



# CITY OF RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701-2724

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November 27, 2019

Rapid City Common Council  
300 Sixth Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701

*Re: Home Rule Charter*

Dear Council Members:

Earlier this month, I provided you with a letter generally explaining the concept of a Home Rule Charter versus the Dillon's Rule form of government. At that time, I expressed my belief that a Home Rule Charter could be a positive change for Rapid City.

Since sending that letter, I have received acknowledgment from three City Council members; however, no feedback regarding this topic itself has been received. As promised in the initial letter on this topic, I am now preparing an agenda item for the appointment of a Home Rule Charter Committee to be discussed at the regularly-scheduled City Council meeting on Monday, December 16.

### **The Need**

To investigate the appropriateness of a Home Rule Charter, we should establish a citizen group, known as a Home Rule Charter Committee.

### **Selection Process**

Considering the unique nature of this specific committee, I believe there is flexibility as to how members are chosen. Three methods we should discuss include:

*Option 1:* The traditional appointment process could be used. Per usual, the mayor would advertise for applications, make an initial selection from those applications and forward the names to the City Council for approval at a regularly-scheduled City Council meeting.

*Option 2:* The Council members could each select a representative from their ward, either through the existing application process or by proactive nomination by the Council member.



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*Option 3:* A combination of both of the above selection methods: We could advertise for applicants, and the Council could choose members from their wards or at large. As mentioned in my earlier letter, I would reserve the ability to appoint a few members based on subject matter expertise and/or diversification of thought.

### **Scope**

- To investigate the benefits of Home Rule and document any pros and cons on the subject.
- To contrast and compare Home Rule government against our current structure.
- To assemble a draft Home Rule Charter, based on examples from around the state or nation; based on advice of subject matter experts; based on the guidelines from the National Civic League or other professional organizations; or based on direct feedback from citizens, to include current City Council members.

### **Committee Duration**

Ideally, this committee would meet at least twice a month for six to nine months. Realistically, the duration of the committee should be fluid – the progress of the work should ultimately determine the duration.

### **Conclusion of the Committee**

If approved, I envision this citizen committee will ultimately make a recommendation to the City Council regarding their findings. If the determination is to stay with our current government structure, no further action will be required. If the recommendation is to pursue citizen approval for a Home Rule Charter, the Council will be asked to consider sending the item directly to a future ballot.

In a nutshell, the citizen committee will be a conduit for the education of current elected officials and citizens alike, regarding the option of a Home Rule Charter.

I am looking forward to this discussion and the ultimate approval of the City Council to take a step forward in learning more about Home Rule.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like additional information on this topic.

Sincerely,



Steve Allender,  
Mayor, Rapid City