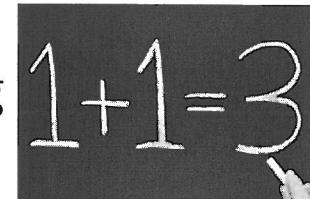


City Governing Structure in Kansas

Possible reorganization of the City of McPherson

April 2018

Comparisons are often misleading



Diversity

- 3,826 local governmental units in Kansas (5th most in US)
- 627 cities, 105 counties and 286 school districts
- Cities
 - Only 123 have populations more than 2000
 - Budgets from \$15k to \$641 m

Home Rule Amendment

Because of the Home Rule Amendment to the Kansas Constitution, most non-uniform laws are subject to change by Charter Ordinance

Classes of Cities in Kansas

First Class – larger cities (greater than 15,000);

Second Class – 2000-15,000 (option to go up to 25,000);

Third Class – smaller cities

- Don't have to go to 3rd Class if we shrink

Some of the Forms of Cities

- Mayor-Council
 - Oldest and most common (555/625)
 - Size of council from 4-12 members
 - Council elected from Wards for 2 years
 - Mayor elected at-large – don't typically vote
- Modified Mayor-Council
 - Mayor & 3 Council members elected at large
 - 4 Council members by Ward
 - 4 year terms
 - Again, mayor does not typically vote

Some of the Forms of Cities *(cont.)*

- Pure Commission Form
 - First allowed in 2nd Class Cities in 1909
 - Hailed by reformers as a way to bring business management to City Hall
 - 2015 – 8 Cities left using this form
 - Most common commission size is 3 with 4 year terms
 - Overall control is in the Commission – not a commissioner
 - Mayor has same powers as a Commissioner, but not more

Administration

1. City Manager
 - Responsible for the administration of all affairs
 - Power to hire/fire
 - Commission/council is a policy making body, but does not run city affairs
2. City Administrator
 - Coordinator of City activities
 - Influence on Budget and Personnel, but not final authority
3. City Superintendent
 - Authority of outside activities of the City (e.g. utilities, public works)

McPherson, KS

- City of the Second Class
- Pure Commission form of Government
 - 3 members elected every 4 years at large
 - Each Commission member heads specific departments & each rotate on the BPU Board
 - Mayor – Public Safety (PD, FD, EMS) and Admin/Fin
 - Comm'r of Streets & Utilities – PW, Storm Water, Waste Water, Insp/Code
 - Comm'r of Lands & Faculties – Parks, Muni/Community Buildings, Golf Course & Cemetery
- City Administrator

General Advantage to 5 Members

Diversity of Voices:

- + With two additional voices, there would be more avenues both for someone to serve and to be heard;
- + Everyone brings views and experience to the Commission
- + Passage would typically require 3 votes instead of 2 votes and in some cases 4 votes would be needed
- + If two members of the Board were absent, the governing body could still make a quorum and take action

Possible General Disadvantages

- Efficiency – too many cooks in the kitchen
- Lines of authority – do not want department heads answering to 2 commissioners
- Voting Precincts – Voting by Wards will bring an element of competition into who gets money/projects for their ward
- Cost – salary and benefits need would increase unless everyone took a cut
- Transparency – law of unintended consequences – commissioners could meet privately
- Citizen control – if a city manager is created, the manager runs the city

Example of Minimal Possible Plan

- Making the smallest changes possible
- NOT AN ENDORSEMENT
- Remain a Pure Commission with Administrator, Elect Everyone At-large for staggered 4 year terms
 - Mayor – Admin/Finance/CVB
 - Comm 1 – Vice Mayor/Public Safety (PD, Fire, Health)
 - Comm 2 – Public Works
 - Comm 3 – Land and Facilities
 - Comm 4 – Utilities (BPU permanent liaison, Waste Water & Storm Water Utility)

Extra Issues to Consider with the Simple Plan

- PW Director will report to 2 commissioners or you will have a separate head over the storm water utility and have to ensure coordination (E.g. Every street project has a storm water component)
- In an Emergency situation – Vice Mayor would really be the key player, not the mayor
- Only one member of the governing body would be familiar with BPU

Steps Necessary for Transition**

1. Need to know what we are transitioning to
 - A. Election is necessary if government for more than 4 years (KSA 12-184b);
 - B. Unclear if stay pure commission but increase to 5 if that would require an election
2. Amend list of Charter Ordinances
3. Amend list of Ordinary Ordinances/City Code
4. Amend internal policies and procedures

Conclusions

1. McPherson can legally change its form of government into a vast array of alternatives.
2. Every change will have positive and negative aspects.
3. At this time, it is impossible to conclude whether changing City government will address the motivation for the change as the motivation is unclear.
4. Likewise, it is also impossible to conclude whether the motivation for change can be addressed in a better way than changing the governmental structure.