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Candidates Nasreen Sheikh-Yousef and Anthony Emerson did not respond to this questionnaire.

Approach to the Charter Commission

1. What do you see as the role of a city's charter? Should the charter, as the city's constitution, solely address how the city is governed, leaving policy issues such as health, labor and the environment to be addressed through ordinance? Why or why not?

William Bailey: *I see The Charter as a blueprint of how the "city machine" works. Yes, the charter should address how the city is governed because I don't believe policy is the charter's purpose.*

Catherine Buxton: *The charter is the foundational document of the City and sets the structure and tone for every aspect of the city's government. A charter provides a template for policymaking and decision-making across the city and outlines the vision and expectations for city officials in all areas of concern. While the Charter is not a policy document, the structures it establishes and the power it imbues to city officials impact decisions from housing to health to labor to schools and beyond.*

Marpheen Chann: *I believe that the City Charter is the governance document for the city and see it as a structural vehicle, not a policy vehicle. Questions regarding policy should be addressed by the mayor and city council, our elected policymakers, and not by a Charter Commission that is elected only to review the City Charter and provide recommendations on how we, as a city, can improve how city government works and serves its residents and voters.*

Lawson Condrey: *This is our best opportunity at creating a better government that works for everyone in Portland. To me, that means creating the right structures so to increase accountability, transparency, and accessibility. I am largely in favor of drawing a line between structural changes to government (i.e., stronger mayor, more representatives, easier access to voting) and policymaking. I want the political decisions to be made by our representatives not via the charter rewrite. I am, however, open to conversations and deliberations around how to increase access to those often left out of the conversation outside of making it easier to run for office and participate (i.e., participatory budgeting is a great, nonpartisan idea that lowers the barrier to entry).*

Steve DiMillo: *Changes to the charter should be restricted to how city government works. Policy issues should be dealt with at the council level. Times change and the council can morph with the times. The changes to the charter should be limited.*

Ben Grant: *The City Charter sets the structure of the government, its processes, and establishes the roles of various positions. Generally speaking, the policy decisions should be made by the elected officials, and not written into the Charter. However, I will approach this on a case-by-case basis. There is too much gray area possible in the policy vs structure debate for me to make a blanket guarantee one way or the other on this question.*

Ian Houseal: *The Charter is the guiding document of the government for the City of Portland which currently vests the power of its voters in its so-called City Council and now elected Mayor; it is not very much like the*



Constitution per say, but “like the Constitution” is fine to say to people who have no idea what the Charter is. The Charter needs to be a somewhat aspirational document covering topic areas such as health, safety, and wellbeing of the public, but primarily it is a document specifying the government’s form, function, and processes. The primary concerns of the charter are democracy and the voice of the people to access elected office and the government’s bond to its people. As such, I think that the Charter should consider existential questions, such as concerns about its land, water, and air because they are fundamental to Portland’s future; but how exactly to give voice to our future Portland, I am not exactly sure at this time and would like to discuss that further with the Commission.

Pat Washburn: *The charter is the founding document and sets the tone for every aspect of the city’s government. A charter provides a template for policymaking and decision-making across the city and outlines the vision and expectations for city officials in all areas of concern.*

Mayoral Power

2. Do you favor expanding the role of Portland’s elected mayor to include the ability to hire and oversee city staff such as the police chief or public works director? Why or why not?

Bailey: *No, I see the city manager as a highly skilled position for someone trained for the specific task of running the city. No, a popularly elected mayor may not possess a single skill needed to perform that job. I see each position being its own distinct job.*

Buxton: *Yes, this is common practice in many cities. The city council should have an oversight role in these hiring decisions as well.*

Chann: *No, I believe this is the job of the city manager, who is the chief administrative and operations officer of the city. According to the City Charter, the mayor and council confirm department heads appointed by the city manager. These confirmation proceedings are where the mayor and council can exercise oversight.*

Condrey: *I believe in a strong mayor system. My guiding principle is that political decisions should be made by people who are elected. Setting priorities and a vision for the city should be done in concert with the City Council. This will ensure that those elected are accountable for the decisions they make and will have to be more transparent about those decisions. I do, however, support a city administrator position that can run the day-to-day operations of the city. I don’t expect an elected official to know how to maintain payroll for city staff or coordinate department heads during a snow emergency. I do expect that position to be removed from political decisions going forward so that the line between Mayor and City Manager is clearer and less confusing to Portlanders. For hiring department heads I think that should be done in concert with the Council, but the city manager/ administrator should also have a say. Non-executive staff can be handled directly with the city manager.*

DiMillo: *I do not favor expanding the role of the mayor to include the responsibility of hiring and managing the city department heads. This should be left to a professional and not a politician.*

Grant: *I favor expanding the powers of the Mayor to include more hiring and oversight, but I am not ready right now to say where the exact lines should be drawn. I do believe in having qualified professionals in charge of Departments - but these two things are not mutually exclusive. I would prefer a system where the Mayor has greater*



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power to hire, but the Charter also contains job requirements. A Mayor should have greater say in some top-level managers, but within a defined set of qualifications.

