

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026

MEETING MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Everett Charter Review Committee was called to order at 4:30 p.m., March 12, 2026, by Chair Sniffen, in the 10th floor Mayor Conference Room located at City Hall 2930 Wetmore Ave.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Members Present: Brady Begin, Randy Bolerjack, Leland Dart, Grant Harrington, Emily Hoke, Shari Ireton, Tom Norcott, Zsofia Pasztor, Alan Rubio, Mason Rutledge, Rod Sniffen, Elizabeth Stenhouse, Eli Vasquez, and Deb Williams.

Committee Members Absent: John Traynor.

City Staff: Jennifer Gregerson (Government Affairs Director), Ramsey Ramerman (Deputy City Attorney), Ashleigh Scott (Legal Administrator), and Michael Duerr (HR Director).

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of February 26, 2026, meeting were approved.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Sniffen amended the agenda to remove Items No. 10 and 11 from the agenda.

The agenda of March 12, 2026, meeting was approved, as amended.

4. WELCOME FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT DON SCHWAB

Council President Don Schwab opened by expressing appreciation to the members of the Charter Review Committee, thanking them for their continued participation and commitment to the process. He emphasized the importance of their work and the value of thoughtful community engagement in updating the City Charter.

When asked about the types of changes he hoped the committee would explore in upcoming meetings, President Schwab identified several substantive areas for consideration. He suggested reviewing eligibility requirements for elected officials, specifically council members and the mayor, along with taking a closer look at the initiative process. He encouraged discussion about potentially reducing the number of council meetings to improve efficiency, and recommended refining Charter language related to annexation and consolidation to simplify language and provide clearer, more functional definitions for future application.



Chair Rod Sniffen noted that the committee should also consider whether elected officials ought to hold only a single position, specifically serving as a council member, rather than simultaneously occupying additional government roles at the county or state level.

Deb Williams stated that Council Members Tuohy and Stonecipher have also submitted their Charter Review revision suggestions to Jennifer Gregerson for discussion consideration.

5. COMMUNITY OUTREACH: PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 26TH UPDATE

Vice Chair Eli Vasquez led the discussion and explained that for the first public hearing, scheduled for Thursday, March 26th, the committee sought a centralized location with good transit access and no associated venue cost. After reviewing options, they selected the Everett Public Library's Evergreen Branch, located at 9512 Evergreen Way, and confirmed the meeting time for 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

During the discussion, Randy Bolerjack asked whether streaming would be available for the public, and Jennifer Gregerson confirmed that the meeting would indeed be streamed.

Chair Rod Sniffen explained that an additional regular committee meeting was needed because the scheduled public hearing would otherwise replace one of the committee's standard discussion and planning sessions. The committee agreed to add a meeting on Tuesday, March 31st, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., to be held in the 10th Floor Mayor's Conference Room at 2930 Wetmore Ave.

In further discussion, Grant Harrington asked whether the upcoming public hearing would be advertised on the City's social media platforms to encourage greater in-person participation.

Tom Norcott inquired about the committee's budget, or whether one existed at all.

Shari Ireton noted that the public libraries offer free printing options, quantity depends on location, which could be used to produce public hearing flyers for distribution at other community meetings, such as neighborhood meetings.

6. ARTICLE 11.2: INITIATIVE THRESHOLDS

Deputy City Attorney Ramsey Ramerman led the committee through a detailed discussion on Charter Article 11.2 concerning Initiative Thresholds. He explained that three core issues needed determination before he could prepare draft language for committee review. The first issue involved determining the appropriate signature threshold. At a previous meeting, the committee voted to set the threshold at 10%, and Mr. Ramerman reviewed how other Washington cities use thresholds ranging from 10% to 25%.

The second issue required deciding which election the 10% should be based on – options included the last presidential election, the last mayoral election, or the most recent local election, as examples. After discussion, the committee agreed that the threshold should be tied to the last mayoral election, consistent with how several other chartered cities structure their signature requirements.

Finally, Mr. Ramerman outlined a third issue with two components: the timing of initiative filing and the prescreening procedures that determine how petitions are processed. The committee discussed whether prescreening authority should rest with the City Clerk or the City Council, as well as whether to incorporate

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buffer periods or formal submission rules. He also raised the possibility of requiring a fiscal impact statement, so voters could understand the cost of implementing a proposed initiative. Committee members questioned who would be responsible for preparing such a statement and expressed concerns about potential political influence or inflated cost estimates.

