

## INTRODUCTION

Pennsylvania has multiple forms of government structures: counties, townships, boroughs, and cities. The City of Lancaster is a Third Class City operating under Optional Plan A of the Optional Third Class City Charter Law, often referred to as a *strong Mayor-Council* structure. In this structure, the Mayor is in charge of all of the administrative and executive functions of the City, and City Council is responsible for all of the legislative actions of the City. Under this form of government, Lancaster may only perform the duties and functions that are explicitly authorized by state law. This form of government also places limitations on the City of Lancaster regarding its finances and financial flexibility.

Pennsylvania offers citizens the right to choose another form of government known as Home Rule. A Home Rule Charter give the City the authority to perform and act in any manner that is not prohibited by the U.S. Constitution, the Pennsylvania Constitution, or the Pennsylvania Legislature. In other words, Home Rule gives greater power of self-governance.

In the 2023 primary election, residents in the City of Lancaster elected to form a Home Rule Study Commission to review, analyze and evaluate Lancaster's governmental structure. Nine commissioners were elected to 1) study other governmental structures, 2) determine whether the current governmental structure works in the best interests of Lancaster's residents, and 3) recommend changes to the structure for subsequent vote by City residents.

The Home Rule Study Commission studied for nine months, concluded that it would be in the best interest of residents to change from the existing form of government under the Optional Third Class City Charter Law to a Home Rule City, and began drafting a new charter. At the outset of the Commission's drafting process, the Commission members elected to model the City's form of government off of the existing structure. The Commission began drafting modifications and improvements to establish a foundation of an accessible,

ethical and transparent government, providing for equitable representation, sound fiscal management, public health, safety & welfare, and local control.

It is important to note that by electing a Home Rule Charter, the City of Lancaster will no longer be bound by certain tax rates established by the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The designation as a Home Rule City *does not* authorize the City of Lancaster to issue new taxes not already authorized by the State. Under Home Rule, Lancaster's elected officials will gain increased flexibility to set tax rates in order to collect the necessary revenue to continue providing City services to all citizens, subject to year-to-year total tax revenue increase limits.

.The chart below summarizes the major improvements being proposed by the City of Lancaster Home Rule Study Commission in three primary areas:

1. Budgetary and/or finance processes;
2. Accessible, ethical and transparent government processes;
3. Organizational structure of the government itself.

Notable improvements include (but are not limited to):

- expanded referendum and voter initiative powers, expanding residents' ability to have ordinances adopted or repealed and meetings of City Council held on specific topics
- creation of an ethics commission
- a longer and more publicly engaged process for the adoption of annual budgets
- a requirement for five-year capital budgeting,
- requirements for quarterly annual public budget reviews by the Administration with City Council
- elimination of the position of Treasurer
- expansion of the powers and responsibilities of the Controller

**CHARTER OUTLINE**

<b>PREAMBLE</b>		
<b>CURRENT LAW</b>	<b>PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)</b>
N/A	We the People of the City of Lancaster PA aspire to establish the foundation of an accessible, ethical, and transparent government. This charter provides for equitable representation, sound fiscal management, public health safety and welfare as well as a measure of local control. We do ordain and ratify this Home Rule Charter for the City of Lancaster.	Added.

<b>ARTICLE I: GENERAL POWERS</b>		
<b>CURRENT LAW</b>	<b>PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)</b>
Name and municipal boundaries, general grant and exercise of powers, construction of charter. Rights reserved to the people.	Name and municipal boundaries, general grant and exercise of powers, construction of charter. Rights reserved to the people.	None.

