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**CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE / PRESERVING INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - Amended
Don Davis Room, 1st floor, City Hall**

**November 15, 2019
2:30 p.m.**

In attendance: Judge Ronald Swanson (Chair), Hon. Matt Schellenberg, Jessica Baker, Nelson McCoy, Heidi Jameson

Also: Paige Johnston – Office of General Counsel; Anthony Baltiero – Council Research Division; Jessica Matthews, Jessica Smith and Jenny Huxford – Legislative Services Division

Guest Speakers: Hon. Lori Boyer – Former City Councilmember; Chris Hand

Meeting Convened: 2:30 p.m.

Call to Order / Remarks from Chair – Chairman Swanson called the meeting to order and started a discussion about setting up future meeting times and guest speakers. The proposed subcommittee meeting dates are tentatively set for 12/12/2019, 12/16/2019, 1/16/2020, and 1/23/2020. All future meeting dates and times are tentative until an official notice has been posted. The subcommittee discussed future speakers and tentative dates for the speakers, including Sam Mousa and the Hon. Bill Gulliford.

Subcommittee Discussion – Chairman Swanson started a dialogue about the procedures for the guest speakers. Mr. Swanson noted that he had sent a memo to the guest speakers highlighting the focus areas of the subcommittee. It was decided to give the guests speakers five to ten minutes to give a quick presentation regarding the subcommittee’s focus areas and to follow with a question and answer session where each commissioner gets five to eight minutes to ask the guest speaker questions. The subcommittee continued to discuss possible future speakers and Karen Bowling was suggested as a possible future speaker.

Presentation by Hon. Lori Boyer – Former City Councilmember – Ms. Boyer went through the subcommittee’s focus area topic sheet and discussed each of the bullet points from the list. She talked about preserving institutional knowledge noting that it is difficult because of term limits and the turnover of department heads that typically happens when a new Administration takes office. Ms. Boyer talked about the possibility of having a City Manager position that can transcend Administrations, but noted the

difficulties of this type of position within a strong mayor form of government. She touched on multiple topics, including extended term limits for elected officials, establishing professional criteria for the Administration's Chief Administrative Officer, does not support an elected Council President, non-partisan elections, and moving the election to November during an off-year cycle. Ms. Boyer talked about issues regarding the General Counsel noting that a long term of service can cause concerns in public perception, but it helps to preserve institutional knowledge. She concluded talking about multiple topics, including the strong mayor form of government and the City Council's role as policy reviewers. Upon completion of the presentation, Chairman Swanson opened the floor to questions:

- Heidi Jameson: Ms. Jameson asked Ms. Boyer to talk about the list of suggested topics and note what is realistically doable and what is not feasible.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer commented on some of topics and noted that eliminating term limits for elected officials would be very difficult to do unless there was a dedicated group campaigning for it and it still might not get enough public support. She noted that changing the timing of elections was a much more feasible suggestion.
- Heidi Jameson: Ms. Jameson asked about non-partisan elections.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer talked about non-partisan elections and noted that there is pushback from the major political parties regarding non-partisan elections.
- Heidi Jameson: Ms. Jameson asked about the idea of having staggered elections and terms for elected officials.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer said that she does not support the idea of staggered terms because every other year half of the elected officials would be in "reelection mode" and focused more on their campaign which impacts how they would vote on issues.
- Jessica Baker: Ms. Baker asked about which election groups that it would be beneficial to speak with about non-partisan elections.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer encouraged the subcommittee to hear from the local political parties and various voting groups to hear their opinion on election suggestions.
- Jessica Baker: Ms. Baker asked about the possibility of requiring a supermajority City Council vote to raise taxes.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer noted that she is not a fan of supermajority votes because the small minority group can stop any action by swaying just one or two other Councilmembers.
- Jessica Baker: Ms. Baker asked about the possibility of requiring City Council approval for any agreements over a certain monetary threshold conducted by the independent authorities.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer stated that she likes the idea of having Council approval for any type of sale, deal, or agreement over a certain monetary threshold.
- Jessica Baker: Ms. Baker asked for suggestions for speakers to come and discuss the independent authority issue.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer noted that the independent authorities may be hesitant to discuss the issue because it would put limits on their autonomy.
- Chairman Swanson: Mr. Swanson discussed the local law enforcement structure and the partnerships between different sections of law enforcement. He asked if the current structure is an issue and, if so, is it a realistic idea to change the structure.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer noted some of the discussions about law enforcement from the Task Force on Consolidated Government, particularly noting the idea of an appointed the sheriff and having a

