

**BARROW COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE  
AUBURN CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MAY 10, 2011  
7:00 P.M.**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Members Present:**

Ray Newman, Chairman  
Bob Akin  
Chris Bailey  
Pat Graham  
Scott Hang  
John King  
David Mann  
Shirley Segars  
Ken Young

**Media Present:**

Katie Cofer, **Barrow Journal**  
Doug Moser, **Barrow News**

**Facilitators Present:**

Jim Dove, NEGRC  
Mott Beck, NEGRC  
Jim Grubiak, ACCG  
Dave Wills, ACCG

Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed those present. He asked Jim Dove to provide an overview of the April 19<sup>th</sup> organizational meeting held in Winder. After making that report, Mr. Dove reported on the meeting format as adopted, and welcomed the two new members appointed by the Committee. Chairman Newman asked that they provide a self introduction.

In his introductory remarks, the Chairman listed three items that might be discussed by the Committee. They include: (a) veto powers of the BOC Chairman; (b) organizational matters, i.e. BOC Chairman's powers, County Manager/Administrator possibility; and (c) a revamp of the government, including the consideration of consolidation.

Chairman Newman asked for comments/questions from members of the Committee. They were as follows:

- Are there other counties in which the Chair has veto power? (DeKalb was mentioned as an example.)
- Any recommended changes in the Charter should take effect after the next election.
- Have Chairs in Georgia traditionally had veto powers in the past? (No, generally speaking.)
- There should be a "cooling off" period in using the veto with a 2/3rds majority required to override.
- Chairman of Barrow BOC really does not participate in the legislative process.

At this time, Chairman Newman invited comments from those in attendance:

- Auburn Mayor Linda Blechinger was the first to speak. She favors a Manager form of government, as it would lead to increased professionalism. Also, she thinks a move to consolidate governments from within the County poses potential problems. She indicated her support of the BOC Chair having a vote if there is a Manager in place. Finally, she is of the opinion that a potential Manager should have an educational background in Public Administration.

During discussion, a Committee member asked if a Manager has more power than an Administrator, or vice versa. Facilitators indicated there is variation in the authority granted; however, both are contract employees. It is felt that Managers/Administrators provide continuity to the governments they serve. Everyone agreed that the role of the Manager/Administrator must be well defined.

- Carl Mayor David Brock was asked if he had comments. He indicated that he was in attendance to be a "sponge" and absorb information. He feels that less politics is the best politics, but he has seen shortcomings that should be corrected.

Chairman Newman then asked for Committee discussion on the items detailed in his introductory comments. He alluded to certain sections of the Charter regarding veto powers. The following comments/questions were raised:

- Either give the Chair a vote, or leave veto power as is.
- If the Chair votes, he/she should not be running the County on a day to day basis.
- With veto power, BOC Chairs have become dictatorial in the past.
- What is the purpose/need of veto powers?

- Perhaps the Manager/Administrator issue should be resolved before recommendation is made on veto powers.
- There should be a "cooling off period" during the veto process.
- At what point will recommendations be made to the BOC, presented to the public in a referendum, or presented to the legislative delegation for action?
- Veto power may also provide an opportunity for new information to be presented.
- Does the County BOC currently have Work Sessions in addition to regular meetings?
- The concept of utilizing Work Sessions has changed during the past several years.
- The portion of the Charter dealing with signing of checks was discussed (it was agreed that this matter should be reviewed more fully).
- Consider provision on quorum determination; veto powers have been in place only since 1989 – look at how often it is used; look at BOC rules and procedures for inconsistencies; and review strong language in Charter regarding "Chairman's approval".
- Consolidation issue should not be discussed further.

Chairman Newman entertained a motion by Mr. King and a second by Mr. Hang to table any further discussion of consolidation matters. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Newman asked for approval of the Meeting Summary of the organizational meeting. One correction was noted; that being the spelling of Mr. Akin's name. A motion to approve the summary as corrected was made by Mr. King and seconded by Mr. Hang. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Newman announced that the next meeting of the Charter Review Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Bethlehem City Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.