**ARTICLE II: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH (CITY COUNCIL)**

City Council holds the legislative power of the City, meaning it passes ordinances and resolutions regarding the operations of the City.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>Eligibility, Qualifications, Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 18 years old.</li> <li>Reside in the City continuously for 1 year prior to election.</li> <li>4-year term.</li> <li>Elected at large.</li> <li>May not also be a department head or employed elsewhere by the City.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eligibility, Qualifications, Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 18 years old and be a qualified voter..</li> <li>Reside in the City continuously for 2 years prior to election.</li> <li>4-year term.</li> <li>Elected at large.</li> <li>May not also be a department head or employed elsewhere by the City.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eligibility, Qualifications, Term</b></p> <p>Adds requirement to be a qualified voter.</p>
<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council consisting of 5, 7, or 9 members (Lancaster has 7.)</li> <li>One officer elected by members of Council (President.)</li> <li>Quorum defined as a simple majority.</li> <li>Mayor, Council President, or simple majority of Council may call a special Council meeting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council consisting of 7 members.</li> <li>One officer elected by members of Council (President.)</li> <li>Quorum defined as a simple majority present at a public meeting..</li> <li>Mayor, Council President, or 3 members of Council may call a special Council meeting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <p>Lower number of Council members to call special meeting Requires simple majority to be physically present at a meeting to establish a quorum</p>
<p><b>Compensation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined by Council ordinance.</li> <li>May include benefits such as health insurance.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Compensation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current compensation maintained.</li> <li>Future compensation changes determined by Council ordinance.</li> <li>May not receive benefits such as health insurance. Does not allow payment for declining a benefit.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Compensation</b></p> <p>Maintains current compensation.</p> <p>No other benefits allowed. Reimbursement of official expenses such as parking and travel allowed.</p>
<p><b>Vacancies &amp; Removal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If position is vacated, Council has 30 days to appoint, by majority vote, an individual to complete the unexpired term.</li> <li>If no appointment is made within 30 days, an appointment will be made by the Court of Common Pleas.</li> <li>May be removed from office by the Governor for just cause.</li> <li>Mayor may vote to break a tie.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vacancies &amp; Removal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If position is vacated, Council has 45 days to appoint, by majority vote, an individual to complete the unexpired term.</li> <li>If no appointment is made within 45 days, an appointment will be made by the Court of Common Pleas upon petition of Council or 10 voters.</li> <li>Office forfeiture provisions include not meeting qualifications of office, violating charter, convicted of certain crimes, committing malfeasance or misfeasance while in office.</li> <li>Mayor may vote to break a tie to fill a vacancy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vacancies &amp; Removal</b></p> <p>Council given 45 days to appoint a replacement, an increase from 30 days.</p> <p>Forfeiture of office provisions detailed subject to procedures to be defined in the Administrative Code.</p>

**ARTICLE III: EXECUTIVE BRANCH (MAYOR & ADMINISTRATION)**

The Mayor is the chief executive of the City, meaning they are in charge of all of the administrative and executive functions of city government. They enforce laws/ordinances passed by Council, develop the annual operating and capital budgets, and hire/remove employees. (Some employees, such as department heads, will require the consent of Council to be hired.)

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>Eligibility, Qualifications, Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 18 years old.</li> <li>Reside in the city continuously for 1 year prior to election.</li> <li>Reside in the city for duration of term.</li> <li>4-year term.</li> <li>Elected at large.</li> <li>May not also be a department head or employed elsewhere by the city.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eligibility, Qualifications, Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 18 years old.</li> <li>Reside in the City continuously for 4 years immediately prior to election.</li> <li>Reside in the City for duration of term.</li> <li>4-year term.</li> <li>Elected at large.</li> <li>May not also be a department head or employed elsewhere by the city.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eligibility, Qualifications, Term</b></p> <p>Must live in the City continuously for 4 years immediately prior to election, an increase from 1 year.</p>
<p><b>Vacancies &amp; Removal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If position is vacated, Council has 30 days to appoint, by majority vote, an individual to complete the unexpired term.</li> <li>If no appointment is made within 30 days, an appointment will be made by the Court of Common Pleas.</li> <li>May be removed from office by the Governor for just cause.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vacancies &amp; Removal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If position is vacated, Council has 45 days to appoint, by majority vote, an individual to complete the term.</li> <li>If no appointment is made within 45 days, an appointment will be made by the County Court of Common Pleas upon petition of Council or 10 voters.</li> <li>May be removed if ruled incompetent or incapable to perform duties by the Court of Common Pleas, or upon conviction of misbehavior or of an infamous crime during term in office.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vacancies &amp; Removal</b></p> <p>Council given 45 days to appoint a replacement, an increase from 30 days.</p> <p>Removal options changed to ruling from the Court of Common Pleas or upon conviction of misbehavior or of an infamous crime during term in office.</p>
<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive power of the City.</li> <li>Enforces ordinances.</li> <li>Supervises all departments.</li> <li>Prepares annual operating/capital budget(s.)</li> <li>May designate any department head or City Clerk as Acting Mayor when absent.</li> <li>May issue State of Emergency.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive power of the city.</li> <li>Enforces ordinances.</li> <li>Supervises all departments.</li> <li>Prepares annual operating/capital budget(s.)</li> <li>May designate any department head or City Clerk as Acting Mayor when absent.</li> <li>May issue State of Emergency.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <p>A Deputy Mayor may serve in the absence of the Mayor or inability of the Mayor to serve for no longer than 120 days.</p>
<p><b>Relationship to Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is not a voting member of Council.</li> <li>Approves or vetoes Council ordinances.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Relationship to Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is not a voting member of Council.</li> <li>Approves or vetoes Council ordinances.</li> </ul>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Compensation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined by Council ordinance.</li> <li>May include benefits such as health insurance.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Compensation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined by Council ordinance.</li> <li>May include benefits such as health insurance.</li> </ul>	

