

Kirke Sievers, Chair
Snohomish County Council
3000 Rockefeller
Everett, WA 98201

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During the course of the debate the Commission determined that while an issue was not chosen for the ballot, the commission felt strongly that certain issues that did not make it to the ballot deserved further attention from the Council for changes to existing policy, or new ordinances.

By communicating this list to you the Commission is stating that the issue deserves further attention from the council. While they did not rise to the level of amendments to the Charter, they are no less worthy of thoughtful debate and consideration by the full council. The issues and a brief statement are as follows:

Issue 47. Consolidate Courthouse Security under the direction of the Sheriff. The Commission did not act on this issue but understands the County is in the process of completing a comprehensive review of security needs for the main administrative complex, as well as the other facilities off site. Furthermore, we understand that review is expected to produce recommendations for the administrative structure for related security services. Our review led us to believe that the current system was built piecemeal without thought given to an overall plan, leading to the current lack of clear administrative authority over security operations at the main county campus. We encourage the Council to address this issue based on the pending review in question, to develop a comprehensive security strategy for county facilities with clear and efficient lines of administrative authority.

Issue 30. Elected Department Signing Authority. The Commission considered the issue raised by Sheriff Bart and decided that the Council should consider if changes are necessary to the County Code to streamline the contracts process while maintaining fiscal accountability. Furthermore, the Commission concluded that signature authority in the hands of independently elected department heads for modest expenditures is a rational move, allowing for greater efficiency in the operation of such departments.

Issue 36. Ombudsman. The commission considered this issue at length but concluded it was not best addressed in the Charter. The Commission feels strongly the county would be better served by having a clear mechanism for citizens to have questions, concerns, and problems with county government addressed. The Commission strongly encourages the County to designate or establish an Ombudsman, or similar such official, through cost effective means. Such an action should also logically include enhanced public access, particularly online, to such a mechanism.

Issue 5. Transparency in County Government. This issue is being placed on the ballot in the form of changes to the Council's Rules of Procedure requirements in the Charter. The Commission felt strongly the Council should schedule evening meetings that are predictable and regular so that citizen access to such meetings is enhanced. Furthermore, the Commission should emphasize, it believes public access to the Council's work would be improved through the use of real time technology to increase the availability of relevant Council materials, such as agendas, minutes, and votes of individual members.

In addition, the Commission is including language in the ballot measure on Biennial Budgeting that addresses technical corrections in Sections 11.40, 11.70, and 11.80 of the Charter; corrections that did not receive voter approval in 1996. If the Biennial Budgeting measure does not receive voter approval this year, we encourage the Council to address the aforementioned technical corrections in a separate proposed Charter amendment, from the Council, at a later date. We thank you in advance for your attention to these matters. Do not hesitate to contact any of us if you require additional clarification or any other needed assistance.

Sincerely

2006 Snohomish County Charter Review Commission