



Legislation Text

File #: RES 20-1110, **Version:** 2

Amending [Appendix A-2](#) of the Administrative Code to establish the creation of a Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee.

WHEREAS, Section 4.07 of the Charter reads that “[t]he Council to make investigations into the affairs of the city and the conduct of any department, office or agency and for this purpose shall have the power to administer oaths and require the presence of witnesses and production of evidence by subpoenas obtained by order from the district court on application from the council.”; and

WHEREAS, Section 4.08 of the Charter reads that “[t]he council shall provide for an annual independent audit of all city accounts and may provide for such additional audits as it deems necessary. Any audit of all city accounts made pursuant to law by the state public examiner or other state officer designated by law shall be deemed an independent audit.”; and

WHEREAS, as part of the City Council’s Organizational Committee’s 2019 work plan, a Performance Audit Work Group was formed in February 2019 to research and evaluate the benefit and costs of re-introducing the function of City Council audits of City departments and programs; and

WHEREAS, the Performance Audit Work Group considered the following questions in its deliberations:

- Lessons from the Council’s old performance audit program,
- Potential improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of City operations,
- Cooperation with the Administration in establishing a new program,
- Connection of a new program to the Administration’s Innovation Team on programs of interest to both the City Council and Administration,
- Cost of a new program, and
- Use of consultants or hiring Council Research staff; and

WHEREAS, the Performance Audit Work Group reviewed their final report and recommended at an Organizational Committee meeting on October 23, 2019 that the City Council restart its audit function; and

WHEREAS, the City Council confirmed the recommendation to restart the Audit Committee at an Organizational Committee meeting on December 18, 2019; and

WHEREAS, in moving the work plan forward for 2020, the Performance Audit Work Group continued to research and define the audit process by considering the following:

- Council authority for doing performance audit,
- Speakers invited to discuss types of audits, how audits are conducted and outcomes, and
- Audit process, topic selection, and budget allocation; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee will be made up of members of the City Council with a Steering Committee of at least four Councilmembers that will work closely with Council Research and members of the administration to coordinate, collaborate and carry out the mission of the Committee; and

WHEREAS, The Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee's mission is to evaluate the financial and program performance of City departments to build public trust and ensure outstanding service delivery, transparency and accountability.

WHEREAS, the Committee will **also** work with residents, district councils, City departments and community partners to identify topics for the Committee's consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Committee will annually review topic submissions and use a common criteria to rank and select the audit topic(s), a preliminary project scope will be developed along with the budget and an RFP or RFQ will be released to find a consultant and throughout this process, the Committee will also work with the administration to ensure a smooth process for

- Enhanced accountability of City operations to conform to performance expectations outlined in adopted codes, policies and budgets,
- Opportunity to improve efficiency and effectiveness of City operation if an organizational and process assessment is included, and
- Demonstration to the public the Council's commitment to efficiency, especially when it must raise taxes; and

WHEREAS, the Committee will report and share the findings with the public and Administration and will also work with the Administration to implement the recommended findings; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City of Saint Paul City Council will establish a Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee to evaluate the financial and program performance of City departments to build public trust and ensure outstanding service delivery, transparency and accountability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Chapter A-2 of the Appendices of the Saint Paul Administrative Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

1. - Council committees.

That in order to provide for the efficient operation of the legislative branch of city government, the following subcommittees of the council are hereby established:

- (1) Finance and budget.
- (2) City operations.
- (3) Community and economic development.
- (4) Audit Committee

The president of the council shall be empowered to establish such additional committees as the need may arise, with the consent of the council.

2. - Membership.

Each council committee shall be composed of at least four (4) members, one (1) of whom shall be the president of the council who shall serve in an ex officio capacity and which members, including the chair, shall be named by the president of the council with the advice and consent of the council. The president of the council may also name, with the advice and consent of the council, alternate members to any committee, who may serve in the absence of regular members of such committees. The members and alternates of the council committee, including the chair, shall serve on such committee at the pleasure of the president of the council. Alternate members, when serving in the absence of a regular committee member, shall have all the powers, functions and duties of regular committee members, including constituting a quorum, voting and participation in the committee affairs in all respects.

Whenever there are not sufficient members or alternates to constitute a quorum at any regularly scheduled committee meeting and the chair deems it necessary to do so, the chair of that committee may

appoint another member of the council who may be present to serve temporarily as an alternate member of the committee. Provided, however, that only one (1) such appointment may be made at any one (1) meeting of the committee.

~~(C.F. No. 88-38, 1-13-88; C.F. No. 88-435, 3-29-88; C.F. No. 88-660, 6-14-88)~~

3. - Functions; participation, in general.

It shall be the duty of each council committee to consider all ordinances or resolutions referred to it by the city council and where permitted by law to conduct all public hearings required by law. All committee agendas shall be cable-casted according to the notification procedures currently established for cablecasting of agendas for city council meetings. The meetings of the council committees shall be open to the public except for those instances permitted by state law, and such committee may hear testimony or public comment as referred by the secretary to the council or as the committee deems proper. All councilmembers may attend any committee meetings. Council committees shall report to the council upon all ordinances or resolutions referred to them, either with or without recommendation, unless the president or councilmember introducing such ordinance or resolution shall withdraw it or the president reassign it. The votes of committee members present and other councilmembers present shall be recorded and forwarded to the council. The affirmative vote of either a majority of the committee members or of the council shall be sufficient to return or refer a matter to the council.

4. - Meetings.

- (1) All council committees shall hold regular meetings according to a schedule adopted by the members at its first meeting in January of each year. A schedule of such meetings shall be provided all councilmembers, the mayor, city attorney, the city clerk and news media and distributed and published in accordance with state law.
- (2) Special committee meetings may be held at the call of the chair. Advance written notice of all special meetings shall be provided all councilmembers, the mayor, city attorney, and city clerk as prescribed by state law and distributed and published in accordance with state law.
- (3) A majority of the committee shall constitute a quorum.
- (4) A majority vote of the committee shall be required for committee action.
- (5) Committees shall keep minutes of all meetings. Committee chairs shall work in conjunction with the director of the council investigation and research center to ensure that the appropriate research, administrative and clerical staff shall be provided for that committee. Committee chairs shall be responsible for approving, by signature, the minutes of committee meetings. A copy of such minutes shall be filed with the city clerk as a public record and a copy provided the council president.

5. - Committee functions in particular.

- (1) *Finance and budget.* The council committee on finance and budget shall establish policy for all capital and operating budgets of all city departments, boards and agencies. In addition, the committee shall assume the responsibility of reviewing capital and operating budget matters submitted to the council and shall be responsible for the consideration of any legislation relating to the personnel of the city, salary questions and labor relations. This committee shall also be responsible for matters related to city franchises.
- (2) *City operations.* The council committee on city operations shall oversee policy development and review and recommend legislation with respect to all city activities except those specifically assigned to other committees. In addition, the committee may respond to administrative proposals that affect these operations.
- (3) *Community and economic development.* The council committee on housing and economic development shall oversee policy development and review and recommend legislation in these areas: The housing and redevelopment authority, housing and economic development by the port authority and the city department of planning and economic development, land use and zoning, improving buildings and especially improving the condition of problem properties, licensing and business regulation, code enforcement and the housing information office.

- (4) Audit Committee. The council committee on audit shall oversee the evaluation of financial and program performance of City departments to build public trust and ensure outstanding service delivery, transparency and accountability.