

Clinton County Government Study Commission Meeting
July 5, 2006
Minutes

Call To Order:

Chairman Dan Harger called the Commission to order at 7:08 p.m. at the Clinton County Courthouse. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was participated in by all present.

Roll Call:

Ms. Gardner took roll call as follows:

Present were Ms. Deb Day, Mr. Mike Hanna arrived at 7:12 p.m., Mr. Daniel Harger, Ms. June Houser, Dr. Kathleen McQuaid, Ms. Coreena Meyer Mr. Richard Novosel, Mr. Terry O'Connor, Mr. Ernie Renninger, Mr. Les Robinson and Dr. Robert Wise.

Pennsylvania Economy League representatives present were Mr. Charles Watters, and Mr. Gerald Cross.

Meeting Minutes of June 21, 2006:

Mr. O'Connor made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 28, 2006 as presented. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took roll call vote whereby the motion to approve the June 28, 2006 minutes as presented was approved unanimously.

Reports:

Invoice Review:

Treasurer Mr. O'Connor presented invoices for approval totaling \$185.45 as follows:

Staples	\$ 12.20
Recording Secretary	<u>\$173.25</u>
Total	\$185.45

Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve payment of the invoices totaling \$185.45. Mr. Novosel seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took a roll call vote whereby the motion to approve payment of the invoices totaling \$185.45 was approved unanimously.

Treasurer O'Connor presented the Study Commission's year-to-date finance

report. The Commission has spent \$12,401.18 of their \$50,000.00 budgeted monies with approximately \$15,000.00 being spent by the end of July. Treasurer O'Connor suggested the Commission consider moving \$6,000.00 from the Miscellaneous Budgeted Item to the Consulting Budgeted Item.

Communication:

Dr. McQuaid announced that after tonight's meeting she will be on vacation for 4 weeks and unable to participate in the Commission meetings.

Survey:

Ms. Day reported that approximately ten of the Clinton County Employee Surveys have been returned. The Commission is giving the employees another week to get any surveys to them. The surveys will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Old Business:

Chairman Harger stated that it is his hope that the Commission can continue as a group, share views with restraint, and proceed through the process with a good result.

New and Continuing Business:

The PEL made introductory remarks which included:

- Review of the charge of the Study Commission.
- Review of interviews.
- Review of County visits.
- Members are to weigh what they have read and seen.
- Ask is weakness outweighing the strengths.
- Ask if the government structure can be more accountable or efficient.
- Belief of the Commission is not to maintain the status quo.
- Reviewed optional plan whose structure is outlined by law.
- Reviewed home rule charter which is more flexible and has more options.

The PEL had the Commission Members participate in an exercise to define the primary strengths and weakness to change or not change the structure of Clinton County government. The Commission has a limited timeline to make a decision.

The exercise started with the positives and negatives of the existing structure.

Strength:

- Elected officials; accountable to the general public.
Noted under optional plan the elected officials go away; can chose to elect the Treasurer, Sheriff, DA and Controller.

Weakness:

- Checks and Balances
- Separation of Powers; Executive and legislative
- Lack of Professional Management
- Budget Control

It was noted that all the weaknesses can be addressed by either an optional plan or home rule charter.

The County's own strategic plan written by the financial consult states there is a need for a CFO.

County decisions are not publicly aired; no public review.

Auditor positions are a weakness; Commission feels a Controller would be a strength.

Commission feels that the Jury Commissioners and Tax Collector positions are unnecessary positions. The PEL noted that under optional plan, Jury Commissioners are eliminated and the Tax Collectors are kept and under home rule, both positions are at the discretion of the charter.

The Commission decided that regional representation was not a weakness of the code. This issue may be debated when at a later date.

The PEL reminded the Commission that a change in structure does not necessarily mean a savings in money. The savings of a change are measured buy the cost effectiveness and sound decisions made by the new structure. The PEL stated there are no empirical studies available on home rule.

The PEL noted that home rule has no control over authorities but does delineate what the process is to develop an authority. They also noted that all debt loads by the County carries over to the new government structure. All ordinances and resolutions remain unless in conflict with the home rule charter.

The PEL stated to the Commission that the use of home rule law can add powers and controls to the existing government structure.

The Commission Members reiterated that any remarks regarding the current

structure on not personal in nature to anyone holding those offices.

The PEL asked the Commission to focus over the next week on what structures can address each issue.

Public Comment:

Mr. Genevish stated he was very impressed with the meeting. He hopes his helps to bring more women into County government. He also stated that elected officials should not be deciding their own salaries.

Adjournment:

Ms. Day made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion.

Deb Day, Secretary
Clinton County Government Study Commission

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