

**Pinellas County Charter Review Commission
Meeting Agenda
November 1, 2023
Palm Room-Pinellas County Communications Building
333 Chestnut Street
Clearwater, Florida 33756
6:00 PM**

- I. Call to Order– Brian Aungst, Chairman**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Public Comment**
- IV. Review/Approval of September 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes**
- V. Background/Housekeeping Information:**
 - a. CRC Member Email Address Migration Update**
 - b. Operating Rules/Procedures & Information re: Public Participation**
- VI. Feedback from Various Pinellas County Offices Re: Possible CRC Topics:**
 - a. Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) – Commissioner Dave Eggers**
 - b. Constitutional Officers - Property Appraiser Mike Twitty**
- VII. Proposed CRC Major Groupings of Topics Advanced to Date:**
 - a. Review & Discussion of topics to determine support by the CRC members to be advanced for further study**
 - b. Prioritization & schedule of topics/speakers for upcoming meetings**
- VIII. Other Business**
- IX. Confirm Upcoming Meetings:**
 - a. November October 18, 2023 @ 6:00 PM in Palm Room**
 - b. November 15, 2023 @ 6:00 PM in Palm Room**
 - c. December 20, 2023 @ 6:00 PM in Palm Room – Should this meeting be changed to earlier in the month?**
- X. Adjournment**

**Charter Review Commission
Pinellas County
September 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

The Pinellas County Charter Review Commission (CRC), as created by Chapter 80-950, Laws of Florida, met in regular session at 6:00 PM on this date in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building, 333 Chestnut Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Brian Aungst, Jr., Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Appointee (Commissioner Chris Latvala), Chair
Linsey Grove, Public At-Large Citizen Appointee, Vice-Chair
Anne-Marie Brooks, Municipal Elected Official Appointee
Richard Butler, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Kathleen Peters)
Nick DiCeglie, Pinellas County State Legislative Delegation Appointee
Dave Eggers, County Commissioner, BCC Appointee
Todd Jennings, Public At-Large Citizen Appointee
Terri Lipsey Scott, BCC Appointee (Commissioner René Flowers) (appeared virtually)
Ashley Overend, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Brian Scott)
Rob Posavec, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Dave Eggers)
Tom Steck, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Charlie Justice)
Mark Strickland, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Janet Long)
Mike Twitty, Property Appraiser, Constitutional Officers Appointee

Others Present

Nancy McKibben, County Staff Liaison, Assistant to the County Administrator
Wade Vose, Esquire, Vose Law Firm, CRC Legal Counsel
Doug Thomas, Strategic Government Resources, Inc.
Katie Poviones, Senior Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Aungst called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and welcomed the members.

ROLL CALL

At the Chair's request, those in attendance introduced themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT

In response to the Chair's call for public comment, David Ballard Geddis, Jr., Palm Harbor, appeared and expressed his concerns.

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 16, 2023, MEETING

Senator DiCeglie made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Butler and carried unanimously.

BACKGROUND/HOUSEKEEPING INFORMATION:

CRC Member Email Addresses

Mr. Thomas confirmed that the members have set up their CRC emails.

CRC Member Responsibilities regarding communication, requests, and materials

Mr. Thomas indicated that emails received by the members on potential topics for discussion should be forwarded to him to be put on the agenda for a future meeting.

General CRC Email Address

Mr. Thomas related that the general email address, charter.review@pinellas.gov, is available to members of the public.

CRC Website and Meeting/Agenda Process

Mr. Thomas indicated that the CRC website identifies upcoming meeting dates, which also appear on the County's calendar system, and contains links to the documents, agendas, meeting videos, and other information.

Mr. Thomas related that it was the consensus of the CRC at the last meeting that the first four CRC meetings would be held in the Palm Room on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00 PM.

Operating Rules/Procedures and information regarding public participation

Mr. Thomas indicated that the CRC previously voted to allow member participation remotely under certain circumstances and inquired whether the CRC would be willing to allow citizens to appear remotely at future meetings, noting that relocating the meetings from the Palm Room may make it difficult to do so. Later in the meeting and in response to a query by Ms. Overend, Attorney Vose indicated that Board action for remote member

participation would be required only for extraordinary circumstances outside of those previously adopted by the Board.

Commissioner Eggers moved that the BCC's procedure for citizen remote participation be adopted by the CRC. The motion was seconded by Senator DiCeglie and carried unanimously.

Discussion ensued wherein Mr. Strickland related that St. Petersburg College could accommodate future meetings, as it has locations throughout the county and the appropriate technology to host the meetings; whereupon, Chair Aungst requested that staff work with Mr. Strickland to identify the potential locations. In response to a query by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Thomas related that County staff will determine the ability to televise meetings held at different locations.

HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW OF PINELLAS COUNTY CHARTER

Referring to a document titled *Pinellas County, Florida, Code of Ordinances, Part I Charter*, Attorney Vose provided an overview of the existing County Charter and responded to queries by the members regarding housekeeping items, topics for future discussion, the referendum process, redistricting, and related matters, indicating that the BCC can accept grants to defray costs relating to a redistricting board; and that there is no constraint on amending the County Charter with regard to BCC composition ratio of single-member and at-large districts; whereupon, he discussed fair districts amendments and redistricting requirements.

In response to comments by Commissioner Eggers regarding the Charter amendment made in 2016, pursuant to which the County Attorney shall be hired and terminated by a 12-member County Attorney Oversight Board, Attorney Vose indicated that tie votes fail; that absent any guidance, a simple majority vote is required; and that a higher voting standard can be established through a charter amendment.

