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# Columbia County, FL | Charter Bylaws

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## BY-LAWS OF THE COLUMBIA COUNTY CHARTER COMMISSION

### Rule 1. Public Meetings

All meetings of the Commission, including all meetings of its committees and study committees, shall be open to the public. Notice of the date, time and place of said meetings shall be made available to the public in advance of the meetings by *written notice to one or more newspapers of general circulation* in the County, by *posting the date*, time and place upon the Charter Commission's Internet site and by posting a notice on the *public bulletin board maintained* for such purposes at the Columbia County Courthouse Annex, at least 48 hours before the meeting.

### Rule 2. Citizen Participation at Meetings

The Commission will entertain public comment on all substantive agenda items. Under the agenda item of Remarks of Interested Citizens, interested citizens shall be afforded an opportunity to comment on matters before the Commission. The remarks of any citizen should be germane to the agenda or matters to come before the Commission. Each agenda shall include a point during the meeting at which Remarks of Interested Citizens may be made. The Commission may impose reasonable limitations on time allotted to any citizen or on the total time to be allotted to public participation during the meeting. Each citizen addressing the Commission is asked to observe the general rules of courtesy and civility, and to avoid repetition of other speakers. Citizens are asked to limit their comments to five minutes in the interest of fairness to all citizens desiring to be heard, although this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Chairman for good cause.



### Rule 3. Place of Meetings

The regular meetings of the Commission shall be at the Columbia County Courthouse. The Commission may also resolve to hold meetings at other locations. The meetings of the Commission, committees or study committees should be at a meeting place large enough to accommodate not only the Commission, committee or study committee, as the case may be, but also interested citizens. The meeting place chosen shall be open and accessible, free of any admission charge or restriction, to the commission and public. Meetings conducted by study committees or committees should be held at a location selected by the chairman of such study committee or committee.

## Rule 4. Call and Notice of Meetings

Date, time and place of each regular meeting of the Commission shall be announced at the preceding regular or special meeting of the Commission, and posted on public bulletin boards in accordance with Columbia County policy. The agenda of each regular or special meeting shall include the fixing of the date of the next regular meeting. Special meetings may be called by the Chair of the Commission, or by any seven (7) members of the Commission requesting such special meeting in writing filed with the County Manager. The County Manager shall be responsible for mailing a written notice of the date, time and place of meetings of the Commission to members of the Commission. All such notices shall be mailed to the members of the Commission at their addresses listed on an appropriate form kept by the County Manager. It shall be the responsibility of any member of the Commission to notify the County Manager of any change of address. The Chair of each study committee or committee shall be responsible through the County Manager, for giving sufficient written or telephone notice of study committee or committee meetings to members.

A written notice of special meetings of the entire Commission shall be given in the same manner as written notices of regular meetings, except that the written notice of a special meeting shall include the purpose for the call of such special meeting.

## Rule 5. Agenda for Regular Meetings

The agenda for regular meetings of the Commission shall be generally as follows, subject to amendment or revision by the Commission Chair or a majority of the members present:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Pledge
- III. Roll Call
- IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
- V. Introduction of Invited Guest (if any) and Their Presentations
- VI. Report of Chairperson
- VII. Reports of Committees (if any)
- VIII. Unfinished Business
- IX. Remarks of Interested Citizens
- X. New Business
- XI. Adjournment with Day Fixed for Next Meeting



## Rule 6. Recording of Minutes

Meetings of the Commission shall be recorded on recording machines. The County Manager shall be responsible for insuring that the recording apparatus is available at each meeting of the Commission. The tapes of all such meetings shall be preserved as required by law. Failure to tape record a meeting shall not affect the validity of any proceeding. The Commission shall make disposition of the tapes of such meetings to the Clerk of Court at the conclusion of the work of the Commission. The Clerk of Court shall further be responsible for the safeguarding of the tapes of such meetings. In addition to the tape recording of the meetings, a representative of the Clerk of Court shall take down minutes of the proceedings of the Commission. The chair of each committee or a person designated by the chair shall take minutes at all proceedings of the committee, and shall transcribe and deliver such minutes to the Clerk of Court. All records of the Commission, including the tape recordings of meetings, shall be made available to the public during office hours of the Clerk of Court or as established by the Commission. Minutes of committee proceedings shall be filed at least once per month. The Chair may request that a verbatim record of any proceeding before the Commission be made. Such a request is in addition to the requirements of Rule 6.

## Rule 7.

A majority of the members of the Commission, or of any committee shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business, and a majority of those present shall be sufficient to agree to any motion except as otherwise set forth in these bylaws.

