

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

**March 22, 2021 – 4:30 p.m.
Council Chamber – City Hall**

A Council work session was held to discuss the proposed new City Council Districts.

Attending: Mayor Bill McMurray and Councilmembers Brenda Blessing, Madison Davis, PJ Kovac, Russell Moore, Brian Myers, Marty Novak, Kent O'Dell and Gary Roach.

Bryan Carter, Interim City Manager/City Attorney; Clint Thompson, Planning & Community Development Director; Debra Bradley, Health Director; Tom Mahoney, Interim Administrative Services Director; Mike Dalsing, Fire Chief; Zack Martin, City Planner; Mary Robertson, Asst. to the City Manager/Communications & Public Relation Manager; Ed Schilling, Multimedia Planner; and Paula Heyde, City Clerk.

Mayor Bill McMurray called the meeting to order.

A Memorandum from Bryan Carter, Interim City Manager/City Attorney, in re: Council Redistricting, dated March 18, 2021, was previously distributed.

Mr. Carter went through a power point presentation containing maps of the City showing the current five district layout, proposed four district layout, revised four district layout proposal and population totals, and census tracts (copy attached).

[Councilmember PJ Kovac arrived.]

There was discussion on drawing the City Council districts from west to east slicing from north to south; under the revised proposal, taking Messanie Street all the way to the Missouri River to divide Districts 1 and 2; keeping the downtown in one district; and providing an overlay of other demographic information.

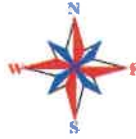
Mr. Carter said the closer the boundaries are kept to the Census Tracts, the more reliable the data is. By keeping it to the uniform style it will help avoid any potential interpretation that there is gerrymandering. Based on this input, City staff will prepare some options that address some of these suggestions but would recommend sticking to the Census Tracts to the extent possible to avoid splitting because the more splitting of tracts, the more we are relying on estimation and the more we rely on estimation, the farther we venture from the hitting that “substantially equal” requirement in the City Charter. After the other options are distributed, a work session will be scheduled to see if there is any consensus on a chosen path.

The meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.



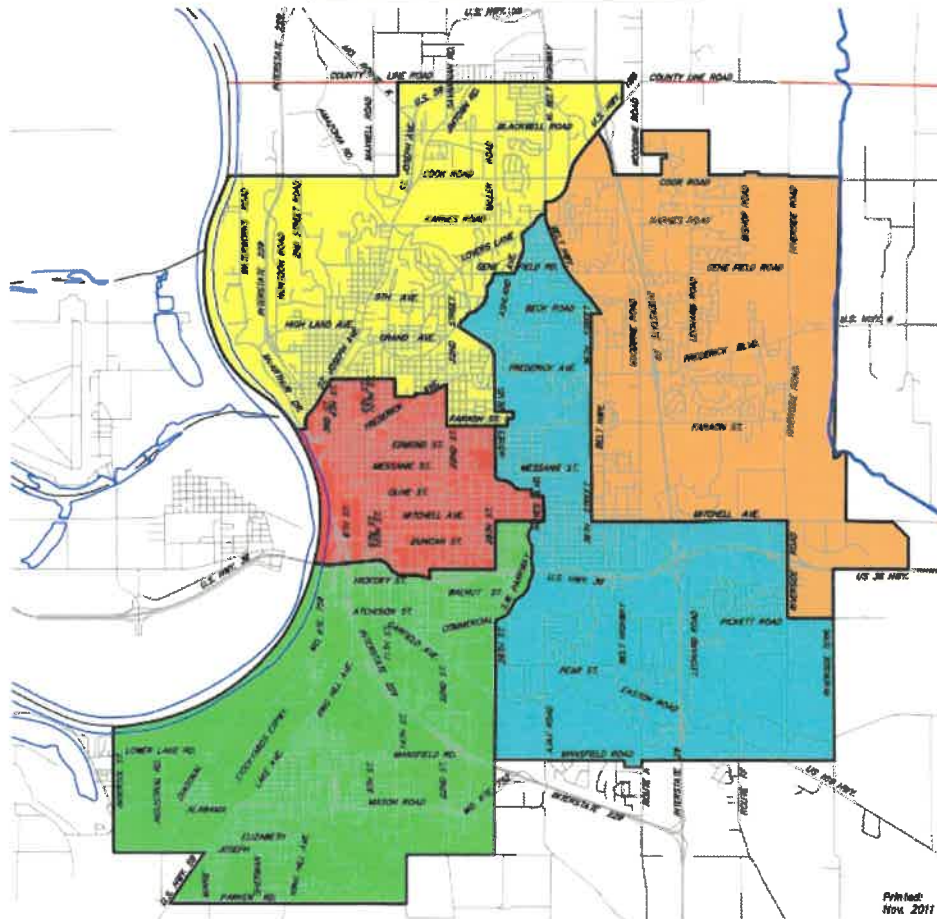
Minutes transcribed by Paula Heyde, CMC, City Clerk.

