

Citizen Charter Review Committee
October 23, 2025
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Leon County Main Library
Programming Room

The Leon County 2025-2026 Citizen Charter Review Committee (CCRC) met on October 23, 2025, at 11:30 a.m. in the Leon County Main Library with Committee members Mary Ann Lindley, Chauncy Haynes, Darryl Jones, Sean Pittman, Linda Bond Edwards, Henry Lewis III, Bruce Strouble Jr., Howard Kessler, Ryan Ray, Liz Ellis, Joey Davis, Anita Favors, Barry Wilcox, Katrina Tuggerson, Slaton Murray, Temple Robinson, Max Herrle, Shamarial Roberson, and Jarrett Terry in attendance. Committee members Heidi Otway and William Smith were absent. Also present were County Administrator Vince Long, Assistant County Administrator Ken Morris, County Attorney Chasity O'Steen, Assistant to the County Administrator for Legislative and Strategic Initiatives Nicki Hatch, Management Analyst Cameron Williams, and Clerks to the Board, Beryl Wood and Daniel J. Antonaccio.

Absent Members: Heidi Otway and William G. Smith

Opening Remarks & Committee Charge – Vincent S. Long, County Administrator

County Administrator Vince Long convened the inaugural meeting of the Citizen Charter Review Committee, welcoming members and expressing appreciation for their willingness to serve. He thanked the members on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, county staff, and the community, emphasizing that their contributions are essential to maintaining an effective and representative home-rule government.

He provided an overview of the Charter Review process, noting that the Committee convenes once every eight years to review the Leon County Charter, referred to as the "home rule constitution", and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. Members will have 120 days to conduct their review and may propose amendments or determine that no changes are necessary. The Board granted broad latitude for discussion, identifying only one specific issue requiring formal review, which will be addressed later in the process.

Committee Introductions:

County Administrator Long stated that county staff's role is to fully support the Committee. He introduced key members of the staff resource team:

- Chasity O'Steen, County Attorney
- Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator
- Nicki Hatch, Assistant to the County Administrator for Legislative and Strategic Initiatives and primary staff liaison
- Cameron Williams, Management Analyst

He emphasized that the process will be methodical and transparent, with members reviewing every article and section of the Charter to ensure that it continues to reflect the needs and preferences of the community.

Each member of the Committee introduced themselves and shared their background and connection to Leon County.

Commissioner Proctor welcomed the Committee and spoke to their diversity.

Commissioner Minor thanked everyone for being present and for their public service.

Overview of Charter Government:

County Administrator Vince Long provided an overview presentation on the history, purpose, and framework of charter county government in Florida. County Administrator Long explained that a county charter functions as a home rule constitution, the local governing document that defines the framework, authority, and structure of county government. It is a *living document*, subject to amendment only by the local electorate.

The concept of charter county government, he said, arises from the principle that *one size does not fit all* in local governance. No two Florida counties are identical, and each faces unique local issues and needs. He noted that while all counties must fulfill the same state-mandated responsibilities, charters allow local governments to tailor their organization and powers to fit their communities.

County Administrator Long provided an overview of Florida History related to the operation of local governments under “Dillon’s Rule” prior to the 1968 Constitutional Revision. County Administrator Long’s overview continued with how the 1968 Constitutional Revision granted home rule authority to local governments by allowing counties to adopt charters by local referendum to exercise greater autonomy and flexibility in addressing community-specific issues. Since that time, 20 of Florida’s 67 counties have adopted charters, representing roughly 75–80 percent of the state’s population.

Leon County’s Charter:

County Administrator Long noted that Leon County adopted its charter in 2002, describing it as a “starter charter.” This approach, he said, is common among first-time charter counties and typically codifies the existing structure of government at the time of adoption, with the understanding that amendments will occur as the community evolves.

Charter Amendment Process:

Mr. Long outlined the three mechanisms through which a county charter may be amended. He emphasized that any proposed amendment must be approved by a majority vote of the local electorate at a general election.

1. Citizen Petition:

- Requires signatures from 10% of registered voters countywide, including 10% from each County Commission district.
 - May be initiated at any time, provided the proposed amendment appears on a general election ballot.
 - This method has never been utilized in Leon County.
2. County Commission Action:
- Requires a majority plus one vote of the Board of County Commissioners.
 - The Board may propose amendments at any time.
 - This method has never been utilized.
3. Citizen Charter Review Committee:
- As established in the Leon County Charter, this citizen committee convenes every eight years to review and recommend Charter amendments to the Board of County Commissioners.

Past Citizen Charter Review Committees:

Mr. Long provided a brief history of the previous Citizen Charter Review Committees convened since the charter's adoption in 2002.

2010 Citizen Charter Review Committee:

The 2010 Committee proposed seven amendments to the Board of County Commissioners.

1. Tourism Development Structure
2. Minimum Countywide Environmental Standards.
3. Employment of the County Administrator
4. Non-Interference Policy
5. Campaign Contributions
6. Petition Thresholds
7. Future Citizen Charter Review Committee Authority

Of the seven proposals, the Board advanced six to the ballot, excluding the "Future Citizen Charter Review Committee Authority" proposal. Five of the six proposed amendments were approved by voters; the "Petition Thresholds" amendment was not adopted.

2018 Citizen Charter Review Committee:

The 2018 Committee advanced two amendments to the Board:

1. Adoption of a Code of Ethics by Ordinance

2. Employment of the County Attorney

Of the two proposals, the Board advanced the “Adoption of a Code of Ethics by Ordinance” amendment to the ballot which was approved by voters. The “Employment of the County Attorney” was not advanced by the Board as a proposed Charter Amendment but instead was effectuated through the adoption of a County Ordinance.

