

Charter Review Commission Meeting

February 17, 2016

The Charter Review Commission Meeting was held at Charlotte County Administration Building at 18500 Murdock Circle, Room B-106; Port Charlotte, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

Roll Call

The following Commission Members were present:

William C. Abbatematteo	Paula Hess	Thomas J. Rice
Katherine D. Ariens	John Hitzel	W. Kevin Russell
Jim M. Brown	Julie Mathis	Thomas J. Thornberry
Thomas (Skip) P. Conroy III	Donald McCormick, Vice Chairman	Stephen J. Vieira
William Dryburgh, Chairman	Jerry J. O'Halloran	

Attorney Robert Berntsson was also present.

Member Frank C. Weikel was not present.

Alternates Raymond A. Corcoran and John M. Davidson were not present.

Citizens:

Dave Kesselring
Alice Loewel (sp)
Michael Zarzano
Deb Lilley
Lawrence A. Daniels

Chairman Dryburgh stated at this time we waive the agenda and go directly to New Business.

I. New Business

Chairman Dryburgh – We have asked Lucienne Pears to be with us today to talk about Economic Development.

Lucienne Pears – Thank you very much for having me today. I am Lucienne Pears, the new Director of the Charlotte County Economic Development office. I have been with this office for six (6) years now starting as a Business Development Specialist moving up to Business Recruitment Supervisor. One of the reasons for that change was Economic Development is a relationship business and to make those relationships you have to get out there and meet the people who are making the decisions for company relocation and expansions. Before that I was in land development for quite a number of years, mostly in Manatee and Sarasota counties. I am a planner by trade; I have a lot of use in land planning, design and entitlement work of residential and mixed use type developments. That skill set was barely quite applicable to Economic Development especially in Charlotte County since with a low inventory of available space most of the projects we are talking about are going out of the ground, so it has been a great fit.

Chairman Dryburgh – In our last Charter Review, six (6) years ago, it was recommended and passed by the citizens that you report to the County Commission. Is that a good fit?

Lucienne Pears – Well in six (6) years there has been one (1) full time Director and a basic commission reported to, I think under those circumstances it has worked very well. It is hard to say if long term that is the best fit. I think it works very well; I have enjoyed the relationship and the direct access to the Board of County Commissioners. Equally I have a fantastic relationship with the County Administrator and the County Attorney. So I think it is appropriate, but to say whether one is better than the other, it is just too soon to tell. Because we have not had enough time to see it operate in different assemblages of people in those positions.

Paula Hess – Do you think there is potential for leakage with the more people that you have to report to?

Lucienne Pears – I think the opportunities are everywhere. I deal a lot with the business community and other partner agencies; the Airport Authority, the School Board and all of whom have been fantastic to work with. I do not think the Commissioners, as opposed to any other single group or partner that I deal with, presents that opportunity. They do understand confidentiality and this commission specifically is very good about saying I recognize there is probably a line of information we should not cross because of confidentiality and they are very respectful of that.

Paula Hess – How highly do the business people you work with esteem confidentiality?

Lucienne Pears – I think everybody understands that especially the business community who all have their own financial/business plans and models, and certainly would not want all of that information shared all over. Therefore; they more so understand the sensitivity of some of the information that we have.

Paula Hess – Are you cautious in how much you tell the Commissioners?

Lucienne Pears – I establish the level of detail that I am going to provide and share that level equally across the board.

Julie Mathis – When our subcommittee interviewed your predecessor, one of his concerns about the direct report is the time involved; can you tell us a little about your feelings on that.

Lucienne Pears – It could be qualified as 20 percent of your time, every Monday I meet with each of the Commissioners. It does not take up the entire day, but certainly a good bit of the day. One of the differences between Mr. Patton and myself is that I travel a significant amount of the time, so just by default it ends up being almost every other Monday. So it is less of a burden on my time and each of the Commissioners has been very available by telephone or through other arrangements. The last three (3) and half months it really has not become an issue.

W. Kevin Russell – The six (6) years into this you have seen it; would you recommend to us that it be changed now?

Lucienne Pears – I think it would be premature to make a change at this point and time.

William C. Abbatematteo – The reporting function is a critical part of the management process; you meet with each Commissioner separately, correct?

Lucienne Pears – Yes, sir.

William C. Abbatematteo – I know there is that balance between reporting to your boss once a week, just my opinion, I cannot see how reporting to five (5) people is more efficient than reporting to one (1). From a tax payer's point of view; 20 percent of your time reporting, that is unheard of in management.

