

The Multnomah County [Charter Review Committee](#) will present [recommendations](#) [PDF] to the county commission tomorrow on a series of measures they suggest putting on the November ballot.

Such committees sometimes handle mundane technical fixes, but tomorrow's recommendations — which follow a series of 13 public meetings held since September 2009 — include a proposals for number of high-profile issues, as well as a call to maintain the status quo on another.

First, the status quo. There has been pressure from some members of the public and former County Chair Ted Wheeler to make the sheriff an appointed position and to require that the sheriff have corrections experience (because the primary role of the sheriff's office is to run the county jails). The committee rejected both ideas.

"Testimony was overwhelmingly in favor of keeping the office of Sheriff an elected position in Multnomah County," the committee wrote. "[And] although a corrections certification is desirable for Multnomah County Sheriff, it is in the best interests of the County that no additional qualifications be required of its elected Sheriff at this time."

But the commission did recommend at least three significant changes be referred to the November ballot:

1. Currently, elected county officials can't serve more than two four-year terms in a 12-year period. The committee recommends abolishing that limit, saying it "deprives the public of desirable experience and expertise in county government by forcing elected officials from office without a vote."
2. Currently, elected county officials must resign if they want to seek another office prior to the last year of their terms. The commission recommends scrapping that stricture. "No other Oregon county or city government treats filing for another office as a resignation," the committee wrote.

One potential impact of voters repealing this requirement is that newly elected County Chairman Jeff Cogen — who is near the top of the list of potential future mayoral candidates — could run against incumbent Portland Mayor Sam Adams in 2012 without giving up his current job.

3. Currently, the Multnomah County Library depends on five-year serial levies to fund itself. The committee recommends forming a permanent taxing district to provide more stable and certain funding to the library.

The current levy expires in 2012, and while this year is not the ideal time to ask voters to approve a new tax, they have fairly reliably renewed levies in the past. Library supporters are already gearing up for the ballot, having put \$190,000 into a political action committee last week.

The county Board of Commissioners will consider the charter review committee's recommendations Thursday morning at 9:30 am in the county boardroom at 501 Southeast Hawthorne. **WU**

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