

**CHARLOTTE REVIEW COMMISSION  
CHARLOTTE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER  
18500 MURDOCK CIRCLE  
PORT CHARLOTTE, FLORIDA 33948**



**Administration/Staff Subcommittee**

**FINAL REPORT  
December 8, 2021**

**Committee Members:**

Donna L. Barrett, Chairperson  
Cyril F. Schrage  
Cherie Burnette  
Robert J. Humpel, Alternate

The committee had several changes in their membership. Member Stephen J. Vieira resigned from the Commission in September, member Steve Drake transferred to the Other Boards and Agencies subcommittee in September and alternate Robert J. Humpel was a new addition to this subcommittee in October.

**Introduction:**

The Administration/Staff Subcommittee was charged by the full Charter Review Commission to review the portion of the Charlotte County Charter as it relates to Administration and Staff. Accordingly, this subcommittee met eleven times as follows:

June 9, 2021	Elected Chairperson and set meeting date
July 7, 2021	Organization meeting and review of questions for interviewees
July 20, 2021	Finalize interview questions
August 16, 2021	Administration Staff interviews
August 23, 2021	Administration Staff interviews
August 26, 2021	Administration Staff interviews
September 21, 2021	Administration Staff interviews
September 23, 2021	Administration Staff interviews
October 7, 2021	Administration Staff interviews
November 18, 2021	Discussed potential recommendations
December 8, 2021	Finalized recommendations for Final Report

## **Charlotte County Administration/Staff interviewed:**

County Attorney – Janette Knowlton  
County Administrator – Hector Flores  
Deputy County Administrator – Emily Lewis  
Assistant County Administrator – Claire Jubb  
Budget Director – Gordon Burger  
Public Works Director – John Elias  
Community Development – Ben Bailey  
Utilities Operations Manager – Craig Rudy  
Director of Community Services – Tommy Scott  
Economic Development Director – Dave Gammon

Each interview took approximately forty-five minutes to one hour to complete. The interviewees had been provided the list of questions prior to the meeting. The interviewees were asked to begin the discussion by describing their duties and functions. In addition to some entity specific question, each interviewee responded to a general set of questions and a brief summary of responses follows. Full interview responses can be obtained by reading the posted meeting minutes of the interviews on the Charlotte County Charter Review Commission webpage.

## **Summary of Responses to Questions:**

### **What are your specific duties and in the performance of those duties what, if any, local government re-structuring could be proposed for the Charter that would improve your ability to deliver services?**

Nine (9) interviewees indicated no changes were needed.

Knowlton suggested deleting Section 2.3F Economic Development Director.

### **Have you read the Charlotte County Charter and how is your job performance affected by the Charter?**

Ten (10) interviewees believe this is the governing document

Burger recommended the following change under Article II Sec 2.2 D. Authority

- Change annually to " in conjunction with the budget".
- Burger also suggested the seven-day posting is difficult in the budget development.

**Have you had experience working under an elected Administrator, and what is your opinion on an elected Executive form of government?**

Nine (9) interviewees indicated "No" they had not worked under an elected administrator. All 67 counties in Florida have an appointed administrator.

Tommy Scott has worked under an elected administrator in the past.

All ten (10) interviewees feel the current structure is best for our community.

This alleviates the conflict of politics between the Board of County Commissioners and administrator.

**In your experience is the non-interference clause observed? Is the method of enforcement adequate?**

Ten(10) interviewees feel the non-interference clause is observed.

Knowlton recommended under Article II Section 2.3C.

- The "injunction" is problematic. Leaving Part (1) is sufficient.

**How do you create the budget for your departments?**

Knowlton- Budget for salaries, equipment, research, and outside consultants

Flores/Lewis/Jubb/Burger- budget department works Jan-Oct. 1. Get input from advisory committees, stakeholders with budgets, MSBU's and public hearings. We build from prior year's using historical actual figures. Presented to board in May/June. Have workshops and final 2 budget hearings in September. Burger starts working on budget in November for the following year.

Rudy- Ongoing process. Yearly budget and start a year in advance reviewing cost to operate plus work with capital maintenance programs, CIP and everything that needs to be completed in 6-year cycle.

Scott- structured from Budget & Admin Services department

Bailey-works closely with Fiscal services and has quarterly budget meetings. All departments funded through general fund, except for building department which is funded through a special enterprise fund from building permits. Budgeting based on dollars, not permits.

Elias-has many budgets (Capital, Sales Tax, 50 MSBUs). Staff in divisions help create budgets. MSBUs are more complex and working on making changes.

**Should there be a residency requirement for Charlotte County Executive Staff?**

Ten (10) interviewees feel "Yes", there should be a resident requirement.

This is already a requirement for the Administrator, Knowlton suggests it should be the same for the Attorney and Economic Development Director for consistency.

Flores - Per the Charter, the Administrator does, the elected officials also as well as our HR policies for the Leadership Team. As Administrator he can waive requirement but has not had to.

**Are there any aspects you know from other communities that the Charter Review Commission should consider for Charlotte County?**

Six (6) interviewees had no suggestions.

Lewis suggested a 7–14-day Notice for public notices.

Knowlton, Burger, Jubb suggested a 10-year Charter Review. (Burger suggested 10-12 years).

**How can we make the process of committee involvement be more effective regarding the MSBU/TU's? (Was not asked to Community Services/Tommy Scott and Economic Development Director/Dave Gammon.)**

Get more volunteers to serve on advisory committees.

Additional education and outreach.

Just hired a social media Manager in hopes to help with outreach.

Increasing civic engagement by encouragement.

Consistently more outreach.

**Additional Questions Pertaining to a Specific Position:**

Public Works Director:

**How does Public Works create the Project Lists?**

PW provides tiers of service depending on the assets available within a MSBU. We work hard on long term agreed upon levels of service depending on assets of the community. Capital and sales tax depending on fiscal who determines if funds are available.

Budget Director:

**Do you feel Fiscal Services should report to Administration or the Board of County Commissioners?**

No. It works just fine the way it is.

Administrator:

**Do you feel Economic Development Director should report to Administration or the Board of County Commissioners?**

No. It works just fine the way it is.

## **Summary of Findings:**

*Based on the interviews with the Administration and Staff, our research, discussions, and feedback from citizens in our community, the Administration/Staff subcommittee has the following suggestions:*

## **Charter Recommendations:**

1. Article II Sec 2.2 D Authority- change annual review to " in conjunction with budget process"
2. Change Charter Review Commission to review 10 years.
3. Add the same employment language as the Administrator to the position of County Attorney
  - a. Sec 2.3 Executive Branch; D. County Attorney
    - i. (2) The county attorney shall be appointed on the affirmative vote of four (4) members of the board of county commissioners on the basis of ability and qualifications and shall resident within the county while so employed.
    - ii. (3) The county attorney's salary shall be set by the board of county commissioners.
    - iii. (4) The county attorney may be removed with or without cause upon affirmative vote of four (4) members of the board of county commissioners or upon the affirmative vote of three (3) members at two (2) separate meetings held at least two (2) weeks apart. Grounds for removal shall include flagrant neglect of duty, physical or mental incapacity, conviction for the commission of a felony, violation of any statute relating to conduct of public employees, or such other grounds as may be provided by ordinance.
4. Add the same employment language as the Administrator to the position of Economic Development Director
  - a. Sec 2.3 Executive Branch; F. Director of Economic Development
    - i. (2) The economic development director shall be appointed on the affirmative vote of four (4) members of the board of county commissioners on the basis of ability and qualifications and shall resident within the county while so employed.
    - ii. (3) The Economic Development Director's salary shall be set by the board of county commissioners.
    - iii. (4) The Economic Development Director may be removed with or without cause upon affirmative vote of four (4) members of the board of county commissioners or upon the affirmative vote of three (3) members at two (2) separate meetings held at least two (2) weeks apart. Grounds for removal shall include flagrant neglect of duty, physical or mental incapacity, conviction for the commission of a felony, violation of any statute relating to conduct of public employees, or such other grounds as may be provided by ordinance.

## **Non-Charter Recommendations:**

Regarding the issue of the Change Memo and the lack of time sometimes involved in researching new information, especially for Economic Development projects, the Administration Staff subcommittee recommends:

- The County Attorney and County Administrator approve these changes in advance.
- County Administrator to review with Economic Development their change memo procedures.
- For County Administration to outline and define the procedures for Economic Development projects to be vetted through various relevant county departments prior to Board of County Commissioner meetings where actions would be taken.

Submitted by:

  
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Donna L. Barrett, Chairperson