

## 2018-19 UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

# REPORT

On December 6, 2017, the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners initiated the required review of the Umatilla County Charter. The goal was to have the review complete and a report to the Board by July 1, 2019. On February 21, 2018, individuals were appointed to the Umatilla County Charter Review Committee. The appointed members that completed the review are:

1. Michele I. Grable, Pendleton, retired attorney, former Umatilla County Counsel, elected Chair;
2. Donald E. Miller, Milton-Freewater, retired educator, former Umatilla County Fair Board member, elected Vice-chair;
3. Sally Anderson Hansell, Hermiston, attorney;
4. Jerry E. Baker, Athena, Realtor, former Umatilla County Budget Committee member;
5. Genna M. Banica, Pendleton, business manager;
6. Daniel N. Dorran, Hermiston, regional sales manager, former Umatilla County Fair Board member;
7. Mark F. Gomolski, Hermiston, retired government manager;
8. Jennifer McClure Spurgeon, Weston, city mayor.

Darla Huxel, Police Chief, City of Umatilla, was appointed a member and attended some meetings, but had to resign due to time restraints. The Committee held its organizational meeting on March 6, 2018. Thereafter, the committee met on a periodic basis, including March 6, 2018; April 3, 2018; May 1, 2018; June 6, 2018; July 12, 2018; August 23, 2018; September 19, 2018; October 11, 2018, November 7, 2018; November 28, 2018; December 18, 2018; January 15, 2019; February 5, 2019; March 5, 2019; April 11, 2019; April 30, 2019; May 28, 2019; May 29, 2019; and June 4, 2019.

The Committee invited a number of individuals to speak, and also heard from citizens of Umatilla County. Invited guests who provided statements included: Rob Bovett, Legal Counsel, Association of Oregon Counties; Glen Youngman, former Umatilla County Commissioners; Dennis D. Doherty, former Umatilla County Commissioner; Clint Reeder, past Umatilla County Charter Review member; Jim Barrow, former Umatilla County Administrative Services Manager/City Mayor; Linda Hall, City Manager, Milton-Freewater ; Terry Rowan, Umatilla County Sheriff; Senator William Hansell and former Umatilla County Commissioner; Connie Caplinger, former Umatilla County Human Services Manager/Executive Assistant; Dan Lonai, Umatilla County Administrative Services Director; Dale Primmer, Umatilla County Community Justice Director; Bob Waldher, Umatilla County Planning Department Director; Paul Chalmers, Umatilla County Assessment & Taxation Department Director; John Turner, City of Pendleton

Mayor; Robert Pahl, Umatilla County Chief Financial Officer; Jennifer Blake, Umatilla County Human Resources Director; Dr. David Drotzmann, City of Hermiston Mayor; Byron Smith, City Manager, Hermiston; Commissioner William Elfering; Commissioner George Murdock; Larry Givens, former Umatilla County Commissioner; and Ralph Wyatt, Linn County Administrative Manager.

Additional guests attended, some of whom provided public input, and included Wes Koklich, Charles Danforth, Ed Chestnut, Suni Danforth, Heather Alarcon, Elizabeth Milatz, Judy Witherrite, Jeannine Nally, Glen Youngman, Tamara Mabbott, Glen Youngman, Rick Pullin, Sally Sundin, Phil Wright (East Oregonian), Jay Martin, Marlene McClintock, Fred Wyatt, Rex Morehouse, Adolf Klein, Rob Lovett, Larry Nye, Bud Rupe, Eli Stephens, Orrin Lyons, MaryAlice Ridgway, Dennis Aiken.

After hearing all of the reports and testimony, and reviewing data, the committee concluded to recommend to the Board of Commissioners several areas of change to the Umatilla County Charter.

- I. County Structure - The Board of Commissioners will appoint a County Manager, who will be responsible for the administration of the County government.
- II. Election Simplification - Election of a Commissioner will be conducted in the November election. If more than two candidates file, a primary election will be held in the May election, and the top two candidates will advance to the general election. If no more than two candidates file, no primary election will be held, and the candidates will advance to the general election.
- III. Sheriff – Use of the term “Law Enforcement Department,” will be changed to “Sheriff’s Office” in all Charter references, with the Sheriff having the functions as set out in Oregon law.

The Committee also had a number of recommendations and suggestions for additional charter changes and implementations.

- A. The County Manager must be a professional manager, having education and experience in municipal government, and receiving compensation commensurate with that experience, of approximately \$125,000 - \$150,000 a year, plus benefits the same as other county employees.
- B. Based on the input received by the Committee, the Committee is recommending further review of the structure of the Board, to include number of commissioners, part-time commissioners and method for electing commissioners.

Supporting Documents:

1. Proposed Ballot Measures
2. Umatilla County Charter Review Testimony Recap
3. Umatilla Charter Review Invited Guests
4. Umatilla County Charter Review public and press guests
5. Umatilla County Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes

## Ballot Measure I – County Management

Caption: Requires appointment of county manager and county counsel

Question: Shall the Board of Commissioners be required to appoint a county manager and a county counsel?

Summary: If adopted, this proposal requires the Board of Commissioners to appoint a county manager to be responsible to the Board of Commissioners and administer the functions of the county, and also requires the appointment of a county counsel by the Board of Commissioners.

Charter changes:

1. The Board shall appoint a County Counsel and a County Manager. The County Manager shall be responsible to the Board for the continuous administration of the County government and be responsible for carrying out the policies, strategies and goals established by the Board. The County Counsel's and County Manager's duties and responsibilities shall be more specifically set forth in an ordinance adopted by the Board.

## Ballot Measure II – Method of Election

Caption: Changes method of election for county commissioners

Question: Shall election of commissioner be changed to the November election, and only require primary election if more than two candidates?

Summary: If adopted, this Charter amendment would change the current process of electing county commissioner in the primary and general elections with only requiring a primary if more than two candidates file for the election. If more than two file, a primary election will be held in the May election, with the top two candidates advancing to the general election in November. The change would avoid the situation of a defeated incumbent in office for over six months, and also avoid the time and the expense of unnecessary campaigns and elections.

Charter changes:

1. Candidates for County elected offices may be nominated at the primary election. When there are two or fewer candidates for nomination, no election is necessary and that person's name shall not be placed on the primary ballot but only on the November general election ballot. If there are three or more candidates for nomination, the names of the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes will be placed on the November general election ballot.
2. The candidate receiving the greatest number of votes in the November general election shall be the candidate elected to the position.

## Ballot Measure III – Sheriff’s Office

Caption: Changes Law Enforcement Department to Sheriff’s Office in County Charter

Question: Shall Law Enforcement Department be changed to Sheriff’s Office in Charter, with Sheriff functioning as set out in Oregon law?

Summary: If adopted, this Charter amendment would change all references and use of Law Enforcement Department in the Charter, to Sheriff’s Office. The Sheriff would have all of the functions as set out in Oregon law, except for the function of the collection of taxes. References to the Law Enforcement Department in the original charter contemplated additional divisions within that Department, which functions do not currently exist, and use of Sheriff’s Office is more accurate and widely used.

Charter changes:

1. The elective administrative officers of the county shall include, in addition to the county commissioners, the Sheriff.
2. The Sheriff’s Office shall have the functions of the sheriff as set out in Oregon law, except the functions regarding the collection of taxes.
3. The Sheriff shall have charge of the Sheriff’s Office. The term of office for Sheriff shall be four years. The office of Sheriff shall be non-partisan.
4. Any action:
  - (a) To combine the Sheriff’s Office with another administrative department of the county;
  - (b) To abolish the Sheriff’s Office; or
  - (c) To take from it any of its functions,May have no legal effect until approved either:
  - (i) By the Sheriff; or
  - (ii) By the legal voters of the county at a regular or special election.

## Umatilla County Charter Review Testimony Recap

### Meeting #1, 03.06.18, Pendleton, OR

- Self-introductions of members
- Elections of Chair/Vice Chair
  - Michele Grable, Chair
  - Don Miller, Vice Chair
- Meeting schedule discussion
- Plan of action discussion

### Meeting #2, 04.03.18, Pendleton, OR

- Rob Bovett, Legal Counsel, AOC
  - Literature, presentation and in depth history of Home Rule Charter in Oregon
  - Charter County Governance structure up to each county, no recommendation
  - Limited issues placed on ballot to one topic, can be multiple issues
  - By 1978 case law, matters of concern were limited to two areas
    - Local government structure
    - Local internal affairs, wide definition accepted (regulation, fees, revenue, involvement) as long as was not adverse to Oregon State statute
  - County governance structures are not consistent across Oregon counties and cities
- Glen Youngman, Past Umatilla County Commissioner
  - Recommend strong professional administrator
  - 5-7 policy makers
  - Continue to elect Sherriff with qualifications
  - Elect policy makers by district with two at large
- General Committee discussion
  - Develop a list of individual concerns
  - Prepare a list of suggested people to testify
  - Concerns noted of difficulties attracting volunteers to serve or seek election
  - Concerns of an administrator obtaining and concentrating too much power

### Meeting #3, 05.01.18, Pendleton, OR

- Dennis Doherty, Past Umatilla County Commissioner
  - Distributed written summary of his thoughts
  - Did not feel strongly about modifying the charter
  - Would not be in favor of Commissioners being elected by district
  - Three commissioners are restricted by open meeting laws and meeting quorums
  - There is no job description or written direction
  - Workload of commissioner is relative to internal and external commitments

- First priority for a commissioner is policy maker than administrator
- County Manager would remove contact of commissioners from community, did not see that happening
- In favor of five members
- In favor of electing a Chairman
- May be financial constraints, ,maybe not
- Clinton Reeder, Past Charter Review Committee member
  - Document distributed and discussion to follow next meeting
- General Committee and public discussion
  - Financial constraints and needs if changes approved
  - Changes should not be determined by funding, but should be aware
  - Glen Youngman reiterated his strong feelings for a five member commission with the board electing the chairman, with three members elected by district and two at large

Meeting #4, 06.06.18, Milton-Freewater, OR

- Jim Barrow, retired Umatilla County Administrative Services, HR, Mayor Walla Walla, WA
  - Three member Commission is restricted by open meeting laws
  - Appointment of an administrator would be helpful/chief of staff
  - Opinion on board expansion, centralized authority consolidates activities, an expanded board represents community better
  - Priority was policy then administrative than advocacy
  - Workload on commissioners was offset by their hard work and dedication
  - Advocacy is an important commissioner responsibility and could be advanced with a manager/administrator/chief of staff
  - Compensation was a frustration for Mr. Barrows and would like to design properly paid commissioners and staff to market
  - Not against elections by zones but did not see a need
  - Not in favor of minimum qualifications for commissioners
  - Did not see need for major changes of charter, minor tweaking
- Linda Hall, City Manager of Milton-Freewater
  - County could work better with counsel/manager format
  - Manager had no political stand
  - Manager would contribute and maintain continuity through new commissioner transition
  - Rotating Chair loses continuity and knowledge
  - Counsel/manager structure creates less stress on employees and staff
- General Committee and public discussion
  - Wes Koklich advocated for an administrator
  - Charles Danforth discussed and administrator compared to a manager



- Charles Danforth wanted elected officials handling the money
- Charles Danforth professed that commissioners should work on advocacy and that policy is set by the constitution
- Mr. Danforth interpreted low voter turnout with satisfaction
- Mr. Barrows, citing his many years of experience, challenged Mr. Danforth's interpretation of low voter turn-out, and explained it is a result of cynicism, not satisfaction
- Ed Chestnut felt Milton-Freewater did not have any problem attracting interested citizens to run for local office

Meeting #5, 07.12.18, Pendleton, OR

- Clinton Reeder, past Charter Review Committee member following up to prior submitted document
  - Before charter adopted, many issues with separate power struggles with staff and commissioners
  - Charter helped smooth monies and financially created county issues
  - Past attempts at County administrator met with multiple issues after a somewhat smooth start in 2003
  - Change one commissioner, not huge impact, change two, much greater impact
  - Does not feel current any current dilemma in county
  - Felt current structure commissioner/manager creates super board with varying priorities and involvement
  - Mr. Reeder advocated for Manager and part time commissioners-would not save money if just adding another manager cost
  - Advocacy can have benefits for county in defined instances, some advocacy is to advance individual and personal goals
  - Hiring a Manager, need to hire correct person
  - Review the most effective commissioners from last fifty years to define qualities in a manager
  - Not a charter issue, but believes there should be an independent commissioner review committee
  - Mr. Reeder felt it would be possible to define commissioner duties in the charter
  - Mr. Reeder felt development of a mission statement for each department
  - Would be needed for a manager and commissioner
- General Committee and public discussion
  - Without guidelines, discussion on how commissioners now function and supervise
  - Discussion of multiple commissioners interacting with department heads and staff commissioner shop until get desired results
  - Commissioners do set goals and policies in structured way and react to issues in an ad-hoc method

- Suni Danforth has seen problems with city manager in the past not doing what she thought best for the city
- Ms. Danforth would not like to see the county in the same situation
- Ms. Danforth would like to see descriptions for department heads and commissioners
- Charles Danforth expressed “if don’t broke, don’t fix”
- Mr. Danforth feels whoever is in command should be elected
- General discussion and explanation that the Review Committee’s general charge is to identify paths to improve County operations and Charter, not to fix a perceived problem

Meeting #6, 08.23.18, Hermiston, OR

- Sheriff Terry Rowan, Umatilla County Sheriff, also submitted written comments
  - Replace reference to “Department of Law Enforcement” with “Sheriff’s Office”
  - Suggested raising minimum age for Sheriff to 25
  - Suggested changing language referring to any common practice to match state statute
  - Referred to Clatsop and Washington County Charter language
- Connie Caplinger, past county employee and County Administrator
  - Believes that three commissioners are correct
  - Strong advocate for a County Manager
  - Responsibilities need to be clearly defined
- Senator Bill Hansell, past Umatilla County Commissioner
  - County Manager, feels that both systems work
  - Who the Chair is not that important, just runs the meetings
  - Not in favor of zoning for commissioner positions
  - In favor of long range planning, but constrained by lack of resources
  - Policy, advocacy, administrator: No one role is more important than the other
  - Important to be involved with broader issues that impact the county
  - Three full time commissioners are good for accountability
- General Committee and public discussion
  - Tamra Mabbott emphasized that if County Manager is the direction, clearly delineated duties should be priority
  - Discussion of separation of policies and rules between sheriff’s office and Board of Commissioners
  - Need to have flexible rules to address different and non-conforming HR policies

