



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?

Ryan Lizanecz: *Yes, economic policies should generally be left to ordinance. Constitutions are supposed to govern structure and HOW policy is made. My objective is to empower our elected leaders to make the change we elect them to do. Making micro-economic or otherwise policy in a charter is dangerous and could lead to having to repeat this process very soon.*

But I still think commissioners need to consider the impacts on health, labor and the environment that their decisions could make, even if not intentional. I certainly will. We should be looking at increasing resident voice and taxpayer voice in local politics to allow for changes to happen that we want to see.

We shouldn't allow this delicate process to be co-opted by any interest groups on the left or right to push a policy wish list. We also shouldn't push additional policies that could raise the tax burden on the public and make it even harder for working people to live here.

Mony Hang: *The charter role is to oversee the city's constitution and engage with the community. It is not the charter's job to make policies.*

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?

Lizanecz: *Yes, somewhat. I think they should be able to nominate when there is a vacancy, but that is subject to approval from the council. We need oversight to prevent corruption and ensure balance of powers. They also should be able to recommend termination to the council privately or publicly. They could be subject to review on a yearly basis by the council, similar to the manager now. Still working this out.*

Hang: *Absolutely not. I think our Police department and public works director are doing a fantastic job.*

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?

Lizanecz: *No. We should have a city administrator oversee this. The mayor should be focused on policy, which could impact the day-to-day operations. Don't like the way day to day operations are being run? Push legislation through the council. Do we want an elected mayor only giving out food and drink licenses to friends, etc.? Probably not. But they should have a say when there are issues with this that arise.*



Hang: *I do not. I think the mayor has enough on her plate. We should let the public works department do their job.*

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?

Lizanecz: *I think they should have a say in this process, but they should not be the only voting voice on this. We don't want an elected mayor, or unelected manager, only giving contracts to their friends/allies.*

Hang: *I can see the mayor working closely with the City Manager but not have full control.*

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

Lizanecz: *I think an independent police oversight board probably should handle this.*

Hang: *I do not believe our mayor should have any part in any police investigation or enforcement. Should we let the Police Chief get involved with the mayor's day to day business?*

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?

Lizanecz: *Yes. This makes sense and mirrors a lot of other legislatures.*

Hang: *I don't have an answer on this.*

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?

Lizanecz: *Yes. This is a low cost, high reward reform that we can adopt. Running for office is expensive, and if you don't have wealthy friends, it can be hard to get involved. This is an easy way to get money's influence out of local politics. and encourage our neighbors to run for office.*

Hang: *It's an interesting idea. I struggle to use taxpayer's money to fund any candidate's campaign. I believe if you want to run you need to raise your own money.*

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



Lizanecz: *No. We should trust the voters. But we also shouldn't be governing through referendums. Hopefully the charter commission can make common sense reforms that will alleviate the need for referendums and frustration from the public. People in my district pay a fortune in taxes and do not feel like they are being heard in city hall, if we amplify voice, referendums may not be as popular.*

Hang: *Yes, if the citizen-initiated referendum is budget related.*

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?

Lizanecz: *Yes. I think this would alleviate a lot of frustrations directed at city hall. I would need to see specifics on financing, etc., before considering this further. But councilors are very busy and oftentimes have full time jobs, we should empower them to make the changes we want them to be able to make. We shouldn't return to having a mayor assistant, etc. without empowering them to make change in the first place. Otherwise, it's a waste of taxpayer money.*

Hang: *No. There are 9 of them so they should be able to assign responsibilities within.*

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

Lizanecz: *Yes. I think councilors should be able to consult with experts in our city government. We also want to make sure city staff are also able to handle their daily duties. So maybe a policy point person would help this without overwhelming resources.*

Hang: *I am not in favor. I think we need to trust that our city staff have the qualification to do their job.*

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

Lizanecz: *At minimum, the islands (Peaks) need their own councilor. I'm open to considering reforms to the other number of council seats, including moving the at-large seats to district level seats. They may need to be simply redistricted/drawn.*

Hang: *I'm not in favor of increasing the number of City Councilors. Having more members means increasing the city budget.*