Lucienne Pears – Well I think that was more so with Mr. Patton than it has been with myself. A lot of what we do in Economic Development is policy decisions, so I need to gauge the comfort level of the companies. Do keep in mind that not everything I do is directly company related. It is positioning, strategy, marketing; it is working through developing the resources that we have in Charlotte County. For example, take into account without being able to communicate directly with the Commissioners about whether or not they support the expenditure of funds down the road. It would be hard to know if they support it until we got to the end of the process. I can understand your concern; again it has not been cumbersome to this point. I have a relationship with the current commission that if I do not have anything to talk to them about on Monday morning, I just let them know and we save the time that day.

Thomas J. Rice – I heard you say that you have the same once a week meeting with Mr. Sandrock to keep him up to the same level as you do the Commissioners.

Lucienne Pears – I interact with Mr. Sandrock on a number of occasions. There is a director's meeting every week, which I am not obligated to attend. I am not a direct report to Mr. Sandrock, but I do attend to stay in touch with what is going on and my peers. I have a monthly meeting with Ms. Knowlton, Mr. Sandrock and myself. I also talk to Mr. Sandrock several times a week problem solving and brain storming.

Donald McCormick – My concern is the appearance of political aspect; I thought in the recent transition there was an appearance of politics that would not have been apparent if you would directly report to Mr. Sandrock. Do you feel that a direct report to the County Administrator might reduce the political aspect?

Lucienne Pears – I think the Economic Development by its very nature is a political animal. Because ultimately the decisions we make on companies, policy initiatives, ordinances, programs; are all subject to approval by the Board of County Commissioners so it is somewhat unavoidable.

Jim M. Brown – Have you had any problems with the local media pressuring you at all or do you have to interface with them?

Lucienne Pears – The media has been very good about contacting me or my office regarding comments; by no means do they run their schedule of reporting by me. I have a policy of always responding and only giving the information that I am able to share. I always establish a level of detail that I can share on any project because of confidentiality that applies to all parties; Commissioners, Mr. Sandrock, media, across the board.

Chairman Dryburgh – Anything you want to add; then agenda will continue in order.

Lucienne Pears – Thank you so much for accommodating me as a whole.

II. Citizens Input

Dave Kesselring gave a summary of handout he provided and is Attachment #1.

My name is Michael Zarzano, government greases government. Some of you have been on this board for many years, but because of your silly rules I am not allowed to ask you any particular questions. I am not allowed to have dialogue and you claim to represent the people. I am giving you recommendations how you can improve upon the Charter. I am in applying that you need to change some of the ways you do business. You need to review your Charter rules and improve on them. You work for me and everyone else in this community, and you need to realize when you work for We the People you answer our questions in a public forum. When you work for somebody, your boss is supposed to be able to talk to you, ask you questions and interrogate you if they choose. We the People are the boss, we are the master and you are the servants.

III. Minutes of January 20, 2016 Meeting

Chairman Dryburgh – The minutes were emailed to everyone, are there any corrections or additions? Paula Hess motioned for approval and Thomas J. Rice seconded. Any discussion? All in favor say I. Everyone said I. Opposed (None)

IV. Approval of Expenses

Chairman Dryburgh – You were given a copy of our expense report. Jim M. Brown motioned for approval and Julie Mathis seconded. Any discussion? All in favor say I. Everyone said I. Opposed (None)

V. Old Business

Chairman Dryburgh – We have the subcommittee final report; Board of County Commissioners.

Paula Hess – We have all the subcommittee recommendations in front of us as I suggested. Are we going to be discussing and selecting what we are going to investigate further?

Chairman Dryburgh – Yes; we are going to start that dialogue today.

William C. Abbatematteo – I want to thank the members of the subcommittee for the time that they spent coming to all meetings. I certainly want to thank Ms. Hess for taking the minutes and sharing this final report. In recognition of that Ms. Hess will read our recommendations.

Paula Hess – Our principal recommendation was to go over all the things that have been suggested, some of them from the citizens. Our recommendations are as follows:

Continuation of the present form of government as prescribed in the Charter; five (5) Commissioners, one (1) from each District elected countywide at large, terms of four (4) years, and no limits on number of terms. The County Administrator appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. All Constitutional Officers remain as elected. Because we have had suggestions for citizens to have non-partisan and election by district and so forth. We discussed this amongst ourselves and with the Commissioners; therefore our recommendation is to leave as it stands now.

