



Minutes of October 17, 2017

Members in attendance: Alice Hunt, Christian Spinosa, Cassandra Denmark, Bart Allen, Drew Crawford, Bob English, Charles McPherson, Clay Watkins, Robert Stanz, Mike Hickman, Patty Schmidt, Ramon Edwards Vicioso and Lisa Jensen.

Members Absent: Greg Masters

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comments:

None

Approval of Minutes Charter Review Commission (CRC) Meeting on September 19, 2017

- Motion to approve the minutes of September 19, 2017 – Lisa Jensen
- Second – Christian Spinosa
- **Minutes approved**

Financial Report

Alice Hunt, CRC Chairperson

Christian Spinosa questioned why the billing for legal counsel was from 8/8/17 - 9/28/17 when the contract was approved at the last meeting September 19th.

Drew Crawford explained all charges were post the approval of the contract; the August 8th was just a means of keeping time spent; but there were no billable hours during this period of time.

Christian Spinosa also questioned what the charge is for The Ledger.

Alice Hunt explained this is a one year subscription so Ms. Curry can pull articles and do research as requested by this board. She further stated the financial update will be presented at each meeting for informational purposes.

CRC Recommendations

Alice Hunt, CRC Chairperson

Alice Hunt asked for any suggestions for discussion, they can be brought up today and will be put on the agenda next month for discussion.

Clay Watkins would like to discuss the time in which the Charter Review Commission is required to meet. They meet every 8 or 10 years; he would like to move the time out further, it was pointed out if this commission needs to meet the County Commissioners can appoint a Charter Review Commission at any time. Currently there have not been any public attending requesting changes, everything is running pretty good. Should this commission meet every 8 years, it might be better at 12. The number 12 is just used as a point of reference.

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Patty Schmidt agreed since there has been no public comment to date, is this because they don't know how things are or are things just progressing. Is this worth the county time and effort?

Bart Allen stated the citizens always have the opinion to do a referendum for anything they would like to do during an election cycle. If there is anything they would like to see changed they have the option.

1. At the next meeting a topic of discussion: "Change when the Charter Review Commission is required to meet, the number of years between meetings."

Old Business

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

Alice Hunt explained the CRC Facebook page is not up, the website has not been updated, which means the pictures taken last month were not added and the reason given was Hurricane Irma. She explained she expressed her concern to Commissioner Lindsey and they both went to meet with the Communications Director, Mianne Nelson. She appointed a team and this communication team should be up and running rather quickly. There should be activity within the next few days. There hasn't been any public interest, it is important we are on Facebook and the website.

She gave an update about the Efficiency Commission which Commissioner Spinosa was asking if there would be an update at this meeting. She spoke to Commissioner Lindsey, and she gave a brief overview of the history of the Efficiency Commission and where it is at currently.

Commissioner Spinosa explained why he was asking; he felt they didn't know why the CRC was voting to eliminate the Efficiency Commission. He found minutes from the County and it was voted on 11 to 7 to eliminate the Efficiency Commission. He has spoken to several Efficiency Commission members, it was a waste of time, and they spent over \$200,000 on a firm from Boston. They interviewed the county employees; they county employees were upset they thought it was a waste of time the first go round and more of a waste of time the second time. Both times it ended with the county was running perfectly with fewer employees. Also; at that point in time the county employees hadn't had a pay raise in 5 years. He feels comfortable about someone from the public asking him why it is on the ballot he now has the answers.

New Business

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

Alice Hunt explained to Commissioner Schmidt why her discussion topics were tabled last month because she wasn't here for the discussion.

Commissioner Schmidt went into detail and explained her topics, she talked to Commissioner Melony Bell and her suggestion was about residency requirement for some of the key staff member. Commissioner Bell wasn't sure if it was a charter issue or a policy issue recommendation. Commissioner Bell did feel like it was more a policy issue of the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) as opposed to something considered by the charter.



Drew Crawford explained the governing statute 125.83 Florida Statute and read the wording to the commission to help bring a better understanding.

Open Discussion on this topic ensued.

- Residency requirements for Department Managers, including the Fire Chief, County Manager and the County Attorney. **(No action taken)**

Commissioner Schmidt went into detail on her second discussion topic which was term limits and the salary for the BoCC. Those are 2 of the biggest items in the charter to begin with. On both of those issues term limits and salary she can see both side of the issue. If a person doesn't work for themselves or isn't independently wealthy and they feel they have something to offer; they can't afford to give up their full time job for what might only be a 4 or 8 year term. For these positions you have to be elected to serve and you have to do a good job.

