

TAXPAYER WATCHDOGS MUST LOBBY THE CITY COUNCIL TO CHANGE THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS OF THE OMAHA CITY CHARTER: by NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM.

Article II Section 2-06. Filling Council Vacancies.

When a vacancy on the Council occurs for any reason, the Council shall by a majority vote appoint a person having the qualifications for the office of Council member in accordance with state law.

REVISION: AFTER 3 TIE VOTES, THE MAYOR CAN BREAK THE TIE VOTE BY VOTING ON FILLING A VACANCY ON THE CITY COUNCIL.

Article II Section 2.16. Mayor's Power to Veto Legislation.

Within ninety-six hours after the adjournment of any Council meeting, the City Clerk shall present to the Mayor the record of proceedings of the meeting and all ordinances and resolutions adopted at the meeting. The Mayor, within seven days of receipt of an ordinance or resolution, shall return it to the City Clerk with or without the Mayor's approval, or with the Mayor's veto. If an ordinance or resolution is vetoed, the Mayor shall attach a written statement explaining the reasons for the veto. Ordinances or resolutions vetoed by the Mayor shall be considered at the next regular meeting of the Council, and the Council may pass the ordinance over the veto by the affirmative vote of five of its members. The effective date of an ordinance passed over the Mayor's veto shall not be less than fifteen days after the date of final passage. *The Mayor's veto power shall extend to disapproving or reducing individual appropriation items in the budget or any ordinance or resolution, except appropriations for auditing or investigating any part of the executive branch. The Mayor shall not have the power to veto any emergency ordinance.*

REVISION: THE MAYOR SHOULD HAVE SPECIFIC AUTHORITY TO VETO ANY PROPOSED TAX OR SPENDING HIKES PROPOSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL.

Article V Section 5.06. Consideration and Adoption of Budget by Council.

At the meeting of the Council at which the Mayor submits the budget, the Council shall determine the time and place at which it will hold a public hearing on the budget. The date for public hearing shall be scheduled for not later than ten days prior to the tax levy certification date, and the time and place of the hearing shall be published in each of the daily newspapers of general circulation in the city not less than five days before the hearing. After the hearing the Council may revise the expenditure side of the budget by increasing, decreasing, inserting, or deleting appropriation items, *except that it shall not reduce appropriations for debt service.* The Council may revise revenue estimates if such revision is concurred in by five of its members. Not later than the day prior to the tax levy certification date, the Council shall by majority vote adopt a budget by resolution and thereby authorize appropriations for the ensuing budget year. The budget as adopted shall be reproduced, and copies shall be made available to interested citizens and other governmental jurisdictions.

REVISION: THE CITY COUNCIL SHOULD HAVE AUTHORITY TO REDUCE APPROPRIATIONS AND OPPOSE A TAX HIKE FOR DEBT SERVICE, IF A MAJORITY BELIEVES THAT BUDGET CUTS CAN LEAVE THE DEBT SERVICE WITH SUFFICIENT FUNDS.

Article V Section 5.07. Tax Levy.

The Council, on the basis of the budget as finally adopted, shall certify by adopting an appropriate resolution a single City of Omaha tax levy for the ensuing fiscal year, *which single tax levy shall be sufficient so that total year end fund balances are greater than or equal to zero.* The single City of Omaha tax levy certified in any year shall not exceed \$.6125 per \$100 of actual taxable value plus whatever tax levy is necessary to provide for principal and interest payments on the indebtedness of the city, and for the administrative expenses incurred in issuing and maintaining bonds, and for the satisfaction of judgments and litigation expenses in connection therewith.

REVISION: THE CITY COUNCIL SHOULD HAVE AUTHORITY TO SET A TAX LEVY SUFFICIENT, SO THAT TOTAL YEAR END FUND BALANCES ARE GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO ZERO AS ANTICIPATED AND SET BY THE COUNCIL ITSELF.

Article II Section 2.18. Initiative.

Ordinances or amendments to existing ordinances may be submitted to the Council by a petition signed by registered electors of the city *equal to at least 15 per cent of the vote for the office of Mayor cast at the last preceding general city election*. Initiative petitions shall be uniform in character, shall contain the proposed ordinance in full, shall set forth the address of each person signing, shall be in the form prescribed by the City Clerk, and shall be filed with the City Clerk.

REVISION: ORDINANCES OR AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING ORDINANCES MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL BY A PETITION SIGNED BY REGISTERED ELECTORS OF THE CITY *EQUAL TO AT LEAST 10% OF THE VOTE FOR THE OFFICE OF MAYOR CAST AT THE LAST PRECEDING GENERAL CITY ELECTION*.

An Addition. Gradually transition all city employee pension systems from a defined benefit to a defined contribution system to save both the city and taxpayers money.

We were unable to locate a reference in the city charter regarding our final concern. After the annual budget has undergone an initial public hearing and deliberation by the city council, individual council members at a regular meeting often introduce resolutions to alter the budget, e.g., transferring funds from one department to another. *However, the public currently cannot comment on these addendum resolutions.* We would like the city charter altered or council procedure changed, so that the public can comment during meetings at which council members introduce these supplemental resolutions that affect the budget.

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