



## LANE COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

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Date/Time: Thursday, September 28, 2023 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Location: Board of County Commissioners' Conference Room  
Public Service Building – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 125 East 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, Eugene

Virtual Option: Join on your computer, mobile app or room device via Microsoft Teams

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### Members:

Ben Clark

Steve Cornacchia

Sarai Johnson

Jenny Jonak

Morgan Munro

Stefan Ostrach

Jeremy Sherer

### Agenda

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Introductions
- 3) Public Comment
- 4) Emergency Business
- 5) Approval of Minutes from September 14 and September 22, 2023
- 6) Chair/Vice Chair Update
- 7) Charter Provisions Discussion
- 8) Charter Review Committee Report
- 9) Charter Review Committee Presentation
- 10) Recommendations for 2034 Charter Review Committee
- 11) Other

**Next Meeting: Thursday, October 12, 3:00pm-5:00pm**



## CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes – September 14, 2023, 3:00 PM

Board of County Commissioners' Conference Room Public Service Building – 2nd Floor, 125 East 8th Ave, Eugene and virtually, via Microsoft Teams

Regular Members:			
x	Morgan Munro; Chair	x	Steve Cornacchia
x	Stefan Ostrach; Vice Chair	x	Jeremy Sherer
x	Jenny Jonak	x	Ben Clark
	Sarai Johnson		

Present: In Person: Chair Morgan Munro, Vice Chair Stefan Ostrach, Steve Cornacchia, Jeremy Sherer, Ben Clark.

Online: Jenny Jonak.

Staff: Jenna Cusimano, Judy Williams.

Guests: Linda Lynch, League of Women Voters.

1. Call to Order:

Chair Munro called the Lane County Charter Review Committee (CRC) meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

2. Introductions:

Everyone in attendance stated their name and affiliation.

3. Public Comment:

Freddi Weishahn, on behalf of League of Women Voters of Lane County (LWV), submitted a written letter of appreciation to the CRC for their service. Weishahn highlighted LWV's stance on a few key issues. 1. Their support for adding a redistricting committee to the Lane County Charter. 2. Their belief that existing election district labels for Lane County Commissioners have proven limiting and misleading over time due to population growth and decline in specific districts. 3. They encourage the committee to examine the Charter for potentially outdated provisions, referencing, as an example, Chapter VII, Section 33, regarding East Alton Baker Park.

4. Emergency Business

No business.

5. Approval of Minutes from August 25, 2023

Chair Munro requested a change to the meeting minutes on page 7, paragraph 4, sentence 7. In the draft, the sentence reads, “If people were concerned about rural representation, the math did not add up to have chunks of the Eugene-Springfield area.”

Munro requested that the sentence be amended to read, “If people were concerned about rural representation, the math did not add up to have chunks excluded from the district as described.”

**The motion to approve the amended August 25, 2023 meeting minutes passed unanimously, 6:0.**

#### 6. Chair/Vice Chair Update

Chair Munro requested an update from Ms. Cusimano regarding scheduling.

Ms. Cusimano reported that staff met with the Chair and Vice Chair and determined that there is a desire to hold an after-action CRC meeting on Thursday, October 12, 2023 following the presentation to the Board of Lane County Commissioners at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 10, 2023.

Linda Lynch entered the meeting at 3:06 p.m.

Ms. Cusimano stated that the next upcoming CRC meetings are scheduled for September 22, 2023, and September 28, 2023. She noted that the meeting on September 28 is scheduled for 2:00 p.m.

#### 7. Charter Provisions Discussion

##### a. Section 10. (3) (d) Redistricting

Vice Chair Ostrach introduced the topic of redistricting and opened the floor to questions.

Mr. Sherer posed the question what it is that the CRC is trying to do by calling it an independent redistricting committee? He asked for the definition of independent in the context of redistricting.

Mr. Clark responded to Mr. Sherer’s question by sharing his perspective that his definition of independent in the context of redistricting means not drawing lines of political boundaries that would benefit one party at the detriment of another, so district boundaries that are independent of that; and the drawing of district boundaries that don’t create a benefit for another.

