

CAPTIONING  
MAY 24, 2010  
CHARTER REVIEW BOARD

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\*\*\*following meeting. It should be used for informational  
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>>MITCHELL THROWER: [MICROPHONE NOT ON]

BY HAVING MR. FRANK REDDICK LEAD US IN THE PLEDGE OF  
ALLEGIANCE.

PLEASE RISE.

[PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE]

THANK YOU, MR. REDDICK.

NEXT UP WE HAVE PUBLIC COMMENT.

FIRST UP WE HAVE COMMISSIONER KEVIN BECKNER.

WELCOME.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: WELL, GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY, AND FIRST,  
LET ME JUST THANK ALL OF YOU FOR SERVING.

I'M HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY COMMISSIONER KEVIN BECKNER, SERVING  
DISTRICT 6 COUNTYWIDE, AND TONIGHT I KIND OF WANTED TO COME  
TO YOU TO BRING MY THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS ABOUT THE IPA'S  
OFFICE, AND WHAT I'M GOING TO ASK YOU TO DO IS TO CONSIDER  
REVERSING YOUR DECISION AND NOT PUTTING THIS ON THE BALLOT  
TO BECOME ABOLISHED.

I THINK THAT -- IN MY OPINION THAT BOTH THE IPA'S OFFICE

AND THE CLERK'S OFFICE SERVE TWO VERY IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS TO THE COUNTY, AND I THINK THEY ACTUALLY HAVE TWO VERY SEPARATE ROLES, AND -- AND AGAIN, I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE BOTH HERE, AND I DON'T SEE AS BOTH OF THOSE AGENCIES AS BEING DUPLICATIVE.

I LOOK AT THE CLERK'S MISSION, NUMBER ONE, IS TO FIRST AND FOREMOST PROVIDE FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT OF THE COUNTY -- FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE COUNTY.

I ALSO LOOK TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE TO PROVIDE -- MAKE SURE THAT ALL OF OUR ORGANIZATIONS AND THIS COUNTY STAYS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE RULES, THE REGULATIONS, AND SUCH FORTH THAT ARE PUT FORTH AND ARE ESTABLISHED BY LAW.

THE IPA'S OFFICE I LOOK MORE TOWARDS THE IDEA OF PROVIDING INTERNAL EFFICIENCIES AND HELPING US PROVIDE ECONOMY AND MAKING SURE THAT OUR OPERATIONS ARE -- ARE OPERATING TO THE -- TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS, AND SO TO ME THERE'S TWO VERY DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS THAT THOSE AGENCIES PLAY, AND I MUST TELL YOU THAT THE IPA'S ROLE HAS BEEN VERY CONTROVERSIAL, AND I THINK THAT'S DUE PROBABLY TO TWO PARTS.

NUMBER ONE HAS TO DO WITH PROBABLY THE STRUCTURE ESTABLISHED BY BOARD POLICY, SO WE CERTAINLY HAVE A LOT AS A BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO DO TO REESTABLISH AND TO REALLY REDEFINE WHAT THE ROLE IS OF THE IPA, AND ALSO, I THINK WE HAVE TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE LEADERSHIP AS WELL, AND

CERTAINLY -- AND WHEN WE LOOK AT WHO HAS SERVED IN THOSE POSTS, WE CAN ASK THE QUESTION IF WE'VE HAD THE BEST LEADERSHIP IN THE OFFICE, AND PERHAPS WE HAVE AND PERHAPS WE HAVEN'T, BUT I THINK THERE'S -- ALSO NEEDS TO BE ANOTHER PERHAPS SELECTION COMMITTEE OR SOME OTHER TYPE OF COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED TO HELP ALSO SELECT AN IPA, SO I RECOGNIZE AS A BOARD MEMBER WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK THAT WE HAVE TO DO TO ADDRESS THE STRUCTURE OF THE IPA, BUT I JUST COME TO YOU TO -- TO GIVE YOU MY FEEDBACK AND TO LET YOU KNOW HOW IMPORTANT I THINK THE IPA SERVES THIS COUNTY AND WOULD ASK FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION TO NOT ABOLISH THAT OFFICE BUT -- BUT ACTUALLY REDEFINE THE STRUCTURE OF IT, AND THAT'S BY CHANGING THE NAME TO THE INTERNAL -- OF THE IPA TO THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S OFFICE AS DEFINED IN SECTION 4.10 OF THE CHARTER AND THEN ALSO REMOVING THE ROLE OF BUDGET ANALYST IN THE IPA'S ROLE.

