

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**December 17, 2009**

A meeting of the Charter Review Commission (CRC) was held at the Administration Complex, Room 106-B, Port Charlotte, Florida.

Roll Call:

The following members were present:

*Ken Doherty (Chairman), William Dryburgh, Maureen Garrard, Joseph Goggin, Suzanne Graham, John Hitzel, Julie Mathis, Thomas Rice, Kevin Russell (Vice Chairman), Frank Weikel.*

Alternates present:

*Michael Grant* arriving at 4:07 p.m.

The following members were not present:

*Andy Dodd, Bill Folchi, Paula Hess, Donald McElroy, Johnny Vernon*

The following alternates were not present:

*Connie Kantor, Bill Weller*

In addition to membership, the meeting was attended by *Robert Berntsson, Esq.*, counsel for the CRC.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. EST by *Chairman Doherty*. *Chairman Doherty* noted that the start of the meeting was delayed a few minutes pending the arrival of more members.

Agenda Items:

1. **Approval of Minutes** of November 19, 2009 CRC Meeting: *Chairman Doherty* confirmed that all of the members present had previously reviewed a copy of these Minutes. There being no additions nor deletions the motion to approve these Minutes was made and seconded and the Minutes were accepted by unanimous vote.

2. **Discussion of CRC Expenses:** *Chairman Doherty* recalled that in the past administrative costs were not reviewed for approval before payment but that the bills for Mr. Berntsson will be submitted monthly to the Commission for review and approval. *Thomas Rice* asked about such things as printing costs, etc. as the session progresses and *Chairman Doherty* said that such costs are included in the budget and will need to be monitored. Those costs will be subject to pre-approval by the membership. On the topic of printing expenses *Maureen Garrard* put forth the suggestion of preparing a hand-out about the January meeting which would be furnished to those CRC persons who are members of organizations. *Chairman Doherty* suggested these organizations could then be responsible for further printing and distribution.

3. **Discussion of proposed methods to promote public awareness:** *Chairman Doherty* indicated that he had a detailed list of possible methods that could be implemented to reach the public, and he indicated that at this time the Commission should focus on the upcoming CRC meeting/Public Hearing on January 21, 2010. He mentioned that he will be a guest on the Curmudgeon Club radio show that will be taking place the day before the hearing. *Chairman Doherty* also indicated that he has had to turn down some other speaking invitations due to scheduling conflicts, and asked the members if any of the veteran members could volunteer to be available in his place at those times. In further discussion of media coverage *John Hitzel* mentioned that he will be authoring the Curmudgeon Club newspaper column on January 12, 2010 and he plans to feature the CRC and the upcoming Public Hearing. In discussion of web coverage, it was indicated that a link to the Home Rule Charter could be specifically put on the CRC webpage. *Chairman Doherty* also asked the members if anyone would like to meet to help construct the handout to organizations previously suggested by *Maureen Garrard*. (Subsequently in the meeting *Robert Berntsson, Esq.* reminded that such a meeting would need to be properly Noticed). *Tom Rice* mentioned composing and sending a piece to the newspaper once a week for publishing, cautioning that this would need to be re- sent weekly to make sure of publication. *Chairman Doherty* directed a question to attorney *Robert Berntsson* regarding the application of the Sunshine Law to his being a guest on aforementioned Curmudgeon Club radio broadcast. He indicated that *John Hitzel* may also be present at that broadcast. Attorney *Berntsson* advised that this is not in violation and does not need to be advertised as long as each member states their own opinions but do not engage in discussion with each other. Regarding a similar invitation from *Maureen Garrard* to speak before the Peace River Republican Women's Club Attorney *Berntsson* re-iterated that the CRC does not need to advertise as long as there is no debate anticipated. *Chairman Doherty* expressed a desire to err on the side of caution in these issues. *Tom Rice* mentioned that an excellent resource for public awareness would be sending notices to the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Realtors, etc. for electronic distribution to their substantial data base. *William Dryburgh* suggested a further contact for publication. *Chairman Doherty* responded that the CRC would be looking at all available options, starting with the most cost effective.

4. At 4:20 P.M. EST the membership convened into their respective **sub-Committees** (Board of County Commissioners, Constitutional Officers, Administration Staff and Other Boards and Agencies). The Minutes from each of these meetings have been prepared separately.

At 4:40 P.M. EST the membership meeting re-convened.

5. **Commission Comments:** *Chairman Doherty* asked if there would be any benefit to a special meeting of the sub-Committee chairpersons, himself and *Vice Chairman Russell* prior to the meeting on January 21, 2010. *Maureen Garrard* asked Chairman Doherty about the format for the January meeting and he indicated that he planned to give an overview of the Charter Review Commission and open the meeting immediately to the Public, deferring regular CRC agenda business until the public input portion was complete. Further discussion ensued about having a meeting of the chairpersons in early January but no date was established at this time. *Tom Rice* asked about drafting of a document or press release to distribute electronically to the members. *Robert Berntsson, Esq.* cautioned that they would have to decide how to make changes to such a document because they could not be made unilaterally and discussion of the changes would constitute a meeting. *Chairman Doherty* stated that a meeting of the sub-committee chairpersons would be scheduled for January, and also stated that a list of CRC expenses would be sent out to all the members monthly for them to examine prior to the regular meetings. *Vice Chairman Russell* addressed the terms of retaining *Robert Berntsson, Esq.* as counsel for the CRC and explained that this will be through a letter of engagement rather than a contract. *Robert Berntsson* confirmed that he had submitted a signed letter of engagement from his firm on his firm's letterhead. The motion was made and seconded that the CRC approve *Mr. Berntsson's* engagement letter and was approved unanimously. *Mr. Berntsson* again thanked the Commission. In reference to the hand-out for organizations, etc (as earlier described in 2 and 3 above) *John Hitzel* expressed the need for creativity. *Chairman Doherty* answered a question from the Board of County Commissioner's sub-committee on how to proceed with their next planned meeting.

(NOTE: Members Julie Mathis and Frank Weikel left the meeting at 4:45 p.m. due to prior engagements).

6. **Public Input** - None

7. **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m. EST.

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Ken Doherty