## Rule 8. Attendance

Regular attendance and attention to the business of the Commission is expected. The seat of any member who fails to attend three consecutive regular meetings, without previous notification, shall be presumed vacant, and the Chair shall report that fact to the County Commissioner who appointed the member, for confirmation that a vacancy exists.

## Rule 9. Proxy Voting

No member of the Commission or any of its study committees or committees shall have the power to vote by proxy. Only those members physically present shall be entitled to vote.

## Rule 10. Deliberations

**I. Issues Agenda.** The Commission shall approve, by majority vote, an initial agenda of issues to be considered, and a schedule of meetings at which the several approved issues shall be discussed. Prior to completion of the discussion meetings, additional issues shall be added and scheduled upon the request of four or more members.

After completion of the scheduled discussion meetings, additional issues may be scheduled with the concurrence of a majority of the Commission.

Any issue may be stricken from further consideration at discussion meetings with the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present, but not less than seven members.

**A. Decision Agenda.** The Commission shall approve, by majority of the whole commission, a schedule and agenda of meetings at which approved issues and approved sample text shall be considered for inclusion in proposed Charter.

After an issue has been discussed, the Commission may instruct the appropriate staff to prepare sample text for its review at a scheduled meeting.



A proposal and text may be approved for tentative inclusion in the Charter, or the tentative Charter may be amended, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present, but not less than seven members.

**B.Final adoption and transmittal.**After all public hearings, the Commission shall amend if necessary, approve and transmit the proposed Charter for Columbia County, and a proposed ballot title and summary of the substance and chief purpose of the measure, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present, but not less than seven members.

## Rule 11. Voting Generally

Each member present shall vote, unless a conflict of interest exists, in which case said conflict shall be publicly stated prior to the vote and filed in writing with the County Manager, as provided by law.

## Rule 12. Official Rules of Order

Except as otherwise provided in these rules of procedure, Robert's Rules of Order Revised (75th Anniversary Edition) shall apply in matters of procedural conflict for the Commission, committees, and study committees.

## Rule 13. Duties of the Chair

The Chair shall:

- a. Preside at all regular and special meetings of the Commission;
- b. Represent the Commission at all functions and activities so requiring (but without authority to state any position of the Commission not previously approved);
- c. Serve as ex-officio (non-voting) member of all committees;
- d. Be charged with the responsibility of making all committee assignments and appointment of all chairs of committees;
- e. Call special meetings where necessary;
- f. Coordinate publicity;
- g. Approve all disbursement requests, certifying that the disbursement has been duly approved by the entire Commission.

## Rule 14. Duties of the Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the chairman in the absence or inability to serve of the latter.

## Rule 15. Duties of the County Manager

The County Manager shall:

- a. Prepare, dispatch, file and otherwise process all correspondence for the Commission as a whole;
- b. Provide for the reproduction or copying of such records as may be requested by the public in a reasonable period of time and at a rate consistent with Columbia County policy.
- c. Maintain accurate records showing the nature, purpose and amount of all expenditures made on behalf of the Commission;
- d. Coordinate with the Office of the Clerk of Court in connection with the proof and filing of all disbursement requests and other administrative requirements.
- e. Perform other duties as prescribed by the Chairman.



## Rule 16. Duties of the Clerk of Court

The Clerk of Court shall:

- a. Be custodian of all records of the Commission;
- b. Keep an address and attendance roster;
- c. The Clerk of Court shall make all minutes available to the public and open for inspection at all reasonable times. The attendance roster shall likewise be open for inspection by any member and by the public at any reasonable time.
- d. Provide for the reproduction or copying of such records as may be requested by the public in a reasonable period of time and at a rate consistent with Columbia County policy.
- e. Perform other duties as prescribed by the Chairman.

## Rule 17. Committees

The Commission may authorize the appointment of Committees as it sees fit to plan and administer ministerial functions of the Commission, or to investigate and report to the full Commission on studies of special departments or functions of the existing or proposed government, or for any other lawful purpose; provided that no Committee shall have any final authority vested by law in the full Commission.

## Rule 18. Policy on Publicity

Every effort shall be made to insure that the proceedings of the Commission are made available to the news media. No attempt shall be made to inhibit the normal processes of the news media. Public statements by the Commission or by study committees shall be coordinated through the Chair and the Executive Assistant. Members of the Commission may make public or private statements of their personal feelings, attitudes or beliefs at any time. In making such statements, however, members of the Commission shall on every occasion make an affirmative statement that their views are not represented as the views of the Commission as a whole. The Chair of the Commission shall be responsible for announcing the adopted positions of the Commission.

## Rule 19. Amendment

These rules and policies shall be the by-laws of the Commission and may be amended by an affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3) of the members of the Commission present and voting.

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