

DECISION POINTS FOR CHARTER COMMISSIONS PROPOSING A CITY FORM OF GOVERNMENT

LEGISLATIVE BODY

- size
- composition (e.g., number from wards/districts, number at-large)
- term
- presiding officer(s)
- appointments
- procedures for adoption of ordinances and other measures
- how vacancies will be filled

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- | | | |
|--------------|----|---|
| <u>Mayor</u> | or | <u>Manager</u> |
| - term | | - term (optional) |
| - vacancy | | - qualifications |
| | | - procedures for dismissal |
| | | - acting manager in case of dismissal/resignation |

Mayor or Manager:

- powers and duties (e.g., financial management, purchasing, personnel management, contracting, labor relations)
- appointments - which ones, if confirmed (by whom)
- provisions for temporary and extended absence

SCHOOL COMMITTEE (see M.G.L., c. 71, s. 37 re: powers and duties)

- size
- composition (e.g., number from wards/districts, number at-large)
- term
- presiding officer
- mayor or councilor to serve on committee (optional)

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

- create department structure in charter (example: West Springfield HRC)
- provide authority for reorganization via ordinance
- create coordinating/communication mechanism(s)
- if departments, boards, commissions created by special act, decide how to include in charter (retain, repeal, reassign function to another agency or board). New boards to create/include in charter.

OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET PREPARATION

- all budget preparation activities should be coordinated by chief executive
- financial forecast (appears in several recently-enacted charters)

ELECTIONS

- preliminary election (optional - most cities have them)
- division of the city into wards (*if proposing different council and/or school committee configuration than is presently in place* -

CITIZEN RELIEF/SAFEGUARD MECHANISMS

- free petition (see Note 1)
- initiative (see Note 2)
- referendum
- recall (see Note 3)

Note 1: free petition - several charters limit this avenue to group petitions only, with a minimum of 100-150 signatures; no individual petitions)

Note 2: may define circumstances where initiative and referendum not allowed; e.g., internal organization of the council, emergency measure, city budget, debt service appropriation, appropriation to implement collective bargaining agreement.

Note 3: May limit application of recall to certain officers, and/or to certain time periods within the term of office (e.g., no recall proceedings in the initial or final six months of any officer's term)

TRANSITION PROVISIONS

- practical steps of moving from present form to form of government as set forth in charter (review of ordinances/bylaws, scheduling of special election, if required, etc.)
- continuation of personnel;
- retention of records and property;
- retention of Civil Service status (as applicable)
- allow members of boards and commissions to complete terms for which they were elected, etc.

OTHER FEATURES

- definitions of terms
- corporate powers affirmed
- authority to enter into interlocal agreements affirmed
- procedure for periodic charter review
- procedures for multiple-member bodies