

July 12, 2016

To: Charter Review Committee
From: Bill Farver
Re: Appointment Process

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you last week.

At the time, I did not know you had already approved a County Manager referral to voters and were undecided about the appointment and supervision process. I should have been clearer in how I answered your questions.

I would treat the hiring and supervision of a County Manager and Appointed Sheriff as the County treats County Department Managers. Voters still elect the County Chair as the Chair of the Board and chief executive. I would view the County Manager as the chief administrative officer or chief operating officer. The Chair should run the recruitment and selection process and forward the nominee for Board approval. (There are many ways to informally and formally involve County Board members, department heads, and others in the selection process that should be left to the Chair's discretion.)

After that, the County Manager would serve at the Chair's discretion, subject to regular performance reviews. If the Board had concerns about the County Manager's performance, they could share them with the Chair, in much the same way they currently can with the performance of Department Managers.

If you start blurring the lines on hiring and supervision between the Chair and Board, I fear you create problems. After serving on Pauline Anderson's staff for eight years, I was hired by the County Board to serve as a "senior" staff to the entire Board. I served in that role for a few months before eventually being hired by Gretchen Kafoury, then a City Council member.

In the role of "Board staff", I tried to work with all Board members on policy matters of joint interest and importance. Problems inevitably came when I received differing directions from different Board members. Without a single point of direction and accountability, the job was not as productive and rewarding as it should have been.

I fear a similar dynamic if the County Manager is hired and serves at the pleasure of the entire Board. I believe that would lead to confusion and potential politicizing of the role.

The strength in a County manager position should come from the training and qualifications the person would bring and the focus on cooperative, efficient administrative practices based on policy direction from the Board and the approved budget.

As to the Sheriff, I can think of no reason why this wouldn't be handle as another Department Head hire. The position is both an advocate for the services he or she supervises and also a member of a team that has the interests of the County at heart. Wearing multiple hats is a skill all Department Managers need to weigh.

I hope this is helpful. I would be happy to clarify or answer questions if that would be helpful,

Bill Farver