I know the issue of “oversight” of various staff became a hot-button issue under Mayor Strimling - but I don’t have enough information yet to be able to say what the “right” amount of oversight should be. We want both of the following: accountable government AND freedom to perform the jobs without micromanaging. That is the balance I will seek to implement in the charter.

Houseal: *Many charters specify certain city functions such as the police in their charter carrying with that charter-specified authority delegated by the voters and along with that, greater public scrutiny and oversight. While Portland’s current charter allows constables to be appointed by the City Council currently in addition to the City Manager, Corporation Counsel, and City Clerk administrative positions, I am far less in favor of sole oversight of the Police by a sole elected executive than oversight by an appointed executive overseen by a representative body authorized by the Charter.*

Washburn: *Possibly. The city council should have an oversight role in these decisions as well.*

3. Do you favor expanding the role of Portland’s elected mayor to include oversight of day-to-day functions of city government, including decisions regarding paving and repairs, and city licensing? Why or why not?

Bailey: *No, I believe that is the city manager's job, not the job of a mayor.*

Buxton: *I believe there should be an appointed city administrator to oversee day-to-day functions, provide staff leadership, and implement policy agenda from mayor and council. Policy will influence these decisions, but I want to ensure we are also trusting city staff and department heads to be expert in their respective roles and duties.*

Chann: *No, I believe the city manager ought to oversee the day-to-day functions of city government and services as the chief operations officer for the city. This ensures that a nonpolitical, nonpartisan professional administrator is in charge of equitably delivering city services. This helps insulate city services from undue political influence.*

Condrey: *No – this should be delegated skilled city administrator(s)/ staff. The charter should set guidelines for how contracts are awarded with more specificity.*

DiMillo: *I do not favor the role of Portland’s mayor to include oversight of day-to-day operations except for consultations with the city manager.*

Grant: *Much like my previous answer, this question assumes a level of knowledge about the day-to-to-day functioning of City Hall that someone like me just does not possess at this time. I believe that City departments should not be walled off from the Mayor, but neither do I think the Mayor should be making calls about minutiae - like which streets get plowed first.*

I am on record favoring removal of the Mayor from the Council and making the Mayor head of the executive “branch” of the City government. In that sense, I envision a greater role in the day-to-day operations. However, I



also believe in check-and-balances - and in professional staff. There is a balance there that we are not achieving now, but I think we can for the future.

Houseal: *Is there a proposal for an expansion of the elected Mayor position to allow for the Mayor to solely issue licenses or set license fees or decide which street was paved or repaired? Would the expectation be that the Mayor would be the sole authority or share that authority with the City Council in setting fees? Would the Mayor also pave and repair the road? Where would they get the money? Would the Mayor not have to ask the voters under this proposal? How would the Mayor decide? I am not in favor of that. What is the question being asked?*

Washburn: *Possibly. It's important that all government functions are accountable to voters and transparent, with power distributed between elected and appointed officials.*

4. Do you favor allowing Portland's elected mayor to have a role in awarding contracts for city services, such as paving contracts, software agreements, or consulting services? Why or why not?

Bailey: *No, again I think this falls under the city manager's area of expertise.*

Buxton: *I am open to learning more about this issue, but currently think elected and appointed officials should have shared authority. It's important to value city staff experience and expertise in their fields when it comes to awarding contracts, but it's also important that the process through which these decisions are made is more transparent and accessible to the voters.*

Chann: *No, I believe contracts need to be awarded through a robust and nonpolitical process to ensure that there is no political favoritism or rewarding of contracts to political allies, donors, friends, and family.*

Condrey: *No – this should be delegated skilled city administrator(s)/ staff. The charter should set guidelines for how contracts are awarded with more specificity.*

DiMillo: *The city manager should be responsible for all contract for city services.*

