

**Charter Review Commission  
Administration Staff  
Subcommittee Meeting  
September 11, 2015**

A meeting of the Charter Review Commission, Administration Staff Subcommittee were held at Charlotte County Administration Complex, Room B-106, Port Charlotte, Florida

Roll Call

The following Administration Staff members were present:

Julie Mathis, Chairman

Stephen J. Vieira

John Hitzel

Donald McCormick

Citizens: None

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by Chairman Mathis.

Agenda Items:

- I. Citizens Input – None at this time.
- II. Old Business

Interviews with Administrative staff in the county had been previously scheduled and the interviewees had been provided the list of questions prior to this meeting and are attached.

- III. New Business

Interview with Kelly Shoemaker, Deputy County Administrator

Chairman Mathis and the subcommittee members welcomed Ms. Shoemaker and thanked her for attending.

What are your specific duties? Ms. Shoemaker stated as Deputy County Administrator I have six departments that report to me, Community Services, Community Development, Public Safety, Public Works, Tourism and Facilities Construction Maintenance, I am also responsible for the Legislative Manager, Communications Manager, I also have a special assignment of the restore pact and the individual we have hired as the coordinator reports to me and I have an Administrative staff position. There are 10 in total. I also have a number of responsibilities as assigned by the County Administrator.

What if any, local government re-structuring could be proposed for the Charter that would improve your ability to deliver services? Ms. Shoemaker stated my position in the Charter really are not very closely connected since I worked for the Administrator, there is a portion of the Charter that applies to the Administrator of course, but when it comes to the Charter in regards to the organizational structure and how we function there are not a lot of specifics in the Charter to allow for us to do our job in regards to the operations.

In the performance of your duties are you affected by the Charter? Ms. Shoemaker stated I would say no.

Have you had experience working under an elected Administrator? Ms. Shoemaker stated no, I have not.

What is your opinion on an elected Executive form of government? Ms. Shoemaker stated since my only experience is with an appointed Administrator I can only speak to the benefits I see there and a lot of that centers around the ability for a County Commissioner to hire a professional that has been educated in this type of work, my education is public administration and that allows the availability of resources that maybe an elected individual would not have. I am a member of the International County Managers Association, County and City Managers Association and those organizations give us a lot of resources, training and provide conversation in regards to the trends that are out there right now and a lot of research and information.

In your experience is the non-interference clause observed? Ms. Shoemaker stated yes.

Is the method of enforcement adequate? Ms. Shoemaker stated I can only reply to what I can read in the Charter, I am going to say they are adequate, I think they are specifically written out in such a fashion if a situation were to exist they would know exactly what they needed to do.

We understand the Administrative Code is being revised. Ms. Shoemaker stated correct.

The annual debt policy and economic impact statements, are they always prepared in accordance with the Charter? Ms. Shoemaker stated to my knowledge, yes they are. With the debt policy we have a review with the Board of County Commissioners every April with a lot of discussion and are handled appropriately. On the economic impact statements, that is truly more of a Fiscal and Attorney's Office function. I personally have the responsibility to review agenda items before they are on a board meeting and I always see them attached and they seem to be communicating the necessary information, so I would say yes.

Are there any aspects you know from other communities that the Charter Review Commission should consider for Charlotte County? Ms. Shoemaker stated there has been conversation years ago on elected Charter Review Commission members I do not think that fits for Charlotte County, the larger counties seem to go that route. I think the way the Board appoints the members, the six year frequency, I think all of those things work very well for Charlotte.

Is the two (2) year budget cycle working? Ms. Shoemaker stated, I think so. Actually it is interesting that you mention that because the off years, so to speak, where we get to do a little bit more analyst, research and review.

Do you think the reporting structure of the Director of Economic Development be changed? Ms. Shoemaker stated I see the positives behind the Charter's decision and then the Board's decision being responsible for that individual, I definitely see that, I think one of the things that could be worked on is a little bit more of a conversation between Economic Development and Administration, I only say that because Administration is responsible for the resources that could be used by Economic Development. I have seen our Director of Economic Development he has very good lines of communication with Administration, I would be concerned if that position did not.

Donald McCormick asked are there any trends in government that you are aware of from your education that we should be aware of or thinking about?

Ms. Shoemaker stated I have several, one is the whole technology and the transparency and I think that we have done a good job in our organization to work towards a lot of those availabilities for the community, we still have a ways to go and I think it is always changing. The other one is I have been sitting on a task force on Women and Government and we have made very few strides as a nation when it comes to the amount of women that are in some of the higher level positions in county and city government. Also, mentoring and working to help the younger generation and try to pull some of those individuals into the profession. These may be more operational, than involve the Charter, but gives you an idea what is going on in the industry.

