

**Charter Review Commission
Pinellas County
April 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

The Pinellas County Charter Review Commission (CRC), as created by Chapter 80-950, Laws of Florida, met in regular session at 6:03 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 (appeared virtually)
Nick DiCeglie, Pinellas County State Legislative Delegation Appointee
Dave Eggers, County Commissioner, BCC Appointee
Terri Lipsey Scott, BCC Appointee (Commissioner René Flowers)
James Millican, Public At-Large Citizen Appointee
Ashley Overend, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Brian Scott)
Robert Posavec, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Dave Eggers)
Thomas Steck, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Charlie Justice)
Mark Strickland, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Janet Long)
Alan Swartz, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Kathleen Peters)
Mike Twitty, Property Appraiser Constitutional Officers Appointee

Others Present

Nancy McKibben, County Staff Liaison, Assistant to the County Administrator
Barry A. Burton, County Administrator
Wade C. Vose, Esquire, Vose Law Firm LLP, 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 6:03 PM and welcomed the members.

ROLL CALL

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

WELCOME NEW CRC MEMBERS

Chair Aungst explained that Richard Butler and Todd Jennings were recently elected to the City Councils of Pinellas Park and Belleair, respectively; whereupon, he noted that elected officials are prohibited from serving on the CRC, with the exception of those outlined in the Charter; and that the BCC appointed Mr. Swartz as Commissioner Peters' appointee, as a replacement for Mr. Butler and Mr. Millican, to represent the At-Large seat previously held by Mr. Jennings.

At the Chair's request, Messrs. Swartz and Millican introduced themselves and provided information regarding their backgrounds and experience; whereupon, Chair Aungst briefly discussed the work done by the CRC to this point.

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 FEBRUARY 26 AND MARCH 21, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Twitty made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lipsey Scott and carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion with Barry Burton, County Administrator, Regarding CRC Items of Interest

Chair Aungst indicated that a potential topic of interest identified by the CRC relates to proposing an elected executive who would serve in what would essentially be a type of County mayoral role; whereupon, he related that Mr. Burton is present to provide his perspective regarding the current system, to explain management of County government from the executive side, and to answer questions from the members.

Mr. Burton related that he will not be able to provide comments regarding any policy on which the BCC has not expressed an opinion, as part of the ethical guidelines through which business is conducted; whereupon, he indicated that the BCC has not yet issued an opinion on this topic. Mr. Burton briefly discussed his background, experience, and role in day-to-day operations, noting that the BCC establishes policy direction related to operations. He suggested that a potential source of information could be found through the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), indicating that he

believes that the organization could delegate someone at the local level to speak with the members.

Chair Aungst expressed appreciation to Mr. Burton and his staff for their support of the CRC and opened the floor for questions.

In response to a query by Ms. Lipsey Scott regarding his feelings related to the County Administrator role becoming an elected position, Mr. Burton indicated that the form of government should be determined by elected officials and the citizens; and that he will not assume an opinion; whereupon, Commissioner Eggers provided comments related to the current structure of the County Administrator position and the resulting benefit to the complex nature of County operations.

Responding to queries by Mr. Posavec and Chair Aungst, Mr. Burton recommended that the CRC contact the ICMA, or a retired manager, for information related to pros and cons of an elected County executive position and commented on his methods for managing disagreements between the Commissioners.

Chair Aungst again thanked Mr. Burton and his staff for their support, clarifying that the discussion is not about him personally; that the CRC is also reviewing the process for hiring and terminating the County Attorney; and that referenda timeframes and citizen initiative petitions discussions have been held with the Supervisor of Elections.

Chair Aungst indicated that he believes that there is enough member interest to open the topic for discussion; whereupon, he requested that Mr. Thomas and Attorney Vose contact the ICMA or the Florida City and County Management Association, and a strong retired mayor, to determine if there would be a willingness to attend a CRC meeting.

In response to a query by Mr. Thomas regarding any additional operational items that he and staff feel should be reviewed by the CRC, Mr. Burton confirmed that he has no further recommendations.

OLD BUSINESS

Term Limits for County Commissioners

Chair Aungst noted that Attorney Vose has provided term limit draft ballot language and specified that it contains three key issues relating to years of service, potential cooling off period, and effective date.

Referring to a memorandum in the agenda packet, Attorney Vose provided detailed information regarding the draft language and options for consideration contained within the attached exhibits.

Chair Aungst related that a majority of the members informally voted at the last CRC meeting to move forward with a term limit discussion and solicited the members' input regarding the three aforementioned key issues, and a lengthy discussion ensued.

In response to queries by Mr. Strickland and Chair Aungst, Attorney Vose indicated that he could add Charter language that refers to a two-year election cycle, rather than an exact date, with regard to the cooling off period.

Obtaining a consensus from the members, Chair Aungst summarized that the following information will be added to the draft ballot language and will then be subject to a final discussion and vote:

- Term limit of twelve years starting from November 5, 2024
- Four-year cooling off period

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Updates from Facilitator and General Counsel

Mr. Thomas indicated that the two remaining topics of interest to be resolved are with regard to ballot language and referendum timing and a County executive position; whereupon, he related that he will work to obtain speakers regarding the County executive discussion.

Attorney Vose related that, based on discussion from a previous meeting, language has been prepared which implements potential revisions to the initiative petition process. He indicated that he has provided the language to the Supervisor of Elections' Office, with a request for feedback; and that he anticipates having a memorandum prepared for discussion at the Board's next meeting.

Referencing the discussion earlier in the meeting regarding a County executive position, Attorney Vose indicated that he will provide a memorandum containing information related to strong mayoral forms of government contained within Florida charters, which was a part of materials obtained during his work with the Orange County CRC. In response to a query by Mr. Strickland, Attorney Vose indicated that the memorandum will

contain information regarding relevant charter provisions for the counties of Miami-Dade, Orange, and Duval, and for the cities of Miami, Tampa, Orlando, and St. Petersburg.

Mr. Thomas noted that the CRC previously discussed the topic of the appointment and removal of unclassified employees, as a BCC-delegated function of the County Administrator; and that the topic will be placed on hold pending the Board's level of interest in a County executive position; whereupon, discussion ensued.

In response to comments and queries by Mr. Steck and Chair Aungst, Attorney Vose indicated that most jurisdictions do not change their established forms of government; whereupon, Mr. Thomas related that he believes that the ICMA tracks movements regarding changes in types of government; and that he will attempt to locate data related to this topic.

UPDATE REGARDING UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Mr. Thomas indicated that he has discussed potential future meeting dates with the members; whereupon, he and Chair Aungst reviewed the slate of potential meeting dates and member availability. Discussion ensued wherein Chair Aungst encouraged members who cannot attend meetings in person to attend virtually via Zoom.

Attorney Vose related that he intends to provide Charter and ballot language for the CRC's discussed topics at the next meeting.

Mr. Thomas clarified that the members have agreed to meet on April 22, May 2, and May 13 and to hold the first and second public hearings on May 23 and June 6, respectively. In response to a query by Ms. McKibben, Chair Aungst requested that May 28 and June 10 remain on hold in the event that additional meetings are needed.

CRC COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

This item was not addressed.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Aungst adjourned the meeting at 7:13 PM.