Meeting #7, 09.19.18, Pendleton, OR

- Dan Lonai, Director of Umatilla County Administrative Services

- Would suggest changes to the “Election of Commissioners” to conform with ORS 249.088
- Would like to clear up language in article IV, section 2(4)
- Would like to address redundant and overlapping elections to save cost
- Feels every 4 years for charter review too often
- Current Commissioner Murdoch serves as a de facto Manager
- County Manager would serve and create continuity through Commissioner change
- Depends on the new Commissioner, but takes time to come up to speed
- Believes with Commissioner Murdoch as de facto Manager, County hasn’t run better
- Amy Ashton-Williams, Human Services Director
  - Performs advocacy for department independent of Commissioners
  - Believes County is running smoothly at this point
  - Meets with Commissioner Murdoch at least once a month
- Dale Primmer, Director for Umatilla County Justice, submitted prepared summary
  - Strong advocate for the liaison with Commissioner strategy
  - Believes both, Manager and Administrative Commissioner systems work and doesn’t have a bias either way
  - Doesn’t believe the County as a whole is in a position to establish goals and strategies
- General Committee Discussion
  - Limited end of meeting discussion due to length of testimony

Meeting #8, 10.11.18, Pendleton, OR

- Tom Fellows, Umatilla County Public Works Director
  - Does not have a position on County Manager, has seen both ways work
  - Discusses road issues with all commissioners
  - Performs advocacy at state level for county road fund distribution and other road issues
  - With three shops and consistently changing road conditions, priorities are set on the run with senior staff
  - Capital projects are not normal part of operations unless special funding is obtained
- Bob Waldher, County Planning Department Director
  - Has good relationships with all commissioners
  - Has worked with manager structure and there are some advantages
  - Success of a manager structure is the person in the position
- Paul Chalmers, Director for the County Assessment and Taxation Department
  - With Umatilla County for 28 years

- Different Commissioners and combination of Commissioners over the years have created low morale, negative employment conditions to positive, best conditions ever
- Directors now have some control over budget, dictated operations in past
- County Manager would be positive, depending on the person
- Commissioner Murdoch has taken on the roll of County Manager over last two years
- Past years, advancement was based on who you knew, not currently the situation
- Advocates through two state associations and passes their priorities on to the UCBC
- General Committee and Public Discussion
  - Rick Pullen, public comment, had views on how the staff interacted with commissioners and how employment staffing was handled
  - Due to length of meeting and time constraint, no committee general discussion

Meeting #9, 11.07.18, Pendleton, OR

- John Turner, Mayor, Pendleton, OR
  - Manager structure would not save money but would have advantages
  - With correct compensation, would not be difficult to find quality manager candidates
  - Current leadership in county is good
  - Advocates and communicates through all commissioners with city staff working directly with county staff
  - County employees currently on Pendleton City Counsel
  - Very important for commissioners to be strong advocates for full county
  - Big question is how to elect commissioner similar to Commissioner Murdoch with strong management and administrative skills
- Robert Pahl, County Chief Financial Officer
  - County is complex organization and takes time for commissioner to learn and understand
  - County is presently running in a good direction
  - Manager would have to have the ability to take control and administer the county
  - Manager would allow commissioners time to set goals, policy and directives
  - 35%-40% of county budget is state/federal funded- very important for commissioners to be strong advocates for those funds
  - Manager full compensation package would be estimated \$225,000
  - Funding could/would be found in budget
- Jennifer Blake, County Human Resource Director
  - County has 200 employees represented by four bargaining units and 80 exempt employees

- 27year employee and current conditions at county best ever due to Commissioner Murdoch's approach and philosophy
- Big question, how do you create and maintain during commissioner change
- Elections cause emotional and morale roller coasters for all county employees, especially director and manager level
- Even with same commissioners, rotating chair creates barriers to continuity
- Manager would create continuity and stability, but would depend on the person
- General Committee Discussion
  - Discussion on how to set qualities of a manager/administer: no conclusive answer
  - Jennifer Blake confirmed what Doug has mentioned before, no background check for commissioners or candidates
  - Job description for Manager/Administer should be clear and inclusive
  - Whether commissioners part time or full time, need job description

Meeting #10, 11.28.18, Hermiston, OR

- David Drotzman, Mayor, Hermiston, OR
  - Very good relationship with Commissioners, especially last several years as they regularly attend meetings
  - Now and historically strongly believes that a structural change to the county government is good for the long-term success of Umatilla County
  - Strong believer in Executive Director/Administrator/Manager with Board oversight
  - Gross cost of Executive Director/Administrator/Manager in \$220,000 without deduct for re-structured commission and compensation
  - With correct recruitment, envisions strong selection pool for Executive Director/Administrator/Manager
  - Strong advocate for additional commissioners, suggested five, for greater input from county regions
  - Would also advocate for electing commissioners by districts or wards
  - Strong advocate for putting Executive Director/Administrator/Manager in the Charter
  - Believes the Commission should elect the chair, not sure rotation is a good method
  - Suggested a \$30,000.00 range for part time commissioners
- Byron Smith, City Manager, Hermiston, OR
  - Works regularly and often with all commissioners depending on issue
  - Hermiston and the County have many crosses over issues, especially in the area of economic development and land use
  - Strong advocate for a County Manager
  - Strong pool of County specialized managers to draw from with correct recruitment
  - Believes County Manager should be part of County Charter

- Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering
  - County is leaner and more efficient in the last five years
  - Past County Administrator caused barriers for department heads and others to communicate with commissioners
  - Handed out suggestions for charter changes
  - Charter should change election requirements to meet Oregon statutes
  - Should have a weak County Manager and Commissioners would retain responsibilities over departments
  - Manager would have responsibility over budget, legal and human resources and coordinate Board
  - Proponent of rotating chair
  - Proponent of three full time commissioners
  - Turnover of commissioners does impact continuity and influence morale

Meeting #11, 12.18.18, Pendleton, OR

- Ralph Wyatt, Linn County Administrative Officer
  - Linn County is a statutory county, with full slate of elected offices
  - He has multiple responsibilities, but is not a county manger
  - There are not any qualifications for serving as Linn County commissioner, other than the statutory requirements. They are full time and are paid approximately \$96,000 a year plus benefits.
  - It takes a commissioner 18 to 24 months to get up to speed. AOC is a source for learning office.
  - A commissioner must take an interest in the state level, since the county is really an extension of the state.
  - For management of the county, communication is key. The administrator must make sure that the commissioners know what is going on; there should not be any surprises.
- George Murdock, Umatilla County Commissioner
  - First elected a commissioner in 2013, did not know the full extent of what counties did or what services counties provided
  - He appreciated the work done by the committee and emphasized that he would accept whatever recommendations were made by the committee
  - County had a position that assisted the commissioners in running the county, but now commissioners are taking a more active role in administering the county government, with chair doing more of the day to day administration of the county.
  - Administration requires a daily presence to address any issues that arise. This is balanced with outside responsibilities of a commissioner.
  - It is important to create a vision on how the county should operate, and to develop stable funding to support it.

- An administrator is possible, and funding would have to be found to pay for it. An administrator may help with continuity and institutionalizing the county vision.
- Of the Oregon counties, 27 out of 36 have some form of county manager.
- One item of concern in the Charter is current system of election. An 8 month delay from election to assuming office is not productive. It also extends the period for campaigning, which also decreases production.

Meeting #12, 1.15.19, Pendleton, OR

- W. Lawrence Givens, Former Umatilla County Commissioner
  - He was first elected in 2006 and was a commissioner until 2018.
  - During the time of his service, the county had a quasi-county manager, which 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.
  - The time has 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.
  - The role of the Board is to create policy, administer 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 everything, but rather five part-time, paid some type of stipend similar to a legislator.
  - The position of the chair should be rotated among the board.
  - 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. 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.
  - 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.
  
- General Committee Discussion

- The Committee reviewed the subjects of potential changes and discussed which ones warranted further discussion.

#### Meeting #13, 2.5.19, Pendleton, OR

- General Committee Discussion
  - The committee discussed future presentations and concluded no further ones would be needed
  - Committee discussed what specific areas of the Charter need to be added or updated, with the plan to write up proposals with advantages and disadvantages and justification for recommendation, with drafts ready for next meeting
  - Should a manager be appointed, and if the requirement should be in the Charter
  - Most wanted manager, and have Charter provision
  - Reasons for manager included growth of county, continuity of management, consistency of management, avoid Commissioner shopping. Disadvantages included barrier to Commissioners, cost, less voter input, concentration of power
  - What should be the structure of the Board – full or part time
  - Part time would allow more exposure to community, broaden representation, larger pool of candidates, more potential diversity, spread advocacy responsibilities
  - Compensation could be decreased for part time, possibly \$20,000 - \$30,000
  - Method of election could be by district or zone
  - Election of chair by board
  - Changes recommended by Sheriff would be discussed after review

#### Meeting #14, 3.5.19, Pendleton, OR

- General Committee Discussion
  - Proposals were drafted for review
  - County Manager requirement to be added to Charter, with Board oversight
  - Role and responsibility of County Manager
  - Board structure – five part time Commissioners, elected by district or at large, or combination
  - Potential for placing minimum age on Commissioner due to lowering of voting age

#### Meeting #15, 4.11.19, Pendleton, OR

- General Committee Discussion
  - Draft proposals were reviewed
  - Number of commissioners
  - Five part time Commissioners will provide opportunity for broader more diverse group, and allow for outside employment



- Method for election would be designed to eliminate November election requirement and lame duck, three or more will have primary requirement, otherwise just have general election
- Have three Commissioners elected by district, with two at large, with districts based on census
- County Manager, have increased cost somewhat offset by lower Commissioner cost
- County Manager would be responsible over all departments
- Sheriff recommendations included change in name of department, appointment of county counsel by Board not County Manager
- Minimum age of Commissioner should be 18 at time of filing, in case voting age lowered to 16
- Discussion with Commissioners planned at workshop to go over proposed recommendations

Meeting #16, 4.30.19, Pendleton, OR

- General Committee Discussion
  - Proposed changes to Charter document reviewed
  - Changes divided into three proposed ballot measures
  - County Manager
  - Board Structure
  - Law Enforcement
  - Committee members voted unanimously for each of the three proposals

Meeting #17, 5.28.19, Pendleton, OR

- General Committee Discussion
  - Draft report reviewed and approved
  - Process for work session with Board

Meeting #18, 5.29.19, Pendleton, OR

- Discussion with Board
  - Sheriff provisions – no questions
  - Election provisions - Unless there were more than two candidates, the Commissioner would be elected at the November general election. If more than two candidates filed, a primary election would be held, with the two highest votes going to the November election. This would help reduce the length of time an incumbent would remain in office after being defeated, and lessen the number of elections needed

- It could increase voter involvement in selecting a Commissioner, due to higher turnout in November elections
- Commissioner Shafer indicated that he would prefer if the charter just follow the Oregon state law process for elections; if a candidate receives a majority of the vote in the primary, the candidate is elected to the position without the need of a general election
- Commissioner Murdock thought that maybe just having one November election may address the issues
- The Chair concluded that maybe the Committee may want to revisit this provision
- Board Structure - Structure of the Board of Commissioners would change to five part time Commissioners, with a county manager to be appointed by the Board of Commissioners. Two Commissioners would be elected at large, and three by districts.
- Recommendation of the Committee was based on a lot of testimony. The Committee had heard from many people, and the recommendations are based on the testimony
- Commissioners are elected to represent the citizens and not to be administrators. If a Commissioner is focused only on day to day administrative matters, this is not a good use of their time.
- It was noted the Board of Commissioners does have the authority now to hire a county manager, but the cost has always been a major deterrent
- Only five counties have part time commissioners
- Commissioner Murdock was hesitant to provide any feedback. He wants to respect the process of the charter review system. He is not comfortable with the Commissioners determining how the county should be structured
- Public Comment
  - Fourteen members of the public spoke, most not in favor of part time commissioners or county manager and that the current system is working

Meeting #19, 6.4.19, Pendleton, OR

- General Committee Discussion
  - Each member provided reaction to work session
  - How should ballot measures be changed to reflect input from Commissioners and public
  - County Manager most important, and if necessary remove restructure of Board to allow for it
  - Recommendation finalized with three components, County Manager, Election revisions, and Sheriff changes
- Public Comment
  - Six members of the public spoke, one in favor of changes, the remainder not

## ***Umatilla Charter Review Invited Guests***

### **1st meeting, 03.06.18, Organizational/structure**

- **04.03.18**
  - Rob Bovett, Legal Counsel, AOC
  - Glen Youngman, Past UCCommissioner
- **05.01.18**
  - Dennis Doherty, Past UCCommissioner
  - Clint Reeder, Past Charter Review Member
    - Submitted distributed document
- **06.06.18**
  - Jim Barrow, Retired UC Admin. Services, HR, Mayor Walla Walla, WA
  - Miss Linda Hall, City Manager of Milton-Freewater
- **07.12.18**
  - Clint Reeder, Past Charter Review Committee Member
- **08.23.18**
  - Sheriff Terry Rowan, Umatilla County Sheriff
  - Connie Caplinger, Past County Employee/Administrator
  - Senator Bill Hansell, Past UCCommissioner
- **09.19.18**
  - Dan Lonai, Director of Umatilla County Administrative Services
  - Amy Ashton-Williams, Human Services Director
  - Dale Primmer, Director for Umatilla County Justice
- **10.11.18**
  - Tom Fellows, Umatilla County Public Works
  - Bob Waldher, County Planning Dept. Director
  - Paul Chalmers, Dir. County Assessment and Taxation Dept.
- **11.07.18**
  - John Turner, Mayor, Pendleton, OR
  - Robert Pahl, County Chief Financial Officer
  - Jennifer Blake, County Human Resource Director
- **11.28.18**
  - Dr. David Drotzman, Mayor, Hermiston, OR
  - Byron Smith, Hermiston City Manager
  - Commissioner William Elfering, Current UC Commissioner

Continued

- **12.18.18**
  - Ralph Wyatt, County Administrative Officer, Linn County, OR Attended by teleconference
  - Commissioner George Murdoch, UC Commissioner
- **06.15.19**
  - Lawrence Givens, Past UC Commissioner
- **02.05.19**
  - No invited guests
- **03.05.19**
  - No invited guests
- **04.11.19**
  - No invited guests
- **04.30.19**
  - No invited guests
- **05.28.19**
  - No invited guests
- **05.29.19**
  - Workshop with Commissioners
- **05.04.19**
  - No invited guests

## ***Umatilla County Charter Review public and press guests***

*1<sup>st</sup> meeting 03.06.18, organizational and structure*

- **03.06.18**
  - No public/no press
- **04.03.19**
  - No public/no press
- **05.01.19**
  - No public/no press
- **06.06.18**
  - Wes Koklich, Charles Danforth, Ed Chestnut, Suni Danforth, Heather Alarcon, Elizabeth Milatz, Judy Witherrite, Jeannine Nally
  - No press
- **07.12.18**
  - Suni Danforth, Charles Danforth, Glen Youngman
  - No press
- **08.23.18**
  - Ms. Tamra Mabbott, Glen Youngman
  - No press
- **09.19.18**
  - No guests/no press
- **10.11.18**
  - Rick Pullen
  - No press
- **11.07.18**
  - No guests/no press
- **12.18.18**
  - Sally Sundin
  - No press
- **01.15.19**
  - No guests/no press
- **02.05.19**
  - No guests/no press
- **03.05.19**
  - No guests/no press
- **04.11.19**
  - No guests
  - Phil Wright, East Oregonian
- **04.30.19**
  - Phil Wright, East Oregonian
- **05.28.19**
  - No public/no press
- **05.29.19**
  - Eva Martin, Marlene McClintock, Rick Pullen, Rex Morehouse, Jay Martin, Larry Nye, Glen Youngman, Kathy Youngman, Adolf Klein, Lorraine Klein, Steve Otzenberger, Fred Wyatt, Bernie Klein, Charles Danforth, Jan Craig, Rob Lovett, Bud Rupe, Wes Koklich, Orrin Lyon
  - Phil Wright, East Oregonian, Sherrie Widmer, Valley Herald, Alan Bailey, Valley Herald
- **05.04.19**
  - MaryAlice Ridgway, Suni Danforth, Marlene McClintock, Ann Jolly, Eva Martin, Bud Rupe, Charles E. Danforth, Wes Koklich, Eli Stephens, Rob Lovett, Dennis Aiken
  - No press

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Organizational Meeting of March 6, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**Absent:** Kim Puzey

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Members and Guests Present:** None

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Introductions - The committee members briefly introduced themselves and provided information on their backgrounds and interest in the Charter.
  
