

St. George Home Rule Charter Overview



Overview

The proposed Home Rule Charter establishes a council-manager form of government, modeled off of national best practices and tailored to the unique needs of St. George. The Home Rule Charter will transition St. George out of the Lawrason Act, the 1898 state law that established a default plan of government for newly incorporated Louisiana municipalities and used by much smaller municipalities. As a growing community of 86,000, St. George established a Charter Commission to develop a plan of government aligned with its vision and needs. The Home Rule Charter provides for a full-time mayor elected by all residents of the city, a seven-member city council with five district and two at-large representatives, and a professional city manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of the city. The Home Rule Charter aligns with the vision of St. George's founders – *better government and local control* – and empowers the residents of St. George to establish a government that serves their needs.

Key Elements

MAYOR

- Elected at-large by all voters of the city
- Presiding officer of the Council
- Primary liaison between the Council and City Manager
- Authority to veto ordinances and individual appropriations approved by the Council
- Official representative of the city
- Responsible for declaring states of emergency and responding to emergencies on behalf of the city

CITY MANAGER

- Professional appointed and overseen by the Council, with work experience and education requirements
- Oversees day-to-day operations of the city
- Manages all employees and contractors
- Executes and enforces the policies and laws set forth by the Council
- Prepares the annual budget and submits it to the Council

BUILT IN ACCOUNTABILITY

- A Charter Commission must be called to review the charter every 10 years beginning in 2030.
- All proposed Charter amendments must be approved by a vote of the people

CITY COUNCIL

- Seven total members including five district council members and two at-large council members
- Responsibilities of the Council:
 - Hiring, overseeing, and firing the city manager
 - Passing all ordinances and resolutions
 - Approving the annual budget
 - Proposing the levying and collection of taxes

REVENUE & FINANCES

- Explicitly requires a vote of the people to raise any taxes for the city, including the 7-mill tax the city may raise without a vote of the people per state law
- Prohibits non-emergency deficit spending

ELECTIONS & TERM LIMITS

- All officials will serve 4-year terms with a 3-term limit
- Council elections will be staggered so that nearly half of the Council is up for election every other year.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Members of the public are eligible to serve on boards and commissions, including the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Charter Commission
- All city meetings are open to the public and encourage public feedback

August 28, 2024
First Charter
Commission Meeting

November 12, 2024
Unanimous Approval
by the City Council

March 29, 2025
Spring Primary Election
& Approval by the
Voters

November 4, 2024
Unanimous Approval
by the Charter
Commission

December 19, 2024
Unanimous Approval
by the State Bond
Commission