

**Charter Review Commission  
Other Boards and Agencies  
Subcommittee Meeting  
September 29, 2015**

A meeting of the Charter Review Commission, Other Boards and Agencies Subcommittee was held at Charlotte County Administration Complex, Room B-106, Port Charlotte, Florida

Roll Call

The following Commission Other Boards and Agencies members were present:

Thomas J. Rice, Chairman

Thomas J. Thornberry

W. Kevin Russell

Robert Berntsson, Esq. also present.

Citizen: Joe Tiseo

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM by Chairman Rice.

Agenda Items:

- I. Approval of Minutes of meeting August 27, 2015; signed and adopted.
- II. Citizens Input – None at this time.
- III. Old Business  
Interviews previously scheduled with the Chambers of Commerce for Charlotte County, Punta Gorda and Englewood and the interviewees had been provided the list of questions prior to this meeting. (The interview questions had been previously appended to the minutes of August 27, 2015).

Mr. Berntsson informed the Subcommittee MSBUs and MSTUs are currently included in the County Charter and therefore; are subject to changes by the Charter Review Commission (CRC). Mr. Berntsson stated the Community Redevelopment Agency was a separate entity governed by State law and were not clearly a subject that could be addressed by the CRC. Mr. Berntsson also stated County staff were discussing the issue of MSBU and MSTU term limits and asked they be permitted to address the CRC before a final recommendation on this topic is made. The members of the Subcommittee asked Mr. Berntsson to request the County Attorney address the CRC at the next meeting on this topic.

- IV. New Business  
Ed Hill, Executive Director, Englewood Chamber of Commerce was absent.

Interview with John R. Wright, Chamber President, Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce

Interview with Wendy Atkinson, Chamber President, Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce

President Wright and President Atkinson both stated the subcommittee's questions were discussed with members of their respective organizations, so below is their responses on behalf of their organizations.

Are there changes in the current election process that should be considered:

Single Member Districts – Both stated the current Charter requirement for countywide representation of members of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) should remain as stated in the Charter without change.

Term Limits

John R. Wright stated term limits for BOCC members should be the same as required by State law. Wendy Atkinson stated the current Charter language should not be changed to specify term limits.

Partisan vs non-partisan Elections – Both stated that BOCC elections should remain partisan, but elections for all Constitutional Officers should be conducted as non-partisan elections.

Campaign Contribution Limits – Both stated campaign contributions should be limited to no more than \$500.00 per contributor.

Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be county residents?

John R. Wright stated members should be residents of the county, but could be permitted to live outside of the county for up to two years based on emergency circumstances or need for transition.

Wendy Atkinson stated members should be county residents, but could have up to one year to become a county resident if they were a new hire needing time to make the transition.

(Upon reviewing Human Resources, 3.10 Residency it states, “Senior Management employees are required to reside in Charlotte County within one year of their employment. The County Administrator may waive the residency requirement for Senior Management employees or may grant additional time to establish residence in Charlotte County.” Senior Management employee is defined as the Administrator, Assistant Administrator and each Department Head or Director of each of the County’s departments.)

Should Constitutional Officers be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners or elected? – Both stated Constitutional Officers should continue to be elected as is now required in the current County Charter, but in non-partisan elections.

Should the County Administrator be appointed or elected? – Both stated the County Administrator should continue to be appointed as is now required in the current County Charter.

At the last Charter Review Commission in 2010, the County Director of Economic Development was changed to report directly to the Board of County Commissioners – Has that been successful?

John R. Wright stated the current reporting relationship of the County Director of Economic Development should remain as it is currently structured in the County Charter, at this time.

Wendy Atkinson stated that her organization was of mixed opinions on whether the current structure was an improvement as changed in the 2010 Charter, but there was no consensus on making further changes at this time.

Are there other changes to the County Home Charter that should be considered? – Neither had additional suggestions for additions or changes to the Subcommittee for consideration.

Should the Community Redevelopment Agency, Municipal Service Benefit Units and Municipal Service Taxing Units be required to “sunset” or reconstituted for designated time periods? – Both groups stated that MSBUs and MSTUs should be established for set time periods and renewal for additional terms should require justification approved by the BOCC.

Should they require re-approval at certain time limits? – Both stated suggested extension be limited to five year increments.

Chairman Rice; thanked each of the interviewees for coming.

V. Discussion

Chairman Rice stated the next meeting for the Other Boards and Agencies subcommittee is October 7, 2015, at 10:00 a.m.

VI. Citizens Input

My name is Joe Tiseo, I just came to listen, but I do have a comment regarding MSBUs, I had done some research a couple of years ago and I could not find the amount of signatures required by the petition process if it was simple majority or super majority and I looked at other counties throughout Florida and most of them have that stated somewhere, and I could not find that in the Charlotte County Charter.

Kevin Russell stated it is 10 percent if you want to do an ordinances or you have to get ten signatures of 10 percent and then it can be proposed, but I do not think that is what you are talking about.

Joe Tiseo stated no, well there is a way to start a MSBU you can create one by the authority of the board by petition before they will consider it for the initial assessment. The rules for petitioning should be in the Charter, it talks about how to create them.

Rob Berntsson stated it is covered under the State law.

Kevin Russell stated if you want to initiate a County ordinance you need to get 10 percent of signatures of the electors qualified to vote in the proceeding general election.

After further discussion, the subcommittee decided an addendum to the Interview questions, which reads as follows: Should the percentage of the required signatures for the public to propose a change or new ordinance be reduced from 10 percent to another number? (This question was also emailed the next day to both interviewees for their comments, if they wish).

VII. Adjournment: Upon motion made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 3:54 PM.



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Thomas J. Rice, Chairman