

B. Arguments in Support of the Surrender of the Town Charter

1. Although charges such as sales taxes, garbage collection costs, etc., enter into tax burdens, the double tax on property arising from the \$3.75 county levy and the \$1.35 town levy imposes on the citizens of Vienna a property tax burden heavier than that borne anywhere else in the Washington Metropolitan area. Presumably, reversion to county status would obviate the town levy.
2. The supplemental police protection provided by the Town is efficient but incomplete. If the Town abandoned its charter, the full capabilities of the Fairfax County Police force of 170 men would be at the disposal of this community.
3. The administrative service performed by the Town of Vienna duplicates services available already in the County system.
4. The advantages of local government are over emphasized.
5. Separate planning for County and Town is disadvantageous to both. The Town represents too small a unit for effective representation in regional and area planning groups.
6. The maintenance of its own roads will impose on the citizens of Vienna an increasingly intolerable financial burden.
7. Water supply and sewage disposal will become an increasingly serious problem. These services must be supplied on an area rather than a local basis. Delay in including Vienna in such area plans may prove costly and hazardous to the health and safety of the population of Vienna.

Each citizen should ask himself these questions:

1. Am I satisfied that I am getting tangible or intangible benefits to recompense what I pay in taxes to the Town?
2. Can Vienna plan and zone adequately when it has no control beyond the Town limits?
3. How long can Vienna operate and maintain a water and sewer system independently with safety to its citizens and the community?

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Town of Vienna, Virginia



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Alvin W. Norcross
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VOLUME 2

NEWSLETTER

March 1961

COMMENTS FROM YOUR MAYOR AND COUNCIL:

In April 1959 your Town Council established a Commission on the Future Government of Vienna consisting of 11 citizens. This Commission's mission was to make recommendations to the Council as to the form of government best suitable for Vienna.

The Commission's Report was received in November 1960, and the Council is now making a detailed study of the information and recommendations contained therein. Your Council recognizes that the information contained in the Report, as well as additional factual data, such as changes in Fairfax County's assessed valuations and tax rate, must be evaluated. The citizens of Vienna will be kept fully informed of any action contemplated by the Council on this matter.

The kind of government Vienna should have in the future is considered so important to every citizen of the town that this entire Newsletter is devoted to a condensation of the Report received from the Commission. A condensation of the Commission's findings and conclusions, with which the Town Government after full study may or may not agree, is presented on the following pages.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF VIENNA

I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Vienna should not become a city at this time. The cost of becoming a city of either the first or second class appears to be economically prohibitive. Property owners now pay a property tax of \$5.10 per \$100 of assessed valuation, based on 32% of market value. This includes the \$3.75 Fairfax County rate and the \$1.35 Town tax rate. It is estimated that Vienna would require a tax rate of \$6.34 using the same basic evaluation - market value ratio - for it to perform all the functions required of a city and to utilize Fairfax County Schools. For Vienna as a city, to operate its own schools, it is estimated that a tax rate of \$7.00 per \$100 would be required. The Commission concludes that until a broader tax base is secured, e.g. commercial and industrial, city status is not economically justified.
2. The Commission split on its recommendation on a 5-4 base regarding Vienna remaining a town or reverting to the County. A majority of the Commission was in favor of Vienna remaining a town. The majority findings were based on the advantages of local control of local government. The minority findings were based on the additional financial burdens required for Vienna to remain a town.
3. In essence, the success of local government would depend on how efficiently it is operated, the degree which it supplements rather than duplicates county services, and how responsive it is to the people's needs.

II. CITY STATUS

Cost - If Vienna were to become a city, it would be required to operate its own schools. Largely because of school costs, the tax rate to support city status would have to be approximately \$7.00 per \$100 of assessed valuation, compared to the present combined county and town rate of \$5.10. The breakdown of estimated school costs is shown in the report. These result in an overall estimated net cost of \$927,500. As a city, Vienna would be required to provide services not now required as a town. A conservative estimate of these additional costs is \$100,000. Required annual expenditures then would total approximately \$1,400,000 as follows:

Present Town Budget (F.Y.1961)	\$372,500
School costs - 2500 pupils (estimated at 125% of Fairfax County per pupil cost)	927,500
Required additional services (Health, Welfare, Library & Police)	100,000
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	\$1,400,000