Deb Williams made a motion to authorize the Legal Department to (1) remove Section 11.2(d) in its entirety; (2) amend Section 11.2(c) to establish a unified ten-percent (10%) signature threshold to both referenda and initiatives; (3) incorporate language expressly granting the City Council the authority to adopt implementing procedures; and (4) revise the vote-based metric to reflect the number of votes cast in the most recent mayoral election. Mason Rutledge seconded. A vote was taken, and all committee members present voted in favor.

7. ARTICLE 2.2: ELIGIBILITY TO HOLD OFFICE

Chair Sniffen facilitated the discussion on potential revisions to eligibility requirements. Alan Rubio offered suggestions based on issues that surfaced during the most recent election cycle, promoting the committee to consider aligning residency requirements so that candidates must live in both within the City of Everett and within their respective district for at least one year. Members also discussed adding a provision requiring residency to be permanent to avoid situations in which individuals, such as seasonal “snowbirds” do not reside in the city or district on a full-time basis. An exception for overseas military service was supported as a necessary safeguard. The committee agreed that guidance from the Legal Department would be needed to determine how best to implement such provisions.

The committee further discussed adding language that would prohibit City Council members and the Mayor from holding any additional elected office outside the City of Everett. Members also raised questions regarding candidates who continue to live within city limits, but recently changed districts due to circumstances beyond their control, noting the importance of clarity and fairness in such situations, but was made aware, those members would have to forfeit their position.

Following deliberation, Deb Williams made a motion, seconded by Alan Rubio, to direct the Legal Department to draft proposed Charter language that would: (1) require one year residency within the City of Everett; (2) require one year of residency within the district the candidate seeks to represent; (3) include a provision specifying permanent residency to prevent “snowbird” complications; (4) create an exception for overseas military service; and (5) establish that City Council members and the Mayor may not hold elected office outside the City of Everett. A vote was taken, and all committee members present voted in favor.

8. ARTICLE 8: CIVIL SERVICE

HR Director Michael Duerr provided an overview of the proposed update to the Civil Service section of the City Charter, explaining the need to modernize hiring processes and remove outdated or redundant procedures. The goals of the revision include ensuring residents are served by qualified employees, promoting transparency, and aligning recruitment approaches with best practices. He reviewed the existing civil service framework, including appointive classifications, represented and non-represented classifications, and seasonal positions, to illustrate how the current system functions today.

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Duerr noted several major changes in the hiring landscape that make modernization necessary. These include the growing influence of collective bargaining under RCW 41.56 and decisions by the Public Employment Relations Commission, increased transparency requirements driven by the Public Records Act, and evolving technology that has changed applicant expectations around communication and recruitment speed. The current charter language mandates competitive examinations, eligibility lists, probationary periods, and merit-based promotions. The proposed language simplifies these requirements and aligns them with state laws RCW 41.08 and 41.12, which already govern police and fire civil service systems.

The anticipated benefits of the amendment span multiple groups. Residents would see enhanced effectiveness in hiring, greater transparency, and faster staffing of essential roles. Job seekers would experience quicker communication regarding application status. City staff would gain more flexibility, fresher hiring rosters, and increased departmental involvement in the selection process. Following voter approval, the City would begin developing competitive service procedures, negotiating impacts with labor groups, updating the Everett Municipal Code, training staff on revised practices, and implementing the new hiring process.

Jennifer Gregerson stated that committee members would have another opportunity to discuss further, due to this meeting's time restraints, at the Tuesday, March 31, 2026 meeting.

9. ARTICLE 3.2 COUNCIL MEETINGS

The committee was unable to begin its scheduled discussion of Article 3.2 Council Meetings due to time constraints.

10. ARTICLE 4.2: APPOINTIVE OFFICE

Item was removed from the agenda.

11. ARTICLE 7.5: LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Item was removed from the agenda.

12. TOPICS 'PARKING LOT' REVIEW

Due to time constraints, no new items were added to the "Parking Lot" for future discussion.

NEXT MEETING:

The first Charter Review Committee Public Hearing meeting is set for Thursday, March 26, 2026, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Everett Public Library – Evergreen Branch, located at 9512 Evergreen Way.

The next regular meeting is set for Tuesday, March 31, 2026 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room on the 10th floor at 2930 Wetmore Avenue.



ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

