

**Kootenai County
Optional Forms of Government
Study Commission**

Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2022

5:30 p.m.

451 N. Government Way
Administration Building, 1st Floor Room 1A/B

Commission Members Present: Tamara Bateson, Dave Botting, Kurt Andersen, Kristen Wing, Bryant Bushling, and Brian Cleary and alternates Bruce Mattare and Joan Genter. Bob Fish, Phil Ward, David Levine and alternate Cheri Zao attended via Zoom.

I. Call to Order

Chair Botting called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Bryant Bushling led the meeting participants in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of / Changes to the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda as submitted was made by Bryant Bushling and seconded by Kurt Andersen. The vote was taken; the motion passed.

IV. Announcements

Chair Botting made the following announcement:

I was asked by several members of this commission to discuss the proposal before you tonight. As I have previously stated, this is not an unconstitutional, communist power grab. This is in accordance with the Idaho Constitution, Article 18, Section 12, and Idaho Code Title 31, Chapters 50 through 58 inclusive. In spite of comments, this Commission has been open all along. Both the Idaho Constitution and the Idaho Statutes are publicly available to anyone. Copies of pertinent Chapters of the Idaho Code were presented to members and alternates of this commission at the end of April. At one of our first meetings, an attorney, Brian Cleary, explained the statutes for the Commission.

Someone who was late to the party has recently stated that the Commission is considering seven optional forms of government: the commission-executive form, the commission-manager form, a three-member Board of Commissioners, a five-member Board of Commissioners, a seven-member Board of Commissioners, a Consolidation of Offices Among Counties, and a Charter Form of County Government. These are the optional forms provided in Idaho Code Title 31, Chapters 50 through 58, but the recommendation before you tonight focuses on one optional form, the Commission-Manager form under Idaho Code Title 31, Chapter 53.

The published recommendation gives the detailed references to the Idaho Code, I won't repeat them now. Suffice it to say the recommendation is for the Board of County Commissioners, who are currently statutorily responsible for the administration of an organization of approximately 300 employees as well as policy and legislation, to transfer the statutory responsibility for administration to an administrator and retain the responsibility for policy

and legislation. This administrator is being targeted, yet the Clerk, the Assessor, the Treasurer, the Coroner, the Prosecuting Attorney, and the Sheriff are all the administrators of their respective departments. This is simply copying the departmental form of those six, long-term operations. By streamlining the operation to match the format of the other departments, the administrator can make decisions the same way as the sheriff and the bureaucracy will actually be reduced. The concern that the administrator is not elected is a misdirection since an incompetent, elected official will remain in office for four years, while an incompetent administrator can be removed and replaced immediately. The administrator is actually more responsive to the voters of Kootenai County than the elected officials since the administrator serves at the pleasure of the elected County Commissioners. In addition to the County Manager, the recommendation is that the Board of County Commissioners be increased to five commissioners and that all six other elected officials remain elected as they are currently. This will result in an increase from nine to eleven elected officials.

Concerns that the title of Chief Budgetary Officer transfers from the office of County Clerk to the County Manager demonstrate a lack of understanding of the process. The Budgetary Officer does not create the budget but compiles the budget from the submissions from the department heads. A qualified County Manager would not make the mistake of informing the public that the budget was being prepared as a Zero-Based Budget in spite of the fact that the budget was actually a Base-Line budget the same as previous years. This basic misunderstanding of budgets demonstrates the weakness of the current situation.

As far as the issue of increased cost of government, this is not within our power to recommend; however, anywhere that this form of government has been instituted, the County Commissioners pay is reduced dramatically, in many cases benefits are reduced or eliminated. The savings from the reduction in the cost of the County Commissioners greatly exceeds the cost of the County Manager, resulting in a total reduction in the cost of Government. All candidates for County Commissioner should be judged on their answer to the question: if the voters choose to have a County Manager, will you reduce the pay of the County Commissioners to \$1,500 per month or less with an elimination of all benefits not mandated by the State? This is how we can actually reduce the cost of County Government and get true public servants, not professional politicians attracted to the easy money and benefits of government.

Finally, we are discussing a recommendation from this Commission to the Board of County Commissioners. The Board will decide to place this recommendation on the ballot for next November. The voters, WE THE PEOPLE, will decide what form of County Government we want, not this Commission and not the Board of County Commissioner. Anyone who is afraid to present this recommendation to WE THE PEOPLE is the true enemy of our Republic.

A quick review. Speakers will have three minutes. A lighting system will be in operation, when the light changes from green to yellow, start wrapping up. When the light turns to red, close your presentation. If a speaker refuses to cooperate, the microphone will be cut. This is your chance to address this Commission. I hope the audience will please refrain from emotional demonstrations, since they will delay the opportunity for others to speak to the commission and will reflect poorly on the demonstrators and their message.

V. Approval of Minutes -January 12, 2022

A motion to approve the meeting minutes as submitted for January 12, 22 was made by Kurt Andersen and seconded by Kristen Wing. The vote was taken; the motion passed.

VI. Reports

This item was not required for this meeting.

VII. Old Business

This item was not required for this meeting.

VIII. New Business

A. Public Hearing (Comment)- Each speaker will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to speak. Complete speaker comments can be found on Kootenai County YouTube website. Written comments submitted during the public hearing were provided to commission members for their review.

1. Ms. Deborah Rose of Athol spoke in favor of the study commission's recommendation to move to five commissioners and a county manager form of government.
2. Mr. Robert Whitehead of Post Falls does not support moving from three to five commissioners or adding a county manager. He is in favor of maintaining elected officials.
3. Mr. John Tappero of Hayden spoke against moving to a commission manager form of government and five commissioners.
4. Mr. Kenny Moore of Hayden spoke against the commission manager form of government and five commissioners.
5. Mike from Rathdrum spoke against the commission manager form of government.
6. Mr. Les Wigen spoke against the proposal.
7. Ms. Marcy Hoggatt of Hayden spoke against hiring a commission manager and moving from three to five commissioners.
8. Ms. Niki Cervenka of Spirit Lake spoke against adding any additional commissioners.
9. Mr. Robert Cervenka of Spirit Lake spoke against moving to a commission manager form of government and five commissioners.
10. Ms. Shari Williams spoke in favor of the study commission's recommendation. Ms. Williams supports 5 commissioners and the hiring of a county manager.
11. Ms. Janis Chevstrom of Coeur d'Alene spoke against hiring a county manager.
12. Mr. Vern Westgate of Coeur d'Alene spoke against the study commission's recommendation.
13. Mr. Gary Schenkenberger of Coeur d'Alene spoke against hiring a county manager.
14. Ms. Kim Eichler of Post Falls would like the elected officials to remain elected. Ms. Eichler was opposed to hiring a county manager or moving to five commissioners.
15. Mr. Rory Cheeney of Coeur d'Alene spoke against the study commission's recommendation. Mr. Cheeney would like the elected officials to remain elected.
16. Ms. Janetta Michael of Post Falls spoke against all changes recommended by the study commission.
17. Mr. DOn Eichler of Post Falls spoke against increasing the number of commissioners to five.
18. Ms. Linda Mitchell of Post Falls spoke against the optional form of government commission's proposal.
19. Mr. Daniel Owsley of Hayden spoke against adding commissioners and creating a commission manager form of government. He wants elected officials to stay elected.
20. Mr. Tom Shoemaker of Hayden spoke against adding any more commissioners and was opposed to hiring a county manager.
21. Mr. William Lee of Coeur d'Alene spoke against the study commission's recommendation.

22. Mr. Bruce Mattare of Coeur d'Alene, who is an alternate on the commission, spoke about concerns about process and the credibility of the commission.
23. Ms. Sandra Shoemaker of Hayden spoke against any change to the current form of government and is opposed to hiring a county manager. She is opposed to the recommendations.
24. Mr. Stan Mickels of Coeur d'Alene spoke about the importance of accountability and transparency.
25. Mr. Ed DePriest of Hayden indicated that the study commission will not mandate a change. The citizens will decide what, if any, changes are made and that is the way it should be.
26. Mr. Daniel Fry of Post Falls spoke in opposition to any study commission recommendations.
27. Mr. Mike Satren of Coeur d'Alene spoke against adding any additional commissioners.
28. Mr. Daryl Jenkins of Hauser spoke against the study commission's recommendation.
29. Mr. James Jeffries of Coeur d'Alene did not specifically address the recommendation but expressed overall displeasure with the process.
30. Mr. Marty Fish of Athol did not specifically address the recommendation but expressed overall displeasure with the process.
31. Ms. Katie McCollum of Coeur d'Alene spoke in favor of keeping elected officials elected and is opposed to adding additional commissioners.
32. Mr. Andy Golub of Hayden spoke against adding any additional commissioners.
33. Ms. Susan Lehman of Hayden spoke against hiring a county manager.
34. Ms. Elisa Schmalz of Rathdrum spoke against hiring a county manager and adding any additional commissioners.
35. Mr. Joe Archambault of Coeur d'Alene spoke against adding any additional commissioners and against hiring a county manager.
36. Mr. Don Warner of Coeur d'Alene spoke against the study commission's recommendation. He believes it is important provide information so voters can make an informed decision.
37. Charity of Hauser spoke against adding any additional commissioners and against hiring a county manager.
38. Ms. Donna Pickering of Post Falls spoke in favor of keeping our government the same as it currently is.
39. Dr. Teresa Borrenpohl of Post Falls spoke in favor of putting the study commission's recommendation on the ballot. Dr. Borrenpohl agreed with the 5 commissioner proposal and hiring a county manager.
40. Mr. Jeff Lackey of Post Falls did not specifically address the recommendation but expressed overall displeasure with the process.
41. Stephanie Wolfe chose not to speak since so many fine patriots have previously spoken.
42. Ms. Connie Cutberth of Post Falls supports smaller government and opposes any change to our current form of government.
43. Mr. Robert Pickering of Post Falls spoke against adding any additional commissioners and against hiring a county manager.
44. Mr. Robert Taylor of Coeur d'Alene did not specifically address the recommendation but expressed overall displeasure with the process.
45. Ms. Nina Beesley of Rathdrum spoke against adding any additional commissioners and against hiring a county manager.
46. Mr. T.J. Farrell spoke against any change to our current form of government.
47. Mr. Brent Regan of Coeur d'Alene spoke against changing our form of government. He suggested that the problem was in who was being elected, not the structure of the government.
48. Ms. Kelsey Hjelm of Post Falls spoke against a commissioner manager form of government and against hiring any additional commissioners. She supports electing the sheriff.

