

Sullivan County Charter Review Commission Meeting

January 18, 2017 at 6:00PM

Present: Steve Altman, Bruce Ferguson, Peg Harrison, Michael Levinson, Bill Liblick, Brian McPhillips, Larry Richardson, Ken Walter, JJ Hanson & Norman Sutherland

Absent: Paul Burckard, Sandra Johnson Fields, Sara Sprague

Others Present:

The Sullivan County Charter Review Commission Meeting was called to order by Peg Harrison at 6:00pm, with the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Richardson moved to approve the November minutes, seconded by Mr. Hanson.

OLD BUSINESS

Co-Chairman Hanson distributed a memo to be discussed regarding the commissioner of finance and elected controls position.

Mr. Hanson stated there has been edits made and asked Mr. Ferguson to take them through those edits as they go through. Mr. Hanson will give an overview. There are two key areas here. Number one being control. When you are creating a County Executive you have to make sure of two things, in my opinion. We are going to have to make a decision on whether to include this with the package we are going to provide the Legislature. A County Executive is responsible for making sure that the operations of a county are being done effectively. This requires two things. Number one is finance. That means that they have to be responsible for the finance. Right now the finance is not completely controlled by the manager. It's split between the Budget Office and the other offices. So, the manager does not have the complete authority of what an executive would have. When you look at the Ulster County model and the way they have done it. They have structured their County Executive in a way that that County Executive does have that full responsibility. So, he is responsible for all the finances of the county and he is responsible for all the budget work of the entire county. If there is something wrong within the county with their budget or their finance, that County Executive is held responsible for that failure. Right now when there is a failure in this county, we don't know necessarily who is responsible. There is always a finger to point. That is a difficult part for a County Manager or any type of county leader to provide a leadership. If you look at a business environment. If you look at a newer government environments. That does not exist. We have learned throughout the past 30 to 40 years, been the practice of local government, but that's kind of setting up a leader for failure. So, if we are making a recommendation to the Legislature of what we believe they should do. I believe that we should make clear that the department of finance should be structured underneath the County Executive. That is my opinion in a very strong County Executive way. There are some County Executives in [New York State] where that's not the case. What I've seen in my past experience working with them is that it does set them up for failure. They do have problems in their counties. They do have systems of political fighting that otherwise would not be there. So, to breakdown the existing structure which would be the existence of the Treasurer. So basically removing the Treasurer form and replacing that with an appointed commissioner of finance. That's essentially the way that would be structured. Then, the second

part of this, which would be the elected comptroller. Now this is important because this is an elected comptroller. They are independent of both the Legislature and the County Executive. What does this provide. It provides a check and balance. Which is pretty important if we are going to a County Executive. It means that we have someone watching the books. Someone that's outside of their structure. They are not being appointed by them. They are not being watched by them. They are not being structured by them. They are alone and they are on their own. That's what we see in Ulster County and we've seen it in other counties as well. This is creating conflict in Ulster County right now. Some would say that is a bad thing, but I don't. I think that it is a good thing that there is conflict. I was the budget director of Ulster County for a year and a half, two years. I also was the deputy budget director for a year and a half. I watched my back to make sure our numbers were solid. Every single day. My boss when I was a deputy, he watched his numbers. Our director of finance watched his numbers. If we were off by five dollars, we want to know where that five dollars was, who had it and where did it go. So, because they were independent and we knew that they were going to watch every single thing that we did. That made us confident in what we did. It made sure that our numbers were always going to be correct and we were going to be held accountable at the end of the day for what we know. Not only did we have that, the Legislature also had their authority to review our books as well. So, not only once, we were going to get reviewed twice. The comptroller, not only was he reviewing us, he was reviewing every other elected official in the county[government]. He was going to go through their books as much as he was going to go through our books. They were going to take a look at how we were practicing our operations, which is extremely important in local government because you have so much responsibility for your operations. That's primarily what the county executive is going to do outside of finance, is manage operations. There is always someone there. There is a check and balance, which is important. He or she was the watchdog. Whoever takes that position. Right now we have someone in that type of position, which is good, but we have someone who is appointed within the structure that they are reviewing. If you are reviewing your own books, obviously if there is something wrong you can check your own books. I don't know enough about their books to say what they are doing. But I'm saying there is not enough there to have that check and balance that you would otherwise have if you have someone who is independently elected. That's the justification for these. How we are going to do this, I think is going to be more of a group discussion and ultimate roll out. I think there is a couple of different viewpoints on how we want to do it. I have my personal thoughts on it, that we should do it together because in my opinion, I believe that if you don't have one without the other, specifically, I'd be willing to discuss the comptroller position a little bit more. But, the finance and county executive, you can't do one without the other. You cannot have a county executive and not give them the authority of the commissioner of finance. Because they cannot be successful in the State of New York. We are setting them up for failure. So, with that I will turn it over to you with your thoughts on it. A lot of it I agree with you. I threw stuff in there because it was in Ulster County.

