

**RESOLUTION NO. 7442**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF LAWRENCE, KANSAS,  
AUTHORIZING AND PROVIDING FOR THE CALL OF A SPECIAL  
QUESTION ELECTION IN THE CITY OF LAWRENCE, KANSAS,  
FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUBMITTING TO THE QUALIFIED  
ELECTORS OF THE CITY THE PROPOSITION OF MODIFYING  
THE CITY'S FORM OF GOVERNMENT.**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Lawrence, Kansas, has, since the qualified electors of the City approved it in 1951, operated under the Commission-Manager form of government;

**WHEREAS**, on February 2, 2021, the Governing Body adopted City of Lawrence, Kan., Res. No. 7353 (Feb. 2, 2021), appointing a task force to study and to make recommendations regarding the City's Commission-Manager form of government;

**WHEREAS**, on June 15, 2021, after having conducted eight public meetings, the task force reported to the Governing Body and recommended that the City make certain modifications to the City's Commission-Manager government;

**WHEREAS**, on August 9, 2022, August 16, 2022, and January 10, 2023, the Governing Body considered the excellent work and recommendations of the task force and, ultimately, on January 10, 2023, discussed transitioning from the Commission-Manager form of government to a Modified Mayor-Council Manager form of government, whereby: (1) the City's Governing Body would include a directly elected nonpartisan Mayor, representing the City at-large and serving a four-year term; (2) the City's Governing Body would also include six nonpartisan Commissioners -- four of whom would represent four districts established within the City and two of whom would represent the City at-large -- each serving four-year terms of office, with those terms of office being staggered so that no more than three seats on the Commission would be open for election at any one time; and (3) the City Manager would continue to oversee the day-to-day operations of the City and would continue to be accountable to the Governing Body;

**WHEREAS**, on February 14, 2023, in accordance with K.S.A. 12-1039, as amended, the Governing Body voted to call for a special question election for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of the City the proposition whether or not to modify the form of the City's government, transitioning from the Commission-Manager form of government to a Modified Mayor-Council Manager form of government; and

**WHEREAS**, if the special question is approved by the qualified electors of the City at the November 2024 general election, then the Governing Body will, at the general election of November 2025, begin transitioning from the Commission-Manager form of government to a Modified Mayor-Council Manager form of government.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF LAWRENCE, KANSAS:**

**SECTION 1:** The recitals set forth above are incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

**SECTION 2.** The Governing Body hereby authorizes, orders, and directs that a special question election be held and hereby calls, pursuant to K.S.A. 12-1039, as amended, for a special question election to be held, in the manner prescribed by law, in conjunction with the general election of November 2024, at which time there shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the City of Lawrence, Kansas, the following proposition:

Shall the following be adopted?

Shall the City of Lawrence, Kansas, abandon the Commission-Manager form of government and adopt a Modified Mayor-Council Manager form of government and become a city operating under a Modified Mayor-Council Manager form of government?

Yes

No

**SECTION 3.** If approved by a majority of the qualified electors voting thereon, then, commencing at the November, 2025, general election, the qualified electors of the City shall elect directly a nonpartisan Mayor, representing the City at-large, to a four-year term. If approved, the duties of the Mayor shall be established by ordinance and shall include, *inter alia*, presiding over meetings of the Governing Body, facilitating the Governing Body in visioning and strategic planning, providing an annual state of the City address, formally representing the City in ceremonial roles, representing the City in intergovernmental relations and interactions, and making, with the consultation and approval of the Governing Body, appointments to the City's advisory boards. The Mayor shall also have the power to vote, but **if and only if** the vote of the Council Members on an issue results in a tie. In the event of a tie vote of the Council Members, the Mayor shall have the power and the duty to vote to break the tie.

**SECTION 4.** If approved by a majority of the qualified electors voting thereon, then commencing at the November, 2025, general election, the Governing Body will consist of the nonpartisan Mayor and six nonpartisan Council Members. Four Council Members shall each represent one of four districts to be established within the City and two Council Members shall represent the City at-large. All Council Members shall serve four-year terms of office, with those terms of office being staggered so that no more than three seats on the City Council are open for election at any one time. The duties of Council Members shall be established by ordinance.

**SECTION 5.** If approved by a majority of the qualified electors voting thereon, then the transition to a Modified Mayor-Council Manager form of government shall occur as follows:

- (a) Following the November 2024 general election and prior to June 1, 2025, the Governing body shall enact ordinances establishing a Modified Mayor-Council Manager form of government, establishing four districts within the City, establishing the duties of the nonpartisan Mayor, establishing the duties of the nonpartisan Council Members, establishing terms of office for the Mayor and the Council Members, and establishing the duties of the City Manager.
- (b) At the time of the November 2025 general election, the three present City Commissioners, who were elected at the November, 2023, general election to four-year terms, shall continue to serve in their elected capacities as Council Members. The two Commissioners receiving the most votes at the November 2023 general election shall represent districts in which they reside and the Commissioner who received the fewest votes among the three Commissioners elected at the November 2023 general election shall represent the City at-large.

- (i) If the two Commissioners receiving the most votes at the November 2023 general election reside in the same district, then the Commissioner receiving the most votes shall represent that district, the Commissioner receiving the second most votes shall represent the City at-large, and the Commissioner receiving the third most votes shall represent the district in which that Commissioner resides.
- (ii) If all three Commissioners elected at the November 2023 general election reside in the same district, then the Commissioner receiving the most votes at the November 2023 general election shall represent the district and the remaining two Commissioners shall represent the City at-large.
- (c) At the November 2025 general election, the qualified electors of the City shall elect a nonpartisan Mayor who shall serve a four-year term as Mayor of the City of Lawrence, Kansas.
- (d) At the November 2025 general election, the qualified electors of the City shall elect three nonpartisan Council Members. The elections shall be for open seats not already filled by existing Council Members who were elected at the November 2023 general election.
- (e) The Mayor and all Council Members shall serve four year terms.
- (f) From thenceforward, members of the Governing Body, consisting of the Mayor and six Commissioners, will be elected to serve four-year terms in accordance with the foregoing pattern.

**SECTION 6.** If approved by a majority of the qualified electors voting thereon, then the City Manager shall continue to advise the Governing Body and to oversee the day-to-day operations of the City in accordance with the duties and obligations established at Chapter 1 of the City Code, as amended.

**ADOPTED** by the Governing Body of the City of Lawrence, Kansas, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023.

**APPROVED:**

  
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Lisa Larsen  
Mayor

**ATTEST**  
  
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Sherri Riedemann  
City Clerk



APPROVED AS TO FORM:



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Toni R. Wheeler  
City Attorney