

Albany County Charter Review Commission
July 10, 2013
Room 620 Albany County Office Building

Members Present:

Henry M. Greenberg
Bob Batson
Jacob M. Crawford
Willow Baer
Paul Weafer
Antonio Cortes
Patrick O. Dalzell
Ami Schnauber

Others in Attendance:

Bradley Fischer
Patrick Collins
Colleen O'Connor

Mr. Greenberg called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The Commission interviewed Thomas G. Clingan, the Albany County Clerk, regarding his views on Article 16 of the Albany County Charter, which establishes the Department of Records. County Clerk Clingan provided the Commission with a general overview of the daily functions of the Department of Records. The County Clerk proposed for the County to make accessible local laws and resolutions that affect the public. He provided the Commission with general information about General Code, a company that supplies document management and municipal codification, and discussed Dutchess County, who updated their print records and online website to increase public awareness about local laws. The County Clerk also suggested changing the language from “Department of Records” to “Office of the County Clerk.” Lastly, the County Clerk proposed extending the roles of the County Clerk to appointing the County Historian, a position that has been vacant for over six years. The Commission asked the County Clerk questions regarding the accessibility of local laws in addition to the utility of changing the language from “Department of Records” to “Office of the County Clerk.”

The Commission interviewed Evelyn A. Kinnah, the Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources, and Jennifer Clement, the Deputy Commissioner, regarding their views on Article 12 of the Albany County Charter, which establishes the Department of Human Resources. Commissioner Kinnah provided the Commission with a general overview of the daily functions of the Department of Human Resources. Commissioner Kinnah detailed the three divisions that

comprised the Department — the Division of Personnel Services, the Division of Affirmative Action, and the Division of Employee Relations. Commissioner Kinnah did not provide any recommendations for the Charter. The Commission asked Commissioner Kinnah questions regarding the language in the Charter, clarifying that the syntax change from “Division of Labor Relations” to “Division of Employee Relations” as well as change from the “Director of Labor Relations” to the “Director of Employee Relations.” The Commission further sought clarification on the powers and duties of the Human Resources Commissioner, specifically the lack of authority to appoint Directors of the Division of Employee Relations and Affirmative Action, which resides with the County Executive. Commissioner Kinnah responded that with the current method of appointment, the Department of Human Resources receives the most qualified employee for the position. Mr. Weafer inquired about the authority of the Grievance Committee to overturn decisions made by the Department of Human Resources. Commissioner Kinnah and Deputy Commissioner Clement responded that the powers and duties of the Grievance Committee were codified under the personnel manual, the Albany County Rules and Regulations, by the County Legislature.

The Commission interviewed Michael Cummings, the Director of Civil Service, regarding his views on Article 12A of the Albany County Charter, which establishes the Department of Civil Service. Director Cummings provided the Commission with a general overview of the daily functions of the Department of Civil Service. Director Cummings provided the Commission with recommendations to Article 26 and distributed a handout detailing those changes. He further provided that he had no recommendations for the Charter pertaining to Article 12.

The Commission interviewed John T. Evers, the Commissioner of the Department of General Services, regarding his views on Article 7A of the Albany County Charter, which establishes the Department of General Services. Commissioner Evers provided the Commission with a general overview of the daily functions of the Department of General Services and distributed a handout detailing the functions of the Department of General Services. Commissioner Evers discussed the need for clarification of the County Division of Weights and Measures, which appears both in Article 7A, § A704 and in Article 20, § 2003.

Mr. Weafer reported on Article 17 concerning the District Attorney, raising the compensation issue and the need to clarify appointment power.

Ms. Baer reported on Article 24A concerning the Department for Children, Youth & Families, raising the issue of Section 802(d) of the Charter concerning the power to hire attorneys as a continuing issue.

Mr. Collins reported on the certified copy of the Albany County Charter and provided the Local Law of 1993 that created the current Albany County Charter as well as all the amendments and local laws since 1993.

The Commission agreed to divide up the reports. Mr. Greenberg will be responsible for the County Clerk’s office. The Department of General Services and the Department of Public Works are assigned to Mr. Batson, and Mr. Cortes will be responsible for the Department of

Human Resources and the Department of Civil Service. Furthermore, Ms. Baer and Ms. Schnauber will work together as a subcommittee for solving working issues. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Batson, which motion was seconded by Ms. Schnauber and unanimously approved.