



April 20, 2013 at 10:00am
Notice posted

Minutes

PUBLIC MEETING

**Meeting of the Charter Review Commission
Cuyahoga County
Saturday, April 20, 2013 at 10:00 A.M.
CCC Eastern Campus, Corporate College
Warrensville Heights, OH**

Required notices were provided and posted and the public meeting was called to order at 10:15 AM by the Chair.

Present: Akers; Tarter; Riley; Albright; McLaughlin; Callahan; Dietrich

Absent: Russell; Headen

A quorum was present.

Akers introduced himself to the members of the public who attended this public meeting of the Charter Review Commission. **Akers** provided background information on the process that the CRC had utilized and asked Tarter to address the three amendments that he had offered to the CRC. Copies of the draft versions of each proposed amendment are attached hereto.

Tarter introduced his first proposal concerning the implementation of campaign contribution limits for council and Executive candidates. Tarter noted that this issue had been discussed by the Transition Advisory Group. Lynda Mayer noted that she had been involved with the Transition Group and the issue of campaign

finance reform had been addressed “outside of the actual T.A.G.”. She noted that this was a similar process that was undertaken regarding the ethics policy. Tarter distributed his handout and noted that the proposal would generally track the amounts listed in the provisions contained in state law, including donor disclosure requirements and the inclusion of a county-maintained website that could be searched by the public.

William McLaughlin (“WMc”), a member of the public audience posed several questions to Tarter concerning current disclosure requirements. Specifically, WMc wanted to know what the County’s BOE was already doing. Tarter noted that the filed campaign finance reports were available on the BOE’s website, but the documents were not searchable. McLaughlin noted that it should be expected that businesses will donate to elected officials and any prohibition of business contributions would likely be problematic. Mayer noted that much of the matters being discussed would likely be better suited in a County Ordinance, rather than written into the Charter. She noted that any changes may be difficult to implement if written into the Charter.

Next, Tarter addressed the topic of including term limitations for the County’s elected officials. He noted that the state has term limits for its officials. He noted that this allows new representatives, with new ideas, into the political arena. Tarter strongly felt that new, innovative thought would be encouraged by having a limit to the number of terms that county officials could serve. McLaughlin noted that this issue touched upon the citizens’ fundamental right to decide who represents them. He also noted that term limitations would remove effective representatives as well as lower-performing ones. He noted that the Honorable Richard McMonagle, of the Court of Common Pleas, was one of the best judges in the County and continues to serve well, even after three decades on the job. Tarter noted that the general public enacted term limitations. Albright noted that term limits are good “in theory” but the loss of institutional knowledge can be devastating. Akers added that including term limits would be a mistake and noted that numerous knowledgeable people have directly attributed some of the state dysfunction to the implementation of term limits. Dietrich added that the focus should be on providing representation and realizing that the electorate always has the ability to remove poor representatives.

Tarter introduced his next proposal. This matter attempts to prohibit the practice of “double dipping” by government employees. Tarter explained that this practice allowed employees to “retire” and shortly thereafter, be rehired by the same governmental entity. This practice allows the employee to receive his/her

retirement benefits while still working. Tarter noted that this practice served to prevent newer workers from entering the workforce. Callahan noted that any savings from this prohibition would only be achieved if the retired employee was hired at a lower salary than was paid prior to retiring. Callahan further added that the pension payout was not actually tax-payer funded. Gross noted that the language drafted by Tarter was a bit confusing and noted that this may be attempting to “solve a problem that did not actually exist”. Gross further noted that some issues could arise if a retiree intended to run for county office. Riley noted his agreement with Tarter’s proposal and felt that, if appropriately drafted, could work for Cuyahoga County. WMc added his thoughts as a retiree from the City of Cleveland and the perspective that this had on the workforce. Additional comments about the practical application of this policy were added by numerous of the CRC members and specific examples were pointed out. Riley and McLaughlin noted that the retire/rehire process was much more prevalent in the areas of public schools and law enforcement. Tarter concluded by noting that this policy is truly blocking new voices from joining the governmental workforce.

There being no further business before the CRC, **Tarter** made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by **Albright**. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00PM.

Draft _____
Issue _____
App. _____
Posted _____