

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Historically, the Board of County Commissioners has been responsible for administration of county government. As counties evolved from primarily rural to urban development, more urban type governmental services in the unincorporated areas of the counties were demanded. To address the needs, the Florida Legislature enacted legislation allowing those counties desiring to do so to hire administrators to handle the administration of governmental services.

In Escambia County, the Board of County Commissioners first hired a separate administrator in the 1970's. In 1985, the Board of County Commissioners formally adopted an ordinance creating the position of County Administrator, which ordinance listed the duties and responsibilities of that office. Based on a recent amendment to the ordinance, it takes a super majority vote of the Board of County Commissioners to terminate the employment of the individual serving as County Administrator.

At present, local governmental services are administered by the County Administrator through the following organization.

County Administration

The following agencies, department and offices report directly to the County Administrator:

- Community Services and Public Safety Agency
- Public Works and Land Management Agency
- Administration Services Department
- Special Projects
- Office of Public Information and Communications
- Office of Purchasing
- Human Resources and EEO Office

The Community Services and Public Safety Agency is headed by an Assistant County Administrator and has the following departments and services reporting directly to him:

- Department of Facilities Management
- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Department of Community Service
- Department of Public Safety
- Extension Service

The Public Works and Land Management Agency is headed by an Assistant County Administrator and has the following departments and offices reporting directly to him:

- Department of Roads
- Department of Engineering
- Department of Growth Management
- Department of Building Inspections
- Department of Solid Waste Management
- Department of Neighborhood and Environmental Services
- Office of Information Resources

As discussed in the paper entitled “Structure or Form of County Government,” the appointment of the County Administrator may be the responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners or of the Chief Executive, depending upon the form of government specified in the charter.

In most charters, the Board of County Commissioners is designated as the legislative body for local government and the County Administrator is responsible for implementation of the policies enacted or adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and for administering the day-to-day operations of county government.

In drafting a charter for Escambia County, the Charter Commission will be considering several options relating to administration of local governmental services:

- (1) Should the charter provide for the position of a County Administrator, and, if so, what duties and responsibilities should be assigned to that position?
- (2) Should the position be filled by a simple or super majority vote of the Board of the County Commissioners?
- (3) Should the County Administrator be subject to termination by a simple or a super majority vote of the Board of County Commissioners?
- (4) Should the charter specify minimum qualifications for the position?
- (5) Should the charter require the creation or retention of specified departments in the county’s organizational structure?
- (6) Should the charter specify that the County Administrator is responsible for administering the day-to-day operations of county government and contain a non-interference clause prohibiting County Commissioners from directing the work of county employees reporting to the County Administrator?

The Charter Commission welcomes input from the public on the foregoing options and on any other matter relating to the effective and efficient administration of local governmental services.