

CITY OF SANDUSKY
2015 CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

MAY 19, 2015

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Mike Will, Chairman, called the Charter Review Committee (CRC) meeting to order at 5 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present: Donovan Cole, Dennis Feltner, Talon Flohr, Andy Gundlach, Dan Kaman, Nicole Lloyd, Christine Mack, Mike Meinzer, Chris Parthemore and Mike Will.

Members absent: Anthony Jones, Darwitt Garrett, Jennifer Washington and Connor Whelan.

Mike Will stated he learned today Anthony Jones has resigned from the Charter Review Committee.

Staff members present: Kelly Kresser – Commission Clerk.

PRESENTATION

Mike Will introduced Dr. Stephanie Walls from Bowling Green State University and Dr. Larry Keller with Cleveland State University/Levin College who presented information to the members of the Charter Review Committee specific to local governments in Ohio. The presentation materials are incorporated as a matter of record and are attached to the Minutes of the May 19, 2015, meeting as well as a DVD recording which will be made available to those unable to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for: Tuesday, June 2 at 5 p.m.



Kelly L. Kresser, CMC
Clerk of the City Commission



Michael J. Will
Chairperson

Understanding Local Governance in Ohio



Presentation Prepared for Consideration by the 2015
Sandusky Charter Review Committee

Dr. Lawrence Keller

Associate Professor Emeritus of Public Administration
Cleveland State University

Dr. Stephanie Walls

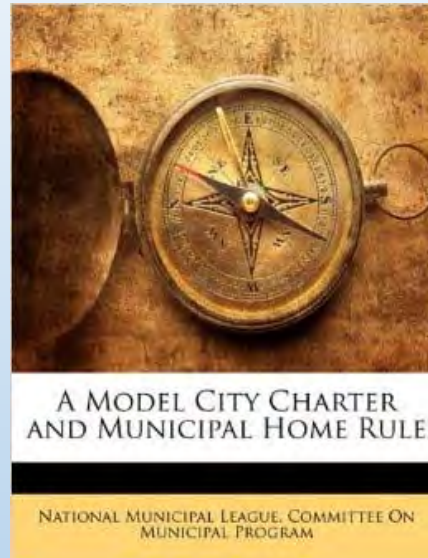
Assistant Professor of Political Science
Bowling Green State University, Firelands

Understanding Local Governance in Ohio

1. The development and purpose of governance charters
2. The meaning and forms of municipal governance
 - a. Strengths and weaknesses of each model
3. The modern trends in adapting the basic models
4. Municipal charters and politics
5. Questions and discussion

Rise of Home Rule for Cities

Political Party Rule
and Politics becomes
focused on rewards –
Honest Graft



State versus local
municipalities over
control and rewards

Reformers seek cities along the lines of the
historic city states such Athens and Rome

Rise of the Metropolis

Second Urban
Revolution and
the Driving
City Plus

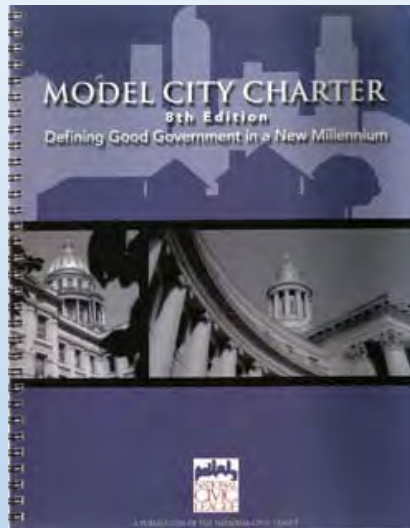


Separation by
Race and Class

Central Cities, Inner Suburbs, Outer
Suburbs and a global economy

A Charter for the Modern City

After the Second Urban Revolution no one charter fits all



A Charter alone does not solve public problems

The search is for a legal document that modernizes government, involves active citizens and prepares a community to face problems with a concern for the long term public interest

The Purpose and Function of a Charter

A [home rule] C[harter] is not the act of a Government, but of a people constituting a government, and a government without a constitution is a power without right.