County Administrator Long concluded that these prior reviews demonstrate the evolution of the County Charter and the community’s ability to make meaningful, measured changes through the structured review process.

Charter Authority, Limitations, and Board Direction:

County Administrator Long concluded his overview by summarizing what county charters may and may not do, as well as outlining the specific direction provided by the Board of County Commissioners for this Citizen Charter Review Committee cycle.

Board Direction to the 2025/2026 Citizen Charter Review Committee:

County Administrator Long reminded the Committee that the Board of County Commissioners had not imposed any limits on the group’s scope of review, granting broad latitude to examine all aspects of the charter. He stated that the Board identified one specific issue for the committee’s objective consideration:

- Whether to recommend an amendment providing that county ordinances prevail in cases of conflict with municipal ordinances, except where restricted by state law.

This topic will appear as a formally agendaed discussion item later in the review process, with full staff analysis and legal guidance.

Overview of Florida's Open Government Laws - Chasity O'Steen, County Attorney

County Attorney Chasity O'Steen briefed the Committee on Florida's Open Government Laws, including the Sunshine Law, Public Records, and Code of Ethics and its application to members of the Citizen Charter Review Committee, as summarized below. County Attorney O'Steen also provided guidance related to public statements made by CCRC members.

- Sunshine Law: Requires that all public meetings be noticed, are open and accessible to the public and minutes are kept. A meeting is defined as two or more members of the same decision making body talking about substantive matters that may come before the Committee.
- Public Records Law: All written communication made or received related to the official business of the CCRC are considered public record and should be retained appropriately.
- Florida Code of Ethics: Protects against any conflict of interest and establishes standards for the conduct in situations where conflicts may exist which applies to CCRC members as Board Appointed Committee Members.

Committee Bylaws & Committee Schedule - Nicki Hatch

Mrs. Nicki Hatch provided an overview of the Citizen Charter Review Committee Bylaws as adopted by the Board of County Commissioners to guide the Committee's deliberations and ensure orderly and transparent proceedings. The overview summarized various sections of the Bylaws including quorum and voting requirements, public comment protocols, and the election and role of the Chair and Vice Chair:

Election of Officers:

Mrs. Hatch stated that one of the first actions of the Committee would be the election of officers.

Election of Chair Motion:

Darryl Jones nominated Mary Ann Lindley to serve as Chair, noting her prior service on the Leon County Board of County Commissioners. The nomination was seconded by Sean Pittman.

There being no other nominations, the vote was called. The motion carried unanimously, and Mary Ann Lindley was elected Chair of the Leon County Citizen Charter Review Committee.

The motion passed 19 - 0.

Chair Lindley expressed appreciation to the members for their confidence and stated she looked forward to working collaboratively with the Committee.

Election of Vice Chair Motion:

Linda Bond Edwards nominated Chauncy Haynes to serve as Vice Chair. The nomination was seconded by Jarrett Terry.

There being no other nominations, the vote was called. The motion carried unanimously, and Chauncy Haynes was elected Vice Chair of the Leon County Citizen Charter Review Committee.

The motion passed 19 - 0.

Process and Schedule Overview: Presenter - Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator

Mr. Ken Morris provided an overview of the Committee's process and timeline, including the three-phase structure for the Committee's deliberations to ensure a methodical and transparent process.

Meeting Structure and Workflow:

1. Issue/Discussion Meetings (Step 1) – Members can request any idea for a proposed charter amendment to be placed on the agenda for formal consideration by the Committee. If approved by a simple majority vote of the Committee, staff

will prepare an analysis of the proposal to be placed on the Committee's agenda for consideration.

2. Decision Meetings (Step 2) – If approved by a simple majority vote of the Committee, the Committee can request staff to prepare proposed charter amendment language for Committee consideration.
3. Public Hearings (Step 3) – If approved by a simple majority vote of the Committee, the Committee can advance proposed charter amendment language to Public Hearing for Committee consideration. Upon conclusion of the public hearings, the Committee can, upon approval by a simple majority vote, recommend the proposed charter amendment language to the Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Morris reported that the Committee is scheduled to complete its work by February 19, with an interim report to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners in March. If the Committee advances proposed charter amendments, public hearings will be scheduled in June and July 2026.

Public Comment:

Chair Lindley opened the floor for public comment.

Staff noted that no speaker cards had been submitted prior to the meeting. Chair Lindley invited any members of the public present to speak; no speakers came forward.

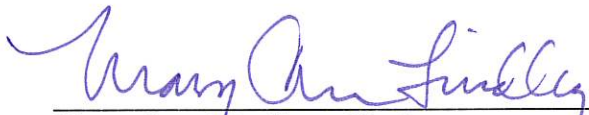
Next Meeting and Adjournment:

The next Citizen Charter Review Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, November 6. Members were encouraged to contact staff with any questions prior to the next meeting.

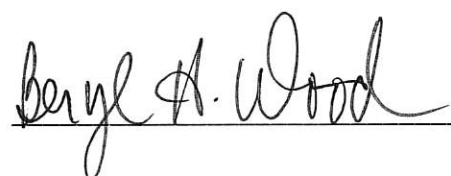
Chair Lindley called for adjournment of the CCRC Meeting. It was moved by Ryan Ray, seconded by Sean Pittman, to adjourn at 1:27 p.m.

The motion passed 19 – 0.

ATTEST:



Mary Ann Lindley, Chair
Leon County Citizen Charter Review Committee



Beryl Wood, Clerk to the Board for
Gwen Marshall Knight, Clerk of Court