Mr. Sherer responded that while it is great to be independent, he questions how to keep politicians accountable, noting that politics are inherent in a redistricting committee.

Judy Williams entered the meeting at 3:14 p.m.

Mr. Cornacchia stated that there is someone or something to oversee accountability, but it is at the end of the process, rather than the start, referencing the judicial system.

Vice Chair Ostrach shared his perspective that prior to the judicial system there is also accountability in terms of public input, equal population mandates, contiguous districts, transparency in the process, etc.

Mr. Clark added his viewpoint that how the commissioners are appointed is very important, but [the commissioners] can still be independent of the people whose districts are being drawn. He said that is where the distinction is very clear, that politicians draw their own lines that get them reelected.

Chair Munro urged the committee to transition into discussion, prompting Mr. Cornacchia to share his perspective.

Mr. Cornacchia offered that he is interested in selecting committee members on the basis their background and qualifications, rather than selecting committee members on what he perceives is based on the premise of fighting institutional racism, wherein electing members with specific, marginalized backgrounds.

Chair Munro suggested that Mr. Cornacchia read through the latest version of the redistricting draft as he may find the language to be more refined and less vague than the previous draft. Mr. Cornacchia agreed to read the latest, updated version.

Mr. Sherer questioned if the language was already in code.

Chair Munro clarified that the language is already in code, and that the question is to take action to elevate a portion code into the charter, while leaving a significant portion of the detail to code.

Vice Chair Ostrach offered that a lot of it parallels the code, but it's not identical to the code, stating that in the code it's not independent commissioners at the final say. He added that the descriptions of the districts are slightly different and the emphasis is on the position number rather than a geographical name.

Mr. Sherer emphasized that as he understands, with the new, proposed draft code, they are taking out the board and replacing it with another independent, impartial board.

Ms. Williams left the meeting at 3:24 p.m.

Regarding redrawing district boundaries, Mr. Cornacchia stated that committees have no personal accountability, but that commissioners have a personal interest in doing things ethically and appropriately.

Mr. Clark retorted that while many commissioners are driven by ethical desires, other people historically have exemplified unethical behavior across the political spectrum.

Ms. Williams entered the meeting at 3:27 p.m.

Chair Munro pointed out sections d and e stating that she changed some areas of the document for clarity. The first change begins with the sentence that reads "every ten years..." Chair Munro added "in conjunction with the release of federal census data."

The second change was to the statement “when it becomes available.” Chair Munro was concerned that the language would prohibit the committee from beginning their work, or research, until the census data becomes available.

The third change was adding the language “The application process shall be laid out in Lane County.”

In reference to the statement “After holding at least ten public hearings...” Chair Munro questioned if the hearings are coming after the maps have been decided?

She added in section e 3 that they would hold ten public meetings to maximize access.

Mr. Cornacchia asked Ms. Williams where the funding for said committee comes from.

Ms. Williams responded by saying that it is budgeted for in different ways, including via the administrator’s budget and the county clerk.

Vice Chair Ostrach requested that the sentence stating “every ten years” be included in section e instead of section d and take out the language that reads “when census data becomes available.”

Vice Chair Ostrach stated that what he thinks the committee should be doing in the meeting is making the big decisions, about whether they want to propose a committee that is independent of the commissioners, and whether they want to do the descriptions of the districts. The big questions are, should the redistricting committee be independent of the Board of Commissioners? Should the descriptions of the districts be revised?

Mr. Cornacchia asked for clarification regarding the upcoming presentation to the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Cusimano responded by saying that staff determined in a discussion with County Counsel that the committee would in fact be making their final recommendations to the Board of Commissioners, however the wordsmithing could happen after.

Chair Munro agreed with Ms. Cusimano’s statement, adding that the language should be as clear as possible when presented in the report to the Board of Commissioners.

