



Ron Cameron, Charter Review Commissioner Dist. 2
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CORONER COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES FROM MARCH 5, 2025

Members of the Coroner Committee met on March 5, 2025 at the courthouse. The following Commissioners were in attendance:

Commissioner Ron Richards, Dist 2
Commissioner Alex Fane, Dist 1
Commissioner Ron Cameron, District 2

Commissioner Walde was excused for this meeting.

Commissioner Richards began our discussion by sharing his review of the King County Charter. While Medical examiner based, their Charter did have things that could help guide us in some direction. He also continued to discuss a declaratory judgement on having the prosecutor continue to serve as ex officio coroner. And finally, Comm. Richards was not certain that appointment was possible and that election of a coroner may be preferred.

Commissioner Fane commented on his research on coroner language from other charters not only in Washington State, but anywhere he could find some information.

We concluded by listing four or so options for one petition for amendment (or more) to present to the entire commissioner. They are:

- 1) electing the coroner
- 2) appointing the coroner
- 3) striking the sentence referencing the coroner from the charter, thereby leaving it to the county commissioners and administrator to develop the department.
- 4) leave the language as it is

Commissioner Richards also discussed separate out another amendment or explanation to assign a separate body to conduct inquests if necessary.

The committee did not commit to any of these on advice of the general Charter Commission and the results of outstanding legal questions that had been submitted to our attorney. Those answers could direct us to our choices.

Respectfully submitted

Ron Cameron

Gores, Loni

From: Cameron, Ron
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 8:54 AM
To: Fisch, Susan; Gores, Loni
Cc: Richards, Ron; Fane, Alex; Walde, Cathy
Subject: Coroner committee report

Susan,

The Coroner committee met on Wednesday, March 5 at the courthouse. Myself, and Commissioners Fane and Richards were in attendance. The meeting was zoomed and one citizen participated.

We went over the reports that have been filed by the members which was research into other home rule charters that discuss coroner positions. Unfortunately, not a lot is out there. Commissioner Ricahrds discussed King County's Home Rule Cahrter, but much of their discussion centers around the Medical Examiner System and the power of the County Executive has to administer that. For me, i was tasked with San Juan Countys porcess. They too are a Home Rule Charter County and their PROsecutor has been the Coroner until recently. I contacted San Juan County PROsecuter Amy Vita and learned their Home Rule Charter is now and always has been silent on the coroner position and they have always simply followed state law. That continues into 2025 with the new law. San Juan County has appointed an interim coroner as of Jan. 1, and is in the process of decided whether to appoint a new office or contract out for services. In short, there was little in place that can help us moving forward.

The committee discussed about four options to present to the Commission moving forward. While i know our time is short in the coming meeting, we respectfully request a bit of time to go over these options with the commission that our committee can move forward.

- elect the cornoner through charter amendment
- appoint the coroner through charter amendment
- simply strike the coroner position from the charter
- leave it like it is and continue with the prosecutor to handle the duties
- and Commissioner Richards suggested any one of the above with an addition that separates out the inquest process to be assigned to another body to conduct the inquiry

More will be detailed at the meeting. The answers may be helped with a response to a legal question whether multiple options can be contained within an amendment phrase on the ballot.

We look forward to discussing this in further detail at our next meeting.

Respectfully submitted.
Ron Cameron