

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MINUTES
May 24, 2012

Members in Attendance: Richard Wishnie, Raymond Belair, Jeff Binder, Alfred Gatta, Julie Killian, Derickson Lawrence, Steve Mayo, Florence McCue, Paul Meissner, David Menken, Jane Morgenstern, Vincenza Restiano, Paul Windels, Gary Zuckerman

Absent Members: Herman Geist, John Mattis, Anne McAndrews, Guy Parisi, Bertrand Sellier, Matthew Thomas, Ronald Volino, Sam Zerka

County Staff in Attendance: Justin Adin, Stacey Dolgin-Kmetz, Chris Crane, Kerriann Stout, Melanie Montalto

Commission Counsel: Lester Steinman

Guests: Norman Jacknis

MINUTES

Chairman Wishnie called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

With a motion by David Menken, seconded by Gary Zuckerman the minutes of March 22nd, March 29th and April 23rd were a vote of 14-0.

Chairman Wishnie introduced Norm Jacknis, former Westchester County CIO. Mr. Jacknis now works at CISCO, a pro bono think tank working with governments locally and all over the world. Mr. Jacknis was the first CIO of Westchester.

Mr. Jacknis gave some opening remarks on sharing technology services with local municipalities. He stated that shared services reduce costs and allow for better software. Mr. Jacknis stated that Westchester has a fairly large technology footprint. He stated that the increase in technology has allowed people to work outside the office. Mr. Jacknis further discussed how technology affects the budget by setting up a rolling budget and a fixed budget.

Mr. Jacknis discussed the benefits of technology in terms of citizen engagement. He stated that taking the work out of the office building and in to the community can offer better services for less money. A discussion on participatory government and getting the citizen involved ensued.

The Commission asked about using technology to get people to comment on the budget. Mr. Jacknis stated that this may be done online. He stated that the budget would go online and people could comment on it. It would be monitored for spam.

The Commission discussed the benefits of “open data”. Mr. Jacknis stated that it is a good idea for data to be available but that simply making it available isn’t enough because of the high volume. The data needs to be presented to the public in a way that people can understand it.

Jeff Binder asked if there are areas of technology that can be monetized to the benefit of the county. Mr. Jacknis says this is a possibility but there have been some pitfalls in attempting to do so in the past.

Vincenza Restiano asked whether technology has created more poverty in that those who can’t get a computer are at a disadvantage. Mr. Jacknis says that the system isn’t perfect but it actually helps some low-income families get access to technology.

The Commission asked whether there is a chapter in the charter on technology. Mr. Jacknis stated yes, that the chapter came into the charter when the CIO position was created. He further stated that the Department of Information and Technology provides technology services for all the departments in the county.

The Commission asked whether there are any provisions in the charter for shared services of IT resources. Mr. Jacknis stated that there is no provision in the charter but IT would provide service agreements to the local municipalities. Mr. Jacknis said it would be helpful to the IT department if it could somehow be put in the charter to make the contracts easier. He suggests a way for them to not have to go through the acquisitions and contracts board.

Discussion ensued on light path system and other government technologies.

Chairman Wishnie spoke to the Commission about changing the voting quorum in order to be able to take actions. Moved by Gary Zuckerman, seconded by Paul Meissner, the Commission approved a new voting quorum of 12 members with a vote of 14-0.

Vincenza Restiano gave an update on the Local Government/County Government Focus Group and invited everyone to attend their meeting next Thursday the 31st at 530 here at the Board of Legislators to hear from a panel of county managers and advisors.

Florence McCue gave an update on the Charter and Codes Focus Group and invited everyone to attend their next meeting on June 13th at noon where they will hear from former County Attorney Charlene Indelicato.

Jeff Binder gave an update on the Budget and Finance Focus Group. He stated that the next meeting date has yet to be determined

Al Gatta gave an update on the Executive/Legislative Relationship Focus Group, stating that they continue to meet with current and former county legislators to hear their opinions on what could be improved.

Chairman Wishnie stated that the next meeting will be on June 28th.

With a motion by Gary Zuckerman seconded by Paul Meissner the Charter Revision Commission adjourned at 8 pm.