Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	0649-2026 **Version:** 1		
Type:	Ordinance	**Status:**	Passed
File created:	2/27/2026	**In control:**	Rules & Policy Committee
On agenda:	3/2/2026	**Final action:**	3/3/2026
Title:	To submit to the electors of the city of Columbus at a special election to be held concurrently with the regular primary election on May 5, 2026, the question of amending the Charter of the City of Columbus, such question to be known as "Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, Community Crisis Response."		
Sponsors:			
Indexes:			
Code sections:			
Attachments:	1. Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1 - Summary.pdf, 2. FINAL PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CHARTER Community Crisis Response.pdf		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
3/3/2026	1	CITY CLERK	Attest	
3/2/2026	1	COUNCIL PRESIDENT	Signed	
3/2/2026	1	Columbus City Council	Approved	Pass

BACKGROUND

On April 4, 2025, petitioners Chana Wiley, Helen Anne Sweeney, Molly Shea, Stephen David, and Stuart McIntyre filed with the City Clerk a pre-circulation copy of a petition for a charter amendment, titled "The Community Crisis Response Amendment. An amendment to the Columbus City Charter to add sections 127-1 through 127-9 to the Charter establishing a division of community crisis response within the department of health, which shall respond to 911 calls and other calls for assistance for persons in crisis, including crises related to mental health and substance abuse, using the most appropriate and least invasive non-police intervention available; collect data on the services provided by the division; and conduct community outreach; establishing the community crisis response advisory board to make recommendations to the department of health regarding the implementation of this amendment and provision of its services; and requiring appropriations to fund the division and advisory board with an initial full year appropriation of $5,000,000 for fiscal year 2027." Following this, on January 29, 2026, petitioners filed with the City Clerk a petition for said ordinance. Petitioners filed 1,211 part-petitions containing 27,458 signatures.

Pursuant to Section 42-9 of the charter, the city clerk submitted the part-petitions to the Franklin County Board of Elections to validate the signatures and to the city attorney to advise on the legal sufficiency of the petition, based upon any applicable local, state or federal laws, rules or regulations.

On February 4, 2026, the City Attorney's office advised this Council that the subject petition complies with Section 42-2 of the City Charter, which sets forth the requirements as to form for each petition for a proposal initiated by a citizen.

In addition, on February 13, 2026, the Franklin County Board of Elections certified its examination of the part-petitions, as required by Section 42-9 of the City Charter. The Board of Elections found that the total number of valid signatures exceeds the standard as defined in Section 45 of the Charter ("equal to not less than ten percent of the total vote cast at the last preceding regular municipal election").

Per Section 45-1 of the charter, this council must forthwith determine the sufficiency of the citizens' charter amendment petition and, if it is found sufficient, forthwith by ordinance provide for the submission of the proposed charter amendment to a vote of the electors of the city. Council may not consider the subject matter of the petition in making this determination and council's action via this ordinance does not constitute support for the proposed amendment.

Based on the foregoing, this council found on February 23, 2026 during its regular meeting that the aforementioned amendment to the charter, hereafter known as "Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, Community Crisis Response," is sufficient pursuant to the requirements of the charter and applicable provisions of the Ohio Constitution and Ohio Revised Code. Having found the petition sufficient, this council must order and provide for the submission of Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1 to the electors at a regular municipal election to be called and held no less than 60 nor more than 120 days from passage of this ordinance. However, given that there is no regular municipal election in 2026, a special election must be called and this question must be submitted to electors at said special election to be held concurrently with the regular primary election on May 5, 2026.

To submit to the electors of the city of Columbus at a special election to be held concurrently with the regular primary election on May 5, 2026, the question of amending the Charter of the City of Columbus, such question to be known as "Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, Community Crisis Response."

WHEREAS, the Charter of the City of Columbus vests with the people of the City of Columbus the right to initiate charter amendments by petition; and

WHEREAS, on April 4, 2025, petitioners Chana Wiley, Helen Anne Sweeney, Molly Shea, Stephen David, and Stuart McIntyre filed with the City Clerk a pre-circulation copy of a petition for a charter amendment, titled "The Community Crisis Response Amendment. An amendment to the Columbus City Charter to add sections 127-1 through 127-9 to the Charter establishing a division of community crisis response within the department of health, which shall respond to 911 calls and other calls for assistance for persons in crisis, including crises related to mental health and substance abuse, using the most appropriate and least invasive non-police intervention available; collect data on the services provided by the division; and conduct community outreach; establishing the community crisis response advisory board to make recommendations to the department of health regarding the implementation of this amendment and provision of its services; and requiring appropriations to fund the division and advisory board with an initial full year appropriation of $5,000,000 for fiscal year 2027."; and

WHEREAS, petitioners are vested with the responsibility to meet all applicable requirements of the Ohio Constitution, the Charter of the City of Columbus, and the Ohio Revised Code in seeking to exercise the aforementioned right; and

WHEREAS, on January 29, 2026, petitioners filed with the City Clerk 1,211 part-petitions containing 27,458 signatures; and

WHEREAS, after a thorough and timely review of the part-petitions as required by Section 42-9 of the City Charter, the City Attorney reported to this Council on February 4, 2026 his opinion that the aforementioned petition is sufficient as a matter of law; and

WHEREAS, after a thorough and timely review of the part-petitions, the Franklin County Board of Elections reported on February 13, 2026 to the City Clerk that the total number of valid signatures exceeds the standard required by Section 45 of the City Charter; and

WHEREAS, following receipt of the report regarding the validation of signatures and the City Attorney's determination of legal sufficiency, per Section 45 of the City Charter, City Council at its regular meeting on February 23, 2026 determined the petition to be legally sufficient, and is providing for the submission of the proposed charter amendment to

a vote of the electors of the city; and

WHEREAS, since no regular municipal election will be held in 2026, a special election shall be called to place the proposed charter amendment on the May 5, 2026 ballot at a special election to be held concurrently with the primary election, per Section 45-2 of the City Charter; and

WHEREAS, Section 42-12 of the Charter of the City of Columbus requires that it is immediately necessary to authorize submission of Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, Community Crisis Response to the electors to assure timely filing with the boards of elections for placement on the May 5, 2026 ballot; **NOW, THERFORE**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. The city council hereby finds that a regular municipal election will not be held in 2026. Therefore, pursuant to City Charter Section 45-2, a special election is hereby called to place the question hereinafter set forth on the May 5, 2026 ballot to be held concurrently with the general election, a date which is not less than 60 nor more than 120 days from passage of this ordinance.

SECTION 2. That there be submitted to the electors of the city of Columbus the question of amending the Charter of the City of Columbus, such question and proposed amendments being set forth as an attachment (FINAL PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CHARTER Community Crisis Response) hereto and hereby made a part hereof.

SECTION 3. That the question submitted in Section 2 be and hereby is known as "Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, Community Crisis Response."

SECTION 4. That the city clerk is directed to forthwith serve a certified copy of this ordinance upon the boards of elections of Franklin County, Delaware County, and Fairfield County, Ohio.

SECTION 5. That the boards of elections of Franklin County, Delaware County, and Fairfield County, Ohio be and hereby are requested to place the question, "Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, Community Crisis Response" upon the ballot to be submitted to the electors as provided for and upon the date set forth herein.

SECTION 6. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to take immediate effect and be in force from and after passage, pursuant to Section 42-12 of the Charter of the City of Columbus.