

Resolution Regarding Charter Revision Report, July 1, 2008

Be it resolved that the Board Directors hereby requests that the Charter Revision Commission reconvene for the purpose of reviewing and reconsidering its recommendations on charge number 14:

“Review the Town Charter for consideration of adding a provision requiring a referendum regarding the adoption of the Town’s annual budget”

In the course of reviewing and reconsidering its recommendations, the Manchester Board of Directors requests that the Charter Revision Commission take into account the following:

The Board of Directors strongly agrees with the creation of a budget referendum, but endorses the position advanced by the minority of Charter Revision Commission that advocated a budget referendum automatically triggered by a tax increase that exceeds the Consumer Price Index (CPI) of that year. This option gives voters the greatest amount of influence over their town’s budget, as the Board of Directors would be constrained from enacting tax increases more than a certain amount without voter approval. The Board of Directors would also support an alternative “trigger,” like CPI+ 1% if consensus could be gained on this matter.

The Board of Directors also recognizes that the strong opposition expressed by the majority of Charter Revision Commission to a budget referendum that contains an automatic “trigger” may not lead to consensus on the matter. Therefore, in the absence of consensus on an automatic “trigger” referendum, the Board of Directors would consider supporting a “referendum by petition” recommendation provided that certain amendments are made to the current proposal.

A “Single Transferable Vote” revision would substantially improve the Charter Revision Commission’s majority recommendation. The current recommendation allows for the possibility of a vote only on whether or not to increase the budget. The Board of Directors believes that a true referendum on the budget would offer both choices on the same ballot. The question would read “Do you support the proposed budget, YES or NO and then IF NO, should it be HIGHER or LOWER?” A question of this nature would more accurately reflect voter sentiment on the budget.

The Board of Directors further recommends that the number of signatures required on a petition for a budget referendum be consistent with the requirements of Section 3-10 of the Charter (Petition for Enactment) and that the minimum turnout requirement be eliminated unless such a requirement is made uniform for any referendum.