**ARTICLE VI: CONTROLLER & TREASURER**

City governments often have independently elected financial officials, in the form of a Treasurer and/or Controller.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>Treasurer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collects taxes and all public moneys.</li> <li>Other duties as assigned by Council.</li> <li>Must be a Qualified Tax Collector</li> </ul>	<p><b>Treasurer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Position eliminated.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Treasurer</b></p> <p>Position eliminated, as these functions are currently assigned to the Department of Administrative Services.</p>
<p><b>Controller</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides fiscal control function, including encumbrances and pre-auditing.</li> <li>Retains office even if Council appoints an independent auditor.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Controller</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for fiscal review and examination of City accounts and conducts pre-audits.</li> <li>Provides comment on the proposed operating and capital budgets.</li> <li>Conducts performance audits of the City, any City department, office, board, or commission.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Controller</b></p> <p>Expanded fiscal review responsibilities including review of financial policies.                  Adds comment opportunity to proposed budgets.                  Assists in selecting independent auditor,                  Adds performance audits to city, city departments, offices, boards, or commissions.</p>
<p><b>Eligibility, Qualifications, Term (Controller)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 21 years old.</li> <li>Reside in the City continuously for 1 year prior to election.</li> <li>Reside in the City for duration of term.</li> <li>4-year term.</li> <li>Elected at large.</li> <li>May not also be a department head or employed elsewhere by the City.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eligibility, Qualifications, Term (Controller)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 21 years old.</li> <li>Reside in the City continuously for 1 year immediately prior to election.</li> <li>Reside in the City for duration of term.</li> <li>4-year term.</li> <li>Elected at large.</li> <li>May not also be a department head or employed elsewhere by the City.</li> <li>May recommend, with Council consent, the appointment of a Deputy Controller who is a licensed public accountant.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eligibility, Qualifications, Term (Controller)</b></p> <p>Must live in the City for the entire term they serve.</p> <p>May recommend to Council the appointment of Deputy Controller who is a licensed public accountant.</p>
<p><b>Vacancies &amp; Removal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If position is vacated, Council has 30 days to appoint, by majority vote, an individual to complete the unexpired term.</li> <li>If no appointment is made within 30 days, an appointment will be made by the Court of Common Pleas.</li> <li>May be removed from office by the Governor for just cause.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vacancies &amp; Removal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If position is vacated, Council has 45 days to appoint, by majority vote, an individual to complete the term.</li> <li>If no appointment is made within 45 days, an appointment will be made by the County Court of Common Pleas.</li> <li>May be removed if ruled incompetent or incapable to perform duties by the Court of Common Pleas, or upon conviction of misbehavior or of an infamous crime during term in office.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vacancies &amp; Removal</b></p> <p>Council given 45 days to appoint a replacement, an increase from 30 days.</p> <p>Removal options changed to ruling from the Court of Common Pleas or upon conviction of misbehavior or of an infamous crime during term in office.</p>
<p><b>Compensation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined by Council ordinance.</li> <li>May include benefits such as health insurance.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Compensation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined by Council ordinance.</li> <li>The salary shall be a fixed annual salary set by ordinance.</li> </ul>	<p>None.</p>

