

**Pinellas County Charter Review Commission  
Meeting Agenda  
March 21, 2024  
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 January 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes**
- V. New Business:**
  - a. Term Limits for County Commissioners**
- VI. Old Business:**
  - a. Revised Draft Ballot and Charter Language – Charter Amendment  
Revising Thresholds for Appointment and Removal of County Attorney**
- VII. Other Business**
  - a. Updates from Facilitator and General Counsel**
- VIII. Upcoming Meetings (*Confirmed meetings in italics*, with balance of dates currently tentative meetings):**
  - a. April 4, 2024 @ 6:00 pm***
  - b. April 17, 2024 @ 6:00 pm***
  - c. May 1, 2024 @ 6:00 pm***
  - d. May 15, 2024 @ 6:00 pm***
  - e. June 5, 2024 @ 6:00 pm**
  - f. June 19, 2024 @ 6:00 pm**
  - g. July 3, 2024 @ 6:00 pm**
  - h. July 17, 2024 @ 6:00 pm**
  - i. Note: CRC Report Deadline: NLT July 31, 2024**
- IX. CRC Commissioner Comments**
- X. Adjournment**

**Special Accommodations** - Persons with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations to effectively participate in this meeting are asked to contact Pinellas County's Office of Human Rights by e-mailing such requests to accommodations@pinellas.gov at least three (3) business days in advance of the need for reasonable accommodation. You may also call (727) 464-4882.

**Appeals** – Persons are advised that, if they decided to appeal any decision made at this meeting/hearing, they will need a record of the proceeding, and, for such purposes, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

**Charter Review Commission  
Pinellas County  
January 22, 2024 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)  
Dave Eggers, County Commissioner, BCC Appointee  
Todd Jennings, Public At-Large Citizen Appointee  
Terri Lipsey Scott, BCC Appointee (Commissioner René Flowers)  
Ashley Overend, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Brian Scott) (appeared virtually)  
Rob Posavec, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Dave Eggers)  
Tom Steck, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Charlie Justice)  
Mark Strickland, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Janet Long)

**Not Present**

Nick DiCeglie, Pinellas County State Legislative Delegation Appointee  
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.  
Tammy Burgess, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk  
Other interested individuals

*All documents provided to the Clerk's Office have been filed and made a part of the record.*

**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, the following individuals appeared and expressed concerns:

Julie Vayne, Seminole  
David Ballard Geddis, Jr., Palm Harbor  
Barbara Haseldon, St. Petersburg

Later in the meeting, the Chair allowed for additional public comment; whereupon, the following individuals appeared and expressed concerns:

Greg Pound, Largo  
Mack Johnson, Largo

## **REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 27, 2023 MEETING**

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

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Review and Discussion Regarding Section 6.02 (Charter Initiative) – Citizen Initiative Persons and Referenda – Signature Percentage and Time Period for Charter Amendment Petition Drives

Chair Aungst provided brief opening comments regarding Section 6.02, indicating that Supervisor of Elections Julie Marcus is unable to attend tonight's meeting; that it is important for the members to understand how her office could be affected; and that Supervisor Marcus may attend a future meeting to provide her perspective.

Referring to documents in the agenda packet, Attorney Vose provided background information regarding the 2016 CRC's Charter amendment revising the signature percentage threshold and time limit for gathering signed petitions for Charter amendments, noting that the signature percentage was reduced from ten to eight percent of registered voters; and that the time limit for gathering signatures was increased from 180 to 240 days; whereupon, he referenced a chart which contains the methods by which

the 20 Florida charter counties may amend their charters by petition, noting that the percentages and times vary substantially.

In response to queries by Messrs. Strickland and Posavec, Attorney Vose provided information regarding his recollection of the reasoning for changing the signature percentage threshold from ten to eight percent of registered voters and his observations related to the volume of charter amendments after lowering the signature percentage threshold, such as in Brevard County where it is four percent.

