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# VOTERS' PAMPHLET

## NOVEMBER 2, 2021, GENERAL ELECTION INFORMATION PROPOSITION ONE

### The short ballot title for Proposition One:

AN INITIATIVE REGARDING THE CITY OF LEWISTON'S FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

### The long ballot title for Proposition One:

AN INITIATIVE TO DECIDE WHETHER TO RETAIN THE CITY OF LEWISTON'S COUNCIL-MANAGER PLAN, UNDER WHICH PLAN THE CITY COUNCIL APPOINTS A CITY MANAGER TO BE THE ADMINISTRATIVE HEAD OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT, OR WHETHER TO CHANGE TO A MAYOR-COUNCIL FORM OF GOVERNMENT, UNDER WHICH FORM OF GOVERNMENT THE ELECTED MAYOR IS THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL OF THE CITY.

**PROPOSITION ONE:** Shall the City of Lewiston retain its organization under the "council-manager plan"?

- Yes
- No

A "yes" vote would maintain the City of Lewiston's current form of government in which the City Council appoints a city manager as the administrative head of the City government.

A "no" vote would change the City of Lewiston's form of government to a mayor-council form of government in which an elected mayor is the chief administrative official of the City.

## A LETTER FROM YOUR CITY CLERK

City of Lewiston Voters:

This City of Lewiston's Voters' Pamphlet is provided to inform Lewiston residents about Proposition One on the November 2, 2021 General Election ballot. In accordance with Idaho Code §§ 34-1801B(16) and 34-1812C, a voters' pamphlet shall be prepared by the city clerk and contain arguments and rebuttals for and against the proposition that will go before the voters.

The arguments and rebuttals outlined on the reverse side of this pamphlet were provided to the City Clerk's Office by groups representing both sides of the issue. The two groups that provided the arguments and one rebuttal were KEEP Lewiston, which is the group supporting a "YES" vote to maintain the current form of government, and Lewiston SMART, which is the group supporting a "NO" vote to change the form of government.

This is an important issue for the City of Lewiston. Please vote on November 2, 2021.

If you have questions concerning voter registration, absentee ballots, or accessible voting, please contact the Nez Perce County Elections Department at 208-799-3020. Additional information regarding elections can be found at [www.co.nezperce.id.us/Elected-Officials/Clerk-Auditor/Elections](http://www.co.nezperce.id.us/Elected-Officials/Clerk-Auditor/Elections). Information regarding both forms of government can be found at [www.cityoflewiston.org/FormsOfGovernment](http://www.cityoflewiston.org/FormsOfGovernment).

If you have any questions regarding this Voters' Pamphlet, please contact me at 208-746-3671 ext. 6203 or [kravencroft@cityoflewiston.org](mailto:kravencroft@cityoflewiston.org).

*Kari J. Ravencroft*

Kari J. Ravencroft  
City Clerk, City of Lewiston



## ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF RETAINING THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

The proposal is to change Lewiston's form of government from the current Council-Manager format to a Mayor-Council format, or what the opposition is calling a "Strong-Mayor" form of government.

Retaining the current Council-Manager form keeps Lewiston less susceptible to corruption, is economical and efficient for taxpayers, and provides the professionalism and accountability that Lewiston residents deserve.

The key question to be answered by this proposal is whether changing Lewiston's form of government to Mayor-Council from Council-Manager is best for our City:

1. The proposed change in government is being conveyed as a way to increase accountability in governance. This idea is simply untrue. Currently every decision, check written and e-mail sent is open for scrutiny by the City Council, and at a moment's notice, the City Manager could be removed. Under a Mayor-Council form of government, the Council would be left with little recourse to reign in a mayor's abuse of power aside from an expensive and cumbersome recall or waiting for an election that is only permitted at certain times of the year.
2. A Mayor, under the Mayor-Council form of government, would control the City Council agenda, hiring and firing of City personnel, and preparation of the budget. Currently the City Manager performs these same duties, but has been selected based on education, defined qualifications and extensive City management experience. He/she is appointed by, works under the direction of, and is held accountable by the City Council. Under the proposal, the only qualifications a mayoral candidate must possess include being a U.S. citizen, a resident for 30 days, 18 years of age and a registered voter. Lewiston deserves guaranteed experience when dealing with a multi-million-dollar budget.
3. The increased costs under the proposal are substantial. Not only would the Mayor be paid \$80,000 per year, plus approximately 40 percent in benefits, but would likely require a City Administrator who would receive an advanced salary and a second set of benefits. Amending the entire City Code, policies and plans would also be required and would be extremely expensive and time-consuming. The upheaval and learning curve of the proposed transition would cost the City greatly in the efficiency of its processes and would be repeated again after the next mayoral election and every four years thereafter. A City Manager, however, brings long-term stability.
4. A study performed by Kimberly L. Nelson and Whitney B. Afonso, Public Administration Review, states that local governments led by City Managers are 57 percent less likely to have corruption. When power is concentrated into one role it can be prone to abuse. The current form of government equally disperses power across seven elected councilors which makes it harder for any one councilor to engage in activities that endanger Lewiston residents.

Retaining a Council-Manager form of government saves valuable taxpayer money, provides efficiency in operations, increases accountability, ensures the city is managed by an experienced individual, and reduces the chance of corruption. Vote **YES** to retain the current form of government and **KEEP** Lewiston moving forward.

Submitted by:  
KEEP Lewiston  
John Pernsteiner, Chairman  
Ashley Schneider, Treasurer



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**A REBUTTAL TO THE ABOVE ARGUMENT WAS NOT SUBMITTED BY LEWISTON SMART**

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## ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION TO RETAINING THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

Vote "No" on Proposition One to replace Lewiston's UNELECTED city manager with an ELECTED "Strong Mayor". Proposition One is asking the voters if they want Lewiston to "retain its organization under the 'council-manager' plan", or in other words continue to have Lewiston managed by an UNELECTED city manager. Vote "No" on Proposition One if you want to ELECT a "Strong Mayor" to manage the City of Lewiston who is directly accountable to the voters.

Most Lewiston residents are surprised to learn that an ELECTED city councilor must get permission from an UNELECTED city manager to obtain information about the city if getting that information requires assistance from city staff. This power gives Lewiston's UNELECTED city manager enormous control over the information seen by the city council. Because of this, one member of the Lewiston City Council has resorted to filing "Public Record Requests" with the city in order to obtain the information he requires for oversight. By voting "No" on Proposition One, an ELECTED "Strong Mayor" will have unencumbered access to all of the city's information.

We believe an UNELECTED city manager not directly accountable to the voters has led to the City of Lewiston having some of the highest taxes and fees in the State of Idaho. Voting "No" on Proposition One will place an ELECTED "Strong Mayor" in charge of developing the city's budget who will have to answer directly to us about how our money is spent. By voting "No" on Proposition One, Lewiston will join the overwhelming majority of Idaho cities that have a "Strong Mayor" form of government.

Submitted by:  
Lewiston SMART  
Joseph Gish, Chairman  
Maureen Anderson, Treasurer



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## REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION TO RETAINING THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

Those looking to change the scope and organization of our local government listed their two reasons for this monumental change as 1) councilors must get city manager's "permission" to get information; and, 2) Lewiston has high taxes. Neither statement is accurate nor persuasive.

The Lewiston City Manager has never required councilors to seek permission when requesting information from City staff (refer to Ordinance 4720). Current councilors request information every week from staff sources. The information is freely and readily provided. This primary reason to undergo the massive change of government is both inaccurate and of extremely minor consequence.

The second argument also misses the mark. Lewiston's \$100+ million budget provides complete services other cities don't and is like a company with hundreds of employees and complicated costs. Lewiston needs the experience and knowledge of a city manager to optimize the budget and ensure that Lewiston both continues to grow and thrive. If a "strong mayor" without this executive experience were to make a mess of this budget or use it for personal/political purposes, the only "answer directly to us" would be a costly and lengthy recall process that would not stop the improper action for the duration of the process. Our current elected City Councilors can simply terminate a city manager immediately if those actions were to happen today.

Please vote YES on Proposition One to ensure the continued stability and successful operation of our City.

Submitted by:  
KEEP Lewiston  
John Pernsteiner, Chairman  
Ashley Schneider, Treasurer