**ARTICLE V: SOLICITOR**

A Solicitor is another term for a lawyer. The Solicitor represents the city in legal matters, and provides legal advice to the Mayor, Council, and other city employees.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed by Council.</li> <li>Must be licensed to practice law in Pennsylvania.</li> <li>Council may appoint an Assistant Solicitor or special legal counsel.</li> <li>Solicitor may be an individual or a law firm.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed by Mayor, with confirmation from Council.</li> <li>Heads the Office of Law.</li> <li>Must be licensed to practice law in Pennsylvania.</li> <li>Council may appoint an Assistant Solicitor or special legal counsel.</li> <li>Solicitor may be an individual or a law firm.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <p>Solicitor appointed by Mayor with confirmation of Council.</p> <p>Solicitor heads the Office of Law.</p>

**ARTICLE VI: OTHER APPOINTED POSITIONS**

Cities need individuals to provide a number of specialized services. Some of these positions are appointed by either the Mayor or Council.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>Director of Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assists in the preparation of the operating and capital budgets.</li> <li>Administers a centralized purchasing system.</li> <li>Performs other duties as directed by Council.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Director of Administrative Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assists in the preparation of the operating and capital budgets.</li> <li>Administers a centralized purchasing system.</li> <li>Performs other duties as directed by Mayor.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Director of Administrative Services</b></p> <p>Updates position title.</p> <p>Changes direction for other duties from Council to the Mayor.</p>
<p><b>Engineer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed by Council.</li> <li>Must be a registered professional engineer.</li> <li>Supervises all engineering matters in the city.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Engineer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council provides for the manner of appointment, compensation and role of the city engineer.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Engineer</b></p> <p>The City Engineer position shall be provided for by Council. Engineering services can be provided either through in-house staff, outside consulting firms, or a combination of both.</p>
<p><b>City Clerk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed by Council.</li> <li>Duties prescribed by Council.</li> <li>Serves as Clerk of Council, keeping meeting minutes and records of its proceedings.</li> <li>Maintains and compiles ordinances and resolutions.</li> <li>Must be qualified by training or experience.</li> </ul>	<p><b>City Clerk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed by Council.</li> <li>Duties prescribed by Council.</li> <li>Serves as Clerk of Council, keeping meeting minutes and records of its proceedings.</li> <li>Maintains and compiles ordinances and resolutions.</li> <li>Must be qualified by training or experience.</li> </ul>	None.
<p><b>Auditor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City is required to appoint an independent auditor.</li> <li>Appointed by Council.</li> <li>Must be certified public accountant.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Auditor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City is required to appoint an independent auditor.</li> <li>Appointed by Council.</li> <li>Must be certified public accountant.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Police Chief</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed and overseen by Mayor.</li> <li>Civil Service applicable.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Police Chief</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed and overseen by Mayor.</li> <li>Civil Service applicable.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Fire Chief</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed and overseen by Mayor.</li> <li>Civil Service applicable.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fire Chief</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed and overseen by Mayor.</li> <li>Civil Service applicable.</li> </ul>	

**ARTICLE VII: ORDINANCES**

Ordinances are laws passed by City Council that govern how the city operates.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must follow the Third Class City Code and the Optional Third Class City Charter Law.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides for specific actions to be by ordinance.</li> <li>Provides for public notice and time between introduction and adoption.</li> <li>Provides for process for emergency actions</li> <li>Provides for mayoral veto and council override.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <p>Increases requirements for public notice prior to adoption.</p> <p>Article XI adds citizen ability to petition to propose, reconsider, or appeal an ordinance by referendum.</p>