2. Committee Charge - Each of the committee members was provided a notebook, which included a copy of the Home Rule Charter of Umatilla County, a sheet listing the history of the charter, 1992 Charter Study Review Report, 1994 Charter Review Report, 2000 Charter Review Report, 2004 Charter Review Report, and charters from the other 8 Oregon counties under Home Rule. Doug Olsen welcomed the members and thanked them for their participation in the committee. The Board of Commissioners is providing the committee with broad authority in its review of the charter, and the method the committee wants to take in its review. Previous committees have conducted interviews of commissioners, directors, and others, as part of the review process.
  
3. Review of Charter History - Doug Olsen went over the history of the Umatilla County Home Rule Charter. There had been two previous attempts to adopt a charter, in 1964 and in 1974, which failed to be passed by the voters. After a county long range study recommended a charter, a Charter Study Committee was formed and drafted a Home Rule Charter. It was submitted to the voters and passed November 3, 1992. As required by the study committee, another option was submitted to the voters in 1996 that a county manager be appointed with five volunteer commissioners. This amendment was defeated.

As required by the charter, a committee was appointed in 1994 to review the charter. No changes to the charter were recommended by the committee, but a number of other recommendations were made and implemented. Another review was done in 2000, and again in 2004. The 2004 study recommended some amendments to the charter - elimination of dated language, adding compensation review committee and four year period for reviews. The amendments were passed by the voters in 2005. Another committee was appointed in 2008, but no record of meetings or recommendations can be found. There has not been a review since that time. When questioned why, this was due to changes in

staff and commissioners. It was the consensus that the charter should be reviewed as required, and not have similar delays.

4. Election of Chair and Other positions.

- A. Chair - Sally Anderson Hansell moved that Michele Grable be appointed chair of the committee. Seconded by Jerry Baker. Ms. Grable said that before elected, the others should know of what direction she would be taking. All would be asked why the person is interested in serving on the committee, and if has any agenda. Ms. Grable would envision the review process to include several stages: (1) Education and what the committee is doing; (2) Hearing and gathering of information, by interviews with commissioners, department heads, public and other input; (3) Discussion and making of recommendation. The consensus was in support of this approach with Ms. Grable as Chair. All voted in favor of electing Ms. Grable as committee chair.
- B. Vice-Chair - Mr. Anderson Hansell moved to appoint Don Miller as vice-chair; seconded by Mr. Baker. All voted in favor of electing Mr. Miller as committee vice-char
- C. Other positions. Dan Dorran felt that the minute taker should be independent and not be a committee member, to allow for full participation. County staff should be used. Doug Olsen said that he was present to be of any assistance and would be able to take minutes. The consensus of the committee was that this will be sufficient for now, and that all future meetings should be recorded.

The Chair presided over the remainder of the meeting

5. Member Perspective

The Chair asked each member why the person is interested in serving on the charter review committee. Ms. Anderson Hansell that she was there for learning, about the process and to see what was best for the county now and in the future. She was concerned that commissioner candidates be knowledgeable of what is required of the position. She wanted to see a good caliber of person in the elected office, and in administration, budget and long range planning, to make sure the county can face any catastrophe. Her agenda was to protect citizens from catastrophe.

Mr. Doran stated that he did not have any agenda. His passion is to be involved in the community. He previously had worked on home rule charter in another state. He was open to ideas and input from others, and from other counties. His one concern was that all areas of the county be assured of representation within the Charter. With trends and advances in technology, the county must remain current.

Mr. Miller said that he did not have any agenda. He was there as a volunteer for representation of the Milton-Freewater area. He was there with a blank slate and ready to learn.

Mark Gomoliski was part of the committee to learn about the county and to know more. He had been in the county for a while and wanted to know where county was going. The county needed to operate efficiently for the benefit of all.

Genna Banica agreed with the others. She did not have an agenda at all. With her education, her interest in government is on-going. She was there to learn more and to make a better community.

Mr. Baker has served on a number of county committees, including the budget committee, and had been a candidate for commissioner. He wants to be involved in county issues and to be a part of the process.

Jennifer McClure Spurgeon said that she is currently the mayor of the City of Weston. Her father had been a commissioner in Union County for 30 years. She wants to learn how different agencies work, and if could apply to the City. She is there to learn, and serve the county.

6. Meeting Schedule

The Chair asked how often the committee should meet. The meetings should start at one location. There would be need for public input at some point, in separate committees. Mr. Miller suggested once a month. Discussion about the date for the next meeting ensued, with a potential for another meeting in March. The consensus was to not establish a setting meeting schedule yet, and just set the date for the next meeting at each meeting. The next meeting was set for April 3, 2018, at 5:30 in Room 114 of the Umatilla County Courthouse.

7. Plan of Action

The Chair wanted information on the structure in other counties and the history of home rule in Oregon. The Association of Oregon Counties has an article on the review process. It will be emailed to each member. She had talked with Rob Bovett from AOC and thought he could give a presentation on the process. The Chair wanted each member to review the information in the notebook - the charter and the previous reports - before the next meeting. Mr. Miller indicated that may be quite a bit to cover but each should digest as much as can.

The Chair outlined the plan for action of the committee in three steps - plan for study and learn what should be seeking, including a history of home rule and global approach to county structures; hearings and input, and then decision and recommendations. There must be public comment. We will want to know how other counties operate, and what is the reason to have a charter. The consensus was to have the presentation from AOC as early as possible, to provide for information on county structure and home rule charters for a good framework to start a review.

The time line was discussed and how much time should the first two steps take. The thought was one year may be adequate, but may not leave enough time for discussion and deliberation prior to the July 1 goal, and any amendments to the voters by November. The committee will need to know the deadline date for the November 2019 election.

A list of the email addresses and telephone numbers is to be sent to each member.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2018, at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of April 3, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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- Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell (arrived at 5:35); Jerry Baker; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski (excused at 6:35); Jennifer McClure Spurgeon
- Absent:** Genna Banica; Darla Huxel; Kim Puzey
- County Counsel:** Doug Olsen
- Guests Present:** Rob Bovett, Legal Counsel, Association of Oregon Counties; Glenn Youngman

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The chair called the meeting to order at 5:30. Mr. Baker reported that Genna Banica was working out of the Hermiston office; she will try to make the meeting but may be late.
2. Chair's Introductory Comments - Chair Grable reminded those present that the meeting is a public forum. It is being audio recorded and minutes will be taken.
3. Minutes of Previous Minutes - The minutes had been emailed to the committee members. Ms. McClure Spurgeon noted a correction; her comments should note that she was not a resident of Wallowa County for 30 years, but that she said her father had been a commissioner in Union County for 30 years. Mr. Dorran moved to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Gomolski. Carried 6-0.
4. Appointment of Alternate - Mr. Olsen reported that due to the length of time the committee may take and to provide some representation from the City of Umatilla area, the Board of Commissioners appointed Darla Huxel as an alternate to the committee. An updated list of committee members and contact information was provided to the committee members.
5. Additions to Agenda - None,
6. Public Input - None [Comments from Glenn Youngman were taken during the business items.]
7. Business Items:
  - A. Presentation. Rob Bovett, Legal Counsel for the Association of Oregon Counties, had agreed to provide a presentation on home rule in Oregon. Mr. Bovett introduced himself and added that he had been with county government for over 20 years, as county counsel, district attorney, and now with AOC. Upon his asking, each committee member introduced themselves and provided a brief personal history.



Mr. Bovett had a power point presentation of County Home Rule in Oregon. A copy will be available for the committee. He noted that the Association of Oregon Counties had a paper on home rule developed by a former AOC director Ken Tollenaar. The committee previously had received a copy of it.

John Dillion published the first treatise on Municipal Corporations. He developed what is known as Dillon's Rule, that state legislature created local governments, so it can also abolish a local government. Also, to be valid, a local government enactment must fit within authorization under state law - "Show me where I can." A local government did not have any inherent authority. An Oregon Supreme Court case from 1882 recognized Dillon's Rule as applicable in Oregon.

As part of the Populist Movement, specifically the People's Power League, W. S. U'Ren, lead the charge in Oregon for moving power back to the people. This lead to the Oregon system of the initiative and referendum process in Oregon, approved in 1902 by the voters. Prior to that point, any changes to the constitution required approval from two different legislatures. A number of amendments to the Oregon Constitution were approved through this process by the voters. One of these was the Home Rule Amendment in 1906.

The Home Rule Amendment included two concepts. The form of local government could be made by local voters and that people were granted authority to enact local laws. Legislative authority was no longer needed for local governments. A local government had the authority to take action unless specifically prevented -- "Show me where I can't."

The question remained what would happen if state and local law conflicted. Based on the language of the Oregon Constitution, the courts finally decided in 1956, that if there was a conflict, legislative authorization was needed for a county to have the authority to enact any legislation. As a result, the voters adopted a ballot measure in 1958 that allowed voters to adopt a county charter and that the charter could provide for the exercise by the county of authority over matters of county concern.

Case developed over the years as to what constituted a matter of local concern. By 1978, matters of county concern were limited to two areas: Local government structure, and local internal procedures. In 1973, the legislature amended the county structure options, and gave statutory home rule powers to all counties, so long as it was not preempted. The two options for counties were to be a general law county, or a home rule county. A general law county had two forms of structure: County Court (county judge plus two commissioners) or County Commission (three to five commissioners). A home rule county could take one of these forms or choose any structure.

County Court is the traditional form of county government, with a county judge. The judge can have judicial powers over juvenile and probate courts. At the present time, there are 8 counties in Oregon that retain this form of government.

County Commissioners, whether three or five members, are the form in the remaining 19 general law counties. Both forms can convert to nonpartisan offices, and also can have an administrator.

Home Rule has been adopted in 9 counties, including Umatilla County. Within the charters, different forms have been adopted. These include elimination of offices, election of commissioners by district, and election of the chair by the voters. As of the 1973 amendment, there is not a difference in the authority of a home rule county versus a general law county. The only additional

power now granted by a charter is to structure the local government in a form different from the two statutory options.

As far as a desired form of county structure, that is up to each county. Is there a concern of concentrating too much power, or having it spread too far out. The question is what is effective for the citizens. In a charter review, may want to see what is working and what is wrong, and if there is a better way to provide services. Mr. Bovett would not provide a recommendation on what form works better.

Mr. Dorran inquired as to how get best people for the office. He likes the Home Rule approach, but wants to find out what would work best for the future. Mr. Miller added that must take a long range approach, and insure that quality people are in charge. Mr. Dorran provided insight from his experience in Alaska, and concluded that people will make the difference if the local government will be successful.

Ms. Grable asked the committee if for the next meeting, each member should identify the issues to discuss, and how to get more input. Possible issues might be voting by district, term limits, minimum qualifications or experience.

Mr. Dorran pointed out the requirements for charter amendments, based on page 73 of the Tollenaar paper. Concern is over the single subject rule, and separate vote requirement.

The Chair asked Glenn Youngman on his perspective, as a former commissioner, on what structure would work best for the county. To be an efficient organization, Mr. Youngman's opinion was to have policy makers, maybe 5 or 7, and have a professional administrator. Policy makers should be part time volunteers, and be elected by district, except two at large. A sheriff must be elected, to make sure qualified. The system must have checks and balances, and power not too concentrated.

Discussion continued on list of concerns or issues to address and options available to the Committee for changes to the charter. The consensus was to develop a list of concerns, and people to ask for comment on the current structure. The object is to develop what is the most effective and efficient form of government for the county. Ms. McClure noted the difficulty in obtaining volunteers, and the risk of elected officials in only knowing what is told by administrators.

The committee concluded that they next wanted to have input from past commissioners and administrators. The goal was to obtain information on the existing structure, and suggestions for change, from past commissioners - Dennis Doherty, Bill Hansell, Emile Holeman, Glenn Youngman, and former administrative services director, Jim Barrow. A later meeting could include input from other charter counties, such as Hood River and Clatsop.

- B. Next Meeting. The consensus was to schedule the next meeting for May 1, 2018, at 5:30, in Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of May 1, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski (excused at 6:30); Darla Huxel; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**Absent:** Jerry Baker

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** Dennis D. Doherty; Glenn Youngman

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The chair called the meeting to order at 5:30.
2. Chair's Introductory Comments - Chair Grable reminded those present that the meeting is a public forum. It is being audio recorded and minutes will be taken.
3. Minutes of Previous Minutes - The minutes had been emailed to the committee members. Mr. Dorran moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Gomolski. Carried 8-0.
4. Resignation - Mr. Olsen reported that Kim Puzey had submitted his resignation from the committee. The Board of Commissioners appointed Darla Huxel as full member of the committee to replace Mr. Puzey. An updated list of committee members and contact information was provided to the committee members. Ms. Huxel provided a brief personal history. She has been involved in city government, and wanted to obtain more on the county perspective and compare the different styles of government.
5. Additions to Agenda - Mr. Dorran wanted the committee to consider meeting at other locations in the county.
6. Public Input: None
7. Business Items:
  - A. Discussion with former Commissioners. Dennis D. Doherty, former commissioner, was present to provide information and answer questions regarding the county structure of government. Mr. Doherty provided a summary of his background, being raised in Morrow County, attending St. Joseph's Academy, prosecuting in the Umatilla and Morrow County District Attorney's Offices, private practice, and then Umatilla County Commissioner from 1996 to 2013.

