

## Background

The City of Columbus strives to be the greenest city in America. The city has made huge advances in reducing our carbon footprint and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through implementing a citywide recycling program, engaging citizens in Greenspot, converting vehicles to cleaner burning compressed natural gas and retrofitting our buildings to be more energy efficient.

Through Executive Order 2007-02, we have led by example and mandated efforts to reduce paper usage and increase use of recycled products. In this vein, as we were reviewing the Charter to prepare for this process, one section stood out.

## Issue Overview

Currently, Section 26 of the Charter requires 200 copies of each of the Mayor's estimates (annual budget) be printed by Council and that copies be sent to the newspapers and to the public library and its branches. In practice, the Mayor's Office through the Department of Finance and Management prints those copies and currently the city does not furnish copies to the public libraries or newspapers.

In recent years, the Department of Finance and Management started making a push to offer the budget in an electronic format and limit the number of paper copies as they have experienced having boxes of leftover copies at the end of the year. The Administration does have approximately 30 copies available to the public the day of the budget announcement in November and anyone is welcome to take them.

## Comparison to Other Cities

Cleveland's Charter states "at least one thousand (1,000) copies thereof shall be printed for distribution to citizens who may call for them." (Charter, Section 38)

Akron's Charter is not specific to any specific copies being printed but does say that it "shall be printed and available for distribution not later than two weeks after its submission to the Council." (Charter, Section 86)

Toledo's Charter states that "at least five hundred (500) copies thereof shall be printed for distribution to citizens who may call for them and the substance thereof shall be printed in the City Journal. The Mayor shall also publish the estimates in an electronic version for widespread distribution utilizing the World Wide Web or a similarly publicly accessible electronic manner." (Charter, Section 45)

## Conclusion

Based on the goal to be the greenest city in America and in light of the current practices, we recommend that the Commission consider placing before the voters an amendment that allows the city to update this section to reflect current needs, technology and practices.

## Current Charter Provision

**Sec. 26. Mayor's estimate.**

The fiscal year of the city shall begin on the first day of January. On or before the fifteenth day of November in each year the mayor shall prepare and submit to council an estimate of the expense of conducting the affairs of the city for the following fiscal year. This estimate shall be compiled from detailed information obtained from the various departments, on uniform blanks prepared by the city auditor, and shall be set forth:

- (a) An itemized estimate of the expense of conducting each department during the next fiscal year.
- (b) Comparisons of such estimates with the corresponding items of expenditure for the last two complete fiscal years, and with the expenditures of the current fiscal year plus an estimate of expenditures necessary to complete the current fiscal year.
- (c) Reasons for proposed increases or decreases in such items of expenditure compared with the current fiscal year.
- (d) A separate schedule for each department showing the things necessary for the department to do during the ensuing year and which of any desirable things it ought to do if possible.
- (e) Items of pay roll increases, either as additional pay to present employees, or pay for more employees.
- (f) A statement from the city auditor of the total probable income of the city from taxes for the period covered by the mayor's estimate.
- (g) An itemization of all anticipated revenue from sources other than the tax levy, including probable balances at the end of current fiscal year.
- (h) The amounts required for interest on the city's debt, and for sinking funds as required by law.
- (i) The total amount of outstanding city debt with a schedule of maturities of bond issues.
- (j) Such other information as may be required by the council.

***Upon the filing of such estimate the council shall cause at least two hundred copies thereof to be printed for distribution. Copies of the estimate shall also be furnished to the newspapers of the city and to the public library and each of its branches.***