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The City Administrator Charter Ordinance proposal should be delayed for two months, and modified slightly.

A delay is needed because there have not been public input sessions/town halls on this topic. These are necessary because this is a very major and contentious issue. I believe that having these will clarify what the administrator will do, explain how it will make the city run more efficiently, and show how it can end up saving more than it costs. Delaying until February is unnecessary, so I suggest two months. This will make everyone a lot happier with the decision.

Second, I would like to see the consideration of a modification to the ordinance. Section III states:

"This charter ordinance specifically removes those duties from the Office of Mayor to oversee the day-to-day operations, management and administration of the City of La Crosse that are found under § 62.09 (8) (a), Wis. Stat. Any charter provision or any previously enacted ordinance or charter ordinance inconsistent or in conflict with this ordinance is expressly repealed."

Wis. Stats. § 62.09(8)(a) states:

"The mayor shall be the chief executive officer. The mayor shall take care that city ordinances and state laws are observed and enforced and that all city officers and employees discharge their duties."

(§ 62.09(8)(b) through (e) state the Mayor's other official duties)

I don't believe it's necessary to transfer the statutory powers granted by § 62.09(8)(a), and I think the right thing to do would be to either eliminate this section or change it to say something like "When not overruled by the Mayor, the Administrator will oversee the day-to-day operations, management, and administration of the City of La Crosse as stated under § 62.09 (8) (a), Wis. Stat."

One of the concerns that many residents have about the Administrator proposal is that it puts another unelected bureaucrat in between the people and their government. The Administrator will be a de facto lifetime appointment with very little chance of removal except for outrageous misconduct; merely being disappointing will probably not be enough cause for removal.

With this change, I believe that the normal dynamic on a day-to-day basis would be indistinguishable from if the statutory power was transferred - the Administrator would still carry out the administrative role as envisioned - but it would ease the minds of many city residents, myself included, to know that the elected Mayor would retain the option to overrule the Administrator if he or she felt it was absolutely necessary. It would not surprise me if this never happens in any of our lifetimes, but just keeping the option would be healthy for democracy.

Also, unless I'm not seeing it, there doesn't seem to be a provision for city administration when the

Administrator is unexpectedly absent. Having the administrative powers be in the hands of two people would allow them to cover for each other when necessary.

Finally, I suspect that the transfer of statutory powers is what makes this a Charter Ordinance, although I'm not certain about that; this would be a question for the City Attorney. If that's the case, then keeping the mayoral powers intact could potentially reduce the number of votes needed to approve the Administrator and preclude the possibility of a costly and time-wasting referendum on it. A few town halls and a tweak to Section III would dramatically ease this proposal along.

Kevin Hundt, La Crosse