

**Charter Review Commission
Administration Staff
Subcommittee Meeting
September 21, 2021**

A meeting of the Charter Review Commission Administration Staff Subcommittee was held at Charlotte County Administration Center, 18500 Murdock Circle, Room B-106, Port Charlotte, Florida at 1:00 P.M. on September 21, 2021.

Roll Call:

The following members were present:

Donna Barrett, Chairman
Cherie Burnette
Cyril Schrage
Steve Vieira

Members Absent: None

Citizens: None present.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by Chairman Donna Barrett.

Approval of Minutes: None

Agenda Items:

I. Citizens Input – None.

II. Old Business

a. None.

III. New Business:

a. 1:00 P.M Interview with Claire Jubb, Assistant County Administrator.

Introduction: I have lived in Charlotte County for over nineteen years. I was born and brought up in the UK (United Kingdom) and moved directly to Charlotte County when we moved to the States. I began working for the County Building department in 2003 as the Business Services Supervisor. I worked my way through the departments and six years ago was appointed Community Development Director. Last year I applied for and was appointed Assistant County Administrator.

1. 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? In Administration we deal with the day-to-day operations of the County. Specifically, I oversee Community Development, Facility Services, Human Services, Water Quality and Asset Management. We work collaboratively in Administration to address all the departments – we are a good team. I deal with the Agenda, “one on ones” with the Commissioners every week (alternating with the Administrator and Deputy Administrator) and any information that needs to funnel down to the departments we handle. We work closely with the Economic Development Office and the Attorney’s Office. We deal with any Citizens inquiries, Media inquiries that can’t be passed down to our departments and work with our local community.

How often do each department report to you? As needed based on how experienced the Director is and how experienced I am with the department, but I also have scheduled meetings with all members of my staff. I maintain an “open door” policy at all times.

There is no need for restructuring. Charlotte County received an award last year from the Florida City County Manager’s Association for 45 years of the Council Manager form of government (manger is appointed)- this is a very good structure and works well.

2. Have you read the Charlotte County Charter and how is your job performance affected by the Charter? Yes. It generally lays out how our government should operate. We supplement it internally with our Administrative Code which builds on the Charter and makes sure we follow the Charter from an Administrative perspective. **Do you think the Sheriff Department should be elected by the Public or appointed by the County Commissioners?** In a county it is typical for the Sheriff to be elected while at the city level they would be appointed. I think it works well for the office to be elected. I think the Sheriff needs the autonomy to perform their duties without reporting to the Commissioners and to be able to work independently. There is much communication between the Sheriff, the Commissioners and Administration. The Administrator meets regularly with the Sheriff to talk through issues such as budgets, mental health, body cams... we have good collaboration.

3. Have you had experience working under an elected Administrator, and what is your opinion on an elected Executive form of government? No. I have only worked for Charlotte County which has the appointed form of Administrator. You are either a politician or a public servant. I am a dedicated public servant – I could never go out and run for office. This is what I am good at and you will find this same quality across all administrators – we are not politicians. If elected, you would not have that quality of person, you would have a politician first and not a public servant first.

4. In your experience is the non-interference clause observed? Is the method of enforcement adequate? Yes, our Commissioners are very good and know to come through us if they want anything done. If we know about it, the Commissioners can speak to the Directors on an information base only. We stress to our Directors that if someone crosses the line, they are to report it to us, and we will deal with it from there. We have good relationships with the Commissioners and can have those tough discussions should someone cross the line.

5. How do you create the budget for your departments? We trust our departments to initially come up with their budgets, to develop their line items and initiatives they want to do. Then as an Administration Team we review every budget – we have a collaborative process to review all budgets. The three of us have lots of experience working in many of the departments so we understand them very well. We are very conservative and good stewards with the taxpayer’s money and instill that in our Directors and throughout the organization. We all laid off

staff during the recession and never want to be in a position to do that again. We want to justify every change in our budget. It is an intensive year long process to put the budget together. It is a performance-based budget – we are looking at outcomes, goals, initiatives – it is very detailed. We have been using this method for many years and it works. Our Fiscal department keeps a close eye on the budget throughout the year and look for anomalies. A large portion of the budget goes to CIP (capital improvement projects).

6. How can we make the process of committee involvement be more effective regarding the MSBU/TU's? Increasing civic engagement is difficult in this community – we see the same people signing up for committees – we need to encourage more people to engage with their community. This is their opportunity to have a voice. We push social media to try to get people involved – we are dealing with retirees who just want to retire. Most people do not understand the governmental process. **What about term limits?** These committees do not have term limits and if they did, we would struggle even more. The MSBU structure is unique to Charlotte County – lots of services to provide in a large county. The MSBU's that do not have advisory boards are handled by the Board of County Commissioners who then approve the work plans. Other MSBU's may have completed all their work and will just exist without any future actions. The list of vacancies is published in the Board Agenda every two weeks and there are press releases concerning same that are emailed every week.

7. Should there be a residency requirement for Charlotte County Executive Staff? Yes, we essentially have one in our Administration Code, I believe we should live here. I believe most of the directors and administrative staff do.

8. Are there any aspects you know from other communities that the Charter Review Commission should consider for Charlotte County? The Charter is appropriate to our needs, no need to fix what is not broken. The biggest change came with the Economic Development Director reporting to the Board rather than the Administrator. It is working well if we maintain communication between us. I see no need to make any drastic changes.

(See Hernando County, (similar in size, one incorporated city) as being like Charlotte County for reference to Sheriff issues.)

Do you feel we could have the Charter Review process every ten years rather than six? Probably, yes.

How do you feel about the Economic Development Director reporting to the Board of County Commissioners? We work closely and hard with the Economic Development Director to have that collaborative relationship. Yes, it is hard with him reporting to the Board of County Commissioners, but we maintain good communication. The Economic Development Director must use our departments to get the information he needs. It would be hard to back away from this change – the mechanisms are now in place to be collaborative. I do not think the citizens would see any benefit in changing the reporting status.

Thank you for being part of the Charter Review and taking time out of your busy schedule for this important process.

End Interview:

IV. Discussion:

a. Discussed the recent Charter Review Commission meeting and what to do when the discussion (1% Sales Tax) goes too long or goes off topic and the Chair allows it.

V. Adjournment:

**MOTION WAS MADE BY DONNA BARRETT, SECONDED BY CYRIL SCHRAGE TO
ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 2:05.**

MOTION CARRIED 3:0

Next meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2021 at 1 p.m.

Donna A. Barrett 11/10/21

Donna Barrett, Chairman Date

Administration Staff Sub-Committee