

April, 2016

A MONTHLY MESSAGE
FROM



**MAYOR
TODD GOTTEL**



City of Rowlett
4000 Main Street
Rowlett, TX 75088

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On the Ballot...

Mayor
Todd Gittel

Councilmember, Place 2
Tammy Dana-Bashian

Councilmember, Place 3
Bruce Hargrave
Chris Kilgore

Councilmember, Place 4
Arlan "Brownie" Sherrill
Debby Bobbitt

Councilmember, Place 6
Martha Brown
Doug Phillips

Charter Amendment and City Council Election Come Out and VOTE!!

The charter is the governing document of the City, "an expression of our city's purpose". Folks, amending our City Charter is not a process entered into lightly or without much forethought. Cities in the State of Texas are classified as either General Law or Home Rule. Rowlett is a Home Rule city and, along with the state laws of Texas, is governed by a Home Rule Charter. Much like the constitution, the Charter outlines the form of government, powers of the City, rules relating to the City Council and their appointees, financial and legislative processes, and franchise regulations. As stated in the Charter, "the City Council shall appoint a charter Review commission at least once every five years." It also states that "Amendments to this Charter may be framed and submitted to the qualified voters of the City.; but no more often than once every two years, as provided by the laws of the State." *The last time our charter was amended occurred after an election in 2013.*

Please read more about the revisions offered for your consideration on the May 7 ballot, and why the Charter Review Commission is recommending them, on the next page. Remember, at the end of the day, whatever

revisions, if any, are made have to be approved by YOU, the registered voters in Rowlett!

Why vote?

The City of Rowlett also elects its Councilmembers on the uniform election date in May. 96 percent of registered voters in Rowlett did NOT vote in the last local election. So why should YOU vote? Well, the City Council are the officials who set the property tax rate, which allows for the budget that provides for water and sewer services, street department staff and materials, public safety staff and training. The Council also approves the trash collection and mowing contracts that ensure Rowlett is a beautiful community. The Council determines the allocations that provide for the services that happen without you having to think about it. These are the things that affect you daily.

This is YOUR community, YOUR city, so please take an active role by casting YOUR vote on May 7!

Mayor Todd Gittel

"I encourage everyone to come out on May 7 and let your voice be heard!"
Mayor Todd Gittel

PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENTS

The charter is the governing document of the City, “an expression of our City’s purpose”.

PROPOSITION 1

Shall Section 2.05 (“Health Regulations”) be amended to add a new subsection (3): The sale of liquor in all residential sections of the City is prohibited; however, the City Council may authorize the sale of liquor in residential sections appropriately zoned for mixed use. **CRC recommendation:** this new provision provides a backstop against nullification of liquor prohibitions in zoning ordinances as provided for by Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code.

PROPOSITION 2

Shall Subsection (3) of Section 3.02 (“Term Limits”) be amended to extend the term limits of the mayor and council members from two consecutive terms to three consecutive terms, and to define the length of service constituting a full term. **The CRC recommends** increasing the term limit to three consecutive terms for both Mayor and Councilmember for the following reasons:

1. Retain institutional knowledge, direction, focus and follow through on key plans and projects.
2. Increased ability to build relationships and collaborate with other elected officials, jurisdictions, agencies and entities to better Rowlett and the region.
3. Current term limits were passed by voters in May 2003.

PROPOSITION 3

Shall Subsections (1) and (2) of Section 3.11 (“Compensation for the Mayor and Councilmembers”) be amended to rename “compensation” to “stipend” and to change the compensation to \$500 per month for the mayor and \$300 per month for councilmembers. **The CRC recommends** this for the following reasons:

1. Elected Officials are not employees of the City and thus are not compensated for their services. The word “compensation” does not accurately reflect the intent of this section, the word “stipend” is more in line with the intended purpose of this section.
2. Elected Officials frequently have expenses outside of those allowed by the City for reimbursement, which can have a negative effect on an individual serving in that capacity. It is the intent of this section to lessen the impact of such expenses.
3. Current compensation plan was passed by voters in May 2003. Since 2003, the dollar has experienced a reduction of 29% in purchasing power due to inflation.
4. Total cost to city of proposal is \$27,600, which represents a mere fraction of the \$92.7 million FY2015-16 city budget.

PROPOSITION 4

Shall Subsections (5), (6) and (7) of Section 2.03 be amended to remove outdated language, correct clerical errors, and harmonize the charter language with State law. **CRC recommendation:** Changes in these sections harmonize it with state law. State law now clearly defines appeals from Municipal Courts. It also allows the City Judge to have input into the appointing of the Clerk of the Municipal Court by the City Manager.

PROPOSITION 5

Shall Subsection (2) of Section 3.09 be amended to clarify language regarding absences and forfeiture of office of councilmembers. **CRC recommendation:** Changes in this section clarify the provision for unexcused absences by a councilmember.

PROPOSITION 6

Shall Subsection (1) of Section 5.04 (“Municipal Judge”) be amended to harmonize the charter language with State law. **CRC recommendation:** This change clearly states the supervisory relationship of the Chief Judge to the Clerk, and removes limiting language for contempt.

PROPOSITION 7

Shall Subsection (4) of Section 3.02 (“Elected Officers”) be amended to add Subsection (5) “Residency” to clarify that residence within the city during a term of office is a qualification requirement of office. **CRC recommendation:** Elected officials should have their primary residence in the community they were elected to represent.

PROPOSITION 8

Shall Section 6.01 (“Audit and Examination of City Books and Accounts”) be amended to repeal the 5-year limit on the use of outside auditors and require the City to seek competitive qualifications from auditors at least once every five years. **CRC recommendation:** This change allows for competitive qualifications without the automatic disqualification of auditors allowed no more than five consecutive annual audits (according to the current Charter).

In June of 2015, the City Council appointed the following Rowlett citizens to the Charter Review Commission (CRC): Whitney Laning, Deb Shinder, Pamela Liston, Martha Brown, Leisa Peebles, Thomas Finney, Ray Kneegs, and Alternate Members Bruce Mahnken and Dan Pence.

After many meetings of the Commission, sub-committees, and joint meetings with the City Council, the Commissioners presented their recommendations. The City Council opted to place before the voters of the City of Rowlett eight propositions to amend the Charter.

These propositions will appear in a Special Election and on the ballot Saturday, May 7, 2016, in conjunction with the City’s General Election and Special Election for Councilmembers.

Early Voting
City Hall Annex Building
4004 Main Street

Mon., April 25 - Sat., April 30
8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Sun., May 1
1:00 to 6:00 P.M.

Mon., May 2 - Tue., May 3
7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Election Day
Saturday, May 7
7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Visit
www.rowlett.com/electioninfo
for locations