John Hitzel stated he would like to make a personal comment, that over the years he has been very impressed with the Charlotte County Government overall and appreciates all you do.

Ms. Shoemaker stated thank you, I do it because of people like you.

This concluded the interview with Kelly Shoemaker, Deputy County Administrator.

#### Interview with Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Chairman Mathis and the subcommittee members welcomed Mr. Sandrock and thanked him for attending.

What are your specific duties? Mr. Sandrock stated I have the pleasure of directing ten executive directors and all of their various responsibilities throughout this organization, reading and administering the policies of the Board of County Commissioners around those directors and their staff, it is in the Charter that the Commissioners set the policy and we implement. We do spend a lot of time with the Commissioners and we have a Board that likes us to provide input and we like to do that, we are just making recommendations to them but, in a big overview that's what it is, it is so much more than that, to me I place so much emphasis on working with the employees and I meet with employee groups on a regular basis. I also send out weekly messages to keep them tuned up and knowing how their work fits with the goals of the Commissioners, because that to me is so important.

What, if any, local government re-structuring could be proposed for the Charter that would improve your ability to deliver services? Mr. Sandrock stated re-structuring from a County perspective, I think we have the ability to do that now through the Charter and have done it since 2006 many times and has been an on-going evaluation and how can we become more efficient, how can we put some groups together, we went from 17 departments down to 10 departments, not including Economic Development so that is where we are at this point. As far as re-structuring goes, Administration has been given the authority and the Commission has supported us, obviously we have to prove through analyst that what we are asking for is going to be successful.

In the performance of your duties are you affected by the Charter? Mr. Sandrock stated absolutely, it defines what my roles are and what the policy maker's roles are and gives it frame work, also affects us in other ways through the debt policies and things that we have to do on a regular basis.

Have you had experience working under an elected Administrator? Mr. Sandrock stated I have not, no experience.

What is your opinion of an elected Administrator? Mr. Sandrock stated the obvious would be how do you make sure you are putting someone in place that has the proper qualifications and experience because that is really key. I guess if you had some way to put that structure together and make sure that you were only looking at a very qualified person that would be probably something to look at, also it could make the process too political this is a business.

In your experience is the non-interference clause observed? Mr. Sandrock stated absolutely and if Ms. Knowlton and I had a situation like that we would work together, but with this Board we have had no problems.

We have learned the Administrative Code is being reviewed and is a working document, do you think the annual debt policy and economic impact statements are being prepared in accordance with the Charter? Mr. Sandrock stated absolutely, they are reviewed according to the Charter dates, but it does not stop there, every current presentation has the debt policy and we talk about the levels, we are very transparent about the amount of money we have in the reserves and why we do and we continue to build our reserves over the year, it is critical.

Are there any aspects you know from other communities that the Charter Review Commission should consider for Charlotte County? Mr. Sandrock stated I do not.

Stephen Vieira asked do you feel the way the Charter is written now and the number of elected officials, number of commissioners and at large commissioners, do you feel that is the appropriate way for the County to operate?

Mr. Sandrock stated I am very comfortable with the Charter and how the commissioners are established and at large is appropriate and it works well. They really try to represent the County.

Is the two (2) year budget cycle working? Mr. Sandrock stated yes, it is amazing you get to stop and analyze.

Should the reporting structure of the Director of Economic Development be changed? Mr. Sandrock stated I am a little leery about whether or not that the correct reporting should be right to the Board, it puts a lot of pressure on dealing with issues that are very confidential, now you are dealing with five people and so by reporting through Administration there is a coverage there, also I think you get a little more cohesive discussion and coordination about projects. My opinion would be that he should report to Administration; however have a lot of atomy maybe more so than the average director.

John Hitzel stated some of the purpose in changing the 2010 Charter was time frame issues and it appears there are still time frame problems, so it would appear from that standpoint that the change in the Charter did not solve the problem that it was originally intended to solve.

Mr. Sandrock stated from the previous structure through Administration if they were looking at a certain project, you know, we would get involved and I had the ability and staff to say here is the outcome if we continue down this path, it just had a more coordinated approach. This is just my opinion that it would take a little bit more pressure off and it would also have a little bit more coordination.

