

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 26, 2026, | 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Reading City Hall, 2nd Floor
815 Washington St, Reading, PA 19601**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Pastor Evelyn Morrison at 5:40 p.m.

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Moment of Silence or Prayer

III. Roll Call

The following Members were in attendance: Chair, Pastor Evelyn Morrison, Debra Bradford, Virna Quinones, David Myers, Jonathan Mejia, Claudette Bullock (via Zoom), and Ann Sheehan (via Zoom).

Members absent were: Carlos Rivera, Tanya Melendez and Sheila Perez.

Staff present: Edwin L. Stock, Esquire, Solicitor.

There were a sufficient number of members present to establish a quorum.

IV. Public Comments - Agenda Related

Tracey Savignac spoke. She thanked everyone for serving on the Commission. She thought everybody appeared to be fair and just.

V. Opening Remarks – Chair

The Chair made brief remarks. She commented this was the end of a journey. The Chair hoped that the Commission made an impact on the community including at the upcoming polls.

Debra Bradford moved to approve the Minutes of the February 19, 2026 meeting. Mr. Myers seconded the motion. The motion carried 7 - 0.

VI. Discussion of Next Priorities & Work Plan

(a) Review of Survey Results

The Survey Results were distributed and are attached to these Minutes.

(b) Consideration of Referendum Questions/Approval of Referendum Questions

No action was taken.

(c) Preparation of Report of Charter Review Commission

The draft Report was distributed. The Chair indicated she would work with the Solicitor to finalize the Report.

VII. Public Comments – General

There were no additional public comments.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

THE FEBRUARY 26, 2026 MEETING WAS THE LAST MEETING OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION THEREFORE THESE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 26, 2026 MEETING WILL NOT BE APPROVED BY THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION AS THERE ARE NO MORE MEETINGS SCHEDULED. THUS, THESE MINUTES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED UNOFFICIAL.

City of Reading Charter Review: A Statistical And Quantitative Analysis

Surveys were conducted in the City of Reading in the realm of community and economic development, as we seek tangible changes to improve the community. Below is a statistical analysis on some of the key aspects and quantitative information we gained from the surveys. Keep in mind (n=250), our sample size for this endeavor was around 250 respondents.

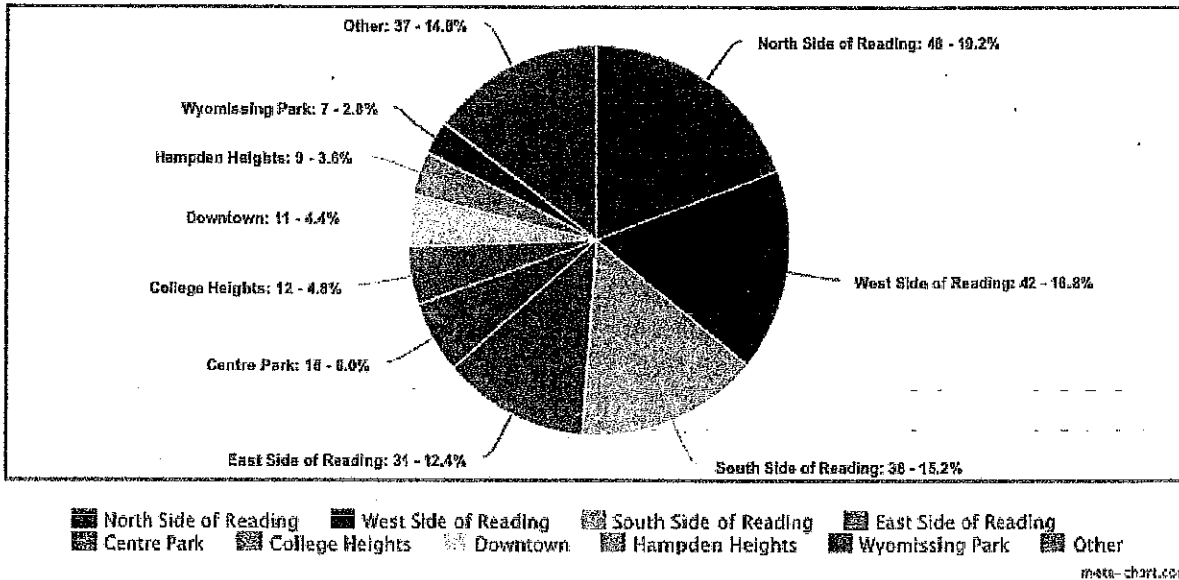
SECTION 1

ABOUT YOU- NEIGHBORHOOD/ZIP CODE:

Below is a breakdown of the neighborhoods interviewed, and what percentage of each area of the community is represented in the subsequent data.

