



Sullivan County Charter Review Commission Meeting

June 15, 2016 at 6:00 PM

Present: Steve Altman, Paul Burckard, Bruce Ferguson, Sandra Johnson Fields, Peg Harrison, Michael Levinson, Bill Liblick, Brian McPhillips, Larry Richardson, Sara Sprague, Norman Sutherland, Ken Walter

Absent: None

Others Present: JJ Hanson, Cheryl McCausland, Nancy Buck

The Sullivan County Charter Review Commission Meeting was called to order by Co-Chairperson Peg Harrison at 6:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Altman made a motion to approve the May 18, 2016 minutes, seconded by Mr. Richardson, put to a vote and unanimously carried 11-0, with Mr. Ferguson absent.

NEW BUSINESS:

Co-Chairperson Harrison introduced JJ Hanson a prior Commission member and stated that he was here tonight to facilitate the discussion with the Ulster County Attorney.

Mr. Hanson stated a little bit of his background in local government was working for County Executive of Ulster County Mike Hein. He started out as Mr. Hein's Deputy Budget Director and Communications Director and managed a number of projects in Ulster County. He then moved up and became one of his Deputy County Executives and Budget Director and he worked in that capacity for around two years. He then stated that he worked alongside Ms. Bea Havranek, Ulster County Attorney and when she started out early before the transition in the form of government and she was very active in creating the Charter. Ulster County was a non-charter county and they had a different form of government from other non-charter counties, many non-charter counties have a Board of Supervisors and Ulster had already transitioned to a Legislature/County Administrator. The difference between an Administrator and a Manager is an Administrator and only has administrative authority, they do not have executive authority, that executive authority would be afforded to the Chairman of the Legislature. What he did for County Executive Hein was he managed his budgets and managed the Department of Finance, the Department of Real Property and a number of other departments beyond what the Charter had said.

Co-Chairperson Harrison inquired what Mr. Hanson's title was with the County of Ulster.

Mr. Hanson stated Deputy County Executive and Budget Director.

Mr. Burckard stated that just so everyone knows that Sullivan County was a Board of Supervisors/County Administrator before they made the change. It does not mean that a County Administrator cannot be powerful it depends on who the Administrator is.

Mr. Hanson stated that his opinion is that the initial intent of Sullivan County Charter was to have a strong executive system, with the Manager being that executive. In practice probably over the last decade that role has been diminished over the years for various reasons a majority of them being political and some may have been personnel issues. The role of the Manager being an executive has shifted largely to being an Administrator which is outside what the Charter calls for. You have a Manager who is not necessarily being the Manager, he is doing a very good job at being an Administrator who is actually not given the same level of responsibility or authority that they should be under the current Charter. The question now actually becomes who is responsible, who is in charge, is the Legislature responsible or is the Manager.

Mr. Hanson introduced Ms. Beatrice Havranek Ulster County Attorney, and stated that Ms. Havranek was appointed County Attorney by the first ever County Executive for Ulster County Mike Hein on May 1, 2009. She was the first woman to serve in that position and prior to that she was in a private practice and served as First Assistant County Attorney and Minority Legislative Council for the County of Ulster. He continued by stating that she also served as a Deputy County Executive for a short period of time from January 1, 2009 until she was appointed County Attorney. Ms. Havranek has a broad base of experience as both an attorney and a former administrator, she was elected the first woman town supervisor in Rosendale, NY and served in that capacity for fourteen years. She is the past president of the Ulster County Bar Association and past director of the Mid-Hudson Women's Bar Association and past president and co-founder of the Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors, she was recently elected by her peers to the County Attorney's Association of State of New York Board of Directors. She has worked and led numerous projects for Executive Hein and was very involved with the creation and transition to the current Ulster County Charter. Ms. Havranek is also an amazing musician and avid biker. She has personally been a long time mentor and friend to Mr. Hanson and he then thanked Ms. Havranek for being available to speak to the Charter Commission via Skype and for giving them her time and thoughts on this issue.

Ms. Beatrice Havranek stated that she is not in a position to give the Commission legal advice, that would be outside her authority, they have a fine County Attorney.

Questions for Ms. Havranek were mediated by Mr. Hanson:

Q. Why did Ulster County decide to explore the County Executive form of government?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that she served as Minority Council in 1997, so her experience goes back to 1997 and this was not the first time the County Legislature looked at a Charter, it had come up before but it just never got anywhere. The County of Ulster had got to a point where it needed to be run as a business. Things had gotten bigger and a lot more that had to be done. They had a 33 member Legislature at that time, the progress, and the amount of time it took to get a project through to get things done. There were factors that actually lead to the successful adoption of Local Law that preceded the Charter and the mandatory referendum that took place. One, there was the 39% tax increase in 2004-2005. At that point there was a lot of activity in the major political parties because the County had been a Republican controlled party forever except for a period of time in the

mid-70's for two years when the Democrats took control. So you had an increase in taxes and the County was in the midst of building a new jail because they were being forced to build a new jail. The jail almost doubled in costs, so this was occurring in 2005 and in 2006 a new Legislature comes in and it was a lot of new faces plus new leadership. The Charter Commission had actually been created the year before, so when January 2006 came about, there was push on to have the Charter Commission finish its deliberations and send to the Legislature their recommendations. Jerry Benjamin led the Commission; he is an expert in this area as well. It took them several months through the committee process to go through the Charter and how they were going to deal with it. In 2006 they had reached a point where everyone seemed to be in as much agreement as possible and a local law was adopted in July 2006. The Charter then went to referendum to the local election the November of that year and it was adopted by the people of Ulster County. Two major things happened, they went from a Legislative form of government to Executive form of government. They now have two branches of government. The Comptroller likes to think he is a branch of government but under the law he is not, there is the Legislature and the Executive. They reduced the number of Legislators from 33 to 23, that was set in the Charter to happen at a later date. The Charter provided for that to happen in 2011, the Charter did not go into effect until January 2009. So, they adopted it in 2006, and in 2009 it was in effect. Why; several things needed to happen, one was they needed to start looking at their form of government and their local laws and resolutions, they needed to come up with an administrative code which is permitted under the Charter laws. The Administrative Code takes the laws of the County and puts them into a form so that comply and meld to the Charter. The other reason was they had to have an election because now the County had these elected positions that did not exist before. They had an elected Comptroller and an elected Executive and they were elected in 2009. In 2009, they elected the first County Executive Michael Hein and he continues to be the Executive, he is an amazing leader and an amazing personality and they elected a Comptroller who is Elliot Auerbach and he has been re-elected as well and still remains as the Comptroller. The Treasurer's position which was an elected position was eliminated in the Charter and the Auditing Department was eliminated in the Charter. Instead, now they have the Comptroller who is the Chief Auditing Officer of the County and a Commissioner of Finance who is the Chief Fiscal Officer of the County. Most duties that went to the Treasurer went to the Commissioner of Finance. The one thing that is really important to remember about an Executive form of government is there is this one phrase under the Executive that defines his duties and it is the part that is "to supervise, direct and control departments." It is important because that is how your county operates, it no longer operates on a committee basis, it is operated by a CEO a County Executive. The other important thing to remember is the County Executive, although he could appoint and those appointments were subject to confirmation by the Legislature, the department heads, not the other elected officials because they control their own offices to a certain point but the department heads serve at the pleasure of the County Executive. So, if the job is not being done, he always has the opportunity to dismiss someone and put someone else at the head of that department so that the work of the county can get done.