Chair Munro urged the committee to address Section 10. (3) (c) Commissioner Election Districts.

b. Section 10. (3) (c) Commissioner Election Districts

Vice Chair Ostrach described the districts as they are currently mapped, adding that concerning Eugene, the north/south distinctions are not necessarily how they should be divided and, if appropriate, the remapping would be left to the districting committee. He added additionally that the emphasis is on the redistricting number rather than the geographical description because those are going to change over time.

Mr. Cornacchia offered a suggestion regarding Commissioner Election Districts to change the language from Eugene Metro to Eugene-Springfield Metro. He added that he believes the current districts are clear and that [the proposal] is an erosion of the concept of the five districts.

Mr. Sherer questioned why there is a proposal to get rid of the current districts if everyone is so used to it.

Chair Munro responded that after having gone through the most recent redistricting process, a challenge the committee had was parsing the importance of the name of the district, in addition to the description of the district. For example, at what point Eugene becomes north or south became a challenging piece, given everything, and with the goal of having equally portioned districts. She offered that for her [the proposal] solves an issue that she has been considering for a long time. She pointed out that at this point there are portions which an everyday person would classify as Eugene in all five districts, due to the urban growth boundaries. She believes that it is at the point where providing the next redistricting committee with the current charter language is an impossible task and that the proposed language honors the five districts, the goals of outside the metro area, recognizes the Eugene piece as separate, and has a shot of making plausible redistricting opportunities.

Mr. Sherer offered a suggestion to keep the language the same except for the metro areas. Concerning the Eugene district he suggested having them read district one/two instead of north/south.

Chair Munro responded that naming conventions in such a manner can be confusing.

The committee took a five-minute break and reconvened at 4:20 p.m.

Mr. Sherer offered a suggestion to give each district a name or number.

Chair Munro clarified that that is reflected already, for example Position 1 is District 1.

MOTION: Vice Chair Ostrach made a motion to adopt Section 10. (3) (c) Commissioner Election Districts as drafted to be included in the packet substituting the word district for the word position. Mr. Clark seconded the motion.

Mr. Sherer proposed a motion amendment to keep the name attached to the district, for example, West Lane County District 1. The motion did not get seconded.

MOTION: Vice Chair Ostrach made motion **to adopt Section 10. (3) (c) Commissioner Election Districts as drafted to be included in the packet substituting the word district for the word position.** Mr. Clark seconded the motion. **The motion passed (4,2).** In favor: Chair Munro, Vice Chair Ostrach, Ms. Jonak, Mr. Clark. Opposed: Mr. Cornacchia and Mr. Sherer.

Discussion about language preferences ensued regarding Section 10 d and e.

MOTION: Vice Chair Ostrach made a motion to recommend adoption of changes to d and e as reflected, substituting must for shall in sub section d. Ms. Jonak seconded the motion.

Mr. Clark proposed a motion amendment regarding language in section e 2.

MOTION: Vice Chair Ostrach made **a motion to recommend adoption of changes to d and e as reflected, substituting ‘must’ for ‘shall’ in sub section d; and amending language in section e 2 as proposed.** Ms. Jonak seconded the motion. **The motion passed (4,2).** In favor: Chair Munro, Vice Chair Ostrach, Ms. Jonak, Mr. Clark. Opposed: Mr. Cornacchia and Mr. Sherer.

c. Campaign Finance

There was CONSENSUS to table the Campaign Finance discussion.

Jenna Cusimano left the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

d. Section 34 INCOME TAX CAP

MOTION: Mr. Cornacchia made a motion for the Income Tax Cap to be included in the section that requests that these things be considered in the future. Seconded by Mr. Sherer.

Vice Chair Ostrach expressed his opposition to the motion, stating that it should be read in its entirety.

Mr. Clark shared his perspective that he believes the Income Tax Cap is not relevant to the charter document itself.

MOTION: Mr. Cornacchia made **a motion for the Income Tax Cap to be included in the section that requests things be considered in the future.** Seconded by Mr. Sherer. **The motion failed (1,5).** In favor: Ms. Jonak. Opposed: Chair Munro, Vice Chair Ostrach, Mr. Clark, Mr. Sherer, Mr. Cornacchia.

