

Official

Minutes Of The Escambia County Charter Commission Meeting
Held April 1, 2003 - 4:00 p.m.
Escambia County Courthouse – Third Floor
(4:00 p.m. – 7:05 p.m.)
(Eleventh Meeting)

Members

Present:	M. J. Menge, Chair	Frank Montenes
	Rita A. Riffel, Vice Chairman	E. P. “Ted” Nickinson, Jr.
	Charles F. Beall, Jr.	Lucy Rentz
	Barbara Forehand “Bobbie” Brown	Phyllis D. Sims
	Elbert Jones, Jr.	Lamar Smith
	Denis McKinnon, Jr.	Garrett W. Walton

Members	LeRoy Boyd (Illness)
Absent:	Johnny W. Blackmon (Meeting Conflict)
	Laurel Dick (Meeting Conflict)

Others Present:

Rod Powell, Human Resources Director, Escambia County
Paulette Stallworth, E.E.O.C., Escambia County Human Resources
Dr. Wynn Teasley, Executive Director, UWF Whitman Center

AGENDA NUMBER

1. Call to order - Chairman Menge at 4:00pm.
2. Approval of the agenda.

Motion made by Mr. McKinnon and seconded by Mr. Jones to approve the agenda and carried 9 – 0, with Mr. Beall, Ms. Brown, and Ms. Sims arriving late.

3. Report from the County’s Human Resources Department.

Mr. Rod Powell, SPHR, Director of the County’s Human Resources Department, addressed the Commission regarding the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Plan and the County’s proposed reforms to the Civil Service System.

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING – Continued

AGENDA NUMBER - Continued

Ms. Paulette Stallworth with the Human Resources Department furnished the Commission with a handout entitled, “Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Plan.” This Plan contained six goals and the actions steps required to achieve those goals. Ms. Stallworth reviewed the Plan with the Commission. Many members of the Commission questioned Ms. Stallworth and Mr. Powell on the completeness of the plan. Although the Plan purported to provide timetables, there were no real timetables.

Mr. Powell explained that he was hired as Director of the Human Resources Department approximately two months ago and a great deal remained to be done to organize the department. He is presently seeking someone to fill the position of EEO officer. Mr. Powell then provided the Commission with a brief power point presentation of the reforms the County proposes to make to the Civil Service System. A hard copy of the presentation was furnished to the members of the Commission.

The County, in requesting the Legislative delegation to allow it to withdraw from the Civil Service System, envisioned that there would be a transition period for the changeover. The County intended to develop its own implementing regulations and brief its managers, employees, and unions on the County’s plan. There would have to be a reorganization of the current Human Resources Systems and Structure.

The County has never completed its plan and implementing regulations because the Legislative delegation declined to introduce legislation which would allow the County to withdraw from the Civil Service System. Mr. Powell stated he would provide the Commission with a copy of the County’s plan with the understanding that it was incomplete and there were certain provisions the County intended to rework.

The Commission requested a point-by-point comparison of the current Civil Service System and the County’s proposed plan and an explanation on a specific basis of how the County’s plan would be an improvement. Several other questions were proposed which Mr. Powell indicated were difficult to answer because the Civil Service Board is currently responsible for the recruitment, testing and classification of all classified employees. Some members of the Commission questioned whether the County was prepared to assume the responsibilities presently preformed by the Civil Service Board.

The Commission advised Mr. Powell that it was very interested in the entire Personnel/Human Resources situation, and indicated it intended to have Mr. Powell and representatives of the Civil Service Board reappear before the Commission in an attempt to determine the best system for the County and its employees.

THE COMMISSION RECESSED FROM 5:45 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Ms. Riffel, Mr. Beall, and Mr. Nickinson departed prior to Whitman Center’s presentation.

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING – Continued

AGENDA NUMBER - Continued

4. Report from the Whitman Center.

Dr. Wynn Teasley, Executive Director of the Whitman Center, furnished the Commission with a written report entitled “Overview of Escambia County Government and Responses to Questions.” This report was prepared in response to the Commission’s letter dated January 30, 2003, requesting that the Whitman Center undertake certain projects.