Q. Proposition

A. Ms. Havranek stated that the proposition was very simple. The Charter was done and it was a one sentence proposition. "Shall the County of Ulster's Charter be adopted."

Q. Who actually drafted the Charter for them?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that the Commission drafted the portion of the Charter with their major ideas and how they wanted it to run and then the Legislature with the County Attorney's office worked with a special

committee that the Legislature created of Legislators to actually draft the Charter. One of the things that she would do over if she had the opportunity is it got so close to the time when the local law needed to be adopted to meet the deadline; one of the things that they did not do at the time was alphabetize the departments so they are easier to find in the Charter. When you look through their Charter it starts out very simple with the separate branches of government and then it sort of goes all over the place. The Administrative Code was really important too because they now had to go back from 2006 to 2008 before the Charter actually went into effect, they started working on the Administrative Code and they made members of a group, the Legislature did not work on the Administrative Code at that point, the group fashioned the Administrative Code by talking and sending out questionnaires to every department that existed at that time and asked them what they thought needed to be in the Administrative Code. They had a written response and then they would meet with them and try to flush out problems that they thought existed and think of ways they could make things better through the Administrative Code. The Administrative Code needs to compliment the Charter, they got the job done on a monthly basis with this special committee. The Legislature went through the changes that they proposed and decided whether or not they were going to accept them, and they got to the point where they finished the Administrative Code in time for it to be effective in the Charter.

Q. What was the role of the Charter Commission in Ulster County in regards to the Code?

A. Ms. Havranek stated once the Charter Commission turned over its recommendation to the County, their role was based on the leadership of Jerry Benjamin was to develop the document that the County Legislature could use as its basis for preparing the Charter. The actual sitting down and finishing it up and putting the finishing touches on it belonged to the Legislature, which they did through counsel's office and in various different ways. They did not hire consultants or spend any money on special counsel, they did it all in house.

Q. How was the actual data, the vote, was it planned or just by the schedule of the Charter Commission or was there a strategic approach to that?

A. It was based upon the law that they saw with the procedural deadlines in it. The Legislature at the time gave them a deadline of when they wanted it done and ready to actually go to a public hearing on it. It starts out as a local law before it can go to the next step. That was all based on a timeline, they like reversed timelines, way back then they did a reversed timeline and they said the latest that they can have this done is a date in June in order for it to get to the newspaper that they are having their hearings, they had more than one hearing and to get it adopted in July. It had to be adopted in late July, and that gave them time to go through the next process which was procedural and really had nothing to do with the Legislature or anyone else at that time, mainly the Clerk of the Legislature, County Attorney's office and Board of Elections to make sure that it was timely in front of the voters.

Q. Who lead the efforts to go to a County Executive form of government?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that she thinks the League of Women Voters were the real catalysts behind it, there was the obvious political, you will never get away from the political, it exists and it will always exist. The League of Women Voters was instrumental, they also were very helpful in getting out information to the public with what they were doing and then when they were getting ready to go to the referendum they had informational meetings to have people come out and talk. It was the County Legislature's decision at that time

and it was a very courageous decision because they were giving up powers that they had. The county was a business and it needed to run like a business with a Chief Executive.

Q. On the actual public referendum, was that during a general election and did it pass the first vote?

A. Ms. Havranek stated yes because if it was not they would have had to spend money on a special election and the Legislature was not going to spend money on a special election. That is where the timing became important so that it made it to the ballot.

Q. Was there any real opposition publically as they were going through this process on a County Executive form?

A. Ms. Havranek stated yes but it was mainly political. There were a few Legislators that did not vote for the Charter but the super majority of the Legislators at that time were in favor of the Charter. The biggest difficulty that the Legislature has had since they adopted the Charter is it has been difficult for them to understand that they no longer have the authority or responsibility of the operations. If the Department of Public Works decides that they need to build a bridge or do something important, the Chief Executive Officer and his departments are involved. The beauty of having an Executive is that they can say that this project needs the Department of Public Works, the Department of Environment and the County Attorney's office, I am directing all of you to get together and figure this out and do it now and I want it done by a certain date. Previously, it would go through two or three committee meetings and there would be discussion and it would take so much time to come to a conclusion that yes, they need to rebuild this bridge. The only emergency that they have ever had in this county has been Hurricane Irene and that was important because it also showed that having leadership of one person to make decisions when you're in the middle of a major catastrophe that was never seen before in this county and was so important. There were a lot of hard decisions that were made here, they made a decision that they were going to sell their nursing home. The County Executive decided that he was going to sell their nursing home, they had people protesting, the Legislature was split on it, they got through it and sold the nursing home and it is a better nursing home now.

Q. If Sullivan County decided to transition to a County Executive structure would they need to eliminate the elected Treasurer position?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that is a legal question and she thinks that this is a question for the Sullivan County Attorney. Based on her research you could keep your Treasurer but looking at the semantics and what you want your Charter to be, the Treasurer would be separately elected and would have certain duties that he or she would have to comply with and certain powers. Having the Commissioner of Finance rather than a Treasurer has made a big difference in our county because he is not independent he has to conform and work with the County Executive in order to get things done. County taxes have not risen since they have had an Executive form of government and last year their budget was reduced. They manage to do things here that takes courage and if you have a leader that has courage like they are blessed with in Ulster County. They eliminated many positions, they are about 2/3 smaller than they were when they started out. The Legislature has made very few changes to Executive Hein's budget over the years, he produces very good budgets.

Q. How long after Ulster County approved the Charter did the election for County Executive take place?

A. Ms. Havranek stated in 2008, which was two years after the Charter was adopted. At the very end of their Charter you can see that it takes effect on January 1, 2009.

Q. During that period of preparation and transition were there any outside consultants brought in to assist with it or was it pretty much done in house with existing county staff?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that they just used county staff.

Q. Was that a result of having County Executive Hein already there or would that have happened regardless of who was there?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that County Executive Hein was the Administrator at that time, so the Administrator in the Legislative form of government works at the pleasure of the Legislature and he was instrumental in making sure that they had the resources that they needed to do it. Even though they did not have consultants you still have to have the resources. Staff has to have the time to devote themselves to this.

Q. Were there any significant changes made to the Charter since the Executive form of government was established?

A. Ms. Havranek stated yes in 2012 there were Charter changes made, significant in the respect that there was a push on; the Charter Revision Commission is created so that hopefully there was equal appointments by the Executive and Legislature, Minority and Majority as far as the Legislature is concerned. There is always a feel that the Executive has too much power, she does not see that is supported but power is power. There was discussion about the powers of the Executive but in the end when the Legislature decided that they were going to accept their recommendations or not, the powers of the Executive did not change but the powers of the Comptroller did change because they were not clearly defined in the Charter. The Comptroller has the auditing functions and there was some confusion of who was doing the auditing functions. The other issue that came up was the Auditing Committee, the Legislature by law aside from the Charter has the authority to audit anything that they want to audit under state law so they created an audit committee in the charter. It was aired clearly for the purpose of how to do the auditing if in fact they decide to audit anything and who would audit the Comptroller, and you are required by law to do auditing annually. The other thing that they changed was the redistricting committee, they had a timing problem that they needed to work on. The census is done every ten years and under law you cannot redistrict more than every ten years, the Charter when it was written said that the 33 member Legislature go to 23 members in 2011, the census did not go out until April or May 2011. In order to do a redistricting you need your census numbers, you need to know what the population is because it is all based on population. The redistricting committee came up with what they thought the districts should look like by early June and now you have Legislators losing their seats and Legislators with areas they never had before. The problem that happened was that in order to get it on the ballot for the November election, there is a petition process in the election law that occurs in July, they had to be done and the Legislature had to adopt the new redistricted Legislature prior to the petitioning process. During that process a lawsuit was commenced against the county by a former County Attorney and another individual. Fortunately, they got a judge who was listening and she made her decision prior to the petitioning process. They were able to get the petitions signed and filed by July. Had that not happened they would have not been able to meet the deadline of the Charter for the redistricting in 2011, they would have been in another situation where they would have been stuck with 33 Legislators for another few years.

Q. Is the redistricting in Ulster County done by the majority or a third party?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that in Ulster County it was done in house, by their Planning Department, County Attorney's Office and a redistricting committee.

Q. With the Legislative Districts that were reduced how has this impacted the role of the Legislature?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that it changed the dynamic in the Legislature because there is less rhetoric and less time wasted arguing and discussing certain things. First of all, they have a County Executive that is pushing them to do certain things and to make certain decisions regarding the budget. The Legislature is definitely involved with how they spend money. It does not take them as long to make a decision about what they want to do. It has not been a big savings as far as their salaries are concerned.

Q. How are salaries determined for elected officials in Ulster County, is there a special committee to make recommendations?

A. Ms. Havranek stated the Charter does have a review committee that looks at the salaries of elected officials and they are responsible for doing that periodically. They go through and make recommendations based on population and responsibilities and there was an increase in salaries for Legislators, it was not a big one but it was an increase. Prior to that it had not been increased in about 20 years.

Q. What is the current salary of a Legislator in Ulster County?

A. Ms. Havranek stated \$12,000. Mr. Hanson added that they work similar hours to Sullivan County Legislators.

Q. Is there a lot of changeover each voting cycle?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that it is unusual to see an incumbent voted out of office.

Q. Does the Legislature need additional budgetary accommodations now in the new form of government compared to where they were prior?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that there has not been much of a change in staff requirements, the Legislature has a Clerk to the Legislature which is a very important position, that person is responsible for noticing and making sure that the bond notices get out, the local laws and the filings with the Secretary of State and all of these things that we do as a government and that person has to be someone who works with support staff and works very closely with the County Attorney although her boss is the Chairman of the Legislature. We have been very lucky with our Clerks that they understand that they need to work with the County Attorney as well because the County Attorney is the one who has to sign off on certain things. The Legislature has its own council and that council is only responsible for preparing resolutions and local laws and advising the Chairman. The County Attorney is the sole legal advisor of the county. No attorney is the county trumps the County Attorney. Her job is to protect the county and she takes that very seriously.

Q. How has the Executive form of government been most helpful to Ulster County?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that they have one face that represents the county and that is important. It is not 33 or 23 faces that may or may not agree with each other you have one person who takes responsibility.

Q. With the administration of County Executive Hein, what do you think the greatest successes have been for the people of the county?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that County Executive Hein was born and raised in Ulster County, he grew up on a farm and had no special benefits growing up. He had a college education and was a banker for a while but it is his personal beliefs that are really important to the position. He believes that the people of Ulster County come first and that the taxpayers of Ulster County come first and that this government should be as transparent as possible. People should be able to know what they are doing and what is going on and that has been difficult for the Legislature to accept at times but they have come around to a degree. He has been able to make decisions that have been so important for this county, the budget document that he produces is well thought out. He hires department heads that qualify for the position, they are not someone's friend or relative or something else. Prior to his leadership, department heads were predominately men at this stage 52% of the department heads that have come under his jurisdiction are women, not because they are women because he feels that they are the most qualified for the position. The Department of Public Works Commissioner hired last year was the first woman to hold that title. He is also a Veteran supporter, they have the greenest county in New York State and they have all kinds of awards for that. He believes in the environment, he recently created electric charging stations on all of the facilities. They have seen a tourism increase because of it, it is something that they are all proud of.

Q. Many argue that it will increase the cost of government by adding another layer, had that been the case in Ulster County?

A. Ms. Havranek stated no they reduced the cost of government. Efficiency and economy comes by having one face and one person in charge and one person responsible to make decisions and have the courage to move the county forward.

Q. Has Ulster County improved financial management, budgeting and property taxes?

A. Ms. Havranek stated yes, absolutely, the Commissioner employs professionals when he needs them. They have a professional come in and audit but most of it is done in house.

Q. Is the due date of the budget written in the Charter?

A. Ms. Havranek stated yes, what the Charter has done is it moved back the budget process, it starts the process much earlier and the County Executive has until September to deliver his budget to the County Legislature.

Q. How has the County Executive form of government altered Ulster County's relationship with other forms of government, for example the New York City DEP or the State Governor?

