

**Charter Review Commission
Pinellas County
May 2, 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
Nick DiCeglie, Pinellas County State Legislative Delegation Appointee
Dave Eggers, County Commissioner, BCC Appointee
Terri Lipsey Scott, BCC Appointee (Commissioner René Flowers) (appeared virtually)
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)
Mike Twitty, Property Appraiser Constitutional Officers Appointee

Not Present:

Alan Swartz, BCC Appointee (Commissioner Kathleen Peters)

Others Present:

Nancy McKibben, County Staff Liaison, Assistant to the County Administrator
Wade C. Vose, Esquire, Vose Law Firm LLP, CRC Legal Counsel
Doug Thomas, Strategic Government Resources, Inc.
Franchesca DiNapoli, 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

NEW BUSINESS: PRESENTATIONS REGARDING FORM OF GOVERNMENT OPTIONS

Bob Buckhorn, Executive Vice President and Principal, U.S. Cities Practice – Shumaker Advisors Florida and Former Mayor, City of Tampa, Florida

Chair Aungst indicated that the form of government topic is the last major topic for consideration and introduced Mr. Buckhorn and Ms. Brangaccio; whereupon, Mr. Thomas related that he and Attorney Vose thought that it would be helpful to provide speakers who have worked in different types of government and provided brief background information regarding Mr. Buckhorn's experience.

Mr. Buckhorn discussed his service and experience as mayor of the City of Tampa and provided examples of the benefits and abilities within a strong mayor form of government; whereupon, he indicated that he believes it to be the most efficient and responsive form of government.

Responding to comments and queries by the members related to this form of government, Mr. Buckhorn provided information regarding the following topics:

- Leadership and approach techniques
- Working with other strong mayors
- Relevant differences between Hillsborough and Pinellas counties
- Benefits of being nonpartisan
- Education and experience
- Challenges when a strong elected mayor lacks competency
- City manager form of government and related challenges

At the request of Mr. Twitty, Attorney Vose confirmed that the latest Supreme Court guidance indicates that an elected countywide officer would run for office as a partisan candidate.

Pamela Brangaccio, Program Manager, International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and former City Manager, City of New Smyrna Beach, Florida

Mr. Thomas provided information regarding Ms. Brangaccio's background and experience, noting that she has had the unique opportunity to work in a variety of different forms of government in Florida.

Ms. Brangaccio discussed her professional background and experience, differences with the various forms of government, including comparisons of a strong mayor to a city or county manager and potential impacts for the County, and the ICMA Code of Ethics.

In response to a query by Mr. Posavec, Ms. Brangaccio indicated that constitutional officers would continue to be elected, clarifying that she is not aware if the CRC has discussed changes in this area; that she does not believe that there would be any changes related to constitutional duties that are outlined in the Charter or by the State of Florida; and that she believes that a change, with a strong elected official, would be with regard to how annual budget negotiations occur.

Chair Aungst indicated that he would like for the members to discuss whether they would like to move forward with the form of government topic; whereupon, a lengthy discussion ensued. Senator DiCeglie provided insight into the reasons that he brought the topic of an elected official position forward; whereupon, he clarified that it was not related to the current County Administrator and his ability to perform his duties, but about accountability to the citizens.

Following an informal vote and input by Attorney Vose, Chair Aungst indicated that pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, the members did not achieve a majority vote to pursue the topic further.

OLD BUSINESS

Revised County Charter Cleanup Amendment, with Revisions to Section 5.02

Chair Aungst explained that this agenda item is a follow-up to a discussion from the last meeting regarding Charter Section 5.02, *Special laws*; whereupon, referring to a memorandum provided to the members and the County Attorney's Office, which outlined a recommended change to the previously presented draft language, Attorney Vose related that upon further thought, he recommends the language previously provided in the cleanup amendment and provided additional information related to Sections 5.02(a) and 502(b), along with his rationale for the recommendation.

Chair Aungst suggested that Attorney Vose prepare a memorandum for use by future CRCs which provides an explanation of certain aspects of Section 5.02. In response to comments and a query by Ms. Overend, Attorney Vose indicated that he sees no legal implication from removing names of boards that have been abolished by appropriate legislative means or from revising names of boards, and brief discussion ensued; whereupon, Attorney Vose related that he will verify the names listed in Section 5.02(b).

Review and Discussion – Compilation of Draft Charter Amendments to Date

Referring to a document included in the April 22 meeting agenda packet regarding amendments discussed by the CRC, Mr. Thomas requested that the members provide any additional feedback in preparation for drafting the final report. Chair Aungst noted that the two items which can be discussed at the final meetings are the list of names in Section 5.02(b) and finalizing language relating to the process for the hire and termination of the County Attorney; whereupon, Attorney Vose pointed out that the ballot order of the amendments will need to be determined.

OTHER BUSINESS

Updates from Facilitator and General Counsel

This item was not addressed.

UPDATE REGARDING UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Chair Aungst indicated that he intends to hold the meeting scheduled for May 13 for a review of anticipated final draft language; that the proposed first public hearing would be held on May 23; and that the second and final public hearing would take place on June 6. Discussion ensued regarding future meeting dates and member scheduling conflicts; whereupon, Mr. Thomas requested that the members continue to reserve the meeting dates that are being held in the event that additional meetings are needed.

CRC COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

No one responded to the Chair's call for comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Aungst adjourned the meeting at 7:58 PM.