shall be deemed to have been made or executed until the approval of the city manager and also of the officer or the head of the department or of the chair of the board, as the case may be, making the contract is affixed thereto. Any contract made as aforesaid may be required to be accompanied by a bond with sureties satisfactory to the board or official having the matter in charge, or by a deposit of money, certified check or other security for the faithful performance thereof, and such bonds or other securities shall be deposited with the city treasurer until the contract has been carried out in all respects; and no such contract shall be altered except by a written agreement of the contractor, the sureties on his/her bond, if any, and the officer, department or board, as the case may be, making the contract, with the approval of the city manager, affixed thereto. Any cash deposit or check payable to the city received as security for performance under this section may be deposited by said



treasurer in any bank or trust company under a separate account to be known as a performance deposit account.

The provisions of this section shall be deemed to have been complied with on all purchases made under the provisions of sections twenty-two A and twenty-two B of chapter seven of the General Laws when one municipality acting on behalf of other municipalities complies with the provisions of this section, or when purchases are made from a vendor holding a contract with the commonwealth for the item or items being purchased.



ARTICLE SIX

CITY AGENCIES

Section 6-1 Reorganization of City Agencies.

(a) Submission - The city manager may from time to time prepare and submit to the city council reorganization plans which may, subject to applicable provisions of the general laws and this charter, reorganize, consolidate or abolish any city agency, in whole or in part, or establish new city agencies, as he/she deems necessary or expedient. Any such reorganization plan shall be accompanied by an explanatory message when submitted.

(b) City Council Action - Every such reorganization plan shall upon receipt by the city clerk be referred to an appropriate committee of the city council which shall, not more than thirty days later, hold a public hearing on the matter and shall, within ten days following such hearing, report either that it approves or that it disapproves of the plan. A reorganization plan shall become effective ninety days after the date it is received by the city council unless the city council has prior to that date voted to disapprove the reorganization plan, or unless a later effective date is specified in the plan. A reorganization plan presented by the city manager to the city council under this section shall not be amended by it, but shall either be approved or rejected as submitted.

(c) Publication - A current record of any reorganization plan adopted under this article shall be kept on file in the office of the city clerk and copies of all such plans shall be included as an appendix in any publication of the ordinances of the city.



ARTICLE SEVEN

NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, INITIATIVE, AND REFERENDUM

Section 7-1 Board of Election Commissioners.

(a) Composition - The board of election commissioners shall consist of five members, of whom two shall always represent each one of the two leading political parties, as defined in section one of chapter fifty of the General Laws; and one person who shall not represent either of said political parties. One member shall reside in each of the five districts created for the election of city councilors in accordance with section 7-6 of this charter.

(b) Appointment, Term of Office - The city manager, subject to approval, by majority vote of the city council, shall appoint the members of the board of election commissioners in accordance with paragraph (a). Appointment of the two members representing the two leading political parties shall be made from a list to be submitted by the city committee of the political party from the members of which the position is to be filled, containing the names of three enrolled members of such party resident in the city and meeting the requirements of paragraph (a), selected by a majority vote at a duly called meeting, at which a quorum is present of such committee; and every member of said board shall serve until the expiration of his/her term and until his/her successor has qualified; provided, however, that if the chair of the city committee has not submitted such list to the city manager within forty-five days after notification to said chair by certified mail, the city manager shall make such appointment without reference to said list. Such appointments shall be for a term of four years beginning April first, except that any appointment to fill a vacancy shall be for the unexpired term and shall be filled in the same manner as aforesaid.

(c) Organization - The board shall organize annually in the month of April by the choice of a chair and a secretary. Where the members are unable to agree upon a chair and a secretary, such officers shall be designated by the city manager. The secretary shall keep a full and accurate record of the proceedings of the board and shall perform such other duties as the board may require.

(d) Power and duties - All the powers, rights, privileges, liabilities and duties relating to caucuses, primaries and elections, by law vested in and imposed upon mayors, city managers, boards of alderman, selectman, city or town clerks and board of registrars of voters, except the power and duty of giving notice of elections



and fixing the days and hours of holding the same, shall be vested in and performed by the board of election commissioners.

The board shall have such other powers and duties as provided under section sixteen A of chapter fifty-one of the General Laws, or otherwise prescribed to said board by general law.

The board may recommend such assistant commissioners and such assistants as it deems necessary; the two leading political parties shall be equally represented with respect to said appointments. Said assistant commissioners shall have such powers and perform such duties as the board may require. Persons appointed to serve temporarily as assistant commissioners or as temporary assistant commissioners, shall not be subject to chapter thirty-one.