Thomas Paine

A Charter establishes the process, context and mechanisms for a community to make decisions about solving problems and facing the future

The Core of a Municipal Charter

- Form of Government
- Structure, Process and Roles of City Council
- Other offices of government and relation to Council and Chief Executive
- Financial Requirements and Processes
- Elections, Initiative and Referendum
- Ethics, both substance and Process
- Roles and Processes for Citizen Participation
- Training and Development of Officeholders

*"Good decisions come from experience.
Experience comes from making bad decisions."*

- Mark Twain (1835 - 1910), American Novelist and Journalist

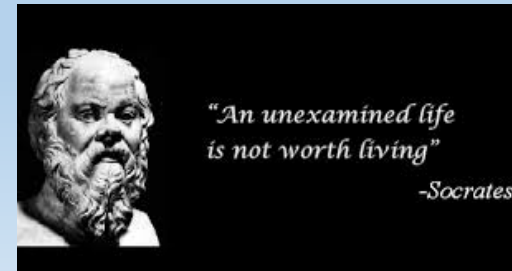
Municipal Charters and Politics

Unless written locally, charters are provided by state legislatures.

The ability to and the process for writing a local charter controlled by state law

The process of writing or reviewing a charter is an opportunity to educate a community.

As with any representative body, a charter or charter review committee must seriously but civilly deliberate.



Forms of Municipal Government

- ❖ Decisions on the form of government is the *most critical* as it has implications for all of the Charter
- ❖ Forms of government are significant, but like charters, generally don't solve community problems
- ❖ Forms of government do create political cultures—environments which can facilitate a community dealing with its problems and building a better future

Forms of Municipal Government: A Short Overview

Current **Forms of Government** were created by reformers focused on improving governance.

Governance is making and implementing public policies, providing services to citizens, and greatly determining their quality of life.

A **Form of Government** is the most important structure by which **Governance** is performed.

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." - Albert Einstein

Options for Local Governance in Ohio

In Ohio, there are four main options for local governance:

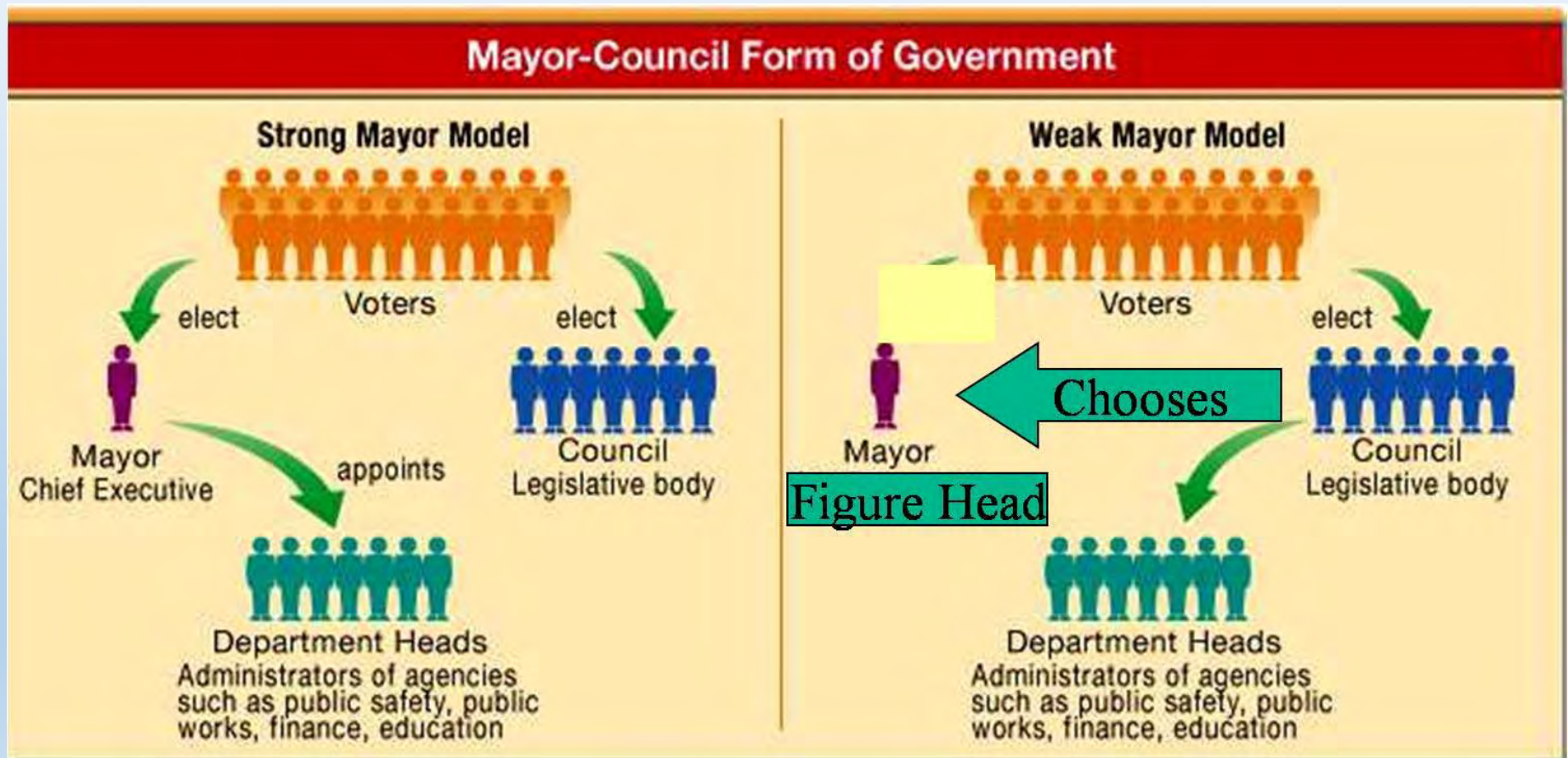
- Strong Mayor—Council
- Weak Mayor—Council
- Commission
- Commission/Council—Manager