- 1st District
- 2nd District
- 3rd District
- 4th District
- 5th District



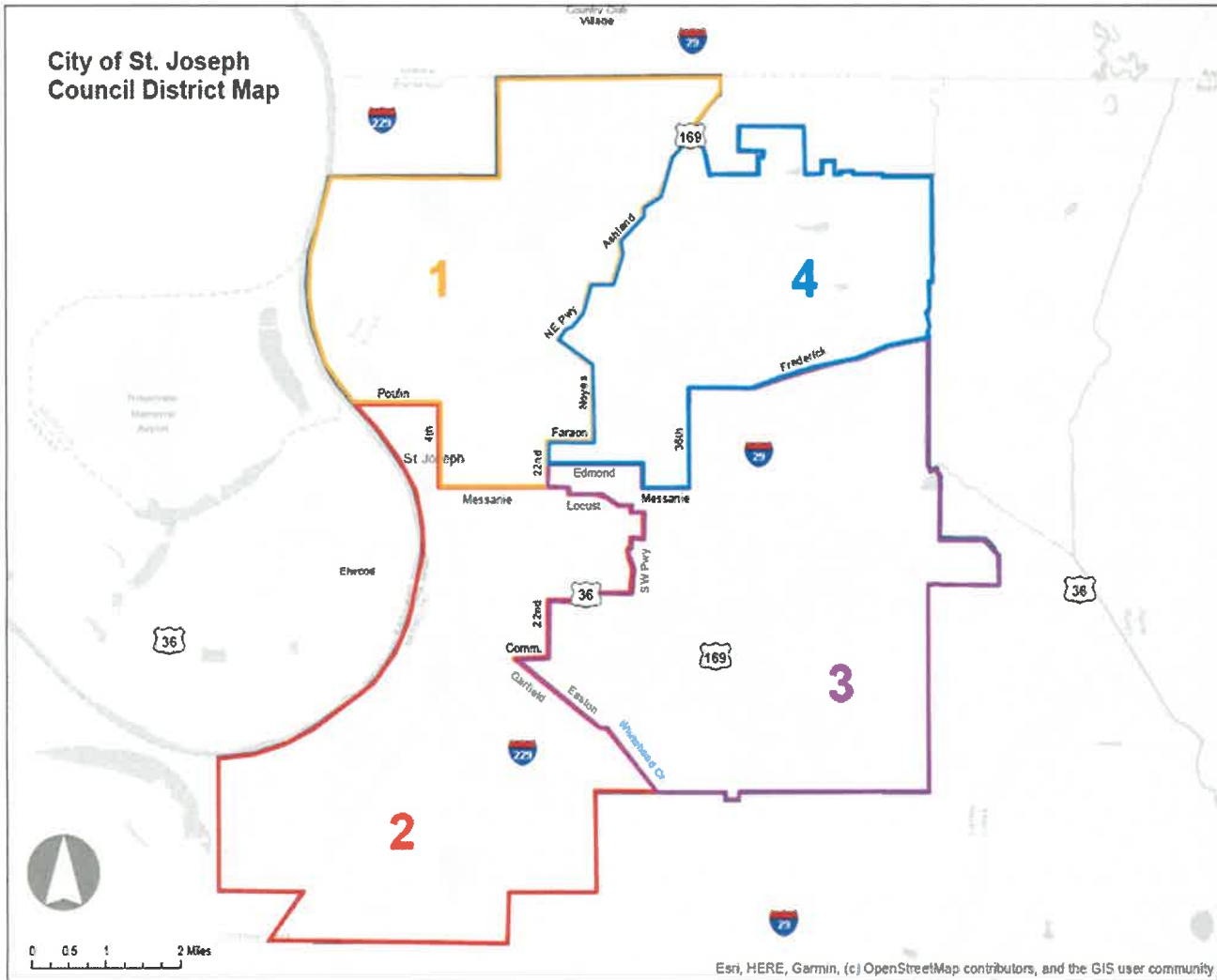
**At Large Districts
include Entire City**