Mr. Doherty passed out to the committee members a written summary of his thoughts on the county home rule charter. The statement included benefits and weaknesses of the charter. He does not believe the charter is clearly written or easy to follow. It would benefit from a total rewrite, but that would be a huge job.

Since there is not a general governance role of the commissioners, there can be challenges to the Board's authority. It is helpful for the board to adopt policies to fill in some of the blanks created by the charter. Compensation was always a question, and what was included in the compensation package, such as the car and credit card rewards.

Overall, though, Mr. Doherty did not feel strongly enough about any of the weaknesses to change the charter.

Mr. Dorran asked if commissioner election by district would be beneficial. Mr. Doherty was not personally in favor. He felt at large elections made a commissioner responsive to the entire county, not just one portion or component, and would lose the visibility factor in the communities, and create disharmony. The commissioner should be acting for the greater good of the county, not just a small area of it.

Mr. Miller inquired about the work load of the commissioners, and if full time is warranted. Mr. Doherty said that full time is needed. As it is, the commissioners are stretched too thin. Everyone wants to have a part in the decision making process, and it comes a question of how to control the work load. Additional commissioners could spread the work load. Since there is no description on what a commissioner is to do, self-imposed side boards or priorities are helpful. The first priority for a commissioner is policy making, then administrative.

There was a general discussion on the duties and responsibilities of a commissioner. Mr. Doherty felt that a commissioner needs to be involved, and be hands on. The duties are not in charter, but are more self-imposed by a commissioner. When funding is limit, the commissioners, like most county employees, take on more responsibilities. He does not see this changing. A copy of the latest commissioner liaison chart was distributed to the Committee by Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Doherty was questioned on the need for a manager. He thought that a manager removes a commissioner from contact with citizens. There really was not the funding for it, and would have to have the right people in the positions. He did not see it happening.

Ms. Grable asked how Mr. Doherty felt about term limits. He was not personally in favor. A commissioner takes time to learn the responsibilities and to have background on matters. It is over time that can acquire the knowledge needed to make policy decisions.

The same was true for part time positions. Unless you can get the right people, it would be a disaster. The commissioners would not have the knowledge necessary to know what to do.

Mr. Doherty was in favor of electing a chair. His preference for any changes would be to expand the board to five, and to elect the chair at large. Funding is the biggest problem, that, and finding enough time.

He felt that the present system for establishing the salary for a commissioner is fair. His recommendation would be that tasks of a commissioner need to be flushed out and documented. A commissioner does need to be full time. He added that he had accomplished some of his goals as a commissioner, but a lot he was not able to get to.

Glenn Youngman was asked for his views on being a commissioner. He said that he had covered this at the previous meeting. To reiterate, he believed a manager is needed due to the complexity. A manager would allow commissioners to focus on other matters, such as getting additional funding, priorities, mental health issues, and economic development. He was in favor of short term tax incentives to encourage development, but not longer terms. The board should be increased from three to five. The chair should be elected by the board; a rotating chair is more responsible to the entire county. The five should be part-time, three elected by district, and two at large.

Mr. Miller added that any changes must be financially feasibility, but should not be done to save money.

- B. Clinton Reeder Comments. Mr. Reeder had provided his thoughts on the charter review, based on his participation in past reviews. The document was distributed to the committee members, and the consensus was to discuss at the next meeting after the members could read the comments.
- C. List of Topics. Discussion for future meeting.
- D. Future presentations or interviews. Consensus was to have more public input, and to hold a public hearing at future dates.
- E. Next Meeting. The consensus was to schedule the next meeting in Milton-Freewater, to allow for discussions with Jim Barrow and City of Milton-Freewater representative. A date other than a Monday was needed to allow for all members to attend. The date for the next meeting is set for June 6, 2018, at 5:30, in Milton-Freewater

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of June 6, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Albee Room, Milton-Freewater Public Library  
Milton-Freewater, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell (arrived 5:45); Jerry Baker (arrived 6:05); Genna Banica; Dan Dorran (via cell phone); Darla Huxel (arrived 5:50); Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**Absent:** Mark Gomolski

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** Jim Barrow; Linda Hall; Jeannine Nally; Judy Witherrite; Ed Chesnut; Elizabeth Milatz; Suni Danforth; Charles E. Danforth; Wes Koklich; Heather Alarcon

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The chair called the meeting to order at 5:30.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes - The minutes had been emailed to the committee members. Mr. Miller moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. McClure-Spurgeon. Carried 8-0.
3. Chair's Introductory Comments - Chair Grable welcomed those present to the meeting. This is the first meeting held outside of Pendleton. The purpose of the committee is to recommend to the Commissioners proposed changes to the Umatilla County Charter. The Committee has had a presentation from the Association of Oregon Counties providing an overview of the county structure. The Committee will look how the county structure is working or not working, and provide specific recommendation for amendments. Everyone is welcome to comment.
4. Additions to Agenda - None
5. Business Items:
  - A. Discussion with Jim Barrow. Jim Barrow, retired Umatilla County Administrative Services Director and Human Resources Director, was present to provide information and answer questions regarding the county structure of government. Mr. Barrow introduced himself and gave information on his background, including his history of 18 years with the county as Director of Human Resources and Director of Administrative Services. He had also provided reports to two previous charter review committees. He is a resident of Washington. He also served on the City of Walla Walla Council, including as Mayor. He has also worked with the Walla Walla County Board of Commissioners, which has a similar structure to Umatilla County.

One of the difficulties with the current Umatilla County Board structure was the problem created with Open Meetings law. With two Commissioners a quorum is present. This creates an impossible burden, and hinders discussion among board members, and also with staff and department heads.

An appointment of a county administrator would be beneficial. It would allow 1 person to dialogue and avoid public meeting requirements. It would not require a charter amendment to accomplish.

An overabundance of elected officials can create conflicts among the officials, and a more concentrated method for decision makers is better. This was a benefit to the Umatilla County Charter.

Mr. Barrow was asked if it would be beneficial to expand the number of board members. He did not really have an opinion. It might have practical problems with having more people to run and also more expensive. If have someone similar to a mayor, that can handle the day to day activities, and have the Board for other policy matters. If have centralized authority, you can handle activities better. If have more board members, can represent community better, and can be more accessible to people. A county administrative could handle the day to day chores, and have full time commissioners to represent the citizens.

A question was raised regarding the role of a commissioner - policy, administrative and advocacy - and which was the priority. The policy role was highest. The day to day activities are important too, allowing for department head to go to someone. The advocacy role for issues and external matters also was important, to have a voice at the local, state and federal levels. The downside was when the commissioner was out of the area on issues, constituents were not able to talk with a commissioner.

The Chair wanted to know his experience with the work load of commissioners. Mr. Barrow always had hardworking commissioners. It is a full time job, but the Commissioners were able to meet the needs. His experience in Washington was with part time elected officials, who had other employment.

An administrator would be beneficial, similar to a chief of staff, who can make sure the policy is faithfully executed. This person could handle the day to day matters, the smaller stuff, working with department heads. It was important to have the right person in the position. The commissioners would still have a full time job, and have time to set policy and for advocacy role. They would, though, be insulated from department heads.

Mr. Miller wanted to know if the advocacy role was functionally needed. Yes, definitely, since the county does not exist in a vacuum. It is easy to be ignored. Best if join with association, to have voice be heard.

Ms. Anderson raised the question of compensation of Commissioners. Mr. Barrow's experience was frustration in dealing with that issue, to make sure Commissioners and county employees were properly paid. He wanted to make sure salaries were adjusted to the market.

The possibility of election by zone was raised. His experience in Washington had election with mixed method, by zone and at large. It did not seem to create any problems with representing all citizens for the entire county. He was not personally against zones, but did not see great need for it.

He was not in favor of any minimum qualifications. It should be up to the voters to decide who to represent them. What would be the qualifications? The present system is working fairly well, and to place limits would be viewed as elitist. Term limits, though, in his personal opinion, do provide fresh viewpoints, but then lose experience and credibility. Ultimately, the ballot box should be the decider. He personally does not see the need for term limits. It takes a while to gain the experience to be able to make good decisions. Usually 6 months to one year just to get the basic knowledge.

A county administrator is a good idea. It would help with the open meetings problem, as Commissioners would have less need to talk with one another. It would not require a charter change. He did not see any real need for any changes to the charter, maybe some tweaking, but no major overhaul is needed. If not broken, no need to fix it.

- B. Discussion with Linda Hall. Linda Hall was introduced. She is the City Manager with the City of Milton-Freewater and has been employed with the City for 25 years. Working with the City, she is familiar with the City Council form of government. In her opinion, the city council structure was effective, it allowed for continuity, accountability and efficiency. The elected officials had more latitude to address the issues. As manager, there was no stand on political issues. Government should be run like a business. A professional manager was responsible to make sure things were addressed. The elected official set policy, and then the manager's job is to implement.

In her experience, the county structure did work well but could work better under a council/manager format. It takes time to learn and educate yourself on the issues. If the chair is rotated, the knowledge and continuity is lost. It takes usually two years to get familiar with parts of government and make competent decisions. A manager can help with continuity. There are checks and balances to make sure power is not concentrated too much. The City does not have difficulty in attracting good citizens to volunteer for council positions.

There are good working relationships with the county. Her opinion and experience are that a council/manager structure works more efficiently. It also makes it easier on employees and provides more continuity and stability. A council can set policy and longer term goals.

- C. Clinton Reeder Paper. Discussion postponed until meet in person with Mr. Reeder.

- D. Public Comments.

Wes Koklich talked about an administrator.

Charles Danforth also added to the discussion on an administrator and the need to give the authority to the administrator. The discussion continued on an administrator compared to a manger. Mr. Danforth noted that he wanted to elect anyone handling the money. Later he added that a commissioner should be working on advocacy and administration, not policy. The policy is set by the constitution. Mr. Danforth felt that the low voter turnout indicated voter satisfaction and that it is working. Mr. Barrow, disagreed; Based on his long term employment in government, he felt that the low voter turnout was a result of cynicism, not satisfaction.

Ed Chesnut commented that the City of Milton-Freewater did not have a problem in attracting interested citizens to be on the council. Any concerns about missing meetings are addressed and self-corrected. Citizens are willing to serve.



- E. Future presentations or interviews. Possible future meetings will include discussions with Senator Hansell and Clinton Reeder. Potential other sources will be from the Sherriff's Department and city groups.
- F. Next Meeting. The consensus was to schedule the next meeting in Pendleton, to allow for discussion with Clinton Reeder. The date for the next meeting is set for July 12, 2018, at 5:30, at the Umatilla County Courthouse in Pendleton.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of July 12, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker (left at 6:35); Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski  
**Absent:** Genna Banica; Darla Huzel; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon  
**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen  
**Guests Present:** Clinton Reeder; Glenn Youngman; Suni Danforth; Charles E. Danforth

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The 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. Mr. Dorran moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Baker. Mr. Dorran noted there was a comment made by Mr. Barrow regarding voter turnout that should be included as part of the conversation with Mr. Danforth. The following should be added to the minutes: “Mr. Danforth felt that the low voter turnout indicated voter satisfaction and that it is working. Mr. Barrow, disagreed; based on his long term employment in government, he felt that the low voter turnout was a result of cynicism, not satisfaction.” Mr. Dorran moved to amend the minutes; seconded by Mr. Miller. The amendment carried 6-0. The minutes as amended were approved 6-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Business Items:
  - A. Discussion with Clinton Reeder. Mr. Reeder was present to follow up and discuss his letter of March 5, 2018 to the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners, regarding the Umatilla County Charter Review. Mr. Reeder is a farmer. The family farm of 140 years has been past to the next generation. He was a professor for 13 years, and has obtained a doctorate in economic and business. He has participated in the formation of the Smoke Management program, and also wind energy development regulation, and planning commission. He has also participated in more than one charter review.

Before the adoption of the charter, each elected official was a department head. It was an interesting structure. Each elected official has own support group in county. This lead to dramatic politics and divisions, especially when budget was tight. Each official sought to have its support group lobby for funding. When the idea of consolidation of positions and elimination of elected

positions was raised, it meet with strong resistance, especially the sheriff. Ultimately it was decided to only have the commissioners and the sheriff elected at the county level. The public did not want to give up the election of the sheriff.

With the change in the county structure, the need for turf protection was eliminated. There was direct supervision by the Board of Commissioners and budget process was very different. It smoothed out the money side of the county government, and easier to shift funds among departments and keep up on the budget. It functioned relatively well.

When went to executive assistant [in 2003], the plan was to improve the communication process between the commissioner and the department heads. It started out well, but when the assistant began to prioritize matters, some concerns began with the department heads if the flow of information was still getting to the commissioners. Even though that position ended, it does provide some guidance on how a county manager might work. That position will change communication dynamic and power structure. Transition from each commissioner actively involved as liaison to department, to more of a policy director, similar to a business board of directors. It is possible to accomplish, but are changing the power structure in the county. You will need to have the right job descriptions and policies set. It will be a big job to make that transition.

Mr. Baker asked if the system is broken, and if needing to be fixed. If change one commissioner, will not make much of a change to the dynamic. If more than one, might be greater impact. Not aware of any great dilemma facing the county at the present time. There is some current discussion regarding the strategic investment program and its impact.

Mr. Dorran asked how prioritize commissioner duties. Commissioners are a super board - both manager and policy maker. They can alter depending on how often meet with department heads. If more actively involved, will be more dynamic function.

Mr. Miller pointed out that in his paper, Mr. Reeder seemed to have the presumption that if had county manager, then a commissioner would not need to be full time. Mr. Reeder said that in all discussions on this subject, the goal seemed to save money and improve efficiency. It will not save money, since adding a fourth person, unless find another source of money.

If advocacy is participating in state and federal level, Mr. Miller wanted to know if that is a functional duty of commissioner. Mr. Reeder felt that you may only have access to some grants if present and participating. There is a significant benefit being involved outside if directly related to county. If not related to county, it is more of a personal benefit to the individual, rather than the county. Is the cost of participation bring any money back to the county. If the national role will generate enough benefit to pay for the additional cost. There might be more of a personal enhancement to the individual, rather than any institutional benefit.