Commissioner Bob English told of his experience as a county commissioner, it is a full time job and getting paid \$40,000 is not enough for the position. The pool of candidates is smaller because you would have to be retired, rich or having some other source of income.

Drew Crawford recited the state law to the commissioners; which it comes from the Office of Economic Research and the legislator publishes this information every year. This is a table based on a calculation which is the population based on what The Florida Statute-chapter 145 states the salary would be for a county commissioner. In Polk County for fiscal year 2017-2018 if we were a non-charter county we would be required to pay our commissioners \$92,153. One of the powers of being a charter county allows you to set the salary levels of what you deem appropriate. The charter currently reads the salary level is set at \$33,500, but over time the BoCC may increase the rate as it sees fit.

Open Discussion on this topic ensued.

Alice Hunt stated to move it forward to next month for discussion there is a need for a motion, second and a super majority vote.

Lisa Jensen stated she doesn't believe in term limits; we have the right to vote people in and out. If the citizens are doing their job they have the ability to vote anyone in or out. She wanted to let everyone know she is not in favor, and went in to detail why. She would like both issues to be separated.

Mike Hickman stated the current commissioners are the best he has seen in 30 years. He would like to see them stay longer; the public did come out at one point wanting to limit terms; because of their dissatisfaction with the commission in the past. It may be a good point of discussion would be a 12 year term instead of an 8 year term. As far as the pay; there were times I felt some where doing it just for the pay as opposed to the call to serve the public.

Open Discussion on the salary topic ensued.

Motion: to consider a 12 year term – Mike Hickman
Second - Ramon Vicioso



All stated AYE

Motion: Mike Hickman made a motion to discuss the salary of the BoCC commissioners
Second – Ramon Vicioso

A call for a vote to be taken:

All stated AYE

Drew Crawford shared information regarding a study which was done in 2014 by Florida Association of Counties for the most part there are 20 counties having charters. For those who impose term limits it is 2 four year terms the maximum limit, there is one which is Broward County imposed 3 four year term limit. He asked the administrative assistant to do the research on the salary issues. Both of these items need to be placed under old business, for discussion so they can be fully developed before we go for a final vote. Brevard, Clay, Duval, Hillsborough, Miami Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, Sarasota, Volusia Counties had 2 terms for term limitation each one have a 4 year term.

Alice Hunt asked Bob English to discuss his topic regarding the Strong Mayor.

Bob English went into detail regarding the Strong Mayor type of government as opposed to a Council/County Manager which we currently have. He is not taking a position right now; in his experience it would add another dimension to the way the county is governed. He explained his experience while being a commissioner, 95% of his time was spent just taking care of daily business, pot holes filled, clean water, garbage was being picked up, there was a public safety system; there was little time devoted to what will happen in the future, what opportunities or what obstacles we have. He gave a brief overview of his concerns for Polk County in the future.

Drew Crawford gave some legal context; which was the same law as discussed earlier chapter 125 also describes certain optional forms the county can organize its government under. The three forms are

- Commissioner/Manager – the type of government we have today
- County Executive – which is a strong government
- County Chair/Administrative – which is a hybrid plan of the County Manager with the main difference between the Administrator and the Manager form of government is the Administrator is selected by the Chair and is responsible to the Chair. It is not a county elected type of position.

The research has been done by the Florida Association of Counties there are 8 Manager/Commission counties Polk included. There are 8 administrative counties which are more of a manager type government; there are only 3 executive counties which are Duvall, Miami-Dade and Orange County.

Robert Stanz stated he appreciates Bob English wisdom; we don't have our voice we have to put a lot of this on the back of the economic development council to seek business. He wants to know why we can't get manufacturing to come to Polk County; we are becoming a warehouse county.



He likes the topic, but I'm not sure I agree to have one person rule. I would be concerned about having someone having authority in this large area.

Bob English wanted to know what restraints the county has.

Drew Crawford stated section 125.84 describes the optional form for county executive charter. He read aloud this information to the commissioners. He stated if in favor of the executive form, there would be a need to craft a list of executive responsibilities they would be responsible for. The only responsibility which is required by general law would be the ability to approve or veto ordinances.

Motion - To discuss the pros and cons of a county executive form of government

Second – Patty Schmidt

Christian Spinosa asked about bringing this subject up first, before salary and term limits only to change to an executive form of government.

Alice Hunt felt putting these discussion points of the county executive first for this commission's purpose would be better.

A call for a vote was taken:

All stated AYE

Alice Hunt stated these discussions will be moved forward to next month in the following order:

1. Strong Mayor
2. Term Limits
3. Salary

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6: 42 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Curry, Administrative Supervisor
Charter Review Commission