Grant: *Undecided/ not enough info. I will have to educate myself about how this process works now - so I'm not sure if there is a problem with how the City currently awards contracts. Generally speaking, I favor strong labor protections/ requirements in law, but then a "non-partisan" process to evaluate contract proposals. We definitely do not need a system in which rank cronyism would flourish - but I do think the City must insist on rigorous standards to provide guideposts that reflect our values.*

Houseal: *The Mayor has a role in awarding contracts as specified in the Charter in cooperation with the City Council as delegated in the Charter. Is there a proposal that the Mayor would have sole authority to award contracts? No, I am not in favor of that. Again, what is the question?*

Washburn: *Possibly. This power should be distributed, and all processes made transparent to voters.*



5. Do you favor allowing Portland's elected mayor having a direct role in police investigations or enforcement actions? Why or why not?

Bailey: *Absolutely not. The Mayor is not qualified for that role. Matters that oversee such things, may require specific training and knowledge in said areas.*

Buxton: *I believe that the mayor should have responsibility for hiring and firing chief of police and officers, as is common in other cities. I also believe there should be a fully funded, independent and empowered Citizen Police Review Board that is able to conduct investigations into misconduct.*

Chann: *No, the mayor should not have the power to direct police investigations and enforcement actions. This opens the door to corruption and improper use of law enforcement for personal or political purposes.*

Condrey: *The mayor should have the power to call for investigations, but those investigations should be lead and coordinated through an independent party.*

DiMillo: *The elected mayor should not be involved in police enforcement or investigations. That person does not possess the necessary training for that type of work.*

Grant: *Undecided/not enough info. I will have to educate myself on what happens now. If this question regards investigations into police conduct, it seems that a strengthened review board would be the right venue for oversight. If this question is about police investigations into criminal activity, it does not seem appropriate for the Mayor to be involved. Again, I will seek to find out more about the history of this topic to try to identify the root of any problem.*

Houseal: *The Mayor should not have the sole power to sue and undertake investigations. Is there a proposal that the Mayor have sole authority of enforcement actions and would the Mayor undertake the duties of a law enforcement officer? Would the Mayor have the power to sue on behalf of Portland without the authorization of the City Council? What is the question?*

Washburn: *No, this role should belong to an empowered Citizen Review Subcommittee.*

6. Do you favor allowing Portland's elected mayor to have sole authority to appoint city councilors to city council policy committees, similar to the Maine Legislature or US Congress (currently such authority is subject to override by a majority of the Council)? Why or why not?

Bailey: *Maybe, though I am not familiar enough with this process to make a decision on this topic. I'd like to hear how the process would work and who would be a part of such decisions and why.*

Buxton: *No, the Council should play a role in setting its members' assignments.*

Chann: *I believe the mayor should be allowed to make appointments to the city council policy committees, but that checks and balances should be in place. The mayor serves as the chair of the council and should be able to collaborate and work with councilors to make these appointments without objection. A 6-vote supermajority is a high threshold to meet and, if met, signals to voters and residents that the mayor is unable to govern.*



Condrey: *I would keep it the same – representatives should have veto power over committee assignments if needed.*

DiMillo: *I do not support the elected mayor to have sole authority to assign council committee assignments.*

Grant: *I am willing to listen to arguments on this point, but in conjunction with my proposal to remove the Mayor from the Council it does not seem appropriate for the Mayor to then make those appointments. In my vision, that function would be filled by a Council Chairperson.*

Houseal: *The Charter currently allows the Mayor to make such appointments to committees. Mayors have traditionally used this power effectively. Is there a proposal to change this at this time? Wouldn't the Mayor discuss appointments to committees with fellow City Councilors? Is this not occurring? There is very little similarity to State or federal government.*

Washburn: *No, the Council should play a role in setting its members' assignments.*

Electoral Reform

7. Do you favor having Portland taxpayers pay for the campaigns of candidates running for City Council, Mayor, or School Board through a clean elections system? Why or why not?