MOTION: Vice Chair Ostrach made **a motion to remove Section 34 Income Tax Cap in its entirety from the charter.** Seconded by Mr. Clark. **The motion passed (4,2).** In favor: Chair Munro, Vice Chair Ostrach, Mr. Clark, Mr. Sherer. Opposed: Ms. Jonak, Mr. Cornacchia.

e. Section 27 NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF COUNTY OFFICERS

Chair Munro introduced the topic of discussion, posing two questions, 1. "Should anyone who is currently elected instead be moved to be an appointed officer? 2. "Should we add people to the list of who's directing?"

She specified that currently county commissioners, sheriff, and assessor are all elected positions.

MOTION: Vice Chair Ostrach made **a motion that the committee recommends no changes to the direct election of county commissioners, sheriff, and assessor.** Seconded by Mr. Cornacchia. **The motion passed unanimously (6,0).**

MOTION: Mr. Clark made **a motion for the discussion of additional elected positions be included in the section that recommends things to be considered in the future.** Seconded by Vice Chair Ostrach. **The motion passed (5,1).** In favor: Chair Munro, Vice Chair Ostrach, Ms. Jonak, Mr. Sherer, Mr. Clark. Opposed: Mr. Cornacchia.

f. Tracking Rubric Items

Chair Munro introduced the topic of the renaming of Lane County.

MOTION: Chair Munro **made a motion that the question of the renaming of Lane County be included in the section of the report that states the topic warrants further study and is left to the commissioners to decide.** Seconded by Vice Chair Ostrach. **The motion passed (4,2).** In

favor: Chair Munro, Vice Chair Ostrach, Ms. Jonak, Mr. Clark. Opposed: Mr. Sherer and Mr. Cornacchia.

8. Staff Input on Potential Charter Revisions

- a. Discussion of Prior Presentations: Steve Mokrohisky, County Administrator
- b. Tracking Rubric

9. Specific Topic Requests for Staff

10. Other

The next meeting CRC is scheduled for Friday, September 22, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Chair Munro adjourned the meeting at 5:12 p.m.

*(Minutes recorded by Terah Van Dusen, LCOG)*

DRAFT



# Draft Report to the Board of Commissioners

October 10, 2023

## Committee Members

Morgan H. Munro - Chair  
Commissioner Trieger - Appointee

Stefan Ostrach - Vice Chair  
Commissioner Berney - Appointee

Steve Cornacchia  
Commissioner Bozievich - Appointee

Ben Clark  
Commissioner Farr - Appointee

Jenny Jonak  
Commissioner Buch - Appointee

Sarai Johnson  
At Large

Kevin Cronin (through July 10, 2023)  
Jeremy Sherer (from July 18, 2023)  
At Large



# Executive Summary

The Lane County Charter Review Committee was established pursuant to the Lane County Charter, Section 35 to review the current charter and report back to the Board of County Commissioners no later than October 11, 2023.

The initial committee of five members appointed by each of the County Commissioners first met on November 2, 2022. At this meeting, the five initial committee members discussed the applicants to the committee and recommended two candidates to serve as at-large members. The County Commissioners appointed these members to the committee. The seated committee met to review and update the Charter Review Committee Bylaws. The Bylaws were approved by the Board of Commissioners on February 28, 2022. At this February meeting, the Board of Commissioners were also presented a work plan for the Charter Review Committee. In July 2023, at-large committee member Kevin Cronin resigned and the Board of Commissioners appointed Jeremy Sherer to serve in that at-large committee seat.

The Committee sought input from the general public, as well as County staff. The Committee hosted public comment opportunities at every meeting and convened two community-wide surveys. County staff members who presented to the committee include: Lane County Administrator, Steve Mokrohisky; Lane County Sheriff, Cliff Harrold; Lane County Assessor, Mary Vuksich-Shafer; Lane County Clerk, Dena Dawson; Lane County Policy Director, Steve Adams; Lane County Equity Manager, Latiffe Amado; and Lane County Budget Manager, Christine Moody. County staff did not identify any Charter provision which was adversely limiting administrative options but did identify Charter provisions they found outdated.

The Committee's report consists of Issue Papers written on each of the issues voted on during the review of the Charter. Committee recommendations fall into the following categories:

1. Charter amendments recommended for placement before voters. These are issues for which the Committee recommends that ballot measures be developed.

Issue #1: Section 10.3.c, Revise the titles and descriptions of Commissioner Districts

Issue #2: Sections 10.3.d and 10.3.e, Revise the Redistricting process and establish the Independent Redistricting Committee in the Charter

Issue #3: Repeal Section 32: Spending Limitation

Issue #4: Repeal Section 33: East Alton Baker Park

Issue #5: Repeal Section 34: Income Tax Cap

Issue #6: Section 35: Revise the Charter Review Committee

2. Issues which are recommended not to be pursued. These are issues which the Committee considered and decided not to recommend changes.

Issue #7: Section 4: should Eugene be retained as the County seat

Issue #8: Section 14: should the Chair of the Board of Commissioners continue to be selected by Commissioners or instead by direct election

Issue #9: 26: should the Charter retain Section 26: Merit System

3. Issues which the Committee felt may warrant further study. The committee determined that these issues would warrant further study before any recommendations could be made.

- A. Issue #10: Whether campaign finance limits should be established
- B. Issue #11: Section 1: Whether to retain the county name
- C. Issue #12: Section 19: Whether to change which positions are directly elected and which are appointed
- D. Issue #13: Whether some means of ranked choice voting should be adopted

It should be noted that because of a Charter required deadline of October 11, 2023 for submission of this report, there has been no opportunity for public input regarding any of the recommendations contained in this Report prior to publishing the Report. The Charter explicitly contemplates up to two years of service for the Committee, so the Committee is ready and willing to follow up on issues as requested by the County Commissioners.

## **Overall Recommendations**

The Committee recommends that County legal staff be directed to review this report and committee recommendations.

The Committee believes that additional effort on this undertaking may be warranted and stands ready to extend its service at the behest of the Board of Commissioners.

# 2023 Charter Review Committee

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## Issue Paper #1: Section 10.3.c

**Issue:** Whether the geographic titles and descriptions of County Commissioner Districts should be retained or amended

**Discussion:** In the most recent redistricting effort concerns were raised by multiple committee members that due to highly concentrated population growth within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), the current Commissioner District definitions within the Charter were increasingly challenging to follow while also honoring state and federal requirements. Lane County CRC member Munro provided background information that the Independent Redistricting Committee expressed concern with both the titles of the Commissioner Districts as well as the definitions provided within the Charter.

The CRC members generally agreed upon the importance of retaining the intent of preserving commissioner representation from outside of the Eugene/Springfield metro area. The committee also generally acknowledged that due to population growth being concentrated within the UGB that portions of the Eugene/Springfield metro had been included in each of the five Commissioner districts. The CRC also heard from community members who were confused about the naming conventions of the Commissioner districts.

**Recommendation:** The Committee recommends that Commissioner Districts be identified solely by number and that geographic references be removed from district titles. The CRC further recommends that district definitions be revised as follows:

### Section 10: Membership, Election, and Tenure

(3) The board of county commissioners shall be elected as follows.

(c) For the purpose of this Section, metropolitan area shall be defined as the area within the urban growth boundaries of Eugene and Springfield. The following election districts shall be established from which the commissioners shall be elected:

- (i) District No. 1, generally comprised of western Lane County outside the metropolitan area, but also including contiguous portions of the County as necessary to comply with subsection (d).
- (ii) District No. 2, generally comprised of the Springfield metropolitan area, but also including contiguous portions of the County as necessary to comply with subsection (d).
- (iii) District No. 3, generally comprised of a portion of the Eugene metropolitan area, but also including contiguous portions of the County as necessary to comply with subsection (d).
- (iv) District No. 4, generally comprised of a portion of the Eugene metropolitan area, but also including contiguous portions of the County as necessary to comply with subsection (d).