We also recommend that we examine merits and drawbacks of the Economic Development Director responsible to the Board of County Commissioners instead of the County Administrator as prior to 2010. We just had the discussion with Ms. Pears and I think regarding the comments we just heard and questions asked; we should still pursue that further. On another subcommittee report there was that recommendation also, so I think we should consider that very seriously; going back to the way it was.

We discussed addition to the language regarding MSBU/TU to expand requirements of the Board of County Commissioners. Exactly what they are going to be I believe has come out of another subcommittee report and we can discuss those individually. Perhaps we do need to add to the description of the requirements even if it is just to schedule the periodic review and sun setting as needed.

We are researching ramifications of exempting churches from these assessments. Perhaps Mr. Russell or our attorney can give a reason for this, but I heard that if you consider churches you have to consider all 501 (c) (3) organizations. Is that right and why?

Robert Berntsson – Yes. You cannot differentiate between what is a church and what is not a church. You have to treat them all relatively the same.

Paula Hess – Is that written somewhere in the law, that we cannot make an exemption just for churches?

Robert Berntsson – I think it is based on court decision; I do not know. Mr. Russell, do you know anything?

W. Kevin Russell – Obviously it is very, very difficult to define the church. Right now IRS tells you what a 501 (c) (3) is; you get designation, it works. I would not want to define a church that would be difficult to do.

Robert Berntsson – Then you get into is this church warranted and do that qualify as a church. Also, you've heard of groups that have nothing to do with religion, but they try to get some exemption as a church.

Paula Hess – I understand that. The next was to explore adding scheduling of Citizens Forum; such as Charlotte Assembly to critique and make recommendations to hold the Board of County Commissioners and Administrator more responsive and accountable to the public. We discussed this prior, if you recall, and we decided that would be too difficult to formulate and we should just put it as a recommendation in our final report, instead of trying to put it in referendum. That is the end of our report.

Thomas J. Rice – I think we need to formally hear from all the subcommittees and then start opening the conversation regarding the topics.

Chairman Dryburgh – That sounds good to me. First is the Administration Staff subcommittee.

Julie Mathis – We did make a recommendation to further discuss the Director of Economic Development report to the County Administrator instead of the Board of County Commissioners. We were not 100 percent sure and wanted to bring forward for the whole group to discuss.

Chairman Dryburgh – Next is the Constitutional Officers Subcommittee.

Katherine D. Ariens – Our subcommittee has no recommended changes for the Charter. We did have a suggestion from Paul Polk if he could change the Geographic Information Services (GIS) Department to his department. After research on my own and investigation into the topic I went back to Mr. Polk who had met with his staff. They determined that would not be something at this point they would want to do and he withdrew the comment and desire. Mr. Polk said they would conduct further training and maybe that was the issue.

Chairman Dryburgh – Next subcommittee recommendation is Other Board and Agencies and you have a number of items.

Thomas J. Rice – That is our final report.

Chairman Dryburgh – Now we have heard them all; do we want to start looking at finalizing a list?

Paula Hess – I have some questions on the Other Board and Agencies recommendations. They actually have language described here that they want to put in the Charter. Like elections for the offices of sheriff, property appraiser, tax collector, clerk of the circuit court and supervisor of elections shall be non-partisan. I would like to go into that a little further.

Thomas J. Rice – Hopefully, we are going to discuss all of them.

Paula Hess – From our subcommittee we want to further discuss the Director of Economic Development.

Julie Mathis – Since I our subcommittee is the first in the packet and we had the same recommendation, let's discuss.

John Hitzel – Mr. Chairman, I make a motion that we do not change the circumstances of who the Economic Development Director reports to at this time.

W. Kevin Russell – I second that.

Chairman Dryburgh – Now there is a motion on the table, we will discuss it now.

VI. Discussion

Paula Hess – As far as the report that came from Ms. Pears; she seems to say it is okay with her to take the time to report to everyone, but I think she is in a rather peculiar position. I think we have to make up our own minds from what we know. It is too prone to leaks; I think Mr. Brown has had a lot of experience in that area. He said that businesses are very reluctant to risk confidentiality and I think the more people she has to report to there is more of a risk of information being leaked.