Mr. Ferguson stated, JJ I think this is a terrific document. It's something that I think very few of us could have done, because he has the degree of knowledge and experience that none of us really have. But I did question, and you will see the highlighted areas, which appear grey on the print copies. I think what we want to deliver to the Legislature and hopefully get it approved, is the idea of a County Executive. The idea of a comptroller. The idea of the Department of Finance. I was concerned that specifying how the elections be handled. What the qualifications are. How they can be filled and things in that order, might seem like we are trying to micromanage the Legislature and the County Attorney's Office. I thought we'd be better off taking the big picture item. If we can sell them on that, everything else will follow. In fact, JJ, with his background, they'd probably welcome a memo from JJ that contain all these suggestions in it. But, I thought if they read it and said, well they're telling us that's not their job, it's our job, and I wanted to avoid that. So, I proposed a slimmed down version of this that leaves a highlighted version. The highlighted items because that's really properly what the County Attorney and the Legislature figure out how they want to handle the specifics of implementing this. Our job is to recommend the strokes that they actually go down this road. That's my thoughts on this.

Mr. Richardson stated, I to want to thank you JJ for putting this together, because it certainly makes you think about it. I do agree with Bruce and this kind of goes back with some discussions with Attorney Conklin and Andy Ford in that there may be some benefit in keeping this a little more simple and allowing the Legislators to buy in by making these kind of decisions. We have the general ally. We know what we think we want or what should be there. We could work out the details.

Mrs. Harrison Stated that the only thing that I can say is that I think we could make a recommendation that the comptroller is not elected the same year the county executive is elected. I don't think that that's feasible.

Mr. Altman asked how would you start that.

Mrs. Harrison stated, or you could do it the following year or you could do it the year before.

Mr. Hanson stated that you could also make a general recommendation. So, we don't tell them what to do. We just say we recommend that they not be elected in the similar year.

Mr. Altman stated could we lead it off with, we imagine you'd be thinking about these issues. Instead of saying we recommend the details that you want to leave out. That we imagine you will be looking at these issues,

Mr. Hanson stated that the other one that he was thinking is very important is the appointments. Because I think that again is in that same line of a county executive having a finance commissioner is, the County executive should be appointing that person. They should be confirmed by the Legislature. We don't have to dictate, but that's something that might be very important. If a Legislature said, no we're not going to allow that, we're going to appoint your employee. Imagine having someone come into a company and saying I'm going to appoint your employee and you're going to hire him. That's a complete undermining of his authority as a County Executive.

Mr. Ferguson stated that the finance director is appointed by the executive.

Mr. Hanson sated correct. Which that might already be within their current charter. That would be a good question to ask.

Mr. Ferguson stated I have two questions. One is, if you create this sort of gap year. What do you do in that year? Doesn't that create more confusion? If we envision a four year term, for these positions. Maybe you elect them initially at the same time and the comptroller's term only lasts two years and they are staggered going forward.

Mr. Hanson stated that's what they did in Ulster.