Chair Aungst, with input from Attorney Vose, related that County Attorney Jewel White has requested that the CRC review Charter language that indicates that the Supervisor of Elections' office is required to approve ballot language. Following brief comments, he suggested that the language be removed or revised, and discussion ensued.

In response to comments and queries by Commissioner Eggers, and at the request of Chair Aungst, Ms. Haseldon provided brief comments regarding the County's signature percentage threshold and time limits.

In response to comments and queries by Mr. Steck and Chair Aungst, Attorney Vose provided information related to actions taken by other charter counties regarding reviewing ballot language for citizen initiative petitions. He pointed out that petitions must be submitted to the Supervisor of Elections within a specific timeframe to allow ample opportunity for processing of initiative petitions prior to an election, and discussion ensued.

In summation, Chair Aungst expressed interest in lowering the signature percentage threshold from eight to five percent of registered voters, noting the challenges posed by the eight percent requirement, and Commissioner Eggers and Mr. Jennings provided supportive comments; whereupon, Mr. Jennings indicated that while he supports lowering the signature percentage threshold, he believes that the multi-district requirement should be maintained.

Thereupon, Chair Aungst requested that Mr. Thomas and Attorney Vose contact the Supervisor of Elections regarding her attendance at a future meeting.

#### Review and Discussion Regarding Proposed Pinellas County Charter Amendments on General Elections versus Other Elections

Attorney Vose indicated that the three methods for amending the Charter are via proposal by the BCC, an initiative petition by the voters, and by the CRC; whereupon, he, with input by Chair Aungst, provided additional information regarding each method.

Discussion ensued wherein Commissioner Eggers suggested changing the Charter to require that all Charter amendments by any of the three methods be placed only on general election ballots; whereupon, Chair Aungst requested that Attorney Vose prepare proposed language regarding Commissioner Eggers' suggestion and noted that the topic will be discussed further at a future meeting.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Draft Ballot and Charter Language – Charter Amendment Revising Thresholds for Appointment and Removal of County Attorney

Attorney Vose referenced a discussion at a previous CRC meeting and reviewed proposed Charter language amending the criteria for selection, appointment, and removal of the County Attorney, noting that it is similar to the current Charter language for the County Administrator; and that it takes into consideration the 12-person County Attorney Oversight Committee (CAOC).

Commissioner Eggers expressed concerns regarding the proposed language pertaining to the required voting threshold for the removal of the County Attorney by the CAOC; whereupon, Chair Aungst and Attorney Vose provided information related to the voting threshold for the removal of the County Attorney by the CAOC at one meeting versus two consecutive meetings, pointing out that the rationale utilized for revising the language was to model the format used for the County Administrator and which is also a common provision in other municipal charters.

Following lengthy discussion, Attorney Vose indicated that he would prepare additional draft language for the Commission to review.

### Initial Draft Ballot and Charter Language – County Charter Cleanup Amendment

Attorney Vose discussed proposed cleanup items previously identified by the Commission, including the removal of one-time provisions that have since occurred or lapsed, gender references, and references to boards that no longer exist. He indicated that the cleanup amendment would serve as a placeholder for additional cleanup items identified by the Commission; whereupon, he displayed the proposed ballot language for the amendment.

Proposed Florida House Bill 57 and Senate Bill 438 Regarding Term Limits for County Commissioners

Mr. Thomas provided information regarding pending legislation addressing term limits, noting that the bills propose eight-year term limits and other potential restrictions for county commissioners.

**OTHER BUSINESS – NONE**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Chair Aungst indicated that the next meeting will occur on January 31 at 6:00 PM. Mr. Thomas discussed future meeting dates and potential conflicts; whereupon, following brief discussion, the members agreed to proceed with the meeting scheduled for February 26, to cancel the February 12 and 21 meeting dates, and to keep the meetings scheduled for the first and third Wednesdays in March and April.

**CRC COMMISSIONER COMMENTS – NONE**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Aungst adjourned the meeting at 7:32 PM.

