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NEWS RELEASE

March 11 hearing to shape voter questions on Sheriff, jails, budget

Multnomah County Charter review citizen panel seeks public input for November ballot

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A [panel](#) of citizens appointed to study Multnomah County's guiding document — the county [Charter](#) — will consider key questions on March 11 about the role of the Sheriff and how the county operates its jails and budgeting process for these functions. The meeting will take place March 11, 2010 at 5:15 p.m., in the Multnomah Building Board Room at [501 SE Hawthorne Blvd.](#) in Portland.

As part of the recurring [Charter review process](#) that began in fall of 2009, panel members give broad consideration to a range of topics to determine whether any Charter amendments will be placed before voters in the November 2010 General Election in order to improve the county's organizing document.

This hearing will feature a host of invited speakers and focus on the work of a subcommittee that has studied several key questions, including whether the Sheriff should have sole authority over the county's jails; if the position of Sheriff should be appointed rather than elected; clarification of the Sheriff's budgetary authority; items related to qualifications (corrections experience, term of residency requirement) and repeal of term limit for the office of Sheriff.

Invited speakers include Chair Ted Wheeler, Sheriff Dan Staton, other Oregon sheriffs and representatives of labor groups within jails, patrol functions and other county operations. Public comment will also be taken and citizens wishing to speak on these topics are encouraged to attend.

“The Charter Review Committee is studying a series of important issues about the position of Sheriff, and authority over county jails.” said County Attorney Agnes Sowle. “This hearing will play a direct role in deciding whether Charter amendments regarding those issues should be placed before voters next November.”

The Multnomah County Charter may be amended or repealed only by a majority vote of voters voting on the Charter. An amendment may be placed on the ballot in one of three ways: by referral by the Board of Commissioners, by initiative petition or by referral by the Charter Review Committee.

The Charter provides that a Charter Review Committee comprised of electors of the county be convened to study the Charter every six years and if it chooses, to submit Charter amendments to the voters of Multnomah county at the November 2010 election.

Minutes from previous meetings and a [schedule](#) are available online. A list of frequently asked questions about the charter review process is located [here](#).

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