Mayor—Council Form of Government

The Mayor—Council form of government generally features:

- An elected Chief Executive (Mayor)
 - Strong or Weak Mayor
 - Type of Mayor depends upon explicit grant of authority as chief executive, veto authority, and control of appointments and budgets
- An elected Legislature - Council or Commission
 - Elected at-large, from wards or districts, or a combination of the two
- A separation of powers (if the Mayor is elected by the voters)

Mayor—Council Form of Government



Strengths and Weaknesses

Strong Mayor—Council

Strengths

- Elected Chief Executive can mobilize electoral support
- Campaigns can highlight issues publicly
- Can form political coalitions
- Connections via Party to other units and levels of government

Weaknesses

- Mayor can be popular but ineffective
- Mayoral candidates seldom have managerial or administrative backgrounds
- Mayor can dominate the agenda
- Can slight and sometimes ignore Council
- May not deal with unpopular issues that could thwart political ambition

Strengths and Weaknesses

Weak Mayor—Council

Strengths

- Council tends to be more diversified and less political
- The administration is more professional
- Allows council members to broadly define their role
- Can create a more cooperative environment

Weaknesses

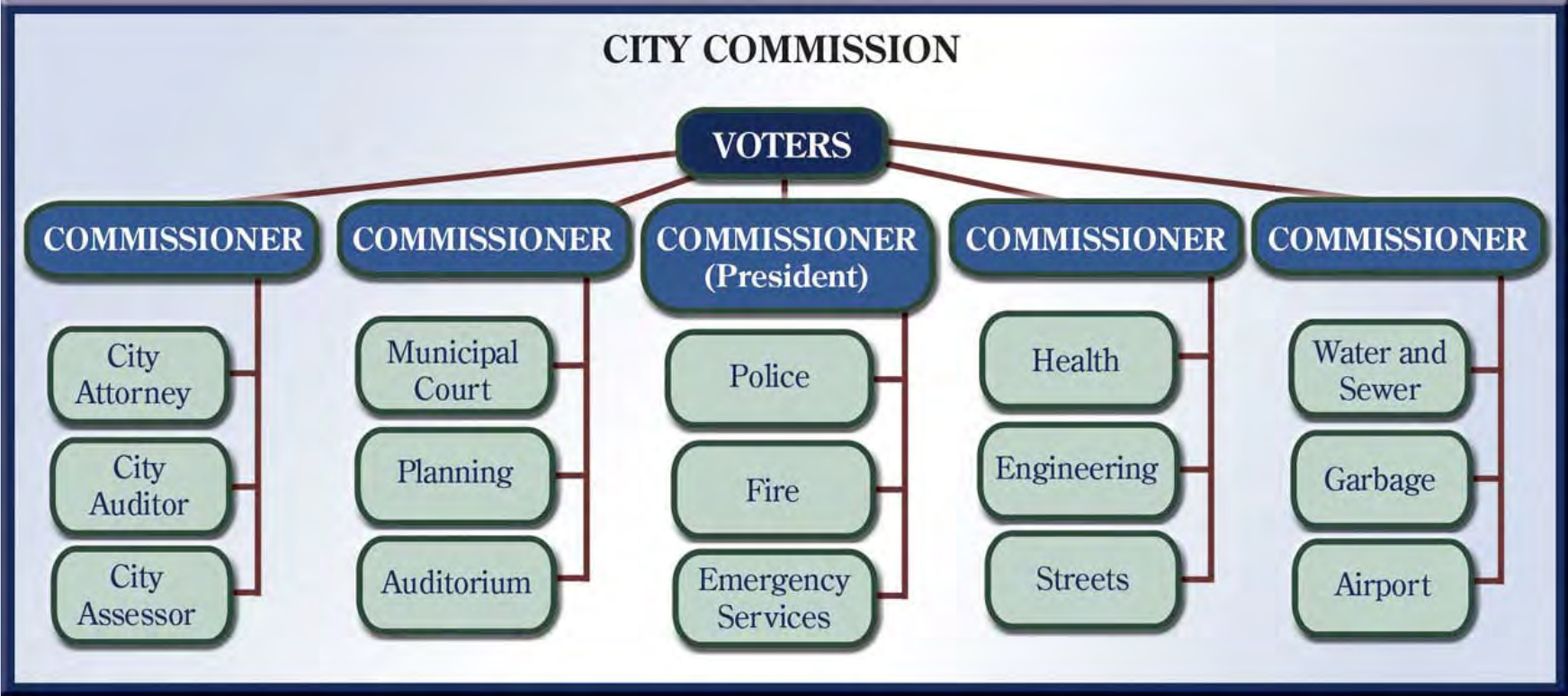
- Power is fragmented and can lead to indecisiveness and inefficiency
- Lack of clearly established institutional arrangements for leadership

