

Meeting Minutes - Governmental Task Force (7/24/13)

Present:

Marilyn Coffey
Jim Marshall
Bill Wadsworth
Jack Schrauth
Tom Shaw
Pastor Cole

Excused:

Kelly Allen

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- ✓ Jim Marshall
- ✓ Pastor Cole
- ✓ Unanimously approved.

Question related to vote on Referendum and what would happen with different forms of Government?

- The Task Force does not want to end up with the defacto "Mayor-Council" Form of Government

General discussion as to the options for a referendum.

- If a "Council-Manager" was to be adopted, does the "Commission" form have to be eliminated first? The answer is, "No." A referendum could be placed on the ballot to adopt the "Council-Manager" form of government without a referendum eliminating the "Commission" form of government. If this happened, certain elements of the "Commission" form would remain. This is very complicated and will take more research from the City Attorney's Office.
- Tom Shaw liked the idea of the ultimate decision between the "Commission" form and the "Council-Manager" form be left to the voters.
- Marilyn does not think that the recommendation of the Task Force should be determined on whether or not the referendum could pass.
- Attorney Lesage had previously stated that if the "Commission" form of government is eliminated, the entire Code Book would have to be re-done at a large cost to the City.

General discussions about different forms of government, with a general agreement that in any form of government, it is about the people.

General discussion and thoughts on Pro's and Con's of the 2 types of government ("Commission-Administrator" vs. "Council-Manager")

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Should we focus on the two types of government and which is the best for Dixon. Then decided how to accomplish it:

This could be done in 1 of 2 ways:

2 Ballot Questions:

- Eliminate “Commission” form
- Adopt “Council-Manager” form

1 Ballot Question:

- Overlay “Council-Manager” form on “Commission” form

PROS AND CONS AS DETERMINED BY TASK FORCE:

“COMMISSION-ADMINISTRATOR”:

(Authority by Ordinance)

Pros:

- Duties of Administrator are flexible / determined by Council
- Hiring / Firing of Department Heads by majority of Council vote in an open public meeting
- Small number of elected officials on Council
- Fast Acting / Quick Decisions on Economic Development
- More Citizen Input (Ordinances must be placed on file for 7 days)

Cons:

- Cannot have geographic representation via “Wards”
- No qualifications for elected officials who have executive authority over specific departments.
- Potential for 2 "Bosses"
- Every member of the Council is elected in the same election (Can result in an entirely new Council at one time)

“COUNCIL-MANAGER”:

(Authority established by State Statute)

Pros:

- Encourages more Candidates (Not responsible for specific departments)
- Clear "Chain of Command" (Department Heads report to City Manager)
- Possibility of geographic representation of City through “Wards”
- Separate Policy and Executive Authority
- Can reduce "day to day" politics in City operations
- Only a portion of the Council is elected at one time. No possibility of an entirely new Council at once
- State Statute authority for City Manager Duties are certain and stable and can only be changed through a referendum. This would result in a different form of government.

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- The potential to have more qualified applicants apply for the City Manager position.
- If a referendum is passed by the Citizens of Dixon, it shows there is clear majority support for this form of government.
- It takes a referendum to abolish the “Council-Manager” form of Government

Cons:

- State determines minimum authority of City Manager
- To much power of 1 person to hire / fire Department Heads
- Potential for Council to become less engaged
- Could reduce power of / responsiveness to the Citizens

Public Comment:

Li Arrellano

- Influence of Council
 - Determined by Manager's style
- Cons for Council Manager:
 - Can be hard to contact and access by the citizens
 - Sterling reputation that citizens have a tough time contacting the City Manager
 - I “know it best” attitude. I have training and you don't. A lack of accountability to the people.
- Rochelle clearly has a few advantages
 - Is the focus on serving the citizens or the city government
 - Portions of citizenry have less power / influence in the “Manager” form
- Managers hold incredible sway over the Council
 - Seen many councils defer to Manager to set policy as well
 - Especially after turnover
 - Can make elected officials lazy and comfortable, reducing representation
- Representation for citizens is diminished through a City Manager. People start to lose the power / have less power.
- Can create a lazy council.
- Manager does not care as much about the people.
- Managers control flow of information to the city council.

Tom Shaw:

- “Commissioner-Administrator” is like remodeling our home
- “Council-Manager” is like tearing down your house and rebuilding from new

Meeting on Monday night for public comment - 6:30 p.m.

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Determination of final meeting for deliberations on - August 7 @ 9:00 a.m

Email list

Motion to Adjourn:

- ✓ Jim Marshall
- ✓ Tom Shaw