Effective December 31, 2011



Printed:
Nov. 2011

City of St. Joseph
Council District Map



Map Previously Presented

Population By District

	2010	Proposed
District 1	20.52%	24.86%
District 2	20.04%	25.19%
District 3	19.21%	27.04%
District 4	19.14%	22.97%
District 5	21.10%	--

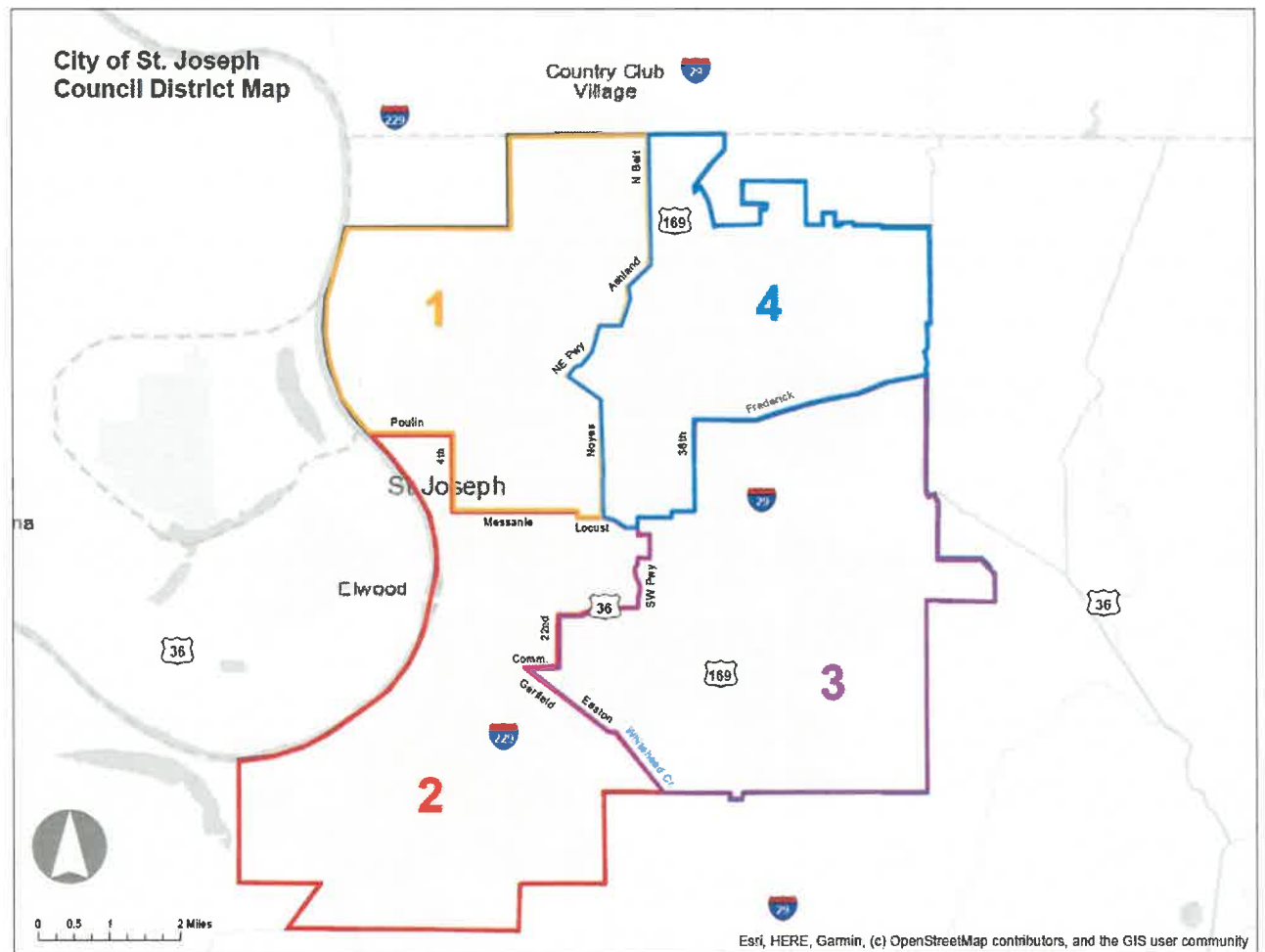
Variance: 1.96% 4.07%

Revised Proposal

Population By District

	2010	Proposed
District 1	20.52%	25.73%
District 2	20.04%	25.18%
District 3	19.21%	25.24%
District 4	19.14%	23.85%
District 5	21.10%	--