William C. Abbatematteo – It is fine to get input from the Commissioners, but I always take it with a grain of salt when the issue affects them. As much as anyone being interviewed wants to remain objective, sometimes it is difficult even with the best intentions. I think that is where it is our job to step up and do the right thing. It makes sense that is our function or at the minimum let the citizen's decide. I am going to repeat what I have said before from listening to some of the Commissioners who gave us the history that it had been changed because of personality clashes. You do not change your constitution because there is a personality clash; that is just my opinion. Looking at this objectively I cannot imagine anyone answering to five (5) bosses, it defies management principles. There is an item called unity of command, you report to one (1) boss. Meeting once a week, 20 percent of the time at meetings to report to a boss, to me that is not workable. The other principle about it and keeping up with the separation of powers, I'm still having trouble with the fact that somebody in the operation reports to the legislative branch. Also, there is no direct supervision. I think we owe a duty to the County and the tax payers at least to let them decide this issue. If not, step up and recognize that this needs to be corrected.

Katherine D. Ariens – What would be the pros and cons of switching it the other way?

William C. Abbatematteo – One (1) boss, one (1) subordinate, be able to take a direct order from the boss. Mr. Sandrock does not have to confer with twelve (12) other people to make decisions. That defies common sense.

Paula Hess – I mentioned the shortcomings of the more people you report to the possibility of information leakage and outside businesses are very concerned about that.

Katherine D. Ariens – I understand that, but to have a correct debate you should hear the pros also.

Donald McCormick – I am the person who keeps using the word politics in all of this and what I saw is a concern, but not necessarily a deal breaker. When the previous incumbent left he did not go after a discussion with his immediate report. There were some public meetings where it almost looked like he was saying; are you with me or are you against me. That put the five (5) Commissioners in a position of assessing what is going to happen, where am I supposed to go on this; if I go with him, my enemy over there might go against him. This becomes a political ramification in the news, for whatever that is worth, but I certainly do not want to isolate the person from the Commissioners. I think when it comes down to; who is the boss and who says you continue your employment or you are fired should be one (1) person.

Katherine D. Ariens – I think that is a proper debate; that is all I wanted today.

Jim M. Brown – I would like to look at this a different way and that is looking at it from a prospective of a private company. You have a board of directors, maybe five (5) or ten (10) people, who make money decisions for that company and they are the final say on budgets, goals, etc. I consider that in this concept similar to what our County Commissioners would be and they make the decisions. Working with the Economic Development Director is something that impacts this County in terms of our budget and in terms of what maybe we go forward with. Mr. Sandrock is the Administrator and he has a full job taking care of all the departments he has. The way I want to make my analogy is it is like taking a plant manager; saying we've got to put him on the board of directors and that is not the way it should work. That goes for the other issue of talking about making that an elective office, then you put him in a different position and you should think about that when looking at this. The Economic Development Director if they can make the decision, they are not taking direct orders from the board, they are a resource to bring something to the company and that is like going before any board of directors.

Stephen J. Vieira – The first point I want to make was the 20 percent of time came from Mr. Patton, when we met with him, he gave an estimate that he spent 20 percent of his work week working with the Commissioners. Then I want to fast forward to what Ms. Pears just said; she meets with them each Monday and if she is on the road she may have to cancel that meeting if there is not enough time or enough to talk about. We are talking about efficiency she is the Director of Economic Development. She has an organization to run so if 20 percent of her time is spent dealing with and reporting to Commissioners; then spending her time on the road, who is running the office. I think her 20 percent time; if it is given back to her by reporting to a single person increases the efficiency of her department.

John Hitzel – Going back to the previous Charter Review when the decision was made to have the Economic Development Director report to the County Commission; it was based on a case made by Don Root. He made the point, in making his case, that he needed a direct input with the County Commissioners. Because the decisions were made at that level and he was not getting timely feedback through the process of the Administrator to the Commissioners and back, in order to be on a timely basis of attracting business. Rather that was an excuse for not doing much or not; I do not know. He made a persuasive case with that kind of time factor being so important to his work that he convinced the full committee to make the change. That was a big reason why the change was made.

Julie Mathis – To add; my recollection of what he said was on any given Monday he could go in and know by noon if there is a consensus on a particular package or program. If he needed to go through the County Administrator that process could be much more time intensive.

Paula Hess – A point was made by Ms. Pears which I think we should consider; that changing it is premature.

John Hitzel – I think so.

Donald McCormick – I think it just has not worked itself out. I think it is wrong to analogize Economic Development with a police or fire department; it is the wrong model because you have to be nimble. If the position cannot talk to Commissioners which they really would not be able to do directly unless going through the Administrator. It limits ability to be competitive in the environment that is Economic Development. I think we will know more in six (6) years.

Jerry J. O'Halloran – Can I have you repeat the motion specifically.