Mr. Dorran raised the comparison with a corporate board. Would it be better if had a fourth board member acting as the chair, with a manager being the business leader. If that type of structure would work? Mr. Reeder emphasized that you cannot ignore that the county is political. It is also a business. You cannot ignore either aspect. It is also an economic entity, and has to pay or cover costs from taxes and grant money. Advocacy is needed to gain economic growth in county. No matter how structure, you will have to manage the people. How do you think the communication system will be most productive, if do or do not make a change? Suggest make a model and as a

group make a decision. Ask those currently involved how would change the system. If want to concentrate power, and have more of a continuity. If have a county manager, you concentrate power and trust to communicate with others. If too removed, the commissioner may not know what is going on. Have to hire the right individual to be manager.

Mr. Dorran asked if have a manager and a chair or mayor, will this have multiple layer of checks and balances. In some organizations, the finance manager is a crucial person. If there is a money tracker and have right the format, the organization will not have many problems with money. The check is in the system, and trustworthy. If have a policy manual, and county level rules and guidelines incorporating state law, and adherence to them, then this is another safeguard.

Ms. Grable pointed out that if a commissioner manager versus professional manger, there are two different objectives. If have professional manager, you have experience, education and continuity, but have concentration of power. A bad manger can create a disaster. You do not have accountability to citizens. There are no qualifications for commissioner. Do we have to pick one or the other? How do you get accountability and continuity and professional management, melded into one functioning system of government? There are no standards for commissioner. Mr. Reeder said a county association could establish standard for a commissioner. Schools do have criteria for school board members. The county is big business, and a commissioner should have some experience with handling money. One thought is to look at what kind of people has been most productive for county in the last 50 years while acting as a commissioner. There should be public service experience, personable to community, manage people, problem solving, and encourage to work cooperatively. The election process is to get an idea on what type of person. But you have to be very careful in establishing standards so as to avoid being too limiting. Production as commissioner is the goal, and to do job under well-defined role. Ms. Grable noted, though, you do not have continuity.

Mr. Reeder stated that the committee will need to determine what problem if any, exists with the current structure and how to solve it. Is continuity the problem? Mr. Miller responded that the issue is determining what is the job of a commissioner. What is commissioner and what role should play is the critical factor to address. His impression at this point is that tasks are assigned, but nothing defines the role or expectations to guide commissioner. The commissioner has to set the role. In observing commissioners, Mr. Reeder believes that stability comes with continuity. Continuity can come with some not being productive. There is no way to assess performance, no formal evaluation. We need to get in one in place. Not a charter review committee, but a commissioner review committee. At least once or twice a year, those not functioning, can be reviewed. You need to create a job description to do so.

Ms. Grable asked if we should define duties in the charter. Mr. Reeder responded that it is possible for you to do that.

Mr. Dorran asked what if the commissioner was an advocate and policy maker, and a chair was the manager, would that help in creating the job description. Mr. Reeder did not believe so, since the commissioner is ultimately responsible for management. It can be delegated, but still ultimately responsible. If hire a manager, the department head would report to the manager and the manger would be responsible for each department. The commissioner would still have to be involved with the manager to know what is going on and to make sure implementation of the policy is being done.

Ms. Grable wants to know commissioners how function now and supervise department head? Primarily decide which department and bring information back to other commissioners. No guidelines are in place. Each commissioner decides how to do it. There are not any set expectations. The commissioners stay in touch with the department head and are informed about department. Commissioners share information on an as needed basis.

Ms. Anderson-Hansell asked for more detailed approach, for a specific department, such as the planning department. Why is the commissioner interacting with the department head on a regular basis? It is to discuss financial and personnel issues. What is not working and why. Fix those problems the department head cannot solve alone, such as involving another department or outside agency. There may be a problem involving more than one commissioners and open meetings. A manager might be able to work behind the scenes without running into this problem. A consultant could also fill this role.

Ms. Grable pointed out that there are no goals or policies set by the commissioners and act on ad hoc way, without any specific goal. Should the commissioner be goal setting? Mr. Reeder provided example that need guidance to look at the problem from the same prospective, and goal setting fulfills this direction and focus.

Glenn Youngman was asked if he had any questions of Mr. Clinton. Mr. Youngman related his experience after being elected commissioners. There were two inexperienced commissioners along with one longer termed. It takes a long time, up to 2 years, to get up to speed. Within the county, there were insufficient funds to operate, and could not get a budget passed, until come together and united. Once they got a budget put together, they then appointed charter committee. The elimination of elected positions, and making those remaining non-partisan eliminated political faction. More rules and regulations were established over monies being disbursed. They sought an increase in discretionary funding though increase in development. Money tends to be the focus if not a mission statement. If the job focuses on just trying to maintain funding for the year, you cannot look at the overall scope to influence the community.

Mr. Reeder added that if you only look year to year, you have no long term perspective. You get trapped, unless you collectively look at what is around you. If do have a manger, can allow for commissioners more time to look at bigger picture.

His recommendation was for the committee to take the time to develop a mission statement for each department of the county. Then ask what must a commissioner know or become familiar with, to get up to speed, to accomplish the mission. There should be a process for the new commissioner to get up to speed, to accelerate the effectiveness of the commissioner. If hire a manager, the same must be done. The person must have clear expectations, guidelines and policy. If don't have, don't hire one. If do, the manager could become a key player, and make things better.

#### B. Public Comments.

Suni Danforth would like to comment. She was appreciative of the attendance of Mr. Reeder and his comments. Being a city resident, she has seen problem with city manager in the past, and not doing what best for the city. The city council hires the manager, so if council not willing to work together to rectify the problem, you are stuck. She would not like the county to be stuck in the same situation. Do need to have some descriptions for department heads and guidelines for commissioner. It is county commissioner's job to look ahead, to see where county should be in the

10 to 20 years. Cities do have long term planning, and the county should do the same. She also wants power spread out too, so at least requires two to make a decision.

Charles Danforth added that if not broken, do not fix it. If things not going right, the voters can change it. You do not want a manager getting too much power, and whoever in command should be elected. Voters can make correction and fix if not.

- E. Future presentations or interviews. Possible future meetings will include discussions with Sherriff and Connie Caplinger. Meetings in September and October will include other department heads. The presentations should be time limited.
- F. Next Meeting. The consensus was to schedule the next meeting in Hermiston. The date for the next meeting is set for August 23, 2018, at 5:30 p.m., at the Stafford Hansell Government Center in Hermiston.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of August 23, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Dennis Doherty Conference Room,  
Stafford Hansell Government Center, Hermiston, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon; Jerry Baker (arrived at 5:45 pm)

**Absent:** Sally Anderson-Hansell, Genna Banica; Darla Huxel

**Guests Present:** Sheriff Terry Rowan (arrived at 5:40 pm); Glenn Youngman; Bill Hansell (arrived at 5:45 pm); Connie Caplinger (arrived at 5:47 pm); Tamra Mabbott (arrived at 5:47 pm)

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The chair called the meeting to order at 5:30, and reminded everyone that this is a public meeting.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes - Mr. Dorran moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Miller. Carried 5-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - Mr. Miller, noted that not necessarily an agenda item, but he would like to discuss limiting time for general public comments - not the invited guest speakers who are presenting. It was the consensus to add that matter to the agenda for the next meeting.
4. Public Input and Recognition of Visitors - The Chair acknowledged Glenn Youngman, a regular visitor. Mr. Youngman noted that he could not find the minutes of the meetings on the County website. Sheriff Rowan also could not find the minutes. Ms. Hallman requested that minutes be posted on the website. Both Mr. Youngman and Sheriff Rowan could be sent minutes of previous meetings.
5. Business Items:
  - A. Discussion with Sheriff Terry Rowan. Sheriff Rowan had made a redline version of his comments on the Umatilla County's Charter document. He had reviewed other county charters. In listening to residents, they want an elected sheriff. The Sheriff went over the highlighted items. The concern is the name of the office, and the consistency between the language of the charter and state statute and administrative rules. The suggested change is to replace any reference of "Department of Law Enforcement" with "Sheriff's Office". He provided the one copy to the Chair. One specific change is under the qualifications for sheriff, increase the minimum age to 25. Language should be changed to reflect common practice and any requirements under state statute or administrative rule. The Board has the responsibility for budget, including creating of employment positions, but Sheriff has authority to hire. The provisions for setting compensation should conform to statutory requirements.

If the qualifications for the office of sheriff refer to the applicable DPSST qualifications, that should be adequate and better than the current language.

In response to a question, the Sheriff believed that Washington County and Clatsop County's Charters are the best for easy reading. Senator Hansell added that Umatilla County's Charter was originally patterned after Benton County's, because it had never needed amendment and was simple and brief. The Sheriff said he had a good working relationship with the sitting Commissioners, and appreciated the expertise each Commissioner brought. He felt full-time commissioners were needed. Although the complexity of the county may warrant a county manager, he was concerned about the lack of voter input.

The Committee had discussion about the one issue limitation for ballot measures and applicability to charter recommended changes. The matter was deferred for discussion at a future meeting

In summary, Ms. Grable noted the Sheriff feels his office should be run independently except for budget. The Sheriff added that he wants to maintain the relationship with the BCC office and to have a clear set of rules. He gave an example of lack of flexibility of policies to deal with emergency situations. Ms. Grable offered that if he wanted, the Sheriff could submit additional suggestions in writing.

Senator Hansell commented on the issue of accountability. If the Sheriff's Office is sued, it is the County that goes to court. Total autonomy can be a problem, when the fiscal responsibility lies with the Board. In addition, policies are set to make sure action is taken consistently and correctly to avoid liability.

Mr. Miller also agreed with the need to have procedures be flexible to meet emergencies or time sensitive matters.

- B. Discussion with Connie Caplinger. She had a hand-out of her background, county positions held and duties. She had been employed with the county for 20 years. She also had been a teacher and involved in education. She started with the county in 1993. She eventually became director for the Department of Health & Human Services, and then executive assistant to the Board of Commissioners and Human Resources Director. She had worked with three sets of commissioners.

The executive assistant was an evolving position, since the position had never existed. She did a number of functions within the Board office - coordinate schedule, efficiency, develop processes. One example was the streamlining of the purchase process. The Board delegated responsibilities to her - Charter Review Committee, state committees, labor negotiations, economic development. It was basically a county administrator position. She would then report back to a commissioner or the board, but was delegated authority to make some decisions.

Ms. Caplinger believed that it would be best to keep three full-time commissioners, representing the entire county. There are times when one commissioner may be absent. Due to the diversity of the county, economic and population, it is time look at someone with a larger vision and to coordinate activities, so need to add a county manager position, either through the charter or by the Board.

Tamra Mabbott added she worked with Ms. Caplinger as a department head and felt her authority was not clear to her and to department heads. Ms. Mabbott suggested if adding a county manager, the duties should be clearly delineated and set out the "chain of command". Ms. Mabbott has been a



county planner for 27 years, including 15 years at Umatilla County, and had been at the City of Umatilla for the last year.

- C. Discussion with Senator Bill Hansell. He was a county commissioner for 30 years. He gave background/history of county structure. Originally established with County Court, which included some judicial responsibilities. In 1971, the County Court took the action to move from a judge and 2 commissioners to 3 full-time commissioner board structure. Home Rule came with vote by the people to allow counties to set up their own charter. Each county charter is different. Some are very detailed. In both earlier versions of the proposed charters, commissioners would be part time volunteers, with county manager. Both were defeated by large margins.

When he first was elected as commissioner, the county had a low tax rate, and always had difficulty in funding county government. In 1990, the citizens voted in a higher tax rate. At the same time, the review for a charter began. In that process, the questions was to have commissioners part time or, keep as is. The compromise was to propose as part of the charter that within 4 years put on ballot the question of volunteer commissioners. When the matter was ultimately put to the voters, the vote was overwhelming to retain paid full time commissioners.

Senator Hansell was part of the transition committee. They proposed merging thirty departments into seven. The Law Enforcement Department name was chosen rather than Sheriff's Office because it would include other offices, such as community corrections, or others that would not require DPSST certification. Everybody have a job description and fit on county organization chart. Pay equity was also a goal. All elected officials transitioned to appointed positions. Due to the elimination of elected office salaries, there was a savings.

His view on if a manager is needed--both systems work. The key is to have good people. This cannot be guaranteed in the political process. The three important benefits of a full time commissioner: 1) accountability, 2) accessibility and 3) availability. You are accountable to the voter, rather than a board like a manager. Commissioners are easily one of the most accessible elected officials. A commissioner is always available to anyone at any time. The lack of knowledge of a commissioner is not a concern. To be effective, a commissioner should be a generalist not an expert. You hire the expert and the one with knowledge. This is how to accomplish things. He feels the current set up of 3 full-time commissioners has worked well and believes it is necessary for oversight. Chair and Vice-Chair rotate each year. Who the Chair is not that important; the chair just runs the meetings.

There was discussion about job descriptions for commissioners (there is none), should there be? Mr. Miller suggested the need at least for long-range planning. Senator Hansell pointed out that most elected positions do not have a job description. There may be some roles set by state statute. Accountability to people, though, that is the job description. On a question for zoning, he was not in favor. If you divide the county into region for representation, then you focus your attention to your area, not for the benefit of all citizens. The county also does not easily divide into three zones.

He is not opposed to long range planning. The Board looked to citizen committees for long term planning. In reality, though, the lack of resources makes planning difficult.

Commissioners fulfill all three roles as administrator, quasi-judicial, and policy maker. Not one is more important than other, just vested in all three. The most time is spent as administrator, then policy maker. All are important. In his experience, part time commissioners do not have time or the resources for advocacy. It is important to be involved in broader issues that impact the county.

Ms. Grable summarized: it is believed that 3 elected officials (commissioners) are good for accountability and to be available, and that part-time commissioners would not work well; also a county “manager” position (similar to the executive assistant position) would be good for overall consistency/continuity.

- D. Set Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be held in three weeks: Wednesday, September 19, 5:30 p.m. in Pendleton at the courthouse. The Committee felt it best to invite 2 to 3 Department Heads (no more than 3) to present similar to those today.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Slatt

Executive Secretary

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of September 19, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker (arrived at 5:57); Genna Banica; Dan Dorran; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**Absent:** Mark Gomolski; Darla Huxel

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** Dan Lonai; Amy Ashton-Williams; Dale Primmer

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The 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. Mr. Dorran moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. McClure Spurgeon. Carried 6-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input. Other than the presenters, there were not any public members to make comment.
5. Business Items:
  - A. Discussion with Dan Lonai. Dan Lonai is the director of Umatilla County Administrative Services. The department includes functions for internal services (such as maintenance, communications, GIS, information technology) and county clerk duties (elections, recordings, marriages, passports). He has been with the county overall 27 years, and ten years as a director.

