

# Board ponders change in term length

Two-year terms or four-year terms.

That's an issue the Lake Ozark Board of Aldermen is considering: Would residents be better served if aldermen – and the mayor – serve four years rather than the two that they serve now.

The topic was discussed several weeks ago at a board of aldermen meeting, and then again during a recent two-hour workshop. City Attorney Chris Rohrer will draw up an ordinance to that effect for board consideration. Aldermen will have the opportunity to adopt, amend or reject the ordinance.

If approved, the issue would be placed on a future ballot for voter consideration. Voters rejected a similar issue in 2008, but aldermen agreed the city is more focused on progress now.

The board generally has been non-committal about the issue. City officials note that if voters agree to the longer terms, it would not take effect until the following municipal election. If the issue is placed on the April 6, 2021, ballot, it wouldn't become effective until the April 2022 terms.

## 2 yr. vs. 4 yr. Terms for Aldermen?

Alderman Larry Giampa, who first suggested longer terms, said it's difficult in small communities like Lake Ozark to find candidates for office. Finding a qualified candidate and then keeping that individual on the board can be challenging. The experience gained in the first two years is invaluable, he said.

Aldermen agreed that if an alderman does his or her job, they more than likely would get re-elected. But that isn't guaranteed and losing two years of experience and knowledge could be detrimental to the continuity of city government.

Alderman Dennis Klautzer said at a previous meeting that it takes at least two years to under-

stand the intricacies of city government. Extending the terms to four years adds value to an alderman's service to his or her community.

Mayor Gerry Murawski suggested that if terms are extended there should be a term limit established.

Alderman Vernon Jaycox, who served a previous community for 22 years, said that if an alderman does his or her job they won't have a problem getting re-elected.

"I can see term limits at state and federal levels, but not so much at local level," Jaycox said. "if you get a good alderman it (term limits) could backfire. But I can see both sides of it. I don't know the answer."

Jaycox said he learned that only a handful of some 500 Fourth Class communities in Missouri such as Lake Ozark have four-year terms for aldermen.

City Administrator Dave Van Dee said the prior communities in which he worked had four-year terms for the governing board.