

CHARTER UPDATE

Impartial Analysis

Measure J, if approved by the voters, would amend the Santa Rosa City Charter as follows:

Frequency of Charter Amendments: Section 12 of the City Charter currently requires a comprehensive review of the Charter every ten years by a committee appointed by the City Council. Measure J would clarify that the decennial review is not the exclusive time for Charter amendments and that additional Charter amendments may be proposed and placed on the ballot by voter initiative or by Council ordinance at such other times as deemed appropriate.

Responsibilities for Emergency Management: Several sections of the City Charter currently reference responsibility for emergency management, including Sections 15, 21 and 22, which set forth the responsibilities of the Mayor, the Police Chief and the Fire Chief. Section 18 of the Charter, which sets forth the general responsibilities of the City Manager, does not currently include any express reference to emergency management.

Measure J would amend each of those Sections to: (a) confirm that responsibility for emergency management lies with the City Manager, Police Chief and Fire Chief; and (b) remove ambiguities and outdated language regarding emergency response.

Option for Multi- Year Budget: Section 28 of the Charter sets forth procedures for the City's budget. Measure J would revise that section to clarify that the City Manager may propose either a single year or a multi-year budget. All procedural provisions of Section 28 would remain unchanged, including provisions for publication of the draft budget and for public hearings.

Jurisdiction of Board of Public Utilities: Measure J would revise Section 25 of the Charter to clarify that, in addition to water-related utilities (water, wastewater and stormwater), the responsibilities of the Board of Public Utilities may, at the City Council's discretion, be expanded to include "dry" utilities, including electricity, broadband and others.

Clarification of Minor Ambiguities: Measure J would also clarify Section 19 (clarifying that the City Attorney must have at least three years of practice in California, but that those three years need not immediately precede appointment); Section 32 (clarifying that a Council vacancy created by recall shall be filled in the same manner as any other vacancy); and Section 37 (clarifying that the City Manager and City Attorney may select their own deputies without need for Council consent).

Gender Neutrality: Measure J would revise the Charter to ensure that all its language is gender-neutral.

Citizenship Neutrality: Measure J would revise the Charter to ensure that all its language is neutral as to citizenship. Specifically, Measure J would revise Sections 10 and 11 of the Charter to replace the word "citizen" with the word "resident," thereby allowing non-citizen residents

equal access to participation in City boards, commissions, and committees. The word “citizen” does not otherwise appear in the Charter.

A “yes” vote on Measure J would amend the City Charter as described above.

A “no” vote on Measure J would leave the City Charter as currently written.

Measure J was recommended by the Charter Review Committee and placed on the ballot by unanimous vote of the Santa Rosa City Council.