Julie Mathis stated in the interviews yesterday, there was a comment made about the agenda items having to be posted a week before the meeting. Do you have issues with that or are you comfortable with that?

Mr. Sandrock stated no, I think we are very comfortable with that, you know, what we found by moving to that process and moving pre-agenda up, it was Commissioner Doherty's concept and you should give him credit for that, you get the information out earlier, you have immediate questions coming in earlier that you can address, you have Commissioners looking at it earlier, so if you got issues you know and then you do not have one day to respond, you can do one-on-ones, you can get more back up information and can provide attachments.

Should there be an entity for enforcement of the Charter? Mr. Sandrock stated I do not think so, I think it almost self-paces itself through the process and because it's not a large document it spells out the playing roles for us all and if there is an issue we are aware of it. I do think that every six years come back, review and talk about how things are working is kind of policing of us.

What are your thoughts on Term Limits? Mr. Sandrock stated term limits I think just keeps the whole thing patently churning....

Julie Mathis stated and the election also takes care of that process.

Mr. Sandrock stated the process has always been interesting for me, I enjoy being a part of it and have a great team.

This concluded the interview with Ray Sandrock, County Administrator.

#### Interview with Gary Hubbard, Utilities Operations Manager

Chairman Mathis and the subcommittee members welcomed Mr. Hubbard and thanked him for attending.

What are your specific duties? Mr. Hubbard stated my primary duties are to provide safe, reliable drinking water and efficient, effective wastewater treatment in the most cost effective manner possible, we are concerned about our Ego System and how we best use our resources to the benefit of everybody. One of the biggest resources we have of course is the harbor so we are very concerned about protecting the harbor. That is obvious with our sewer expansion program. I supervise 201 employees and will go up to 237 this coming year.

What, if any, local government re-structuring could be proposed for the Charter that would improve your ability to deliver services? Mr. Hubbard stated that the Charter is a broad type of document that guides you through all operations of the County and I think it effectively does that, are there things we can do in government better, of course there are.

In the performance of your duties are you affected by the Charter? Mr. Hubbard stated I think overall yes, it governs our activities on a broad view, it provides the guidelines we need to adhere to and you have to operate underneath it effectively.

Have you had experience working under an elected Administrator? Mr. Hubbard stated I have never had to work directly under an elected Administrator, in my consulting career I worked with a lot of elected officials, I find that when you are in that situation politics can get in the way, not saying it will, but it can. In an appointed type of Administration it is more effective because you have trained personnel that have their specialties.

Have you had any experience with the non-interference clause? Mr. Hubbard stated I have not had any experience with the non-interference clause, but I have had the opportunity to spend some time with each Commissioner and have found no interference at all, they are very supportive of our effects.

Do you have any experience with the annual debt policy or economic impact statements? Mr. Hubbard stated in the future with the scale of the economy I am sure I will. I am not sure if that answered your question.

Donald McCormick asked where does your revenue come from?

Mr. Hubbard stated all of our revenue is customer based.

Are there any aspects you know from other communities that the Charter Review Commission should consider for Charlotte County? Mr. Hubbard stated I think anything we can do to reduce paperwork would be a significant benefit that is one of my responsibilities to try and think outside the box, can we do things differently. You will see a big change in CCU, I am changing a lot of the paperwork we are doing away with as much as we can. We are evaluating all of our processing to simplify our efforts because it gets very difficult for the customers to understand what we do and why. It is a major task because there are so many laws on the books that restrict what we can do.

Due to you being new to the position, have you been involved with the two (2) year budget cycle? Mr. Hubbard stated in the past I have worked with a one year budget cycle, it takes a lot of time working on budgets and does consume a lot of staff time, I think having it on a two year cycle allows us to do other things, focus on other issues. I have found that the Board is receptive to changing some of the things in the budget, amending the budget as the year goes on which that helps also because looking at a two year cycle you cannot predict everything. The Board does help us in that manner, there is some flexibility and I have found the Board to be really good to work with.

John Hitzel asked about the implementation and the results of the audit that took place, if I am not mistaken you came in as the audit was being conducted?

Mr. Hubbard stated they came in last fall so I was here during the preparation of the audit and the audit reflects that we told them where the problems were and many of the things that are in the audit I had already started working on before they ever came on board. It has been very beneficial to us and they are promoting the efforts we need to make Utilities a better organization. We are establishing new programs, new ways of doing things and it has been good to have them on-site to hear their ideas, we definitely had some ideas, but it is always good to get different opinions and we have already developed action plans and put together a team to address each recommendation. A lot of the programs developed will be used County wide.

