



Minutes of
December 19, 2017

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

Members Absent: Clay Watkins and Patty Schmidt

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comments:

None

Approval of Minutes Charter Review Commission (CRC) Meeting on November 21, 2017

- Motion to approve the minutes of November 21, 2017 – Mike Hickman
- Second – Christian Spinosa
- **Minutes approved unanimously**

Financial Report

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

Drew Crawford explained for informational purposes the invoice was rendered on December 18th; legal expenses for the month of October and November were a sum of \$950.00.

No discussion – documentation for review purpose only

Email/Website/Communications

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

CRC Member Comments

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

None

Old Business

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

Alice Hunt explained last month there were questions on the BoCC salaries. She explained there was a discussion regarding salaries of several counties and it was narrowed down to 10 which are similar in demographics to Polk County. She discussed the documentation which was presented in the packets



and gave an overview. They reviewed the chart which showed the number of county employees who make more than the commission; as well as the total benefit package the commissioners currently are receiving. Lisa Jensen asked if we don't want to change the salary structure; do we just let it pass. Alice Hunt explained no motion and no second and it goes away. She wanted to make sure the questions from last month were all answered. Continued open discussion. Lisa Jensen stated since she was the one who wanted the additional information; she is satisfied with this compensation packet; to change the salary structure at this time would complicate our mission.

Alice Hunt stated she added the BoCC term limits to be placed back on the agenda for further discussion. We did vote not to make a change in the terms; she asked if the commission would open the discussion again tonight. She reviewed the landscape of the commission now and in 2018 we will lose Commissioners Bell and Dantzer; and in 2020 we will lose Commissioners Lindsey, Hall and Braswell. In a few years there will be all new commissioners; she likes the work the current commissioners are doing she asked to be allowed to open this topic back for discussion. The terms would go from 8 years to 12 years.

- Motion for the point of discussion to consider a 3rd term for the BoCC – Mike Hickman
- Motion second – Lisa Jensen
- **Motion Approved unanimously**

Open discussion:

Drew Crawford stated the motion will be brought back as a formal final action item on the January 16th CRC meeting. Greg Masters stated maybe a way to sale it to the people of Polk County, instead of having 2 people and then 3 people because there are longer terms it will help the continuity. Can we change the number of people who come and are going off? Drew Crawford explained the Florida Statutes. He recommends the way the Constitutional Revision Commission handled it when they went to term limits for the legislator. He quoted how it was handled. His suggestion is it is active for the next election after that; this would make a level playing field. He has seen it in other local governments. Alice Hunt asked Drew Crawford to bring back some facts or information for the January 16, 2018 meeting. Drew Crawford stated Winter Haven recently just adopted term limits for its community; he will be bringing back this information as well as his suggestion. Lisa Jensen asked to include the way they did it in Florida when the constitution was done. Christian Spinosa stated the Florida Constitution; they were going from having no term limits to two term limits. We are going from having two term limits to having three term limits. You can't start off with a clean slate; if Commissioner Braswell runs again in 2020 he doesn't get 3 more terms after that, he would only get 2 more terms. Are we doing retroactive where he is subject to the 2 terms; in 2020 and in 2024 he can run again then he is done. Greg Masters stated the biggest thing as a board we can do to make sure the BoCC doesn't get weak and they all go to 3. The City of Lakeland just got 4 new commissioners which only leave one standing commissioner really knowing what's going on. Alice Hunt stated we need to have the wording so the commissioners who are currently in office will overlap in the election cycle after the CRC finishes and if it passes. They will have the ability to run for a 3rd term. Drew Crawford stated the reset is very clean; it's whether you want to count prior serve or not; the dialogue



is there and will be able to present some samples to this commission. Winter Haven just recently imposed brand new term limit 12 years; but if a commissioner who has served 12 years steps off the commission for a minimum of 2 years they can then run and have another 12 years on the commission. Currently the BoCC is a 2 term maximum 8 years. He stated you don't want to limit the talent pool, in Winter Haven there is about 35,000 to 40,000 people; Polk County does have a population of 600,000 plus so the talent pool could be there for the 12 years. Mike Hickman stated we don't want to create a fiefdom and you don't want to limit talent coming back and when the power of the incumbent is so strong. Once you get off the board it's not easy to get back on. Greg Masters stated the hope with this extra term is to give the BoCC the most continuity. This should be the goal when we add a 3rd term. Robert Stanz stated he would be for a 3rd term as long as these types of things will be acknowledged and discussed; the idea if they sat out 4 years and they came back; there's no problem with that. All we are doing in theory if we add a term the problem recognized we have 5 great commissioners, we are going to lose Commissioner Bell all we have done is extend the problem for 4 years. We now have even more seasoned commissioners and we are going to replace them with novices how do we know who will run. Drew Crawford read the current portion of the charter which details information on terms and term limits.

Continued discussion ensued.

Final Action Items(s)

None

New Business

Alice Hunt, Chairperson

Alice Hunt stated item "a" discussing the number of years between each Charter Review Commission meets will be tabled for this meeting because Clay Watkins is not in attendance. Also; she brought up for discussion in the future meeting in room 407; the entire committee was in agreement.

Open Discussion:

Drew Crawford discussed the item "b" meeting (item 2.7 Polk County Charter – Wording); he has a legal concern with this request; stemming from the statutory command the date the commissioners are seated shall be the third Tuesday after the first Monday in November. This is the date the new commissioners are required by statute to assume office; the only entity having the authority to change the date is the BoCC itself. The statute goes on further to say in chartered counties the BoCC by ordinance can adjust the date; that ordinance has to be in referendum; it would have to be sent to the electors. His concern comes from the express wording of the statute The Charter Review Commission (CRC) may not have the authority to propose changes in the date the commissioners are seated. His recommendation if the CRC still wants to move forward with this formal suggestion would be; instead of a formal recommendation which would appear on the ballot; simply say in the Charter Review Commission final report this item was discussed and we think the BoCC should consider this change as to accommodate holiday schedules during periods when there is an early Thanksgiving.



Continued open discussion ensued

Christian Spinosa suggested when the CRC makes their recommendations we state it's not a ballot item just a formal suggestion for 2022 to change when the first meeting for the BoCC will take place.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Curry, Administrative Supervisor
Charter Review Commission