

Prepared by Heather Chura

October 3, 2014

## **Direct Accountability Subcommittee**

### **Cincinnati Charter Task Force**

#### **Working Document**

#### Presentation Research

- Benchmark cities data (Jason Kerschner and Matt Jones)
  - (Data outstanding)
- History of Cincinnati government (Heather Chura, Jill Schiller, Erika King-Betts)
  - See Cincinnati Charter
    - Will need to break down for presentation at forums
- Community Engagement Plan (Vanessa White, Andrew Bare)
  - Format of forums is key
    - Small groups with mediators
    - Citizens must be engaged and informed and have time to present their own thoughts/research
    - Community open to come with suggestions
    - Target groups and marketing plan should be coordinated with other subcommittees (Heather to discuss with TF Chairs)
      - Suggestions on groups for outreach?
    - See attached proposal by Andrew Bare

#### Forums Format

- Goal is to promote openness, transparency
- Begin with questions to citizens launched online or through email
  - What concerns you with the current Charter in terms of accountability toward citizens?
  - What are your frustrations as citizens?
  - Suggestions?
- To whom will we direct communication for outreach?
  - Will be driven by demographic data provided
- Where will forums take place?
  - Find target locations
    - West side suggestions?
    - East side suggestions?
- When will the forums take place?
  - Dependent on locations
  - Limited to the weeks of November 10th and 17th
  - Should be coordinated with other committees

Additional research to be conducted.

As a committee, we are responsible for researching the issues identified by the Task Force pertaining to direct accountability for citizens. Please see the list below and volunteer for one of the teams. Research should include the following:

- Studies performed or resources pertaining to each specific issue
- Explanation of how each research topic was originally included or changed in the Charter
- Has the research topic evolved over time? If so, how?
- What are the legal/public ramifications associated with the topic of research?
- Brief one page summary of topic and research

## Research Teams

### Elected Offices/Additional positions

- City Solicitor
  - Should the City Solicitor be independently elected? And/or have more independence from the City Manager? (Article IV, Section 5)
  - Is there a conflict of interest between obligations of Solicitor to serve the citizens and act as counsel for City Council and staff? Should it be different positions? (Article IV, Section 5)
- Should the appointment of a department of finance be replaced with an independently elected City Auditor? (Article IV, Section 6)
- Would an ombudsman position help clarify roles of council in interaction with City administration? (Not in Charter)

Team Members:

### Procedural Issues

- Should standards for the use of emergency ordinances be more clearly and narrowly defined to limit their use? (Article II, Section 3)
- Should the role of motions be defined, and is there any reason to change it (e.g. give motions some legal impact)? (Article II, Sections 3,4, &5)
- As a practical matter, the Clerk is NOT appointed by Council as the Charter calls for. Language should reflect reality or process changed. (Article II, Sections 3,4,& 5a)
- System does not actually operate as written. Need clarification, possible change in process (Article V, Sections 3&4)
- Should the role of motions be referenced in Article IV, Sections, 3,4, & 6?

Team Members:

### Recall/Referendum Processes and Transparency

- Should Council be permitted to conduct executive sessions to discuss contracts, legal issues, etc? (Article II, Section 5)
- Should the Charter contain a provision for how to amend it? (Article XVI, et al)
- Should there be a process for recalling elected officials? If so, by referendum or otherwise? (Article II, Section 3)
- Process for amending should be added. It should be distinguished from the referendum process. (Article II, Section 3)

- Delineating referendum and amendment processes. (Not in Charter)
- Should the mayor (or council members) be subject to recall? If so, how would the recall process of the mayor and/or council work? (Articles II & III, Sections 3 & 1)

Team Members:

Next meeting will take place on Thursday, October 9, 2014 at noon.  
Location TBD.