This concluded the interview with Gary Hubbard, Utilities Operations Manager.

#### Interview with Gordon Burger, Budget Director

Chairman Mathis and the subcommittee members welcomed Mr. Burger and thanked him for attending.

What are your specific duties? Mr. Burger stated I am the Director of Budget and Administrative Services, my responsibilities include Fiscal, Budget, IT, Purchasing, Real Estate, Fleet, Transit and Risk Management, roughly 110 / 120 employees. Fleet and Transit were combined and given one common leadership and start running this more from the business perspective as opposed to the customer service perspective, quite honestly somewhere along the line I hope we move Transit back out under someone that is more customer focused, but I think we have done a great job in terms of streamlining, efficiencies and updating.

What, if any, local government re-structuring could be proposed for the Charter that would improve your ability to deliver services? Mr. Burger stated in terms of re-structuring I really do not see any. I think it has some plus and benefits from relining Economic Development, I can see pros and cons, beyond that in terms of re-structuring it, I think the Charter is well written.

In the performance of your duties are you affected by the Charter? Mr. Burger stated sure, in things as minimal as making sure agenda items are published a week in advance, which is a good thing and does affect us and how we operate, of course any of the reserve policies, debt policies, those types of things and how we interact with the Board.

Have you had experience working under an elected Administrator? Mr. Burger stated I have not had direct experience I have worked closely with organizations that did have an elected Administrator.

What is your opinion on an elected Administrator? Mr. Burger stated I think if you want to politicize something and make it less functional, it is a great idea. I do not see an upside to it, the downside to it is you are really putting something out there for the public to vote on instead of someone's record and how they are as a professional executive. I do not think it works well.

In your experience is the non-interference clause observed? Mr. Burger stated yes, I think it works well. I would suggest using an independent practice audit just as a routine check every couple years.

Julie Mathis stated we understand the Administrative Code is going under a major review and you are responsible for the annual debt policy. Are economic impact statements being prepared on a routine basis?

Mr. Burger stated economic impact statements, yes, anytime there is an ordinance or resolution going before the Board I make sure they are being done. The annual debt policy I wish was written just a little bit differently, rather than reviewing I think it would be better to state review the level of debt annually. The policy really does not change, it has not changed since I have been here.

Julie Mathis stated I think we meant to say review the level of debt.

Donald McCormick stated the Charter does not say it either.

Julie Mathis stated we will review.

Are there any aspects you know from other communities that the Charter Review Commission should consider for Charlotte County? Mr. Burger stated not really, except maybe we review the Charter too frequently, it is a well written document, but not saying there cannot be changes.

Do you think the two (2) year budget cycle working? Mr. Burger stated absolutely, it forces an organization to think more strategically and more long term, it is such an intense ten (10) month process just putting the budget together and it involves every part of the organization. In fact in this off year we are starting in October a six (6) month process with the Board to walk through all of our capital and info structure needs for the next twenty (20) years, we would never have the time to do that as an organization.

What are your thoughts on the MSBU process? Mr. Burger stated I think we are still incremental in getting the MSBU's there, I do not think it is destructive to the MSBU process, I think it can enhance it, because we have got them pretty much on a two (2) year cycle now. This is my perception with MSBU's, they started as a way to provide standard levels of service and paving, many of them morphed into Home Owner's Associations and what the two (2) year process does is infuse a little bit of discipline in that so we are working with them as a committee to think a longer term, let's think out two (2) years, let's not be changing our projects. For the most part though we need to establish some standard levels of service and think out what other projects you want to do in the next two (2) years, not the next six (6) months.

Donald McCormick stated do you believe the MSBU system is fixable?

Mr. Burger stated there is reasons why you cannot do something different, I think I would rather see fewer of them, but with the amount of vacant land we have in this county, I have a hard time seeing how we would ever keep up with the maintenance of the roads and drainage in place and the canals.

Julie Mathis asked should the reporting structure of the Director of Economic Development be changed back?

Mr. Burger stated like I said I can see pros and cons, it is difficult to maintain a focus direction and tough to maintain confidentiality with five (5) bosses. That being said, I think Mr. Patton does a great job and it does have pros there is direct access to them.

This concluded the interview with Gordon Burger, Budget Director.

IV. Discussion

The subcommittee discussed how informational and extremely beneficial the interviews were.

V. Citizens Input – None at this time.

VI. Adjournment: Upon motion made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM. It is noted the interviews were moved up as time permitted.