A. Ms. Havranek stated that the County Executive has a working relationship with the Governor, like I said there is one face so if the County Executive needs something or the Governor needs something and they agree on it you know it is likely to happen. They have had their issues with the DEP in Ulster County, they have the Catskill Watershed, they feed NYC with their reservoirs. Several years ago in 2010-2011 they had issues with the City of New York channeling out of a muddy channel, it then disturbed the stream. It causes a lot of environmental and aesthetic problems. The County Executive took the stance that the DEP was an occupying nation as far as he was concerned. He managed to convince the DEC that they had a role to play in this because they are the enforcement entity, not the County of Ulster, they are the ones that have to enforce the violations of

what they saw and what the City of New York was doing to Ulster County and its citizens. As a result, they are looking at a new filtration avoidance determination, things have changed. DEC did commence proceedings against the City of New York and forced them to change some things that made it better in Ulster County. On the flip side, it opened up a dialogue that they never had before with the DEP and the City of New York and they now work with the DEP on various different projects. The other major thing that Mike Hein accomplished with the DEP was 11 miles along the Shokan Reservoir which had an old railroad track that has not been used in years will now become a trail.

Q. In Sullivan County, there are a lot of community related issues that are important to county residents and they relate to county leadership. Has the County Executive gotten involved with community issues such as public health, college education, public safety? Ms. Havranek already mentioned environment and Veterans so that was already answered.

A. Ms. Havranek stated in the area of public health, Executive Hein has done two things that have made a major change, he fired the Public Health Director that they had at the time the Charter took effect, this situation was not a good situation. They now have a doctor in their who has made an incredible Commissioner of Public Health. He has taken the Department of Mental Health and has privatized a lot of it so that they do not have a redundancy in the Mental Health area. They now contract for services where they had employees before, a lot of things that we wanted to get done were not getting done before, with less money but also being responsive to the mental health issues that they have in this county. The environment also goes hand in hand with public health, they initiated a lot of programs through the Department of Public Health and the Commissioner. They moved Public Health out of the old building in with the Mental Health and the combining of the Public Health and Mental Health Department has made a big difference because they do go hand in hand. College education, one of the things that has been happening lately is that they have become involved with their community colleges budget process. Normally, what would happen in the past is that the community college would adopt their budget without any input from the county and then the Legislature would meet and adopt the budget. Last year it became apparent that the community college was in need of some expertise from the county, so they decided to let them know that they were there to help them. The County Executive also let them know that he was not happy with the tuition increase and there had to be a better way. They worked with them with their budget, they changed leadership in the interim and again this year they have had the county budget people work with them before the budget went to the trustees and then to the county for adoption. They are putting in a solar project on their Ulster County Community College premises and another solar project on a defunct closed landfill, which will save the county an enormous amount of money in electrical costs.

Mr. Hanson thanked Ms. Havranek for her time and then opened the floor up to further questions from the Commission members.

Mr. Burckard inquired seeing how their government operates at this point, if you are looking at your Charter and your Code, do you think you are better served by having a shorter Charter and putting more of the mechanics or operations in the Code because it is easier to amend the Code when necessary, or do you feel that you are better served by putting a lot more into the Charter initially?

Ms. Havranek stated that the Code is always going to be bigger because it encompasses your local laws and a bunch of things that are necessary for the operation of the Code. However, she would say that the Charter should be smaller, you really need to be careful in the Charter by defining the powers and the duties of the

elected officials and the separate branches of government. You really need to concentrate on that Charter and make sure that those basic decisions about who is responsible for what and what their duties and responsibilities are and if they are clear. It is something that cannot be changed without going for a referendum on it. They put a clause in their Charter that if in fact there is any effort to curtail or transfer the powers of one elected official to another, it needs to go to a mandatory referendum and that stops a lot of nonsense. It is so important that the Executive have the authority as the Chief Executive Officer to do what he or she has to do to keep the county running efficiently.

Mr. Ferguson inquired if Ms. Havranek can clarify the scale of government employees before and after County Executive?

Ms. Havranek stated that she does not have the number of employees in front of her but she thinks that they have something like 1800 employees to begin with and it is around 1300 now.

Mr. Hanson added when he was there before they sold Golden Hill the budget was \$363 million and before he left it was around \$331 million, which is a \$30 million drop. The decrease in employees was from the sale of the home and through attrition. They reorganized departments and what the departments did, it was done strategically over four or five years to lower the size of the government.

Ms. Havranek stated that the biggest expense that they have had for the county is the retaining of labor counsel. Their County Attorney's office is much bigger than what Sullivan County has but the demand of services for her office far exceeds the staff that she has so they contract for special legal fees. They use Roemer Wallens out of Albany, you cannot just move people and lay people off without making sure that you are in compliance with civil service law. It is one of the best expenses that this county makes by hired outside labor counsel.

Mr. Liblick thanked Ms. Havranek for this session because they have been debating these issues and the issue of County Executive for many months now and she has clarified something that many of them have been saying all along. He inquired if in Albany, she feels that there is more attention in Ulster County right now pre County Executive?

Ms. Havranek stated absolutely, County Executive Mike Hein and Ulster County is well known because of him. She thinks that Governor Cuomo sometimes copies the programs and projects that we start.

Mr. Liblick inquired what Executive Mike Heins restrictions were when he was an Administrator as opposed to the County Executive? What clear differences do you see in his performance?

Ms. Havranek stated he served at the pleasure of the Legislature, he could not be autonomous to make decisions without a committee or the Legislature and everyone putting their ideas forward. For instance, when they finally went to the Charter, January 1st came along, weeks before January, the Legislature being the only form of government that they had, argued for weeks about where the County Executive office was going to be. January 1st the County Executive came in and said this is where it is going to be and this is where you are going to be. They were not happy about it but that is the kind of decision making the County Executive has. The Legislature could have tried to stop him but they knew that he was doing what they could not do and what they needed him to do.

Mr. Burckard stated that this whole process is rather fluid, and he is assuming if the Legislature asked the Charter Commission to help them and work with them on the language and changes to the Charter and the Code

based on the recommendations that they are making. He inquired if there is anything that prohibits that, this is a wide open process that works differently from county to county as it works out best so the relationship between the Legislature, Commission and County Attorney's office can work as the county deems appropriate, there are no prohibitions against the process, is this correct?

Ms. Havranek stated that Mr. Burckard is absolutely correct, he should know though that when they did the revisions, she takes her position as County Attorney very seriously and politics should not get in the mix. On the County Executive side, she was going to be in the room when they were working on the revisions, there were members of the opposition party that were on the Commission that felt that they should have their own legal counsel. Her position was that she is the sole legal advisor so no matter what they do here and they hire their own legal counsel she is still the one that is going to be advising the Executive and still the one that is going to be telling the Legislature what she thinks and what her legal opinion is. The County Attorney is important in this process, but when the Commission was working on the first Charter they were fortunate to have people on the Commission who were dedicated to getting a document done and coming to a consensus about what they thought the county should look like. They were dedicated to getting it done and getting it to the Legislature so that the Legislature could then move on with it. There was a process that involved the Legislature, County Administrator and the County Attorney's office was crucial.

