

**Whatcom County
Charter Review Commission**

Meeting Minutes

April 12, 1995

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Human Resources Training Room, Bellingham City Hall, by Chairperson Kathy Sutter.

II. Roll Call

Present:

Keith Ahrens
Danna Beech
Joe Elenbaas (arrived late)
Karen Federick
Yvonne Goldsmith
Don Hansey
Darlene McLeod
Ron Polinder
Ray Radke
Mary Scrimsher
Orphalee Smith
Mary Stender
Kathy Sutter
Terry Unger

Absent, but excused:

Georgia Gardner

III. Approval of the Agenda

Goldsmith moved to approve the agenda.

Stender seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Reading and Approval of Minutes from the March 29, 1995 Meeting

Stender moved to approve the minutes.

Goldsmith seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Open Session - Public Comments (15 minutes)

The Chair opened the floor for open session.

Seeing no one wishing to speak, the Chair closed open session.

{Clerk's note: Joe Elenbaas arrived at this point in the meeting.}

VI. Discussion of Proposed Motions

Scrimsher moved to amend the Charter as follows:

Section 2.24 - Relationship with Other Branches

Except in the performance of its legislative functions under this Charter, ~~as defined in Section 2.10;~~ the County Council, its staff, and individual council members shall not interfere in the administration of the executive and/or ~~administrative branch or executive branch.~~ They shall not give orders to or direct, either publicly or privately, any officer, or employee subject to the direction and supervision of the County Executive, ~~executive branch,~~ or other elected official.

McLeod seconded the motion.

By consent, the Commission amended the motion by changing "2.10" to "2.20".

Elenbaas moved that we add to the motion before us that shaded language, that last paragraph that Shirley provided us with, stating, "Interaction between the County Council, its staff and individual Council Members, and those officers and employees under the direction of the County Executive shall be in a manner and follow procedures agreed to by the County Executive and the County Council."

Goldsmith seconded the motion.

The Chair restated the amendment to the main motion as follows: "Interaction between the County Council, its staff and individual Council Members, and those officers and employees under the direction of the Executive Branch shall be in a manner and follow procedures agreed to by the County Executive and the County Council."

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Motion to amend carried, 12 - 2, with Unger and Stender opposed.

By consent, the Commission amended the main motion, changing the first line to read, "Except in the exercise of its legislative powers under this Charter".

Main motion, as amended, carried unanimously.

{Clerk's note: for final amended motion, see attachment, #1}

Scrimsher moved to amend the Charter as follows:

{Clerk's note: see attached, #2}

Goldsmith seconded the motion.

Elenbaas moved that we table this one to the next meeting for some addition or revised wording, in that it appears that we have a meeting of the minds on the meaning and intent, but we don't have agreement on the wording.

Stender seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

{Clerk's note: at this point in the meeting, the Chair called for a break.}

Elenbaas moved to take Orphalee's amendment next.

Ahrens seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Smith moved to amend the Charter as follows:

{Clerk's note: see attached, #5}

Beech seconded the motion.

By consent, the Commission amended the motion to remove the language "both the primary election and".

Motion failed for lack of a majority, 7 - 7, with Ahrens, Beech, Elenbaas, Frederick, Goldsmith, Radke, and Smith in favor.

Radke moved to amend the Charter as follows:

{Clerk's note: see attached, #3}

Beech seconded the motion.

Motion failed, 2 - 12, with Elenbaas and Radke in favor.

Frederick moved to table the last two items.

{Clerk's note: see attached, #4 and #6}

Stender seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Break

The Chair called for a break at 8:25 p.m.

The Chair reconvened the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

VIII. Other Business

The Chair directed Intern Martin Otterson to search for certain terminology throughout the Charter.

The Chair discussed various handouts from Intern Martin Otterson, Bob Woods, County Budget and Program Analyst, and members of the public.

Secretary Kerstin Bailey discussed the request from the County Open House Committee to move the meeting location on May 17, 1995.

IX. Discussion of Next Agenda

Items to be included on the next agenda: call to order, roll call, approval of agenda, approval of minutes, open session, discussion of proposed motions, other business, discussion of next agenda, adjourn.

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Kerstin M. Bailey
Recording Secretary

WHATCOM COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

Yvonne Goldsmith, Secretary

Kathy Sutter, Commission Chair

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
SPEAKERS AT THE
MARCH 29, APRIL 5, APRIL 12, AND APRIL 19, 1995 MEETINGS**

March 29, 1995

(No members of the public spoke at this meeting.)

April 5, 1995

Dr. William S. Griffith, P.O. Box 1189, Point Roberts
(See hand-out)

945-1346

-I am not so upset about the taxes we are charged in Point Roberts as the lack of use of those taxes in Point Roberts. We receive a disproportionately low percentage of County services. Surely there must be some way to ensure a more equitable provision of services to the Point!

April 12, 1995

(No members of the public spoke at this meeting.)

April 19, 1995

1. Shirley Forslof, County Auditor

-Regarding Radke's motion to add Section 1.50, Performance and Strategic Planning: I think that the County should be doing long-term planning. It has in the past, but recently it's seemed more short-term. In order to do an audit, you have to establish a means of measurement. You might want to be more generic in the wording.

-Regarding requiring that candidates' names appear on the ballot as drawn by lot: if you look at the last election, it cost us \$6,000 to have the candidates' names rotate on the ballot. It requires extra printing, extra costs to set up automatic counting, and extra checking. Just the printing was about \$3,000. We looked at the overall results of the election to the results on the absentee ballots, which did not rotate. The order of the names did not seem to matter; people voted for the people they wanted. Because of the size of the Charter Review Commission, the cost of rotating names is exaggerated.

2. Robert Imhof, County Council Chair

-I think that an increase in the Council's salary appropriate. I think that you should also look at making the Council Chair a full-time position, in lieu of making everyone full-time. I can't take the time out to go to various meetings. By not having representation at those meetings, especially the ones that determine where money is spent, we miss out on our share. To have representation at those meetings would more than make up for the extra cost of the position and would greatly benefit the County. I'm concerned that Whatcom County is losing out on an ear at the State level. We're the only County in the state that has part-time representation. It would also give the position a little more power. It doesn't benefit me; this is my last year as Chair. The Council would still choose its own Chair; we'd just have to see who could do it and work it out. I don't think it should be tied to the

at-large position, because then you have that person on for four years. Right now, the Council Chair is one or two years.

-I spend 25 - 30 hours per week as the Chair.

-The position of Chair is as powerful as the person. I focus more on moving forward and getting things done than my predecessor did.

-In order to go to other meetings, half-time won't do it. With all the literature that comes across my desk, I could have put together an 80-hour week really fast. But even by the time I've sorted what I need to do from what I don't, it's still more than half-time. You need to make the position financially sound enough for the person to do a good job. If we don't have time, we end up sending staff, so staff ends up developing legislation, which is our job.

-I also think that it's important that the Charter have generic wording. If you have more specific language, you could recommend it to the Council as an ordinance or resolution, on the budget and any other items that come up that may not be appropriate for the Charter. I think the Council would be very receptive to that. Coming from a group like this, it would carry a lot of weight.

-I'd also like to caution you not to develop recommendations that come from the current personality problems, but rather look at the overall process. People going to meetings and saying, "This is the will of the Council," when, in fact, it's never come before the Council, is a problem with who gets elected and personalities.

-Having an ombudsman in the Executive's office would be a possibility. I do think that we need to do something differently.