

Official

**Escambia County Charter Commission
Minutes of May 15, 2003 Meeting
Pensacola Campus of Pensacola Junior College
Baroco Center – Room 2142
(Fifteenth Meeting)**

Members

Present: M. J. Menge, Chair
Rita A. Riffel, Vice Chairman
Charles F. Beall, Jr.
Johnny W. Blackmon
LeRoy Boyd
BarbaraForehand“Bobbie”Brown
Laurel Dick
Frank Montenes
E. P. “Ted” Nickinson, Jr. .
Lucy Rentz
Phyllis D. Sims
Lamar Smith
Garrett W. Walton

Members

Absent: Elbert Jones, Jr.
Denis McKinnon, Jr

AGENDA NUMBER

1. Call to order - Chairman Menge at 5:35p.m.
2. Approval of the Agenda.

Motion made by Mr. Beall and seconded by Ms. Riffel to approve the agenda carried 12 – 0 with Mr. Blackmon arriving late and Mr. Jones and Mr. McKinnon absent.

3. Statement regarding public input meetings.

Mr. Menge made a brief statement regarding the work of the Charter Commission since its initial meeting on November 14, 2002.

Copies of the Public Input Meetings pamphlet were provided to the members of the public attending the meeting.

4. Input from the public on the topic of “County Administration”

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING – Continued

AGENDA NUMBER-Continued

Four people addressed the Commission and their statements are as follows:

- 1) Byron Keesler – Preferred to address the topic of the BCC. Concerned with the provision of overturning the BCC on any decision would compromise stability , this would subject businesses to pull their contracts out of the county. Frequent appeals would lessen the effectiveness of local government. Provide a recall provision for a County Commissioner that is consistently flawed. Leave the salary at a level with a modicum of dignity fitting for their position.
 - 2) Isaac Brigham – Spoke on the issue of County Administration. He prefers a system where there is a local board and all of the administrative positions are to be appointed. BCC should have the authority to hire and fire the administrators, administrator should have minimum of qualifications of experience and education, administrator to be responsible for the day to day running of the county and receive guidance from the BCC for policy, administrator should have the ability to hire and fire his staff.
 - 3) Ellen Roston – First comments are on behalf of the League of Women Voters. The League supports the following three points: 1) single administrative head chosen by the BCC, 2) choice of professional department heads by the Administrator, 3) flexibility in administrative structure to allow for adjustment and changing needs of the county. She then expressed her own views in the following: structure the hiring process with an independent committee who review resumes and make recommendations to the BCC and the BCC chooses from the recommended candidates, super majority required. Make it harder to hire a CA and easier to fire a CA, non-interference clause, and limit powers of the CA.
 - 4) Rita Jones – Charter should provide for the position of CA and CA duties are making sure goals are met and policies carried out, BCC should develop policies and limit the latitude of the CA, BCC should be able to monitor and evaluate the CA's authority, BCC should be able to set goals and change them as needs of the county changes, super majority to fill a position and to terminate, set minimum qualifications, charter should not require the creation or retention of specified departments, other responsibilities need to be directed individually. She did clarify that she is planning on running for the office of County Commissioner in District three.
5. Approval of the minutes of the May 6, 2003 meeting.

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING – Continued

AGENDA NUMBER-Continued

Motion made by Mr. Blackmon and seconded by Mr. Nickinson to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2003 meeting. Motion carried 13 – 0 with Mr. Jones and Mr. McKinnon absent.

6. Communications.

- 1) Agenda of April 10 meeting.
- 2) Official minutes of April 10 meeting.
- 3) Agenda of April 24 meeting.
- 4) Official minutes of April 24 meeting.
- 5) Memo from Frank Montenes regarding questions for Legal Advisory Team.
- 6) E-mail from Charles Beall regarding questions for Legal Advisory Team.
- 7) Signed letter to Mr. Touart regarding UWF invoice.
- 8) Document titled “Ten Reasons to Support Adoption of a Charter.”
- 9) Update on website.
- 10) Mr. Nickinson’s e-mail concerning the lack of public input.

The members discussed various means to facilitate more involvement from the citizens, possibly forming a sub-committee for communication purposes only and vying for more television coverage. Mr. Montenes is working with Mike West from Gulf1.com to maintain the website and database of 8,000 names of people in Escambia County that would like to be kept informed on charter government.

The members would like to consider meeting in different parts of the county and at various times to encourage people to attend. Various places were mentioned such as: Jim Bailey Middle School, Tate High School, and a location in Molino (possibly Northview High School). The charter can advertise in the Tri-City Ledger to reach people in the north end of the county.

Motion made by Ms. Riffel and seconded by Mr. Walton to take three of the last meetings and move them to various locations around the county. Motion carried 13 – 0 with Mr. Jones and Mr. McKinnon absent.

Motion made by Mr. Beall and seconded by Mr. Montenes to move the time of the next meeting to 7 p.m. Motion carried 13 – 0 with Mr. Jones and Mr. McKinnon absent.

Members will firm up the locations and times of meetings at the May 22, 2003 meeting. The Whitman Center will assist with locating a meeting place that is available on the agreed upon dates. Members also agreed that the Charter Commission will eliminate restrictions on the published issues and allow for a broader scope of input at the meetings.

Mr. Menge brought up an alternative to the July 17, 2003 meeting.

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING – Continued

AGENDA NUMBER-Continued

Instead of having members from the Polk County Charter Commission appear at that meeting, have a round table discussion with the Civil Service Board and Human Resources. This would allow for these two entities to make an updated presentation to the Charter Commission on their policies and procedures handouts presented to the Charter Commission at an earlier meeting.

7. Review of Charter Commission website.

Ms. Ramos stated that work is continuing on the website and that members can review their handouts for updates, but it is not the final draft of the website. She gave an overview of the changes and the links those members wanted to appear on the website.

8. Unfinished Business.

There was no unfinished business.

9. Items added to the Agenda.

There were no items added to the agenda.

10. Announcement of the next public input meeting.

The next meeting will be held on May 22, 2003, at 7 p.m. in the BCC Board Room. The topic will be the Constitutional Officers. The Charter Commission will also open up discussion to any topic the public desires to address the Commission about.

11. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Action Items:

- 1) Whitman Center to contact Pensacola News Journal to ensure meeting time is changed for next week.**
- 2) Whitman Center to contact appropriate personnel to find out if suggested alternate locations are available at the specified times and dates.**

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING – Continued

APPROVED BY:

THE CHARTER COMMISSION

PREPARED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA WHITMAN CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE