

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVERETT CHARTER COMMISSION PRELIMINARY REPORT:

City Council: The new one branch Council would be composed of 11 members, with 6 ward members elected city-wide who must live in and be domiciled in the ward they represent and 5 members elected at-large citywide. Members would serve 2-year terms. The Council would retain authority to confirm or reject department heads selected by the Mayor. The Council would also retain the powers of municipal legislative bodies in Massachusetts. All regular meetings of the city council shall provide a period of public comment.

Mayor: The Mayor would continue to carry out the functions of the office of mayor, as it currently exists. The City would retain its “strong mayor” form of government. The Mayor would serve a 4-year term.

School Committee: The School Committee would remain a 9-member body, with 6 ward members elected citywide who must live in and be domiciled in the ward and 3 members elected at-large citywide. Except in the case of an emergency, the School Committee shall not meet on the same day as a regular city council meeting. The Mayor shall have a right to attend at any time to participate in school committee discussions, to make motions and to exercise every other right of a regular member but not including the right to vote.

Organization of City Operations: The Mayor would be authorized to submit reorganization plans of City departments, boards and commissions to the City Council. The Council could approve or reject the Mayor’s proposals but would not have the authority to amend them. There would be merit principles, which the Mayor would be required to hire individuals that are especially fitted by training and experience for City positions.

City Finances: The Mayor would be required to call a joint meeting of the City Council and the School Committee to review the fiscal condition of the City before the start of each year's budget process. The budget process would become more open and transparent, and would require a public hearing. The Mayor would be required to prepare five-year financial projections and capital improvement programs. The City Council, not the Mayor, would be charged with the retention of the annual independent audit firm.

Elections: Preliminary elections will be retained. Individuals running for ward councilor or ward school committee member must be domiciled in the ward they represent and would stand for election citywide.

Prohibitions: Members of the City Council or School Committee would not be allowed to hold any other position with the City and would not be eligible to participate in the City's group health insurance program. Any elected official finally convicted of a state or federal felony would immediately be removed from office.

Voter Participation Provisions: There would be provisions for voters to directly participate in the decisions of City Government. There would be a provision to allow voters to petition the City Council to put an item on its agenda; to initiate a referendum to allow voters to reverse measures adopted by the City Council or School Committee; to initiate petitions to compel the City Council or School Committee to adopt measures; and to recall elected officials. There would be safeguards against frivolous petitions.

Charter and Ordinance Review: The City would be required to review its charter and codify its ordinances every ten years.

Time of Taking Effect: The proposed charter will be on the ballot on the November 2011 municipal election. If the voters approve the new charter with a YES vote, it would not take effect until the preliminary election of September 2013. There will be transitional provisions allowing for a smooth transition to the new government