(e) Compensation - The members of the board of election commissioners shall receive such compensation for their services as the city manager and city council may determine.

Section 7-2 City Elections: General: Preliminary.

The regular municipal election shall be held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in each odd numbered year.

The City manager and city council may fix the date of the preliminary election and may fix the time for filing nomination papers and for certification of the names thereon. Any action taken by the city manager and city council fixing any date as authorized by this section shall be taken not later than the sixtieth day prior to the date otherwise provided by general or special law, and if not so fixed, general or special law shall otherwise apply thereto.

Notice of such action shall be published in one or more local newspapers, if any, or posted in at least five public places, including the city bulletin board, within the city.

Section 7-3 Non-Partisan Elections.

All elections for city offices shall be non-partisan and election ballots shall be printed without any party mark, emblem, or other designation whatsoever.



Section 7-4 Preliminary Elections.

(a) Statement and Petition of Candidate for Nomination –

There shall not be printed on the official ballot for use at such preliminary election the name of any candidate for nomination at such election, unless he/she shall have filed, within the time period required, with the board of election commissioners a statement in writing of his/her candidacy, and with it a petition signed by the voters as required by paragraph (c); said statement and petition shall be in substantially the following form.

Statement of Candidate

Form of Statement - I (), on oath declare that I reside at (number if any) on (name of street) in the city of Worcester; that I am a voter therein, qualified to vote for a candidate for the office of (name of office) for (state the term) to be voted for at the preliminary election to be held on Tuesday, the day of , nineteen hundred and , and I request that my name be printed as such candidate on the official ballot for use at said preliminary election.

(signed)

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ss.

Subscribed and sworn to on this day of , nineteen hundred and , before me.

(signed)

Justice of the Peace or

(Notary Public)

Petition Accompanying Statement of Candidate

Form of Petition - Whereas (name of candidate) is a candidate for nomination for the office of (state the office) for (state the term), we, the undersigned, voters of the city of Worcester, duly qualified to vote for a candidate for said office, do hereby request that the name of said (name of candidate) as a candidate for nomination for said office be printed on the official ballot to be used



at the preliminary election to be held on the Tuesday of _____, nineteen hundred and _____. We further state that we believe him/her to be of good moral character and qualified to perform the duties of the office.

No acceptance by the candidate for nomination named in the said petition shall be necessary to its validity or its filing, and the petition, which may be on one or more papers, need not be sworn to.

(b) Signature Requirements –

The number of certified signatures of voters to appear on the petition accompanying the statement of a candidate for election to the office of councilor-at-large or school committee member-at-large shall be not less than 300. The number of certified signatures of voters from the district from which nomination is sought, required to appear on the petition accompanying the statement of a candidate for election to the office of district councilor or district school committee member, shall be not less than 100.

(c) List of Candidates, Official Ballots –

On the first day, other than Sunday or a legal holiday, following the expiration of the time for filing the above described statement and petition, the board of election commissioners shall post on the city bulletin board, the names and residences of the candidates for nomination who have duly qualified as candidates for nomination, as they are to appear on the official ballots to be used at the preliminary election, except as to the order of the names. The board of election commissioners shall cause the ballots which shall contain said names, in their order as drawn by said commissioners, and no others, with a designation of residence, and of the office and term of service, to be printed, and the ballots so printed shall be official and no others shall be used at the preliminary election.

Blank spaces shall be left at the end of each list of candidates for nomination for the different offices equal to the number to be nominated therefore, in which the voter may insert the name of any person not printed on the ballot for whom he/she desires to vote for nomination for such office. There shall be printed on said ballots such directions as will aid the voter, as, for example: "vote for one", "vote for two" and the like, and the ballots shall be headed as follows.



Official Preliminary Ballot

Candidates for nomination for the offices of () in the City of , at a preliminary election to be held on the day of in the year nineteen hundred and (The heading shall be varied in accordance with the offices for which nominations are to be made).

(d) Election Results –

The board of election commissioners shall, immediately upon closing of the polls at preliminary elections, count the ballots and ascertain the number of votes cast in the several voting places for each candidate, canvass said returns, and shall forthwith determine the result thereof, insert the same in one or more local newspapers and post the same on the city bulletin board.