Commission Form of Government

The Commission form generally features:

- Elected Commissioners
 - Typically elected at-large
 - Function collectively as legislators
 - Function individually as the Directors of Administration; each directs a different department or departments
- No Separation of Powers

Commission Form of Government



Strengths and Weaknesses

Commission

Strengths

- Commissioners experience internal issues at the work level
- Non-partisan which matches voters more and more declaring independent as their political status
- Typically 5 to 9 Commissioners so it is possible to reach consensus by deliberation
- Unlikely to have one person dominate the agenda

Weaknesses

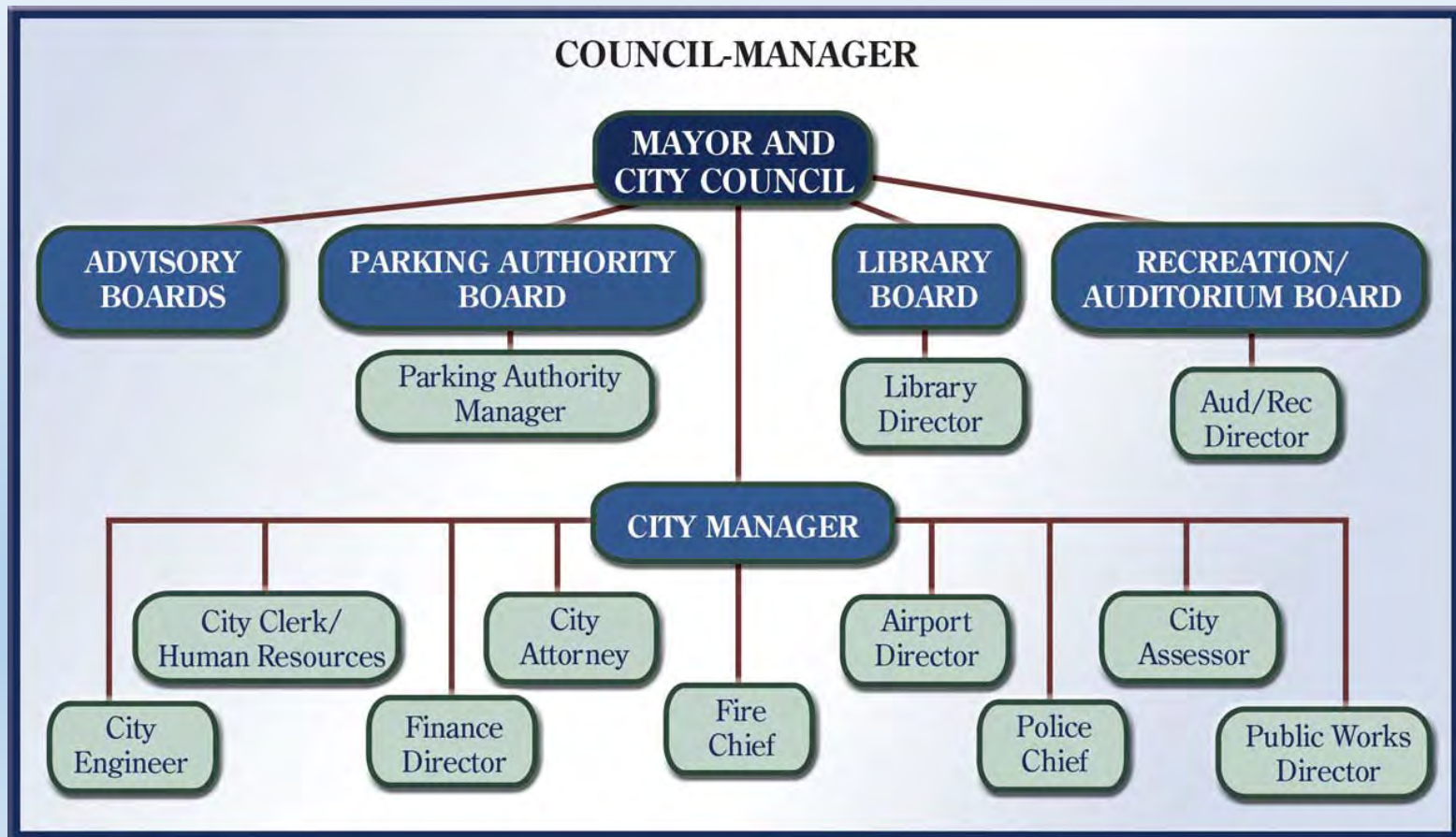
- Difficult to cope with conflicts among commissioners
- Leadership difficult to establish
- Coordination of administration very difficult to accomplish
- Difficult to conduct inter-unit and intergovernmental relations