Mr. Ferguson stated otherwise you'd be creating two separate forms of government. We've Government without a comptroller for one year. Which is what does that mean and the next year you have a comptroller. I think we better bring them on at the same time and then stagger them going forward. The reason for staggering is your view.

Mr. Richardson stated my feeling is there would be more continuity in government if you have somebody who is experienced that overlaps with a new person.

Mr. Hanson stated you also have a lot of, in many counties, you have candidates from the same offices. So, you might have the same comptroller that's running against the county executive. If they are both running in the same term, you are going to lose one of them. You are going to lose that position which also breaks

down your consistency within those positions. Is that a good decision or bad decision? I would say that's more of a political position that would be up to the legislature to make. I've seen it in the past where you lose and I think we've seen it here in our own county, where you are losing a large number of our candidates in one year. And when you lose that much in one year, you lose the consistency of government.

Mr. Richardson stated I think that the same arguments that we made for staggered terms of the Legislature applies here.

Mr. Altman asked if they would be losing their power or authority.

Mr. Ferguson stated somewhat.

Mrs. Harrison stated not really.

Mr. Ferguson stated that some of their authority would change. We've listed the power of authority that the Legislature would have under this form of government. It's pretty substantial. There's a lot for them to do and look out for.

Mr. Altman stated but the powers that they are losing are more powers that have been self described to them because they are not really following the charter the way they are supposed to be. This brings them back to what their task is supposed to be.

Mr. Richardson stated maybe we do something like a simple sentence, while both these positions may have to be created at the same time. The Legislature may want to consider staggering them by having the first comptroller's term half the length of a regular term. So, it's two years instead of four.

Mr. Altman stated the first term but then it becomes four.

Mr. Richardson stated that you don't want to lose people because they want to move up in government and maybe make a challenge. That's a really good point. You don't want people tossed out of government unnecessarily. That can be come without mentioning dates or year.

Mr. Ferguson in regards to the point made about, should this be presented in one resolution from us or not. I would like to see if this all could be presented at one time. I'd probably like to see it as a separate resolution recommendation. As separate from recommending elected county executive. Many, many meetings ago I made the comment. I don't want them to be upset with one part of it and throw the whole.

Mr. Altman asked what happens if they don't accept one.

Mr. Ferguson stated there are a few counties in the state that still have an elected treasurer. We might be down to one now because [Suffolk] [Charter] just changed it. They found out they were better off not to have an elected treasurer and so they changed it. I guess it's not the end of the world if they say we'll go with a county executive but we are going to stay.

Mrs. Harrison stated that the resolutions that we present are our resolutions. Somebody to follow up on our resolutions and find out that we have ten of them or fifteen as opposed to just one final one that we give them. We've got to think about that. Our resolutions are not their resolutions in other words. So they don't have to adopt our resolution a hundred percent. We don't really want to create twenty resolutions and have them forget about fifteen of them and only work on five. We really want them to package. To address them even if they don't agree with them. At least address them.

Mr. Altman stated my questions is this. Separation is one thing. Are you talking about handing them in separately or handing them in together separately?

Mr. Richardson stated they are going in as a package. But in this folder is a resolution in favor of an elected county executive. Anybody who writes resolutions, the resolution is a supporting document itself. So. This resolution, say, supports an elected county executive and in that resolution is support. The next on in the packet is a resolution for a county comptroller and in that resolution is supporting documents. If you write a resolution that goes on for pages, you lose them.

Mr. Ferguson stated what JJ has written here, the very first sentence says, the argument for county executive form of government cannot be made without change. Also requires changes in other areas. That's what sets up the comptroller. So, either we accept JJ's premise that you can't do one without the other and we fold them together. Or, we have to change this language here. [note: refer to draft report]

Mr. Richardson stated I think a clean break is better. Give them a package that works. If we really don't think it's going to work and really don't think it's going to work to have a county treasurer. Do we really want them to only go halfway and create problems and possible failure. Or do we feel for this to work, you need this independent watchdog that's outside of the executive's control. Shouldn't we just say so. We don't want this complicated. But just say you really got to do this if you want to have the independent safeguard of someone else looking at the money.

