



# Charter Review

## Form of Government Subcommittee Minutes

Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 12

[www.cityoftacoma.org/charterreview](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/charterreview)

March 10, 2014 – 5:30 p.m.

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Committee Members Present: 6 – Baarsma, Brackett (arrived at 5:34 p.m.), Edmonds, Merritt, Miller, and Van Dyk.

Committee Members Excused Absence: 1 – Messina.

Committee Member Brackett arrived, at 5:34 p.m.

### **Approval of the March 3, 2014 Minutes**

Committee Member Baarsma moved to approve the minutes of March 3, 2014 meeting. Seconded by Committee Member Edmonds. Committee Member Merritt requested his absence be noted as excused. Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was adopted.

### **Introduction of University of Puget Sound Interns**

At approximately 5:35 p.m., Committee Member Van Dyk introduced Brian Gerrity and Sara Hoffman, students from the University of Puget Sound. Mr. Gerrity and Ms. Hoffman introduced themselves to the subcommittee. Chair Miller inquired about their interests, goals, and availability to assist the subcommittee. Discussion ensued regarding how to request work from the interns, who would be the main point of contact, and prioritizing the needs of the subcommittee as a whole then individual requests.

### **Review and Discussion of Criteria Definitions and Research**

At approximately 5:50 p.m., Chair Miller asked Committee Members to review the criteria definitions and comments. He asked each person to explain the items they work responsible for, noting the group would discuss whether it would be fruitful to use it as a criteria.

Committee Member Brackett discussed his definition for the balance of power criteria. He also provided supplemental information. Discussion ensued regarding getting data from groups such as the League of Women Voters or the National Civic League pertaining to the different forms of government, and the differences between the different forms of government. Committee Member Brackett stated he would work further on this item.

Committee Member Brackett then reviewed his definition and supplemental information provided regarding the business climate criteria. Discussion followed regarding the impact of the form of government on the health of the community, whether there is a correlation with the form of government, how to define the economic health of the business community, and if there is a good way to test the link between form of government and business climate. Chair Miller requested Committee Member Brackett work with Mr. Gerrity to see if there is obvious link that could be used.

Committee Member Merritt discussed his definition of politically responsive/accountability, stating it is acting in the best interest of your constituents. Discussion ensued regarding how this plays differently depending on the form of government, and the potential link to the balance of power.

Committee Member Merritt then reviewed his definition of diversity, noting Oregon has an Office of Equity and Inclusions. Discussion followed regarding whether there is a way to distinguish whether this is impacted by the form of government.

Committee Member Edmonds reviewed her definition of power of the people, noting it is how people are engaged or involved in government. Discussion followed regarding initiatives, referendums, the link with the form of government, district representations, term limits, and neighborhood councils.

Committee Member Baarsma reviewed strategic/visionary capacity within leadership versus management. Discussion ensued regard who should be making transactional and transformative decisions for the city.

Committee Member Baarsma discussed twin cities. Discussion followed regarding getting a set of 10-15 twin cities. Chair Miller stated he would share a cluster of cities with the group.

Committee Member Van Dyk reviewed the definition of a fiscally responsible structure. Discussion ensued regarding the correlation of a city's bond rating and the form of government, and whether there is a measure used by the Auditor to rate the fiscal responsibility of a city. Chair Miller stated he would work with Committee Member Van Dyk on this research.

Committee Member Van Dyk then discussed corruption and how best this could be measured. Discussion followed regarding potentially looking at local official indictments.

Chair Miller briefly discussed the population/demographic criteria. Discussion followed regarding whether there is a correlation between the form of government and the ethnic mix of a city or the poverty of a city. Chair Miller stated he will continue his analysis on this item.

Chair Miller requested waiting to review Committee Member Messina's definitions until he returns.

Chair Miller then stated it seems the choice of the form of government comes down to a matter of political philosophy rather than any objective data. He noted the subcommittee preliminary reports are due to the Charter Review Committee on March 24, 2014. He then stated Committee Members need to be ready to discuss the correlation between their criteria and the form of government, just as they will to the Charter Review Committee, next week. He noted there may be a need to hold a special meeting next week to finish this discussion prior to presenting to the Charter Review Committee. Committee Members Van Dyk, Baarsma, Miller, and Merritt would be prepared to discuss their items on Monday. Chair Miller stated he would contact Committee Member Messina directly. He then noted those members who do not present their items on Monday will need to discuss them at the special meeting. Discussion ensued regarding whether it would be possible for Mr. Gerrity to run an econometric by March 24, 2014, availability of the interns over the next few weeks, and the report to the Charter Review Committee.

**Discuss Possible Committee Theme Song**

Chair Miller removed this item from the agenda.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Committee Comments**

None.

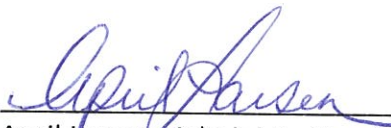
**Adjournment**

On proper motion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.



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Ken Miller, Chair



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April Larsen, Administrative Assistant