John Hitzel – The motion is simply to leave the reporting relationship as it is.

Jerry J. O'Halloran – So the relationship now is the Economic Development Director reports to the Board of County Commissioners as opposed to the County Administrator.

Chairman Dryburgh – Correct.

Jerry J. O'Halloran – Personally, I would find that very cumbersome if I was a Commissioner. My job would be to hire a County Manager. The County Manager should be responsible for managing the people under them; even Economic Development. Then if I had other things I would like to have the Economic Development Director bring to the County Commission, yes we could do that. I have never seen a structure be that diluted. Keep in mind, I have a corporate background, but mostly I have military background and you just do not do that. If you want decisions made you hire someone, give them the responsibility to do it. If later on you have to fire them, you have to fire them because they did not comply with what you wanted them to do. Right now it seems like you are asking the County Commissioners to almost micromanage things that are happening economically and that is a tough, tough position. I do not think you get your money's worth that way from the Economic Development Director.

Thomas J. Rice – I call the question.

Chairman Dryburgh – All in favor of the motion; please raise your hand. All against? Motion carries eleven (11) to four (4).

Paula Hess – Concerning recommendations, the Administration Staff Subcommittee we just discussed and voted. The Constitutional Officers have no recommendations, so all we have left is the Other Boards and Agencies. You have a number of recommendations, is that right?

Thomas J. Rice – In your recommendations there were references about expanding the requirements of the Board of County Commissioners on MSBU/TU's; research exemption of churches or non-profits from taxation and consider adding the Citizens Forum. Are those recommendations to change the Charter or for other comments.

Paula Hess – The Citizens Forum is going to be a recommendation in the final draft, exempting churches we have to discuss whether we want to include, that was a recommendation from several citizens. I thought it was worthy of discussion and we found out that you must include all 501 (c) (3) organizations. The impact report we received he just looked at churches and the increase was negotiable. If we are going to consider it we have to have him look at the areas where there are also 501 (c) (3).

William C. Abbatematteo – We also heard during the discussion that other counties do exempt churches. I do not know how they make a decision, if that is true. We are just hesitant to make that decision, but I think it is worth exploring because it was put on the table. They distinguish the Church of the Holy Spirit from the Homeless Coalition.

Donald McCormick – The City of Punta Gorda does not collect ad valorem taxes on churches.

Paula Hess – How do they distinguish between legitimate churches and those churches people just decided to start for the exemption?

Robert Berntsson – I believe it is all 501 (c) (3). I think the common reference is that churches are not taxed, you look at a church and say that are not on a tax role. I do not believe there is a distinction, I am not aware of a distinction in the other communities.

Thomas J. Rice – It sounds like Administration Staff and Constitutional Officers are finished with their report. If I am hearing you right the only change out of the Board of County Commissioners Subcommittee would be the exemption of churches and non-profits. So I would suggest that we do more research and look at that as a potential change at our next meeting.

Chairman Dryburgh – Also; let us put on the book today about taking up at the next meeting; do we want to limit the terms on the Charter Review Board and having it elected/appointed.

Paula Hess – I do not know about how you can elect this board, do they mean in a general election?

Chairman Dryburgh – That was what was suggested; Sarasota County does it and I think they have terms.

Paula Hess – Can you give us an explanation of how that could be done? You can just say limit the terms; but I want to figure out how you could get the people more involved. Apparently, there are a number of people that feel this Commission being selected by the Board of County Commissioners, is not satisfactory to the population of the County. I would like to explore that other avenue.

William C. Abbate Matteo – Our report was based on information we received from the Commissioners and having said that there has been a lot of input from the citizens about electing Commissioners districtwide instead of countywide, and I think that is worth exploring. Plus a citizen also brought up a court case that may impact this; there have been court decisions that went against counties who elect these Commissioners countywide.

Robert Berntsson – Several months ago I researched that, they were not on point to that issue.

William C. Abbate Matteo – In addition to that, we have had citizens come forth and they should have the choice of how they want their government elected.

Julie Mathis – I am very confused; you did not make that recommendation in your report.

Chairman Dryburgh – We are actually going to go through everything we have heard, so we know at the end we have covered them all. At the next meeting we will bring them up for a vote and move forward.

Paula Hess – We will discuss the Other Boards and Agencies recommendations, come up with topics that have come from the citizens and discuss those at the next meeting, right?

Chairman Dryburgh – We are working on the list and will send them to each of you before the next meeting.

Jim M. Brown – To add to that, regarding Commissioners by district they wanted two (2) additional Commissioners.