(e) Determination of Candidates - The two persons receiving at a preliminary election the highest number of votes for nomination for each office shall be the sole candidates for that office whose names shall be printed on the official ballots to be used at the regular municipal election at which such office is to be voted upon, and no acceptance of a nomination shall be necessary to its validity; provided, however, that a person nominated at a preliminary election may withdraw his/her name from nomination by a request signed and duly acknowledge by him/her and filed with the election commission within five business days succeeding five o'clock in the afternoon of the day of holding such preliminary election. Such nominee shall be replaced by the candidate with the next highest number of votes in said preliminary, unless otherwise provided herein.

(f) Condition Making Preliminary Unnecessary - If at the expiration of time for filing statements of candidates to be voted upon at any preliminary election not more than twice as many such statements have been filed with the board of election commissioners for an office as candidates are to be elected to such office, the candidates whose statements have been filed with the board of election commissioners shall be deemed to have been nominated to such office, and their names shall be voted upon for such office at the succeeding regular or special election, and the board of election commissioners shall not print said names on the ballot to be used at such preliminary election and no other nomination to such office shall be made. If in consequence it shall appear that no names are to be printed upon the official ballot to be used in any particular district or districts of the City, no preliminary election shall be held in such district or districts.



Section 7-5 Ballot Position, Incumbents.

The names of all candidates shall appear on the official ballot in the order in which they are drawn by lot. Each such drawing shall be conducted by the board of election commissioners. Each candidate or his/her duly authorized representative shall have an opportunity to be present at such drawing. After the name of each candidate for office who is an elected incumbent thereof, shall be added the words "candidate for re-election".

Section 7-6 Districts.

(a) Number, requirements:-

(1) The board of election commissioners shall divide the city into 5 districts for the purpose of electing district councilors under Article Two. Each such district shall be compact and shall contain, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants, shall be composed of contiguous existing precincts, and shall be drawn with a view toward preserving the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

(2) The board of election commissioners shall divide the city into 6 districts for the purpose of electing district school committee members under Article 4, of which at least 2 shall be majority-minority single member districts where Hispanic/Latino/a and Black residents together comprise a majority of the citizen voting age population. Each such district shall be compact and shall contain, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants, shall be composed of contiguous existing precincts and shall be drawn with a view toward preserving the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

(b) Revision of District Lines - The city clerk shall immediately provide notice to the board of election commissioners of the results of each state census and division of the city into wards and precincts as required under chapter fifty-four of the General Laws. The board of election commissioners shall review the districts for conformance with the requirements of paragraph (a) and shall redraw said districts, if necessary, after public hearing, within sixty days of receiving notice from the city clerk. Revision of district lines and new wards and precincts shall take effect simultaneously.

Section 7-7 Application of State General Laws.

Except as expressly provided in this charter and authorized by law, all city elections shall be governed by the general laws relating to the right to vote, the



registration of voters, the nomination of candidates, the conduct of preliminary, general, and special elections, the submission of charters, charter amendments and other propositions to the voters, the counting of votes, the recounting of votes, and the determination of results.

Section 7-8 Initiative Petitions to Council or School Committee.

A petition conforming to the requirements hereinafter provided and requesting the city council to pass a measure, except an order granted under section seventy or seventy-one of chapter one hundred and sixty-four or chapter one hundred and sixty-six of the General Laws, or requesting the school committee to pass a measure, therein set forth or designated, shall be termed an initiative petition and shall be acted upon as hereinafter provided.

(a) Requirements, Commencement - The city council or school committee shall take action in accordance with paragraph (b), on any initiative petition filed in accordance with the requirements as set forth in this paragraph.

(1) Signatures - Initiative petitions shall contain signatures of voters equal to at least fifteen percent of the total number of voters in the city.

Signatures to initiative petitions need not all be on one paper. All such papers pertaining to any one measure shall be fastened together and shall be filed in the office of the city clerk as one instrument, with the endorsement thereon of the names and addresses of three persons designated as filing the same. Accompanying each signature to the petition shall be stated the place of residence of the signer, giving the street and number, if any.

(2) Certification - Within five days after the filing of a petition, the board of election commissioners shall ascertain by what number of voters the petition is signed and what percentage that number is of the total number of voters, and shall attach thereto their certificate showing the results of such examination.

When such certificate has been so transmitted, a petition shall be deemed to be valid unless written objections are made thereto by a voter within forty-eight hours after such certification by filing such objections with the city council or the school committee, and a copy thereof with the board of election commissioners.

A copy of the objections so filed shall forthwith be transmitted to the state ballot law commission which shall hold a public hearing on such objections, shall render a decision on the matter referred to it within fourteen days after the



objections were filed and transmit a copy of its decision to the city council or the school committee.