Mr. Lonai had reviewed the Umatilla County Charter and had a number of items that may need changing. First was Article III, section 3, the election of commissioners. Under ORS 249.088, unless candidate for nonpartisan office receives a majority of the votes casts, the two highest votes are nominated, and if receives a majority, then is elected. The statute is subject to a home rule charter provisions. In the Charter, it specifies that one commissioner is elected at each presidential election, and the other two are elected at the general November election. So even if a candidate receives a majority, then still has to be on the ballot in November. He thought the language from another county charter was better - chosen in the same years as presidential election, and other two in the alternate biannual election.

He thought the language in Article IV, section 2(4), was awkward and unclear. Elected officials shall devote full time to the office.

Article V, section 3(1)(a), can create more cost to the county. Normally is a county matter is on the ballot, there is no additional cost for primary or general elections. The charter provision allows for special elections to fill commissioner vacancies in March, June and September. Since there are not normally county wide issues or even any ballots for these elections, the county would have to pay the full cost for the election, roughly \$1 per voter, a total of approximately \$40,000. The provision should be changed to only allow for elections at times there would a ballot - primary or general. There was concern raised by committee members that this may result in substantial delays in filling the position if the vacancy occurs in an off election year.

Mr. Lonai also suggested an update to Article VII, section 5, the time requirements for charter review. He thought every four years was too often.

Mr. Lonai agreed to provide the committee with proposed language to address his concerns. He was asked about his opinion on the county structure. Mr. Lonai has had experience in Walla Walla County as well as in Umatilla County prior to the charter adoption. The previous structure created for fighting between departments over the budget, and there was no control over departments. He much prefers the current structure with the more limited departments under commissioner oversight. His current liaison commissioner is Commissioner Murdock.

With new commissioners, it always takes time to be brought up to speed, and the quality of a commissioner can be different. Having a manager may allow for continuity, but there can be difficulties depending on the experience and the abilities of the manager. A manager may prevent some ideas from reaching the Board. At the present time, he does not believe that the county has run better.

- B. Discussion with Amy Ashton-Williams. Amy Ashton-Williams has been with the county as the Human Services Director since June 2016. Prior to that time, she was in private practice providing mental health and addiction services, and had worked as a therapist. The Human Services Department includes outpatient treatment services, veterans' services, and school based mental health prevention. The Board is the county mental health authority and oversees the providing of mental health services in the county.

Ms. Ashton-Williams was asked about her interaction with the Board of Commissioners. Her liaison commissioner is Commissioner Murdock. She has discussed with all commissioners problems facing her department. She meets with Commissioner Murdock at least once a month to discuss the department and any needs or concerns, and he helps her in prioritizing matters for the department. If a problem develops, she will also contact the commissioner. She guided the development of strategic plan for her department, with input from Commissioner Murdock. She also is involved with advocacy for her department, including through state organizations, and also with her liaison commissioner.

- C. Discussion with Dale Primmer. Dale Primmer is the director for Umatilla County Community Justice. He had prepared a summary of his thoughts related to the county structure and county operations, which he circulated to those present. He had three topics he wanted to cover: efficiencies, liaisons, and professional growth. Mr. Primmer has been employed by Umatilla County for 21 years.

Mr. Primmer began his county employment as a work crew supervisor in 1997, then moved to parole officer, assistant director, and finally to the director. He has been in a management role for 13 years. During his tenure, he has not seen a more efficient use of county resources, than the current leadership. Staffing has been reduced and restructured and the Board of Commissioners has assumed more duties. His current liaison for Community Justice is Commissioner Elfering. He has a set monthly meeting with the Commissioner, but also frequently communicates with him by phone or text, and can stop by his office.

In his role on the city council, Mr. Primmer is familiar with a manager structure and how it functions. He believes both structures work well, and he does not have a bias. It depends on who is in the position. If a manager would restrict access, it can create problems.

When questioned regarding strategic planning, Mr. Primmer responded that he sets the plan and then presents to the Board for review and approval. The plan is required by the state funding of the program. The juvenile department also has a strategic plan. He thought for the county as a whole, a plan would be difficult with the multiple systems.

Mr. Primmer believed that the liaison structured performed an important role in the running of the county. It allows access to the Commissioners, and can create a stronger relationship.

Using his own experience as an example, Mr. Primmer believed that the county encourages growth of its employees and opportunities for professional development -- to grow leaders from within. It does not always work to bring in from outside. The current Board has worked to enhance the professional growth of its managers and staff.

- D. Limiting Time. Mr. Miller had requested this matter be put on the agenda. He does not believe it is an issue and that it can be removed from discussion.
- E. Future Presentations. One potential source might be to talk to some of the area mayors. No direction was given.
- F. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in Pendleton to continue the discussion with the department heads. The date for the next meeting is set for October 11, 2018, at 5:30 p.m., at the Umatilla County Courthouse.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of October 11, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran (via phone); Mark Gomolski  
**Absent:** Michele Grable; Don Miller; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon  
**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen  
**Guests Present:** Tom Fellows; Bob Waldher; Paul Chalmers; Rick Pullen

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - Jerry Baker, the acting chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30, and reminded everyone that this is a public meeting. He gave a short statement on the purpose for the committee and process for the review of the charter.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes - The minutes had been emailed to the committee members. Ms. Banica moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Anderson Hansell. Carried 5-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input. There was not any public comment.
5. Business Items:

A. Discussion with Tom Fellows. Tom Fellows is the Public Works Director. He has been with the county since January 1994. The Public Works Director has always worked closed with the Board. The Board has always taken the stance that any complaints or concerns will be first directed to the department to resolve. The department has the first opportunity to respond to complaints. He believes that any complaints should be resolved at the lowest possible level.

Mr. Fellows has had the chance to see how the manager position has worked in other counties. Both structures have drawbacks and advantages. He does not have a position on which one is better. If there is a manager, the direct access to the Board is limited. He is satisfied with the current opportunities.

The liaison for the department currently is Commissioner Givens. That has worked well and Commissioner Givens is available. Mr. Fellows has worked with other commissioners, some of which take a less involved approach and only want to know if issue. He does work with all three

commissioners and has a lot of contact with all. All three commissioners are available for road issues.

The department takes care of 1700 miles of road, 500 of which are paved, along with over 300 bridges. There are 10 fewer employees than 15 years ago. There are always gaps, but do as much as possible with limited funding. Recently there has been additional funding to allow for updating of fleets. Besides roads, the department also includes the county park, county surveyor and the county noxious weed program.

Mr. Fellows is involved with public works at the county and state level. This has provided the county with a voice when trying to restructure the method for distribution of funding.

A question was raised as to establishing priorities for the department. The department includes three separate shops to address different areas of the county. Each is staffed independently and can address problems in each of the areas. The highest priority is the paved roads, which are cheaper to maintain than repair or replace. The remainder of the roads is addressed depending on the need and time of year, such as grading or plowing, and trying to focus on the collector first with the most traffic. The senior staff is usually the one to set the priorities. There are not any capital projects unless special funding is obtained.

- B. Discussion with Bob Waldher. Bob Waldher is the Planning Department Director. He became the director over a year ago. Planning has a staff of six people, including 2 planners, administrative staff and code enforcement. Originally his liaison was Commissioner Elfering, it has now been changed to Commissioner Givens. He is comfortable with the arrangement, has a good relationship with the commissioners and feels comfortable going to them. He has been able to meet with all three as much as needed.

He has been with Umatilla County for three years. Prior to that, he was a landscape architect for 10 years. He was familiar with working with governmental agencies. He has worked with agencies with manager structure. There are some advantages to a manager, but what makes the largest difference is who is in the position.

The department engages in long term planning. The county comprehensive plan is outdated. The transportation system plan also needs updating. Priorities are set and reviewed each year for the department. Individual goals and professional growth are also completed each year as part of performance evaluations.

The county has used technology to its advantage. Thanks to IT, the county has its own permit tracking program, unique to the county. They also try to do as much as possible electronically.

- C. Discussion with Paul Chalmers. Paul Chalmers began work with the county in January 1990, and has been with the county 28 years. He has been the director for the Assessment and Taxation Department since 1995. In 1990 there were 33 full time positions in the two departments. After Measures 47/50, staff was cut in half, and there are now 16 positions. There is adequate staff to complete the function, just need to make sure the right people in the positions.

The situation in the county is the best it has ever been. At one time there was a fear factor, uncomfortable, with people not knowing if would still have a job. Today, professional development and growth are stressed. The budget is being well managed. The director has some control over budget, versus in the past when cuts were directed.

\$98 million is collected in property taxes, of which 19% is the county portion. They work to keep taxes from going delinquent and are paid timely.

His thoughts on if a manger system would be better, is it depends on who is filling the position. There are trust issues, and making sure matter is been related onto the Commissioners. It makes two layers to get to the Board. Currently Commissioner Murdock has taken on the role of the county manager. It fits his talents and experience. He has worked for 8 different commissioners and overall the current is the best. Efficiency is encouraged. Customer service is emphasized, as well as professional development. A manger position encourages continuity, but it is not elected. He is just not sure of the benefit of a manager. There is plenty for three commissioners to do. In past experience with the county, advancement was based on who you knew, rather than capabilities. That is not the current situation

When requested about advocacy role, Mr. Chalmers responded that he is involved in two state associations. These groups work on legislative priorities. He passes this information onto the Board. The groups do not set policy, just work on administrative oversight.

In most counties, the position of the Assessor is elected. Only 11 counties have appointed Assessor. A lot of the Assessors have little experience.

- D. Resignation. Darla Huxel submitted to the Board of Commissioners her resignation from the committee. The position will not be refilled by the Board.
- E. Future Presentations. The committee would like to meet with staff for the Board of Commissioners, and also city mayors.
- F. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in Pendleton to have discussion with Commissioner staff and city mayors. The date for the next meeting is set for November 7, 2018, at 5:30 p.m., at the Umatilla County Courthouse. The meeting was adjourned by the Acting Chair at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel



**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of November 7, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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- Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker (arrived 5:45); Genna Banica; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski
- Absent:** Jennifer McClure Spurgeon
- County Counsel:** Doug Olsen
- Guests Present:** Mayor John Turner; Robert Pahl; Jennifer Blake

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The 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. Mr. Gomolski moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Miller. Carried 6-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input. There was not any public comment.
5. Business Items:
  - A. Discussion with John Turner. John Turner is the Mayor of the City of Pendleton. Chair Grable provided background on the purpose of the committee. Mayor Turner had talked with colleagues about government structure and benefits of commissioners managing the day to day operations versus a manger system. A manager system would not result in any money savings. The salary for a manager would be significant, and even if reduce salary of commissioner, there will be some additional cost. At the present time, there is good leadership at the county and he has a high regard for the commissioners. The City and its staff get along fine with the County. There are county employees on the City Council.

The mayor was asked who he interacts with at the county. He mostly interacts with the commissioners. If there is a concern or question, he does ask staff. At the present time there are not any controversies. He believes most interactions between the two organizations are through staff.

The commissioners do need to be advocates. At the present time, Commissioner Murdock is involved with the multiagency legislative advisory team.

The City has not had a problem in recruiting a manager. He is aware that some other organizations do have a problem. The salary must be reasonable. The Mayor does not believe there is too much of concentration of power in a manager system. The City has also not experienced any lack of dedication by volunteer council members. The members want to help solve problems that arise. The council has oversight over the manager. If there is a problem, it is dealt with by the manager. The structure must be clear that the manager interacts with and employs the staff, not the council or its members.

The county currently has in Commissioner Murdock a good manager. He has the experience and the background to administer the county. The question is how to keep or to elect someone with those attributes.

- B. Discussion with Robert Pahl. Robert Pahl is the CFO for the county. He has been with the county for over 14 years. The county currently is being run well. Because of the leadership, attributes and goals, the county is in a better financial position. The county is a complex organization, with its multiple departments and responsibilities. There is a lot for a commissioner to learn and to understand.

The county goals and priorities are set through the budget process. Primarily this starts with the directors, CFO and the Commissioners. The process begins in July, and he tries to set future financial projections. The county mission statement is the basis for the budget, and each department also has its goals.

The Commissioners use the liaison system to help manage the county. Commissioner Murdock has most of the administrative functions. The budget changes all of the time, and funds are allocated to fit the needs of the department.

Mr. Pahl was with the county during the period of the executive assistant. It was a different structure than a county manager. A manager does help with the continuity problem. A manager would have to have the ability to take control and administer the county. This would leave the commissioners time to set policy, goals and directives.

The Commissioners also have an advocacy role. Since 35 to 40% of the funding is from the state and federal governments, the county must be part of larger organizations. This allows the county to seek and be aware of funding. The department directors do this, but the Commissioners also have a role.

The cost of a manager is estimated at \$225,000. This funding will have to be found within the budget somewhere.

- C. Discussion with Jennifer Blake. Jennifer Blake started with the county in 1993, 27 years ago. She is the Human Resources Director. The office has 3 people. They handle employment, recruiting, labor negotiations and issues for all county employees. There are approximately 200 represented employees in four bargaining units, and 80 exempt employees.

The situation at the county has never been better. The county has not always been an enjoyable place to work, and the employees not always valued as should be. Due to Commissioner Murdock, the county culture has changed. He leads by example and wants each employee to feel valued by the organization. The question is how to maintain that standard. At the present time, the chair is

in charge of the staff - finance, HR and legal. If it changes each year, the continuity and momentum can be lost. A manager might help, but it will depend on the people in the position.

- D. Future Presentations. The committee would like to meet in other locations and start talking to the current commissioners.
  
- E. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in Hermiston with City of Hermiston and Commissioner Elfering, on November 26 [This was later moved to November 28 due to schedules]. A meeting in Milton-Freewater will be set for December 17, 2018, to meet with the public and Commissioner Givens.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Meeting of November 28, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Dennis Doherty Conference Room, Stafford Hansell Government Center  
Hermiston, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell (arrived 5:42); Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran (via telephone); Mark Gomolski

**Absent:** Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** Mayor David Drotzmann; Byron Smith; Commissioner William J. Elfering

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The 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. Mr. Miller moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Gomolski, Carried 6-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input. There was not any public comment.
5. Business Items:
  - A. Discussion with David Drotzmann. David Drotzmann is the Mayor of the City of Hermiston. He has had a great relationship with the Commissioners, particularly over the last several years, and they regularly attend meetings.

