

**Whatcom County
Charter Review Commission
Meeting Minutes**

March 29, 1995

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Courthouse Multi-purpose Room, 311 Grand Ave, by Chairperson Kathy Sutter.

II. Roll Call

Present:

Keith Ahrens
Danna Beech
Joe Elenbaas (arrived late)
Karen Frederick
Georgia Gardner
Don Hansey
Darlene McLeod
Ron Polinder (arrived late)
Ray Radke
Mary Scrimsher
Orphalee Smith
Mary Stender (arrived late)
Kathy Sutter
Terry Unger

Absent, but excused:

Yvonne Goldsmith

III. Approval of the Agenda

Beech moved to approve of the agenda.

McLeod seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Reading and Approval of Minutes from the March 22, 1995 Meeting

McLeod moved to approve of the minutes.

Ahrens seconded the motion.

Polinder withdrew his motion.

Gardner moved to close debate on this issue.

Motion carried by a majority.

Polinder moved that we suspend the rule that we adopted earlier tonight and that we proceed to vote on the motion that Orphalee presented earlier this evening.

Unger seconded the motion.

Motion carried by a two-thirds majority.

Having discussed Section 3.21, the Commission voted on the motion that the Section should read as follows: "The County Executive shall be appointed by the County Council." This motion failed, 5 - 9, with Ahrens, Beech, Hansey, Smith, and Stender in favor.

VII. Break

The Chair called for a break at 8:15 p.m.

The Chair reconvened the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

VIII. Other Business

The Commission discussed motions to be discussed at the next meeting.

The Chair discussed the deadline for getting motions to the clerk to be put on the agenda.

Stender introduced the Commission's intern, Martin Otterson.

Bob Woods, County Budget and Program Analyst, commented on two handouts, one of the Council's committees, the other of the Whatcom County Credo.

Unger moved that the amendment proposed by the County Auditor be put on the agenda for discussion.

Beech seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

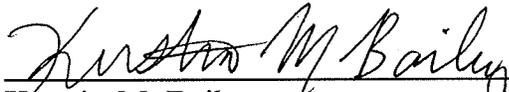
IX. Discussion of Next Agenda

Items to be included on the next agenda: call to order, roll call, approval of the agenda, reading and approval of the minutes, open session, discussion of proposed motions, break, other business, discussion of next agenda, adjourn.

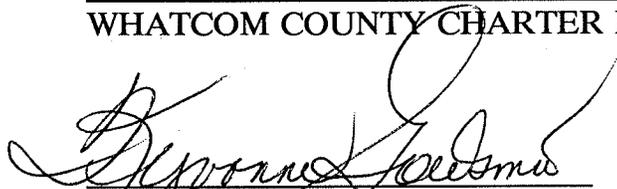
X. Adjourn

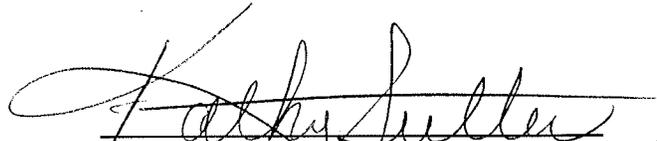
The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. by the Chair.

Respectfully submitted,


Kerstin M. Bailey
Recording Secretary

WHATCOM COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION


Yvonne Goldsmith, Secretary


Kathy Sutter, Commission Chair

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
SPEAKERS AT THE
MARCH 29, APRIL 5, APRIL 12, AND APRIL 19, 1995 MEETINGS**

March 29, 1995

(No members of the public spoke at this meeting.)

April 5, 1995

Dr. William S. Griffith, P.O. Box 1189, Point Roberts

945-1346

(See hand-out)

-I am not so upset about the taxes we are charged in Point Roberts as the lack of use of those taxes in Point Roberts. We receive a disproportionately low percentage of County services. Surely there must be some way to ensure a more equitable provision of services to the Point!

April 12, 1995

(No members of the public spoke at this meeting.)

April 19, 1995

1. Shirley Forslof, County Auditor

-Regarding Radke's motion to add Section 1.50, Performance and Strategic Planning: I think that the County should be doing long-term planning. It has in the past, but recently it's seemed more short-term. In order to do an audit, you have to establish a means of measurement. You might want to be more generic in the wording.

-Regarding requiring that candidates' names appear on the ballot as drawn by lot: if you look at the last election, it cost us \$6,000 to have the candidates' names rotate on the ballot. It requires extra printing, extra costs to set up automatic counting, and extra checking. Just the printing was about \$3,000. We looked at the overall results of the election to the results on the absentee ballots, which did not rotate. The order of the names did not seem to matter; people voted for the people they wanted. Because of the size of the Charter Review Commission, the cost of rotating names is exaggerated.

2. Robert Imhof, County Council Chair

-I think that an increase in the Council's salary appropriate. I think that you should also look at making the Council Chair a full-time position, in lieu of making everyone full-time. I can't take the time out to go to various meetings. By not having representation at those meetings, especially the ones that determine where money is spent, we miss out on our share. To have representation at those meetings would more than make up for the extra cost of the position and would greatly benefit the County. I'm concerned that Whatcom County is losing out on an ear at the State level. We're the only County in the state that has part-time representation. It would also give the position a little more power. It doesn't benefit me; this is my last year as Chair. The Council would still choose its own Chair; we'd just have to see who could do it and work it out. I don't think it should be tied to the

at-large position, because then you have that person on for four years. Right now, the Council Chair is one or two years.

-I spend 25 - 30 hours per week as the Chair.

-The position of Chair is as powerful as the person. I focus more on moving forward and getting things done than my predecessor did.

-In order to go to other meetings, half-time won't do it. With all the literature that comes across my desk, I could have put together an 80-hour week really fast. But even by the time I've sorted what I need to do from what I don't, it's still more than half-time. You need to make the position financially sound enough for the person to do a good job. If we don't have time, we end up sending staff, so staff ends up developing legislation, which is our job.

-I also think that it's important that the Charter have generic wording. If you have more specific language, you could recommend it to the Council as an ordinance or resolution, on the budget and any other items that come up that may not be appropriate for the Charter. I think the Council would be very receptive to that. Coming from a group like this, it would carry a lot of weight.

-I'd also like to caution you not to develop recommendations that come from the current personality problems, but rather look at the overall process. People going to meetings and saying, "This is the will of the Council," when, in fact, it's never come before the Council, is a problem with who gets elected and personalities.

-Having an ombudsman in the Executive's office would be a possibility. I do think that we need to do something differently.