

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 27, 2012

Members in Attendance: Richard Wishnie, Jeff Binder, Alfred Gatta, Herman Geist, Derickson Lawrence, Steve Mayo, Anne McAndrews, Florence McCue, Paul Meissner, Jane Morgenstern, Guy Parisi, Vincenza Restiano, Bertrand Sellier, Matthew Thomas, Ronald Volino, Paul Windels, Gary Zuckerman

Absent Members: Raymond Belair, Julie Killian, John Mattis, David Menken, Sam Zerka

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

Commission Counsel: Lester Steinman

Guests: Nick DeSantis

MINUTES

Chairman Wishnie called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

With a motion by Paul Meissner, seconded by Guy Parisi the minutes of June 28th, 2012 were approved with a vote of 16-0.

Chairman Wishnie introduced the guest speaker, Nick DeSantis, Partner at O'Connor Davies Munns & Dobbins LLP, who also serves as the county auditor.

Mr. DeSantis described the County budget process and his concerns about the procedures.

Mr. DeSantis stated that because the County Executive releases his budget after Election Day, on November 15th the legislature is given a short time to review, make changes too, and approve the entire budget for the following year. Mr. DeSantis stated that he feels the Commission should consider this and suggest a way to provide the legislature more time to review the budget. He suggested that instead of November 15th, maybe the budget has to be delivered to the legislature on the first Monday after Election Day. A discussion ensued regarding the county budget calendar.

Mr. DeSantis discussed in further detail the problems associated with the current budget calendar and the deadlines for additions and deletions from the budget. He stated that there are instances where they are able to find money or mistakes in the budget but the legislature cannot make the appropriate changes to the budget because a deadline has passed.

The Commission agreed as a group that the current process is very restrictive and should be changed. Members asked the Commission Counsel to provide examples of other counties budget procedures.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the timeframe and deadlines for additions and subtractions as well as the adoption of the final budget.

Chairman Wishnie suggested that the Commission ask the County Executive and the Budget Director their thoughts on the current procedure to get additional feedback. Chairman Wishnie stated that he will work with Mr. Binder and his Budget & Finance Committee on a letter to send to the County Executive and Budget Director.

The Commission briefly reviewed the attendance of the Members at full Commission meetings.

The Commission briefly reviewed the calendar for the duration of the term of the Charter Revision Commission.

Mr. Gatta stated that the Executive/Legislative Relationship Focus Group met today and began reviewing possible ideas for the focus group report.

Ms. Restiano stated that the Local Government-County Government Focus Group met today and asked that all of the minutes from the previous meetings be sent to the group members. She asked that the members review these minutes and come up with a list of questions and they will schedule another meeting to go over them.

Mr. Binder stated that it has been a busy year for the Budget & Finance Focus Group and they are ready to begin working on their group report.

Mr. Parisi and Ms. McCue gave an overview of the meetings and speakers that the Charter & Codes group has had and stated that they will begin compiling ideas for their group report at their next meeting on October 3, 2012 at noon in the Board of Legislators Library.

Chairman Wishnie stated that the next meeting will be on October 25th, 2012.

With a motion by Guy Parisi seconded by Gary Zuckerman the Charter Revision Commission adjourned at 8:20 pm.