

Charter Review Commission Meeting
Regular Session
November 15, 2023

The Charter Review Commission for Dorchester County convened in Open Session in Room 110 of the County Office Building at 6:10 p.m. on the 15th day of November, 2023.

A roll call of the members was conducted. Present in Room 110 were: William Layton, Chair; Linda Henry; Susan Dukes; George “Phillip” Reed, Glenn Bramble and, Robert Murphy. Also present in Room 110 was Donna F. Lane, Chief of Staff.

REGULAR SESSION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission approved the minutes of November 1, 2023.

REVIEW OF SECTIONS OF CURRENT COUNTY CHARTER

Proposed Article 4, Section 606, Governmental Transparency.

The Commission: 1) discussed the language Allen Nelson, Member, provided for the addition of Section 606, Government Transparency in Article 4 of the Charter; and, 2) agreed to ask the Council to pursue the addition of this Section as a Charter Amendment.

Section 606, Government Transparency

To promote broad public knowledge and understanding about its conduct and operations and have informed participation of citizens in its policy and decision-making processes, the County Government shall provide comprehensive public information about its affairs in a timely and convenient manner:

(a) Furnish public access:

- 1) By broadcast and other remote means such as the Internet to all public meetings, legislative meetings and other public sessions of the County Council.
- 2) Provide public access to any documents, upon request, including items submitted during the meeting, the agenda and all documents, as permitted by law, reasonably in advance of such meetings and thereafter.
- 3) Promptly upon approval (if required), the minutes of such meetings and the summary of Closed Sessions shall be posted on a bulletin board in a public place or multiple places specified by the Council, together with each resolution passed and bill enacted during the meeting.

- (b) Such other practices as the Council may prescribe.

Proposed Revision- Article 4, Subsection 405(c), The Executive Branch

The Commission agreed to revise Subsection 405(c) as highlighted and ask the Council to pursue this change as a Charter amendment.

The County Manager may be suspended by and removed by the Council pursuant to an initial resolution setting forth the reason(s), which need not constitute cause. The County Manager shall have 10 days after receiving a copy of the signed resolution to request in writing a hearing by the Council delivered to the Councils Office and Human Resources. A hearing by the Council must occur within not less than 10 days and no more than 20 days after such delivery. The County Manager may request the hearing to be at a public meeting. Following the deadline for such request and the hearing, if requested, the Council may adopt a final resolution removing the County Manager by a majority vote of its entire membership. Unless so removed within 30 days after he or she receives the initial resolution, the County Manager shall continue to serve, and any suspension terminated. If suspended, the County Manager shall receive full salary and other compensation, which shall continue until the effective date of the final resolution if he or she is terminated.

Proposed Revision-Article 4, Subsection 405(d), The Executive Branch

The Commission agreed to revise Subsection 405(d) as highlighted and ask the Council to pursue this change as a Charter amendment.

- (6) The Council shall fill the vacancy within six months, provided that period may be extended for up to three additional, consecutive months by resolution. If the County Manager position is not filled within six months, the Council must hire and pay for the expenses of a recruitment company to find qualified applicants.

Proposed Addition-Article 2, Section 206,

After a discussion, the Commission agreed to ask the Council to consider amending the Charter to add County Council term limits utilizing the language below. Ms. Dukes, Ms. Henry and Mr. Murphy opposed.

- (b) No person shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive terms on the County Council. A person who has been elected to the County Council three times or who has been elected to the County Council twice and has been appointed to fill a Council vacancy and served two or more years of that term shall be ineligible to be a candidate for the County Council. This Section shall become effective December of 2026.

OTHER

The Commission agreed to: 1) provide all of its proposed Charter Amendments recommendations to legal counsel for review; 2) hold its next meeting when legal counsel is available; and, 3) meet on December 13, 2023 in lieu of December 20, 2023 if legal counsel is able to attend that meeting.

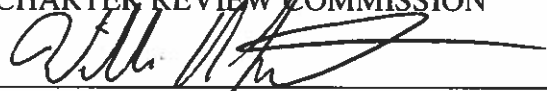
ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned.

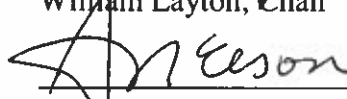
ATTEST:




CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION



William Layton, Chair



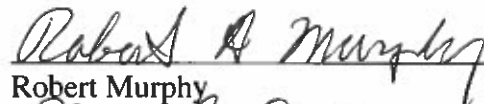
Allen Nelson, Vice Chair



George "Phillip" Reed



Susan Dukes



Robert Murphy



Glenn Bramble



Linda Henry

Approved the 13th day of December 2023.