

Learn More About the Omaha Mayor and City Council

What are the Responsibilities of the Omaha Mayor and City Council?

The actions of the Omaha Mayor and City Council directly touch the lives of Omaha residents, yet many do not know the specifics of their responsibilities. Many voters assume that federal elections are more important than state or local elections, but decisions of these officials directly affect lives in the community, particularly on issues community members feel are important to them.

The Omaha Mayor and City Council are elected in a nonpartisan election every four years.

The Omaha Mayor:

- Submits the operating budget and a capital budget to the City Council
- Can veto City Council ordinances, the budget or an amendment to the budget
- Appoints all officers and employees in the executive branch (but may delegate the actual authority to make appointments to department and division heads)
- Supervises all executive and administrative activities
- Mayor appoints these department heads:
 - Convention and Tourism Director
 - Parks, Recreation, and Public Property Director
 - Human Resources Director
 - Planning Director
 - Public Works Director
 - Human Rights and Relations Director
 - City Attorney
 - Fire Chief
 - Police Chief (Council confirms)
 - Library Board of Trustee members (Council confirms)
 - Metropolitan Entertainment and Convention Authority (MECA) board (mayor and council alternate appointments)
- Mayor appoints all boards and commission (with exception of MECA) and the City Council conforms
- Mayor appoints two members of the building commission
- Appoints advisory committees
 - For a complete list go to <https://mayors-office.cityofomaha.org/boards-and-commissions>

City Council:

- Composed of seven members known as Councilmembers
- Has the power to pass, amend, or repeal any and all ordinances
- Makes or confirms appointments as required by this charter
 - Approves library board appointed by mayor
 - Approves Human Rights and Relations Board appointed by mayor
 - Approves Park and Recreation Board appointed by mayor
 - Approved the Police Chief appointed by mayor
 - Metropolitan Entertainment and Convention Authority (MECA) board (mayor and council alternate appointments)
- Holds public hearings on the budget
- After the budget hearing the Council may revise the expenditure side of the budget by increasing, decreasing, inserting, or deleting appropriation items, except that it shall not reduce appropriations for debt service. The Council may revise revenue estimates if such revision is concurred in by five of its members.
- By majority vote, they adopt a budget by resolution and thereby authorize appropriations for the ensuing budget year
- Investigates, and provides for independent audits
- Appoints the City Clerk
- Adopts ordinances for all city codes – plumbing code, electrical code, fire prevention code, building code
- Oversees zoning change approvals
- Can make emergency appropriations or transfers to meet a public emergency threatening serious loss of life, health, or property by ordinance. *The Mayor shall not have the power to veto any emergency ordinance.*
- City Council Meetings take place on most Tuesdays at 2:00pm and are streamed online. The public may comment in person or on Zoom. For a schedule and agenda, go to <https://citycouncil.cityofomaha.org/>

How the Mayor and the City Council Interact:

- Mayor can attend City Council meetings, appear before the council to express their views, present messages and reports and propose legislation for consideration.
- Mayor presents the budget, (but the City Council can amend it and adopt).
- Mayor can veto a city council ordinance and call a special meeting of the council (*a veto can be overridden by 5 or more council members*)

Did you know – the public has a way to present and object to ordinances:

- Ordinances or amendments to existing ordinances may be submitted to the Council by a petition (signed by registered electors of the city equal to at least 15 per cent of the vote for the office of Mayor cast at the last preceding general city election).
- Initiative petitions shall be uniform in character, shall contain the proposed ordinance in full, shall set forth the address of each person signing, shall be in the form prescribed by the City Clerk, and shall be filed with the City Clerk.
- The Council shall either enact the ordinance without amendment or reject it within thirty days.
- Prior to the date when any ordinance takes effect, a petition bearing the signatures of registered electors equal in number to 15 per cent of the vote for the office of Mayor cast in the last preceding general city election shall be filed with the City Clerk and certified as to sufficiency, such ordinance shall be suspended from going into operation.
- The Council shall reconsider such ordinance and, if it does not repeal the same within thirty days of the time said petition is filed, it shall submit said ordinance to the voters at the next regular election held within the city.
- In referendum elections the question shall be determined by a majority of the electors voting on the question.

For more information, see the Omaha Municipal Code

https://library.municode.com/ne/omaha/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTICH_ARTIITHCOLE Part I: Charter, Article II: The Council and Legislation, Article III: The Executive Branch