(v) District No. 5, generally comprised of eastern Lane County outside the metropolitan area, but also including contiguous portions of the County as necessary to comply with subsection (d).

## Issue Paper #2: Sections 10.3.d and 10.3.e

**Issues:** Whether to add an Independent Redistricting Committee (IRC) to the redistricting process and whether to limit how often redistricting may occur

**Background:** In 2021, an Independent Redistricting Committee (IRC) was adopted by ordinance and established in Lane Code. Each redistricting cycle, the IRC is tasked with bringing forward 2-4 recommended maps to the Board of Commissioners and then the Board selects one of the recommended maps.

The Charter states that "The board of commissioners shall, not less than every 10 years, initiate review of the population densities of each district and boundaries when necessary." This allows for the possibility of multiple redistricting efforts within each decennial.

**Discussion:** The Committee discussed the merits of enshrining an IRC within the Charter versus leaving the IRC entirely within Lane Code. Additionally, there was much discussion about where the authority and responsibility for redistricting should reside. The Charter assigns the work of redistricting to the Board of Commissioners, and the Commissioners have recently tasked the IRC with drafting recommended maps while reserving for the Board of Commissioners the task of determining which map to move forward.

The committee was split on this topic with a majority in support of these recommendations and a minority in opposition. Those in opposition were interested in fully retaining the responsibility and authority for redistricting with the Board of Commissioners and maintaining the IRC within Lane Code.

**Recommendation:** The Committee recommends replacing Sections 10.3.d and 10.3.e with the following:

d) In accordance with Federal, State, or County census figures, the boundaries of the five districts shall be drawn so as not to deny any person equal protection of the law. Every 10 years, in conjunction with the release of Federal Census Data, the board of commissioners shall initiate a review of the population of each district and determine if a modification of boundaries is necessary to ensure equal protection under the law. If so, an Independent Redistricting Committee shall be convened. No boundary creation, position designation, or boundary change shall disqualify a commissioner from completing the term of office to which that commissioner was elected or appointed.

e) Each Independent Redistricting Committee (IRC) shall be established as follows:

- i) The IRC shall be composed of fifteen (15) Regular and three (3) Alternate members.
- ii) The application process shall be laid out in Lane Code. From the applicant pool, each commissioner will select one (1) member to serve as a Regular member of the IRC. The five (5) directly appointed Regular members will select the remaining ten (10) Regular and three (3) Alternate committee members from the applicant pool.

- iii) The IRC will hold at least ten (10) public meetings at times and locations that will reasonably maximize access for all county residents to participate.
- iv) The IRC will prepare at least two (2) but not more than four (4) proposed redistricting plans. The proposed plans must comply with relevant laws relating to redistricting and voting rights. Following a series of no fewer than five (5) public meetings, the IRC will select one (1) plan.
- v) The Board of Commissioners must adopt the plan selected by the IRC in the form of an ordinance. District boundaries shall be adopted at least six months prior to any election for which they are to be effective.



## Issue Paper #3: Section 32

**Issue:** Should Section 32: Spending Limitation be removed in full

**Background:** Section 32: Spending Limitation was established prior to current state laws and practices that govern spending by the county. Additionally, many terms used within this section are out of date and have shifted in meaning since this provision was included in the Charter.

**Discussion:** The Committee discussed this provision and determined that this section serves no modern purpose for the County. Additionally, the County is out of compliance with some elements of this provision as they are past practices that are no longer applicable. The committee agreed that this provision serves largely as a historical artifact and provides no or minimal value to the county.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined that Section 32: Spending Limitation should be repealed.

*Note: The 2011 Charter Review Committee also recommended that Section 32 (then Section 35) be repealed (see page 25 of the 2011 CRC Report).*

## Issue Paper #4: Section 33

**Issue:** As the County no longer owns or controls East Alton Baker Park should this provision be repealed?

**Background:** This provision about East Alton Baker Park was established when the county still owned this land. This land has been sold to the City of Eugene.