Mr. Liblick inquired if the Comptroller was that position or was there a Treasurer before that?

Ms. Havranek stated that they had an elected Treasurer before that and that position was eliminated and an elected Comptroller's position was created in the Charter.

Co-Chairperson Harrison inquired about the audit process, the audit process is notorious where people assume that they are going through and looking like a forensics but what is the normal audit process in the organization of the county? Is it to make sure that the cash count is the cash count or is to look for forensic issues?

Ms. Havranek stated that it is not either one of those, she is not a CPA or accountant and even in private practice she would not advise her clients on something that had to do with a financial matter. The audit process is a transparent process, it is an opportunity for the government to check and see, do we have enough funds for this. That is one of the things that the Comptroller looks at first, does this project have a contract, is there enough funds in this line item for that. When the invoices come in, is there enough money in the contract to pay this. Was this project required to be a bid, there are procurement laws in New York State that we all follow. That is part of the audit process and they have a new financial system which has been very helpful for the entire county because anyone can go on and look and see who spent what on what. The Legislature's role is that they are responsible for approving contracts that exceed \$50,000 anything under \$50,000 it belongs to the Executive for approval and then it goes to the Comptroller after that. The Comptroller does not have the authority to approve that budget or expenses, that is not their role and it should not be. The Comptroller's responsibility is to make sure that the money is being spent in the way that it was intended to. The Comptroller has attempted to do what he may consider forensic audits but they were not forensic audits in fact there were a lot of inaccuracy in them as well.

Mr. Hanson stated that there are a couple of different roles on the accounting or auditing side, you have the independent audit which is basically at the scope of the Legislature, that is the organization that is going to look at the year-end financials and make sure that everything balances, they deal with the finance office and the

budget office to go over those details. The second component is the budget, when the Executives office delivers the budget to the Legislature, the Legislature actually hires an accounting firm that comes in and actually reviews the budget for them, they go through it in detail and do two weeks of questions and answers with the budget. That was something that he did when he was there, he would sit down with the accountants while they went through line by line to inquire why they budgeted that amount for this. The accountants would then give a report to the Legislature about what they agree with and what they do not agree with. It then went back and forth in the Legislative Wage and Means Committee and the Budget office to say this is the final thing that they are going to agree to on the Executive budget and then they approve the final budget. The third component is the Comptroller and to his understanding the Comptroller can do audits but the detailed audit is not really to do that detailed audit work. He does have an accountant typically on staff but they are looking at the day to day operations more and how that is being done and if it is being done in compliance. Also, the departmental operations to see how they are doing their role as a department, are they properly following SOP and are they in compliance with whatever they are supposed to be in compliance with. Those are the reviews and the studies that he then releases. Forensic audits are not the responsibility of the Comptroller.

Co-Chairperson Harrison inquired if there is a third party that comes in and reviews the budget every time a budget is done.

Mr. Hanson stated yes. The Legislature is not involved in the pre-budget process and they should not be, that is done by the Executive, it is the Executive's budget to prepare. When he prepares it, he is required by Charter to give it to the Legislature by first Friday of September, so they have two and a half months to fully review the budget. They could either hire someone in house and have a budget assistant on staff or they could pay the same amount and hire a firm to review the budget. It is probably more effective for their choice to have an outside firm come in and when he was there they dealt with a different firm each year.

Ms. Havranek stated that one thing that she forgot to mention that she feels is very important is that the Executive has veto power so every act of the Legislature, he has veto power. She has seen that in every Charter that she has looked at. The County Executive in this county has vetoed, she thinks, three different acts of the Legislature over the past seven years and predominantly because he was advised that what they did, they could not do. He does not take that power very lightly.

Mr. Burckard inquired if Ms. Havranek stated previously that the Charter requires the Legislature to have their own counsel, it is not optional and would she recommend it be a requirement or optional to the Legislature to decide.

Ms. Havranek stated that she thinks that it is good for the Legislature to have separate counsel because for them as attorneys, they have to determine who their client is. Under the law, her first responsibility is to the County of Ulster and then she goes down the line. There have been times where she says that she is conflicted out of this. She then described a dispute between the Comptroller and the Commissioner of Social Services.

Mr. Hanson stated that the Comptroller also has the right to subpoena. Ms. Havranek added that the Legislature does as well.

Mr. Ferguson inquired if there are any negatives that you see with the transition to County Executive that you see in Ulster County?

Ms. Havranek stated none at all, in her opinion it would have been nice it was done sooner. She continued by wishing the Commission luck and stated that it takes a lot of courage to come to this conclusion and it is the Commission's job to convince them. The Charter Commission here in Ulster County was very vocal about it because they strongly believed in it.

Mr. Liblick inquired if it was unanimous.

Ms. Havranek stated that she believes it was, she did not sit in on every meeting but she never heard that there was any controversy. If there were any adversarial issues they kept it amongst themselves.

Mr. Altman inquired if there are term limits in the county?

Ms. Havranek stated no term limits and no staggered terms.

The Commission then thanked Ms. Havranek for her time.

Continued Discussion Regarding Ms. Havranek's Presentation:

Mr. Burckard stated one general concept, he focused on what she was saying looking back in time and as they transition from what we were a Board of Supervisors changing to a Legislature and what they went through, he can remember similarities. The old board in essence was eliminating themselves, they were not changing power, they were gone. It was an enormous change and still the board because of what was happening were in favor of it. He thinks good people at times can make good decisions when they realize that the result of it will benefit everyone. It happened there and it happened for us back when they made that change.

Co-Chairperson Harrison stated that she also picked up that they have legal counsel, the minority and majority. That may be something that they recommend that they put into the next budget for the current as opposed to going to the County Attorney. It would be a third party for them to talk to.

Mr. Liblick stated that he thinks that they have that now, when they had the issue with the permissive referendum, they paid \$5,000 for legal counsel, they discussed it amongst themselves because there was opposition. It is a good idea to do that.

Mr. Altman stated that he mentioned last month and as they have these little discussions and they come up with an idea, he thinks that they should have a master list of these ideas so that they can go back and reference it. Otherwise it is just going to get lost in conversations.

Co-Chairperson Harrison agreed.

Mr. Burckard stated that one thing that he feels came out of here very strongly is that the County Executive is in charge and there is not any question in anyone's mind. If you cross the line in Ulster or Orange County you know who is running the show. When you have a vacuum it compounds that loss tremendously and he thinks that is one of the things that they are finding here.