(b) Action by City Council or School Committee if Initiative Petition is Fully Signed; Referendum - If any initiative petition, meeting the requirements of paragraph (a) is filed, the city council or school committee shall, within twenty days after the date of the certificate of the board of election commissioners to that effect:

1. Pass said measure without alteration, subject to the referendum vote provided by this charter; or

2. The city council shall call a special election to be held on a Tuesday fixed by it, not less than thirty nor more than forth-five days after the date of the certificate hereinbefore mentioned, and shall submit the proposed measure without alteration to the voters at that election; provided, that if any city election is otherwise to occur within ninety days after the date of said certificate, the city council may, at its discretion, omit calling the special election and submit the proposed measure to the voters at such approaching election.

(c) Proceedings if Petition Not Fully Signed - If an initiative petition is signed by voters equal in number to at least eight percent but less than fifteen percent of the total number of voters, and said measure is not passed without alteration, within twenty days by the city council or the school committee as provided in the preceding paragraph, such proposed measure without alteration, shall be submitted by the city council to the voters at the next regular municipal election.

(d) Question on the ballot - The ballots used when voting upon a proposed measure, or a measure or part thereof protested against hereunder, shall state the nature of the measure in terms sufficient to show the substance thereof.

(e) Passage, Date of Effect - A proposed measure or a measure or part thereof protested against hereunder, shall become effective if it shall be approved by the voters equal in number to one third of the total number of voters and also by a majority of the voters voting on such measure, but not otherwise.

Section 7-9 Citizen Referendum Procedures.

(a) Petition, Effect on Final Vote - If, within twenty days after the final passage of any measure, except a revenue loan order, by the city council or by the school



committee, a petition signed by the voters, equal in number to at least twelve percent of the total number of voters, and addressed to the city council or to the school committee, as the case may be, protesting against such measure or any part thereof taking effect, is filed with the city clerk, the same shall thereupon and thereby be suspended from taking effect; and the city council or the school committee, as the case may be, shall immediately reconsider such measure or part thereof; and if such measure or part thereof is not entirely rescinded, the city council shall submit the same, by the method herein provided, to the voters either at the next regular city election, or at a special election which may, in the city council's discretion, be called for that purpose, and such measure or part thereof shall forthwith become null and void unless a majority of the voters voting on the same at such election, vote in favor thereof.

(b) Certain Initiative Provisions to Apply - The petition described in this section shall be termed a referendum petition and section 7-8, with the exception of the last paragraph 7-8 (a) (2), shall apply to the procedure in respect thereto, except that the words "measure or part thereof protested against" shall, for this purpose, be understood to replace "measure" in said section wherever it may occur, and "referendum" shall be understood to replace the word "initiative" in said section.

Section 7-10 Ineligible Measures.

None of the following shall be subject to the initiative or the referendum procedures: (1) proceedings relating to the internal organization or operation of the city council or the school committee; (2) an emergency measure adopted in conformity with the charter; (3) the city budget or the school committee budget as a whole; (4) revenue loan orders; (5) any appropriation for the payment of the city's debt or debt service; (6) an appropriation of funds to implement a collective bargaining agreement; (7) proceedings relative to the election, appointment, removal, discharge, employment, promotion, transfer, demotion, or other personnel action; (8) any proceedings repealing or rescinding a measure or part thereof which is protested by referendum procedures; and (9) any proceedings providing for the submission or referral of any measure to the voters at an election.

Section 7-11 Submission of Other Matters to Voters.

The city council may on its own motion, and shall, upon the request of the school committee, if a measure originates with that committee and pertains to the affairs under its administration, submit to the voters for adoption or rejection at a



general or special city election any proposed measure, or a proposition for the repeal or amendment of any measure, in the same manner and with the same force and effect as are hereby provided for submission on petition.

Section 7-12 Conflicting Provisions.

If two or more proposed measures passed at the same election contain conflicting provisions, only the one receiving the greater number of affirmative votes shall take effect.



ARTICLE EIGHT

NEIGHBORHOOD AREA COUNCILS

Section 8-1 Purpose.

It is the purpose of this article to encourage citizen involvement in government at the neighborhood level by permitting limited self-government through the establishment of neighborhood area councils as legal entities of the city government.

Section 8-2 Establishment of Neighborhood Council Areas.

The city council may establish one or more neighborhood area councils to provide advisory and self-help functions that the neighborhood area council is authorized to undertake.

Section 8-3 Petition to Establish Neighborhood Area Council.

