A Charter is the constitution for the local governments. It lays out the basic framework for how the City governs itself. The original Keizer Charter was adopted March 29, 1983. The Charter was amended in 1985 to require all water department funds to be used exclusively for water department fund expenses. It was also amended in 1992 to make several relatively minor changes.

In 1993, a third amendment was done by an initiative process. The No Special Rights Committee, together with the Oregon Citizens Alliance gathered sufficient signatures to place a measure on the ballot that prohibited the City from granting “special rights” to persons based on sexual orientation. Keizer voters approved the measure which was placed in the Charter as Section 44. Because it was by initiative petition, the City Council had no involvement in its adoption. Shortly after that, state law made all the local “no special rights” provisions unenforceable. However, to remove the provision from the Charter, a Charter amendment or revision must be passed by the voters.

Last year, the City Council determined that it would be appropriate to delete Section 44 from the Charter and review the Charter to see if other changes would be appropriate. The City Council formed a Charter Review Committee to receive recommendations for changes to the Charter, hold public hearings on proposed changes and recommend changes to the City Council.

The Charter Review Committee has compared the League of Oregon Cities’ Model Charter with the current Keizer Charter and has made recommendations for consideration. Sections have been moved, grammatical revisions have been made, sections have been deleted, and some of the sections in the Keizer Charter have been replaced with the League of Oregon Cities’ Model Charter to make it easier to read. Below is a highlight of some of the major revisions:

1. The Keizer Charter has Section 44 as mentioned above. The Charter Review Committee is recommending removal of this Section to be consistent with state law.

2. The current Keizer Charter states that an Ordinance must be available one week before the first reading of the Council. The suggestion is to change this from one week to five calendar days.
3. The current Keizer Charter uses the term “elector” throughout the document. It is recommended that this term be revised to “registered voter in the City.”

The Keizer Charter Review Committee would like input on the draft Charter, especially on three sections. These sections have a placeholder in the current draft Charter and are left blank (Sections are 3.1, 7.1 and 7.9). These sections have been deferred for public input. Questions to consider for these sections are as follows:

A. Councilors are currently elected “at-large” meaning they are elected by all the registered voters of the City. A “ward” system elects the councilors from specific geographical areas (“wards”) of the City. Do you prefer “ward” or “at-large” councilor positions?

B. Every two years, three councilors are elected in “head-to-head” elections, meaning the candidates choose which numbered position to run for. Another method would be to have all the councilor candidates run against each other and the top three are elected to the three positions. If the at-large method is used, would you prefer an at-large, a “top three” or other method be used?

C. Currently councilors serve four year terms. Would you like to continue with the current four year terms or would you like to see the councilors serve two years instead?

D. Currently if a council office becomes vacant, the vacancy is filled by appointment. Do you want to change the method from an appointment method to a special election process? If you want to consider a special election process, does it matter how much time is left in the term?

**PUBLIC FORUM NOTICE**

The Charter Review Committee will hold a limited public forum on April 21, 2020 at 6:00pm at the Keizer Civic Center. Please relay any input you have on the draft Charter to charterreview@keizer.org or Debbie Lockhart, Deputy City Recorder at LockhartD@Keizer.org, PO Box 21000, Keizer, OR 97307 or 930 Chemawa Road NE, Keizer, OR 97303. Due to concerns regarding COVID19, we would like to encourage anyone who wishes to participate in the meeting on April 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. to provide public testimony via email or written correspondence, rather than attending the meeting in person. Please provide your comments on or before April 21, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. The following options are available for participation:
• Written comments may be submitted by email or mail as indicated above. City Hall is currently closed to the public, but comments may be dropped off at a table in the Civic Center lobby.

• Individuals may participate online through the ZOOM web conferencing platform. Contact Debbie Lockhart at lockhartd@keizer.org or by phone at (503)856-3418 no later than 3:00 p.m. on April 21, 2020 to register for ZOOM participation.

• We will be practicing social distancing and other safety measures within the Council Chambers. There will be very limited allowance to testify in person at the Council Chambers.

Your time and input is appreciated. Thank you.