

Clearwater, Florida, September 19, 2005

A meeting of the Pinellas County Charter Review Commission (CRC) (as created by Chapter 80-950, Laws of Florida) was held in the Hospitality Classroom of the C. W. Young University Partnership Center Building at St. Petersburg College, 9200 113th Street North, Seminole at 5:13 P.M. on this date with the following members in attendance:

Alan Bomstein, Chairman
Ricardo Davis, Vice-Chairman
John Bryan, City of St. Petersburg Councilmember
James F. Coats, Sheriff
Robert C. Decker
George Jirotko
Louis Kwall
Susan Latvala, County Commissioner
Jim Sebesta, State Senator
Roger Wilson

Late Arrivals:

Karen Burns
Katie Cole
Roy Harrell

Also Present:

Susan H. Churuti, County Attorney
James L. Bennett, Chief Assistant County Attorney
Stephen M. Spratt, County Administrator
Elithia V. Stanfield, Assistant County Administrator
Kurt Spitzer, KS&A
Stephen F. Humphrey, Jr., Senior Partner, MGT of America, Inc.
Other interested individuals
Arlene Smitke, Deputy Clerk

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Fire Services Study – Preliminary Report

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4. Annexation Policy
 - a. Charter Authority – Policy on Involuntary Annexations
 - b. Charter Authority – Policy on Preservation Areas
 - c. Charter Definitions
5. Other Business
6. Adjourn

WELCOME

Chairman Bomstein called the meeting to order and confirmed the presence of a quorum; whereupon, he noted that Ms. Cole, Ms. Burns, and Mr. Harrell are not yet present.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF AUGUST 15, 2005 – APPROVED

Upon presentation of the minutes of the meeting of August 15, 2005 by Chairman Bomstein, Senator Sebesta moved, seconded by Commissioner Latvala and carried that the minutes be approved as distributed.

FIRE SERVICES STUDY – PRELIMINARY REPORT

Stephen F. Humphrey, Jr., Senior Partner, MGT of America, Inc., referred to a document titled *Fire and Fire Rescue Services Improvement Study for the Pinellas County Charter Review Commission – Draft Final Report* and conducted a PowerPoint presentation, copies of which have been filed and made a part of the record. He indicated that MGT has been working on the study for three months; that the fire system had been discussed at an earlier meeting; that additional information will be gathered and verified; and that a second version of the report will be completed in approximately two weeks, with the final version to be completed in the latter part of October; whereupon, he presented commendations on various aspects of the current system, reviewed the findings of the study, and elaborated on the following recommendations:

- ▶ Establish a single fire district encompassing the entire county and incorporate the existing fire departments and fire districts into the new district.

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- ▶ Implement a priority dispatch system using symptom guidelines to evaluate 911 calls and provide victims with the most appropriate response.
- ▶ Revise policy and procedures regarding Advanced Life Support (ALS) to incorporate the appropriate level of response based on the incident.
- ▶ Create a single emergency dispatch center that co-locates the dispatchers for all law enforcement, fire, and medical calls. This may not be a feasible alternative.
- ▶ Do not install traffic preemption devices on ambulances at this time. Many fire trucks currently have this capability, and multiple controllers could create a collision hazard.

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Ms. Cole entered the meeting at 5:21 P.M.; Ms. Burns and Mr. Harrell arrived at 5:24 P.M.

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Mr. Humphrey indicated that the savings potential is still being evaluated; that further discussions will be held with the stakeholders; that appendices will be supplied by the County for inclusion in the final report; and, in conclusion, that overall fire operating costs could be reduced by 10 to 15 percent by adopting a single district; that savings could amount to \$10 to \$15 million; and that implementation will take three to four years.

Topics of discussion included the following:

- ▶ EMS first responder medical/fire service is funded by tax dollars; Sunstar ambulance service is fully user supported.
- ▶ Fire department/district personnel are capable of handling a major fire, even if the on-demand staffing concept is employed.
- ▶ Mr. Wilson requested that MGT contact the Insurance Service Office (ISO) regarding the implications of department/district consolidation and the resulting district rating.

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- ▶ Statistical information regarding mutual aid activity is currently being compiled and will be included in the report.
- ▶ The study addresses cost efficiency and effective service delivery; quality of service not an issue and should be retained at its current level.
- ▶ The study addresses operational issues only; governance would likely be delegated to a new entity, which would be responsible for planning and level of service issues.
- ▶ In many respects, the current system functions as a single district.
- ▶ The County will be providing ad valorem tax information; MGT can provide comments, but will not do a detailed analysis.

