

Election and City Governance Task Force Meeting
December 16, 2016
7:30 am

Present: Bruce Furness, Arlette Preston, Jed Limke, Rick Steen, Kevin Wilson.

Absent: Sean Foss, Daryl Ritchison.

Others Present: Steve Sprague, Mike Montplaisir.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bruce Furness.

No agenda was provided for this meeting.

Bruce said he feels this group is having a difficult time getting the issues presented resolved. He said he spent last weekend reading through his packet of information again trying to find what a good solution might be. He said he broke the information into two parts: governance system and the election system. He said he does not believe that the governance system is broken; however, the addition of two Commissioners is a reasonable request. He said the election system is how this whole task force was started and the group has spent quite a bit of discussion time on the approval voting system. He said he spoke with Mike Montplaisir to make sure that voting system is a viable option.

Mike gave a synopsis of the approval voting system. He said it would not require any additional equipment; however, there may need to be some voter education.

In response to a question from Rick questioning how the city would determine how many individuals to vote for, Mike said he thinks there would be a formula in the home rule charter that would spell it out.

Jed said if a voter is restricted in the number of people they are voting for it is no longer considered approval voting. The advantage in approval voting, he said, is that it prevents vote splitting and the taxable voting that causes individuals to have to split their votes.

In response to a question from Arlette as to whether or not what is being presented by the Task Force would require a public vote, Steve said not everything being discussed would require an amendment to the Home Rule Charter as some of the requirements are set by Resolution or Ordinance.

Bruce said he was hopeful there would be a consensus from the group; however, he does not think that is possible now.

Rick said he feels the group has addressed quite a few of the charges the group has been tasked with. The question that still looms, he said, is should there be a run-off vote or not?

Steve said the way run-offs were done previously is no longer feasible due to a change in the law and the military.

Mike said federal law states that absentee ballots have to be sent to military personnel at least 46 days before an election.

In response to a question from Rick questing the best way to handle a run-off election, Steve said the best way to conduct a primary and general election.

Arlette said she would not be in favor of primary and general elections due to the lack of participation from voters.

Jed said he would agree that if the City continues with the current system of voting, a primary and general election run-off is necessary.

Arlette said there is certainly an advantage, from the public standpoint, to conduct the elections the way the county does them.

Mike said the League of Cities was originally going to put in a bill to try to move to a primary/general system for all Cities. He said there was a lot of push back from Counties who run the elections and so they are now looking at conducting a study of that.

Arlette said the remaining questions for the next meeting are primary and general elections, districts vs. at-large voting or a combination of the two and a new voting system.

Bruce said he will present the tasks in a ballot form for the next meeting.

The Meeting adjourned at 8:28 am