

## Home Rule Commission Educational Session – Oct 3, 2024

### Questions/Feedback made by participants:

#### Questions:

- 1) 3.9 (i) If emergency powers are granted, what is in place to determine how long they are to last and when they are to end?

**Answer:** This is a question that will be addressed by City Council through the adoption of an Administrative Code as required by the Charter.

- 2) 7.07 (a) Emergency ordinance: Also, If a declared emergency is determined to be ended prior to the time period following the date on which it was adopted, does the Council have the power to end it earlier?

**Answer:** This is also a question that will be addressed by City Council through the adoption of an Administrative Code.

- 3) If we move to Home Rule and it is deemed not working, may we change back? If so, what steps would need to be complete to make the change?

**Answer:** If after five years it is determined that Home Rule is not desired, the procedures set forth in the Pennsylvania Home Rule charter and Optional Plans Law would need to be followed to have the matter placed before the voters for the establishment and election of a government study commission and for that commission to determine the next steps.

- 4) What costs are projected for the increase in the city administration to Council, the cost of referenda, other costs or possible implications for an increase in staffing, etc.?

**Answer:** No additional staff are needed to manage referenda or petition requests from voters. The elected Treasurer position was eliminated. The elected Controller could choose to request hiring a Deputy Director; however, the request would have to be approved by Council at a public meeting.

- 5) If transfer, local service tax, and real estate tax are likely not to be raised, why are they included in taxes that could be raised? If they were to be raised, what might that look like?

**Answer:** By state law municipalities (local government – city council and the mayor) are provided four primary taxes to raise revenue--property, earned income, local service, and real estate transfer. Under current law three of the four tax rates are capped and have been for decades. They have not kept up with inflation. The fourth, property tax rate, can be changed by council and mayor in the budget process. Changing to a Home Rule form of government provides (among other things) flexibility to change all four tax rates rather than only property taxes at the local level. The Sorace Administration has suggested that it would not suggest raising the rates of real estate transfer or local service tax. For more info about taxes (link to the Tax Education PDF).

- 6) What is the best single reason for voting for the Home Rule Charter?

**Answer:** There is no “best reason” for voting. The Commission’s Final Report details its reasons for placing the draft charter before the voters for election. We invite the public to review the proposed charter for themselves at [cityoflanasterpa.gov/home-rule](http://cityoflanasterpa.gov/home-rule).

- 7) What is the strongest objection to voting for the Home Rule Charter?

**Answer:** We cannot answer as to what a particular person’s strongest objection to voting for the Home Rule Charter would be. We invite the public to review the proposed charter for themselves at [cityoflanasterpa.gov/home-rule](http://cityoflanasterpa.gov/home-rule).

#### Comments:

- 1) Thank you for your work!