



Legislation Text

File #: 1747-2014, Version: 2

This ordinance provides for the submission to the electors of the city of Columbus the question of amending the Charter of the City of Columbus ("charter"), as hereinafter described. Such question is based on the recommendations of the 2014 Columbus Charter Review Commission ("commission").

On June 30, 2014, the Charter Review Commission, appointed by Mayor Michael B. Coleman and Council President Andrew J. Ginther, adopted twenty-one (21) recommendations. A report summarizing those recommendations was submitted on July 7, 2014 and is attached to this ordinance.

Based on council's consideration of the commission's recommendations, council proposes a ballot question regarding city administration. Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, City Administration, addresses the following:

- A new section establishes that no officer, employee, or agent of the city shall deny equal access to city services, or equal opportunity in employment and promotion, or the benefits thereof, to any person on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, family or military status, or any other status that is protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance.
- A new section establishes a charter review commission every ten years. Members must be Columbus residents, cannot hold office or employment with the city, and may not be paid. Council shall appoint two members, the mayor shall appoint two members, and the council president and mayor shall jointly appoint the chair. The commission must conduct a comprehensive review of the charter and report recommendations within six months. Council may submit any recommendation, in whole or in part, to electors. This provision does not limit council's authority to submit charter amendments, or limit appointment of commissions more frequently.
- A new section establishes a process for making technical changes to the charter by a 30-day ordinance, passed by unanimous vote of council, and subject to the referendum. Technical changes are strictly limited in the new section.
- The mayor's budget estimate shall be published as a permanent, electronic public record, rather than a printed document distributed to libraries.
- The mayor, auditor and city treasurer must certify to council the monies needed to satisfy city debt obligations; council shall submit those amounts to the county commissioners; and the auditor shall place unexpended funds in a bond retirement fund.
- The Sinking Fund and all references thereto shall be repealed, effective July 1, 2015.
- City investments shall be regulated by ordinance.
- References to city utilities are amended to include all utilities, rather than being limited to water.
- The mayor and auditor, with approval of council, must place enough funds from city utility revenues, or other necessary sources, to cover the city's outstanding utility debt obligations.
- The water depreciation fund and cash deposit for water service are repealed.
- Utility service exemption is amended to apply to all city utilities and to assist non-profits in the city serving disadvantaged persons; and such exemption is permissive.
- The Civil Service Commission is authorized to change from one to three years for reinstatement on the eligible

list for persons who separate from the city or are reduced in rank without fault or delinquency.

- Franchises authorized by the city must reserve the right to prevent unjust discrimination in service or rates.
- Recreation and Parks Commission members must be residence of the city of Columbus, with eight members appointed by the mayor with concurrence of Council and one member appointed by the Columbus and Franklin County MetroParks board, with concurrence of the mayor and council.
- The city clerk must compile an annual report of the city and the report must be a permanent, electronic public record rather than a bound book.

To submit to the electors of the city of Columbus at a special election to be held concurrently with the regular general election on November 4, 2014, the question of amending the Charter of the City of Columbus, such question to be known as "Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, City Administration"; and to declare an emergency.

WHEREAS, on the centennial of the charter's adoption by Columbus voters, Council President Andrew J. Ginther and Mayor Michael B. Coleman appointed a five-member Charter Review Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the city's charter; and

WHEREAS, the highly regarded community leaders who served on the commission held seven public working meetings, solicited public comment via two public hearings, an online form, and a dedicated email address, and, based on such deliberations, submitted a final report of recommendations to the mayor and council president on July 7, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Charter Review Commission made twenty-one recommendations, of which nineteen necessitate changes to the charter; and

WHEREAS, after due deliberation and consultation with the mayor, auditor, and city attorney, this council finds that the residents of Columbus will be well-served by the proposed charter amendments regarding city administration; and

WHEREAS, An emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the city, in that it is immediately necessary to authorize submission of Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, City Administration to the electors to assure timely filing with the boards of elections for placement on the November 4, 2014 ballot, thereby preserving the public health, peace, property, safety and welfare; **NOW THEREFORE**

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 2014. Therefore, pursuant to City Charter Section 234, a special election is hereby called to place the question hereinafter set forth on the November 4, 2014 ballot at a special election to be held concurrently with the general election, a date 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 ("AMENDED FINAL PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CHARTER City Administration 20140711"20140717") hereto and hereby made a part hereof.

SECTION 3. That the question submitted in Section 1 be and hereby is known as "Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1, City Administration."

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, City Administration" 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 be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor does not approve the same.