In response to comments by Chair Aungst, Attorney Vose clarified that the CRC is not advisory to the BCC, noting that that the BCC cannot change Charter amendments to be placed on the ballot which are decided upon by the CRC; whereupon, discussion ensued regarding the types of issues the CRC may review.

Ms. Lipsey Scott left the meeting at 7:30 PM.

REVIEW OF 2016 CHARTER REVIEW PROPOSALS AND OUTCOMES

Mr. Vose referred to a document titled *CRC Agenda – Section VI* and briefly discussed the 2016 ballot questions, and in response to queries by Commissioner Eggers, indicated that the financial impact statement is a separate 75-word statement under the ballot question regarding revenues or costs to the County resulting from the approval of a charter amendment; and that he would research whether Commissioner appointees to the CRC for at-large districts must reside within the same area of the county as the appointing Commissioners.

DESIRE TO SOLICIT FEEDBACK FROM PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

Chair Aungst indicated that soliciting the feedback of the BCC and the Constitutional Officers regarding the Charter areas which they would like reviewed would be beneficial; that Mr. Twitty may speak with the other Constitutional Officers; and that Mr. Thomas could serve as the liaison to the Commissioners to avoid any Sunshine Law violations; whereupon, Attorney Vose related that the BCC could have a discussion at a BCC meeting without violating the Sunshine Law, and Commissioner Eggers indicated that he would speak with the Commissioners at the next BCC meeting to solicit their preferred method of discussion.

During discussion and in response to queries by the members, Mr. Vose clarified that any member of the CRC, except for Commissioner Eggers, is free to speak with the other Commissioners; and that while the Commissioners can propose amendments to the Charter at any time, the proposed amendments must also be placed on a ballot.

Chair Aungst related that he would like to extend the solicitation of ideas to the County Administrator and staff; and that CRC members appointed by the individual Commissioners may seek input from them.

REVIEW/DISCUSS TOPICS OF INTEREST AND PRIORITIES

In response to the Chair's call for additional potential topics of interest, the following Charter sections, items, and accompanying requests were brought forth:

- *Article II, Section 2.02. Security of rights of citizens (e) Protection of human rights – add verbiage regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and appearance*
- *Article II, Section 2.07. Environmental lands – discuss preservation, future acquisition, and/or disposition*

- *Article V, Section 5.02. Special laws* – review the list of protected boards, authorities, districts, and councils, and confirm whether other subsequently enacted Special Act districts are already protected or need to be added
- *Article VI, Section 6.05. Reconstitution of 2004 CRC* – review
- Maintain a running tab of cleanup items
- Discuss defining and generalizing Special Districts created by act of the Legislature instead of listing them
- *Article IV, Section 4.01. County administrator* – substitute pronouns with position title
- *Article VI, Sections 6.01 and 6.02* – explore charter amendments relating to special tax referendums
- *Article VI, Section 6.02. Charter initiative* – obtain information about what other similarly-situated counties have in place
- *Article IV, Section 4.01. County administrator (c)(3)* – clarify whether the BCC can veto termination of unclassified positions
- Review consolidation of public services
- *Article IV, Section 4.02. County attorney* – discuss adding language about hiring and termination
- Require the County Administrator to be an elected position

In response to Mr. Thomas’s request for clarification, Chair Aungst provided a proposed order for addressing items on future agendas. In response to a query by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Thomas indicated that he would also solicit ideas from the County Attorney’s Office.

OTHER BUSINESS – NONE

CONFIRM UPCOMING MEETINGS

Earlier in the meeting, the upcoming meeting dates were confirmed.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Aungst adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM.

November 1, 2023 Pinellas County Charter Review Commission Meeting
Item VII:
Major Groupings of CRC Member Suggested Topics

Governance Issues:

- I. 3.01 Board of County Commissioners - Definition/clarification of County Commissioner At Large Districts.
- II. 3.01 Board of County Commissioners - Term Limits for County Commissioners.
- III. 4.02 County Attorney - Appointment/Removal of County Attorney Procedures – Voting standards less specific than with County Administrator (higher threshold for appointment/removal).
- IV. Elected County Administrator / County Executive.

Clean Up Issues:

- I. Remove all references to “His/Her” pronouns in Charter.
- II. Any areas of Charter that may require updating due to changes in State Law since 2015-2016 CRC review?
- III. 2.07 Environmental Lands – How to deal/include any future land acquisitions.
- IV. 5.02 Special Laws – (B) – Is this list of excluded Boards/Commissions current and correctly titled, and/or can we just identify all current and future Boards/Commissions established by Special Acts?
- V. Section 6.05 Reconstitution of 2004 Charter Review Commission – Can this provision now be eliminated?

Possible New Issues:

- I. Any emerging issues, including what other Counties may be considering/adding to their Charters?
- II. 2.02 – Human Rights – Add sexual orientation and gender identity as protection.
- III. 6.02 Charter Initiative – Citizen Initiative Petitions and Referenda – What are other Charter Counties doing in this area?

Questions to Be Addressed:

- IV. 4.01 County Administrator (c) (2) – What does “Unclassified” mean and what is the list of Unclassified Positions?
- V. County Referendums – Does State Law require Charter amendments referenda to be on General Election ballot?
- VI. Consolidation of Public Services - Topic that 2016 CRC reviewed (Section 5) that they did not have time to fully review before concluding.
- VII. Consider limiting annual increase in County’s budget to CPI or some other index – Any other Counties limiting budget growth in their Charters?