

Agenda Item 9-1 – Announcements/Upcoming Agendas

Mayor Javandel announcing agenda item for Council meeting of September 19, 2011: Council consideration of referral of election review process to the Charter Review Committee

From: Albany Charter Review Committee

To: Albany City Council and Board of Education

Date: 29 August 2011

Re: Election method review process

Albany elects the members of the City Council and Board of Education as well as the City Treasurer by the at-large plurality method. According to former City Clerk Jacqueline Bucholz, Albany has not reviewed this choice of election method since at least her appointment in 1975. Considering the number of municipalities in Alameda County that have changed election methods recently, as well as other municipalities in the Bay Area, California, and the country, the CRC believes Albany would be well served by a review of its election method.

In the past twelve years, three cities in Alameda County (Oakland, Berkeley, and San Leandro) have requested a change in their method of electing municipal officers. The Alameda County Registrar first implemented these requested changes in November 2010. San Franciscans also voted for a change in electoral method in this same time period, and first used the new method in November 2004. In each of these jurisdictions, the change was from two round runoff to ranked choice voting, also known as instant runoff voting.

Other municipalities, as well as school districts, in California and the rest of the country have also changed election methods in the past decade. Some have switched to ranked choice voting, while others have switched to cumulative voting or from at-large to district elections.

The first step in the planned review process is to develop criteria for judging potential election methods for Albany. The next step is describing potential election methods. The final step is to assess the potential methods relative to the criteria.

In starting the review, the CRC requests the City Council and Board of Education comment on the proposed process and provide other information or guidance for the CRC's consideration during this review. The CRC also hopes the Council and Board of Education can raise awareness of this process so more members of the public provide input. The CRC plans to take up the first step in this process at its upcoming meeting, which is on Monday, September 26th.

Thank you.