
CITY OF BALTIMORE

Brandon M. Scott – Mayor
Zeke Cohen – Council President



Office of Council Services

Nancy Mead - Director
100 Holliday Street, Room 415
Baltimore, MD 21202

CHARTER REVIEW SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The Honorable Ryan Dorsey
CHAIR

HEARING NOTES

LO25-0038
Charter Review

Hearing Date: 3/18/2026

Hearing Start Time: 4:00 PM

Hearing End Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

Total Estimated Attendance: 10

Committee Members in Attendance:

- **Chair** Ryan Dorsey
 - Odette Ramos
 - Jermaine Jones
 - **Vice Chair** John Bullock
 - Zac Blanchard
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MAJOR SPEAKERS

(This is NOT an attendance record.)

- Committee members
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NOTES

- Chair Dorsey welcomed everyone to tonight's hearing
- The chair discussed a summary sheet reflective of the committee's work and proposals to date
- The Chair noted that he has held meetings with non-committee members to brief them on the committee's work and proposals
- The Committee discussed Councilwoman Ramos' submission related to the merger of OCS and DLR
- 3 submissions made their way to the committee
 - Citizen referendum power to repeal legislative acts
 - Recall elections for the mayor and members of the city council
 - Revised process for soliciting input from community members
- Public testimony
 - Referendum power was recommended by the 2023-2024 charter review commission
 - This is something needed from the point of view of the voters
 - The commission was composed of citizens

- Would allow the public to overturn the passage of an ordinance by citizen referendum
- Committee members discussed the referendum power
 - Maryland authorizes a system allowing voters to initiate a referendum election to halt the ability to implement a law that the jurisdiction’s legislating body passed
 - Each jurisdiction may set restraints on that power
- CW Ramos asked about two pieces of the summary sheet
 - Clarifies that procurement pieces will be replaced by code
- CW Ramos again asked about the debate on one vs. several amendment referenda
 - Suggests that budget article be one topic
 - Chair Dorsey pushed back on that suggestion
- CW Ramos reiterated her belief that it takes a long time to explain the proposals and it may be easier to separate them from the perspective of transparency
- Chair Dorsey indicated we are seeking guidance from the Board of Elections and Attorney General’s office on what is appropriate
- DLR asked about the committee’s thoughts on having a discrete budget article
 - Chair Dorsey expressed that he liked the idea of taking something outside of BOE’s exclusive sphere
 - But in the event that BOE later goes away, it can replace that article entirely
 - The Chair would prefer that, if so, the budget goes first in the article
- CW Ramos discussed her proposal
 - Welcomes the feedback of DLR and OCS
 - Move DLR back outside of executive departments because it should work for both the council and mayor
 - The offices have similar provisions
- Chair Dorsey noted that DLR was not previously in its own article
- DLR indicated that having the office out of the purview of one principal would make it difficult to have an advocate in the budget
 - It would be critical to have admin buy in in order to get accurate information
- MOGR indicates it disagrees with the suggestion that agencies write reports to kill bills
- CW Ramos indicated that she would like to have a robust discussion of the capital budget for the 2028 cycle
- DLR indicated that it could have a draft by next week

Hearing Packet in bill file? ----- YES NO N/A
Attendance Sheet in bill file? ----- YES NO N/A
Vote Record in bill file? ----- YES NO N/A
Agency reports read? ----- YES NO N/A
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? ----- YES NO N/A
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the bill file? ----- YES NO N/A
Evidence of notification to property owners in bill file? ----- YES NO N/A

Notes by: Ethan Navarre
 Notes Date: 3/18/2026

Direct Inquiries to: Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov