

# FINAL

2020 Overview Commission  
Wednesday, January 22, 2020 4:00-6:00p  
UGA Health Sciences Campus  
Russell Hall, 205, 100 Foster Road  
Athens, GA 30606

## **Members Present**

Mumbi Anderson, Paul Bunce, Armand Chapeau, Gail Cowan, Richard Davis, Joseph Fabregas, Andrea Farnham, Elizabeth Higgins, Brandy Kirkwood, Stephanie Lynn, John Napier, Peter Norris, Frank Platt, Hunaid Qadir, Roy Schmidt, Sherry Tanner, Biff Tant, Ellen Walker

## **Members Absent**

Timothy Pierce-Tomlin, Taisheema Schley, Alex Vanden Heuvel

**Guests:** Lucy Rowland, Former Vice-Chair 2010 Overview Commission, John Wolfe, Former Athens Clarke County Auditor

**Other members of the public:** Stephanie Maddox, Alvin Sheats, Chanyse Allen

Meeting called to order at 6:00p

- I. Introductions
- II. General Comments from the Chair

Elizabeth acknowledged the requirement of the sunshine law to post notice of public meetings a week in advance for regularly scheduled meetings and apologized for the short notice about this meeting. It was a specially called meeting and we posted notice of it 2 days in advance which meets the 24 hour notice requirement for specially called meetings.

- III. Presentation from Lucy Rowland and John Wolfe

Lucy Rowland and John Wolfe participated as special guests to offer us a framework for our work, make some suggestions on ways to work together with the auditor's office, and graciously answered questions of commission members. John also offered a historical perspective on the process, why it exists, and how it has changed over time. He also discussed some of the different ways the different commissions have approached the process. For example the first commission was closely examining the promises made during unification to see if those promises had been met. It was conceived to see if the new unified government achieved the goals of the charter. Subsequent commissions looked at things like the relationship between the mayor, commission and city manager, and the power dynamics between them. The last one went a little deeper into

# FINAL

individual departments and was perhaps too granular and overwhelming. Lucy commented that they barely finished on time. She also remarked that there was dissent within the group about some of the recommendations, however that dissent was not noted in the report.

Lucy recommends that we focus on departments that unified during the unification. She suggested we do not cover any of the courts besides the Municipal court because the other courts are not reportable to the M&C. They may receive some county funding but they do not answer to the county because they are state or federal jurisdiction. This was an item with dissenting opinions among the 2010 OC and Lucy feels they covered all the courts unnecessarily. The goal was to ensure uniformity of service in the unified departments. The question the overview commission was asked to resolve is whether the government met those requirements.

Lastly, Lucy and John gave us an example of how we might handle the overview of a simple department - the Airport. It was not a department that was unified because there was only one airport. They said first we would have all departments give presentations to the larger group about what their departments do. Then a small group (1-3 people) or whatever size does not equal a quorum, go to interview the department head with a core set of questions. Based on the answers to the questions, you might follow up with more organic conversations.

She provided the list of core questions they began with for every department:

- What do you consider to be the goals of your department?
- What does your department do well to meet the goals of ACC?
- What could it do better?
- What resources are needed to meet your goals?

During the discussion, it was pointed out that Stephanie Maddox can coordinate the meetings for us. They recommend we have four departments give 15-20 minutes presentations per meeting. We could get through all of the departments in 10-12 meetings.

Frank Platt asked about looking at data for resource distribution. Lucy said to look at the comprehensive plan and community assessment with regards to resource coverage. Like the number of sworn police officers for the population growth, etc.

Lucy said it's important to understand enterprise funds - different from tax payments. Solid waste expenses are covered by their own revenue.

There were several questions from commission members during the discussion.

**Richard Davis** asks Lucy why the courts should not be included because the 2010 report says they should be. This was when the comment about dissent within the commission was brought

# FINAL

up. She says because the courts wouldn't change if unification was reversed. Also the courts are not paid by ACC - they are state entities.

**Roy Schmidt** asked to confirm whether or not we should not look at CCSD and Lucy confirmed this is not under our purview - the school board is an independent entity and M&C have no authority over them.

**Joseph Fabregas** asked if all recommendations in the report were voted on by the entire commission or were the recommendations from each committee just voted on by that committee. Lucy remarked that there was not consensus on many of the recommendations or statements in the report.

**Hunaid Qadir** asked if the entire analysis was based on just dept staff interviews or were there public information sessions. Lucy commented that they definitely had public input sessions. She said to make sure people know that what you present at the commission meetings is not confidential but public record.

Question came up multiple times about whether the overview commission is needed, and if so, do the charges need to change - the second charge might no longer be relevant.

John Wolfe referenced section 9 -

[https://library.municode.com/ga/athens-clarke\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTICH\\_ARTIXTRPR](https://library.municode.com/ga/athens-clarke_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTICH_ARTIXTRPR)

10 years ago there was a suggestion the OC was no longer needed, but John argued it should continue. This is a citizen group and is very different than the auditor's office. It is an evaluation process - not a body to legislate or make orders. It has value. John also mentioned Duvall county Florida has an overview commission - we could look at what they do. He suggested we look at the comprehensive plan because it was done right before the OC was empaneled. We should use it to get community data.

#### IV. Other Items as needed

Elizabeth proposed that we consider hiring a facilitator to work with us on a strategy session. We need to work together collaboratively and not be divisive. Members were asked if they would support this effort. Several people volunteered they felt this was a good effort, and no one disagreed. We did not vote on the topic.

We discussed a regular meeting schedule and settled on more frequent meetings for the next few weeks and every other week afterwards. The next two meetings will be back to back on January

# FINAL

30 & February 6 then every two weeks beginning February 20. The meetings will be at 6:00. Length of meeting to be determined. Mumbi will work on scheduling the meetings.

**Peter Norris** volunteered that because we will be meeting so frequently, if there are people who can't make every meeting, he will organize zoom meetings and make sure the technology is available.

**Brandy Kirkwood** provided us some information about our district representation and noted how imbalanced it is. Elizabeth will follow up with the DA about whether this is something we need to remedy and what remedies are available.

## V. Closing Remarks

The meeting adjourned at 5:39pm.