

Elected v Appointed Committee SUMMARY 5/26/21

1. Should the County Manager remain appointed?

Vote: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays **No Change Recommended to full CRC**

Findings:

- a. The council/manager form is working.
- b. more accountability and transparency
- c. allows for the ability to find qualified, professional, credentialed people
- d. appointment can insulate the appointed person from pressures of political interests
- e. allows quick removal should they prove incompetent
- f. appointment of County Manager allows the County Council to maintain greater control over county government.

2. Should County Health Officer remain an appointed position?

Vote: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays **No Change Recommended to full CRC**

Findings:

The County Health Officer should remain appointed because it allows for the ability to find qualified, professional, credentialed people.

3. Should there be term limits for County Council?

Vote: 4 Ayes, 2 Nays **Recommend to Full CRC**

The Elected vs Appointed Committee voted to propose that County Council Members should be limited to three consecutive four-year terms and that once a Member has sat out of office for one four-year term that Member would be eligible to begin the term-limit cycle again (eligible to run for three consecutive terms).

Findings:

In support of this proposal, the Committee states the following:

- 1) It is important that new voices be brought in as a part of County leadership from time-to-time. The County will benefit from new perspectives and new ideas.
- 2) When the advantages of incumbency begin to seem permanent, they can discourage challengers.

3) It is true that term limits, if too short, could cause the Council to lose important institutional knowledge, but the possibility of three consecutive four-year terms (twelve years) will provide a safeguard against that problem.

4. Should the Auditor and Treasurer's departments be consolidated?

No Change Recommended to Full CRC

Vote: To leave Auditor-Treasurer-Assessor offices separate,
5 Ayes, 1 Nay

The Committee declined to consolidate these departments because the current system is not broken.

Should the Auditor, Treasurer, and Assessor remain elected offices?

Vote: To have Auditor, Treasurer, and Assessor remain elected offices. 4 Ayes, 2 Abstentions

Findings re: Keeping Auditor elected

Departments are working well as they are. Financial services, including auditing, should be free of County Council control. All WA state counties, except King County, elect the auditor.

Findings re: Keeping the Assessor elected

Departments are working well as they are. Financial services, including assessor, should be free of County Council control. In Washington state the County Assessor is an elected position in all counties. The Assessor's responsibilities are such that he or she is responsible to the citizens of the county and should not be appointed and supervised by either another appointed official such as the County Manager nor the elected County Council. Independence is key for the proper execution of the County Assessors duties as referenced in multiple Washington state RCW's.

Findings for Keeping Treasurer Elected:

Departments are working well as they are. Financial services, including treasurer, should be free of County Council control. By remaining an elected office, the Treasurer preserves important checks and balances needed for the collection of funds in the County. The Treasurer is also responsible for the County's

investment management. There is no intent to provide a solution in search of a problem.

5. Should the Sheriff change from elected to appointed position?

Vote: 5 Nay, 1 Abstention **No Change Recommended to full CRC**

Findings:

As the most visible elected official, the Sheriff is accountable to voters. As an elected official, the Sheriff can concentrate more efforts on law enforcement priorities. Election also removes the position from Council and Administration intrusion.

6. Should the County Clerk remain an elected position?

Vote: 5 Ayes, 1 Abstention **No Change Recommended to full CRC**

Findings:

a) An Independently elected Clerk allows for strong advocacy on behalf of the public that might be contrary to the views of other electeds or department heads serving in the Judicial, Executive, or Legislative Branches. Appointment by any other official or board compromises this advocacy role.

b) The County Clerk is unique in County Government as the office has mandated duties in both the Judicial and Executive branches of government making reporting to any other branch a potential improper check on the balance of power in government.

c) An independently elected Clerk preserves accountability and access for the public to the court record and cannot be subject to the influence of any other official or judge. The Clerk needs to be on equal footing with other department heads and officials to best advocate for the public.

d) Recruiting and appointing the Clerk as a Department head would most likely result in increased costs to the County, with no accountability of the position to the public.

**Proposed Minimum Qualifications for Elected Officials
05-26-21**

7. Add language regarding minimum requirements for elected positions.

Vote: 6 Ayes for each 5 officials **Recommend to full CRC**

Proposals:

A. Assessor

Shall be a state-accredited real estate appraiser under RCW 36.21.015 or a state-licensed or state-certified real estate appraiser under RCW 18.140

B. Auditor

Proposed qualifications shall be two years as a chief deputy of a Washington county auditor, or three years of other relevant experience in the office of a Washington county auditor, or three years of experience in accounting or financial management.

C. County Clerk

Proposed qualifications shall be two years as a chief deputy in the office of a Washington county clerk, or three years of relevant experience in the office of a Washington county clerk, or three years of other relevant experience working in Washington courts.

D. Sheriff

Proposed qualifications shall be two years of experience as a full-time law enforcement officer.

E. Treasurer

Proposed qualifications shall be two years of relevant experience in the office of a Washington County Treasurer, Auditor or County Clerk or some combination thereof, or three years of experience in accounting or financial management.

Findings: The Elected v Appointed Committee finds that minimum qualifications for the various elected offices are necessary to ensure that candidates for those offices possess the basic skills and experience necessary to effectively perform the duties of the office.

5/25/21: The full CRC voted to reject this recommendation for all five positions.