

ALTOONA GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014 – 6:00 P.M.
CITY OF ALTOONA TRAINING FACILITY & COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1320 WASHINGTON AVENUE, ALTOONA, PA

CALL TO ORDER at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Hippo

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL was taken by City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer; present were Study Commission Members: Dave Duncan, Vice-Chairman Richard Fiore Jr. Richard Flarend, Chairman Wayne Hippo and Robert Kutz; Heather Eckels was absent; Beverly Green was absent

ALL PUBLIC COMMENT – offered by Chairman Hippo and none given

ADOPTION OF THE SEPTEMBER 22, 2014 MEETING MINUTES - Upon motion of Bob Kutz seconded by Richard Flarend all were in favor to adopt the September 22, 2014 meeting minutes; there was no further discussion and the motion carried; Heather Eckels was absent; Beverly Green was absent

MOTION – Solicitor Larry Clapper asked for a motion to ratify the actions of the Chairman in ordering informational and promotional signs and authorizing the Chairman to expend funds for informational and promotional material within the amount budgeted by City Council concerning the approval of the referendum on the Home Rule Study Commission; there was a motion by Dave Duncan and a second by Richard Flarend; there was no further discussion and the motion carried; Heather Eckels was absent; Beverly Green was absent

GENERAL DISCUSSION REGARDING OUTSTANDING ISSUES PRIOR TO THE NOVEMBER 4TH ELECTION – Chairman Hippo reported that he received an email from IAFF 299 President Bryson Peterman stating the Firefighters Local endorsed home rule as a favorable form of government for the City and thanked the Commission for their efforts and recognized the work of the Commission and City Council; Chairman Hippo thanked the Firefighter Union for their efforts and their willingness to sit down and talk to a number of the members of the Commission over time; Chairman Hippo stated the Commission is grateful for their support and the Commission looks forward to working with the Firefighters to get the ballot referendum ratified

Chairman Hippo read Bryson Peterman's email into the record as follows: *On behalf of the International Association of Firefighters Altoona Local 299 I would like to inform you the Executive Board voted unanimously at our October 19, 2014 meeting to endorse the Home Rule Charter. We feel this change will give Altoona the best opportunity to be the first Third Class City to emerge from Act 47. We offer our support to the Government Study Commission because we know the Commissioners, as well as City Council, know the value of maintaining our already high levels of public safety. We understand our recent contractual concessions, along with the transition to the home rule form of government, will allow a more*

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stable, short term financial future, as well as the best hope for long term prosperity for our beloved City. Best regards, Bryson Peterman

Chairman Hippo once again thanked the Altoona Firefighters

Chairman Hippo reported a very favorable meeting was held with ABCD as they plan to endorse the ballot referendum and the Home Rule Charter; Chairman Hippo thanked Richard Fiore and Beverly Green for their work

Bob Kutz stated he felt there was an indication at the second public hearing the Commission held that AFSCME 2188 were on board and supportive as well; Bob Kutz felt the Police were also supportive by the words of the FOP President at that hearing

Bob Kutz stated there were recently five Mayors of Altoona on the air that endorsed this process and the change in the form of government which was quite an accomplishment; they were not all of the same party but all in agreement that they want to do what is best for the City of Altoona

Chairman Hippo stated there have been ongoing speaking opportunities and thanked everyone for their efforts; Chairman Hippo stated the presentations have been well received and there have been some questions about some of the issues but once getting information out to people they recognize that it is something that has a chance to be very beneficial; Chairman Hippo commended the group stating there is a broad base of the community on the Commission and none have pushed their own agenda and the Commission has truly tried to identify a neutral document that allows the City to govern itself as opposed to a document that is trying to advocate a position

Richard Fiore stated since the last meeting he spoke to Rotary Club, Tea Party, ABCD Corp., M&T Bank; Vice-Chairman Fiore will be on Steve Willet's radio show on WRTA on Monday, October 27th at 9am

Chairman Hippo asked Beverly Green, Richard Flarend and Richard Fiore to put together a newspaper ad and circulate it to the group for input; Richard Flarend stated he would like to see the endorsements of the various groups in the ad if the groups agree to it; Richard Fiore stated they should contact the groups and inform them of the ad on November 2nd and see if they are willing to be named in the ad; Linda Rickens Schellhammer stated the *Altoona Mirror* will be able to do a full page ad for the amount approved and it will have color; Linda Rickens Schellhammer stated she would provide the contact information for the *Altoona Mirror* staff person handling the ad and the deadline information to the three named Commissioners

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Linda Rickens Schellhammer stated she had not heard from Jody Gill yet and that she would contact Jody again about a possible interview on Central PA Live

Bob Kutz received a question from the general public as follows: in 1987-88 when the form of government was studied and changed, the current sitting Mayor at the time had intentions of running for the new Mayor's position but was told that he could not; Bob asked if the current sitting Mayor can run for the new, full time Mayor's position; Solicitor Larry Clapper stated he would have to research this as it could have to do with holding two offices and you would have to resign from one office before holding another office

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT – offered by Chairman Hippo and none given

MEDIA QUESTIONS – Bill Kibler, *Altoona Mirror and* Steve Willet, WRTA Radio asked questions of various Commission members

ADJOURNMENT - By Chairman Hippo

Linda Rickens Schellhammer, CityClerk/Recording Secretary