

**Cecil County Charter Board  
Worksession Meeting Minutes**

**September 14, 2009**

**PRESENT:** Joyce Bowlsbey, Henry Burden, Edwin Cole, Robert Gell, Ross Cameron, Harland Graef, Chris Ann Szep, Executive Office Administrator Vicky Rinkerman, and Consultant Victor Terval, Esquire, and members of the public.

**ABSENT:** Daniel Schneckenburger

**OPEN SESSION called to order at 6:00 p.m.**

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

**Approval of Minutes** – On motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Ms. Szep, the minutes of the September May 18, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

**Volunteer Fire Companies** - Discussion ensued regarding a request from Joe Fisona to discuss the proposed charter, and how it may affect the benefit provided by the County to retired fire company volunteers. Mr. Schneckenburger will attend a meeting of the Fire Chief’s. The Board members concurred that the proposed charter would not affect the benefit provided to volunteers

**Meeting Time** – Mr. Schneckenburger has started a new job in Baltimore and asked if the charter meetings could be scheduled to start at 6:30 p.m.

**ACTION:** The Board concurred to continue to start the meetings at 6:00 p.m.

**Public Response to questions** – Discussion ensued regarding a response to questions from the public regarding the draft charter. The response should be that the charter is being developed and will be released to the public as soon as possible. Draft versions of the charter should not be released to the public. A Friends of Charter group has formed and they will be working with the Board to market and educate the public on the charter.

As required by law, the Charter must be published in its’ entirety twice in a local newspaper and the County’s website in August 2010.

**New Business – Referring to 1996 Cecil County Charter**

**Section 309 Election of County Executive – Temporary Absence or Disability** – Discussion ensued regarding the need to define the word “temporary absence” in this section. The County Executive and appointed officials are executive officials of county government and do not fall under the definition of an employee.

**NOTE:** The only mandated interaction with the Council is defined in Section 306 A, which indicates that the County Executive has ten business days for a veto.

**ACTION:** The Board concurred not to define “temporary absence” in the charter, and determined that the officials in office should define as necessary.

**Section 310 Director of Administration**

ACTION: The Board concurred to strike the last sentence and have the language revised by Mr. Tervala in this section.

**Section 311 Appointment of Department Heads** – Discussion ensued regarding the language in this section, the relevance of mandating a consultation between the county executive and administrator before a department head is appointed, and including the names of the county departments. A suggestion was made to add, “principal operating” in the section. The county executive would make appointments to boards and commissions, other than those created by the council.

ACTION: The Board concurred to change “principle” to “principle operating”, remove the provision requiring a consultation before a department head is appointed, and have the language revised by Mr. Tervala in this section.

**Section 312 Temporary Administrative Appointments** – Discussion ensued regarding who determines the operating departments.

ACTION: The Board concurred to add “operating” to the section and the Council would determine the “principle operating” departments and/or agencies of county government.

**Section 313 Reorganization of the Executive Branch** – Discussion ensued regarding mandating that the county have a written strategic plan in the charter. To date, no county charters in the State mandate or require a written strategic plan.

ACTION: The Board concurred that the county executive should have a specific date to review and complete the reorganization after taking office.

**New – County Attorney** – Discussion ensued regarding adding a section to the charter for a county attorney. The attorney would represent the county in all issues, and the Council would still have the ability to hire their own counsel if necessary. The Board was referred to Section 213 of the Montgomery County charter.

ACTION: The Board concurred to review this section of the Montgomery County charter, and that the intent is not to create a legal department at this time.

**Personnel for Council** – Discussion ensued regarding the employment status of an advisor vs. employee.

ACTION: The Board concurred that the Council should have the ability to hire administrative staff to assist with carrying out their duties.

### **Old Business**

**Section 207 Compensation of Council and Section 406 Compensation of County Executive**– Discussion ensued regarding the number of council members and the salary for council and the county executive. The Board reviewed statistical salary information from the Maryland Association of Counties website. The data indicates that the salary of a county executive is lower than a county administrator.

ACTION: The Board concurred to keep the number of council members at five, and to consider a salary range for Council between \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year, and a starting salary range for the county administrator at \$98,000 per year. This topic will be discussed again at a future meeting.

### **Adjournment**

ACTION: Motion made by Mr. Graef, seconded by Ms. Bowsbey, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting Date** – The Board will meet on Monday, September 28, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the Perryville Room in the County Administration Building.

Approved:

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Joyce Bowsbey, Chair

Attest:

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Vicky Rinkerman  
Executive Office Administrator