Bailey: *No, I don't support any taxpayer funded elections. Taxpayer money should not be spent on elections. Taxpayer money is to help support the running of the city not who runs the city.*

Buxton: *Yes. Such a funding system would expand the opportunity of running for office to low- and middle-income Portlanders, many of whom are renters and working people. This would improve economic equity and also expand access to public office for communities of color. Our taxes pay for all sorts of things, from roads and sidewalks, to sports arenas and more, it is important that we also support programs that grow better leaders for our city.*

Chann: *I am in favor of clean elections generally and would likely support a municipal clean elections system if alternatives, like negotiating and collaborating with the Maine State Ethics Commission and clean elections system, are entirely unfeasible. The city could save money by allocating the funding and having the State Ethics Commission administer the program.*

Condrey: *I am in favor of a clean election fund. However, I support increasing the size of the council and school board to make districts more neighborhood-related, which would inherently make campaigns cheaper. There should be two funds: one for a citywide race (i.e. Mayor) and another, smaller fund for district races.*

DiMillo: *I do not support the use of taxpayer dollars to fund campaigns. There seems to be a way around all campaign finances. Let people do as they choose with their money.*

Grant: *I am in favor of public financing for municipal elections. Few people in Maine have more experience than me regarding campaign finance. I have been the E.D. of the Maine Senate Democrats, the Chair of the Maine Democratic Party, counsel to the Speaker of the House, counsel to many candidates and entities appearing before*



the Ethics Commission, and I was a board member of the Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. My general observation is that public financing does one thing very well - namely it attracts a wider field of candidates to run for office. This is a good thing...it means that a more diverse group of people would consider serving, with the burden of fundraising removed.

I have answered other questions in this campaign regarding the financing of such a program - and I am on record stating that the Charter should not guarantee funding. This is one of those "policy" questions that should be left in the hands of each Mayor/Council.

Houseal: *No.*

Washburn: *Yes. Such a funding system would expand the opportunity of running for office to low- and middle-income Portlanders, many of them renters and working people. This would improve economic equity and also expand access to public office for communities of color.*

8. Should the City Council have the authority to amend citizen-initiated referendum questions passed by the voters? Why or why not?

Bailey: *No. Once a question has been voted on, I believe it should not be amended unless it is to be voted on again. I believe in the power of the voter.*

Buxton: *No. Ballot questions should appear as the citizens who initiated them and circulated them intended.*

Chann: *I believe the elected representatives, the mayor and council, ought to be able to amend citizen-initiated referendums that are passed, especially with regard to referendums that deal with highly technical issues that require expertise. However, a process allowing this should be clearly defined and the limits made explicit.*

Condrey: *The referendum process has a storied tradition in Maine, and I would not change it. I'm in favor of the current checks and balances with city council interpreting referendums in but would allow more collaboration with the council and mayor.*

DiMillo: *I am unsure about that issue.*

Grant: *Yes. I think the referendum process should work like it does for the State. The people can pass ordinances, but they become laws just like anything passed by the Legislature (i.e., the Council). The fact is that most successful citizen-initiated legislation is not substantially disturbed, because elected officials recognize the political problems in opposing something the people passed themselves. That said, I don't believe referendum should result in laws/ordinances with special status.*

Houseal: *I think this question should be reviewed by the Charter Commission in greater detail. There are many ways to accomplish a reasonable way of balancing voter questions in the charter, which the current Portland Charter lacks.*



Washburn: *No. Ballot questions should appear as the citizens who initiated them and signed the related petitions intended.*

Mayor and Council Process

9. Do you favor giving Portland's Mayor/City Council dedicated staff to respond to constituents and research policy proposals? Why or why not?

Bailey: *I am opposed to this if it means an increase to the budget by hiring more staff.*

Buxton: *Yes. City Councilors are overworked, paid a very small stipend, and are expected to be responsive to voters in a way that they do not have time for. Constituent service is so deeply valuable and can make a huge difference in the decisions made at city hall. Constituent service is also difficult to do well and responsively on top of full-time jobs and attempting to do the adequate preparatory research to make informed policy decisions. Paid staff would be hugely helpful in ensuring councilors could do their jobs, connect with voters, and better serve the office.*

Chann: *Yes, I believe the mayor and council should have dedicated staff to allow for better, more proactive policymaking and to reduce the demand and requests placed on city staff who must focus on implementing and administering policy passed by elected officials. Portland has had a history of councilors and mayors overstepping their authority and making requests and demands of city staff. Without a clear policy and process by which elected officials can make requests of city staff, this creates disruption and inefficiency.*

Condrey: *Yes! Councilors are effectively volunteer positions but work fulltime outside of their day jobs. They should be supported to develop sound and reasonable policy. It's unreasonable to expect they can do it all on their own.*

DiMillo: *I do not favor adding any more staff for the council or mayor. Our property taxes are too high as it is.*

Grant: *Yes. One of the themes of my campaign is increasing the responsiveness of our elected officials. I believe that with a part-time, citizen council we need to also provide constituent service staff to ensure that day-to-day issues are addressed quickly and professionally.*