SO WITH THE PLEASURE OF THE CHAIRMAN AND THE BOARD, I'D BE HAPPY TO ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE OF ME.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

ANY QUESTIONS FOR COMMISSIONER BECKNER AT THIS POINT?

MRS. REBACK.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: COMMISSIONER, HAVE YOU AS A COMMISSION --

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: THANKS.

HAVE YOU, AS THE COMMISSION, RECEIVED THE REPORT THAT WE RECEIVED FROM THE CONSULTANT WHO PRESENTED LAST WEEK AGAIN REGARDING SUGGESTED FIXES TO THE POSITION?

>>KEVIN BECKNER: YES, AND I'M IN FULL CONCURRENCE OF HIS REPORT.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: AND WHAT, IF ANYTHING, IS THE COMMISSION DOING TO FORMULATE ANY POLICY CHANGES MAYBE CONSISTENT WITH THAT REPORT OR OTHERWISE?

>>KEVIN BECKNER: WE ARE SCHEDULED TO TAKE THIS UP AT OUR NEXT BOARD MEETING TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS, AND I ASSUME THIS WOULD PROBABLY GO INTO JULY.

I'VE SCHEDULED A TIME FOR MR. TARR TO COME BACK WHEN HE WAS AVAILABLE AT OUR JULY 14th MEETING TO TALK ABOUT STRUCTURAL ISSUES, BUT LIKE I SAID, THERE'S A LOT OF WORK THAT I THINK WE HAVE TO DO AS A BOARD FROM SETTING OUT THE WORK POLICY OF THE IPA AND REALLY MORE REDEFINING WHAT THE ROLES ARE BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW THAT IT'S ALWAYS BEEN CLEAR TO THE IPA WHAT THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE BOARD HAS BEEN.

SO AGAIN, WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING SURE THAT THAT'S SET OUT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. ROBINSON.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: THANK YOU.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: YEAH.

COMMISSIONER BECKNER, WE HAVE TWO ISSUES HERE.

ONE IS ELIMINATE THE PERFORMANCE AUDITOR.

THE OTHER IS THE BUDGET ANALYST, AND THE ONLY WAY THAT CAN CHANGE IS BY AMENDMENT TO THE CHARTER, SO TRULY THE BUDGET ANALYST SHOULDN'T BE STILL IN THE CHARTER, SO WE HAVE TO HAVE SOMETHING ON THE BALLOT TO REMOVE THE BUDGET ANALYST.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: YEAH.

WHAT MY SUGGESTION WOULD BE, THERE'S TWO RECOMMENDATIONS THAT MR. TARR MADE THAT I AM IN -- AGAIN CONCUR WITH, AND AGAIN, THAT'S REMOVING THE BUDGET ANALYST ROLE AS THE IPA AND THEN ALSO CHANGING THE NAME TO THE INTERNAL AUDITOR, AND WHY I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMOVE THE BUDGET ANALYST SECTION OF THAT, BECAUSE WHEN WE'RE LOOKING AT HAVING AN INTERNAL AUDIT OFF AN AUDIT, THERE CAN BE SOME CONFLICT THERE.

WHERE I DO THINK I CAN SEE THE ROLE OF THE IPA IS, FOR INSTANCE, WHEN WE'RE GOING THROUGH THE BUDGET PROCESS, IF, FOR INSTANCE, MR. JOHNSON OR THEIR BUDGET DIRECTOR IS PRESENTING THE BUDGET TO US, TO HELP PROVIDE A FAIR AND BALANCED CLARIFICATION OF WHAT MR. JOHNSON'S RECOMMENDATIONS MIGHT BE OR WHOEVER THE BUDGET DIRECTOR MAY BE AT THE TIME, I THINK I WOULD SEE THAT AS BEING PART OF THE ROLE OF THE IPA, AND -- HOWEVER, TO ACTUALLY BE THE ANALYST TO WALK BEHIND MR. JOHNSON I DON'T THINK WOULD BE THE APPROPRIATE ROLE, AND THAT'S -- AND I WOULD AGREE WITH YOU THAT THAT NEEDS TO BE REMOVED.

