

MINUTES
UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
Meeting of January 15, 2019
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse
Pendleton, Oregon

- Committee Members Present:** Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker (arrived 5:38); Genna Banica; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski
- Absent:** Michele Grable; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon
- County Counsel:** Doug Olsen
- Guests Present:** W. Lawrence Givens

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The vice-chair called the meeting to order at 5:30, and reminded everyone that this is a public meeting.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes - The minutes had been emailed to the committee members. Ms. Anderson-Hansell moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Dorran, Carried 5-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input – None
5. Business Items:
 - A. Discussion with W. Lawrence Givens. Former Commissioner Givens was present. He was introduced by Vice-Chair Miller and provided a summary of the goals of the committee. Mr. Givens was first elected in 2006 and was a commissioner until 2018. During the time of his service, the county had a quasi-county manager. The position was protective of the Board of Commissioners and may have limited ability to get to commissioners. The position, though, was helpful to the Board. It allowed commissioners to do outside county business, particularly at the state and national levels, and not worry about the administrative details.

It was the belief of Mr. Givens that the time had come to have a county manager, and not a weak manager. The position must be filled by one that is educated and experienced in municipal government. School administration would not have the exposure or scope needed for the position. A political science education would be helpful.

The role of the Board is to create policy, administrate policy and conduct outside work. This outside work would be for grant funding and promotion of the county in other areas, such as at the federal and state levels. He did not think three commissioners could do it, but rather five part-time, paid some type of stipend similar to a legislator. This would allow them to hold other jobs. The positions

should be spread across the county. Not good if all from one area. The extent of part time would be dependent on the individual. One option is to establish a time frame, such as 20 hours a month. It may be better to specify that can only miss a certain number of meetings. It may be difficult for some that are employed, but retirees will be interested. Qualifications for such a position cannot be put in the charter under Oregon law. The position of the chair should be rotated among the board. The chair may feel obligations to special interests if directly elected

The cost for the additional positions will be an increase. This could be offset by decreased salaries for the commissioners. The method for selection of commissioners should be what brings best representation to all communities. Smaller communities and unincorporated areas have been left out when the commissioners are elected from the two largest cities. One possible method would be three districts and two at large positions.

The current liaison arrangement for departments is not good for consistency. With three commissioners, there are three styles of administration. It creates inconsistency and discord among departments and is not good for morale. It is why a county manager would have an advantage. There are disadvantages to a manager. If do not have the right one, or a power hungry one, will attempt to dictate more than administration, and into policy. The policy/advocacy role should be reserved for commissioners.

How will recommendations be received? Now is a good time for changes. Two of the commissioners are in final term. Whatever would be best for the county and its citizens.

The election process for commissioners could be changed. One possibility would be if 3 or more running, then the top two go from the primary to the general election. If only two candidates, then both go to the general election.

In summary, Mr. Givens is in favor of a strong manager, with part time commissioners, paid a stipend (\$28,000), plus payment of expenses for state and federal conferences. He thinks funding can be found for additional commissioners. With additional commissioners, maybe additional revenues will be found. Commissioners will concentrate on policy and advocacy.

The Vice-Chair declared a recess at 6:40 for dinner. The meeting reconvened at 6:52

- B. Future presentations or interviews. The consensus of the committee that they would like to hear from a representative of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Otherwise the committee has adequate information to start formulating recommendations.
- C. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in Pendleton, February 5, 2019, at 5:30 p.m.
- D. Recap/Suggested Charter Changes. The Committee reviewed the subjects of potential changes and discussed which ones warranted further discussion.
- E. The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel