



WESTMINSTER
COLORADO

Agenda Memorandum

Agenda Item – {{section.number}}.C.

City Council Meeting
August 14, 2023



Strategic Priority 1: Preparedness and Resilience

Build a system of intentional support for residents, businesses and the environment that mitigates risks and proactively seeks out ways to ensure the community not only endures, but thrives.

Subject: First Reading of Councillor’s Bill No. 39 Proposing Charter Amendments, Resolution No. 24 Setting a Ballot Question Regarding Wards and Resolution No. 25 Calling for Participation in the November 7, 2023, Coordinated Election with Adams and Jefferson Counties

Prepared By: David Frankel, City Attorney
Mathew Munch, Assistant City Attorney
Chris M. Lindsey, Assistant City Manager
Abby Fitch, City Clerk

Recommended City Council Action:

1. Pass Councillor’s Bill No. 39 on first reading placing questions on the November 2023 coordinated election ballot to amend the Charter and direct the City Clerk to certify the ballot language to the designated election officials for Adams and Jefferson Counties.
2. Adopt Resolution No. 24 Setting a Ballot Question Regarding Wards
3. Adopt Resolution No. 25 Calling for Participation in the November 7, 2023, Coordinated Election with Adams and Jefferson Counties

Summary Statement:

- The coordinated election will be held November 7, 2023.
- At the July 31, 2023, Study Session, City Council provided direction on charter amendments to be placed on the November 2023 ballot.
- City Council directed Staff to draft an ordinance that will place four questions on the ballot that amend the charter. These changes include:

- budget control;
 - budget procedures;
 - contracts; and
 - definition of publication, mailing of notices.
- City Council also directed Staff to draft a resolution to place a question on the ballot to gauge public interest in creating City Council Wards.

Fiscal Impact:

To be determined.

Source of Funds:

General Fund

Policy Issue(s):

1. Does City Council want to call a coordinated election?
2. Does City Council agree with the proposed language for the Charter amendments and the ballot question regarding Wards?

Alternative(s):

1. City Council could call for the city to run their own election. This is not advised because it would be much greater expense, including the need to hire additional Staff and rent equipment.
2. City Council could choose not to put the ballot language on the ballot. This is not advised because City Council directed Staff as to which questions to put onto the ballot.

Background Information:

It is recommended that City Council and Staff regularly review the City Charter to ensure that the City Charter continues to meet the needs of the City. Staff has identified four possible ballot questions that are outlined below.

1. City Charter, Section 9.6 – Budget Control. This question would amend the City Manager’s budgetary control from the department level to the fund level in order to allow for more effective financial management. The language that would be amended is proposed to read as follows:

Except for purposes which are to be financed by the issuance of bonds or by special assessment, or for other purposes not chargeable to a budget appropriation, no money shall be drawn from the treasury of the City except in accordance with an appropriation thereof for such specific purpose, nor shall any obligation for the expenditure of money be incurred without an appropriation covering all payments which will be due under such obligation in the current fiscal year, except that:

- (1) Money from the contingency fund may be transferred by resolution at any time during the year.

(2) The City Manager may order the transfer of budget appropriations within a funds within a departmental budget at any time during the year.

(3) [The] Council may order the transfer of any unencumbered appropriation balance, or any portion thereof, from one account, department, fund or agency to another at any time during the year

2. City Charter, Section 9.2 – Budget Procedures. This question would amend the current year expenditures as of July 31 rather than September 1 to provide the community with a consistent basis of comparison of City expenditures. The wording of the amendment is proposed as follows:

The City Manager shall prepare and submit to City Council on or before September 15 of each year a recommended budget covering the next fiscal year, and shall include therein at least the following information:

- (a) Detailed estimates with his supporting explanations of all proposed expenditures for each department, office and agency of the City, and for the court, showing the expenditures for corresponding items for the last preceding fiscal year in full, and for the current fiscal year to July 31 ~~September 1~~ and estimated expenditures for the balance of the current fiscal year;
- (b) Statements of the bonded and other indebtedness of the City, showing the debt redemption and interest requirements, the debt authorized and unissued, and the condition of sinking funds, if any;
- (c) Detailed estimates of all anticipated revenues of the City from sources other than taxes with a comparative statement of the amounts received by the City from each of the same similar sources for the last preceding fiscal year in full, and for the current fiscal year to July 31 ~~September 1~~, and estimated revenues for the balance of the current fiscal year;
- (d) A statement of the estimated balance or deficit for the end of the current fiscal year;
- (e) An estimate of the amount of money to be raised from current and delinquent taxes and the amount to be raised from bond issues which, together with any available unappropriated surplus and any revenues from other sources, will be necessary to meet the proposed expenditures;
- (f) Such other supporting information as the Council may request.

3. City Charter, Section 13.3 – Contracts. This question would allow the City Manager to designate an individual to certify an appropriation that has been made before a contract, agreement, or purchase order is executed to provide for more effective management of financial controls. The wording of this amendment is proposed as follows:

(h) Before any contract, agreement or purchase order obligating the City to pay an amount exceeding a maximum amount as may be set from time to time by the Council by ordinance is executed, the ~~Finance Director or the City Manager~~ or their designee first shall have certified that an appropriation has been made for the payment thereof, or that sufficient funds will be available if it be for a purpose being financed by the issuance of bonds or by special assessments or for some other purpose not chargeable to a budget appropriation. In the case of a contract or agreement obligating the City for periodic payments in future fiscal years for the furnishing of a continuing service or the leasing of property, such certification need not cover those payments which will be due in future fiscal years; but this exception shall not apply to a contract for the purchase or construction of a public improvement unless such

purchase or construction is being financed by an installment contract. Certification by the ~~Finance Director or the City Manager~~ or their designee shall be endorsed on each contract, agreement or purchase order requiring same or shall be filed as an attachment thereto.

4. City Charter, Section 17.5 – Definition of Publication, Mailing of Notices. This question would amend the requirement for the publication of notices and ordinances in the newspaper to allow for either newspaper publication or publication on the City’s website, or both, in order to reach more people more efficiently and quickly. The wording of this amendment is proposed as follows:

The requirement contained in this Charter for the publishing or publication of notices or ordinances shall be met by either posting such notice or ordinance on the City’s official website, or by publishing an appropriate insertion in a newspaper published in the English language for the dissemination of news of a general character, which newspaper shall have had a general circulation at regular intervals in the city for at least two (2) years immediately preceding the time that it is used for such publication purposes, or both. The affidavit of the printer or publisher of such newspaper, or of his foreman or principal clerk, annexed to a printed copy of such notice, ordinance or proceeding taken from the paper in which it was published and specifying the times of publication shall be prima facie evidence of such publication.

In any case in which this Charter requires the mailing of notices, the affidavit of the officer or employee responsible for such mailing that such notice was mailed shall be prima facie evidence of such mailing.

5. City Council also discussed setting a ballot question regarding wards or districts in the City. Council directed Staff to prepare a question on the ballot to gauge the public interest in creating a ward or district system. A resolution has been drafted for approval to place this question on the ballot. The proposed question is:

Shall the Westminster City Council propose by 2026 a system of electing some or all City Council members from geographic wards rather than at-large?

Providing direction to Staff on ballot measures meets all of the Strategic Priorsities: Preparedness and Resilience, Proactive Public Safety, Shared Sense of Community, Quality of Life and Robust Infrastructure by providing ongoing excellence in City services and a well-planned community that meets the needs of residents now and in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark A Freitag

Mark A. Freitag
City Manager

Attachments:

Councillors Bill 39 Placing Charter Amendments on the November 2023 Ballot

Resolution 24 Setting a Ballot Question Regarding Wards

Resolution 25 Calling for Participation in the November 7, 2023 Coordinated Election with Adams and Jefferson Counties