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TO: Framingham Charter Commission
FROM: Tanya Stepasiuk, Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management
DATE: July 5, 2016
RE: Data Regarding Signatory Requirements for Council Nominations

Below is a small sample of municipal signatory requirements to put councilors on the ballot. These range from a low of 50 signatures for smaller cities' (Winthrop, Pittsfield) ward or district councilors to a high of 300 for at-large councilors in Lynn.

Most municipalities with separate at-large and ward/district councilors have different signature requirements for each type of office with those running for at-large councilor seats required to collect more signatures, sometimes with these signatures not concentrated in one place (the requirements for no more than X amount of signatures coming from one ward or the requirement that X amount of signatures must come from each district).

The commission will likely want to consider whether it wants to set a high or low bar for running for office. A lower bar of fewer signatures will potentially encourage more participation and increase the candidate pool as well as making the process of running for office easier for those that want to stand for election. Additionally lower signature requirements might increase the need for preliminary elections. If the bar is set higher with more signatures, it will encourage only those with demonstrated support from voters to be able to run.

As one of the objectives of Framingham's charter commission is diversity, we recommend considering a provision that any at-large requirements are gathered from more than one ward/district (as in the case of Lynn, Newton, Watertown, or Weymouth. This prevents a candidate from collecting all of the signatures from his or her home-base and earning support from other areas of the community.

Municipality	Council Signatory Requirement		2010 Census Actual Population	Council Size	At-Large Reps	Ward/District Reps	Notes
	At-Large	District					
BRIDGEWATER	150	100	26,563	9	2	7	
GLOUCESTER	150	75	28,789	9	4	5	
LAWRENCE	100	50	76,377	9	3	6	
LYNN	300	100	90,329	11	4	7	For AL councilors, no more than 100 can come from any one ward
NEWTON	150	50	85,146	24*	8	16	Newton currently has a charter commission studying these issues
PITTSFIELD	150	50	44,737	11	4	7	
WATERTOWN	100	100	31,915	9	5	4	For AL councilors, not more than 50 can come from any one district
WEYMOUTH	150	100	53,743	11	5	6	25 must be from each district for AL councilors
WINTHROP	100	50	17,497	9	3	6	