Mr. Liblick stated that it's very important to stress, maybe one page, that we've come up with this conclusion, yet the people of Sullivan County should be the people that decide on this. It shouldn't be any elected body or anyone else. Let the debate begin with the people of Sullivan County. Whether they agree with this or not.

Mr. Walter stated that there's been a comment made here many times, setting up for failure. Will somebody please give me an example of how or why it failed. Everybody is saying how having a county executive or elected treasure is setting them up for fail. What failure are we setting them up for? I want specifics. I don't want to hear words or start an argument. I want to hear specifics of why you think that argument is true.

Mr. Hanson stated that he's seen it personally and multiple times. I've seen it in other counties. If you want to take a look at the Charter of Sullivan County and take a look at the responsibilities of the Treasurer. You can see the responsibilities of the Treasurer. I recommend that you look at the responsibilities.

Mr. Walter stated you have the experience, where do you see the failure.

Mrs. Harrison stated we've created these funded positions within departments that we never act on filling. Because we want the buffer of having this cushion.

Mr. Hanson stated as a county executive you are responsible for all operations. So, operations are everything the county is going to do. You should be responsible for all things going on. If you have someone who, a treasure, who is elected and not within your purview, but they are going to managing all finances for that county. And they are going to tell you no when you are trying to do basic management, because they don't like you. Say they are Republican and you're a Democrat. And they just don't like you. Say they want to reduce your budget by 10%, and they just say no, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to raise my budget this year because I'm going to go to Legislature by 20% and they go ahead and do it. You as a manager can't manage that. You have no ability to actually follow, to tell them what you want for them. When you are actually going forward and doing your own books. When you are talking to your reviewers. The reason I'm trying to look this up is because I'm trying to remember the right words and I can't get them

in my head.

Mr. Walter stated that every budget has income and other. We have income based upon sales tax and real estate taxes and whatever else. What happens is, if they want to balance the budget or if they want to do more, the bottom line is, no matter who's sitting where. They say we are going to bond something like road construction.

Mr. Hanson stated under the current structure, if they don't want to talk to the County Executive about the bonds, they don't have to. Because politically, they say I don't like you, I don't have to talk to you about it. Therefore, they can go out and discuss it with who they want to. They can do whatever they want and there's no requirement. Where the county executive, they are appointing their own commissioner that's going to be managing their finance. Their job is on the line. So they have to do that work. When I went down and I met with my Commissioner of Finance. We had to report to our County Executive what was going on. There was no in between. I was responsible to him. I would have to talk to him. Under our current structure, if we had a County Executive, they don't have to. Do what they want. I'm an elected county official, I can walk away from you right now and we're done. If we're talking budget, I don't have to do anything.

Mr. Walter stated, who certifies the funds available?

Mr. Hanson stated no one under the current structure.

Mr. Walter stated Treasurer.

Mr. Hanson stated okay.

Mr. Walter stated who certifies the funds available under Exec.

Mr. Hanson stated probably the Finance Commissioner.

Mr. Walter stated we have two jobs doing the same thing.

Mr. Ferguson stated no. As I understand the Comptroller is the independent oversight to make sure that money is being handled correctly. The Treasure does not fight independent oversight of county operations. She's an integral part of the whole way money is handled in the county. You can't do that and be your own policeman. It's like an IG in another department. You might have an IG that is outside. Within the Attorney General's Office is an IG that is completely outside the chain of command. His job is to find fault within his own department. It's that kind of rule. It's a policeman's rule.

Mr. Walter stated there's actually two checks and balances in place right now. One is they hire an independent auditor to go through all the books. Then you also have a Comptroller's Office that comes in and checks the same thing. So, those two things are already in place.

Mr. Ferguson stated we do have a [County Auditor], right?

Mr. Walter stated we do have a [County Auditor] and the county hires somebody to come in here and audit. But then the State has theirs. That comes through every so often and checks the system too.