Revenue - The Vienna Town Budget for fiscal year 1960-61 shows total estimated receipts from all tax sources of \$238,500 based on assessed property value of \$17,666,500 - other receipts of \$134,000 - making total revenue receipts of \$372,500. However in 1962, A.B.C. fund payments should be increased by \$28,800, making other receipts total \$162,800. To support city status, the general tax revenue must pro-

vide \$1,237,200 (\$1,400,000 less \$162,800 other receipts). With Vienna's present tax base of \$17,666,500 assessed property valuation, this then results in a tax rate of \$7.00 per \$100 valuation. If Vienna as a city, were permitted to continue using Fairfax County Schools, this would reduce the Vienna annual school cost to \$810,000. But this still results in a tax rate of \$6.34 against the present rate of \$5.10. There is no assurance the County would permit this at all, or on any except a temporary basis.

III. RETENTION OR SURRENDER OF TOWN CHARTER

A. Arguments in Support of Retaining Town Charter

1. Property taxes are high, but only 26% goes to the Town; with 74% going to the County. Vienna already possesses the capital equipment to provide basic services, and, as rising population forces the County to acquire such equipment, County taxes will skyrocket. Town services then become an obvious bargain.
2. The essence of effective police protection is speed. A policeman who covers only the Town can usually respond faster than one who includes the Town as only part of his "beat". The Town department in effect is complete because it obtains from the County, without charge, detective, juvenile and jail services.
3. Street lighting, trash removal, water and sewer services are indispensable to health and safety. They are provided by the Town exclusively. They are not available at all, or only at higher cost, in much of the County.
4. The fact that each Councilman is responsible to all town citizens tends to induce in the Town Council an acute sense of responsibility to its electorate. The County Board cannot serve the interest of rural areas without seriously sacrificing the special needs of urban centers like Vienna. The opportunity to participate in local government is important. Many times, when controversial issues arise, the Town Council chamber is filled. County Board meetings held in daylight hours are not as accessible.
5. Vienna, as a town, is empowered to exclude from its limits whatever undesirable elements of area plans its citizens do not want. Local control of zoning is important.
6. Vienna's water and sewer system can become part of a countywide system when it becomes a reality. Meantime, Vienna has a modern self sustaining system. And, it is not subject to the higher costs inherent in bringing similar services to relatively sparsely populated areas.
7. Grants from the state will defray a major part of road maintenance which the Town will be required to assume July 1, 1961. And with responsibility and supervision at the local level, improved maintenance can be expected.

Vienna, as a town, has been successful. There is little real evidence that reversion to the County would result in substantial benefit to its residents. If Vienna surrenders its charter, the opportunity for city status will be lost forever. No compensating gain will be achieved. It appears, therefore, that Vienna can preserve maximum flexibility of future development by remaining a town.

Future Prospects of Vienna Becoming a City

	<u>Fiscal Year 1961</u>		<u>At Maximum Population</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Per Capita</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Per Capita</u>
Population	11,532 ¹		16,600	

<u>Expenditures</u>				
Schools - Total Cost		2,500	\$1,335,600	3,600 ²
Number of Pupils			536,180	\$371.00
Present Town Functions	\$372,500		100,000	32.30
Additional City Functions		\$32.30		
<u>Total Expenditures as a City</u>			\$1,971,780	

<u>Revenue</u>				
Total (excluding general tax base)	\$134,000		\$ 208,500	
Merchant Capital, Tools & Equipment	4,500	.39	6,475	.39
Bank Stock	6,300		6,300	
Business Licenses	42,000	3.64	60,425	3.64
Auto Tags	41,500	3.60	59,760	3.60
A.B.C. Profits	7,500		36,300	
Fines and Costs	15,000	1.30	21,580	1.30
Interest, Penalties and Costs	1,200	.10	1,660	.10
Building Permits	12,500		12,500	
Miscellaneous	3,500		3,500	
<u>Balance to be Raised from General Taxes</u>			\$1,763,280	

<u>General Tax Base</u>				
(Total Assessed Value)	\$17,666,500	\$1,532.00	\$25,431,200	\$1,532.00
Real Property	14,148,000	1,226.80	20,364,880	1,226.80
Personal Property	2,963,000	257.00	4,266,200	257.00
Utililities	555,500	48.20	800,120	48.20
General Tax Rate Necessary to Meet Expenditures - Rate per \$100			\$6.93	

¹ Official Census Figure for April 1, 1960

² Based on 1960 Ratio - Per Pupil Cost (Net)

