

County of Allegheny

436 GRANT STREET ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15219

Government Review Commission of Allegheny County

Agenda: Tuesday, July 28, 2015
8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
 - a. Ms. Magley and Mr. Price were not present.
3. Opening Remarks by the Chair
 - a. Chair welcomed all who attended the meeting and commended commission members for all of the work they have put in so far.
4. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Motion set in place to approve minutes by Commissioner Aradhna Oliphant. Motion passed unanimously.
5. Public Comment : Five (5) minutes per speaker
 - a. No public comment given
6. Form of Government Committee Report
 - a. Second of three committee meetings was held on July 13th at 8:30. All three county executives attended that meeting. The subcommittee asked each county executive their thoughts about improvements.
 - b. Jim Roddey previously submitted written comments.
 - c. Following each county executive making their comment there was a round-table discussion. It was a collaborative effort discussing how to make the best Allegheny County government possible.
 - d. At the end, as part of the format, Commissioner Nowalk asked the committee members to come up with recommendations. The subcommittee has not clarified exactly what it will be recommending to the commission but there is much to think about. One suggestion is

that the at-large county seats be eliminated to ensure minority representation. There is minority party representation already at the council at the regional level, therefore, the thinking is that it may not be necessary to have the position. These are suggestions, not recommendations. There was a suggestion that the Sheriff's office be eliminated. The elimination of the elected treasurer position was also a suggestion.

- e. The committee did discuss the salary for the Executive. Commissioner Nowalk stated that the idea that the salary should be tied to the union contracts is not sound, and it has not been increased in 15 years. He stated that there needs to be a better system, and it is good government to have the salary appropriate for the work that is being done.
 - f. The role of County Council and contracts and appointments was discussed. The consolidation of municipalities was also discussed. The need to prepare the county for municipalities that may fail or choose to dissolve themselves were also discussed.
 - g. Commissioner Schwartz stated that there was a lot to think about from the subcommittee minutes, and that these minutes would be good for everyone to review.
 - h. Commissioner Oliphant stated that Mr. Nowalk ran a very nice meeting as far as format, and that the sitting executive did not state anything about the salary. Mr. Bob Webb started the discussion about salaries at the subcommittee meeting. Mr. Webb made the suggestion that some of the more business-oriented function, like payroll, might be better placed not in controller's office, but in county manager's. So this question was posed to Dan Onorato, and he responded that the controller needed these business functions to control the auditing functions. Mr. Nowalk suggested talking to the County Controller and County Manager.
 - i. Mr. Nowalk stated that August 18th at 3:00pm is the County Council meeting and that it will be in the Gold Room.
7. Fiscal and Personnel Committee Report
- a. Each member of the committee is working individually and occasionally together to review the specific sections of the Charter and administrative code that have been assigned to the subcommittee. The committee has scheduled public meetings for August 6th and September 2nd. The original work has been in anticipation of those meetings so that the subcommittee knows exactly what it wants to focus on.
 - b. As a result, the committee has invited for the August 6th meeting County Managers Robert Webb, James Flynn, and William McKain. Also invited are Directors of Administrative Services Tim Johnson (

Onorato), Jerry Tyskiewicz (Fitzgerald) and Director of Budget Amy Weise (Onorato) and others.

- c. For the September 2nd meeting, those who have been invited to attend include three former solicitors including Charles McCullough. Two Directors of Human Resources have also been invited. Additionally, all members of the ACE Commission have been invited to discuss ethics issues surrounding county government.
 - d. Chairman Foerster asked if salary concerns should fall under this committee or stay within each individual subcommittee.
 - e. Ms. Geraghty answered that the salaries are a management question, and that this committee is addressing the operations of the county. This is a management decision.
 - f. Commissioner Oliphant stated that the Commission could ask a committee to recommend that in the future someone take a look at the salary issue. Commissioner Oliphant asked Ms. Geraghty if that would be good to discuss and look at the question and report back to the Commission. Ms. Geraghty agreed.
 - g. Commissioner Schwartz commented that two of the salaries are in the charter, The Chief Executive and Council, and that the others may not fall under the Commission's purview to recommend.
8. External Entities, Reviews and Independently Elected Officials Committee Report
- a. The committee consists of Commissioner McCants-Lewis, Foerster and Price.
 - b. The committee had an interview with Sheriff Mullen. They met on July 16th for an hour and twenty minutes. The main issue was the consolidation between Allegheny County Sheriff's office and police department.
 - c. The committee also discussed budgetary constraints with regard to training. They would like to look further into the possibility of consolidation.
 - d. Future meetings are to be held on Thursday August 20th at 5:00pm and September 17th at 5:00pm. Controller Chelsea Wagner will be attending the September 17th meeting.
 - e. Outstanding meetings that need to be confirmed are either September 17th from 7:00pm-8:00pm or August 20th between 5:00pm-8:00pm.
 - f. Also Robert Hurley from 5:00pm-8:00pm or September 17th from 7pm-8pm.
 - g. Stephan Zappala also needs to be confirmed.
 - h. Letters will be going out today asking for their availability for those specific dates.