Houseal: *Do you mean paying for political staff for the Mayor and City Council? Maybe best would be a reminder instead: per the Charter, the City Council have had staff and they do have staff and as a matter of fact as specified in the Charter have all the staff. They do respond to constituents and research policy proposals, or at least they did in the past. This question points out that there has been an erosion of the relationship between the public, administration, and the City Council; which probably explains why the Charter Commission is being formed. Clarity in the Charter may help some, but not all.*

Washburn: *Yes. There are few duties at City Hall more important than constituent service.*

10. Do you favor allowing city councilors direct access to city staff as part of their policymaking function? Why or why not?



Bailey: *I believe there needs to be a chain of command. Day-to-day functions need to go through the proper channels for vetting and proposed purpose.*

Buxton: *Yes. Councilors need access to information on staff activities and the ability to communicate and collaborate with staff. Staff knowledge is hugely instructive to policy making, they're the ones on the ground doing the work, and councilors should be able to communicate with staff about their experiences and expertise.*

Chann: *I believe a process should be laid out whereby elected officials, ideally through their own, dedicated staff, can make formal requests to department heads while keeping the city manager informed. Good governance requires good communication and free flow of information in and amongst the various branches. However, government must also work efficiently so elected officials should not have direct access to staff other than department heads and/or their designee or liaison.*

Condrey: *Yes! Access to information is key for policymaking. There should be reasonable safeguards in place to protect staff's time and resources.*

DiMillo: *I would support a change that would allow councilors to speak with city staff on a limited basis but not as their direct supervisor.*

Grant: *Undecided/not enough info. I have heard from past/present councilors on both sides of this issue, so I remain undecided and needing to learn more. Again, there needs to be a balance between sufficient access to information in order to make prudent decisions and micromanaging/overburdening staff with requests that prevent them from doing their jobs. It's not clear to me where the truth lies over the last 10 years, but it is something I will certainly want to learn more about.*

Houseal: *This is not an issue of the Charter, rather one of the relationship between administration and City Council, but will keep the question in mind.*

Washburn: *Yes. Councilors need access to information on staff activities and results as part of their decision-making.*

11. Do you favor increasing the number of City Councilors beyond the current nine (Mayor and eight councilors)? Why or why not?

Bailey: *No, I think this would increase the budget and thereby increase the tax burden on Portland's residents.*

Buxton: *Yes. The current system means many councilors are overburdened with work out of proportion to their compensation. Also, districts are too large and do not best represent city neighborhoods. Increasing the number of councilors would provide more resources to accomplish the work and provide better local representation for voters.*

Chann: *I would first like to examine our at-large councilor seats to see if we need all three, especially when we have an at-large, elected mayor. I think immediately looking at increasing the number of councilors is premature prior to taking this initial step.*



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I do, however, see the value in smaller, more representative districts. For example, the islands and the waterfront could form its own district given its distinct issues and concerns of residents.

Condrey: *100%. By adding councilors we can increase Portlanders' access to their representatives and would increase the likelihood of the rep sharing the same concerns/issues as their constituents. Also, and perhaps more impactful, this would lower the barrier to entry to for people to get involved. Right now, it's intimidating to get involved in Portland politics. There are a lot of smart people out there who would run but otherwise don't because of the heavy lift. If your district is, say, just your 10-block radius neighborhood then you would more likely be able to handle a campaign of that size on top of obligations. And as I mentioned earlier, this would make campaigns cheaper — no reason to buy hundreds of dollars of Facebook ads or \$3,000 mailer if your district is just your immediate neighborhood.*

DiMillo: *I do not support the expansion of the council. I think the current makeup of the council provides ample representation for a city our size.*

Grant: *I am open to this idea, but it is not my preference. My proposal is to eliminate the at-large council (and school board) positions and move to 9 individual districts. I believe this will improve the responsiveness of officials to the public and will facilitate greater diversity on the Council/ Board. Those bodies would then elect a Chairperson from within their ranks.*

Houseal: *Well for starters, if the City Council was to increase in size, the City would need a larger City Council Chambers. Hmmm... that is something to possibly consider and will likely be costly. Why would the City Council increase in size? Is there an expected outcome?*

Washburn: *Yes. The current system means many councilors are overburdened with work out of proportion to their compensation. Also, districts are too large and do not represent city neighborhoods. Increasing the number of councilors would provide more resources to accomplish the work and provide better local representation for voters.*