49. Ms. Sharon Oldfield of Coeur d'Alene does not support moving from three to five commissioners or adding a county manager.
50. Mr. Justin Allen of Athol spoke against any change to the current form of government.
51. Ms. Cheryl Dugan of Rathdrum spoke against any change to the current form of government.
52. Mr. Mike Birdsong of Coeur d'Alene spoke against any change to the current form of government.
53. Ms. Rachelle Ottosen spoke against any change to the current form of government.
54. Ms. Norma White of Athol spoke against any change to the current form of government.
55. Kelly LaVine spoke against the proposed change to the current form of government.
56. Mr. David Hoekendorg of Coeur d'Alene spoke against adding commissioners and hiring a county manager. Mr. Hoekendorg was in favor of elected officials remaining elected.
57. Mr. James Ausley spoke against any change to the current form of government.
58. Mr. Michael Burgess of Post Falls spoke against any change to the current form of government.
59. Ms. Julie Meyer of Hauser spoke against adding any commissioners and hiring a county manager.
60. Ms. Linda Asche of Hauser spoke against adding any commissioners or a commission manager. She would rather spend the money to update technology.
61. Mr. Logan Meyer of Hauser spoke against any change to the current form of government.
62. Mr. Jeremy Fuller of Rathdrum initially gave the name of Let's Go Brandon. Mr. Fuller spoke against increasing the size of the government.
63. Ms. Carolyn Fuller of Rathdrum did not think the commission should have been established and spoke against adding commissioners and hiring a county manager.
64. Ms. Michelle McAninch of Athol spoke out against the recommended changes but is in favor of keeping elected officials elected.
65. Ms. Summer Bushnell of Post Falls spoke against hiring a county manager based on their ability to hire and fire county employees.
66. Ms. Honey Wheaton of Coeur d'Alene spoke against the study commission's recommendation.
67. Ms. Lucy Walton of Post Falls spoke against the study commission's recommendation and redistricting concerns.
68. Mr. Doug Balija of Coeur d'Alene spoke against hiring a county manager based on their ability to hire and fire county employees.
69. Mr. Kevin Hoekendorf of Hayden spoke against the study commission's recommendation.
70. Mr. Dave Ciscel of Athol spoke against adding more government and the recommendation.
71. Mr. Matt Edwards spoke against the study commission's recommendation.
72. Mr. Brian Smith of Coeur d'Alene spoke against adding commissioners and against hiring a county manager.
73. Mr. Russ McLain of Coeur d'Alene spoke against adding any additional commissioners. Mr. McLain spoke in favor of hiring a county manager.
74. Ms. Wendy Smith of Coeur d'Alene spoke against big government, adding commissioners and hiring a county manager.
75. Ms. Cathy Hoekendorf of Coeur d'Alene spoke against adding commissioners and hiring a county manager.
76. Ms. Lynda Putz of Hayden spoke against large government and the study commission's recommendation.
77. Mr. Tom Bosenko of Athol spoke against any change to the current form of government. Mr. Bosenko stated he is in favor of keeping elected officials elected.
78. Mr. John Hyatt of Coeur d'Alene spoke against adding commissioners and hiring a county manager.

After the last member of the public spoke, Chair Botting indicated the public comments period has ended.

IX. Items of Next Meeting Agenda

a. Confirming Scheduling Following Meetings

1. January 26
2. February 2 (Meeting Room 1B only)
3. February 9
4. February 16

The January 26th meeting will focus on discussing the information provided during the public hearing, establishing the writing committee and determining the schedule for future meetings.

X. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kurt Andersen and seconded by Bryant Bushling. A vote was taken and the motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Levine, Clerk/Secretary