Area	Count	Percentage
North Side of Reading	Approximately 48	19.2%
West Side of Reading	Approximately 42	16.8%
South Side of Reading	Approximately 38	15.2%
East Side of Reading	Approximately 31	12.4%
Centre Park	Approximately 15	6.0%
College Heights	Approximately 12	4.8%
Downtown	Approximately 11	4.4%
Hampden Heights	Approximately 9	3.6%
Wyomissing Park	Approximately 7	2.8%
Other	Approximately 37	14.8%

Neighborhood/Zip Code



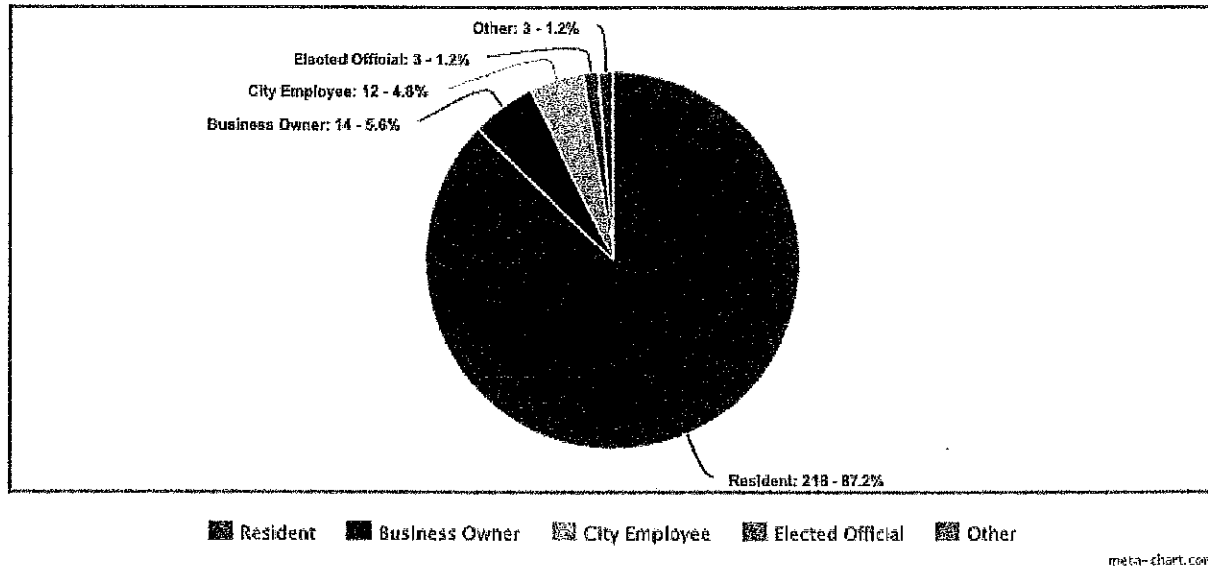
Predominantly, constituents were surveyed from the North, East, West, and South Side, and not from other more extraneous places (e.g., Wyomissing Park). Overall, all boroughs/major neighborhoods in Reading are represented in the data, enhancing its overall credibility.

ABOUT YOU- CONNECTION TO READING

Below is a breakdown of what a constituent's occupation or general role in the overall context of Reading is.

Category	Count	Percentage
Resident	Approximately 218	87.2%
Business Owner	Approximately 14	5.6%
City Employee	Approximately 12	4.8%
Elected Official	Approximately 3	1.2%
Other	Approximately 3	1.2%

Connection to Reading



A very large proportion of the sample classifies themselves as residents, and this is beneficial in trying to determine the genuine needs and concerns of the overall Reading constituents. Oftentimes, business owners, city employees, and elected officials are multitudes more financially and civically affluent than day-to-day residents, so this means the data truly represents the vulnerable population.

ABOUT YOU- PREFERRED LANGUAGE

Some of the survey respondents selected both English and Spanish, which resulted in a higher total count than (n=250). Below is a table breaking down what language is most predominantly spoken by the constituents of Reading.

Language	Count	Percentage
English	Approximately 148	55.0%
Spanish	Approximately 119	44.2%
Other	Approximately 2	0.8%

Across all the survey data, 19 respondents (or 7.6%) indicated their preferred language as both English AND Spanish. Nevertheless, this data shows how much of an even split the language barrier is for the constituents of Reading, as the ratio is nearly 50%-50%.

SECTION 2

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT- FAMILIARITY WITH CITY CHARTER

Next the survey transitioned into Section 2, away from the interpersonal demographics of a constituent and into their role in the overall City Charter. Below measures their level of familiarity:

Level of Familiarity	Count	Percentage
Not familiar	Approximately 134	53.6%
Somewhat familiar	Approximately 89	35.6%
Very familiar	Approximately 27	10.8%

This data demonstrates that over half of the sample surveyed was not **familiar**, and 10.8% considered themselves **very familiar** with the document that guides the city's governance.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT- MEETING PARTICIPATION

The next question in the survey gauges if the survey participant has ever participated in a city government meeting or initiative, following along the same vein of overall civic engagement.

Participation	Count	Percentage
No	Approximately 179	71.6%
Yes	Approximately 71	28.4%

One key finding within this data that should be noted as that although 71.6% of survey participants never participated in city government meetings/initiatives, the participants that did engage previously specifically noted attending City Council meetings or neighborhood-specific initiatives.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT- SERVICE ON CITY OF READING BOARD OR COMMISSION

Below answers the question of some of the more "official" roles in previous civic participation that constituents may have had.

Service History	Count	Percentage
No	Approximately 224	89.6%
Yes	Approximately 26	10.4%

For Question 6, several respondents provided specific details about the boards, commissions, or groups they have served on. While many left this open-ended field blank, the following specific entities were mentioned in the handwritten responses.

Several individuals noted their participation or service specifically related to **City Council functions**, and some mentioned the **Environmental Advisory Council**, for the respondents involved in environmental or sustainability initiatives. Also present was the **Planning Commission**, **Charter Review Commission**, and **Zoning Hearing Board**. Some people also cited **Neighborhood Groups/Associations**, listing service in leadership roles for specific neighborhood groups (e.g.,

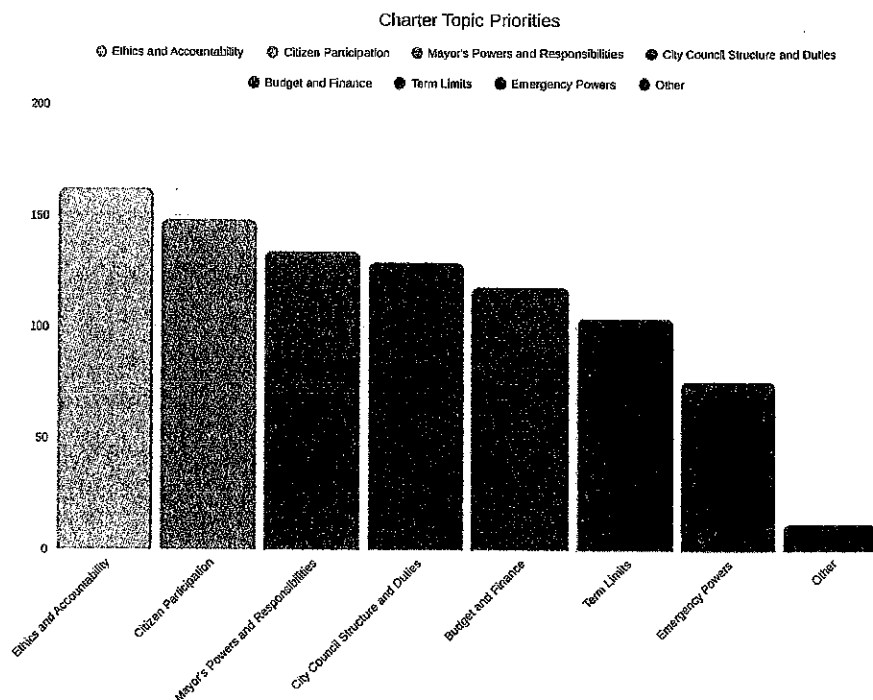
Centre Park or College Heights). Additionally, some respondents used this space to clarify their role as a **City Employee** rather than a volunteer board member.

SECTION 3

CHARTER TOPIC PRIORITIES- REVIEW/IMPROVEMENT

In the next section, survey respondents were asked to identify the areas of the Charter that needed improvement. The question was structured to "check all that apply" so the sample size is larger than (n=250,) because many respondents checked multiple.

