

Summary and Explanation of Two Questions on Ballot
for Election Day November 2019
to Amend Home Rule Charter of the Municipality of Bethel Park

On this coming Election Day, November 5, 2019, the residents of Bethel Park will be asked to vote on two questions to amend the Bethel Park Home Rule Charter. The two questions, and the reasons for the amendments, are summarized here for the benefit of voters.

1) Shall the Home Rule Charter of the Municipality of Bethel Park, Article 7, Section 701 be amended to remove the requirement that the Financial Officer become a resident of the Municipality of the Bethel Park within one year of appointment?

2) Shall the Home Rule Charter of the Municipality of Bethel Park, Article 8, Section 801, Subsection A be amended to remove the requirement that the Planner become a resident of the Municipality of the Bethel Park within one year of appointment?

The original Home Rule Charter effective in 1978 contained a residency requirement for four appointed Municipal positions: the Municipal Manager, the Chief of Police, the Financial Officer and the Planner. Persons appointed to these positions had to be residents or become residents of Bethel Park within one year of appointment. Experience has shown that as to the Financial Officer and Planner positions, the pool of available applicants for these positions is limited by the requirement to become a resident of Bethel Park. Our experience has shown that eligible applicants often have personal ties to their community, which can make it difficult for the person to commit to move. The residency requirement becomes a deterrent to Bethel Park getting the best candidates. Surrounding municipalities do not have similar residency requirements for these positions, and Council felt that the Bethel Park community will be better served by removing the residency requirement for the Financial Officer and Planner positions.

No change in the residency requirement for the Municipal Manager or the Chief of Police positions is proposed by the amendments, and persons holding those positions would still be required to be residents or become residents within one year of their appointments. These proposed changes would also not effect residency requirements for elected officials or the rules regarding members of the police force or municipal employees.