**Discussion:** The Committee discussed repealing this provision and determined that the primary value of retaining this section would be as a historical artifact. As this provision serves little purpose and also with the awareness that developable land within the Urban Growth Boundary may benefit from greater flexibility governing its use, the committee largely agreed that this provision served little purpose for the county.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined that Section 33: East Alton Baker Park should be repealed.

## Issue Paper #5: Section 34

**Issue:** Is there a value to retaining the Income Tax cap when we do not have a county level income tax?

**Background:** This provision of the Charter was established at the same time that a companion provision to create a county level income tax was voted down. Thus, we have a provision that restricts how an income tax would be used but no county level income tax.

**Discussion:** The Committee discussed this provision and determined that there is no current need to restrict how a non-existent tax will be spent. The committee further discussed that any future implementation of an income tax would be best served by the opportunity to define and determine parameters that suit that moment.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined that Section 34: Income Tax Cap should be repealed.

*Note: The 2011 Charter Review Committee also recommended that Section 34 (then Section 37) be repealed (see page 27 of the 2011 CRC Report).*

## Issue Paper #6: Section 35

**Issue:** The dates specified within this provision relate largely to the 2011 Committee and haven't aged well. Additionally, constraining the work of the Charter Review Committee (CRC) to one year limits the effectiveness of this effort.

**Discussion:** The Committee determined that this provision includes very specific historical dates that are unnecessary going forward. The Committee also found that a one year limit on the work of the committee reduced opportunities to engage with the public and seek input as well as reduced opportunities for the committee to engage more deeply with the Charter and possible recommendations.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined that Section 35: Charter Review Committee should be replaced with the following:

Section 35. CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE. Every ten years, beginning in 2034, the Board of County Commissioners shall convene a Charter Review Committee to review the existing charter and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners regarding suggested changes to the Charter.

- (1) Membership. The Charter Review Committee shall consist of seven members. Each member of the Board of County Commissioners shall appoint a member to each subsequent charter review committee by July 1<sup>st</sup> of the year that each subsequent committee is convened. The five members of the committee appointed by the individual commissioners shall nominate additional persons to fill two at-large positions. At-large appointees shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners as a whole. The member of the Committee shall serve at the will of the appointing Commissioner(s), but for no longer than two (2) years from the date of appointment, or until the assigned tasks have been accomplished. Subsequent Charter Review Committees shall be appointed in the same manner every 10 years.
- (2) Timeframe. Members shall immediately begin meeting to review the current Charter, and shall report back to the Board of County Commissioners with recommendations for any suggested changes no later than two years from the date each subsequent committee is convened.

## Issue Paper #7: Section 4

**Issue:** Should Eugene remain the county seat?

**Discussion:** The Committee discussed the potential for moving the county seat out of Eugene. The Committee did not find that there was significant public interest or justification to do so.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined that Eugene should remain the county seat and that no changes should be made to Section 4: County Seat.

## Issue Paper #8: Section 14

**Issue:** Some counties directly elect the Chair of their Board of Commissioners, would this benefit Lane County?

**Discussion:** The Committee looked into other Oregon county charters to learn how they select their Board Chair. Among the counties that directly elect a Board Chair, the Board Chair role was often a blend between a facilitative peer leader (Lane County's current model) and the work of a county administrator. The directly elected Board Chairs were elected county-wide and also often served for different lengths of term than the general Board members.

The Committee discussed the value of the Board of Commissioners selecting their own chair, the rotating nature of this role, and the benefit of each district potentially having their representative serve as Chair.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined that the Board of Commissioners should retain the opportunity to select their own chair and no changes should be made to Section 14: Board Chair.