VII. Citizens Input

Michael Zarzano – I would like to see on that list an additional topic of discussion about recording these meetings; both audio/video and holding them in the main chambers. So those who are working can have the privilege of seeing and hearing what is going on. Also, I am for electing Commissioners by districts and feel the people would be better served.

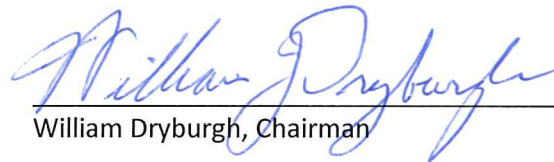
Lawrence A. Daniels – I just want to make a quick comment and maybe you can rethink this. I was listening with intensity about the Economic Development Director reporting to the County Commissioners as they have done in the past. I have a human resource background and that position should report to one (1) person. They have weekly and monthly reports this person could give to the Administrator and it would be up to the Administrator to transfer that information to the board. Also, I think it is imperative this process include each department head be in attendance, at every County Commission meeting. So when certain topics and issues come up that particular department head could personally address the citizens. This is something to look at and think about. Thank you.

Chairman Dryburgh – Thank you all for coming. Our next meeting is on March 16, 2016 starting at 3:00 p.m. in this conference room. Motion to adjourn.

Julie Mathis – So moved.

W. Kevin Russell – Second.

Committee adjourned at 4:45 p.m.



William Dryburgh, Chairman

ATTACHMENT #1

Remarks by Dave Kesselring

I'd just like to restate some of the proposals made at last month's meeting and add a few additional comments. At the last meeting, I proposed that the Charter Review Board be elected by the People and that there be term limits on Board members, as some have been on the Board for 18 to 24 years. I heard no discussion on this matter at the last meeting. It appears that you all believe that the same small pool of people should be appointed to this board over and over, year after year. If this is so, what is your justification? You have a Commissioner that was on the initial Charter Review Board back in the 1990s and probably had a lot to do with the original authoring of the Charter. He has been on every board since. Now he's one of the Commissioners that gets to pick the members on this board and he's also at many meetings, steering the outcome. Should one man have this much power? Should a small group of people have such a high degree of input in this very important event that happens only once every six years.

In recent weeks, at least one proposal to provide the people of Charlotte County with more influence in the establishment or changing of county codes and ordinances was given to this board. The proposal was an amendment to Section 2.2 (G), changing the 10% currently required in subsection (1) to 5%. For those citizens that were not here last month. This has to do with how many petitions you need to gather to get changes to statutes and ordinances on an election ballot. I'm not sure that even if we got the 5% that we asked for, that the actual amount of signatures would come down to the number that originally existed. The population has seen tremendous growth which makes it nearly impossible for anyone to get the petitions necessary. It's still at that unattainable level with the 7.5% that was offered by the committee in charge. This is still a much larger and more restrictive number of petitions than it was originally. My question is why? Why would you allow this obstruction of the people's rights in Charlotte County to continue? I also would like to propose that the cost of ten cents per ballot be eliminated by amendment to our charter. Why should the people be fined for getting involved in their system of governing? Why should the people be fined for attempting to amend restrictive and harmful legislation?

Another proposal was for a vote by those affected, when the county wants to raise taxes, sometimes massively, with another MSBU. These increases in taxes run widows and others on fixed incomes out of their homes. It can easily multiply someone's taxes well above the state's legal limits. Contrary to what Commissioner Doherty, one of the main initiators of MSBUs in this county, says, we can do just fine without MSBUs. This is the perfect time for the old cliché. This county doesn't have a revenue problem. It has a spending problem. Spending in the county needs to decrease.

Another proposal was to change the position of County Administrator from an appointed to an elected position. This certainly makes sense, as the County Administrator is probably the most powerful position in the County and has a huge effect on the people in Charlotte County.

Lastly, there was a proposal to have Commissioner elections by district. This makes sense as the cost to run for the office of Commissioner has risen greatly. Some of the candidates are raising nearly \$100,000 to run for Charlotte County Commissioner. Mail outs, which are necessary to win an election are out of reach for many in an area so large. Door to door campaigning has become a thing of the past and that's a shame. District wide elections would make campaigns much more viable for the average citizen that wants to make a positive difference in his or her community. I know that elections are about money even though they shouldn't be, but here's your perfect chance to, at least, allow the people of Charlotte County to partially remedy this situation through a charter amendment to elect County Commissioners by district.