

News Release

For Immediate Release

For More information contact:

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Linda Webb (865) 681-1983

Louisville Voters to Decide on Home Rule Charter

At the November 8 meeting of the Louisville Board of Mayor and Aldermen a measure passed on second and final reading giving Louisville voters the opportunity to decide if Louisville should have a home rule charter. The action passed by a vote of 3 to 2. The home rule charter referendum will be on the ballot during the next municipal election in 2012. The proposed home rule charter provides that no property tax, on either real or personal property, can be enacted in Louisville unless first approved by 51 percent margin of votes in a referendum. In addition, the proposed home rule charter establishes a procedure by which citizens could seek a recall of elected officials. As reflected in a paper prepared by the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service outlining the pros and cons of home rule charters, “[a] home rule charter may include a provision that a property tax may not be levied without being approved by a referendum.” Mayor Tom Bickers, Vice-Mayor Bob Gormley and Alderman Angie Holley voted in favor of the Ordinance to place the proposed home rule charter on the ballot. Aldermen Steve Dixon and Joe Gallagher voted against the measure.

In explaining the reason for the Ordinance, Mayor Bickers stated that according to current state law, in the absence of a home rule charter, a three person majority on any future Board of Mayor and Aldermen could impose a property tax. Mayor Bickers further stated that the Tennessee State Constitution provides that the citizens of a municipality may elect "home rule" and decide for themselves the manner in which they are governed. Mayor Bickers added, “I am pleased Bob Gormley and Angie Holley joined with me to give Louisville citizens the opportunity to decide for themselves if referendum approval of any property tax is to become a permanent component of Louisville's form of government. Many of us believe that the best way to limit the size and growth of government is to limit its ability to impose new taxes by requiring citizen approval of any significant new tax through referendum. I hope Louisville citizens will decide they want to give that right to themselves. If our research is correct, and if the measure is approved, Louisville will become the first municipality in Tennessee to utilize home rule to require referendum approval of a property tax.”

In a related action, the Board enacted Ordinances that require a referendum on any property tax and establish a procedure for recall of elected officials that will be in place until the home rule charter measure can be determined in the next election. Bickers, Gormley and Holley voted in the affirmative, with Dixon and Gallagher opposed.

Bickers' nomination of Jim Brown to serve another term on the Board of Zoning Appeals was unanimously approved by the Board.

Copies of the Home Rule Ordinance and the MTAS paper cited herein are attached.