Mr. Ferguson stated the only thing is, by putting the [Comptroller] as a separate elected office, it's ensured of independence in a way that with our [County Auditor] in the present government, is still embedded in the fabric of the government. It's not truly outside.

Mrs. Harrison stated that the biggest thing is the Treasurer right now sets the revenue for the year for the budget. The Manager agrees with it and there's no issue. If the Manager disagrees with it and says no, there should be more, it's the Treasurer that says how much the revenue is going to be. Then they have to go to the Legislature. Where under a County Executive, the Finance guy would say to the County Executive, this is the revenue projection.

Mr. Walter inquired appointed by whom?

Mrs. Harrison stated by the County Executive.

Mr. Walter stated but then there's no checks and balances there.

Mrs. Harrison stated it's not the recording of the income. It's the projection of the income. That's what the most important thing. It's not the recording of the income, which is the Comptroller's responsibility to make sure everything is coming in.

Mr. Hanson stated the Comptroller's reviewing the same books.

Mrs. Harrison stated that it's the projection of the income. That's why we've got these pockets of unfilled employees within the departments, because they don't budget. Money gets tied into there, it's funded initially, but if you don't fill that position, you never spend that money. Now you've got a little reserve, a little cushion.

Mr. Walter stated every taxing authority does that game and we used to have a much bigger inflated budget than we ever had. In 2005 they took positions out, but you always built in a little cushion in case things go south.

Mrs. Harrison stated that's not the issue. That's not what I'm saying is necessary. What I'm saying is if you're responsible for doing the projection of the income and the expenses, you're going to get a tighter gap. Someone independently that is elected that is projecting your income, and you're an employee of the Legislature, you're going to come to terms with it. You're not going to fight, you're just going to figure out to work around it. That's probably, in my mind, the biggest discrepancy.

Mr. Walter stated I see it work totally differently. I don't understand the issue.

Mr. Richardson stated everybody should have this memorandum that Andy Ford provided to us back in September. He went through this and wrote down for us the simple duties of the County Treasurer, Comptroller and the Auditor and all departments. It goes on and on about the duties. So, if you are not sure of the duties, you could review that. It's pretty interesting.

Mr. Ferguson stated one way to present this is, since we do have an elected Treasurer who happens to be very popular, we could recommend that the duties of the Comptroller become her responsibility and the Department of Finance take over some of her responsibilities.

Mr. Hanson stated that's exactly what happens in Ulster County. Is that the elected official in that position became the Commissioner of Finance, by appointment. Managed that position for two years, raised the end of the career salary. I'm not making that recommendation. That's up to the Legislature if they want to do that. That was the will of the elected County Executive. That's up to them, who want to do what.

Mr. Richardson stated I don't think we should lose sight of the fact that she has free will. First of all we

shouldn't be talking about personable, but we are, we do it over and over again. But, if she so chooses, she could run for Comptroller or she could very well be appointed Director of Finance under the Executive Director. So, she certainly would have those options.

Mrs. Harrison stated she could run for County Exec.

Mr. Hanson stated and would probably do very well.

Mr. Walter stated I would have to agree with Larry on the presentations to the Legislature. Keep everything separate because the last time they kept everything separate, they could take what they want and they could throw out what they want. We don't want to lose any parts. We don't want to lose the whole thing because of some parts.

Mr. Hanson stated personally, I do not believe that we should separate Commissioner of Finance and County Executive. If you put one without the other, you are setting, in my opinion, you are setting that person up for failure. You are setting up that position for failure.

Mr. Liblick asked what the County Executive?

Mr. Hanson stated the County Executive.

Mr. Altman stated and they'll probably know it, before they even run.

Mr. Hanson stated yes.

Mrs. Harrison stated or they don't understand.

Mr. Hanson stated either way. I would say that you could move other things off the list, but that position needs to be closely held together.

Mr. Walter stated that things that are interconnected should be together.

