

City of Costa Mesa

Charter Committee

Definitions

Governance: The way a city is controlled by the people who run it.¹ In a general law city, state law describes the procedures for a city council to establish its form of government. See Cal. Gov't Code § 36501. Government Code sections 34851 through 34859 contain the general law parameters for the City Manager form of city government.

In a charter city, the charter establishes the city's form of government. See Cal. Gov't Code §§34450-34462. Some examples include: "city council form of government" whereby city council has authority over the management of a city, "council/manager" form of government whereby authority is vested in both the political body and management, "strong mayor" form of government whereby the mayor has greater discretion over management of the city, and/or "city manager" form of government. A charter city's form of governance would be described in the charter.²

Firewall: Are there sufficient barriers between the city staff and its elected officials in the performance of duties that are within staff's authority to control?

Compensation: Income, retirement, and health insurance benefits received by elected officials and employees of the city.

Unfunded pension liability: The amount, at any given time, by which future anticipated payment obligations exceed the present value of funds available to pay them. For example, a pension plan's payment obligations, including all income, death and termination benefits likely to be owed, are compared to the plan's present investment experience, and if the total projected plan obligations exceed the projected plan assets at any point in time, the plan has an unfunded liability.³

¹ Merriam Webster Dictionary

² League of California Cities Municipal Law Handbook, § 1.3.01

³<http://www.investorwords.com>