Mayor Drotzmann historically is in support of a change in structure. He does not believe that the current structure is the best for the long term or for the benefit of the region. He likes the idea of an executive director or administrator, with board oversight, similar to a city or school. A person should have experience in civic management. He encourages the committee to look at that format closer. It is hard to get elected officials that have the experience to run a large organization. It concerns him that people are elected that do not have any experience. Currently the county does have in Commissioner Murdock the experience and expertise of running a large organization, but that will not always be the case.

When asked about the cost for an administrator, it will impact the compensation and maybe the number of commissioners. Can three really representative the county fairly? A larger number

might be better. Compensation restructuring would be necessary if the commissioners are not doing administrative work. The City does not pay its council members that much.

What is the reason for better communication between the two entities? There was a binding relationship in EOTEC that provided the opportunity to work together and know one another. It has been better now for the last six years and there is a good collaborative relationship that is mutual.

He has contact with all three commissioners, and talks with different commissioners depending on the subject. One commissioner currently is carrying the bulk of the work. There is a concern that the burden is on one person, who is carrying more of the work load. There is also the concern that can get around one individual, and just need two to support. An administrator could make a final decision, and could not be avoided. There is also the issue that a commissioner may not be able to represent all areas of the county at all times, and currently some areas of the county are not represented. It may need more commissioners to represent smaller cities or rural areas, and this may be better accomplished if elected by zone.

Should the commissioners have minimum qualifications? The concern is the number of available candidates with the qualifications. If have administrator, though, the oversight role would not require the level of experience or education at the commissioner level. There should be available candidates for an administrator position with the needed qualifications. The City recruited nationally and the four finalists were from out of state. Mr. Smith added there are professional managers that specialize in county management. Key will be that pay is commensurate with the responsibilities. You could recruit someone to come to the county.

An administrator structure would result in a significant reduction in the commissioner compensation package. It may not necessary encourage individuals to serve. Mr. Smith added that there may be advantages if go to part time position. Someone with another job brings a different perspective, which has value. The Mayor continued that having members in the community brings a broader perspective and opportunity to obtain input from more citizens and from all areas of the county. There are challenges, though, getting people to volunteer in governmental organizations.

- B. Discussion with Byron Smith. Byron Smith is the manager for the City of Hermiston, and has been for four years. He will be giving a very biased opinion. He has been a professional manager for ten years. His education is in that area and he has been a professional manager in four different states. It is a good way to go. Most higher rated organizations for financing have a professional manager, so there are tangible results having a manager with expertise.

If he works with the County, his contact will differ depending on this situation. He will make it work, but if had one person to go to, it would be better. The Charter has already removed most of the elected officials, which is good. Multiple elected officials create a lot of challenges, and less desirable for a professional manager. Every time an elected official changes, it takes time to bring the person up to speed and have the knowledge and involvement necessary to function. It slows down the process.

Current commissioners work well. EOTEC was a foundation to establishing a good relationship, and to have further joint projects. He goes to whichever commissioner he thinks will get something done. It depends on the situation. He does whatever is necessary to get something accomplished. There could be some improvements however. More commissioners would be helpful, particularly to avoid open meeting laws violations. He would recommend five part-time members, if more than

that is a challenge and breaking the county into too small of represented areas. He is also supportive of election by districts or wards. If have a professional manager, full time commissioners would not be needed. Compensation could be reduced as well, though, but still be retained at \$30,000 for example.

Things are working well with the county. There may be some problems, but there will always be. It could be improved by a manager, though, by having one connection and insuring that communicated. The first manager will have some challenges transitioning from when people are used to going to commissioner and doing business in a new way. Morrow County changed its structure and hired a professional manager in the recent years. After that person left after a year, a local individual was employed that has more of a business background. It appears to be working well.

Should recommendation for a county manager be placed in the charter? The Mayor believed it should be in the charter. From a fiscal standpoint, it will be easier to gain support from citizens if change structure as well. Without changing the structure of the board, will not have the means to hire a manager. Mr. Smith was in agreement, that without a board change, a professional manager would not be able to take charge and be effective. If the county wants a real professional manager, then have to change the structure.

Is it necessary to have the chair directly elected by the citizens, or appointed by the board members? Mr. Smith explained that historically, cities operated fine without a mayor, and the mayor role has been added more recently. The chair or the mayor usually leads meetings or makes public appearance. Mayor Drotzmann has functioned in both capacities. He prefers that the five representatives elect a chair. The chair leads the meetings, but also has more responsibilities, which not all people can fulfill. Appointment is better.

Mr. Smith was asked if there are any publications or research conducted on what is the best structure. He said there is some research and data regarding size and professional managers. He will provide information on the studies. Also, can one manager replace three full time commissioners for administration? The person will need to rely on and hold department heads accountable and make a leadership team. You may need an assistant county manager if get to a certain size.

- C. Discussion with Commissioner William Elfering. Commissioner Elfering was first elected a Umatilla County Commissioner in 2012, and his current term will expire in 2020. There have been many good changes made in the last 5 years. The county is leaner, communication is better, resources are spent better, and the county has established professional training for its managers, and the morale at the county is higher. When the county had an executive assistant, it functioned like a county manager. It did create obstacles to those wanting to meet with a commissioner.

Commissioner Elfering handed out two documents - charter change recommendations, and the 2018 Commissioner Liaison Assignments. He has two recommendations. First is that the election of the commissioner should follow the statute, rather than require the official to be elected at the general election. It is a waste of resources and time. Second is that the county should have a weak county manager, with responsibility over the budget, legal, human resources, and coordinate the Board, and manage the day to day operations. The Commissioners would still maintain responsibility over departments, so that there is a direct link to a commissioner.

There is a need for three full time commissioners. Currently they are stretched thin, in attending meetings and dealing with not just the county, but also 11 cities, state and federal. The commissioners address policy both at the federal and state levels, and interact with other county commissioners to help establish policy and promote at the legislature. It cannot really be compared to a city council role. There is a lot of interaction with outside organizations, to make sure the county has a role in local and regional matters. A county manager could not accomplish all that a commissioner does.

Each county is different and has a different structure. He likes that the chair is rotated, so that each commissioner has the opportunity to lead. Power should not be vested in just one person. The current Board of Commissioners operates well, and can work together as a singular mind.

You cannot set qualifications for a commissioner, and you just have to trust the voters. Candidates have to work hard to educate the voter, through all of the means available. Meetings are open to the public, though few attend. A commissioner, though, is always reachable by phone.

A commissioner must maintain communication with department heads and employees. There must be a free flow of information, so that there can be a dialogue. Problems arise if there is a gate keeper. If the county does have a manager, it should be established through a change in the charter, and have the approval of the voters.

The position should be kept at full time. There is plenty of work to do. If have five part time commissions, the work may not get done. The role of a commissioner includes department work, with communication with the department head. It also includes advocacy, for example, water and economic matters; it is important to represent the county interests.

Turnover in commissioners does impact continuity. Department heads, though, can help fill gap, and if have a weak manager, can as also maintain momentum. There really is not a good way to memorialize and keep continuity. Commissioners have the opportunity to observe and attend meetings prior to assuming office. There is also the orientation through the AOC County College, which is a year-long course. There is a big learning curve for a commissioner. The process of learning never ends.

- D. 2019 Schedule. The committee would like to meet in longer sessions, with possible day meetings, to review the data gathered and to begin process of drafting recommendations.
- E. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in Pendleton, December 18, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. The Committee would like to talk with Linn County Administrative Officer Ralph Wyatt, and continue the discussion with current commissioners.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of December 18, 2018  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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- Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran
- Absent:** Mark Gomolski; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon
- County Counsel:** Doug Olsen
- Guests Present:** Ralph Wyatt, Linn County; Commissioner George L. Murdock; Sally Sundin

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The 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. Mr. Miller moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Dorran, Carried 6-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input. Sally Sundin was present for a portion of the meeting. She is an advocate for addiction services and had been a teacher. She had some questions regarding the hours worked by commissioners. She was informed that her questions were beyond the scope of the charter review and was invited to submit any relevant information to the committee.
5. Business Items:
  - A. Discussion with Ralph Wyatt. Ralph Wyatt is the County Administrative Officer for Linn County. He was appearing by telephone.

Linn County is a statutory county and has a full slate of elected offices - treasurer, assessor, surveyor, clerk, sheriff, and also three full time commissioners. The Board has budget authority over all of the other elected offices. The county is a very flat organization. He has multiple responsibilities, include HR director, labor relations, payroll, administrative services, motor pool, IT. He manages the support side of the organization - anything the Commissioners want him to do. There are 671 FTE, with a \$148 million budget. He has been with Linn County since 1992. His prior experience includes military and civil engineering, and civil management. He is not a county manager. He is in the same office as the commissioners and sees them periodically throughout the day.



Linn County has long serving commissioners, from 10 to 20 years. There are not any qualifications for serving as commissioner, other than the statutory requirements. It takes a commissioner 18 to 24 months to get up to speed. AOC is a source for learning office. A commissioner must take an interest in the state level, since the county is really an extension of the state.

For management of the county, communication is key. The administrator must make sure that the commissioners know what is going on; there should not be any surprises. The commissioners are full time and are paid approximately \$96,000 a year plus benefits. The commissioners divide up responsibilities at the first board meeting each year; they each have internal and external liaison assignments, which do not change much. The chair sets the agenda, and the chair is elected each year, though the same commissioner has been chair a number of years. The commissioners are elected at large for four year terms.

- B. Discussion with Commissioner Murdock. Commissioner Murdock was first elected a commissioner in 2013. He provided the committee with a proposed update to the county strategic plan. When he first became commissioner he did not know the full extent of what counties do and what services counties provided. He appreciated the work being done by the committee and emphasized that he would accept whatever recommendations were made by the committee.

When he first became commissioner, the county had a position that assisted the commissioners in running the county. Approximately three years ago, a number of positions were eliminated and the commissioners assumed the work of those positions and took a more active role in administering the county government. There has been a more direct relationship between the commissioners and the department directors. Recently the chair has taken on more of the day to day administration of the county. Administration requires a daily presence to address any issues that arise. This is balanced with outside responsibilities of a commissioner.

He attempts to model behavior for county employees. This includes acknowledging the value of each employee and the contribution to the county in providing good customer service to the public. It is important to create a vision on how the county should operate, and to develop stable funding to support it.

He was asked if a county administrator would be a benefit. With elections, no continuity is guaranteed. The less managerial experience held by a commissioner, the longer will be the learning curve. The responsiveness to the public is better through election. An administrator is possible, and funding would have to be found to pay for it. An administrator may help with continuity and institutionalizing the county vision. Of the Oregon counties, 27 out of 36 have some form of county manager. He is not in favor of a weak manager.

It is important that the committee understand that there has not been any discussion by the Board on what it wants or expects from the committee. The work of the committee will be honored. The recommendation could include transition periods for implementation. One item to note is the current system of election. An 8 month delay from election to assuming office is not productive. It also extends the period for campaigning, which also decreases production.

- C. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in Pendleton, January 15, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. The Committee would like to talk with Commissioner Givens, and then begin the process of complying and synthesizing the information.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

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

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- 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

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**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

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

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**Absent:** Mark Gomolski

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** None

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:50 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:50, and reminded everyone that this is a public meeting.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes - The minutes had been emailed to the committee members. Mr. Dorran moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Baker, Carried 7-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input – None
5. Business Items:
  - A. Future presentations or interviews. No further presentations or interviews are planned at this time.
  - B. Recap/Suggested Charter Changes. The Committee reviewed the subjects of potential changes and discussed which ones warranted drafting changes.
  - C. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in Pendleton, February 25, 2019 [later moved to March 5, 2019 due to weather], at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

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

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski (by phone)

**Absent:** Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** None

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:40 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:40, and reminded everyone that this is a public meeting.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes - The minutes had been emailed to the committee members. Mr. Baker moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Anderson-Hansell, Carried 7-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input – None
5. Business Items:
  - A. Future presentations or interviews. No further presentations or interviews are planned at this time.
  - B. Recap/Suggested Charter Changes. The Committee reviewed the subjects of potential changes and discussed which ones warranted drafting changes. Categories included county manager, number and time of commissioners, and method of election.
  - C. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in Pendleton, April 11, 2019, at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Douglas R. Olsen  
Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of April 11, 2019  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski

**Absent:** Genna Banica; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** None

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:42 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:42, and reminded everyone that this is a public meeting.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes - The minutes had been emailed to the committee members. The committee approved the minutes by consensus.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input – None
5. Business Items:
  - A. Recap/Suggested Charter Changes. The Committee reviewed the subjects of potential changes and discussed which ones warranted additional drafting changes. Categories included number and time of commissioners, method of election and county manager. Additional concern was raised if age of elector lowered, if minimum age needed for commissioner. The advantages of changes were discussed and an itemization began.
  - B. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be in Pendleton, April 30, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. The committee would like to meet for a workshop with the commissioners, possibly on May 29.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

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

\*\*\*\*\*

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran

**Absent:** Mark Gomolski; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** Phil Wright, East Oregonian

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:38 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:42, and reminded everyone that this is a public meeting.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes - The minutes had been emailed to the committee members. The committee approved the minutes of April 11, 2019 by consensus.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input – None
5. Business Items:

A. Charter Changes. A summary of the proposed charter changes had earlier been sent to the Committee members to review. It consisted of five areas for consideration. The Committee reviewed the subjects of potential changes and did not have any wording changes. The item adding a minimum age for candidates for county commissioner was deferred for later review, to see if is needed or not.

The committee discussed the best method to address the changes, and if should be combined or separated into different potential ballot measures for voter consideration. Mr. Dorran moved to have the matters addressed in three different proposals—government structure, method of election, and Sheriff changes; seconded by Mr. Baker. Carried 6-0.

The first recommended charter change would be for the structure of the government, and would consist of proposed changes 1 (number of commissioners), 2a (3 elected by district, two at large), 2b (years for election), 3 (setting districts), and 4 (county manager). Mr. Miller moved to approve; seconded by Mr. Baker; Carried 6-0.

The second recommended charter change would address current requirement that commissioner be elected in November election. The proposal would be to have two or less candidates running in



November election, and if three or more candidates running in primary election, with two highest running in November election. These items were paragraph 2c and 2d. Mr. Baker moved to approve; seconded by Mr. Miller. Carried 6-0.

The third recommended charter change would change the wording in the charter from Law Enforcement Department to Sheriff's Office, and to make clear Sheriff had powers under Oregon law. These changes were set out in paragraph 5. Mr. Miller moved to approved; seconded by Ms. Anderson-Hansell. Carried 6-0.

