

**Cecil County Charter Board
Meeting Minutes**

May 3, 2010

PRESENT: Joyce Bowsbey, Dan Schneckenburger, Henry Burden, Harland Graef, Chris Ann Szep, Bob Gell, Ross Cameron, Executive Office Administrator Vicky Rinkerman, and Consultant Victor Tervalá, Esquire via phone conference, members of the public.

ABSENT: Barry Montgomery and Ed Cole.

OPEN SESSION called to order at 6:09 p.m.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Approval of Minutes – March 8, 2010 meeting minutes and April 12, 2010 meeting minutes.

On motion by Ms. Szep, second by Mr. Graef, the minutes of the March 8, 2010 and April 12, 2010 meetings were approved as presented.

Opinion of Attorney General – Chair Bowsbey stated that the Charter Board received the opinion from the Attorney General’s Office relative to staggered terms of office for Council and the election of the County Executive. The opinion confirmed the following:

1. “A Cecil County charter may provide for staggered terms for members of a County Council.”
2. “On the other hand, a County charter may supplant the current local law and dispense with staggered terms for members of a County Council.”
3. “A Cecil County charter may provide for the elections of a County Executive in 2012 and every four years thereafter.”
4. “Alternatively, a County charter may provide for the initial elections of a County Executive in 2012, a subsequent elections in 2012, and future elections every four years thereafter.”

Charter draft submission - on motion by Mr. Burden, second by Mr. Gell, the Board concurred to submit the final Charter draft to the Commissioners on July 27, 2010 at the worksession meeting at 9:00 a.m. in the Perryville Room of the County Administration Building.

Age Requirement for County Executive and Council members – Mr. Graef stated that other charters have age requirements for the Council and County Executive. He feels that an age requirement would help get qualified individuals to run for office. Ms. Szep stated that she feels that adding this language could be considered “age discrimination” and the voters should decide who they elect to office. The Board concurred to not add an age requirement to the charter.

Residency Requirement for Finance Director – on motion by Mr. Graef, second by Mr. Burden, the Board concurred to remove the last sentence in Article 5 Budget and Finance Section 501 to remove the last sentence relative to a residency requirement for the Director of Finance.

Salary for County Council – The Board discussed comments from the public relative to starting salaries defined in the charter. The Board concurred that the starting salaries were fair compared to other jurisdictions.

Procedure for salary increases for elected officials – Discussion ensued regarding the process in the charter for salary compensation.

Redistricting issue – Mr. Tervalo offered an opinion from the last meeting and it was read from the April 12, 2010 minutes.

Chair Bowsbey stated that she received an email from Mr. Gaylord Moody stating his support for Charter government. He felt that the Board needs a “political” face to promote the Charter. She stated that she feels the Board has tried to keep this issue non-political and that this group has no authority to convey this issue. Chair Bowsbey stated that Mr. Hank Passi has requested Charter information for a Memorial Day celebration at the Rising Sun American Legion. Mr. Graef stated that the Salute to Veterans organization has requested information for a July event. This information will be forwarded to the Friends for Charter group.

Mr. Schneckenburger stated that he has heard discussion regarding the district elections. Discussion ensued regarding the anticipated number of voters that would be assigned to each district.

Section 309 Publication of Laws –Discussion ensued regarding this section relative to there being no newspaper of general circulation available. The Board concurred to have a comma placed in the sentence after the word “website”.

Discussion ensued regarding a forma final adoption by the Board of the Charter and scheduling a public hearing for that purpose. Tentative date for the public hearing would be July 19, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Schneckenburger stated that he is still working on scheduling meetings at the American Legions and VFW’s.

Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Szep, second by Mr. Graef, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The next meeting of the Charter Board is scheduled for Monday, June 21, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in the Perryville room of the County Administration Building, 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Elkton.

Approved:

Joyce Bowsbey, Chair

Attest:

Vicky Rinkerman, Exec. Office Administrator