(a) A petition may be submitted to the city council requesting the establishment of a neighborhood area council to advise the city council on neighborhood affairs and to act on its behalf when specifically authorized to do so by majority vote of the city council. Such petition must be signed by twenty percent of the voters residing in such area. The petition shall describe the territorial boundaries of the proposed neighborhood council area, shall specify the advisory and self-help functions to be provided, and shall indicate the size of the neighborhood area council.

(b) Upon receipt of the petition and certification of the signatures thereon by the board of election commissioners, the city council shall, within thirty days following receipt of such certification hold a public hearing on the question of whether or not the requested neighborhood area council should be established. The hearing may be adjourned from time to time but shall be completed within sixty days of its commencement.

(c) Within thirty days following the public hearing, the city council shall, by resolution, approve or disapprove the establishment of the requested neighborhood area council.

(d) A resolution approving the creation of the neighborhood area council may contain amendments or modifications of the boundaries of the neighborhood



council area, functions or size of the neighborhood area council, as set forth in the petition.

Section 8-4 Boundary Changes of a Neighborhood Council Area.

Pursuant to a request from a neighborhood area council, accompanied by a petition signed by at least twenty percent of the voters residing in the area to be added or deleted, the city council may enlarge, diminish, or otherwise alter the boundaries of any existing neighborhood area council in accordance with the procedures set forth in section 8-3(b),(c), and (d).

Section 8-5 Criteria to Set Boundaries.

In establishing neighborhood boundaries and determining those functions to be undertaken by a neighborhood area council, the city council shall study and take into consideration, but shall not be limited to, the following criteria.

(1) The extent to which the area constitutes a neighborhood with common concerns and a capacity for local neighborhood initiative, leadership, and decision-making with respect to city government.

(2) City agency authority and resources which may appropriately be transferred or shared with the neighborhood council.

(3) Population density, distribution, and growth within a neighborhood area council to assure that its boundaries reflect the most effective territory for local participation and control.

(4) Citizen access to, control of, and participation in neighborhood area council activities and functions.

Section 8-6 Dissolution of a Neighborhood Area Council.

(a) The city council may, after a public hearing, dissolve a neighborhood area council on the initiative of the city council or pursuant to a petition signed by at least twenty percent of the voters living within the neighborhood area.

(b) The city council shall give notice, in a local newspaper of general circulation in that neighborhood area, of its intention to hold a public hearing on a proposed dissolution. Such notice shall be given not less than fourteen days before the date of the public hearing.



Section 8-7 Election of Neighborhood Area Council; Vacancies.

(a) A neighborhood area council shall consist of five to nine members. The term of office of each member shall be two years and he/she shall serve until his/her successor is qualified.

(b) Neighborhood area council members shall be elected at-large by and from voters residing in the neighborhood council area at the time of the election. The city council shall determine the time and manner of holding such elections. The district councilors who represent any portion of the area included in a neighborhood council area shall serve, ex-officio and with no power to vote, as members of the neighborhood area council.

(c) The director of a neighborhood center, or his/her delegate, whose center is a duly organized non-profit corporation which provides human services in the neighborhood area, or a portion thereof, shall be a member of said neighborhood area council with full voting power.

(d) The city manager may appoint an additional ex-officio member, with voting power, if such appointment is needed to satisfy the city's commitment to open, fair and equitable practices in city government. Such appointment shall be subject to approval, by majority vote, of the city council.

(e) A vacancy on a neighborhood area council shall be filled by the candidate for neighborhood councilor on that neighborhood area council who received the largest number of votes for said office, without being elected, provided that such individual remains eligible and willing to serve. The board of election commissioners shall certify such candidate to the office of neighborhood area councilor for the then unexpired term. If there be no such candidate, the vacancy shall be filled by the neighborhood area council who shall elect, by majority vote, a voter to serve for the balance of the unexpired term.

Section 8-8 Neighborhood Area Council Powers and Functions.

A neighborhood area council may exercise any power and perform any functions within the neighborhood area expressly authorized by the city council, which may include but shall not be limited to:

(1) Advisory or delegated substantive authority, or both, with respect to such programs as community action, urban renewal, relocation, public housing, planning and zoning actions, other physical development programs, crime



prevention and juvenile delinquency programs, health services, code inspection, recreation, education, and manpower training. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to authorize the city council to delegate to any neighborhood area council any substantive authority with regard to zoning or the operation of private non-profit neighborhood centers.

(2) Self-help projects, such as supplemental refuse collection, beautification, minor street and sidewalk repair, street fairs and festivals, cultural activities, recreation, and housing rehabilitation and sale.