Mr. Richardson stated we could still preface a separate resolution in favor of the Comptroller, by saying our due diligence has come to this conclusion that it's so important that you, we don't say it's absolutely going to fail, because we don't know that for certain. Some kind of wording to make a point that we feel very strongly that this needs to be part of change.

Mr. Altman stated we have to come to some conclusion of what we are talking about. Then somebody has to rewrite this because we are not going to wait another two months to put this in.

Mr. Richardson stated my suggestion would be that if we rough it out and it is roughed out and we are happy with it, then I would say we have Andy Ford put it in, a little more legal ease. He's volunteered to do it and for whatever it's worth, it may be a little bit better received if it comes from an attorney.

Mr. Altman stated I agree with that, but we have two writers here. And one is going to be off the boat for a while. So, who's going to rewrite this and give it to him.

Mr. Richardson stated I would say by next month we should be prepared to settle on final rough draft. At that point then we ask the attorney to work on it. He's got to bring it back to us when he's done with too. So, we'll see some more emails amongst us of a rewrite.

Mr. Ferguson stated so far there are two sentences that we want to rewrite. We are going to recommend staggered terms, but do it in a very loosely way that it doesn't prescribe to them how they should do it.

Instead of saying they have to have a Comptroller, that we strongly recommend that they do what other counties have done, that have a County Executive. That is also simultaneously adopted Office of the Comptroller. We'll just tweak the top of yours in that way. It is separable if they want but the clear indication is they should keep them together. That's our recommendation, they don't separate them. But they can tear it apart if they want to.

Mr. Ferguson stated on how they can fill a vacancy, they can figure that out themselves.

Mr. Hanson stated that he put that in as a whole and that he's completely fine with that.

Mr. Altman asked did everybody get the copy that he did? That I cleaned up and sent out.

Mr. Richardson stated I just found it easier to reread it.

Mr. Richardson stated I took all the strikeouts out so you could read it.

Mr. Ferguson stated if we agree on the strikeouts, we can change the two sentences and have a new document to circulate.

Mr. Walter stated it looks like a marked up bill.

Mr. Richardson stated that was the original but I sent out a cleaned up copy that just took out all that stuff that was struck out. It reduces it down to two pages. I just felt it was easier.

Mr. Ferguson stated I think we need one more page that's going to tell the role of the Legislature with the County Executive. It tells the Legislature all the powers it would still have and the few things that they won't have.

Mr. Ferguson stated I agree with you. We have that literature already some place. As a cover letter to this thing. Attached is additional information. Not necessarily part of the resolution.

Mr. Richardson stated in the resolution we have documentation for the case of the County Executive. That makes our argument for it. Then we have this document. And then we would have one that states the role of the Legislature. I think we directly address their concerns. What does this mean.

Mr. Ferguson stated I think so because they are going to question, what have I got left.

Mr. Richardson stated that's it. They are still going to have to approve all appointees. Just as they do now. They have most of their powers. The strategic planning would move from the Legislature to Executive. They would approve the budget. So they can still write local laws.

Mr. Altman stated right now they are like micromanagers of departments. They are going to lose that.

Mr. Hanson stated and keeping policy too.

Mr. Altman stated, not to change the subject, but in one of the emails you made a comment.

Mr. Liblick stated I don't want to discuss it, in a private session.

Mrs. Harrison stated, the fact that this will automatically happen as a result of going to the County Exec., is it really necessary, to reiterate to them, the difference. If we just promote County Exec by virtue of moving to

a County Exec. The only real difference between their powers, is that a County Exec is not an employee and he can stand and say no. It's not until you give him veto power that it becomes a true issue. And we are not making that recommendation. So, do we even need to say anything more other than promote the County Executive.

Mr. Richardson stated I just disagree with you. I think that they haven't been in on this discussion. So, I'm sure in the back of their minds, is where does that leave me. Where is my relevance to this whole thing. I do think that rather than somebody try to wrestle in their head, what am I going to be doing here.

Mr. Ferguson stated the first sentence is something like, the role of the County Legislature with a County Executive form of government is little changed period. Then go through all the things that are the same. They are going to be feeling like something's being taken from them and we don't want them to feel falsely that something's been taken away from them. It's not.

