

§2102. Charter revisions, adoptions, procedure

1. Municipal officers. The municipal officers may determine that the revision of the municipal charter be considered or that adoption of a new municipal charter be considered and, by order, provide for the establishment of a charter commission to carry out that purpose as provided in this chapter.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

2. Petition by voters. On the written petition of a number of voters equal to at least 20% of the number of votes cast in the municipality at the last gubernatorial election, but in no case less than 10, the municipal officers, by order, shall provide for the establishment of a charter commission for the revision of the municipal charter or the preparation of a new municipal charter as provided in this chapter.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

3. Petition procedure. The following procedure shall be used in the alternative method set out in subsection 2.

A. Any 5 voters of the municipality may file an affidavit with the municipal clerk stating:

- (1) That the 5 voters will constitute the petitioners' committee;
- (2) The names and addresses of the 5 voters;
- (3) The address to which all notices to the committee are to be sent; and
- (4) That the 5 voters will circulate the petition and file it in proper form.

The petitioners' committee may designate additional voters of the municipality, who are not members of the committee, to circulate the petition.

Promptly after the affidavit is filed, the clerk shall issue petition blanks to the committee. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

B. The municipal clerk shall prepare the petition forms at the municipality's expense. The petition forms must be printed on paper of uniform size and may consist of as many individual sheets as are reasonably necessary.

- (1) Petition forms must carry the following legend in bold lettering at the top of the face of each form.

"Municipality of"

In the instance of preparing a new charter, the lettering at the top of the form must read: "Each of the undersigned voters respectfully requests the municipal officers to establish a Charter Commission for the purpose of preparing a New Municipal Charter."

In the instance of revising a charter, the lettering at the top of the form must read: "Each of the undersigned voters respectfully requests the municipal officers to establish a Charter Commission for the purpose of revising the Municipal Charter."

Each signature to a petition must be in ink or other indelible instrument and must be followed by the residence of the voter with street and number, if any. A petition may not contain any party or political designation.

- (2) The clerk shall note the date of each petition form issued. All petitions must be filed within 120 days of the date of issue or they are void.

(3) Each petition form must have printed on its back an affidavit to be executed by the circulator, stating:

- (a) That the circulator personally circulated the form;
- (b) The number of signatures on the form;
- (c) That all the signatures were signed in the circulator's presence;
- (d) That the circulator believes them to be genuine signatures of the persons whose names they purport to be;
- (e) That each signer has signed no more than one petition; and
- (f) That each signer had an opportunity to read the petition before signing. [PL 2019, c. 149, §1 (AMD).]

C. Petition forms shall be assembled as one instrument and filed at one time with the clerk. The clerk shall note the date of filing on the forms. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

[PL 2019, c. 149, §1 (AMD).]

4. Procedure after filing. Within 20 days after the petition is filed, the clerk shall complete a certificate as to its sufficiency, specifying, if it is insufficient, the particulars which render it defective. The clerk shall promptly send a copy of the certificate to the petitioners' committee by mail and shall file a copy with the municipal officers.

A. A petition certified insufficient for lack of the required number of valid signatures may be amended once if the petitioners' committee files a notice of intention to amend it with the clerk within 2 days after receiving the copy of the clerk's certificate.

Within 10 days after this notice of intention is filed, the committee may file a supplementary petition to correct the deficiencies in the original. This supplementary petition, in form and content, must comply with the requirements for an original petition under subsection 3. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

B. Within 5 days after a supplementary petition is filed, the clerk shall complete and file a certificate as to its sufficiency in the manner provided for an original petition. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

C. When an original or supplementary petition has been certified insufficient, the committee, within 2 days after receiving the copy of the clerk's certificate, may file a request with the municipal officers for review.

The municipal officers shall inspect the petitions in substantially the same form and manner as a recount under section 2531-B and shall make due certificate of that inspection. The municipal officers shall file a copy of that certificate with the municipal clerk and mail a copy to the committee. The certificate of the municipal officers is a final determination of the sufficiency of the petitions. [PL 2011, c. 255, §1 (AMD).]

D. Any petition finally determined to be insufficient is void. The clerk shall stamp the petition void and seal and retain it in the manner required for secret ballots. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

[PL 2011, c. 255, §1 (AMD).]

5. Election procedure. Within 30 days after the adoption of an order under subsection 1 or the receipt of a certificate or final determination of sufficiency under subsection 4, the municipal officers shall by order submit the question for the establishment of a charter commission to the voters at the next regular or special municipal election held at least 90 days after this order.

A. The question to be submitted to the voters must be in substance as follows:

In the instance of establishing a new charter, the question must read: "Shall a Charter Commission be established for the purpose of establishing a New Municipal Charter?"

In the instance of revising a charter, the question must read: "Shall a Charter Commission be established for the purpose of revising the Municipal Charter?" [PL 2019, c. 149, §2 (AMD).]

[PL 2019, c. 149, §2 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW). PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 608, §4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 255, §1 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 149, §§1, 2 (AMD).

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