  
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Julie Mathis, Chairman



## Attachment #1

### Interview Questions

What are your specific duties and in the performance of those duties what, if any, local government re-structuring could be proposed for the Charter that would improve your ability to deliver services?

In the performance of your duties are you affected by the Charter?

Have you had experience working under an elected Administrator, and what is your opinion on an elected Executive form of government?

In your experience is the non-interference clause observed? Is the method of enforcement adequate?

Is the Administrative Code current? The annual debt policy? Are economic impact statements faithfully prepared?

Are there any aspects you know from other communities that the Charter Review Commission should consider for Charlotte County?

Is the two (2) year budget cycle working, does it impact the MSBU process?

Do you think there are inefficiencies that an independent body to oversee and review could correct? For example; the permitting process and deadline decisions presented to the commission without sufficient information provided by staff?

In addition to the above, the following specific questions will be asked of County Attorney Knowlton and Administrator Sandrock:

Should there be an entity for enforcement of the Charter? How should this enforcement be handled? Should there be penalties for non-compliance in addition to those for non-interference?

Should the reporting structure of the Director of Economic Development be changed?

## **Attachment #2**

### **Interview Summary**

**What are your specific duties and in the performance of those duties what, if any, local government re-structuring could be proposed for the Charter that would improve your ability to deliver services?**

Eight speakers indicated that no changes are needed. One suggested that the lead time for agenda items is too long (three weeks) and it makes quick response difficult. The staff re-organizes as needed.

**In the performance of your duties are you affected by the Charter?**

The Charter is our governing document.

**Have you had experience working under an elected Administrator, and what is your opinion on an elected Executive form of government?**

Only one speaker had worked with an elected Administrator.

Each speaker said that they would not like to see an elected Administrator because it could make the process to political. They also like that an appointed Administrator has the education and professional background needed for the position.

**In your experience is the non-interference clause observed? Is the method of enforcement adequate?**

Each speaker said the non-interference clause is observed. If there is a concern, speakers suggest the Commissioner talk with Mr. Sandrock or make the suggestion under Commissioner comments and get a consensus to move forward.

One speaker suggested using an independent practice audit as a routine check.

**Is the Administrative Code current? The annual debt policy? Are economic impact statements faithfully prepared in accordance?**

The Administrative Code is a working document and is currently undergoing a major review.

The annual debt policy review is occurring and the policy is good. There was a suggestion to review the level of debt annually (not the policy). Economic Impact Statements are being prepared and are helpful.

**Are there any aspects you know from other communities that the Charter Review Commission should consider for Charlotte County?**

One speaker noted that some larger counties have elected Charter Review members.

From the County Attorney - Make the residency and non-interference provisions for the County Attorney and the Economic Development Director consistent with the County Administrator. Exclude County employees from the Charter Review Commission. Remove the six month residency requirement prior to qualification because state law (six month prior to assuming office) takes precedence. Allow sole proprietor business owners who are not residents and local voters to serve on the MSBU Advisory Committee.

### **Is the two (2) year budget cycle working?**

Every speaker loves the two year budget cycle which gives staff time to review items, analyze data, focus on other issues (20 year unfunded project list), planning, saves staff time, an efficient process.

### **The question does the two year cycles have an impact the MSBU process?**

The budget cycle does not have an impact. If the MSBU has money, then they should do the project. Maybe too many MSBU's.

### **Should there be an entity for enforcement of the Charter? How should this enforcement be handled? Should there be penalties for non-compliance in addition to those for non-interference?**

Not needed. It works well now.

### **Do you think there are inefficiencies that an independent body could oversee and review and correct?**

This question was added that morning by a different subcommittee member and we were not sure exactly what it meant. Those who answered the question did not think another layer was needed. Building issues are handled by the Building Industry Oversight Committee and the agenda by Administration. We use consultants from time to time.

### **Should the reporting structure of the Director of Economic Development be changed?**

Yes, taking the current people out of the discussion, confidentiality and coordination are concerns. The BCC is not part of the Economic Development Agency so confidentiality could be an issue.

It depends on who the Director and Administrator are. Current ED spends about 20% of his time meeting weekly with BCC.

With a direct report it gives the Director a heightened importance.

Not sure. The key is communication.

Not sure. There is a lot of pressure on the Director dealing with five Commissioners on confidential issues.

**Trends** – technology, transparency, women in government, mentoring, state mandates, health care costs. Could have a citizen committee review items, e.g., space needed for the Justice Center.