Mr. Hanson stated one hundred percent I agree with you on this. I think it's important one, for us to speak to them. Not only with the actual document that we created, but to actually go and present. Whether it's just a ten to fifteen to twenty minute present. We have spent, you have all spent a lot more time than I have, on this issue. But, everyone here has spent a lot of time and work on this. I think we've earned the time to speak to them. In that presentation, not only should we justify how many of you have had your opinions changed on this issue. Who in the beginning I thought were not going to be for this. Who have now kind of changed their mindset on it because of what you've heard or learned, to share that. To say this is what I've learned over the past year and a half, two years. I think the other part of it is many of them are new to county government. They have not been in county government for a long time. So, for them to understand that this is not a losing of authority, it's a shifting of authority to a different area. That is, being focused as a law maker, they are now shifting to a way from operations, which they should never have been on in the start. Our current charter in this county does not have them as having a role in the operations. They shouldn't be there, but they are. I think that is a large part of the problem that we have in the county. I think we have a lot of good lawmakers in our county Legislature. I think they need to hear that from us. The people who we respect, who we have worked with should know that we respect what you are doing. We know what you are doing. We are trying to help you succeed in the work that you are doing and we think that this is the best way to do. That's what you told us to do. Is evaluate the current Charter and understand in detail. We have spent hundreds of hours researching this material. We are all very talented people. We've all come to this conclusion that this is good for the county, and here's why.....

Mr. Ferguson stated you sound like you are going to be our spokesman.

Mr. Richardson stated that I envisioned the three chairs taking this presentation to whatever committee or wherever they think they want to hear it.

Mr. Altman stated I imagined us all being there and we have a spokesman giving them all the points. This is a big deal. This is not like staggered terms. This is the biggest deal we are going to give them.

Mrs. Harrison asked anybody else?

Mrs. Harrison stated there is one removal from the second to last paragraph. The commission concluded that the elected county exec goes by other elected execs, will have the authority and ability to hire division department heads with the appropriate levels of training and expertise.

Mr. Richardson stated I suggested that we drop that. It breaks up the flow of the argument and that's sort of a housekeeping detail. I don't think that has to be in here. It's too much detail and it takes away from the thrust of the argument for County Executive.

Mrs. Harrison asked any other comments.

Mr. Liblick stated I think we still need something added in about the people have to decide. I don't think it's enough.

Mr. Ferguson stated we can have a resolution.

Mr. Liblick stated I understand that, but I don't think it's enough.

Mrs. Harrison stated so, with the resolution would be the cover page.

Mr. Hanson stated We talked about having a cover page, because that's a good location for it.

Mr. Ferguson stated that could be the first sentence of the resolution,

Mrs. Harrison asked are you comfortable with that.

Mr. Liblick stated yes, I just vision that as a problem.

Mrs. Harrison stated for next month we will have a resolution going up by Andy to help us with this with the legal.

Mr. Richardson stated that resolution will clean up JJ's piece a little bit. We'll get the text on what is the role of the Legislature. Just a brief thing saying basically it's little change. What remains the same and what has changed.

Mrs. Harrison stated that there's a matrix on this and that's easy to do. Asked if Larry would chair the next meeting.

Mr. Hanson stated he could chair. Actually, I can try it, if I can't, can you back me up.

Mrs. Harrison asked do you want to work with Andy Ford on the resolutions? Or do you want me to call him tomorrow?

Mr. Hanson stated he could call him tomorrow.

Mr. Ferguson stated I will clean up your things and I will put in my blue text. The two things we talked about changing. Clean up what we've got and we'll have a simple sentence available. On staggering the terms and change it to must have a Comptroller to strongly recommend they have a Comptroller. I will even roughly do something, I guess working with the matrix, on saying the role of the Legislature. I think we need to be sure with them on that.

