

County of Allegheny

436 GRANT STREET ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15219

Government Review Commission of Allegheny County

Agenda: Thursday, April 30, 2015

3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
 - a. Absent- Commissioner Andrea Geraghty
3. Opening Remarks by the Chair
 - a. Meeting called to order at 3:05pm.
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Public Comment
 - a. No public comment
6. Introduction of Guest
 - a. Mr. George M. Janocsko, Esq.
 - b. Mr. Janocsko is an assistant solicitor in the Allegheny County Law Department. He was the first chair of the Allegheny County Council
 - c. An Introduction to Home Rule in Allegheny County was provided by Mr. Janocsko.
 - i. Mr. Janocsko provided information on the Allegheny County Home Rule Charter and presented the history of the Allegheny County Home Rule Charter and the previous governmental structure. The Charter sets forth the role and mission of the Government Review Commission.
7. Update of 2006 Government Review Commission Report
 - a. The staff of the County Executive provided the Commissioners with a document that summarized the status of the 2006 recommendations.

- b. Chair noted that the Commissioners should follow up on the recommendations presented in the 2006 report.
 - c. Commissioner Schwartz noted that some of the recommendations had no action taken.
 - d. Commissioner Nowalk noted that we can use the 2006 report as a starting point for our review.
 - e. Mr. Davis noted that when we make recommendations it is up to the County Council to move on them.
8. Staffing Consideration with Independent Entity
- a. Commissioner McCants Lewis provided the name of Justin N. Leonelli as a student intern who will maintain minutes for the Government Review Commission.
 - b. A motion was presented to retain Mr. Justin Leonelli as a student intern to serve as an intern with the Government Review Commission.
 - c. Discussion took place asking if other entities were asked to provide names of individuals to provide staffing needs for the Commission. The Institute of Politics was also approached but indicated that they are not able to accommodate the Commission's needs.
 - d. Commissioner Schwartz noted that perhaps some fellows from Coro or students from Allegheny County Community College could be of assistance.
 - e. Commissioner Nowalk recommended David Miller from the University of Pittsburgh. He is involved with Connect. This is another place to explore.
 - f. The Executive's staff noted that they exploring the scope of the document it can be done in house.
 - g. Commission Vice Chair Oliphant also suggested Susan Hockenberry from the local Government Academy's ED and Mo Coleman for assistance.
 - h. The county Executive's staff observed noted that the significant amount of time consumed during the last review commission was on the minutes and public meetings. There would have to be a plan to work out that information from the keeper of the minutes to develop the report. Since we do not yet know that format and scope of the report – it is hard seek individuals without this information.
 - i. Commission Chair – noted we will address this more specifically and make a decision at the next meeting.
9. Identification of Organizing Principles
- a. The Commission Chair and Vice Chair met last week with staff to begin the discussion related to the identification of organizing principles for the review and report.

b. Structural or Issues Approach

- i. Is it the Commission's responsibility to look at the issues in County Government?
- ii. How should the Commission set up its organizing principles?
- iii. Commission Vice Chair Oliphant inquired as to whether the Commission should go down the issues path. She stated that the structure will come in, and that instead the Commission should spend the bulk of its meetings determining where it wants to go. Commissioner Oliphant encouraged her fellow commissioners to remember that the Commission is an advisory committee.
- iv. Commission Chair Foerster stated that the sitting Commission may be able to find guidance as far as its action plans by looking to the issues raised in the prior Commission report.
- v. Commission Vice Chair Oliphant stated that the Commission should look at what was left unattended from the previous committee.
- vi. Commissioner Schwartz stated that perhaps the Commission should start with the issues that were not addressed in the previous review commission, mentioning in particular that there were two referendum issues that were voted down. This is an example of where we can start from.
- vii. Commission Chair Foerster stated that the Commission may want to close the book on the past review. He proposed that the Commission should have a one year follow-up to close the chapter from its review.
- viii. The Executive's office noted that the Commission should consider looking at the report from a structural approach with sub committees based upon the Articles of the Charter. Perhaps the Review of the Charter can be divided into review committees based upon the Articles.
- ix. Commissioner Nowalk agreed with this approach because they have grouped the charter.
- x. The Executive's office also noted that Commission Chair Foerster said he wanted to meet with past members of County Council. Members of this Commission can now determine what sub committees they want to work on. This will also create the work plan that needs to be memorialized.
- xi. The Executive's staff noted that this approach will make the responsibilities of the commissioners more manageable.
- xii. The Commission would like to create four committees that can be cross referenced with the past report.

