

**Anaconda-Deer Lodge County
Study Commission Special Meeting
6:00 p.m. Thursday, September 17, 2015
Courthouse Courtroom**

Present: Heather Edwards, Terry Galle, Milo Manning, Dan Tocher, Adam Vauthier, and Kevin Hart

Others Present: Julie Hoffman, Secretary

Members of the Public: Sandy Tocher, Cody Tocher, Rose Nyman, Jason Mavrinac, Artha Whealon, Whitney Nyman, Jessica Collinsworth, Becky Collinsworth, Sandy McNamara, Connie Ternes Daniels, Kathie Miller (Anaconda Leader), RJ Tocher

I. Call to Order

- A. Heather Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

- A. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. Old Business

- A. Revision of the Tentative Report

Heather Edwards informed the Study Commission and the public the purpose of the Special Meeting is to determine whether to revise the Tentative Report to include the recommendation to make the Clerk and Recorder an elected position. Although there was no question specific to the Clerk and Recorder position on the survey, seven comments were received with regard to the position being elected rather than appointed.

Adam Vauthier did not think it was necessary to revise the Tentative Report. However, if enough public comment is received on the Tentative Report to substantiate the Clerk and Recorder being elected, he suggested it be included in the Final Report.

Milo Manning suggested the Study Commission should take all of the comments under advisement and use them to formulate a decision in terms of what will go into both the Tentative and Final Report.

Kevin Hart noted the survey specifically had questions which addressed the CEO and Chief of Law Enforcement positions but did not have a question addressing the Clerk and Recorder position. Although seven comments were made regarding the Clerk and Recorder position being elected, it is a very small fraction of the electorate and it does not justify amending the Tentative Report. Mr. Hart reminded the group that the original Charter was touted as a masterpiece/model for other communities to use. He added that all department heads have always been appointed.

Terry Galle reminded the group it discussed the importance of the Clerk and Recorder position early on. He felt the Study Commission is doing an injustice by ignoring the seven comments made concerning the Clerk and Recorder position. He pointed out the survey results suggested leaving the CEO and Chief of Law Enforcement positions elected. However, based on the comments, the Study Commission chose to include the CEO and Chief

of Law Enforcement in the Tentative Report. He believes the Charter form of government allows for self-determination so the people need to have their voice heard.

Dan Tocher expressed concern that the Study Commission is not doing its job if it does not amend the Tentative Report.

Public Comment

Rose Nyman – 121 E. 3rd: Ms. Nyman remarked she has never had an issue with the Clerk and Recorder but believes the staff is not appropriately supervised. She believes the Study Commission is charged with listening to the people and understands the people feel very strongly about this. For her, however, it comes down to supervision in this department.

Connie Ternes Daniels – 203 S. Dixon: Ms. Ternes Daniels was a bit aghast when she saw the article in the paper announcing the Study Commission was holding a Special Meeting to discuss amending the Tentative Report to include the Clerk and Recorder position. She noted a few things with the survey the Study Commission distributed back in the spring and questioned the validity of the survey. She believed in addition to the Study Commission gathering public information, it is also their duty to look at government structure. Ms. Ternes Daniels informed the Study Commission the Clerk and Recorder requires a lot of education and experience. The position manages the County's budget along with the regular duties. If the position were to be elected, the County may have to ultimately hire a finance officer. As a citizen, Ms. Ternes Daniels is adamantly opposed to this position being singled out.

Heather Edwards noted the survey came from the Local Government Center.

Whitney Nyman – ~~800 Main~~: Ms. Nyman asked the Study Commission to pay attention to the position and not the individual in the position. She stated it is an important position.

Jessica Collinsworth – ~~800 Main~~: Ms. Collinsworth informed the Study Commission the Clerk and Recorder's office is responsible for tracking the County's budget. She stated she has been in the department for about a year and a half, and it has taken a long time to clean up what was left over from the previous Clerk and Recorder. She stated her office has worked together with the CEO and the department heads to be in compliance with all federal guidelines. She does not believe putting the position out to be elected for someone without a financial background is the smartest decision.

Artha Whealon – ~~800 Main~~: Ms. Whealon has been in the Clerk and Recorder's office for about a year. She informed the Study Commission she has held a lot of fiscal manager/office positions. She stated one thing an auditor always points out is it takes at least two years to get to fully know a job because of all the reports, etc. She feels if this position were to be elected it would be "mayday" all of the time. She has never known anyone in this type of position who does not have a rough and tough attitude with lots of guts and balls. She feels Joey does a great job and if she was not in the position, she would hope someone else would come in and do a great job. She does not believe this could be done if the position were elected.

Becky Collinsworth – ~~800 Main~~: Ms. Collinsworth stated she assists with elections. Prior to doing this she ran business offices at hospitals. She feels a complete turnover every four years would create a problem for the County. She stated Joey knows finance and the election process. She cautioned that the County does not want to screw up the election process because this is frowned upon in the United States. She added this position takes someone who wants to do it and it should not be a popularity contest.

Sandy Tocher – ~~609 E. 7th~~ **1815 Hamburg**: Ms. Tocher stated no one is going after Joey Blodnick. The discussion is focused on the position, not the person as the concern is for the Clerk and Recorder position just as it is for the CEO and Chief of Law Enforcement positions. She stated if Joey is doing a great job, the position would go to her in an election, and she would be welcome to be on the ballot if that is what she wanted to do. She noted that in all other communities in Montana, the Clerk and Recorder is an elected position.

-end public comment

Milo Manning noted when he first began working for ADLC, the Clerk and Recorder was an elected official. She was very efficient and ran the department with an iron hand. However, she did not have a good public persona. In the next election, she was defeated. The next Clerk and Recorder had a great persona but was incompetent and could not even take minutes. It was at this point he felt an elected individual was not good for this position.

Terry Galle was in agreement with Ms. Tocher and disagrees that it is an attack on the person. Rather, this is about the position.

Dan Tocher reminded his fellow Study Commission members all of them took an oath to represent the citizens of Deer Lodge County. He feels like they are not listening to the public by not amending the Tentative Report.

Heather Edwards informed the group this is in the hands of the people. The issue has been thoroughly discussed. The Tentative Report is publicly available and if comments concerning the position are made, it can be put into the final report. Her hope is that people start stepping forward and making their voices heard.

Adam Vauthier moved to proceed with the original Tentative Report; seconded by Milo Manning.

Motion passed with Adam Vauthier, Heather Edwards and Milo Manning in favor. Dan Tocher and Terry Galle were opposed.

VI. Miscellaneous

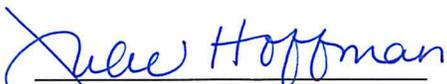
No miscellaneous.

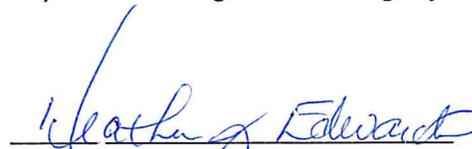
VII. Public Comment

No public comment.

VIII. Adjournment

Adam Vauthier moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Milo Manning. The meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.


Julie Hoffman
Secretary


Heather Edwards
Study Commission Chair