

## **DRAFT RESOLUTION 10-8-2020**

### **TITLE**

**A Resolution authorizing the placement of two questions related to the size of the membership of the Common Council and the length of alderperson terms as binding referendum questions on the Spring 2021 election ballot.**

### **BODY**

WHEREAS, on September 8, 2017 the City of Madison created the Task Force on Government Structure ("TFOGS") (RES-17-00714) to examine and make recommendations related to the structure of the Mayor's Office, Common Council, and the City's Boards, Commissions and Committees ("BCC"); and,

WHEREAS, the TFOGS Resolution asked the TFOGS to consider whether the City's existing government structure provides adequate avenues for resident representation and participation in government without privileging decision-making on having the time, resources, and ability to navigate the City's current government structure; and,

WHEREAS, the TFOGS Resolution specifically sought recommendations that could improve the ability of people of color and those living with lower incomes to participate and engage with City government; and,

WHEREAS, the TFOGS and its subcommittees met ninety (90) times over an almost two-year period, invited members of the community to their meetings, collaborated with seven (7) community liaisons from the City's most traditionally under-represented neighborhoods, held two community open houses, and created surveys seeking input from city residents, staff, and current and former government officials; and,

WHEREAS, the TFOGS studied the structure and function of the City's Common Council, reviewed options for alternative government structures, and, among other things, investigated how the relationship between the current Common Council and the City's nearly 100 Boards, Commissions, and Committees impacts resident representation, engagement and participation; and,

WHEREAS, the TFOGS concluded that "the City's current government structure is an impediment to full participation and representation and, therefore, that the City's structure is fundamentally unfair to a large portion of the City's population, including, most notably, the City's residents of color and low income"; and,

WHEREAS, in specifically reviewing the current structure of the Common Council, the TFOGS Final Report found that each geographic district had different levels of representation based, in part, on how much time the alder could devote to their work, and concluded that "as Madison has grown so too has the complexity of the challenges it faces; and that adequately representing constituents facing these challenges requires a full-time Council"; and,

WHEREAS, the TFOGS Final Report states that a full-time Council would, among other things, be better positioned to address other impediments to resident representation, engagement and participation, such as the size and complexity of the City's Board, Commission, and Committee structure and the lack of alternative and innovative ways for residents to engage with their government; and,

WHEREAS, the TFOGS Final Report states in addition to transitioning to a full-time Common Council, increasing alderperson terms from 2-years to 4-years would allow alders to settle into their positions and role as constituent representative before having to run for reelection; and

WHEREAS, the TFOGS Final Report recommends creating a smaller full-time Common Council consisting of ten (10) members making the area median income of a single parent with two children, approximately \$67,000 per year, and serving four-year terms; and,

WHEREAS, changing the number of alderpersons and length of alderperson terms requires amending Madison General Ordinance 3.01 through a binding referendum on the ballot of a general or special election; and,

WHEREAS, in order to place the question of the number of alderpersons and length of alderperson terms on the ballot of the Spring 2021 general election, the Common Council must pass a resolution authorizing that those questions be sent to the electorate and directing city staff to give notice of the referendum question to the election clerk within 70 days of the Spring 2021 general election; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council heard a general presentation regarding the TFOGS recommendations related to the structure of the Common Council on September 15, 2020, discussed the issue more fully at a Committee of the Whole on October 8, 2020, and discussed the issues again at a meeting of the Common Council on \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council directs City staff to take the necessary steps to place the following two questions on ballot in the Spring 2021 general election for referendum vote by the electorate, in order to amend Madison General Ordinance Section 3.01:

1. Madison's Common Council is currently comprised of twenty (20) part-time alderpersons, one from each aldermanic district. Should the City of Madison reduce the number of aldermanic districts from twenty (20) to ten (10) and transition to a Common Council comprised of ten (10) full-time alderpersons, one from each aldermanic district?
2. Madison alderpersons are currently elected for a term of two (2) years. Should the City of Madison transition to a Common Council where alderpersons are elected for a term of four (4) years?

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the ad hoc TFOGS Implementation Workgroup should collaborate with the Mayor's Office and Common Council Executive Committee (CCEC) to develop a plan, as allowed by law, to provide information to the public about the above referendum questions, including regarding the potential fiscal impact of implementing the changes, if approved; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in the event the above referendum questions are approved by the electorate at the Spring 2021 election, the ad hoc TFOGS Implementation Workgroup should begin preparing for Common Council discussion, action and implementation other specific recommendations contained in the TFOGS Final Report related to the structure of the Common Council that do not require a city-wide referendum, including establishing term limits for alderpersons, increasing the term of the Common Council President from 1-year to 2-years, and any budgetary action that would be necessary to facilitate the transition to full-time Common Council as described above; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, in the event the above referendum questions are approved by the electorate at the Spring 2021 election, the ad hoc TFOGS Implementation Workgroup should develop a plan and timeline for transitioning to a full-time Council as described above, taking into account the advantage of having it coincide with redistricting associated with the 2020 Census.