Variance: 1.96% 1.89%



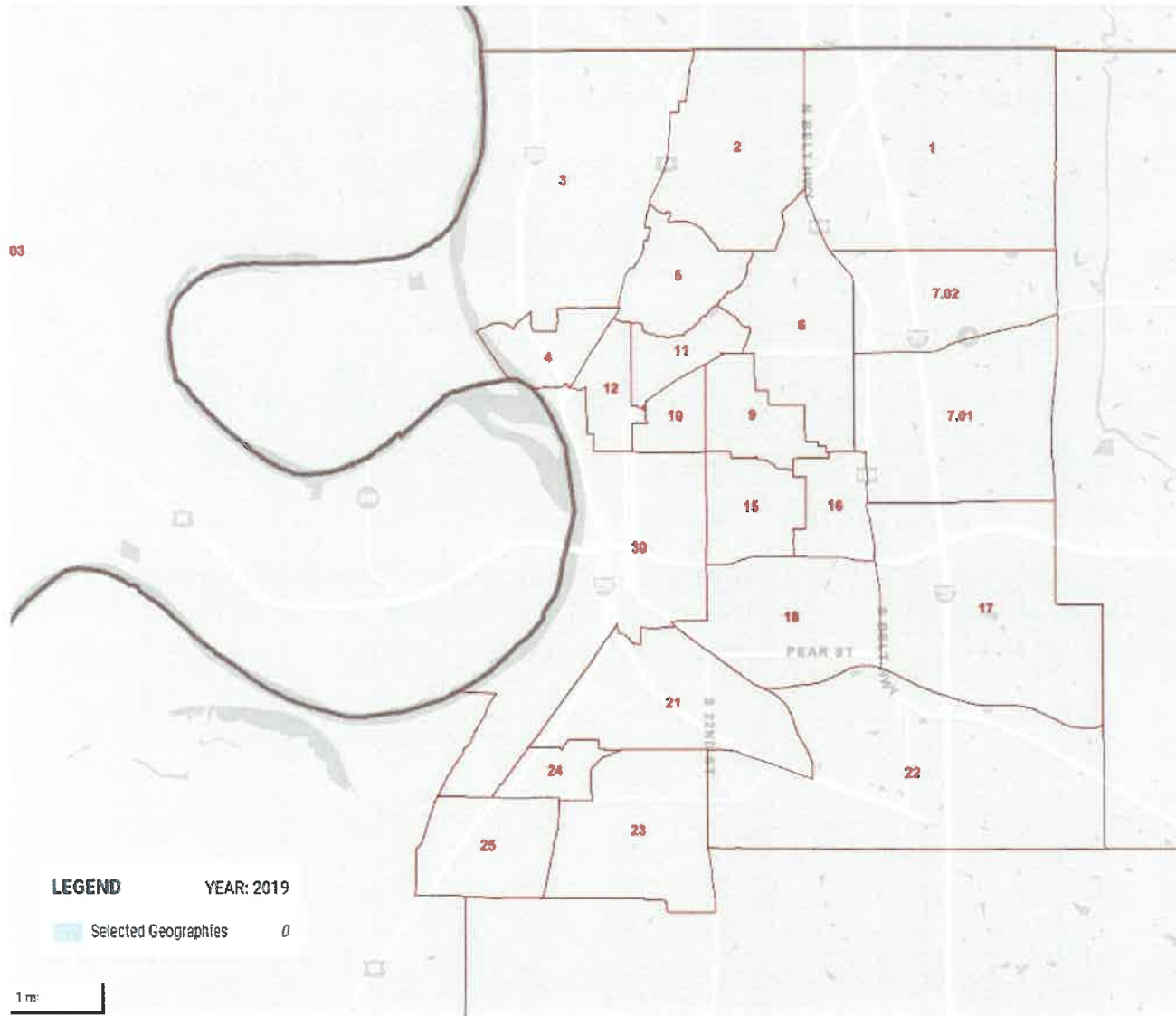
Revised Proposal Totals

District 1		District 2		District 3		District 4	
Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.
2	4094	15	4956	7.01	4491	1	5928
3	3344	23*	2523	16	2562	6	5386
4	1403	24	1852	17	4306	7.02	4659
5	3190	25*	2133	18	3504	(1/2) 9*	2236
(1/2) 9*	2236	29*	3321	21	2579	(1/2) 27*	1741
10	3186	30	6277	22*	1931	-	-
11	2305	-	-	(1/2) 27*	1741	-	-
12	1769	-	-			-	-
Total	21527	-	21062	-	21114	-	19950
Percentage	25.73%		25.18%		25.24%		23.85%


Variance: 1.89%

*2 out of 4 proposed districts share some population of Census Tract 9. Since an accurate count is not possible, the total of the tract was divided by 2 and the proposed lines were drawn based on logical street routes.

* Tracts 22, 23, 25, 27, & 29 are shared by the City and Buchanan County. As there is no clear-cut way to count residents of this area, estimates were used to the best of Staff's ability to redraw lines.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor McMurray and Members of the City Council
FROM: Bryan Carter, Interim City Manager 
DATE: March 18, 2021
SUBJECT: Council Redistricting

Overview

Amendments to the City Charter were approved on June 2, 2020, reducing the number of Council Districts from 5 to 4, effective in 2022. Based on population data that is currently available, City staff has created a proposed new Council district map. The map is included on page 3 of this memorandum. The proposed districts are comprised of four areas that meet the City Charter's requirement to be "substantially equal" in population. Revised districts can be described as generally located in the Northwest, Central/Southwest, Southeast, and Northeast sections of the City and follow existing streets or physical features where possible. The data used to create these maps was from the American Community Survey Data ("ACSD"). The ACSD is information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau on an annual basis between official census takings and is the most accurate data currently available due to delays in finalizing the 2020 Census.

