

07/08/09 Charter Commission Workshop

Members Present: Claude Morgan (chair), David Lunt, John Eder, Steve Gorden, Dick Feeney, Meredith Burgess

Members Absent: Lisa Villa (co-chair), Neil Jamieson, Kathleen Babeu

Others Present: Elizabeth Trice (county staff), Bill Whitten (county staff)

Workshop.

Response from legal counsel that a “county finance committee” is term used for charter commission rather than “budget advisory committee”. The county would not have both.

Gorden: The draft charter from the 80s has many administrative details. Would like to propose that those items are part of bylaws that the board of county commissioners adopt and change as they wishes. The charter requires an arduous process to make changes (including going to voters). Bylaws would include meeting times, administrative code, other issues that would be expected to change from time to time.

Burgess suggests group has mailing list for interested parties. With “constant comment”, can send regular updates to list; individuals can choose to opt out of list, emails can include graphic masthead.

** Elizabeth will get Bill’s list in Excel, will fill in titles with Bill, investigate purchasing “Constant Contact”, then communicate with Morgan and outreach committee re logo. Also will get “Join our mailing list” on website.

Question for Legal Counsel:

It appears that a finance committee would be required under a charter and that the powers given a finance committee (section 1353) may be stronger than the powers given the current Cumberland County budget advisory committee. (section 742-A)

Are we required to have the Finance Committee made up of exclusively municipal officers?

Issues Requiring more discussion

Role of Finance Committee – how to make better process, how much authority does it have, who does it represent (citizens or municipalities)? Morgan: finance committee is to give voice to municipalities? Lunt: county is like school committee; school committee creates budget, towns pay. Whitten: county could give direct tax bill to residents. Gorden: this topic could be taken to public for feedback during charter process.

Recommendations Requiring Legislation

County financial oversight of Civic Center (perhaps acquiring Recreation District)

Item for Administrative/Policy Code/Bylaws

Issues requiring research:

What do other chartered counties have for finance committees?

Next meeting: July 29th. (NOT July 22nd)