Charter Area	Count	Percentage of Respondents
Ethics and Accountability	Approximately 162	64.8%
Citizen Participation	Approximately 148	59.2%
Mayor's Powers and Responsibilities	Approximately 134	53.6%
City Council Structure and Duties	Approximately 129	51.6%
Budget and Finance	Approximately 118	47.2%
Term Limits	Approximately 104	41.6%
Emergency Powers	Approximately 76	30.4%
Other	Approximately 12	4.8%



The numbers speak for themselves, and **Ethics and Accountability** is chiefly the largest concern. Yet **Citizen Participation, Mayor's Powers, and City Council structure** were flagged by over half the participants, making it beneficial to take a look at the balance of power within the city government and if residents are being properly represented.

Additionally, handwritten responses in the "**Other**" category included specific concerns regarding parking enforcement, public safety, and transparency in city hiring.

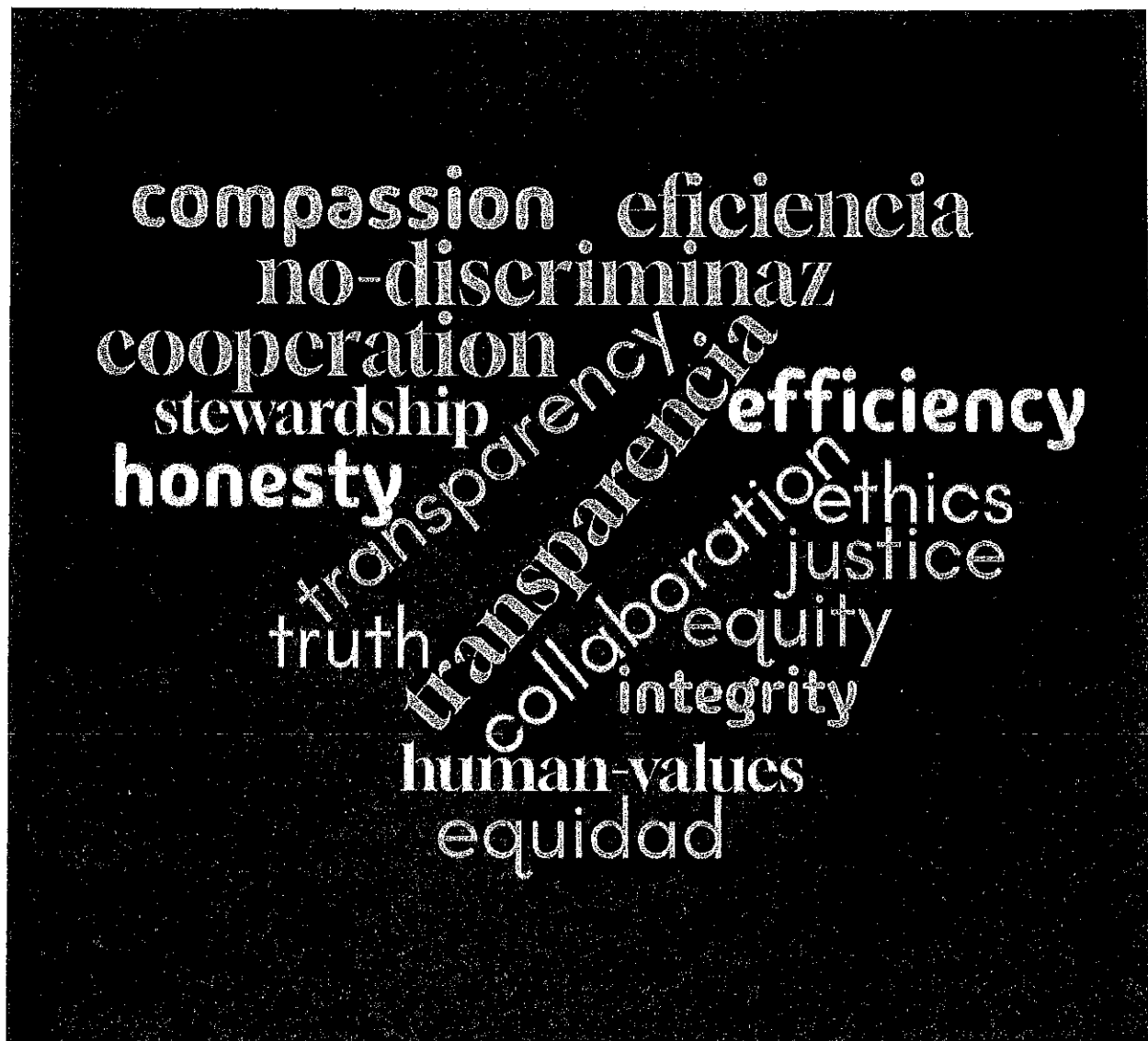
CHARTER TOPIC PRIORITIES- OPEN-ENDED CHANGES IN CITY GOVERNMENT

Next, two open-ended questions followed where constituents were asked what changes they'd like to see in City Government. Although responses varied, many were very similar. Below are common themes that appeared among the responses.