municipal police department. The Task Force ultimately said no to both ideas. She noted that she doesn't think the current structure is an issue and defers that discussion to the Sheriff, but that it is essential for law enforcement to be coordinated.

- Chairman Swanson: Mr. Swanson asked about the idea of implementing a City Manager position.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer noted that the position would help to preserve institutional knowledge, but it would be very hard to implement in a strong mayor form of government.
- Matt Schellenberg: Mr. Schellenberg asked Ms. Boyer about an ordinance that she introduced regarding the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) position and what happened to that bill.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer talked about the ordinance noting that it did pass, but the General Counsel's interpretation of the ordinance stated that the Mayor had the ability to define the qualifications for the CAO position. As a result, the goal of the ordinance was not achieved.
- Matt Schellenberg: Mr. Schellenberg noted that a General Counsel's binding opinion holds up until another General Counsel issues a different binding opinion. He continued to talk about the General Counsel nomination process and asked if any changes to the process are needed.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer noted that the Charter and Ordinance Code did change the General Counsel nomination process and that it would be a good idea to reevaluate the process and see if additional changes are needed.
- Matt Schellenberg: Mr. Schellenberg discussed changing the election time and noted that the Mayor doesn't have to release the budget until July so the Councilmembers still wouldn't get to see the budget until then. He continued stating that it would benefit the Administration because they would have more time with the budget process.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer agreed that the Administration would benefit from having longer to work with the budget and added that the benefit to the Council would be to have an extra six months to get to learn the City Council processes and get to know the functions of the different departments.
- Matt Schellenberg: Mr. Schellenberg talked about budget issues and noted that the City Council doesn't really have a chance to create a budget. He continued asking if it would be a good idea for the district Councilmembers to have a set of funds dedicated to their district to be used at their discretion.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer noted that each Councilmember would have to have their own dedicated Public Works employees and contractors to do the work which makes the idea very difficult to implement.
- Mr. Schellenberg: Mr. Schellenberg asked if there is a structure that can be put into place to make the government more balanced.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer noted that to make things more balanced, the City Council being the legislative body needs to truly be the policy makers.
- Nelson McCoy: Mr. McCoy asked if there is a way to make the City Council more proactive and less reactive.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer noted that individual Councilmembers could be more proactive, but the Council as a whole is inherently reactive because of the strong mayor form of government.
- Chairman Swanson: Mr. Swanson asked if there are any priorities that the subcommittee have missed so far and should be considering.
- Ms. Boyer: Ms. Boyer stated that she likes the current list of priorities and would put emphasis on finding ways to preserve institutional knowledge.

Following Ms. Boyer's presentation and the subsequent question and answer session, Chairman Swanson called for a five-minute recess from 3:45 PM – 3:50 PM.

Presentation by Chris Hand – Mr. Hand gave a presentation about the updated 50th anniversary edition of the book, “A Quiet Revolution”. Mr. Hand talked about changes to government structure. He made multiple points relating to government structure, including limiting independent authority leadership positions to a single term; bringing the independent authorities back into the City's purview; requiring a supermajority Council vote to appoint independent authority leadership; changing the timing of elections; evaluating the size and makeup of the City Council; maintaining the current General Counsel structure; making General Counsel binding opinions more transparent to the public; and having an Office of General Counsel presence at all of the independent authorities. Upon completion of the presentation, Chairman Swanson opened the floor to questions:

- Nelson McCoy: Mr. McCoy asked for Mr. Hand's thoughts on expanding the City Council based on population size. He also asked about the idea of eliminating the At-Large City Council seats.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand noted that he thinks that basing Council seats on population size is a good idea. He added that you could keep the At-Large Council seats, but give them each a specific policy area to focus on.
- Matt Schellenberg: Mr. Schellenberg asked if the City Council positions should be made into fulltime positions.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand discussed the idea and noted that it would depend largely on public support of the idea, but it is something that can be considered.
- Matt Schellenberg: Mr. Schellenberg talked about having dedicated attorneys from the Office of General Counsel present throughout the city agencies. He asked if the General Counsel should refrain from being assigned to any particular agency, particularly the Mayor's office, to act as a truly independent arbiter.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand discussed the possibility and noted that it is up to the General Counsel to be mindful of all of their clients without being perceived as being too close to anyone in particular.
- Matt Schellenberg: Mr. Schellenberg asked if there should be term limits for the General Counsel.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand feels that the General Counsel position tends to term limit itself and that there are mechanisms in place for the Administration and City Council to control the appointment or reappointment of the General Counsel.
- Jessica Baker: Ms. Baker asked if bringing the independent authorities back into the purview of the City is a realistic idea and if done would it be beneficial to the City.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand noted that it could be done, but it would have to come from the state level to make it happen for the independent authorities that are not currently in the Charter. He added that if it were done, bringing the independent authorities back into the City would allow for a better strategic alignment between agencies.
- Jessica Baker: Ms. Baker asked about the possibility of requiring City Council approval for any agreements over a certain monetary threshold conducted by the independent authorities as a way to get better unification between agencies.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand was hesitant to answer because he would need to research that issue more fully.

- Jessica Baker: Ms. Baker asked about the appointment of the independent authority leadership by the Mayor as being a goal of consolidation to keep the agencies closer to the City.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand noted that he is not sure if that was a goal of the founders of consolidation.
- Jessica Baker: Ms. Baker asked if Mr. Hand could elaborate on the pros and cons of non-partisan elections.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand talked about the tradition of not having politics within local government. He continued by talking about Jacksonville' unitary election system and how it may spread to state level ballots.
- Heidi Jameson: Ms. Jameson asked about other Florida cities successfully implementing non-partisan elections and how they were successful.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand said that he has not done the research on other cities, but is very interested to look deeper into how they were successful. He added that some of the cities do have a long history of keeping politics out of local government.
- Heidi Jameson: Ms. Jameson following up on Mr. McCoy's comments about having the City Council grow based on population size asked if Mr. Hand knew the population capita per Council seat.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand noted that he believes that it is 65,000 people per district seat.
- Heidi Jameson: Ms. Jameson asked about other cities and how they handle their independent authorities.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand noted that it varies between cities and provided a few examples.
- Chairman Swanson: Mr. Swanson asked Mr. Hand to pretend that he had ultimate power and could unilaterally implement a single change and asked what would that change be.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand said that he would change the timing of the elections to September and November of the odd numbered years.
- Chairman Swanson: Mr. Swanson asked another question in the same framework but changed the question to ask what single recommendation would he make without the power to unilaterally implement it.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand said that he would suggest finding ways to address the unfulfilled promises of consolidation and try to extend the benefits of consolidation to everyone in Jacksonville.
- Chairman Swanson: Mr. Swanson asked if the City Council were to grow or shrink, would that be disenfranchising, or appear to be disenfranchising, to parts of the community.
- Mr. Hand: Mr. Hand noted that there may be people who think it is disenfranchising if the Council were to shrink.

Public Comment (as time permits) – Chairman Swanson opened the floor to public comments.

- Stanley Scott: Mr. Scott talked about his displeasure with the leadership in Jacksonville. He also suggested to eliminate the At-Large Council seats.

Approval of Minutes – Staff noted that the subcommittee had to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. The minutes from the November 8, 2019 meeting were approved as distributed. Chairman

Swanson said that he will make it a point to include a section for minutes approval on future meeting agendas.

Chairman Swanson adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 4:29 PM

Minutes: Anthony James Baltiero, Council Research Division
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