- B. Next Meeting. The proposed recommendations will be sent to committee members to review. The next meeting will be in Pendleton, May 28, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. to finalize recommendations and discuss work session with the commissioners on May 29, 2019.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of May 28, 2019  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell (by telephone); Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski; Jennifer McClure Spurgeon (by telephone)

**Absent:** None

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** None

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:42, and reminded everyone that this is a public meeting.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes – Minutes from April 30, 2019 were not available for review.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Public Input – None
5. Business Items:
  - A. Charter Changes. The proposal of the three recommended changes had earlier been sent to the Committee members to review. There were not any changes by the members. Mr. Miller moved to approve the recommended changes as proposed; seconded by Mr. Baker. Carried 7-0.

The members discussed the structure for the work session. The proposals would be discussed first with the Commissioners. The committee discussed if public comments should be allowed. Mr. Dorran moved to allow public comment at end of session, with two-minute limit per person; seconded by Mr. Baker; Carried 7-1.

- B. Next Meeting. The work session with the commissioners is on May 29, 2019, at 5:30.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**WORKSHOP**

Meeting of May 29, 2019  
5:30 p.m., Room 130, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorrان; Mark Gomolski

**Absent:** Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** Commissioner George Murdock; Commissioner John Shafer, Commissioner William Elfering; Eva Martin; Marlene McClintock; Rick Pullen; Rex Morehouse, Jay Martin; Larry Nye; Glen Youngman; Kathy Youngman; Adolf Klein; Lorraine Klein; Steve Otzenberger; Phil Wright, East Oregonian; Fred Wyatt; Bernie Klein; Sherrie Widmer, Valley Herald; Alan Bailey, Valley Herald; Charles Danforth; Jan Craig; Rob Lovett; Bud Rupe, Wes Koklich; Orrin Lyon; Eli Stephens; David Drotzmann.

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30, and provided a summary of the purpose of the workshop, and introduced the six other members of the committee present. She expressed her appreciation for the work of the committee members. The committee had recommended changes to the charter that the committee believed were in the best interest of Umatilla County and its citizens.

The ground rules for the workshop session were provided. This is not a formal meeting, and there will not be any decision or action to be taken. Public commentary will be allowed at the end of the session, and will be limited to two minutes per person.

The committee will present its report and proposed ballot measures to the Board of Commissioners and will take any questions or comments from the Commissioners.

2. Proposed Report - The proposed report from the committee had been provided earlier to the Commissioners, and was available as a handout for those present. The Commissioners did not have any questions about the report.
3. Proposed Ballot Measure – Sheriff provisions These proposed changes revolved around the change of the name of the Law Enforcement Department to Sheriff’s Office, and clarifying that the Sheriff had the functions as provided by Oregon law. It was primarily housekeeping changes. The Commissions did not have any questions about these proposed changes.

4. Proposed Ballot Measure – Election provisions The method of election of Commissioners was proposed to be changed. Unless there were more than two candidates, the Commissioner would be elected at the November general election. If more than two candidates filed, a primary election would be held, with the two highest votes going to the November election. This would help reduce the length of time an incumbent would remain in office after being defeated, and lessen the number of elections needed. Mr. Dorran added that it would increase voter involvement in selecting a Commissioner, due to higher turnout in November elections. Commissioner Shafer indicated that he would prefer if the charter just follows the Oregon state law process for elections; if a candidate receives a majority of the vote in the primary, the candidate is elected to the position without the need of a general election. Commissioner Murdock thought that maybe just having one November election may address the issues. The Chair concluded that maybe the Committee may want to revisit this provision.
5. Proposed Ballot Measure – County Structure Under this portion of the recommendation, the structure of the Board of Commissioners would change to five part time Commissioners, with a county manager to be appointed by the Board of Commissioners. Two Commissioners would be elected at large, and three by districts. The intent was that a county manager would handle to day to day administrative functions of the county, and free up Commissioners to concentrate on policy issues, advocacy and strategic planning. Since 1990 the population of Umatilla County has increased dramatically and the budget of the county has also grown proportionally, a professional manager would better be able to address the needs of the county. A manager would also provide a more consistent style of management, and a continuity lacking with turnover in Commissioners and rotation of duties.

Mr. Dorran added that with five Commissioners other areas of the county beside the two largest cities would have representation. Since 55% of the population resides outside these two areas, this portion of the citizens might have more representation and attention to their issues.

Mr. Baker said that the recommendation of the Committee was based on a lot of testimony. The Committee had heard from many people, and the recommendations are based on the testimony.

Ms. Anderson-Hansell emphasized that Commissioners are elected to represent the citizens and not to be administrators. If a Commissioner is focused only on day to day administrative matters, this is not a good use of their time. There are people that have the background and the education to manage the administrative matters, and allow the Commissioner to focus on what they were elected to do. The system will also establish some checks and balances to a county manager, through the oversight of the Board and a Board appointed county counsel.

Mr. Gomolski stated that the Committee had heard from many people, and had spent time discussing and debating the issues. The Committee was able to receive consensus on all of the proposals. The goal of the proposal is to set up a system that can address what may happen in the future.

Ms. Banica reiterated that the proposal addresses the need for continuity in the future, after the present Commissioners no longer are serving. She emphasized that the proposal is not the creation of the Committee but is what it heard from citizens and others providing testimony.

Mr. Dorran added that these are large changes, but are needed to empower Commissioners to address the future needs of the County.

The Commissioners were provided the opportunity to raise questions of the proposed structure change.

Commissioner Shafer read a letter regarding Douglas County and its proposed adoption of a home rule charter. The letter was signed by former Commissioner Larry Givens. The letter noted the importance of full-time commissioners and the weaknesses of a non-elected manager. He also noted the additional cost of having a county manager.

Commissioner Elfering noted a number of items. The Board of Commissioners does have the authority now to hire a county manager, but the cost has always been a major deterrent. A manager is not elected and is not as responsive to the citizens as is a Commissioner. He was also concerned about the pool of candidates for part time positions, and would limit those that could run for office. Another concern was that Commissioners elected from certain districts may concentrate only on those areas and not be representative of the entire county. Decisions should not be based on where you are from.

Commissioner Elfering offered that of the 36 counties, 7 are of the older court system. Of the remaining 29 counties, five have part time commissioners. If you talk to these commissioners, it is not as good as it sounds and are not happy. Morrow County just changed to full time commissioner. There were 10 counties that do not have managers. He is concerned what information that a county manager would give to part time commissioners. The current system is working well. A defeated incumbent should take the responsibility to mentor the successor, and this provides for desired consistency and continuity.

The Commissioner said that the County did have a strategic plan. Mr. Dorran asked for the top county priority. Commissioner Shafer said that his was public safety. Commissioner Elfering added that the economic stability of the county was another. The county was busy with day to day matters and did not really have formal priorities. Mr. Dorran also noted that the potential pool of candidates should be greater, allowing for retirees, homemakers, and self-employed individuals to apply.

Commissioner Murdock was hesitant to provide any feedback. He wants to respect the process of the charter review system. He is not comfortable with the Commissioners determining how the county should be structured.

6. Future Meeting The Chair asked if the Committee would want to meet again to discuss the feedback from the Commissioners. The consensus was to have a Committee meeting, without any Commissioners, on June 4, 2019, at 5:30.
7. Public Comment The Chair asked those guests present if any wanted to provide any comment.
  - A. Jay Martin, Milton-Freewater. If spend time on infrastructure issues, you could appoint someone to do those tasks and free up time. That person could report on monthly basis on basis to the Commissioners, and allow the Commissioners to devote full time to other matters. You could also hire two more people, and that would allow Commissioners to travel elsewhere. He was curious on how the County would be divided into districts, particularly Hermiston and Pendleton. He is in favor of a November election and wondered if party affiliation is considered.
  - B. Marlene McClintock, Milton-Freewater. Her concern is the opportunity of citizens to get to Commissioners if only part time. You get what you pay for too. She is afraid of losing voicing in a growing government. She also wanted to know the process on how would hire a county manager, and if would be local or national basis.
  - C. Fred Wyatt, Pilot Rock. He knows the current Commissioners and voted for these individuals because he felt they could run the county. Why tweak something that has been working. He believes that the

Commissioners are capable of running the county by themselves. If do not feel that they can run the county, they should not run for office. he Committee reviewed the subjects of potential changes and discussed which ones warranted drafting changes. Categories included county manager, number and time of commissioners, and method of election.

- D. David Drotzmann, Hermiston. Dr Drotzmann thanked the committee for its work. He is supportive of the recommendation. He currently works in that environment. He believes people would be willing to serve as part time Commissioner. His one concern would be how the district boundaries would look and how make sure get fair and equal representation across the county.
- E. Rex Morehouse, Pendleton. He believes that if the system is not broken, don't fix it. He has never had any problem in getting to a county commissioner, and they know what is going on. The proposed system would be like the City of Pendleton, where the part time councilors do not know anything. He would just leave the structure alone.
- F. Adolf Klein, Umapine. There is nothing wrong with the current system. A manager would run the county and the part time commissioners would not be strong enough to fight the manager in running the county.
- G. Rob Lovett, Hermiston. He has come to see a Commissioner a number of times, and is always able to walk in and talk to a Commissioner and get feedback. He likes the current system for its direct access by a citizen to a Commissioner. If put another layer in, it will not be as good. If have long term manager with shorter termed Commissioners, the manager would set the course of the county, not the Commissioners. He wants the direct access to a Commissioner.
- H. Charles Danforth, Milton-Freewater. Most of his concerns have been address and he concurs with all of them. He does have a concern about the proposal regarding the Sheriff, and he is not supportive if it results in the Sheriff giving up any of his authority or responsibility. Rotation of commissioner is good and protects the citizens and is a strong point. He is happy with what have.
- I. Larry Nye, Athena. He has been involved as activist in Umatilla County and has never had any problem with access to a Commissioner. If a Commissioner is an administrator, the Commissioner knows what is going on in that area and owns the problem. If take away knowledge of the Commissioner of what is going on, it is a detriment. He supports what others have said. He also has a concern if any authority is being taking away from the Sheriff.
- J. Wes Koklich, Milton-Freewater. He would not like to see a Commissioner that only works part time, it is a full-time job, and must be aware of all problems in the County. Cost should be part of the consideration for the proposals.
- K. Bud Rupe, Milton-Freewater. He appreciates the current Commissioners and they way in which they work together. Mentoring is important. Working together, this County can do anything and solve anything.
- L. Phil Wright, Pendleton. What is there now in the County Charter that guarantees that any incoming Commissioner gets any mentorship whatsoever?
- M. Eli Stephens, Reith. Usually housekeeping changes are not good, there is usually a hidden agenda. If it isn't broken, don't fix it. If there is something that goes wrong, can fix it in five years.

N. Orrin Lyons, Milton-Freewater. In his experience with managers, if have good manager, that is good deal, but if not good, that is not a good deal. Good ones are hard to fine. He is happy with the current system, it isn't broken don't fix it.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Meeting of June 4, 2019  
5:30 p.m., Room 114, Umatilla County Courthouse  
Pendleton, Oregon

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**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michele Grable; Vice-Chair Don Miller; Sally Anderson Hansell; Jerry Baker; Genna Banica; Dan Dorran; Mark Gomolski

**Absent:** Jennifer McClure Spurgeon

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests Present:** MaryAlice Ridgway; Suni Danforth; Marlene McClintock; Ann Jolly; Eva Martin; Bud Rupe; Charles E. Danforth; Wes Koklich; Eli Stephens; Rob Lovett; Dennis Aiken

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order - The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30, and reminded everyone that this is a public meeting.
2. Minutes of Previous Minutes – Minutes from May 29, 2019 had been sent earlier to Committee; there were no questions or changes. Mr. Dorran moved to approve; seconded by Ms. Anderson-Hansell. Carried 7-0.
3. Additions to Agenda - None
4. Business Items:
  - A. Response to Work Session. The committee discussed reactions to the response received to the proposed recommended changes at the May 29, 2019 work session. Though the feedback and input were appreciated, the members were disappointed with the response from some of the Commissioners and the member of the public. The committee discussed how to move forward with the recommendation, and if any changes should be made. The recommendation was made based on what the committee had learned and heard over the past 15 months, and was designed to meet deficiencies in current structure.
  - B. Recommendation

The most important item for the Committee was the need for a county manager. The need for consistency in management was made clear from the previous meetings. If the change in the time or number of Commissioners would prevent a county manager, then could revise the recommendation. Mr. Dorran moved to revise the recommendation for county structure to only include a county manager, with no further structure changes; seconded by Mr. Miller. Carried 7-0.



The second proposal for the method of election had meet with some resistance at the work session. No revisions were suggested. Ms. Anderson-Hansell moved to forward the recommendation without change; seconded by Mr. Baker. Carried 7-0.

The third proposal for the Sheriff Office changes had one in opposition at the work session. Further discussion with the public member and the Sheriff had clarified the request, so that the public member was comfortable with the proposed changes. Ms. Anderson-Hansell moved to forward the recommendation without change; seconded by Mr. Gomolski. Carried 7-0.

The final recommendation will be sent to the members for review. There is no need for any further meetings, unless need to discuss recommendation. The committee members will present the final report to the Board of Commissioners as soon as possible.

5. Public Comment. The Chair asked those guests present if any wanted to provide comment.
  - A. MaryAlice Ridgway, Pendleton. She had been the County Treasurer prior to the adoption of the Home Rule Charter. She had always believed the county manager was needed. Other department directors had felt the same. The county currently had Commissioner Murdock to manage it, but this will not always be the case. The election process will not insure a qualified and professional manager. She was in support of the recommendations made by the committee.
  - B. Charles Danforth, Milton-Freewater. He had to two letters to submit. One was from Grenella Thompson. He is not in support of any changes to the charter.
  - C. Rob Lovett, Hermiston. He is opposed to a county manager. A manager would be in control and commissioners would not have true oversight. He wants accessibility to those in control of the county.
  - D. Wes Koklich, Milton-Freewater. He is concerned that the cost of the proposed structure changes was not considered. Government continues to grow and spend money.
  - E. Dennis Aiken, Hermiston. Efficiency should not be the objective for government or its management. Part-time commissioners are not desired and will defer to a manager. Need accountability to the citizens and access to a commissioner. He is not supportive of any changes.
  - F. Eli Stephens, Pendleton. Current commissioners are doing the job. He is concerned about the cost of the proposed changes. The guests at the meetings represent the make-up of the county. He wants access to government leaders.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas R. Olsen

Umatilla County Counsel