

PUBLIC INFORMATION CIRCULAR

Why Sheffield Lake Needs a Temporary Appointments and Continuity of Government Program

Preserving Government Operations While Protecting the City's Checks and Balances

Prepared for: GENERAL PUBLIC

Purpose: Public Information Regarding the Temporary Appointments and Continuity of Government Ordinance

Government Doesn't Stop Because Someone Resigns

Every city depends upon experienced professionals to carry out the day-to-day operations of government.

These individuals oversee:

- Public finances.
- Engineering projects.
- Public safety.
- Public service operations.
- Personnel administration.
- Contracts.
- Procurement.
- Public records.
- Grants.
- Regulatory compliance.

But what happens if one of those individuals unexpectedly resigns, retires, becomes seriously ill, or passes away?

Government still has to function.

Employees still need to be paid.

Bills still need to be processed.

Roads still need to be maintained.

Water and sewer systems still need to operate.

Citizens still expect City Hall to remain open for business.

Planning Before a Crisis Happens

The best emergency plans are created before emergencies occur.

The proposed Temporary Appointments and Continuity of Government Ordinance prepares Sheffield Lake for those unexpected situations by establishing a clear process before a vacancy occurs.

Rather than making decisions during a crisis, the City will already have rules in place describing how temporary appointments are made, what responsibilities those individuals have, and how they remain accountable to the public.

Balancing Speed with Accountability

The ordinance recognizes two important realities.

First, the Mayor must be able to respond quickly when an important position suddenly becomes vacant.

Waiting weeks for government to respond could interrupt essential municipal services.

Second, individuals temporarily performing the duties of a Charter Officer or Department Director may exercise significant authority over taxpayer dollars, contracts, purchasing decisions, engineering approvals, personnel administration, public records, and many other governmental functions.

Those responsibilities require accountability.

This ordinance balances both needs.

A New Check and Balance

Under the proposed ordinance:

- The Mayor may immediately appoint a Temporary Officer or Department Director whenever necessary to maintain uninterrupted municipal operations.

In exchange:

- The Temporary Appointee becomes subject to clear legal duties.
- The Temporary Appointee must act independently and in the City's best interests.
- The Temporary Appointee must cooperate with audits and legislative oversight.
- **City Council may remove the Temporary Appointee for Cause by a majority vote if that individual violates the law, fails to perform the duties of the office, or otherwise fails to protect the public interest.**

The result is a balanced system that combines operational flexibility with public accountability.

The Ordinance Applies Regardless of Job Title

Government responsibilities should not change simply because someone is called a consultant instead of a director.

The ordinance applies whenever someone is substantially performing the duties of a Charter Officer or Department Director, including:

- Interim Directors.
- Acting Directors.
- Independent Contractors.
- Consultants.
- Professional Services Firms.
- Temporary Employees.

If someone is exercising the authority of a department head, the same standards of honesty, professionalism, and accountability should apply.

Protecting Professional Independence

One of the ordinance's most important goals is protecting independent professional judgment.

Temporary Appointees must:

- Follow the law.
- Follow accepted professional standards.

- Protect taxpayer funds.
- Maintain accurate public records.
- Report attempts to improperly influence their decisions.

Their primary duty is owed to the City of Sheffield Lake—not to the personal interests or preferences of any individual.

Protecting Taxpayers

City officials entrusted with temporary executive authority frequently make decisions involving:

- Purchasing.
- Budget administration.
- Financial reporting.
- Public contracts.
- Engineering decisions.
- Personnel matters.
- Regulatory compliance.

The ordinance establishes clear expectations for how those responsibilities are to be performed while strengthening transparency and public accountability.

Preserving Institutional Knowledge

When experienced officials leave office, valuable information can leave with them.

The ordinance requires structured transitions that include:

- Transfer of records.
- Transfer of passwords.
- Status of ongoing projects.
- Budget information.
- Grant administration.
- Pending litigation.
- Audit status.
- Major operational issues.

This helps ensure that important information remains with the City—not with any individual.

Continuous Improvement

The ordinance doesn't simply end when a temporary appointment is over.

It requires:

- A documented transition.
- Performance evaluation.
- Risk assessment.
- Review by the Finance and Audit Committee.
- Recommendations for improving future transitions.

This allows the City to learn from experience and continually improve its governance practices.

What the Ordinance Does

The ordinance:

- Allows the Mayor to make immediate temporary appointments during unexpected vacancies.
 - Preserves uninterrupted municipal operations.
 - Establishes clear professional and ethical standards.
 - Protects independent professional judgment.
 - Requires cooperation with audits and legislative oversight.
 - Requires written agreements for temporary appointments.
 - Requires orderly transitions between officeholders.
 - **Allows City Council to remove Temporary Appointees for Cause by majority vote, preserving legislative oversight and the Charter's system of checks and balances.**
 - Promotes transparency, accountability, and continuity of government.
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What the Ordinance Does Not Do

The ordinance does **not**:

- Create new permanent positions.
- Change how permanent Charter Officers are appointed.
- Increase taxes.
- Appropriate additional money.
- Delay emergency appointments.

- Interfere with the Mayor's ability to keep City government operating during unexpected vacancies.

Instead, it establishes a clear framework governing how temporary appointments operate until permanent appointments are made.

A Better Process for the Future

Good government depends upon good procedures.

Unexpected vacancies will occur in every community.

The question is not whether they will happen.

The question is whether the City is prepared when they do.

This ordinance creates a permanent framework that future mayors, future councils, future employees, and future residents can rely upon regardless of who holds office.

By allowing immediate temporary appointments while preserving Council's continuing oversight—including the authority to remove Temporary Appointees for Cause—the ordinance strengthens the City's system of checks and balances, promotes public confidence, and helps ensure that government remains both effective and accountable.

Good government requires continuity.

Continuity requires accountability.

Accountability protects the public trust.