

# GOVERNING BEAVERTON: THE PROPOSED CITY CHARTER ON THE MAY 19, 2020 BALLOT

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**National Policy Consensus Center**  
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# SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROPOSED CITY CHARTER:

- What is a city charter?
- Why refer the proposed city charter for voter consideration?
- What are the common forms of government in Oregon?
- What forms of government were studied by the Beaverton mayor and council?
- What would the proposed city charter do if passed?
- What would be the role of elected officials under the proposed city charter?
- What would be the role of the city officers under the proposed city charter?
- What are some next steps?
- What would be the cost to tax payers if the measure passes?
- What would happen if the proposed city charter does not pass?



# WHAT IS A CITY CHARTER?

- The U.S. federal government and the state of Oregon each have **constitutions**, while cities in Oregon have **charters**.
- Constitutions and charters are foundational documents describing how the government is organized and how it will govern itself.
- They are the legal documents that define the **organization, powers, functions, and essential procedures of the government**.
  - The U.S. constitution describes the roles and powers of the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court.
  - The Oregon constitution describes the roles and powers of the Governor, Legislature, and the state Supreme Court.
  - The City of Beaverton charter describes the roles and powers of the mayor, city council, and city officers. The charter describes the basic framework within which the city conducts its business.



# WHY REFER THE PROPOSED CITY CHARTER?

- It is common for cities and counties to periodically review their charters.
- The current city charter was approved by voters in November 1980—about 40 years ago—and was amended once in 2008 when voters changed a section relating to urban renewal.



# WHAT ARE THE COMMON FORMS OF GOVERNMENT IN OREGON?

- There are 241 cities in Oregon. They are organized into four basic forms of government:
- **1. Mayor/Council.** Smaller Oregon cities typically have the mayor-council form, in which the legislative and policymaking body is through a popularly elected mayor and council.
- **2. Commission.** Portland is the only city in the state with the commission form of government, where the elected commissioners function collectively as the city council and serve as administrators of city departments.
- **3. Strong Mayor.** Beaverton is the only city in the state with the strong mayor form, in which the mayor, serving as the chief executive officer, has the authority to appoint city staff, is responsible for city administration, and serves as the presiding officer at council meetings.
- **4. Council/Manager.** Most Oregon cities with populations over 2,500 have the council-manager or council-administrator form, in which the council hires (and can fire) a chief executive officer to be responsible for the daily supervision of city affairs.



# WHAT FORMS OF GOVERNMENT WERE STUDIED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- As they considered the form of government for the future, the council focused on two of the four methods of governance:
  - 1) the current strong mayor form; and,
  - 2) the council-manager form of government.
- They looked at charters suggested by the National Civic League and the League of Oregon Cities.
- They reviewed charter language from a variety of cities in Oregon and around the country.



# IF PASSED, WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSED CITY CHARTER DO?

- If the measure passes, the proposed city charter would outline details related to the city's form of government, term limits and language preferences.
- The City Council would appoint a full-time City Manager for an indefinite term to oversee the city's day-to-day operations. The City Manager would be an at-will employee who could be fired by a majority of the elected officials, consistent with local laws and their employment agreement. The city manager would not be an elected position.
- The City Council would increase from five members to include seven members: six part-time City Councilors and one full-time Mayor with voting privileges. The City Council would serve as the city's governing body and be responsible for the city's legislative functions. In addition to serving on the City Council, the Mayor would serve as the chief elected official.
- All City Council positions would be nonpartisan and elected at-large by Beaverton voters.



# IF PASSED, WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSED CITY CHARTER DO (CONTINUED)?

- The City Councilors and the Mayor would be limited to three consecutive four-year terms in office for their respective positions. A councilor or mayor who reached the three-term limit would be allowed to run again for election to the same office only after a break in service. The term limit does not prevent a term-limited mayor from running for election as a councilor, or a term-limited councilor from running for election as mayor.
- The new charter would remove gender-exclusive references.
- The mayor or a councilor could be removed from office for unethical or criminal conduct.
- The City's indebtedness would not be allowed to exceed debt limits imposed by state law.
- A public hearing before the council would be required to adopt any ordinance.



# WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ELECTED OFFICIALS UNDER THE PROPOSED CITY CHARTER?

- If the proposed charter passes, the Council would:
  - Approve the city's budget and adopt city laws and regulations.
  - Set goals and objectives for city staff and city business.
  - Hire a professional city manager based on that person's education, experience, skills, and abilities and then supervise the manager.
  - Have the authority to remove the city manager at any time, consistent with an employment agreement.



# WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CITY MANAGER UNDER THE PROPOSED CITY CHARTER?

- If the measure passes, the city manager would be an at-will employee who could be fired by a majority of the elected officials, consistent with local laws and their employment agreement.
- The city manager could:
  - Propose the city budget for consideration by the budget committee and then by the mayor and council.
  - Recruit, hire, supervise, and may terminate city staff.
  - Serve as the mayor and council's chief advisor by providing complete and objective information about city operations, providing options for their consideration, offering an assessment of the long-term consequences of decisions, and making recommendations on how to manage the city and deliver services.
  - Carry out the policies established by the mayor and council, enforce laws and regulations, and implement short and long-range city goals and objectives.



# WHAT ARE SOME NEXT STEPS?

- **A Public Vote.** The Beaverton City Council referred the proposed city charter to Beaverton voters for the May 19, 2020, primary election.
- **Effective Date.** If approved, the proposed charter would become operative on January 1, 2021.



# **IF PASSED, WHAT IS THE COST TO TAXPAYERS?**

- The financial impact, if any, due to changes to city positions under the proposed charter would be approximately \$42,000 because the proposed charter would replace or modify existing positions included in the city's current charter. For example, the cost of adding a new city Councilor position would be available from a redistribution of the Mayor's existing salary to a new councilor position. The cost would be paid by the City's general fund through an existing revenue stream, and there would be no fiscal impact to taxpayers.



# WHAT HAPPENS IF THE PROPOSED CITY CHARTER DOES NOT PASS?

- Nothing. The city would continue to operate as it does under the existing charter, the city's present mayor-council form of government would remain in place, and there would be no fiscal impact.



**THANK YOU!**

