

**Election—November 4, 2008
City of Longmont Ballot Issues**



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**Prepared by League of Women Voters
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**CITY OF LONGMONT 2A
POLICE AND FIRE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

SHALL THE CITY OF LONGMONT HOME RULE CHARTER BE AMENDED BY ADDING A NEW ARTICLE XV TO PROVIDE THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE AND BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY WITH THE CITY TO ALL FULL TIME SWORN POLICE OFFICERS AT OR BELOW THE RANK OF SERGEANT IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, FULL TIME COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICERS, POLICE SERVICE TECHNICIANS AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS (DISPATCHERS) MAINTAINING A POSITION EQUIVALENT TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT RANK AT OR BELOW POLICE SERGEANT, ALL FULL TIME SWORN FIREFIGHTERS AND FIRST LEVEL FIRE DEPARTMENT SUPERVISORS; TO GRANT THOSE EMPLOYEES THE RIGHT TO ENTER INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS ON WAGES, BENEFITS, AND WORKING CONDITIONS; TO PROHIBIT STRIKES, SLOWDOWNS OR ANY FORM OF WORK STOPPAGE BY THOSE EMPLOYEES; TO RESERVE MANAGEMENT RIGHTS EXCEPT AS SPECIFICALLY LIMITED BY THE EXPRESS TERMS OF A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT; TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM OF IMPASSE REVIEW BY A NON-BINDING INDEPENDENT FACT FINDER AND FINAL RESOLUTION OF UNRESOLVED ISSUES BY THE QUALIFIED ELEC-

TORS OF LONGMONT AT A SPECIAL ELECTION; TO REQUIRE THE CITY AND THE BARGAINING AGENT TO SHARE THE EXPENSES OF ANY SUCH INDEPENDENT FACT FINDING AND TO REQUIRE THE CITY OR THE BARGAINING AGENT OR BOTH TO PAY THE COST OF ANY SUCH SPECIAL ELECTION, ALL ACCORDING TO ORDINANCE O-2008-66?

A Yes vote will amend the City Charter to allow certain public safety employees to enter into collective bargaining agreements with the City regarding wages, benefits, and working conditions; while at the same time prohibiting any form of work stoppage.

A No vote would keep the City Charter as it is currently and not allow collective bargaining.

BACKGROUND:

Several Colorado cities currently have collective bargaining agreements with their Police and Fire Departments. A similar ballot issue was placed before the Longmont voters in 2004, when it was defeated with 45% voting for and 55% voting against. At that time, it was placed on the ballot through the petition process. Subsequent to its failure a city wide Employee Advisory Group was formed, with elected representatives from each employee group, including Police and Fire. This group meets with the City Manager on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of employee workplace issues. The current proposal was brought before City Council and sponsored by the Longmont Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and the Longmont Professional Firefighters Association (LPFFA). Police and firefighter membership in these organizations, at the rank of Sergeant and below, is approximately 87% for FOP and 95% for LPFFA. City Council initially agreed to place the amendment on the ballot, but required that certain aspects of it be re-written. After negotiations between FOP, LPFFA, and City Staff, the revised amendment was approved by City Council and placed on the ballot for the public to decide.

THOSE IN FAVOR SAY

- It will promote the retention of highly skilled police officers and firefighters, and attract quality fire and police candidates to our City.
- Any strikes, slowdowns, or work stoppages over issues of impasse, will be prohibited.
- Employees will not be required to join the designated firefighter or police employee organization that represents them.
- Traditional management rights will be protected and allow the citizens of Longmont, not a 3rd party arbitrator, to ultimately decide any issues of impasse.

THOSE OPPOSED SAY

- Longmont Police and Fire employees have great pay (Master Police Officers rank second highest within the state), great benefits, great working conditions, and have a meaningful voice in all matters that impact their working conditions.
- The community is being asked to vote for a significant change in our City's constitution (charter) for a special-interest group.
- Unionization would create an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy within public safety and critical decisions may have to wait months or years before being resolved.
- The voice of the individual public safety employee could become muted as a National Labor Organization becomes their voice.