Process: Using ACSD estimates and a map of census tracts located (completely or partially, as some census tracts cross the City's corporate limits) within the City of St. Joseph, the following population estimates were developed for each census tract:

Table 1: Buchanan County Census Tracts & Estimated Population (ACS, 2019)

Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.
1	5928	6	5386	11	2305	18	3504	25*	2133
2	4094	7.01	4491	12	1769	21	2579	27*	3483
3	3344	7.02	4659	15	4956	22*	1931	28*	4806
4	1403	9*	4472	16	2562	23*	2523	29*	3321
5	3190	10	3186	17	4306	24	1852	30*	6277

*Tract 9 is split between three districts, meaning exact population count was not possible. Lines are drawn to provide as much equality as possible between districts.

*Tracts 22, 23, 25, 27, & 29 are shared by the City and Buchanan County. As there is no clear-cut way to count residents of this area, estimates were used to the best of staff's ability to redraw lines. As a result, for example, the southwestern district, is likely slightly overcounted in this estimate. This is possible for all the districts to an extent given the estimate data.

*Tract 28 is located completely outside city limits and is not included in the overall count.

*Tract 30 is shown as 30.01 and 30.02 in the attached census tract map. The ACS has these two tracts combined into one for their 2019 estimates and were treated as one for the purposes of this project.

*Tracts 8, 13, 14, 19, 20, and 26 are not located in Buchanan County.

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CITY CLERK

The total population of these tracts (excluding 28) is 83,654, while the estimated population of St. Joseph is 74,875 (ACS, 2019). This is a decrease from the 2010 count of 76,783 (a decrease of 1,908 or 2.5%). To achieve four districts, the current *estimated* population for the City was divided by 4, totaling approximately 18,718. This was the target number used by City Staff to help create the redrawing of new district lines.

In addition to the numerical values, staff also sought geographic uniformity when drawing the lines, avoiding gerrymandering-like tentacles and following census tract borders and streets. While some districts may appear geographically slightly larger than others, it is important to take into consideration the makeup of those districts, such as the wide industrial riverfront in the southwest, lightly populated bluffs in the northeast, etc. The calculations grouping census tracts by district are shown below.

Table 2: Proposed Districts by Census Tract and Total Estimated Population (ACS, 2019)

District 1		District 2		District 3		District 4	
Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.	Tract	Pop.
2	4094	15	4956	7.01	4491	1	5928
3	3344	23*	2523	(1/3) 9*	1490	6	5386
4	1403	24	1852	16	2562	7.02	4659
5	3190	25*	2133	17	4306	(1/3) 9*	1490
(1/3) 9*	1490	29*	3321	18	3504	(1/2) 27*	1741
10	3186	30	6277	21	2579	-	-
11	2305	-	-	22*	1931	-	-
12	1769	-	-	(1/2) 27*	1741	-	-
Total	20,781	-	21,062*	-	22,604	-	19,204

*3 out of 4 proposed districts share some population of Census Tract 9. Since an accurate count is not possible, the total of the tract was divided by 3 and the proposed lines were drawn based on logical street routes.

* Tracts 22, 23, 25, 27, & 29 are shared by the City and Buchanan County. As there is no clear-cut way to count residents of this area, estimates were used to the best of Staff's ability to redraw lines.

When calculated this way, the total is 83,651 (as tracts 9 and 27 cannot be evenly divided between Districts 3 and 2 respectively without decimal points, the count is very slightly off the original total in the previous paragraph, resulting in the total being 3 fewer people than the total population of St. Joseph). As stated in the footnotes, there is no way to clearly delineate the larger census tracts that also extend into the county from their portions within City limits. Due to this limitation City Staff expects that all districts will have a potential fluctuation of approximately 2,000 people. This fluctuation is in addition to the variance resulting from using estimates provided by the Census Bureau rather than the final count from the 2020 census. This will place the districts in the range of 18,000 to 21,000 residents and creates 4 substantially equal council districts for St. Joseph.

Summary: Using the preceding information provided by the US Census Bureau, staff has provided an updated Council District Map reflecting the changes in St. Joseph's population over the past decade. Upon Council supporting the proposed new district boundaries, an Ordinance would be required to adopt districts in accordance with the City Charter requirements.

