

**BARROW COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
BETHLEHEM CITY HALL
MAY 17, 2011
7:00 P.M.**

MEETING SUMMARY

Members Present:

Ray Newman, Chairman
Bob Akin
Chris Bailey
Pat Graham
Scott Hang
David Mann
Shirley Segars
Ken Young

Citizens Present:

Emily Bailey
Beth Buchanan
Tommy Buchanan
Sandy McNab
Joyce McNab
Michelle Sims
Eva Elder
Fran Smith
Clay L. McDaniel
Tommy Porter

Media Present:

Susan Norman, **Barrow Journal**
Merritt Melancon, **Athens Banner Herald**

Facilitators:

Jim Dove, NEGRC
Mott Beck, NEGRC
Dave Wills, ACCG

Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. He asked Committee members if there were any changes to the May 10th meeting summary as presented. There being none, the summary was approved by consensus. Chairman Newman provided a report on previous meetings and briefly discussed the meeting format. He indicated that the Committee had focused discussion on the Chairman's veto powers and the pros and cons of a Manager/Administrator form of government. The Committee determined it would not consider a consolidated government measure during these deliberations.

Chairman Newman asked Committee members for comments prior to entertaining discussion from local citizens. Committee members indicated the desire to review portions of the charter other than the section pertaining to veto powers when time allows. It was reiterated that the change to a Manager form of government would require the assistance of the local legislative delegation. It was also mentioned that a potential point of discussion is in regard to the manner in which vacancies on the Board of Commissioners are filled.

Chairman Newman asked for comments from guests in attendance. There being none at that time, he again asked for further discussion on veto powers. The following points were then made by Committee members and attendees:

- If veto power is removed, the Chair should be given a vote.
- Final recommendations on this and other matters will be made at the June 9th meeting.
- If veto power remains in effect, the number of votes needed to override such should be changed to four rather than the current five.
- Perhaps the Committee should review a change to reduce the number of districts to four plus a Chair.
- The Committee would be wise to weigh the benefits versus the costs associated with changing make-up of the districts.....be careful in “tampering with it”.
- The question was raised as to why/why not have a veto.
It began in 1989.
Historically, veto power has not been used very often.
Should the number required to override a veto be lowered?
Should the use of veto power be restricted?
Veto allows for a “cooling off” period.

The next item of discussion was in regard to a Manager/Administrator form of government. The following was offered:

- As far as differences in the two, a Manager usually can hire/fire employees, an Administrator cannot.
- The role should be well defined.
- If a change to a Manager/Administrator form is implemented, what is the role of the County Chair?
- Why is there a need for a Chair and a Manager?
- If it is determined that a change is in order, an Administrator is preferred.
- The Chair should have a vote; otherwise, he/she cannot participate in the legislative process.
- Manager/Administrator provides for more continuity in government.
- A benefit to having a Manager/Administrator is in the hiring process; if carried out correctly it will allow for employment of an individual with the proper skill set.
- A benefit associated with a full time Chair is that person is perceived as being more responsive to the public.

In closing, Chairman Newman asked members to continue to review the charter and advise of sections where clarification is needed. He reminded everyone that the next meeting of the Barrow County Charter Review Committee will be held on **Thursday, May 26th at 7:00 p.m. at the Statham City Hall.** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

