

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 9

**Report on Minneapolis City Council
committee structure under a 13-man
council**

April 1953

C I T I Z E N S L E A G U E O F G R E A T E R M I N N E A P O L I S

From: Forms and Structure of Government Committee, Charles B. Howard, Chairman

To: Board of Directors

Subject: Report on Proposed Committee Structure of the 13-Man City Council

In anticipation of the reduction of the size of City Council from 26 to 13 men on July 1, 1953, the Committee on Forms and Structure of Government has studied the need for changes in the Council's Committee structure. The Committee has reviewed the theory of committee structure in local legislative bodies in Minneapolis and other cities; studied the present Minneapolis system; surveyed by questionnaire the practice in other large cities of the United States; and considered the proposals and suggestions of four incumbent Minneapolis aldermen; George E. Johnson, Lindsay G. Arthur, W. Glen Wallace and Edwin Hannula.

The Committee herewith transmits its report and recommendations to the Board of Directors as approved by the Committee on March 31, 1953.

Committee Structure under Present 26-Man Council

At present, the Minneapolis City Council has 21 standing committees, with 19 having five members each and two having 13 members each. In addition there are eleven ex officio memberships on boards and commissions, such as the Park Board and the Metropolitan Airports Commission, which are filled by aldermen. Thus, 25 aldermen (the president of the Council excluded) fill a total of 132 assignments on committees and boards and commissions.

The present 21 standing committees vary greatly in the importance of their duties and their work loads. The Ways and Means Committee, for example, has a heavy responsibility and considerable work, whereas the duties of the Personnel, Payrolls and Classifications Committee are largely routine.

Some functions of City government are now divided among several committees. For example, the following three committees deal in some way with streets: Good Roads and Equipment, Paving and Roads and Bridges. Licenses are handled by the Health and Hospitals Committee, the Licenses Committee and the Fire and Fire Prevention Committee.

Council Committee Structure in Other Mayor-Council and Council Manager Cities over 300,000 Population

The staff sent questionnaires to other cities over 300,000 population inquiring about council committee structure. A summary of the replies received was as follows:

1. General

<u>Cities replying</u>						
<u>Form of government</u>	<u>Number of cities questioned</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Median size of Council</u>	<u>Median number of committees</u>	<u>Median committee size</u>	<u>Median number of committee memberships per council member</u>
Mayor-Council	20	18	15	11.5	5.6	4.6
Commission	6	6	5	---(3)	---	---
Council-Manager	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5.5</u>	<u>2.7</u>	<u>1.8</u>
Total	34 ⁽¹⁾	32 ⁽²⁾	---	---	---	---

(1) Minneapolis is not included.

(2) No replies received from Houston and Louisville.

(3) Under commission form, each member of legislative body (commission) is also a department head. Thus, committees for supervising administrative departments are not needed. Such general business as budget determination is conducted in committee of the whole.

2. Relationship between size of council and number of committees:

On the average (median), the number of committees is somewhat smaller than the number of councilmen.

3. What types of committees are found most frequently?

- a. Committees dealing with substantive matters of legislation or administration.

The following tabulation shows the general titles of the most frequently occurring titles, listed according to frequency:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Finance | 5. Health |
| (taxation, ways and means) | 6. Parks and recreation |
| 2. Public works | 7. Zoning and planning |
| 3. Public safety | 8. Law and judiciary |
| 4. Public utilities | 9. Personnel and salaries |

- b. Committees dealing with internal matters of council procedure, etc.

The most common of these are on rules, ordinances and legislation.

4. Does Council meet as committee of the whole? (does not apply to commission form cities)

Yes - 21
No - 4
No reply - 1

Questionnaire comments: In Buffalo, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Council meets as committee of the whole for budget consideration. Toledo Council discusses most matters in committee of whole. Not used though authorized in St. Louis.

Proposed Committee Organization

The Forms and Structure of Government Committee's recommendations for committee organization of the 13 man City Council are as shown below. The duties and responsibilities listed under each committee are those presently being performed by City Council. This Committee has not passed on the question of whether they should or ^{should} not be performed by the Minneapolis City Council.

1. WAYS & MEANS 5 members

Budget, tax levies, appropriations, bond issues.
Salary ordinances, - hears employee groups.
Consider changes in status of city council employees
Payroll procedures
Working Conditions of employees
Convention trips, allowances.
Finances on public improvements by special assessments.
Passes on depositories and security of city funds
Conducts bond sales - Elwell Bonds
Considers sources of funds for claims and expenses not originally provided for.
Passes on purchases of materials of general nature, affecting more than one committee - coal, oil, gas, tires, etc.

Chairman serves on the Board of Estimate and Taxation

2. ROADS AND BRIDGES (PLANNING) 5 members

Policies on zoning ordinance changes.
Street openings, widening, extensions
City Planning Projects
Appoints Elwell Commissioners for grading projects
Traffic Problems and Control (long range)
Housing

Chairman-serves on Park Board
Should have one member also on Safety committee.

3. ORDINANCES & LEGISLATION 5 members

Local Ordinances. At times this committee meets with other committees especially interested.
Legislative programs. Special committees may be set up for specific legislative proposals. These would work with the O & L Committee.
Public Welfare. This serves somewhat as a catch-all, but does allow the council president to refer some issues to this committee which he might have difficulty assigning elsewhere.

4. SAFETY 5 members

Police

Work with Roads & Bridges (Planning) on long range traffic problems. 1 member should also serve on R & B Committee. Policies in police department organization, management, personnel, stations, equipment, and operations. Street traffic regulations, including Street RR and buses, Parking facilities.

Fire

Policies in fire department organization, management, personnel, stations, equipment, and operations.

Passes on license applications as to fire hazards, filling stations, storage yards, places of public safety.

Civil Defense - Operations requiring council action.

Aquatennial - Operations requiring council action.

This committee is very heavy if no Metropolitan Transit Authority is created. In that event, street railway and bus traffic, routes, and regulation should be an additional committee. However, it should be noted that as the TCRT replaces street cars with buses, City Council will have diminishing control over the transit system.

5. LICENSES 5 members

Liquor Licensing - Per recommendations of Citizens League Committee on Licensing Procedure.

Other Licensing - Same

6. PUBLIC GROUNDS & BUILDINGS 5 members

Auditorium - Policies in management, operation and rates

Plans and procedures for maintenance of buildings under council jurisdiction.

Insurance on Public Grounds and Buildings under this committee's jurisdiction.

Commerce, Markets and Harbors

Establishes policy in management of river terminal and municipal market. Rules, regulations, charges.

Participates in programs devoted to river transportation development.

Proceedings in Upper Harbor development, land acquisition, improvement.

Water Works

Policies on organization, management, construction, operation, and rates of water works.

Complaints and adjustments of water bills.

Extension of water mains.

Contracts with outside parties.

Appoints Elwell Commissioners for water main projects

Sanitation

Sewer & storm drain programs

Contracts with outside parties for sewage disposal.

Garbage collections and incineration programs

Appoints Elwell Commissioners for sewer projects.

Chairman of this committee serves on the Park Board

7. STREETS AND UTILITIES 5 members

Paving

Programs of paving, sidewalk, curb and gutter, alleys.
Purchase of paving materials.
Appoints Elwell Commissioners for paving projects,

Good Roads and Equipment.

Determines policy on purchase and use of Engineering equipment
Passes on street improvement - grading.
Programs of street work - snow removal, street oiling.
Appoints Elwell Commissioners for grading projects.

Public Utilities

Policies in gas franchise administration
Street lighting programs
Permits for work in streets by utilities. Electric, Gas, Tel.RR.

Committee of the Whole

Elections

Elections policy and procedures - number of judges and clerks,
voting machines, registration programs, precinct boundaries,
canvassing returns.
Studies election laws and improvements

SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Board of Estimate and Taxation (Meets during August only)

1 member is the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

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The Committee feels that CLAIMS should not be handled by a separate committee as the name in itself invites claims. We believe that claims not approved by the City Attorney should be settled in Conciliation Court or possibly a higher court, and only under very unusual circumstances should be brought to the Council as a whole. We are against 5/13 of the man power of the Council spending valuable time on claims---and it is one of the most time-consuming committees under the present Council---when there are adequate processes now available.

PERSONNEL was also omitted as a general committee. Specific problems involving personnel unique to a department should be initially referred to the committee having supervision of the department involved, and to the Ways and Means Committee, if applicable. Insofar as possible, personnel matters should be handled administratively.

If the Council were split seven majority and six minority (which creates the most work for the majority in order to keep control because seven members gives the majority its least possible manpower) the following table would be applicable:

RELATIVE WORK WEIGHT (Percentage)	COMMITTEE, COMMISSION or JOB	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	
		Maj.	Min.
100	Ways and Means	3	2
95	Ordinance and Legislation	3	2
95	Safety	3	2
95	Roads and Bridges(Planning)	3	2
85	Licenses	3	2
75	Public Grounds and Bldgs.	3	2
75	Streets and Utilities	3	2
	Metr. Airports Commission (1)	1	0
	Sanitary Commission (1)	1	0
	City Planning (1)	1	0
	Welfare Board (2)	1	1 (perhaps)
	Park Board (2)(Planning and Public Gr. & Bldgs. Chairmen)	2	0
	Brd. of Est. & Tax. (Ch. of Ways & Means)	1	0
	Metr. Transit Comm.(1)(If Created) I	1	0
	President of Council	1	0
	Board of Tax Levy	1	0
	Minneapolis Teachers Retirement Fund)	2	0
	Minneapolis Employees Retirement Fund)	1	0
		<u>34</u>	<u>15</u>

So, a seven man majority will have 34 jobs to handle, making an average of almost five jobs per man. Each minority member will have an average of $2\frac{1}{2}$ jobs. Whether a majority member serves on five or four, or a minority member on three or two assignments will be controlled somewhat by the weight of the assignments as well as his own abilities, but it is the opinion of this committee that no Councilman should serve on more than five.

The over-all plan as outlined allows each committee of the City Council to meet one morning every two weeks, with two mornings vacant for special meetings, if necessary, without interfering with regular committee meetings, or Board of Commission meetins, all of which are held in the afternoon. In addition the Council would have open time for meetings as a Committee of the Whole.

The Committee notes that City Council has directed the City Attorney to prepare a revision in the Council's rules in anticipation of the reduction of the size of the Council.

The Committee recommends to the Board of Directors of the Citizens League that this report be transmitted to City Council.