Commission / Council— Manager Form of Government

The Commission/Council—Manager form generally features:

- Elected Commissioners or Council Members
 - Often by at-large elections
- Commission/Council appoints a Chief Executive, the City Manager, who serves at its pleasure
- City Manager has sole administrative authority and administers the budget
- No separation of powers

Commission / Council-Manager Form of Government



Strengths and Weaknesses

Commission / Council—Manager

Strengths

- Empowers Council – People’s Representatives
- Chief Executive is an educated professional
- Hiring of the City Manager facilitates Council identifying issues
- City Manager in but not of the local politics
- Accountability of the City Manager for how governing is conducted

Weaknesses

- Partisan Politics are difficult to address
- Depends upon the quality of Council
- Can lack political leadership
- Citizens may lack understanding of the system

Sandusky's Current Form of Government

Sandusky's current form of government is described in the Charter as being a "Commission—Manager Plan"

- It features a "President," or weak mayor, who has a voice and vote but no veto. This position does come with emergency powers.
- The commission has governing power and the city manager administers the budget and has other administrative power as granted by the commission
- There is no separation of powers.

Adapted Models of Governance

- Adapting a model refers to making changes to the existing model without abandoning its core concepts
- It is estimated that 69% of cities utilize some sort of adapted model
 - **Adapted Mayor—Council**
 - Mayor directly elected, not on council, has veto power, full-time
 - Council elected by district, at-large, or mixed
 - Department heads report to Mayor
 - City manager is appointed/terminated by Mayor without consent of council
 - **Adapted Commission/Council—Manager**
 - Mayor directly elected, on council, *may* have veto power, usually part-time
 - Council elected by district, at-large, or mixed
 - Department heads report to city manager, who is appointed and terminated by council

The Conciliated Model of Governance

- The conciliated, or hybrid, model of governance is one that is so significantly changed that it no longer favors the mayor—council model or the commission/council—manager model
- It is estimated that 13% of adapted cities have crossed into this category
- Features:
 - Directly elected mayor who has strong political powers but defers administrative matters (some models have the mayor select the city manager)
 - Directly elected council with ward representation and weaker overall powers
 - City Manager with strong administrative powers
 - Shared executive authority between the mayor and manager

Concluding Remarks

All public activities in a community are political.

Politics is a process by which a community determines the “authoritative allocation of values” – that is what is valuable to the community as a whole.

The quality of politics is determined by how it is done and creates the public character of the community.

ANYONE WHO
SAYS THEY ARE NOT
INTERESTED IN POLITICS
IS LIKE A DROWNING MAN
WHO INSISTS HE IS NOT
INTERESTED IN WATER.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Discussion