

Wilmington 72 – Summary

Governing board: The proposed charter would have established a nine-member Board of Commissioners, elected at large to two-year terms. The mayor was to be elected separately, also to a two-year term. All elections were partisan and on the county election cycle. The mayor was to preside at board meetings and had the same rights and responsibilities on voting as did board members.

Form of administration: The proposed charter would have retained the manager system in place in both the county and the city.

Law enforcement: The proposed charter would have made no change to law enforcement. It specifically left the sheriff with the full range of law enforcement powers given sheriffs by general law. But it also clearly anticipated that there would be a separate police department for the Wilmington urban service district, by providing that the chief of that department was to be appointed by the board of commissioners upon the recommendation of the consolidated government manager.

Referendum: The proposed charter authorized the board of commissioners to refer ordinances to the voters; the consequence was that such an ordinance would become effective only if approved by the voters. The Wilmington charter had an initiative procedure, under which citizens could propose ordinances by petition and force a referendum, but there was nothing comparable to this referendum procedure. The proposed charter did not include an initiative procedure.