

The City Charter is the official document that outlines the structure of government for the City of Claremont. Claremont's first City Charter was adopted on October 21, 1947. The most recent revisions were adopted November 4, 2003.

A charter commission is an independently elected body of 9 at-large, non-partisan members, who review and develop proposals for revisions to the existing charter or the adoption of a new charter. The provisions that may be included in a City Charter are those permitted by state law and the New Hampshire Constitution and are generally outlined in RSA Chapter 49-C. The Charter Commission election has been set for January 21, 2014.

Within 7 days of election (no later than 1/28/14), the City Clerk must notify elected members of the date/time/place of the Charter Commission's organizational meeting, with 7 days public notice of the meeting. At this organizational meeting (no later than 2/04/14), the commission must elect a chairman, vice chairman, and a secretary.

Within 14 days of the organizational meeting (no later than 2/18/14), the Charter Commission is required to hold a public meeting expressly "for the purpose of receiving information, views, comments and other pertinent material relative to its functions."

After the initial public meeting, the Charter Commission may hold as many meetings as it may desire and may hold additional public hearings to receive additional input. Such additional meetings and opportunities for public input are at the sole discretion of the Charter Commission. All meetings must be open to the public and all meetings require at least 7 days public notice. There is no basis for a Charter Commission to hold non-public meetings pursuant to RSA 91-A.

No later than 7/10/14 (170 days after its election), the Charter Commission must prepare a preliminary report, including the text of the charter provisions that the Commission intends to submit to the voters and any explanatory information the Commission deems desirable. This preliminary report must be printed and made available to the public by the City Clerk and at other locations as may be determined.

Upon receipt by the City Clerk, the preliminary report is submitted to the New Hampshire Attorney General, Secretary of State and Department of Revenue Administration for a determination that the proposals comply with state law and constitution. The state has 30 days to respond; if it does not do so, the proposals are deemed in compliance.

No later than 9/09/14 (231 days after its election), the Charter Commission must submit its final report to the City Council, including the full text and explanation of the proposed changes, such comments as the Commission deems desirable, any minority reports, and a written opinion of an attorney stating that the proposed charter is not in conflict with the state constitution or state law.

The City Council must order submission of the proposals to the voters "at the next primary or general municipal election or at the next regular state biennial election held at least 45 days after filing of the final report" (10/17/14). The next qualifying election will be the state biennial election, set for 11/04/14.