

**Memphis and Shelby County  
Metropolitan Government Charter Commission**

**Minutes  
Organizational Meeting  
November 10, 2009  
10:00 a.m.**

**Commission members present:**

Julie Ellis, Acting Chair  
LouEtta Burkins  
Andre Fowlkes  
Damon Griffin  
J. W. Gibson  
Mayor Richard Hodges  
Linda Kerley  
Billy Orgel  
Chris Patterson  
Carmen Sandoval  
Richard Smith  
Jim Strickland  
Randolph Meade Walker  
Rufus Washington  
Rev. Ralph White

**Commission members absent:**

**Others present:**

Brian Kuhn, County Attorney  
John Ryder, Assistant County Attorney  
Christy Kinard, Assistant County Attorney  
Kelly Rayne, Assistant to County Mayor  
Herman Morris, City Attorney  
Mary White, Executive Secretary to County Attorney

The organizational meeting was held at the Shelby County Courthouse, 140 Adams Avenue, Room 325, Memphis, Tennessee 38103 and was called to order at approximately 10:20 a.m. It was determined that a quorum was present.

Julie Ellis called the meeting to order as Acting Chair. Acting Chair Ellis set out the mission and duty of the Commission to deliver a new Charter that integrates excellence and innovation. Acting Chair Ellis set out that in the next nine months they will be spending a great deal of time together and they are unpaid volunteer civic citizens. Acting Chair Ellis then turned the table over for introduction, asked each member of the Commission to say a few things about

themselves and what they hoped to achieve. (Introduction and remarks made by each member.) Thereafter Mayor Wharton was introduced for his opening comments.

Mayor Wharton announced that he took the liberty of asking Julie Ellis to serve as Acting Chair simply to call this meeting to order. Obviously, it is within the Commission's power to select whatever officers they wish. Thereafter the Mayor gave his comments regarding consolidation and what is expected of the Charter Commission to accomplish.

Dr. Walker then opened with a prayer.

Herman Morris was next to give his comments on what the Charter Commission is all about and described his experience years ago, when he was one of the former Shelby County Charter Commission members and served as Chair, to get the County Charter Commission from start to finish and getting it done.

John Ryder then gave his comments regarding his experience, also being a former member of the Shelby County Charter Commission, stating to keep it simple and stick to major principles of government.

Next to give his comments was Shelby County Attorney Brian Kuhn stating it's a three step process 1) education process – gathering information; 2) middle process - actual work of putting together the parts; and 3) panic – finding your running out of time – saving your hardest issues to the end and not to do that. That you have only 9 months to get this task accomplished. Needs to be a compromise document that works. County offices are at their disposal for assistance, i.e. staffing, places to meet, taking of minutes, legal counsel, etc.

Ms. Christy Kinard spoke regarding the Open Meetings Act and the Public Records Act and the nuances of these state laws and how they affect the Charter Commission and its work. She advised that email accounts will be set up for each member and that they are subject to the Public Records Act. Ms. Kinard advised it is necessary to post meetings with the time, date and place of such meeting, giving at least 48 hours notice is deemed adequate time before such meeting to comply with the Open Meetings Act, and the minutes needs to be fully recorded. That the budget of this Commission is \$50,000.00 and that the County Attorney's Office has established a line item in their budget. Ms. Kinard discussed the timeline the Commission has with regard to filing the proposed Charter.

Kelly Rayne discussed the notebook contents that Commissioners received before the meeting.

Discussion was then had by all members to establish meeting times and dates, the election of officers, selecting chair, where to meet, etc. After much discussion between the members it was established that they would meet on Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the County Commission Conference Room at 160 Main on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor. The agenda then is to elect officers of the Commission, housekeeping, research, staff decisions, committee selection, etc.

Motion to adjourn was made Walker and seconded by Smith. Motion received a unanimous vote in favor of adjournment. Acting Chair Ellis declared the meeting adjourned.