Mr. Richardson inquired if they are at that point now where they would want to take a straw vote to see what the feeling is in terms of staying where they are or going to a County Executive. If the feeling around the table is that we should move in that direction, that is a whole different focus on what they should be doing going forward instead of talking about strengthening any departments or the Manager. It is a whole different focus. If

they say it is in the best interest to go to a County Executive, then they have to start looking at how should that Charter be recommended.

Mr. McPhillips stated that one thing that bothered him from the last time, when he asked the question of why did the last Charter stop. They said that it went to them and the Legislature never made the decision. He then inquired who kept checking up on them to make sure and the answer was no one did. I agree to the extent that if this table agrees that we should go to a County Executive, we continue that route. Let's say that decision gets denied by the Legislature, they should still be able to meet to say, let us strengthen the positions that we need because they are not following their recommendations to have a County Executive. He thinks that they should have a backup plan instead of just putting it out there.

Mr. Liblick stated that petitioning is the backup plan.

Co-Chairperson Harrison stated that in that scenario they responded by rejecting it, what happened the last time the Charter was reviewed they did not address it at all it is in none of their minutes at all. So, at least a vote is an action.

Mr. Ferguson stated that as he understands the last Charter Commission submitted a report at the end of the process which is easier to word. If they can finite resolutions like the one about staggered terms, it will be a single issue for them to take up. They will not say that they are not going to do all that but really tease out single issues they feel are important.

Mr. Burckard inquired what specifics?

Mr. Ferguson stated like County Executive if that is what they are thinking.

Mr. Liblick stated that he wanted to hear from Mr. Hanson who was on the Commission and first handedly knows the county government and Sullivan County to discuss his opinion on this issue and where he thinks they should go.

Mr. Hanson stated he thinks that he made a valuable point but he also understands some of the comments from the other members. He has studied county government for a total of twelve years and he has been studying local government management. It was his study when he was an Undergraduate and it was his study when he received his Masters and he also worked in it. The first time he ever interned, he interned with the Sullivan County Legislature and did a report on Sullivan County verses Delaware County on the new Charter verses the old Supervisors form. The current Charter in his opinion was written with particular intent and the intent was right, however it is unmanageable for many reasons that Ms. Havranek just mentioned. There is no way to hold people accountable to the current Charter. They could strengthen it battle it down and make it stronger, which might enhance the responsibility and the authority of the Manager which he would say would be a good idea. How long does that last before it is filter down again becomes the question. The reality that he found out about this state and particularly this arena of the state, when you go to upstate counties it is not the same thing or even in other states. When a Manager is far better than a County Executive. Due to our region and the way we compete on a state level for resources in a political way, due to our region and the problems that we have I think that without going to a County Executive you will have complete failure in this county within the next ten years. He just does not believe that we can manage it, you do not know who is in charge, no one knows who is in charge at any particular time. It can change with a particular person at a given moment but ultimately that gets

altered very quickly. His opinion is the County Executive is the best way to go, not because he thinks that they are always going to get the perfect candidate, you might not get the Mike Hein, you may get someone else that you do not care for. It is a political position but the difference is when it comes up to a vote, they are held responsible for that failure. Right now, when the county fails, no one is particularly held responsible there is no accountability on that matter. With a County Executive, Mike Hein raised the tax levy by 5% because there is a new jail, Mike Hein is going to be held accountable for that. He is going to have to answer to the taxpayers why he raised their taxes.

Mr. Altman inquired would a County Manager who is interviewed and hired as a professional also be in the same position if he was not afraid to be fired if he could only be fired by a super majority, wouldn't that be the same thing? He then stated that Ms. Havranek said that what happened there was that the Legislature had meeting after meeting and nothing would get done, that happens here and that can be fixed too. He worries about an elected official, Ulster County got lucky and they got a great guy.

Mr. Walters stated that he has sat through many of these meetings and he keeps hearing the same general thing, that nobody is in charge. He sat through a meeting last week in the room over there and there is a resolution and one of the Legislators said "well that is taking power away from the Legislature." If they want to go to a County Executive, do they think that the Legislature is going to give up their power and if they are not they are spinning their wheels. Then, they have to come up with another way to make the system work. They had a super majority for our County Manager and by a simple majority of the Legislature, they threw that out and went back to a simple majority and got rid of the County Manager. The County Manager is always the fall guy when things do not go right, they do not look in the mirror it is always the County Manager when things go wrong. They are looking for a magic bullet and there is no magic bullet for any of this.

Mr. Ferguson stated that Ulster County Legislature did vote for a County Executive. They had Luis Alvarez come in here two months ago and said this thing is not working. Our Legislature is not blind to the fact that this county is dysfunctional, he would say they know better than anyone and he would not say that they cannot be persuaded.

Mr. Richardson stated that in regards to the whole super majority thing, they may have a super majority in their corner until the next election.

Mr. Liblick stated that he remembers very vividly they had a County Manager who had a jail situation that a new jail needed to be built and there was no jail built and now the people are in an uproar screaming about overturning the tax cap. The reality is if you had a County Manager who was managing this county and said you have to build a jail, they would have the jail today at lower costs. That alone is a reason why you need to have an elected leader for Leni Binders term, Chris Cunningham's term, Jonathan Rouis's term, Scott Samuelson's term they have been hearing about jails about this building and that building. This Legislature comes in and says that they want to confront the issue and the people are in an uproar. If you had a County Manager doing the work that a County Manager is supposed to do that is accountable, you would have a jail. With the super majority, if you are a politically controlled Legislative body, which you had then when they voted against it but you had Democrats and Republicans that gathered together and hired outside counsel to overturn that. It was done for a simple reason because it appeared that there was a rubber stamp to allow the County Manager to do things, Legislators were not informed, things were not getting done. Then, the word

micromanagement comes into play and Ira Steingart went and sued the county, and the judge said that the Legislature was right they could do what they did not to have the super majority.

Mr. Burckard stated that they went around the table and what they all agreed to was that someone has to be in charge. There may be differences about what that is but everyone agreed that someone has to be in charge. The prior Commission spent a lot of time bringing in County Executives, County Managers, Chairs and County Legislators and getting their perspectives about how all of this really worked before they made a final decision. One of the things occurring as they were doing their debates and investigations was that down in Orange County you had Democratic County Executive, a Republican controlled Legislature, and for four years, they kept the lights on and plowed the roads. They never did the water loop that just came up, they can discuss personalities forever because it does not matter if you elect someone or appoint someone, if the person themselves do not have the capability, power and temperament to do it, it will not get done. They can do a lot with the County Manager, they can make them very powerful but if the person themselves does not have the ability to do it you are not going to gain anything. The same thing happens if you elect. For them to make a decision, they have to make the decision on the form of the government and they have to take out the possibilities of maybe they will get a good person and maybe they will not get a good person. He knows that they make their argument, if you continue to bring that in you will never be able to make a decision. It has to be made on what is the best form of government for this county at this point in time.

