

Craig, Sondra

From: Notices
Sent: Saturday, January 31, 2026 12:47 PM
To: Craig, Sondra; Elsen, Nikki; Janssen, Barb; Kahlow, Chris; Slezak, Larry; Trost, Jennifer; Mindel, Mackenzie; Dickinson, Tamra; Goggin, Erin; Steele, Annette; Washington-Spivey, Shaundel; Weston, Lisa; Newberry, Aron; Bedford, Crystal; Padesky, Gary; Stine, Olivia; Northwood, Rosanne
Subject: City Council Contact Form: City Charter Ordinance City Administor

Submitted on: 1/31/2026

Name: Mike Kiefer

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Is this related to a legislative agenda item: Yes

Agenda item number:

Subject: City Charter Ordinance City Administor

Council members,

You are tasked to consider something that has not happened in our city in the past century, changing the structure in which our city government works. I implore you to consider all the options then move forward in a careful, detailed manner.

When I attended a public listening session it was repeatedly stated that the City Administrator Working Group was charged with the sole purpose of considering the former Mayor's proposed ordinance and no other options. A city manager option was not discussed and there was still confusion as to who the new administrator would report to as well as what role the mayor would play. These are very important details that need to be debated and clearly defined before moving forward.

Recently the La Crosse County Board experienced conflict with the role of their administrator. Monies approved by the Board for one purpose were shifted to another program without consulting or getting approval of the full board. This dissent led to four members voting not to renew the County Administrators contract. This appeared to be a disagreement about the governmental process of authority and not with the actual performance of the person. This is a recent, local example of the importance of clearly spelling out the details and processes of this new position.

I believe the charter ordinance put forward by our prior mayor, currently being considered, is woefully inadequate and so poorly written that trying to amend it into a coherent plan is not possible and will only create confusion with many future problems.

The Newberry charter ordinance appears to be a bit cleaner framework to work with, clearly defining the role of mayor, council and lines of authority. I would however eliminate the limiting subsection e QUALIFICATIONS and let subsection b APPOINTMENT language guide the hiring process.

Due to the fact this is a once in a century structural change this body will debate, I think taking the time to consider all possibilities and details is necessary. As much as postponing a decision is frustrating, this is one that needs to be done right the first time. Under this potential change, the role of Council will become focusing on the big picture and no longer micromanaging the details. Stepping back and taking the 30,000-foot view to consider all options now is the best approach before finalizing the details of this endeavor.

Thank you and good luck to you all,

Mike Kiefer

City of La Crosse resident since 1987