Mr. Richardson stated that when you are finished with it, circulated, give it a couple of days, so we have a chance to read it. We're happy with it, send a note to JJ, this is it. At that point is contact Andy and ask can I send this over to you and let him work on it.

Mr. Ferguson stated the first two documents can go out tomorrow, probably without no problem.

Mr. Hanson stated in terms of time line. We get it back to us, we circulate it to the group and we all review.

Mr. Ferguson stated if we can get it a week before next month's meeting would be great. So we can be

prepared to move on that.

Mr. Hanson stated we can vote on it at that meeting and we can set up

Mr. Ferguson stated at that point we can find out where they would like a presentation made.

Mr. Walter stated it would be in Executive Committee. I recommend doing it all in one package, not doing it in piece work. Put everything in one packet.

Mr. Richardson stated I would be in favor of disbanding this committee once we finish this work and moving if we choose to into an ethics seat.

Mr. Liblick stated I don't think we should do that until we make the presentations.

Mr. Richardson stated yes, after that. But what I'm saying is rather than going on and trying to find other smaller things in the Charter. And this is such a big deal, and we can get it, it's a major accomplishment.

Mr. Richardson stated that one meeting after the presentation, that will also give them a chance to come back to us if they have some other questions about it. But effective that meeting, we are essentially done.

Mr. Liblick stated that in the beginning we had some presentations with the Charter and the Codes, were some recommendations for some changes. Do we want to, after we have that one recommendation, go over that so we can submit that to the Legislature.

Mr. Richardson stated he thought about that, but, if you change the form of government.

Mr. Liblick asked what if they don't.

Mr. Richardson stated if they don't, then we failed.

Mr. Liblick stated that there were some changes that we had, that were important to admit certain things.

Mr. Richardson stated they are only important if they don't approve.

Mr. Richardson stated we are not an advocacy group. Legally that's not our role. If we want to resign, whether we want to do it privately or do it as a loose organization, who know your function is to sell this to the public, educate and sell to the public. That's something else.

Mr. Altman stated you're saying we're not on this commission anymore. We're an independent group and we're going to meet independently go for a referendum.

Mr. Walter stated we are responsible for making adjustments to the Charter and they make the code for the Charter. So, like anything that Congress does, they pass the law, the bureaucracy makes the rules and regulations. That's what the code is.

Mr. Liblick stated there are still recommendations. That was the debate with Cheryl and Paul Burckard and others like I did, disagree with.

Mr. Ferguson stated when I said disband, what I really should have said, I feel strongly when we make this recommendation about this major government form, that we not go forward with new business and make other small board recommendations, that will take away from and distract and slow up action on this. If we

put one big thing in front of them I think we are in a very strong position to bring public attention on to it and bring the Legislators attention on it. If you give them a laundry list of stuff and this is one of the items, I think it will be much harder to get focused on it.

Mr. Hanson stated you and I were at the meeting, two or three meetings ago. They expect us to be disbanding by June. They made that very clear at that meeting. They expected us to be done already. We are ahead of our own schedule. I did not see that as clearly communicated to us. They expect us to be finished by that time. Additionally, with the significance of this, the recommendations that we are working with and the potential of what's going to be happening, if we do need to go to an advocacy role, I don't know if it would be making good sense to be doing both at the same time. I would agree with you that there are things on the Charter that do need to be reviewed. I don't know that it's going to be a good strategic decision for us to be the ones to do it at this time.

Mr. Liblick stated I understand and let's take it when it comes. Let's see how this plays out. If we need another meeting to just review a document.

Mrs. Harrison stated I would want another meeting to list everything that we've addressed and everything we've presented them. What place the next Charter Commission, ten years from now, can go to and say this is their package. That's how I envision the final meeting.

Mr. Liblick stated lets go through and take it from there.

Mrs. Harrison stated that brings us to other committee business and I was going to discuss the meeting that we had with the Legislature. We were told by two Legislators that the resolution included a time frame when we were created and appointed, which we didn't. They are looking for us to end by June they want us done.

Public Comment: None

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Liblick, meeting adjourned at 7:01pm.