- i. Mr. Forester commented that it was a great meeting and that much good feedback was given to help with recommendations.
- j. Commissioner McCants-Lewis commented that there are 117 police departments in Allegheny County, which is unheard of, and that consolidation needs to be an option.
- k. Commissioner McCants-Lewis stated that there was a lot of initial pushback with the consolidation of the 911 system, but that it worked fine and that this is a positive sign for consolidation of the police departments.
- l. Commissioner McCants-Lewis stated that she spoke briefly with Treasurer Weinstein and members of Controller Wagner's office to see what other department consolidations might be recommended.
- m. Commissioner Oliphant stated the importance of considering the consolidation of other departments since the review only occurs once every 10 years.
- n. Commissioner Nowalk stated that there was at one time the approval of the county executive and council but that it did not go forward because of procedural matters. He discussed that the committee topic was also about consolidation of governments rather than individual departments. One of the county executive's view was that there were many problems with the counties being able to do what they do. The point that came out was that if a municipality does go under the likely entity that would fill in would be county government; therefore the county should be prepared in the event that Allegheny County would move in that direction. Commissioner Nowalk noted that the county government cannot say it will consolidate, but that the Commission can figure out how to recommend preparations for the future.
- o. Commissioner Oliphant stated that one municipality does not have the right to merge with another municipality right now under PA law. She inquired if there was advocacy work required from Harrisburg.
- p. Commissioner Nowalk stated that we have communities where people are looking out for each other and each have their own police force. To that end, it is worth keeping in mind that there is a benefit to so many governments. There is a benefit to being able to pick up the phone and call your local public official.
- q. Mr. Foerster stated in agreement that there is a benefit to being able to personally know your police force.
- r. Commissioner Oliphant again stated that it is not for the Commission to mandate, but that these are the kinds of questions that the Commission should be considering for 2025.
- s. Commissioner Nowalk stated that Mr. David Miller has many ideas on this topic and suggested that the Commission meets with him.

- t. Mr. Forester stated that this may head toward the point where the Commission recommends that a study be undertaken to study this issue in more detail. This issue may get too deep for the Commission to handle.
- u. Commissioner Schwartz stated that Representative Stephenson in 2000 addressed the issue that a borough could choose to dissolve itself.
- v. Commissioner Nowalk agreed that the Commission accomplish what it can and then suggest that a study or recommendation be undertaken after that point.
- w. Commissioner Oliphant stated that there were many studies done that were effective from Chancellor Nordenberg's commissions, and that the Commission may be able to garner information from those studies.
- x. The staff of the Executive's office stated that there are 43 school districts within Allegheny County (42 outside the city in AIU3). Also states that there are also Council of governments (COG). Executive's office stated that the City of Pittsburgh is considered its own COG.
- y. Mr. Nowalk stated that there are 4 cities, 42 townships, and 84 boroughs.
- z. Mr. Foerster stated that the Commission may not be at the point where it can make August recommendations.
 - aa. Commissioner McCants-Lewis stated that after this meeting she will be sending out three letters to get the final three people scheduled for the August meeting.

9. Staffing Update with Independent Entity

- a. The Executive's office stated that Professor Mistick at Duquesne University has accepted the responsibility with an enthusiastic response with having the students from the law clinic to come on at the end of August. It is his hope that not only would the students be engaged in the full Commission, but that they would be engaged with the committee as well, and that this would be a great opportunity for students to be involved in community engagement, particularly with civil justice issues. So philosophically and academically this will occur at the end of August.
- b. The Executive's office stated that the companion issues as far as information sharing has to do with the website. The Government Review Commission is on the website. It is in the government review search and will be moved to the front page. At this point the main element of the site is the overview of the charge, the meeting agenda. The meeting minutes will be included once they are approved.

- c. Mr. Foerster stated that one of the meeting dates was changed from pm to am; (8:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. for the Internal and External Review Committee meeting on October 15th, 2015.
 - d. Commissioner Nowalk discussed his previous work with Duquesne students and that all of them did excellent work. Mr. Nowalk stated that the Commission can look forward to a lot of good work.
 - e. Commissioner McCants-Lewis stated that Professor Mistick has about 10 students at present.
10. Action items
- a. Motion to adjourn set in forth by Commissioner Oliphant, and Motion seconded by Commissioner McCants-Lewis.
 - b. Meeting adjourned at 9:25am, Tuesday, July 28.