



Minutes of  
November 21, 2017

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

Members Absent: Clay Watkins and Bart Allen

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comments:

None

**NOTE:** (FTR System was not working properly – the minutes were still captured by the electronic system).

This meeting was streaming live on Facebook.

Approval of Minutes Charter Review Commission (CRC) Meeting on October 17, 2017

- Motion to approve the minutes of October 17, 2017 – Lisa Jensen
- Second – Mike Hickman
- **Minutes approved**

Financial Report

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

No discussion – a document for review

Email/Website/Communications

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

Website/Communications

There was a brief overview regarding the media being shared for the CRC. She introduced Kevin Watler, BoCC Communication Specialist who was operating the equipment allowing this meeting to stream live on Facebook.

The meeting was noticed in The Ledger, there have been improvements.

The CRC website now has pictures; all of these items are moving forward and running smoothly.



### Sample Survey

There was a sample survey created by Communications for the CRC to review and give feedback. Kevin Watler fielded questions from the CRC and explained how the survey would be used and/or be sent out.

Open Discussion ensued.

- Motion not to move forward with the use of the survey – Christian Spinosa
- Second – Greg Masters

A call for a vote to be taken

**AYE** - Alice Hunt, Christian Spinosa, Cassandra Denmark, Bob English, Charles McPherson, Robert Stanz, Ramon Edwards Vicioso, Greg Masters, and Lisa Jensen.

**NAY** – Mike Hickman and Patty Schmidt

### Motion Passed

#### CRC Recommendations

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

Christian Spinosa stated in the Polk County Charter, Item 2.7, as stated:

*The organizational meeting of the Board of County Commissioners shall be held on the third Tuesday following the first Monday in November of each year.*

The concern there is when it falls on this Tuesday of Thanksgiving it causes a scheduling conflict. Are there any thoughts as to what this could be changed too. Can the charter be changed so there is some flexibility as to scheduling this meeting to another Tuesday?

Open discussion: wording could be change to read maybe the third Tuesday unless it runs into a holiday week.

Alice Hunt stated this item will be placed on the December 19, 2017 agenda for further discussion.

#### Old Business

Drew Crawford – Legal Counsel

Strong Mayor – Reviewed the information contained in the packet regarding this subject. He reviewed “Three Forms of County Government, History of County Term Limits” he explained these pages do have excerpts from various publications and statutes (FS 125.85 and FS 125.84) which have been included for informational purposes.

The Strong Mayor/Manager would be called in county parlance a County Executive form of government. There are three optional forms of government the chartered counties may choose. If there Charter Commission Minutes 11/21/17



appears this is something this commission desires to propose to the electors; this must be spelled out in the charter which is a requirement of general law what the executive powers are of the county executive. FS 125.84 County charter; optional forms and FS 125.85 – County charters; executive responsibilities spell out what powers to pick from to assign.

Term Limits and Salary – Reviewed the power point which included other information regarding the other 20 chartered counties. There are eight counties to use in comparison value to Polk County; Alachua, Brevard, Columbia, Lee, Miami-Dade, Osceola, Volusia and Wakulla; but there are four most suited by population size, per capita income, median household income; Alachua, Columbia, Osceola and Wakulla. Also included is FS 145.022 which is the guaranteed salary upon resolution of board of county commissioners – the guaranteed salary does not apply to Polk County because this is a chartered county, salaries are set by charter. The formula is a population based formula which is published every year at the Office of Economics and Demographic Research; they create the study and publish what the salary should be for constitutional officers, county commissioners and school board superintendent. If the county is not a chartered county they must follow this salary scheme.

Open discussion:

Lisa Jensen asked what is the total number of county employees and how many of them or what percentage of those employees make more than our commissioners. This question is to try to put it into balance. She felt Wakulla and Columbia don't have much industry and are remote areas; they would not be the best to compare Polk to. Better to look at Osceola, Alachua or Lee (although Lee is a coastal county and could change things but the population does matter.)

1. What are the total number of county employees and how many of them or what percentage of those employees make more than the commissioners? (Research for December 19, 2017 CRC Meeting.)

Salary is based on population and the population does demand service; these services are a responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). There was a question as to any extra benefits the BoCC might get outside of their salary? Lea Ann Thomas explained they do not get vacation or sick leave they can take what they need. They are allowed to be part of the counties employee health insurance plan, a portion is paid by the BoCC. They are in the Florida State Retirement System. The county has to pay a percentage for their retirement.

*\*Eligibility for the FRS Pension Plan benefit (i.e. be vested) when you complete six years of service (if you enrolled in the FRS prior to July 1, 2011) or eight years of service (if you enrolled in the FRS on or after July 1, 2011)*

Commissioner English explained when he was a commissioner and serviced 8 years; he got a lump sum of \$60,000 at the end of his years of services.

Greg Masters summarized the questions for staff to do the research on and bring the information back to the CRC.



1. How many times has it been moved forward to raise the commission's salaries in the other chartered counties? If so; what has happened; and what is the success rate.
2. Does the charter allow the county commission to put on the ballot themselves to raise their own salary?

Drew Crawford responded the Polk BoCC does have the right to put an increase to their salary on the ballot under 8.3.1 of the Charter.

Some of the CRC Commissioners spoke to their commissioner and got the feedback they were satisfied with the salary they received. Lisa Jensen stated some of the commissioners she spoke to stated: if the terms were extended and they would be here longer there might be some interest in more money. There is a fear the public opinion to ask for more money could be unpopular. Bob English stated what we are trying to do is have a salary which is attractive to the people who have a lot to offer, such as experience, education and their ideas and run for office without the personal sacrifice by lowering their pay 20% to 30% per year. A higher salary could attract a group of professionals who might run for office. Christian Spinosa stated this is a part time position and there are several commissioners still are running businesses; they can run a business; there is nothing in the charter saying they can't.

Open discussion ensued.

- Motion – not to change the term limits in the charter – Greg Masters
- Second – Christian Spinosa

A call for a vote to be taken:

All stated **AYE**

Strong Mayor:

- Motion –based on the election results in Lakeland there is no need for any more discussion on this matter – Bob English
- Second – Mike Hickman

A call for a vote to be taken:

All stated **AYE**

Final Action Item(s)

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

None



New Business

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

Discussion on the number of years between each Charter Review Commission meets was tabled (December 19, 2017); so Commissioner Clay Watkins could be present when his suggested item is discussed.

CRC Member Comments

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

None

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6: 57 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Curry, Administrative Supervisor  
Charter Review Commission

\* Per MyFRS [https://ww.myfrs.com/FRSPro\\_Pension.htm](https://ww.myfrs.com/FRSPro_Pension.htm)