Accountability and Ethics	Communication and Engagement	Operational Efficiency	Structural Changes	Infrastructure and Services
Demand for Transparency: Many respondents requested clearer reporting on how city funds are spent and how decisions are made. Ethics Enforcement: Several mentions of strengthening the Ethics Board and ensuring there are consequences for violations of the Charter.	Bilingual Outreach: A high volume of Spanish-speaking respondents requested that all city notifications, meetings, and digital services be consistently available in both languages. Neighborhood Focus: Suggestions to move away from "city-wide" thinking and have more direct engagement with specific neighborhood groups or councils.	Public Safety & Cleaning: Many residents used this section to advocate for more visible police presence in neighborhoods and more aggressive trash/graffiti removal. Staffing & Hiring: Comments regarding the need for "qualified professionals" rather than political appointments in city departments.	Term Limits: A significant number of written comments echoed the checkbox for term limits. Balance of Power: Suggestions that the City Council should have more oversight over the Mayor's office to ensure a system of checks and balances.	Parking: This was a recurring point. Residents mentioned the need for better-managed parking enforcement and more resident-only parking options. Youth Programs: Requests for more city-funded initiatives or centers for teenagers and children.

CHARTER TOPIC PRIORITIES- OPEN-ENDED CHANGES IN CITY GOVERNMENT

The last question in the survey focused on the values that the Charter Review Commission should highlight and hone in on. Although a couple respondents wrote lengthy sentences, most just wrote a simple one or two words down. The values that seemed to continuously show up are highlighted in the Word Cloud below (English and Spanish).



Direct Quotes Mentioned:

Below are verbatim responses to Questions 8 and 9, that provided specific and reasoned perspectives on the city's future. These were in response to changes they'd like to see in city government, and what values should guide the Charter Review Commission's Work.

- "Stewardship and making the best decisions for the biggest best benefits for the most people."
- "Integrity & compassion, knowledge of the city, and a passion for the city."
- "No discriminaz y que sea un proceso justo para todos los miembros de la comunidad."
(Translation: No discrimination and let it be a fair process for all members of the community.)
- "I would like to see more transparency in how the city funds are spent and how decisions are made at the top."
- "The work should be guided by truth and justice for the people of Reading."

- "All city notifications and meetings should be consistently available in both English and Spanish to include everyone."
- "Values should include honesty, ethics, and a high level of accountability for those in elected positions."

POTENTIAL CORRELATIONS TO NOTE:

Before concluding, it would be helpful to note certain correlations that came about when surveying the 250 participants. Does a certain geographic location correlate with higher familiarity with the City Charter? Does a constituent's connection to Reading correlate to service on a City of Reading Board or Commission? Do certain demographics have a higher propensity to prioritize certain values?

It turns out that there WERE patterns in this data. Below are some statistically significant correlations to note:

Connection (Q2) vs. Charter Priorities (Q7)

There is a very strong correlation between being a Business Owner and prioritizing Budget and Finance. For Business Owners, 92.8% identified Budget/Finance as a top priority for review, while Only 47.2% of General Respondents identified it as a priority. Business owners are nearly twice as likely to be concerned with city fiscal management compared to the average resident.

Language (Q3) vs. Charter Priorities (Q7)

Respondents who indicated Spanish as their preferred language showed a significantly higher interest in Citizen Participation. For Spanish-Preferring, 73.9% prioritized "Citizen Participation," while General Respondents said that 59.2% prioritized "Citizen Participation." There is a clear mandate from the Spanish-speaking community for the Charter to create better or more formal pathways for them to participate in city government.

Neighborhood (Q1) vs. Civic Participation (Q5)

Residents in Centre Park and College Heights were the most likely to have attended a city meeting. For Centre Park/College Heights, 45% answered "Yes" to having participated in a meeting, while the City Average was only 28.4%. Civic participation is currently concentrated in specific historic neighborhoods.