AND AS FAR AS THE NAME GOES, I THINK THAT IF YOU ARE AN AUDITOR AND YOU'RE CALLED A PERFORMANCE AUDITOR, THAT HAS A DEFINED MEANING, WHERE WE'RE LOOKING FOR IN OUR PARTICULAR SITUATION AS SOMEBODY THAT CAN CONDUCT MORE GENERAL AUDITS AND NOT NECESSARILY JUST BE PRECLUDED TO PERFORMANCE AUDITS.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: SO THEN YOU'RE GOING TO BE LOOKING AT HAVING A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THAT PERSON?

I MEAN THE PREVIOUS PERSON SAID -- MR. BARNES SAID THERE WASN'T ANY JOB DESCRIPTION AND HE TRIED TO GET ONE WRITTEN UP AND THE COUNTY COMMISSION WOULDN'T EVER GIVE HIM ONE. SO, I MEAN, HE MADE SOME STATEMENTS THAT PROBABLY ARE BEYOND THIS CHARTER REVIEW BOARD; HOWEVER, I THINK WE'VE GOT TO HAVE AN AMENDMENT ON THE BALLOT FOR THE VOTERS TO SAY DO THEY WANT BUDGET ANALYST TO STAY THERE.

SO WE'VE GOT TO HAVE SOMETHING ON THERE, AND WE REALLY NEED TO DO IT THIS FALL INSTEAD OF WAITING TILL 2012.

BUT THE OTHER ISSUES THAT WERE IN THAT REPORT, I WOULD ASSUME THAT THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ARE GOING TO TAKE THOSE UP BECAUSE IF NOT, THEN WE'RE PROBABLY GOING TO GO OVER THEM I WOULD THINK BECAUSE WE GOT PUBLIC HEARING SET FOR IT NOW.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: YES.

IN FACT, I'M LEADING THE CHARGE ON THAT TO MAKE SURE THAT WE -- JUST BECAUSE OUR IPA IS NOT HERE ANY LONGER THAT WE

DON'T LET THIS ISSUE GO BY THE SIDE, SO AGAIN, WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO AS A BOARD TO REDEFINE THAT PARTICULAR POSITION FROM JOB DESCRIPTIONS, MORE CLARITY AS FAR AS WHAT OUR EXPECTATIONS ARE.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. FISHER.

>>RALPH FISHER: MR. BECKNER, RALPH FISHER.

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE.

IT'S A GREAT HONOR.

I WISH EVERY SINGLE COMMISSIONER WOULD BE HERE LIKE YOU WERE, BELIEVE ME.

WHAT ABOUT THE IDEA OF TAKING AWAY THE REQUIREMENT THAT IT TAKES FIVE OF YOU, A SUPERMAJORITY, TO APPOINT OR REMOVE THIS INTERNAL PERFORMANCE AUDITOR AND CHANGE THAT SO THAT IT ONLY REQUIRES FOUR OF YOU?

WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOR OF THAT CHANGE, SIR?

>>KEVIN BECKNER: I THINK WHEN -- ANY TIME THAT YOU'RE LOOKING TO MAKE A MAJOR CHANGE TO A POSITION HEAD LIKE THAT -- I HAVEN'T GIVEN THAT A LOT OF THOUGHT, BUT PROBABLY -- I'M STILL PROBABLY MORE COMFORTABLE WITH A SUPERMAJORITY.

I WILL TELL YOU ONE THING THAT I DO BELIEVE THAT NEEDS TO BE REVISITED ARE THE PAY SEVERANCE PACKAGES, NOT ONLY FOR THE PERFORMANCE AUDITOR'S DEPARTMENT BUT ALSO FOR ALL OF -- FOR THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AS WELL AS THE COUNTY

ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, SO I WOULD PROBABLY STILL BE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH A SUPERMAJORITY BECAUSE THEN THAT JUST REALLY SHOWS THAT YOU REALLY HAVE A DISSATISFACTION, BUT AGAIN, THE TERMS ON HOW -- ON HOW THAT PERSON WOULD BE REMOVED AS FAR AS SEVERANCE GOES, I THINK THAT NEEDS TO BE REVISITED.

>>RALPH FISHER: BY YOU OR US?

>>KEVIN BECKNER: OH, NO, THAT WOULD BE BY THE BOARD. THAT WOULD BE BOARD POLICY.

MY ONLY EXPECTATION AND THE ONLY THING THAT I SEE THAT YOU- ALL HAVE A ROLE IN IS AGAIN ON THE CHARTER SIDE, AND THAT HAS TO DO WITH WHAT'S WRITTEN IN THE CHARTER UNDER 4.10, WHICH IS THE BUDGET ANALYST AND THEN ALSO THE NAME OF THE ACTUAL OFFICE, BUT BEYOND THAT, MOST OF THE REST OF THAT LIES WITHIN THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

ANY -- MR. WHITE.

