

## RELEVANT LINKS:

[Handbook for Minnesota Cities, Chapter 6](#)

[Minnesota Statutes, Chapters 410-414](#)

## I. APPOINTING AUTHORITY & TYPE OF GOVERNMENT

Overview: Minnesota has two basic types of cities: statutory cities, those operating under the statutory city code; and home rule charter cities, those operating under a local charter.

Without specific statutory or charter authority, a city council may not delegate its responsibility for hiring and firing personnel, determining working conditions, setting salaries and establishing personnel policies. Councils may delegate to others only those functions that do not involve the exercise of discretionary administrative power. Ministerial functions, including day-to-day supervision of employees, however, may be delegated to an officer or committee.

While the council must make the final decisions in these matters, it should consider the studies and recommendations of administrative officers, council committees, or other advisory bodies. No matter which system a city uses, it should review and update personnel policies on a continuous basis. The council should review the city's personnel policies once a year and consider major revisions and overhauls at least once every 3-5 years.

### A. Standard Plan & Statutory Plan A

[Handbook for Minnesota Cities, Chapter 3](#)

The Standard Plan has the common weak mayor-council form of government consisting of an elected mayor, elected clerk (or clerk-treasurer) who serves as a voting member of the council, and three or five council members. The treasurer is also an elected official, but is not a member of the council.

Plan A is a modification of the Standard Plan. It retains the weak mayor-council characteristics, but provides for an appointed clerk, treasurer (or combined clerk-treasurer), and a mayor and four or six council members. All new cities automatically organize under Plan A unless they complete the required legal steps to put one of the other plans into effect. Voters must approve the change from Plan A to another form of city government.

In Standard Plan and Plan A cities, the council is responsible for personnel administration. It has the authority and responsibility to hire and fire personnel, determine working conditions, set salaries, and establish policies regarding promotions, vacations, training opportunities and fringe benefits.

### B. Statutory Plan B

Optional Plan B is the council-manager plan. While the Standard Plan and Plan A are available to all cities, only cities over 1,000 population may adopt Optional Plan B.

In Plan B cities, direct responsibility for personnel administration (including hiring and firing employees) rests with the city manager. The council establishes basic policies and exercises general oversight for administrative activities.

## RELEVANT LINKS:

[Handbook for Minnesota Cities, Chapter 4](#)

## C. Home Rule Charter

The distinction between home rule cities and statutory cities is one of organization and powers, and is not based on differences in population, size, location, or any other physical feature.

Home rule charters are, in effect, local constitutions. State laws give cities a wide range of discretion in the contents of a charter when one is adopted. The charter may provide for any form of municipal government, as long as it is consistent with state laws that apply to all cities in Minnesota. The four forms of government home rule charter cities in Minnesota have used are: weak mayor-council, strong mayor-council, council-manager and commission.

Like Plan B cities, in most charter cities the city manager has direct responsibility for personnel administration. The council provides general oversight on administrative activities.

## D. Civil Service Commission

[Handbook of Minnesota Cities: See Chapter 9, Page 9](#)

In cities that have adopted a civil service system, the civil service commission usually supervises the hiring, promotion, demotion, suspension, and discharge of city employees.

Civil service systems limit appointing authorities to the selection of an appointee from a certified list of people who have passed the civil service examination provided by the civil service commission. In addition, more limitations are placed on the removal of unsatisfactory employees.

## E. Townships

Minnesota Association  
of Townships, P. O. Box  
267, St. Michael, MN 55376  
(763) 497-2330.

The Legislature describes township government as the form of local government that most efficiently provides governmental services in areas used or developed for agricultural, open space, and rural residential purposes.

[Minnesota Association of Townships Web Site](#)

People often incorrectly use the term "town" to describe a small city. In the strictest sense, a town is the governmental or political organization, while a township refers to the geographical congressional territory without connection to the governmental organization. For the most part, Minnesota laws, particularly state statutes, use the terms interchangeably.