

# City of North Bend Charter Review Committee

## Background, Timeline, and Procedural Analysis

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### Executive Summary

The City of North Bend’s Charter Review Committee was not a spontaneous or ad hoc effort. It was the result of a **multi-year, Council-directed policy initiative** that began with the adoption of the City’s Strategic Plan in 2023 and continued through a structured, public, and legally compliant process in 2025–2026.

The Charter Review Committee served strictly as an **advisory body**. The City Council retained full authority over whether to move forward with any proposed Charter amendments and ultimately referred those amendments to the voters.

Based on the record reviewed, **there is no clear violation of the City Council’s adopted rules** in the creation or operation of the Charter Review Committee.

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## I. Origin of the Charter Review Effort

### June 27, 2023

The City Council adopted the **FY 2023–2025 Strategic Plan**, which expressly included:

**“Review and update the City Charter (Priority 4G)”**

This establishes that:

- Charter review was a **formally adopted Council priority**
  - The effort began **years before** the 2025 committee process
  - The initiative was **policy-driven**, not reactive
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### May 13, 2025

The Council adopted the **2025–2028 Strategic Plan**, which expanded the objective to include:

- Establishing a committee
  - Working with legal counsel
  - Engaging the public
  - Preparing potential ballot measures for 2026
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## II. Pre-Committee Legal and Policy Work

May 15–30, 2025

- Draft Charter revision materials circulated internally
- **City Attorney Mark Wolf provided edits** to “Charter Revision – Council Goal”

This confirms:

- Legal review began **before committee formation**
  - The process was **deliberate and structured**
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## III. Committee Formation Process

July 7, 2025

Council work session materials:

- Outlined Charter review process
  - Compared North Bend Charter to **LOC Model Charter**
  - Recommended a **citizen lay-committee approach**
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July 7–16, 2025

- Councilors were asked to **nominate committee members**
  - Nominations were submitted and compiled
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July 22, 2025

The Council formally adopted:

### **Resolution No. 3369**

Creating the **Charter Review Committee**

Key provisions:

- Established as a **citizen lay-committee**
- Advisory in nature
- Subject to:
  - Oregon Public Meetings Law
  - City Council Rules

- Meetings required to be **noticed and recorded**

### **Same Meeting:**

- Members were **appointed and confirmed in public session**
  - Motion passed **unanimously**
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## **IV. Committee Operations and Public Process**

### **July 30, 2025**

- Staff coordinated scheduling and logistics for meetings
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### **August 1 / 4, 2025**

- First meeting notice publicly posted
  - Included agenda, location, and livestream info
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### **August 6, 2025**

- First Charter Review Committee meeting held
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### **August 12, 2025**

- **Council received public update** from Mayor
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### **September 10, 2025**

- Second committee meeting held
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### **September 2025 (Ongoing)**

- Committee provided:
  - LOC Model Charter
  - National Civic League materials
  - Oregon city comparisons
- LOC consulted on governance issues

- Peer city data gathered
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### **September 23, 2025**

- City Attorney provided **Council update**
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### **October 8, 2025**

- Scheduled meeting **cancelled**
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### **October 22, 2025**

- City Attorney recommended extending committee timeline
  - Shift toward **May 2026 election cycle**
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### **October 28, 2025**

- The City Council adopted Resolution 3375 – Extending the Term of the Charter Review Committee
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### **December 4, 2025**

- Final committee meeting (consensus stage)
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### **December 9, 2025**

- Final committee update to Council
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## **V. Council Action on Committee Recommendations**

### **January 13, 2026**

City Council:

- Reviewed committee recommendations
- **Modified Section 22(9)** based on updated LOC model

- Authorized preparation of ballot measures

Vote:

- **6–1 approval**

Key takeaway:

- Committee was **advisory only**
  - Council made **final decisions**
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## VI. Ballot Referral and Legal Process

January 19–21, 2026

- City Attorney prepared:
    - Ballot referral ordinance
    - Ballot titles
  - Resolution No. 3377 assigned
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## VII. Ballot Title Challenge (Court Review)

March 16–17, 2026

- Former Councilor **Susanna Noordhoff** filed petition
- Court hearing held March 16
- Judge issued order certifying ballot titles

### Court Order:

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#### Key Outcome

The Court **adopted amended ballot titles**, including one change:

#### Added language:

“Updating the process of removing a city councilor by a vote of the City Council after a public hearing.”

No changes to:

- Caption
- Question

- Core structure
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## **March 23, 2026**

Email exchange confirms:

- Ms. Noordhoff:
    - Acknowledged she filed the challenge
    - Criticized committee formation
  - Mayor Engelke:
    - Confirmed compliance with Oregon law
    - Confirmed court-certified titles are controlling
    - Noted proactive public communication efforts
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# **VIII. Public Information Phase**

## **March 23, 2026**

City issued neutral communication:

- Measure scheduled for **May 19, 2026**
  - Effective date: **July 1, 2026**
  - Provided factual explanation of amendments
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# **IX. Summary of Committee Timeline**

## **Committee Meetings:**

- August 6, 2025
- September 10, 2025
- October 8, 2025 (cancelled)
- December 4, 2025

## **Council Updates:**

- August 12, 2025
  - September 9, 2025
  - September 23, 2025
  - December 9, 2025
  - January 13, 2026
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# X. Analysis: Compliance with Council Rules

## Conclusion: No Clear Violation

### 1. Authority to Create Committee

Council Rules allow:

Creation of boards, commissions, and lay-committees by ordinance or resolution

- ✓ Resolution 3369 complies
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### 2. Type of Committee

- Properly created as **lay advisory committee**
- Not a council committee

- ✓ Correct classification
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### 3. Public Meetings Compliance

- Notices posted
- Meetings held publicly
- Council updates provided

- ✓ Substantial compliance
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### 4. Appointment Process

- Nominations by council members
- Confirmed in public meeting

Rules allow flexibility:

“Procedures developed for the specific vacancy”

- ✓ Not inconsistent with rules
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### 5. Advisory Nature

- Committee did not take final action

- Council retained full authority

✓ Consistent with governance structure

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## 6. Minor Clerical Issue

- August notice contained incorrect year (“2023”)

✓ Administrative error

✗ Not evidence of structural violation

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# XI. Final Observations

- This was a **planned, multi-year effort**
  - Driven by:
    - Strategic planning
    - Legal review
    - Statewide governance trends
  - The process included:
    - Public meetings
    - Council oversight
    - Judicial review
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## Bottom Line

**The Charter Review Committee was created through a formal, publicly approved resolution, operated as an advisory body, held publicly noticed meetings, and functioned within the framework of the City’s Council Rules and Oregon law. Based on the record, there is no clear evidence that the City Council violated its adopted rules in creating or utilizing the committee.**