(3) Acceptance of funds from public sources, but not including city, private sources, including public subscriptions; and expenditure of monies to meet overhead cost of neighborhood area council administration.

Section 8-9 Compensation; Meetings; By-Laws; Quorum.

(a) Members of a neighborhood area council shall receive no compensation but may receive reimbursement of actual and necessary travel and other expenses incurred in the performance of official duties.

(b) A neighborhood area council shall adopt rules providing for the conduct of its business and the selection of a presiding officer and other officers. Copies of all rules adopted by neighborhood area councils shall be made available to the public upon request.

(c) A majority of the voting members of a neighborhood area council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Each member entitled to vote shall have one vote.

Section 8-10 Annual Report.

Each neighborhood area council shall make an annual report of its activities to the city council which shall be made available to the public. It shall also hold an annual meeting in the neighborhood area at which it will report on its activities and make copies of said annual report available.

Section 8-11 Financial Records.

Each neighborhood area council shall maintain complete financial records which shall be subject to audit by the city.



Section 8-12 Relationship to City Manager.

The city manager shall, at the request of the neighborhood area council, assign a representative to attend the meetings of the neighborhood area council and act as liaison between the neighborhood area council and the city manager.



ARTICLE NINE

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 9-1 Charter Changes.

This charter may be revised or amended in accordance with the procedures made available under the constitution of the commonwealth or pursuant to any applicable provision of the general laws.

Section 9-2 Severability.

The provisions of this charter are severable. If any provision of this charter is held invalid, the other provisions shall not be affected thereby. If the application of this charter, or any of its provisions, to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the application of this charter and its provisions to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

Section 9-3 Specific Provision to Prevail.

To the extent that any specific provision of this charter may conflict with any other provision expressed in general terms herein the specific provision shall prevail.

Section 9-4 Rules and Regulations.

A copy of all rules and regulations adopted by city agencies shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk and shall be made available for review by any person who requests such information at any reasonable time. No rule or regulation adopted by any city agency shall become effective until five days following the date it is so filed.

Section 9-5 Number.

Words importing the singular number may extend and be applied to several persons or things; words importing the plural number may include the singular.

Section 9-6 Reference to General Laws.

All references to the General Laws contained in this charter refer to the General Laws of the commonwealth of Massachusetts and are intended to refer to and to include any amendments or revisions of such chapters or sections, or to



the corresponding chapters and sections of any recodification, or revision of such statutes enacted or adopted subsequent to the adoption of this charter.

Section 9-7 Certificate of Election or Appointment.

Every person who is elected, including those elected by the city council, or appointed to an office of the city shall receive a certificate of such election or appointment from the city clerk.

Except as otherwise provided by law, before performing any act under an appointment or election, all such persons shall take and subscribe to an oath of office and be sworn to the faithful performance of their duties.



ARTICLE TEN

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Section 10-1 Continuation of Existing Laws, etc.

All General Laws previously accepted by the City, special laws, ordinances, resolutions, orders, and rules and regulations of or pertaining to the city that are in force when this charter takes effect, and not specifically or by implication repealed herein, shall continue in full force and effect until amended or repealed, or rescinded by due course of law, or until they expire by their own limitations.

Section 10-2 Continuation of Government and Administration.

Until superseded under this charter, the organization of the city agencies and the powers and duties exercised by each such city agency, shall continue as established prior to the adoption of this charter.

Section 10-3 Transfer of Records and Property.

All records, property, and equipment whatsoever of any city agency, or part thereof, the powers and duties of which are assigned in whole or in part to another city agency pursuant to this charter, shall be transferred forthwith to such agency when such agency shall have been established hereunder.

Section 10-4 Continuation of Personnel.

Any person holding a city office or a position in the administrative service of the city, or any person holding full-time employment under the city, shall retain such office, position or employment, and shall continue to perform the duties of such office, position or employment until provision shall have been made for the performance of those duties by another person or agency; provided, however, no person in the permanent full-time service of the city shall forfeit his/her pay grade, or time in service of the city. All such persons shall be retained in a capacity as similar to the capacity in which they were serving at the time this charter becomes effective, as is practicable.

Section 10-5 Effect on Obligations, Taxes, etc.

All official bonds, recognizances, obligations, contracts, and other instruments entered into or executed by or to the city before the effective date of



this charter, and all taxes, special assessments, fines, penalties, forfeitures, incurred or imposed, due or owing to the city, shall be enforced and collected, and all writs, prosecutions, actions, and causes of action, except as otherwise provided herein, shall continue without abatement and remain unaffected by this charter; and no legal act done by or in favor of the city shall be rendered invalid by reason of the adoption of this charter.