Responding to the Chairman's call for citizens wishing to be heard, the following persons appeared and stated their opinions:

Chief James S. Angle, Palm Harbor Special Fire Control and Rescue District
William Israel, Pasadena Golf Club Estates
President John Little, Pinellas County Council of Fire Fighters

During discussion, Ms. Cole requested that Mr. Humphrey provide information relative to municipalities that contract with other municipalities for fire services.

It was the consensus of the Commission that any action on this item be deferred until the final report has been delivered.

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The meeting was recessed at 6:31 P.M. and reconvened at 6:42 P.M.

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ANNEXATION POLICY

County Administrator Stephen M. Spratt conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which has been filed and made a part of the record. He provided charter history related to

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annexation; defined important terms; gave statistical data regarding annexations; cited three recent cases illustrating problems with the current charter authority, including comments received from property and business owners protesting annexation of their property; and described the concept of unincorporated conservation areas.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Spratt explained the *non-referendum referendum* annexation, whereby an area having no registered electors can be annexed pursuant to a request by 51 percent of the property owners and representing 51 percent of the acreage within the area to be annexed, and discussion ensued. Mr. Wilson requested that Mr. Spratt repeat his presentation at the October 11 meeting with the Legislative Delegation.

Responding to the Chairman's call for persons wishing to be heard, the following individuals stated their views and responded to queries by the members:

Wesley C. Snipes, Clearwater
Art Hebert, Largo
Ray Neri, Lealman
Betty Bootier
James Morton
Albert "Al" Estes, Sr.
Mayor Robert Jackson, City of Largo
Bill Babcock, Evatone
Carl Evans, Evatone
Albert Redman, Unincorporated Seminole
Lena Acheson, Lealman
Jere Beauchamp
Barbara Bailey, M.O. Precision
Francois Bootier
Dot Miller
Carl G. Maier
Mayor Jerry Beverland, City of Oldsmar
William Israel, Pasadena Golf Club Estates
Mayor William Mischler, City of Pinellas Park

Referring to allegations regarding actions of City of Largo employees, Senator Sebesta stated for the record that he thinks Largo is a great city; that he finds Mayor Jackson to be a man of very high esteem; that if any chicanery is going on in Largo, he does not believe Mayor Jackson is aware of it; and that, regardless of any action taken by the CRC, he will look into the *non-referendum referendum* annexation process governed by Chapter 171, Florida Statutes.

During discussion, Mr. Bryan stated that if Mr. Spratt is going to make his annexation presentation before the Legislative Delegation, he would like to have a presentation by

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the Pinellas Planning Council or someone representing the interests of the cities, and Mr. Harrell concurred; whereupon, Chairman Bomstein indicated that the purpose is to present the facts, not have a debate; and that he will take the matter into consideration. Mr. Harrell queried whether an alternative might exist that could address the problem areas rather than a change to general law or a special act which puts the power into the hands of the BCC; and in response, Attorney Churuti noted that a special act could delegate the authority to address the matter under the charter; and that the specific wording could be decided at a later time. Following a request by Mr. Bryan that the cities be given an opportunity to provide input regarding changes to annexation laws, Chairman Bomstein pointed out that tonight's meeting was well publicized; that several mayors are in attendance; and that the Council of Mayors has indicated an unwillingness to work with the CRC on annexation issues.

Responding to query by Ms. Cole regarding the proposed Community Preservation Act, Chief Assistant County Attorney James L. Bennett referred to the minutes of the August 1, 2005 CRC meeting and clarified that the draft legislation presents the preservation area concept; and that the means of determining areas to be preserved and other considerations such as time limits will require further discussion by the CRC.

Discussion continued regarding the recommendations to be made to the Legislative Delegation; whereupon, it was the consensus of the members that the CRC will convene at 3:00 P.M. on October 11 in preparation for the 5:00 session with the Delegation; and that the County Attorney's Office will prepare and distribute to the CRC draft legislation to address the issues of notification to property owners of a city's intention to annex, annexation incentives, length of time between an unsuccessful annexation attempt and re-solicitation, voting rights for annexation of commercial, industrial, and government-owned property, and community preservation areas for residential and commercial property. Responding to query by Mr. Kwall, Attorney Churuti cautioned that the members are not allowed to communicate among themselves outside of published meetings; and stated that all comments should be submitted to Mr. Spitzer for recording and distribution.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Bomstein announced that the October 11 meeting will begin at 3:00 P.M. at the Young-Rainey STAR Center, 7887 Bryan Dairy Road; whereupon, there being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 P.M.