

## 7. New Section 2.XX - Council – Full-Time; Staff; Investigative Authority

# Charter Review Committee

## Amendment Summary

### Section 2.XX (New Section, Article II)

#### **Brief Summary of Amendment**

- Requires Council Members to serve on a full-time basis.
- Authorizes Council Members to employ or contract for personnel to directly report to and advise or assist the Council.
- Authorizes the Council to audit and conduct investigations into the affairs of the City and the executive branch.

#### **Committee Vote**

**Yes:** Katie Baird, Nicholas Carr, Maricres Castro, Patrick Fischer, Bryan Flint, Andre Jimenez, Melissa Malott, Latasha Palmer, Rebecca Stith, Andrea Reay, Steve Wamback, Diamatris Winston

**No:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Jason Gauthier, Lok Yin Wu

#### **Amendment**

**New Section. Section 2.XX** – Council Members shall serve on a full-time basis and shall have the authority to employ or contract for personnel who will directly report to and advise or assist the Council Members.

#### **New Section. Section 2.XX -**

The Council may as a whole or by committee, conduct public hearings on matters of public concern and, further, may audit and make other investigations into the affairs of the City and the conduct of the executive branch including any City department, office, agency, board, commission, or committee, and for this purpose may retain special counsel and subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony, and require the production of evidence.

#### **Amendment Positions**

##### **Rationale for Amendment:**

One of the primary consensus goals of the 2024 Charter Review Committee has been empowering the City Council by affirming that its members serve on a full-time basis, authorizing the Council to hire its own staff (e.g., a chief of staff, policy advisors, and legal advisors), and allowing the Council to audit and investigate the affairs of the City and the conduct of its administration. The proposed investigatory power is recommended as a best practice in the National Civic League's 2021 Model City Charter, Section 2.10, and draws further support from RCW 35.18.060, which permits a city council to audit any

city department or office. A strengthened Council will be in an enhanced position to serve its constituents under either the council-manager or the mayor-council form of government.

**Dissenting Position:**

None