Section 10-6 City Agencies Established by Special Law.

(a) Special Laws Retained - Nothing in this charter shall be construed so as to alter in any manner the provisions of certain special laws establishing and governing the operation of:

(1) Worcester City Hospital - In particular, the provisions of chapter two-hundred and sixty-six of the acts of nineteen hundred and fifty-three and chapter three-hundred and eighty-six of the acts of nineteen hundred and eighty-four.

(2) Civic Center Commission - In particular, the provisions of chapter two-hundred and sixteen of the acts of nineteen hundred and seventy-six.

(3) Off-Street Parking Board - In particular, the provisions of chapter three-hundred and sixty-five of the acts of nineteen hundred and fifty-five.

(4) Board of Trustees of the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall - In particular, the provisions of chapter two-hundred and eighty-two of the acts of nineteen hundred and thirty.

Each of the aforesaid entities shall continue to operate under the provisions of law heretofore applicable to it, and its relationship with the several city agencies, the city manager, and the city council shall be unaffected by the adoption of this charter.

(b) Special Laws Repealed - Certain city agencies previously established and governed by special law are hereby continued as city agencies subject to the provisions of article six of this charter for the purposes of organization and reorganization. These city agencies include the board of health and the commissioner of public health established by chapter one-hundred and eighty-one of the acts of nineteen hundred and fifty-three, the commissioner of public works established by chapter two-hundred and ten of the acts of nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, and the parks and recreation commission established by chapter two-hundred and four of the special acts of nineteen hundred and seventeen (but the



powers contained in chapter one hundred and eighteen of the acts of nineteen hundred and seventy-five are specifically preserved). The special laws establishing these agencies are hereby repealed but the provisions of such special laws are retained and shall have the force of city ordinances which may be amended, revised, or repealed in accordance with the power to reorganize city agencies contained in article six of this charter.

Section 10-7 Effective Date of the Charter and Certain Provisions.

This charter shall become effective upon its approval by the voters pursuant to the procedures available under the constitution of the commonwealth or under the general laws, and in accordance with the following schedule.

(a) This charter, in its entirety, unless otherwise provided herein, shall take effect on January 1, 1987.

(b) Within ninety days of the adoption of this charter by the voters, each city committee of the two leading political parties shall submit the list required by section 7-1(b) to the city manager for the purpose of appointing the board of election commissioners. Said list shall comply with the requirements of section 7-1(a) except that the names may be selected from the city at large, giving consideration to the geographical distribution of the nominees within the city. Within sixty days of receipt of said list, the city manager shall appoint the board of election commissioners in accordance with section 7-1(b). In appointing this board of election commissioners, the city manager shall not be restricted by the district residency requirements contained in section 7-1(a), but shall give consideration to the geographical distribution of the members within the city.

Once the board of election commissioners shall have organized, the city clerk shall send an official notice informing said board of the results of the most recent state census and division of the city by the city council into wards and precincts as required under section one of chapter fifty-four of the General Laws. Within one hundred and twenty days following receipt of such notice, the board of election commissioners shall, after public hearing, divide the city into five districts for the purpose of electing district councilors under Article 2 of this charter. Each such district shall be compact and shall contain, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants, shall be composed of contiguous existing precincts, and shall be drawn with a view toward preserving the integrity of existing neighborhoods.



Section 10-8 Home Rule Petition.

Immediately following the election at which this charter is adopted, the city clerk shall transmit to the members of the general court who represent the city, a certificate stating that the voters have approved of the filing of the following petition to enact a special law.



APPENDIX

AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF WORCESTER, MASS. CHARTER



**AN ACT EXEMPTING CERTAIN POSITIONS IN THE CITY OF
WORCESTER FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE
LAW.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in the General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows.

Section 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the positions of city treasurer and city clerk in the city of Worcester shall be exempt from the provisions of chapter thirty-one of the General Laws.

Section 2. The provisions of section one shall not impair the civil service status of any incumbent holding permanent status in said positions on the effective date of this act.



ADDENDUM

Pursuant to the vote at the election held on November 3, 1987 the citizens of Worcester voted the following charter amendment eliminating the Citizen Complaints Officer.

QUESTION

"Shall this City approve the charter amendment proposed by the City Council summarized below?

The proposed charter amendment eliminates the position of Citizen Complaints Officer by deleting Section 2-8(c) of the Worcester Home Rule Charter which provides that the City Council shall appoint a Citizen Complaints Officer to process citizen complaints and inquiries."