**LEGISLATIVE BODY**

County	Size	How Elected	Partisan Election -- Y/N	Length of Term	Term Limitation	Adjustments to Salary	Separates Legislative & Executive Functions	Specifics Non-Interference Clause	Administrative Code Required	Recall
Alachua	5	District (§2.2)	Silent	4	N	Statute	Y (§2.1)	N	Y (§2.2)	Y (§2.2)
Brevard	5	District (§2.1;2.3)	Silent	4 (§2.4)	2 (§2.4)	Ordinance (even-numbered years)(§2.6)	Y (§1.5)	Y (§3.4)	Y (§2.10.2)	Y (§5.2)
Broward	9	District (§2.01(A)1)	Y (§2.01(B))	4	3 (§2.02)	Statute (§2.01(D))	Y (§1.02(c))	Y (§2.07)	Y (§2.13)	Y (§1.04(M))
Charlotte	5	District/At Large (§2.2)	Silent	4	Silent	Statute	Y	Y	Y	Y
Clay	5	District	Silent	4	2	Charter (majority vote in general election)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Columbia	5	District (§2.1)	N (§2.3;5.3)	4	N	Statute (§2.5)	Y (§1.6)	Y (§3.4)	Y (§2.8(6))	Y
Duval	19	14 District/5 At Large (§5.02)	Silent	4 (§5.03)	2 (§5.04)	Charter (§5.04, 9.12)	Y (§4.01)	N	Y	Y (§15.01)
Hillsborough	7	4 District/3 At Large (§4.03)	Y	4		Ordinance (§4.07)	Y (§3.01)	N	Y (§7.01)	Y (§9.08)
Lee	5	District/At Large (§2.2(A))	Y (§2.2A)	4	3	Statute (§2.2(C))	Y (§2.1)	Y (§2.2(I))	Y (§2.2(E))	Y (§2.2(G))
Leon	7	5 District/2 At Large (§2.2(1))	N	4	Silent	Ordinance (§2.2(3))	Y (§§1.8, 2.1)	Y	Y (§2.2(6))	Y (§4.2)
Miami-Dade	13	13 District (§1.04)	N (§3.3)	4 (§3.01)	2 (§3.01(E))	Charter (§1.06)	Y (§1.01, §2.02)	Y (§4.04)	Y (§1.02(H))	Y (§8.02)
Orange	7	6 District/Mayor-At Large (§201)	N (§605)	4 (§204(A))	2 (§204(B))	Ordinance (§2.05)	Y (§108)	Y (§212)	Y (§211)	Y (§604)
Osceola	5	District/At Large (§2.2(A))	Silent	4	Silent	Statute (§2.2(C))	Y (§2.1)	Silent	Y (§2.2(E))	Y (§2.2(G))
Palm Beach	7	District (§2.2)	Y-except non-partisan for property app, sheriff, sup. of elections (§4.1.a)	4	2	Statute	Y (§2.1)	Y (§2.5)	Y (§2.4)	Y (§5.2)
Pinellas	7	4 District/3 At Large (§3.01)	Silent	4	Silent	Statute (§3.01)	Y (§3.01, §4.01(c))	N	Silent	Silent
Polk	5	District/At Large (§2.1)	Y (§5.2.1)	4 (§2.4)	12 (§2.3)	Charter (§2.5)	Y (§1.6)	Y (§3.4)	Y (§2.10)	Y (§6.2)
Sarasota	5	District/At Large (§2.1A)	Silent	4 (§2.1A)	2 (§2.1A)	Charter (§2.1B)	Silent	Y	Y	Y
Seminole	5	District/At Large (§2.2A)	Silent	4 (§2.2A)	Silent	Ordinance	Y (§2.1)	Y (§2.2(I))	Y (§2.2E)	Y (§2.2G)
Volusia	7	5 District/1 At Large/1 Chair At Large (elected) (§301)	N (§904)	4 (§303.1)	2 (§303.5)	Charter (§304)	Y (§203)	Y (§404)	Y (§308.1)	Silent
Wakulla	5	District/At Large (§2.1)	Silent	4 (§2.4)	N	Statute (§2.5)	Y (§1.6)	Y (§3.4)	Y (§§2.8,2.9)	Y (§6.2)



GRETCHEN R.H. (“BECKY”) VOSE ‡  
WADE C. VOSE †‡  
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PAUL R. WATERS  
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OFFICES  
WINTER PARK  
FORT MYERS  
BRADENTON  
COCOA BEACH

## M E M O R A N D U M

**TO: 2024 Pinellas County Charter Review Commission**  
**FROM: Wade C. Vose, General Counsel**  
**DATE: March 14, 2024**  
**SUBJECT: Reversion to Initial Draft Ballot and Charter Language – Charter Amendment  
Revising Thresholds for Appointment and Removal of County Attorney**

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At the CRC’s January 22, 2024 meeting, the CRC discussed a draft charter amendment revising the thresholds for appointment and removal of the County Attorney. That initial draft provided that the County Attorney Oversight Committee shall select and appoint a County Attorney by an 8-vote supermajority, and may remove the County Attorney only by a 7-vote majority at two consecutive meetings, or by an 8-vote supermajority at one meeting. At that meeting, the CRC gave direction for two other options to be brought back.

At the CRC’s February 26, 2024 meeting, the CRC discussed draft charter amendments implementing those two options.

One option raised the threshold for hiring the County Attorney, or removing the County Attorney at a single meeting, to a 75% supermajority (9 of 12 members), while retaining the threshold to remove at two consecutive meetings at a 7 of 12 member majority.

The other option retained thresholds from the prior draft for hiring the County Attorney, or removing the County Attorney at a single meeting, at a 8 of 12 member supermajority, and a 7 of 12 member majority to remove at two consecutive meetings, while adding an additional requirement that any decision to appoint or remove must be approved by both a majority of the county commissioners, and a majority of the other constitutional officers, on the Committee.

The general direction of the CRC’s discussion at that meeting appeared to indicate a lack of overall support for either of the two later elaborated options. Accordingly, this memo contains the initially prepared draft of the charter amendment for the CRC’s consideration.

I look forward to discussing these matters with you at your March 21, 2024 meeting.



**A. Ballot Proposal:** The ballot title and summary for Question #X are as follows:

**CHARTER AMENDMENT REVISING  
THRESHOLDS FOR APPOINTMENT AND  
REMOVAL OF COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Shall the Pinellas County Charter be amended to provide that the 12-member County Attorney Oversight Committee shall select and appoint a County Attorney by an 8-vote supermajority, and may remove the County Attorney only by a 7-vote majority at two consecutive meetings, or by an 8-vote supermajority at one meeting?

\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_ No

**B. Text Revisions:** Upon approval of this question at referendum, the following portions of the Pinellas County Charter are amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 4.02. County attorney.**

- (a) There shall be a county attorney selected by a county attorney oversight committee, consisting of the county commissioners and the sheriff, tax collector, property appraiser, supervisor of elections, and clerk of the circuit court and comptroller, who shall serve at the pleasure of the county attorney oversight committee. The county attorney shall be selected and appointed by the affirmative vote of eight (8) members of the county attorney oversight committee, and shall serve until such time as the county attorney shall be removed either by a vote for removal of seven (7) members of the county attorney oversight committee voting for removal in two (2) consecutive meetings of the committee held at intervals of not less than fourteen (14) days, or by a vote of removal of eight (8) members of the county attorney oversight committee at any one meeting of the committee. The office of county attorney shall not be under the direction and control of the county administrator but shall instead be responsible directly to the board of county commissioners, and shall be subject to annual review by the county attorney oversight committee. The county attorney as of the effective date of this amendment shall not be subject to the selection provision of this subsection, but shall be subject to all other provisions thereof.