

## For discussion on Thursday, September 12, 2024

### Topic: Responding to the petition requesting a public referendum

**Purpose:** To begin discussion of an alternative plan to adding a public referendum for public debt to the charter.

**Goal:** To respect the community's concern regarding public debt and the sense that came from the August workshop that Council was not inclined to add language requiring a public referendum to the charter.

#### Details:

1. Develop an ordinance, not amend the charter.
  - a. An ordinance will enable future Town Councils to revise with more ease, if needed.
2. Set a threshold at 3% of real estate assessed value from previous year, irrespective of whether project requiring debt was included in the budget the previous year or not.
  - a. The state requires a referendum if more than 10%, so this is lower.
3. Hold a public hearing, to allow residents (defined as registered voters, property owners, and business owners) to share their reactions with Town Council.
  - a. Prior to the public hearing, Town Council should provide detailed information on the reason for the debt, the size of the debt, the vehicle for the debt, and the repayment requirements.
4. Within 10 business days of the public hearing, hold a public meeting (or Town Hall), to allow dialog between Town Council and residents.
  - a. The goal is to have a discussion in which residents comments from the public hearing are addressed and allow additional dialog.
5. At the conclusion of the public meeting, all residents at the meeting indicate their support for or against the debt, in a non-binding manner.
  - a. This could be a simple raising of the hands, but the goal is to get a sense of the residents' perspective following meetings focused on the debt – including the reason and vehicle for the debt.
6. Any additional public hearings needed for financial decisions or requirements for the Town Council vote, would be applicable for incurring the actual debt from this point forward.