ST. TAMMANY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

August 14, 2025

TO: Home Rule Charter Committee
Chairman Kevin Davis
Gina Hayes on behalf of President Mike Cooper
Councilman Joe Impastato
Councilman Arthur Laughlin
Councilman Larry Rolling
Councilman Cheryl Tanner
DA Collin Sims
Scott Delacroix
General Carl Ernst
Arlana LeBlanc
Jeff Schoen
21490 Koop Dr.
Mandeville, LA 70471

Dear Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee:

As the voice of business, we provide this valuable insight for the Home Rule Charter Committee as you prepare to finalize recommendations for the Parish Council. The Chamber has been closely following the committee's deliberations on various topics, including the size of the council and different management models.

While there may be differing opinions on specific recommendations, the Chamber emphasizes the importance of a nimble and efficient local government which can significantly catalyze local business growth by removing barriers, providing support, and creating a favorable environment for entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation. This, in turn, leads to a stronger local economy and a better quality of life for our residents.

We propose the following items for your consideration:

1) "Parish Manager" model for administration, which would streamline processes and reduce bureaucracy. Streamlining processes such as permitting and licensing can reduce the administrative burden on businesses, allowing them to focus on their core operations.

2) An article for an Office of Inspector General can foster a more accessible government. Transparent and responsive governance builds trust between government and the business community, encouraging investment and fostering a sense of partnership. Businesses are more likely to thrive and expand in an environment where their concerns are heard and addressed.

3) We support referendums as a powerful tool for citizens engagement – when used responsibly. To protect against misuse, we recommend basing petition thresholds on the average voter turnout over a set period , rather than a single election. This would prevent one low turnout year from setting an artificially low bar. Paired with a data driven percentage, this approach keeps the process fair, accessible, and safeguarded from frivolous measures.

4) In observing proceedings and feedback received regarding reducing the size of the council to either seven with two at large seats or seven district seats, we recognize this as the most controversial issue in charter changes. However, our board leadership agrees that the size of the Council needs to be evaluated to foster efficiency and cooperation between both branches of government, ultimately creating citizen's trust and confidence in Parish Government. We are hesitant to formally recommend any changes during this HRC review without having the information associated with the costs to implement.

Finally, while we have no formal recommendation, we are not aware that the committee has considered a reduction of term limits for the Council or Parish President. We discussed your consideration of staggering council members' terms, holding an election every two years for half of the 14 current council.

Our endorsement of the above items are made with caution. Specific information on potential new costs of any Charter amendment is not known at this time. We reserve the right to recall our recommendations pending release of details related to cost.

Thank you for your partnership working with the business community.

Sincerely,

Lacey Osborne, IOM
President and CEO

Carrie Calvin, CPA, CFE
2025 Chairman of the Board

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