>>GERALD WHITE: THANK YOU FOR -- THANK YOU FOR COMING, COUNTYWIDE --

>>KEVIN BECKNER: IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU UP ON THAT SIDE OF THE DAIS VERSUS DOWN HERE.

>>GERALD WHITE: THANK YOU, COMMISSIONER.

YOU'RE DOING AN OUTSTANDING JOB AS A COUNTYWIDE COMMISSIONER.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: THANK YOU.

>>GERALD WHITE: AND THANK YOU FOR COMING HERE THIS EVENING.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: YOU'RE WELCOME.

>>GERALD WHITE: YOU KNOW I HAVE A DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THIS OFFICE BECAUSE THE LARGE SUMS OF TAX DOLLARS HAVE BEEN WASTED UNDER THE EXISTING ORDINANCE, AND SO CITIZENS ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT WASTE OF MONEY AND NOT REALLY GETTING ANY PERFORMANCE OUT OF THIS OFFICE, AND NOW HERE WE HAVE A PETITION THAT'S CIRCULATING THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY FOR AN ELECTED COUNTY MAYOR UNDER THE EXISTING STRUCTURE THAT WE HAVE TODAY, CHANGING THE POSITION, AND THEN WE GET AN ELECTED COUNTY MAYOR.

WOULDN'T THAT POSITION SERVE WELL UNDER THE EXISTING STRUCTURE IF YOU HAD AN EXECUTIVE FORM OF GOVERNMENT?

>>KEVIN BECKNER: ARE YOU -- YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE INTERNAL PERFORMANCE AUDITOR?

>>GERALD WHITE: YES, THE --

>>KEVIN BECKNER: I THINK WHEN APPROPRIATELY STRUCTURED AND POLICY IS WRITTEN TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AS FAR AS HOW THE DUTIES OF THAT OFFICE TO BE TAKEN -- TO BE CARRIED OUT, I THINK IT WOULD PERFORM WELL UNDER EITHER ONE OF THOSE STRUCTURES.

AGAIN, I RECOGNIZE RESPONSIBILITY THAT A LOT OF THIS REMAINS -- YOU KNOW, GOES BACK TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, THAT WE HAVE TO DO AND WE HAVE TO REDEFINE

THE POLICIES THAT WE HAVE THAT AGAIN OUTLINE THE DUTIES,  
BUT I THINK THAT THIS POSITION COULD DO WELL UNDER EITHER  
STRUCTURE.

>>GERALD WHITE: OKAY.

AND YOUR COLLEAGUES, THE OTHER SIX MEMBERS ON THE BOARD,  
ARE THEY -- YOU FEEL AS THOUGH THEY SHARE YOUR -- YOUR  
OPINION RELATED TO THE CHANGE THAT YOU'RE CALLING FOR NOW?

>>KEVIN BECKNER: WELL, I THINK -- I CAN'T SPEAK FOR ALL MY  
OTHER COLLEAGUES, BUT WHEN WE HAD THE DISCUSSION ON THE  
TERMINATION OF MR. BARNES, MANY EXPRESSED THAT THEY  
SUPPORTED THE OFFICE, THEY JUST DID NOT SUPPORT THE  
LEADERSHIP.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE INDIVIDUAL THOUGHTS WOULD BE OF EACH  
COMMISSIONER, BUT I KNOW THAT THERE WAS AN EXPRESSION THAT  
MANY HAVE COME OUT AND SPOKEN IN SUPPORT OF THE OFFICE,  
JUST NOT THE LEADERSHIP.

>>GERALD WHITE: WELL, HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH A CLERK WHO HAS  
CALLED FOR ELIMINATION OF THIS POST?

>>KEVIN BECKNER: WELL, I THINK, YOU KNOW -- AGAIN, I  
REALLY RESPECT MS. FRANK.

I HAVE A DEEP ADMIRATION FOR HER, MR. POHTO.

I THINK THEY RUN AN OUTSTANDING ORGANIZATION.

AGAIN, I JUST SEE TWO VERY DISTINCT ROLES.

AGAIN, THE CLERK I SEE AS FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT FOR THE  
COUNTY IN MAKING SURE THAT EVERYBODY'S STAYING IN

COMPLIANCE, AND AGAIN, I LOOK AT THE IPA OR HOPEFULLY IT WOULD BE CALLED THE IA'S OFFICE AS -- AS BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AROUND EFFICIENCIES AND ALSO CHECKS AND BALANCES.

