



City of Grover Beach

PRESS RELEASE
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Grover Beach City Council Places Charter on November Ballot

GROVER BEACH, CA — At the meeting held last week, the Grover Beach City Council decided to place a Charter measure on the ballot in November. If successful, the measure would convert the City from a “general law” form of government to a “charter” form of government. A majority of the City Council voted to place the measure on the ballot, with Mayor Pro Tem Nicolls and Council Members Bright and Peterson voting to support moving the measure forward, and Mayor Shoals and Council Member Molnar opposed to moving the item forward at this time.

Currently, Grover Beach is a “general law” city and derives its ability to legislate rules and regulations from the State Constitution. In essence, State law serves as the City’s constitution. As a “charter city”, the draft charter adopted by the Council, once approved by the electorate, becomes the City’s constitution.

According to the staff report presented on July 16th, the approval of a charter gives a city greater control over “municipal affairs”, while “statewide concerns” would continue to be subject to state law.

In March 2012, City staff presented the City Council with a conceptual discussion regarding charter cities. Following the initial discussion, the Council directed staff to proceed with the development of a Charter for Grover Beach. A more in-depth discussion was then held by the City Council on April 16th. Based on public testimony and Council discussion, the draft Charter was developed over several months. Three public hearings were held on the development of the Charter, on May 14th, June 18th, and July 18th. A majority of the Council then voted to move forward on the matter.

If approved by the electorate in November 2012, the Charter will provide for the following:

- Protective language focused on limiting the State’s ability to reduce local revenue sources;
- Language to limit the State’s ability to require the City to carry out unfunded State mandates;
- A minimum residency requirement of six months for all City Council candidates;
- Enable the City to establish its own contract, purchasing, and bidding procedures, as opposed to following state rules and requirements;
- Allow the City to exempt itself from prevailing wage requirements for locally-funded public works projects (but would not be applicable to state- or federally-funded public works projects, nor projects with statewide concern or effect);
- Support economic development efforts;
- Support the development of local volunteer efforts; and
- Eliminate the limit of three General Plan amendments per year.

The Charter, if approved by the voters, will not impact other areas of municipal government. For example, it will:

- *Not* change current term limits of elected officials;
- *Not* change Council Member compensation (currently set at a stipend of \$300 per month);
- *Not* change the election process or procedure; and
- *Not* change the City’s current taxing authority as defined in state law.

As noted in the staff report, enacting a local Charter will give the City greater control over municipal affairs. The Charter will serve as a firewall between the City and the State to prevent the further erosion of local control at the hands of the State. Adoption of the Charter will enable the City to operate more efficiently and will assist in the preservation of local tax revenues for local uses.

Staff noted to the City Council in its deliberations that, while the Charter could be expected to accomplish a great deal, it would not be a panacea. Staff went on to point out that the City's ability to weather future State challenges would determine the ultimate success of the Charter. Staff also emphasized that the City's ability to implement a prevailing wage limitation would *only* extend to *locally-funded* projects, which currently account for approximately 20% of the total amount budgeted in the City's Capital Improvement Program. Most City projects either in process or on the drawing boards have some sort of federal or state monies involved and will, therefore, require the payment of prevailing wages.

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