

**Charter Review Commission Meeting
Regular Session
August 30, 2023**

The Charter Review Commission for Dorchester County convened in Open Session in Room 110 of the County Office Building at 6:25 p.m. on the 30th day of August 2023. A roll call of the members was conducted. Present in Room 110 were: Glenn Bramble; Linda Henry; George “Phillip” Reed; Susan Dukes; Robert Murphy; William Layton; and, Allen Nelson. Also present in Room 110 were Jeff Powell, Interim County Manager; and, Donna F. Lane, Chief of Staff.

REGULAR SESSION

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Board appointed the following:

Chair William Layton
Vice Chair Allen Nelson

ADOPTION OF ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER

The Board adopted the Roberts Rules of Order and established that four Commissioners is a quorum. Mr. Powell stated that a copy of the Roberts Rules of Order will be provided.

APPROVAL OF MEETING SCHEDULE

The Board agreed to meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., reevaluating at the December 20, 2023 meeting, schedule below:

September 6, 2023	September 20, 2023
October 4, 2023	October 18, 2023
November 8, 2023	November 22, 2023
December 6, 2023	December 20, 2023

OTHER

The Board agreed to the use of legal counsel at meetings and by phone, as necessary.

Commissioner Bramble stated that he strongly believes in term limits for all elected officials. Mr. Powell explained that the Board is to evaluate the Charter, not the County Code, and recommendations will be placed on a referendum. In response to Commissioner Nelson’s question, Ms. Lane stated that each change will need to be

adopted by the Council by resolution and she will consult legal counsel to verify if separate ballots are required. Mr. Powell noted that the County Council activated the Charter Review Commission to review the residency requirements of the Finance Director and the County Manager as well as other items that may be addressed as they see necessary. Commissioner Dukes explained that the Board previously reviewed the residency requirement of the County Manager to expand it to surrounding counties on the Eastern Shore but it was not approved.

A discussion ensued regarding the process to identify proposed areas to change in the current Charter. Chairman Layton recommended making a list of all the items that need to be addressed, such as residency requirements and term limits, and reviewing them from top to bottom. Commissioner Dukes suggested reviewing the previous presentation. Mr. Powell stated that a copy of the presentation will be provided at the next meeting. Commissioner Henry explained that the Charter was reviewed section by section by the prior Charter Review Commission members and that they discussed any and all concerns. Ms. Dukes explained that requests were sent to the County Department Heads, the Acting County Manager and the County Council seeking their anonymous comments regarding the County Charter. She said some of the items they addressed were based on the feedback that was received anonymously.

Ms. Lane noted that: 1) the board will be placed on the County's website, maintained by staff; 2) she will manage a dedicated email address for the board; and, 3) advertisements will also be managed by staff.

In response to Mr. Reed's inquiry, Mr. Powell stated that a legal opinion is needed prior to going into Closed Session. Ms. Lane said she will obtain legal counsel's opinion.

Mr. Powell stated how competitive the job market is, which makes it difficult to find qualified applicants for the Finance Director and County Manager positions within the County limits. Mr. Nelson stated that secondary residences are common when commuting long distances to work. Mr. Powell said applicants may be vested in the community, even though they do not live in the County. He added that the real estate market is also a factor when requiring a candidate to move within six months.

Mr. Powell expressed his belief the most important job of the County Council is filling the County Manager position and allowing the manager to perform their duties as outlined in the Charter. Commissioner Dukes concurred, expressing that micromanaging needs to be addressed, along with a supermajority.

Pursuant to Commissioner Bramble's statement, Commissioner Murphy opined that a "reasonable distance" should not be used when determining the residency of an applicant. Commissioner Allen reiterated his example of a secondary residence and stated that the wording use is critical.

Commissioner Bramble expressed his opinion that the City of Cambridge property and business owners that do not live within City limits should be allowed to vote, which could be applied to the County.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned.


ATTEST:



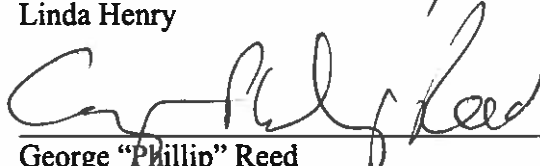
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION




Glenn Bramble




Linda Henry



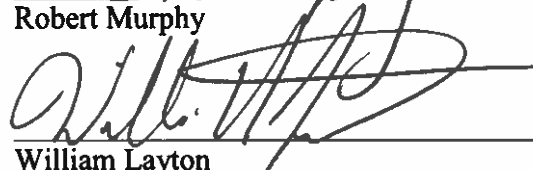
George "Phillip" Reed



Susan Dukes



Robert Murphy



William Layton



Allen Nelson

Approved the ___ day of _____ 2023.