Mr. Hanson stated that two things from the Executive form that are fundamentally different from the Manager form. The typical role of the Manager is they are supposed to be the executive of that county, the way the Charter is written is that our current Manager should be an executive. He is not acting as an executive, he is very capable, he is a very good administrator and does a good job, however that role over the past ten years has been diminished. It has been diminished by the Legislators. When you have an Executive form of government where you have that same role, the Executive has that executive authority and when the Legislature gets a little squirrely and they start going out and trying to make these changes, a resolution or local law, that power that he has is to veto. That protests the Charter that is the check and balance and right now, there is no check and balance. If the Legislature wants to undermine the Charter because they want to do something that they want to do for political reasons, they can do it if they have the votes. The role in Albany, the County Executive when they want to talk to the Governor's staff they are going to meet with a Deputy Secretary, 2nd to the Governor and the Director of Operations. If it is really important they may get 10 minutes with the Governor. When a Chairman of the Legislature or a Manager come up typically they are going to meet with junior staff, it is just the political nature of it.

Mr. Altman inquired isn't the nature because of the political parties?

Mr. Hanson stated of course.

Mr. Altman stated that the political parties choose who runs, that does not mean that they are qualified.

Mr. Hanson stated that you have the same thing with political based appointments. He stated that Mike Hein is not a political guy.

Mr. Altman stated that is great for Ulster County but how often are you going to find a qualified individual to run here.

Mr. Hanson stated that in our county you have many individuals who are very qualified in all levels of government, Legislators, Town Supervisors, people sitting at this table who are capable of being a County Executive. When Mike Hein first started, he is not what he is today, he was not this man that everyone thought could be the next Congressman or Governor, he could barely speak in public. He developed it over time and became the leader he is, he was a good decision maker because he came from the banking industry, that was his talent. He knew enough to know his weaknesses and hired people around him to assist in those weaknesses. Are you always going to get that, no you will not but at the same time are you always going to get a great Manager, no you are not. That argument is flawed because it is the same argument on either side. It goes back to Mr. Burckard's argument that it is form first, person second.

Mr. Ferguson stated that he knows this is really obvious but worth noting, not only is there confusion in this building with who is in charge, which there is but he does not think that the residents in the county understand the structure either. The advantage of the County Executive is it mirrors what they understand the government to be. It is like the Federal Government, you have a Legislature, a Congress and you have a President. It is like the State Government you have a Governor and a Legislative body. If we had an Executive, we would have a very clear form and everyone would automatically understand that.

Mr. Walters stated that he wants to go back to what happened with the super majority and the County Manager. The way the system works is the Legislature has certain powers where they can change the law or the Charter the way it reads. There was a motion to have a super majority and they changed it back, they got sued and after the suit was settled there was still time to petition to go from that form to a permissive referendum. It was not written in stone that it had to be a permissive referendum to do this or not written in stone in the Charter that it had to be a super majority. A super majority has to hire and it was to fire but they changed it to a simple majority. As far as the jail that they are getting less jail for the same money they would have four years ago is because the voters chose to keep three and change six just like they did this time and they came in here and tried to cut here and cut there on the jail to keep the costs down and they did, they got a smaller jail and now the costs are the same. That would not matter if there was an Executive or not someone has to control the purse strings.

Mr. Liblick stated that is not true, if it were done by other administrations they would have had a larger jail at a cheaper cost.

Mr. Walters stated that they are not talking about other administrations, they are talking about two years right now that Mr. Liblick mentioned.

Mr. Liblick stated no, he just went from Leni Binder, Chris Cunningham, Jonathan Rouis, Scott Samuelson and Luis Alvarez. Mr. Alvarez came before them a few weeks ago and told the Commission how he wants, he is telling them he wants a County Executive and he is sitting there as a Chairman saying that he cannot get this stuff done because of the politics of everyone else.

Co-Chairperson Harrison stated that the one thing that she will say is that the strategic plan has not been updated. It should have been updated in 2010 via the Charter.

Mr. Liblick stated that they do not even know what it is.

Mr. Walters stated that with the last Legislature, he went to all of those meetings for strategic planning and he sat through all those meetings and they did absolutely nothing with it.

Mr. Liblick stated that shows why you need leadership.

Mr. Levinson stated there is the problem.

Mr. McPhillips stated that maybe it is not just who is in power but people recognizing that they are not the ones in power. The board should be setting policy and procedures. He knows as a councilman that they spend so much time trying to run other departments because you do not have direct people that you can go to. They lose the vision of how they are expanding Liberty and getting Liberty to where it is because they are busy spinning wheels on departmental aspects. If the County Legislature understood that the Executive was in charge and they were not, he thinks it makes their job easier to set policies and procedures for the county.

Mr. Burckard stated that the only problem with that is, even if the Legislature understands who is in charge, if the person in charge is not in charge they can step and fill the backend.

Mr. Richardson stated that he has had the same reservations early on that Mr. Altman expresses about the County Executive. If they elect someone who is really not qualified and your stuck with them, who makes that decision, the parties are going to decide who runs. All that being aside, he accepts what Jerry Benjamin said to them right in the beginning, you have to look at the form and not the people in the positions. It has to be the form of government to best move the government forward and hope for the best. If you get the wrong person in, he will not be there long.

Mr. Levinson stated or find out he is in over his head and quite.

Mr. Altman stated that he was sent to military school in tenth grade and that was where he met Donald Trump. He was an eleventh grader and Donald Trump was in eighth grade, he was brash then and a bully then but why he mentions this is the run for the presidency brought him to the table but it opened a can of worms with the silent majority. The Congress is polarized and it goes right down to State Government, you cannot pass ethic laws in Albany because they are afraid they will be falling on their own swords. So, what he is talking about is they have to do something for Sullivan County, for the people of Sullivan County and they are voted second from bottom here and second from bottom there. He is not involved with politics and he does not want to be, he commends the people that want to do good for their fellow citizens and he resents those in a position of power. When he got appointed by Ira Steingart, he thought Sullivan County has been great to him, let him give something back. Then, people were filling his ears with things about people around the table and he found them to be completely wrong. Mr. Liblick may have a bad delivery but he is passionate and his heart is in it. We have to do what is good for the people of this county not what is good for us. That is why he talks about term limits, raising the salaries and having a Manager who is educated in running the county.