## Issue Paper #9: Section 26

**Issue:** Would retaining a Merit system be at odds with current HR practices and rules?

**Discussion:** The Committee learned that the term "Merit System" refers to old fashioned terms and practices where people were employed based on either a Merit or Spoils system. Under a Spoils system, jobs were given as favors to allies and family members of elected and appointed leaders. Under a Merit system, people are hired based on their qualifications and preference is not given to friends, allies, or family members of elected leaders or current staff.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined that no changes should be made to Section 26: Merit System

## **Issue Paper #10: Whether campaign finance limits should be established and enshrined in the Charter**

**Issue:** Community members expressed strong interest in establishing Campaign Finance limits in Lane County

**Background:** There was strong support in the two community surveys this Committee conducted for the establishment of Campaign Finance limits.

**Discussion:** The Committee discussed the potential for Campaign Finance limits. This topic was found to be highly complex and nuanced. The Committee recognized that the State has been discussing establishing Campaign Finance limits and that action at the state level would need to be taken into account with any local limits.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined that this topic may warrant further study if the community or the Commissioners want to look into it further.



## Issue Paper #11: Section 1

**Issue:** Should the county continue to be named Lane County or should we change our name?

**Background:** Over the years, a growing number of community members have expressed interest in changing the name of this county. The Board of Commissioners discussed the potential to establish a committee or group to look into this topic but took no further action.

**Discussion:** The Committee received strong public input on either side of this topic. The Committee discussed the reasons to change the county name and also reasons to retain the name. The Committee also discussed potential alternative names for the county, were a change to be made. There was no consensus on whether to retain or change the county name nor was there consensus on what alternate names might be.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined that this topic may warrant further study if the community or the Commissioners want to look into it further.

## Issue Paper #12: Section 19

**Issue:** Whether to change which positions are directly elected and which are appointed

**Background:** The Lane County Commissioners, the Sheriff, and the Assessor are directly elected positions within our local government. The County Administrator, the Clerk, and other positions within the county are hired by the Board of Commissioners or by staff within the county.

**Discussion:** The Committee discussed the possibility to move any of the currently elected positions to appointment. The Committee also discussed the possibility to move any of the currently appointed positions to direct election. Concerns were raised that shifting the currently elected positions to appointments could create potential conflicts of interest. Additionally, strong support was expressed for keeping these positions directly elected rather than appointed.

**Recommendation:** The Committee determined not to recommend that any of the currently elected positions move to appointments.

The Committee also determined that moving appointed positions to direct election may warrant further study if the community or the Commissioners want to look into it further.

## **Issue Paper #13: Whether some means of ranked choice voting should be adopted**

**Issue:** Whether a means of ranked choice voting should be used as an election method for Lane County elections.

**Background:** Ranked choice voting means an election method in which voters rank candidates for an elected office in order of the voter's preference. Currently, Lane County elections only allow a voter to select a single choice on a ballot.

**Discussion:** There are different types of ranked choice voting, including STAR voting, ranked choice voting that occurs in rounds, and "instant runoff" ranked choice voting where the votes are measured in a manner to determine a winner without engaging in multiple rounds of voting. Ranked choice voting can also occur in "single winner" versus "multi-winner" elections.

**Recommendation:** The Committee felt that this issue was too complex and would require community engagement in order to advance a recommendation within the time limits of when this report was due. This issue may warrant further study if the community or the Commissioners want to look into it further.

## Recommendations for Future Charter Review Committees

For the next Charter Review Committee, this Committee had some recommendations that might assist the future Committee with its work:

- In one of the first meetings where the entire future Committee convenes, have a presentation by staff to explain the differences between the Lane County Charter, Lane Code, and Administrative Rules (AR's) so that a future Committee appreciates what may be covered by each.
- Set an early timeline and get input from staff on that timeline. Include in the timeline community engagement that the Committee may wish to obtain regarding the Charter.
- Meaningful community engagement requires a significant amount of time, staff dedication and resources. It may make sense to allocate specific resources to a future Committee to ensure that it can conduct meaningful community engagement.
- Specific types of community engagement that a future Committee may want to consider include: surveys, community listening sessions, zoom meetings where the public can learn more about the Charter, advertising within community networks particularly in rural areas (such as rural newsletters, newspapers, chambers of commerce, etc.), and pairing up with non-profits in Lane County for greater outreach.