Votes Cast

Yes: 15641 No: 12663



**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CITY OF WORCESTER SCHOOL
COMMITTEE ELECTION**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. The charter of the city of Worcester, which is on file in the office of the archivist of the commonwealth, as provided in section 12 of chapter 43B of the General Laws, is amended as set forth in this act to provide that all biennial local municipal elections for the city of Worcester school committee shall be conducted under a district and at-large system, hereinafter referred to as the hybrid system.

SECTION 2. Under the hybrid system, the city of Worcester shall be divided into 6 school committee districts of which at least 2 shall be majority-minority single member districts where Hispanic/Latino/a and Black residents together comprise a majority of the citizen voting age population. The hybrid system shall have 2 at-large seats elected by plurality voting. The district boundaries shall be drawn in consultation with an independent expert retained by the city pursuant to paragraph R contained within the terms of the October 26, 2021 consent decree in the United States District Court of Massachusetts matter of Worcester Interfaith, Inc. et. al. v. City of Worcester et. al., Case No. 4:21-cv-40015-TSH.

SECTION 3. Section 4-1 of article four of the charter of the city of Worcester, which is on file in the office of the archivist of the commonwealth, as provided in section 12 of chapter 43B of the General Laws, is hereby amended by striking out subsection (a) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

(a) Composition - The school committee shall consist of the mayor, who shall chair the committee, 6 district members and 2 members elected at-large.

SECTION 4. Said section 4-1 of said article four of said charter is hereby further amended by striking out subsection (c) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

(c) Eligibility –



(1) Any voter shall be eligible to hold the office of at-large school committee member; provided, however, that the person shall have resided within the city for 1 year immediately prior to the election.

(2) Any voter shall be eligible to hold the office of a district school committee member; provided, however, that the person shall have resided within the district for 1 year immediately prior to the election.

(3) For the 2023 school committee election only, if the school committee district boundaries have not been finalized by September 1, 2022, then the date by which a person shall have been a resident of the district shall be 60 days following finalization of the school committee district boundaries.

(4) In the event that a district school committee member relocates their residence to a different district within the city during their term of office, such school committee member shall be permitted to serve the remainder of their 2-year term but shall not be eligible for reelection in the same district.

SECTION 5. Said article four of said charter is hereby further amended by striking out section 4-6 and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

Section 4-6 Vacancies.

(a) At-large school committee member -

If a vacancy shall occur amongst the 2 at-large members of the school committee, said vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as provided in section 2-10(a) for the filling of vacancies in the office of councilor-at-large, from among the candidates for election to the office of at-large school committee members at the preceding regular municipal election.

(b) District school committee member -

If a vacancy shall occur in the office of district school committee member it shall be filled in the same manner as provided in section 4-6(a) for the office of at-large school committee member, except that the list shall be of the candidates for the office of district school committee member in the district in which the vacancy occurs; provided, however, if there be no candidate on such list who remains eligible and willing to serve, the vacancy shall be filled at a



special election called by the city council to be held within 90 days after the city council is notified by the board of election commissioners that the vacancy cannot be filled as aforesaid.

SECTION 6. Section 7-4 of article seven of said charter is hereby amended by striking out subsection (b) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

(b) Signature requirements:-

The number of certified signatures of voters to appear on the petition accompanying the statement of a candidate for election to the office of councilor-at-large or school committee member-at-large shall be not less than 300. The number of certified signatures of voters from the district from which nomination is sought, required to appear on the petition accompanying the statement of a candidate for election to the office of district councilor or district school committee member, shall be not less than 100.

SECTION 7. Section 7-6 of said article seven of said charter is hereby amended by striking out subsection (a) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

(a) Number, requirements:-

(1) The board of election commissioners shall divide the city into 5 districts for the purpose of electing district councilors under Article Two. Each such district shall be compact and shall contain, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants, shall be composed of contiguous existing precincts, and shall be drawn with a view toward preserving the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

(2) The board of election commissioners shall divide the city into 6 districts for the purpose of electing district school committee members under Article 4, of which at least 2 shall be majority-minority single member districts where Hispanic/Latino/a and Black residents together comprise a majority of the citizen voting age population. Each such district shall be compact and shall contain, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants, shall be composed of contiguous existing precincts and shall be drawn with a view toward preserving the integrity of existing neighborhoods.



SECTION 8. The changes to the city of Worcester’s school committee electoral system as set forth in this act shall take effect for the city’s municipal elections in November of 2023.

SECTION 9. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Approved, September 1, 2022.