Dr. Teasley verbally touched upon the highlights of the report. The report was broken into three parts. Part I assessed the relative taxing, spending and tax burden of fourteen counties in Florida with a population between 200,000 and 500,000. Seven of the counties were non-charter and seven were charter counties. Part II deals with county government structure, and Part III briefly addresses the Civil Service situation.

The research conducted by the Whitman Center indicates that in 2000, non-chartered counties had a higher millage rate and levied higher property taxes on a per capita basis than chartered counties. Charter counties raise more revenue than non-chartered counties in franchise fees and utility service taxes. Non-tax revenues of chartered counties exceed the revenues raised by non-chartered counties from these sources.

Comparing Escambia County with both chartered and non-chartered counties, the Whitman Center found Escambia County:

- (1) Had the second highest millage rate of the fourteen counties.
- (2) Raised more revenue per capita from sales and user taxes than any of the other fourteen counties.
- (3) Was second among the fourteen counties in the amount of revenue raised per capita from the collection of franchise fees.
- (4) Raised more revenues per person in 2000 than the average for either charter or non-charter counties.
- (5) Ranks at or near the top in county tax effort demanded of its residents and landholders.
- (6) Had lower total fund balances, a higher dependence on intergovernmental revenues, a higher level of debt and a greater declining fund balance than the average chartered and non-chartered counties to which it was compared.

In Part II, the report reviewed the different forms of governmental structure used by both counties and municipalities. Most Florida counties that have adopted charters have elected the County Manager form of government.

The report also indicates which county charters retained the Constitutional Officers without any changes and those that changed the status of their Constitutional Officers. The report touched briefly on the issue of whether the transfer of the finance and accounting functions from the Clerk’s office to the County Administrator would create greater efficiency.

Part III discusses additional aspects of the Civil Service System.

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING – Continued

AGENDA NUMBER - Continued

The report also contains a charter reflecting per capita tax revenues by category reported by all of Florida's counties, a summary of the major revenue sources for Florida's county governments, comparison of different charter counties chair positions, sample non-interference clauses, comparison of different Florida charter county commissions, non-partisan election clauses, citizen's bill of rights, and other miscellaneous provisions.

Since the Commission had not had an opportunity to review the Whitman Center's report prior to this evening's meeting, Dr. Teasley was asked to meet with the Commission at its next meeting to answer any questions that the Commission members may have.

5. Approval of the minutes of the March 27, 2003 meeting.

Approval of these minutes was delayed until the next meeting.

6. Communications.

- A. Copies of the City of Pensacola Charter were distributed to the Commission.
- B. The Escambia County Charter Commission Public Input Meetings Pamphlet was provided to members of the Commission. Chairman Menge indicated it was his intent to have the public input meetings widely publicized.

7. Unfinished Business.

The Commission decided to invite representatives of the Area Housing Authority, the Escambia County Housing Finance Authority, and the Pensacola Escambia County Promotion and Development Commission to make presentations to the Commission at its April 10th meeting.

8. Items Added to the Agenda.

None.

9. Announcement regarding the next meeting, date, place, and topics for discussion.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 10, 2003 in the BCC Board Room at 5:30 p.m. The Commission will hear from the three Regulatory Agencies noted above and participate in a general overview discussion of what the Commission has learned thus far.

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING – Continued

AGENDA NUMBER - Continued

10. Public Forum.

No one asked to address the Commission.

11. Any Commission Response.

Mr. Montenes announced that a series of television shows by the Escambia County Citizens' Coalition will be shown on the UWF channel on April 7, 9, and 15.

12. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 P.M.

Action Items

- (1) **Need more detailed EEO/Affirmative Action Plan from the County.**
- (2) **Mr. Powell is to furnish the Commission with a copy of the County's proposed Civil Service replacement plan.**
- (3) **Need to reschedule appearances by Mr. Rod Powell and representatives of the Civil Service Board before the Commission.**

APPROVED BY:

THE CHARTER COMMISSION

PREPARED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA WHITMAN CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