The Commission had a brief back and forth discussion about several things that they need to do and repeated discussions and points stated above.

Mr. Burckard stated that if they are going to go to a powerful Executive then the Charter needs to be written in a very powerful way.

Mr. Ferguson seconded Mr. Richardson's motion to take action to have a straw vote on changing the form of government to a strong County Executive.

Mr. Walters no.

Mr. Richardson yes.

Ms. Sprague yes.

Mr. Liblick yes.

Mr. Burckard yes.

Mr. Sutherland yes.

Mr. Ferguson yes.

Mr. Altman no.

Mr. McPhillips yes.

Ms. Johnson-Fields yes.

Ms. Harrison yes.

The Commission inquired what Mr. Hanson was in favor of.

Mr. Hanson stated that his first choice would be County Executive, he thinks that would be the best form of government for the county right now. If it fails, he does think that they should have a preparation to go to a strong County Manager.

Mr. Burckard stated that he was involved very heavily in NYSAC for over thirty years and there is a big difference between what goes on down in the southeast and what goes on in the northwest. County Manager form works better up in that area, down here you need a heavy weighted form of government to hold your own with the boys that are around you.

Co-Chairperson Harrison stated that a County Executive appears to be a more responsive form of government.

The Commission then continued a brief discussion about the benefits of having a County Executive.

Mr. Altman inquired if the Legislature does not go along with the County Executive are they willing to run this referendum themselves.

The Commission stated yes.

Mr. McPhillips stated that he knows that Ms. Havranek spoke about it and he knows that you get rid of the Treasurer position and make them a Comptroller, he inquired if that would still be an elected position?

Mr. Burckard stated that is absolutely not correct, the Treasurer seizes to exist.

Mr. Altman inquired why?

Mr. Burckard stated because you are never going to have a form of government with another person who is an elected official for a four-year term that handles the finances. That is a disaster, if you are going to go to an Executive form of government, the Treasurer is gone replaced by a Finance Commissioner appointed by the Executive to work for the Executive.

Mr. Altman inquired what the job of the Legislators will be?

Mr. McPhillips stated that he thinks one of the biggest assets this county has is Nancy Buck.

Mr. Burckard stated that she will make arguments why you should not do this.

Mr. McPhillips stated that trying to eliminate something that is going defunked; you are actually getting rid of one of your best assets.

Mr. Richardson stated that they would have a Comptroller so she could run for that position.

Mr. Hanson stated that with regards to the Legislative question, the less power statement is something that they started sharing that they should not have. It is not necessarily the nature of less power, they would have the same amount of power that they are supposed to have now but they are not using it. Their job is supposed to be to set policy and they will still have that opportunity. The key policy document among government is the budget. The Executive has the opportunity to create that budget, set policy in it and then the Legislature has the opportunity to say that they like this and do not like that. Through the rest of the year they have the opportunity to set policy that is the right way for the county.

Mr. Altman stated that they will not want to give up their power that easy and they are the ones that have to agree with them to give up their own power.

Mr. McPhillips stated that six new people just came in and now is the time to give them this because they do not realize the power that they have yet.

Mr. Ferguson stated that they are talking about them accepting a plan that they have not even come up with yet. Let us come up with a good plan and then submit that to them.

Mr. Walters stated that Mr. Altman talks about raising the pay and in Ulster County they went from 33 to 23 and they pay them \$12,000 a year and they still get people to run for office, it is not about the money.

Mr. Altman stated that they should have a few of the members write up something on this.

There was some discussion regarding Ulster County and their taxes, jail and social services.

Mr. Altman stated that if they want to move ahead should they have a mini-committee draft something so that they can move forward on this issue.

Mr. Burckard stated that it is not that simplistic, you have to give them something more specific.

Mr. Altman stated just something for this committee to pass.

Mr. McPhillips stated that Ms. Havranek made the point that the Charter and Code go together and that we should be looking at both of them.

Mr. Richardson stated that Mr. Altman agreed that although he does not agree with the Executive at this time, he is willing to go with the majority.

Mr. Altman agreed.

Mr. Richardson continued by inquiring how they respond to Mr. Walters concerns he thinks it would be great if they were unanimous.

Mr. Walters stated that it is obvious that the majority want a County Executive, so it will be his job to make sure that it is written properly and does what they want it to do. He will be on board to get the job done, he will not undermine it. The problem that they have here is people's perception that we have a County Manager that has no clout but yet when he had a conversation with someone from one of the departments today and they like the way Josh does business as a personality because he is more laid back, everyone has their own management skills.

Mr. Richardson stated that he appreciates what he is saying and he inquired if they can all work together and move forward to put something down for County Executive.

The Commission had a brief discussion about several ways to rewrite the Charter and to look at other counties to see what they have in the Charter.

Mr. Liblick stated that the next few meetings can be working sessions.

The Commission agreed that they have had enough speakers.

Co-Chairperson Harrison stated that she felt that they needed to have the Supervisors come to one of their meetings.

After a brief discussion about the Supervisors coming to a future meeting, a decision was not formally made. The Commission did decide to not have any speakers come to the July meeting.

Mr. Richardson asked the members to look at as many other county Charters as they could before the next meeting.

Mr. Burckard asked the members to think about the form, is everyone in agreement with a strong form with no Treasurer, etc. and how they are going to do it.

Mr. Hanson stated that Suffolk County has a very strong Charter for the County Executive and Ulster County looked at that Charter during their transition. Ulster County was very successful and very similar to Sullivan County.

Mr. Burckard stated going back to why the Legislature would want to support this. He would hope that they are smart enough that if they have a Charter Commission that is prepared to go forward with this no matter what they do. Tactically, the smartest decision they could make is to agree to put it up for a vote and then go out to lobby against it if they do not want it. If they just say, no they are not going to do that they have turned the bully pulpit over to whatever comes out of this to force that issue and take it to the public. He would hope that they are not that foolish but they might be.

Mr. Walters stated that he pulled the census information regarding the population just as an FYI for the Commission.

Co-Chairperson Harrison wanted to make sure that everyone received the response letter from the Co-Chairs to the Legislature.

The Commission did and there were no further comments.

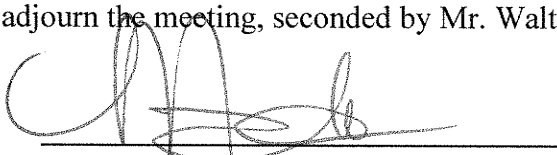
PUBLIC COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT:

July 20, 2016 at 6:00 PM *Legislative Hearing Room*

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Richardson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Walters, meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.



Michelle Huck, Secretary