

CHARTER SUMMARY

Draft legislation would establish a municipal charter and allow the residents of South Walton to decide whether to form the municipality of South Walton. The draft legislation contains the following key charter provisions.

- **Corporate Name** – Town of South Walton, Florida
- **Form of Government** – Council-Manager form of government; the Council shall appoint a municipal Manager to be the chief administrative officer of the municipality.
- **Council** – The Council will consist of seven members elected as described below. Each candidate for the Council shall have been a resident of the municipality for a minimum period of one year prior to qualifying for office and if running for one of the six district seats must be a resident of that district for a minimum period of one year prior to qualifying. If a member moves out of the district they represent (but remains in the town) within less than one year of the end of their term they will serve out the remainder of their term. If they move out of the district they represent (but remain in the town) with one year or more remaining in their term, the member must resign from the council and the replacement process will take place. The seven seats and their basis for election are:
 - Seat 1: Not associated with a district; elected at-large; this is also the Mayor
 - Seat 2: Resides in District 1; elected from within the district
 - Seat 3: Resides in District 1; elected at-large
 - Seat 4: Resides in District 2; elected from within the district
 - Seat 5: Resides in District 2; elected at-large
 - Seat 6: Resides in District 3; elected from within the district
 - Seat 7: Resides in District 3; elected at-large
- **Council Districts** – There will be three Council districts. The districts shall be as roughly equal in permanent population as practical according to the population figures available from the most recent Walton County population estimate determined by the decennial United States census. Initially, the three districts will be defined based upon the four voter precincts that together make up almost exactly the same geographic area as the area being incorporated. The district boundaries will be rebalanced and adjusted as necessary when the 2020 census is available. The three initial districts will be:
 - District 1 = Voter precinct #510 (Miramar Beach)
 - District 2 = Voter precinct #520 (Santa Rosa Beach)
 - District 3 = Voter precincts #530 (Point Washington) and #540 (Rosemary Beach) combined less Bunker Island

- **Mayor/Vice-Mayor** – The Mayor is elected at large across the municipality as the Seat 1 Council Member. The Mayor shall have the powers and duties the same as the other Council Members. The Mayor shall serve as the chairperson during the meetings of the Council and shall serve as head of the municipal government for the purpose of execution of legal documents. The Mayor shall also serve as the ceremonial head of the municipality. The Council shall elect a Vice-Mayor from its membership who shall serve a term of two years.
- **Terms of Council Members** – Four year terms, staggered

Term limit of two consecutive terms after which a member may not run for any council seat for four years. If a member reaches the term limit and their seat is uncontested at the next election creating a vacant seat, that member is eligible to serve an additional term if the council appoints that member to fill the vacant seat.
- **Salary of Council Members/Mayor** – The salary of each Council Member, except for the Mayor, shall be \$12,000 per year. The salary of the Mayor shall be \$15,000 per year. An ordinance increasing or decreasing the salary of the Council may be adopted; however, if the Council takes action to increase the salary, the salary of Council Members shall not be adjusted until the first day following two years after the next regular municipal election.
- **Municipal Administration** – The Council shall appoint a municipal Manager and municipal Attorney. A municipal Clerk shall be appointed by the municipal Manager with the consent of Council.
- **Budget** – The municipal Manager shall submit to the Council a budget in accordance with state law. The Council shall adopt, after a minimum of two public hearings regarding the budget, the budget by resolution on or before the 30th day of September or as otherwise provided by municipal ordinance.
- **Powers** - The municipality will have all available governmental, corporate and proprietary powers of a municipality provided by the Florida Constitution and state law
- **Council Authority to Levy Ad Valorem Taxes** – The Council shall have the authority to levy municipal ad valorem taxes as prescribed by general law. However, any such ordinance levying or increasing the levy of municipal ad valorem taxes shall require a supermajority vote of the Council. A supermajority vote shall consist of five Council Members voting in favor of the measure.

The municipal ad valorem millage may not exceed 2.5 mills.

- **Capital Program** – In conjunction with the submission of the budget, the municipal Manager shall submit to the Council a five-year capital program.
- **Nonpartisan Elections** – All elections shall be conducted on a nonpartisan basis without any designation of political party affiliation.
- **Elections** – The regular election of Council Members beginning 2020 will be on the first Tuesday in April of each even numbered year. A member must receive a majority of the votes cast to win a seat. If there are more than two candidates for a seat and no candidate receives a majority of the votes, a run-off election between the two candidates receiving the most votes will be held.
- **Referendum Election** – August 29, 2017
- **Initial Election of Council** – November 7, 2017
- **First Council Meeting** – December 4, 2017
- **Regular Council Meetings** - The Council, which is subject to the state's open meetings and public records laws, will hold regular public meetings
- **Transitional Ordinances/Resolutions/Comprehensive Plan/Land Development Code** – The Ordinances/Resolutions/Comprehensive Plan/Land Development Code currently provided by Walton County shall be adopted by the municipality and will remain in place until otherwise modified or replaced by the Charter or the Council.
- **Recall of Council Members** – The voters of the municipality will have the ability in accordance with state law to recall Council Members who have lost the confidence of the voters in regards to the member's ability or appropriateness to continue in the position of Council Member.
- **Audit** - A third party auditor will annually conduct an independent audit of all municipal accounts and issue an audit report.
- **Code of Ethics** – The Council shall adopt and enforce a Code of Ethics.
- **Charter Changes** - The Charter may be amended in the future as permitted by general law.