



# City of CHARLOTTE

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Armitage and City Council Members

FROM: Gregg Guetschow, City Manager

SUBJECT: City Manager Report

DATE: August 21, 2020

**Elections Administration.** You will recall the discussion that took place during the August 17 special meeting on the subject of the City Clerk's role in administering the November general election. Following that meeting, I asked GovTemps to begin work immediately on finding an interim clerk so as to minimize the disruption in processing applications for ballots, distribution of ballots and the myriad other tasks required to run an election. Even though they acted on this immediately, including advertising the position on Tuesday afternoon, it must be acknowledged that there are likely to be challenges to accomplishing election tasks as efficiently as we would desire. These challenges have been exacerbated by news reports regarding the U.S. Postal Service and prominent individuals' pleas to voters to act early to secure their voters are counted. The consequence has been an unprecedented level of early election-related activity in the Clerk's office.

Later in the week, Mayor Armitage met with Ginger Terpstra and requested that she consider delaying her retirement until after the November election. She and I met as well to discuss this possibility and other alternatives. I feel that she has earned her retirement and discouraged her from delaying it, for reasons that I will not detail, but also advised her it was her decision to make and would certainly be in the City's best interest if she were to be available for the election.

Ms. Terpstra presented me this morning with a proposal that would have her vacate the clerk-treasurer position on August 31 but continue her City employment as Director of Elections through mid-November. She has proposed financial and other terms for this arrangement that she has characterized as largely non-negotiable.

I believe it is in the City's interests to accept the proposal so as to ensure the integrity of an election that is likely to have the highest level of scrutiny of any in our history. I have discussed the proposal with Mayor Armitage and intend to proceed with negotiating the exact terms under which she would continue her employment in this new role.

It is important to note that her only duties as Director of Elections will be those related to preparing for and administering the election. As a consequence, and in accordance with provisions of the administrative plan, I would take on the role of acting clerk-treasurer on August 31 and would continue in that role until an interim clerk-treasurer is appointed.

Based on my discussion with Ryan Cotton of GovTemps, I believe that removing day-to-day responsibility for administering elections from the City Clerk position will expand the range of possibilities for filling the clerk-treasurer position.

Although the Director of Elections arrangement would go into effect August 31, at my insistence Ms. Terpstra will be on vacation from August 31 until September 7.