- xiii. Commissioner Nowalk noted that the commission is comprised of 9 members, so there could be two people on each committee with the Chair as an ad hoc member on each committee.
- xiv. Commissioner Magley noted that there may still be some holes in the past report and she wants to make sure that we don't miss some of those things that were not completed.
- xv. Commissioner Price noted that there are going to be some issues that appeal to others. He has suggested that the Commission has guests from the Authorities or community join meetings to discuss what they see as a need for review, so that committee members can make a decision about what subcommittee needs to be created.
- xvi. The Executive's office noted that the Commissioners were not going to be assigned to subcommittees today. The staff is going to create the committee names and a description of the committees so commissioners can determine what subcommittee they will serve on.
- xvii. Commission Chair Foerster noted that the commission needs to have draft reports and public hearings. He also noted that members' work on the Commission concludes in March 2016. The Commission needs to present to County Council and the County Executive in February 2016.
 - 1. Additionally, the Chair noted that the commission needs to have public meetings in November 2015 and December 2015. The commission also needs to complete our report by January 2016.
- xviii. Mr. Janocsko explained that according to the Administrative Code the commission needs to complete its review within one year of its appointment. The time constraints are set by County Council and only they can change this. This is a legislative change.
- xix. Mr. Janocsko was asked what sanction if any can be imposed if the commission does not meet its deadline for the report.
- xx. Commission Vice Chair Oliphant cautioned that the commission should be disciplined enough to have the report completed within one year. Further, she stated that the commission can make a recommendation after its review if it finds that more time is needed to complete the report.
- xxi. The Executive's office advised that the commission needs to create a schedule after the next meeting.
- xxii. Commission Chair Foerster noted that the committees need to meet every month.

- xxiii. Mr. Catanese informed the Commissioners that the committees are also covered under the Sunshine Act and that it costs \$300.00 every time the Commission advertises a meeting. As such, it would be most efficient to have a schedule to advertise all meetings at once. Commissioner Nowalk agreed.
- xxiv. The Executive's office noted that it is hard to turn around information for the subcommittees and full committee.

10. Creation of Subcommittees

- a. The following subcommittees were voted on and passed as subcommittees within the Commission:
 - i. Internal and External Review Committees
 - ii. Form of Government Committees
 - iii. Fiscal and Personnel Committees

11. Schedule of Full Commission Meetings

- a. Commissioner Hagerman asked if meetings can be scheduled as block of time.
- b. Mr. Catanese advised against doing so because the commission will need to advertise under the Sunshine Act, the specific date, time, and location of the meetings.
- c. The Executive's office also noted that since this is a government commission the meeting should take place in a government setting.
- d. Commission Chair Foerster asked if it would be convenient to convene meeting in the morning.
- e. Commission Vice Chair Oliphant noted that the Commission can rotate meetings on a schedule, in the morning, afternoon, and evening to accommodate everyone's schedule.
- f. Commissioner Bechtolt Magley asked for clarification on the recommendation that Commissioners not miss more than one consecutive in-person meeting. Commission Chair Foerster noted that this was not mandated. Commission Vice Chair Oliphant explained that calling into a meeting would be considered presence for attendance purposes.

12. Action items

- a. Commission Vice Chair Oliphant presented the Commissioners with action items for the next meeting:
 - i. Commissioners will receive the 3 subcommittee descriptions within the week
 - ii. Commissioners are to provide their 1st and 2nd subcommittee interest to chair by May 10, 2015

- iii. Commissioners will be informed by May 15, 2015 what committees they have been assigned to serve on.
- iv. Commissioners are to review their committee materials and provided issues and persons to be interviewed for the next meeting.
- b. Motion to adjourn presented by Commissioner Hagerman, Seconded by Commissioner Price.
- c. The meeting was adjourned at 4:27pm