**ARTICLE VIII: BUDGET AND FINANCE**

A Budget must be passed annually. It is presented by the Mayor to Council and the public for review. Council passes budgets through provisions in this Article.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>Annual Operating Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepared by Mayor with staff assistance.</li> <li>Presented to Council at last meeting in November.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Annual Operating Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepared by Mayor with staff assistance.</li> <li>Presented to Council at last meeting in October.</li> <li>Mayor required to present budget message that must include: explanation of all revenues and expenditures; major changes from the current year and the prior year; outline of proposed programs; explanation of new/expanded/abolished programs and functions; summary of the City's debt position; other material that will inform Council and the public of the city's goals.</li> <li>Revenues must equal proposed expenditures.</li> <li>Must include comparisons for revenue and expenditures for current fiscal year, actual revenue and expenditures for the last four fiscal years, and projections for the next two fiscal years. Total of seven years of financial data for public review.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Annual Operating Budget</b></p> <p>Makes the budget introduction one month earlier (October vs. November).</p> <p>Prescribes what information must be included in the Mayor's budget message.</p> <p>Must introduce a balanced budget.</p>
<p><b>Annual Capital Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<p><b>Annual Capital Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepared by the Mayor with staff assistance.</li> <li>Presented to Council by June 30, approved by Council by September 30.</li> <li>Requires public hearings on capital budget.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Annual Capital Budget</b></p> <p>Requires an annual capital plan that outlines significant spending on capital items, plans for multiple years and provides citizens an opportunity to comment and question large purchases before they occur.</p>
<p><b>Public Inspection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public hearings from department heads in November.</li> <li>Must be legally advertised at least once.</li> <li>Must be publicly available at least 20 days before adoption.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Public Inspection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public hearings from department heads in November.</li> <li>Must be legally published at least once.</li> <li>Must be publicly available when introduced to Council at last meeting in October.</li> <li>Must allow written public questions with specified time to provide answers to public's questions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Public Inspection</b></p> <p>Lengthened time budget draft is publicly available.</p> <p>Added mechanism for public questions and response from officials.</p>

BUDGET AND FINANCE CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

**ARTICLE VIII: BUDGET AND FINANCE (CONTINUED)**

A Budget must be passed annually. It is presented by the Mayor to Council and the public for review. Council passes budgets through the ordinance procedure.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>Adoption</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be adopted by December 31</li> <li>Council may reduce any item in the Mayor’s proposed budget with simple majority vote.</li> <li>Council may increase any item in the Mayor’s proposed budget with a super majority vote.</li> <li>Mayor can veto budget adopted by Council.</li> <li>Council can override Mayor veto with two-thirds majority vote.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Adoption</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be adopted by December 15th. If budget is not adopted by this date, the Mayor’s proposed budget becomes the official budget.</li> <li>Mayor can veto budget adopted by Council.</li> <li>Council can override Mayor veto with a majority plus one vote.</li> <li>If Council amends the budget over certain thresholds, an additional public inspection period is required.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Adoption</b> Makes deadline to adopt the budget earlier.</p> <p>If Council does not adopt budget by December 15th, the Mayor’s proposed budget becomes the official budget.</p>
<p><b>Amended Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopted budget may be amended in January following a municipal election.</li> <li>May also amend tax ordinances.</li> <li>Must be adopted by February 15.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Amended Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopted budget may be amended in January following a municipal election.</li> <li>May also amend tax ordinances.</li> <li>Must be adopted by February 15.</li> <li>Must follow public notice requirements of regular budget.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Amended Budget</b> Added public notice requirement.</p>
<p><b>Taxpayer Protections on Tax Rate Increases</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property tax rate limited to 30 mills, plus 5 more mills with court approval (current mill rate is 12.64)</li> <li>All other taxes are at fixed rates set by state law.</li> <li>Exemptions available.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Taxpayer Protections on Tax Rate Increases</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adds a limitation that projected total tax revenue may not increase by more than 6% over the preceding year.</li> <li>Allows for Council to override this limit with a supermajority vote.</li> <li>Keeps the current exemption and prohibits reduction of any exemption from current amounts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Taxpayer protections on tax rate increases</b> Adds a total Tax Revenue Increase Limit, but allows for Council to override this limit when necessary.</p> <p>Prohibits Council from decreasing or eliminating any tax exemptions in place at the time the charter is adopted.</p>
<p><b>Fiscal Year</b> January 1–December 31.</p>	<p><b>Fiscal Year</b> January 1–December 31.</p>	None.
<p><b>Investment of Funds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council may adopt investment strategy consistent with those permitted by law.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Investment of Funds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council may adopt investment strategy consistent with those permitted by law.</li> </ul>	

**ARTICLE IX: AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS (ABC)**

Appointed individuals responsible for various advisory, legal and regulatory matters of the City.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council may create any city office, public board, bureau, or commission deemed necessary.</li> <li>Council may make appointments and regular terms, duties, and compensation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council may create any authority, board, or commission deemed necessary by ordinance.</li> <li>Mayor makes appointments with council consent.</li> <li>Consideration for appointment may include geography, demographics, and other categories to increase citizen participation and representation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b> Clarifies what authorities, boards, and commissions Council can create by ordinance.</p> <p>Clarifies appointment process.</p>



**ARTICLE X: ADMINISTRATIVE CODE**

An Administrative Code is the set of laws that govern how a community operates.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must follow the Third Class City Code and the Optional Third Class City Charter Law.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council must adopt an Administrative Code no later than 18 months after Charter's effective date.</li> <li>Administrative Code must detail processes and procedures for the operation of city government, including rules and requirements for personnel, budgeting, purchasing, and other areas necessary for efficient and effective government.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <p>Requires the adoption of a local Administrative Code.</p>

**ARTICLE XI: PETITION AND REFERENDUM**

Provides mechanism for citizens to petition for changes to city ordinances.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires signatures of at least 20% of total voters from most recent Mayoral election.</li> <li>Citizens must sign petitions in person at City Hall (circulation by multiple voters not allowed) within 15 days.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires signatures of at least 20% of total voters from most recent Mayoral election.</li> <li>Citizens must sign petitions within 45 days and copies of petitions can be circulated.</li> <li>Citizens may request an ordinance be considered by Council and, if not adopted, have it voted on by citizen referendum.</li> <li>Citizens may request an ordinance be repealed or amended by Council and, if necessary, have the repeal/amendment done by citizen referendum.</li> <li>Citizens may request an agenda item be added to a regularly scheduled meeting of Council or request a special meeting of Council (requires petition from 3% of total voters from most recent Mayoral election.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <p>Simplifies requirements, lowers thresholds, allows for longer petition circulation time and copies of petitions can be circulated.</p>

**ARTICLE XII: ETHICS COMMISSION**

Though statewide law dictates ethics standards, some cities have additional requirements.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governed by statewide law.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of new local ethics board, tasked with educating elected officials, staff, and the public on state ethics act requirements.</li> <li>Candidates for appointment to the Ethics Commission will come from a public register of nominees.</li> <li>Investigate complaints of wrongdoing against rules.</li> <li>Enforcing ethics rules.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Provisions</b></p> <p>Creates new ethics board to educate elected officials, staff, and the public.</p> <p>Investigate complaints regarding violations of the ethics code and enforce ethics rules.</p>

**ARTICLE XIII: TRANSITION**

Dictates how local government changes from Third Class Code to the locally approved charter.

CURRENT LAW	PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE(S)
N/A	<p><b>Transition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides for procedure for an orderly change to Home Rule charter provisions.</li> <li>• Provides timeline for adoption of Administrative Code and Ethics Code.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transition</b></p> <p>Dictates how government transitions to Home Rule charter.</p> <p>Establishes a transition committee consisting of Mayor (or designee), a member of Council, and a Home Rule Commissioner</p>

**HOME RULE CHARTER EDUCATION SESSIONS**

The Home Rule Study Commission will offer a series of education sessions about the proposed Home Rule Charter throughout the fall. You can see the schedule at [www.cityoflanasterpa.gov/home-rule/](http://www.cityoflanasterpa.gov/home-rule/)