IT WAS THE -- IT WAS THE INTERNAL AUDITOR, THE IPA'S OFFICE THAT ACTUALLY FOUND THE ISSUE WITH THE PAY RAISES AS WELL AS WITH THE E-MAIL SITUATION, NOT TO SAY THAT THE CLERK WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND THAT SITUATION, AND WE CERTAINLY WEREN'T LOOKING FOR THAT TYPE OF ACTIVITY, BUT AGAIN, IT'S PROVIDING THAT CHECKS AND BALANCES TO THE ADMINISTRATION TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS THAT I THINK IS ALSO -- PROVIDES A LOT OF VALUE TO OUR ORGANIZATION.

>>GERALD WHITE: THANK YOU.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: YOU'RE WELCOME.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. TOKLEY, WE HAVE A TIME -- AND ACTUALLY, MRS. REBACK -- LET ME LET MR. TOKLEY -- WE HAVE A TIME CERTAIN, SHERIFF GEE, AT 6:15.

WE'VE ALREADY PASSED THAT TIME.

HE HAS GRACIOUSLY SAID HE WOULD HOLD OFF FOR A FEW MINUTES.

I APPRECIATE THAT.

THANK YOU.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: COMMISSIONER BECKNER.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: MR. TOKLEY.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: FORGIVE ME FOR NOT BEING HERE TO HEAR WHAT

YOU SAID, WHICH I'M CERTAIN WAS QUITE MOMENTOUS.

I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU WHICH I'M CERTAIN YOU'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT.

IT INVOLVES THE COUNTY ATTORNEY, RENEE LEE.

WITH ALL THAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE FACT THAT NOTHING SUBSTANTIVE HAS BEEN BROUGHT AGAINST HER, WHAT, IN YOUR OPINION, IS THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' CONCERN?

WHAT ARE THEY PLANNING TO DO TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION WHICH INVOLVES HER?

ARE THEY PLANNING TO RETURN HER TO HER SEAT OR IS SOMETHING ELSE IN THE OFFING THAT WE MIGHT NEED TO KNOW ABOUT?

>>KEVIN BECKNER: I'D BE HAPPY TO ADDRESS THAT.

FROM MY -- I'LL SPEAK FROM MY PERSPECTIVE BECAUSE, AGAIN, I CAN'T SPEAK FOR MY OTHER COLLEAGUES, BUT I'M WAITING THE -- THE CONCLUSION OF THE INVESTIGATION FROM THE FDLE.

I BELIEVE IN DUE PROCESS, AND HOW THE SITUATION CAME WITH THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR IS THAT WAS BROUGHT BY AN INDIVIDUAL COMMISSIONER WHO DECIDED THAT THEY'D BRING THAT AS WELL AS THE INTERNAL PERFORMANCE AUDITOR TO THE AGENDA. I HAVE NOT HEARD OF ANY MENTION ABOUT BRINGING MS. LEE -- MS. LEE'S SITUATION TO THE AGENDA, AND AGAIN, MY -- MY POSITION IS IS TO WAIT FOR AND ALLOW DUE PROCESS AND ALLOW THE FULL INVESTIGATION TO CONCLUDE AND THEN MAKE A DETERMINATION HOW TO PROCEED FROM THERE.

SO AGAIN, I BELIEVE EVERYBODY SHOULD BE TREATED EQUALLY AND FAIRLY AND AGAIN AFFORDED DUE PROCESS.

I'M AN INDIVIDUAL COMMISSIONER, SO, LIKE I SAID, I WOULD NOT BE BRINGING THAT FORWARD BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF THOSE REPORTS.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: YOU'RE WELCOME.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: ANY OTHER QUICK QUESTIONS?

MRS. REBACK.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: JUST -- JUST -- I THINK IT'S FAIRLY CLEAR THAT WE NEED TO AT A MINIMUM AMEND THE POSITION TO REMOVE THE BUDGET ANALYST FUNCTION FROM IT AND THAT THAT'S A CHARTER AMENDMENT THAT WE WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR, BUT I'M STILL CURIOUS TO KNOW WHETHER YOU PERCEIVE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COLLECTIVELY PERCEIVE THAT WITHOUT THE OTHER STRUCTURAL CHANGES SUGGESTED BY THE CONSULTANT THAT THE POSITION WOULD STILL BE A VIABLE POSITION WITHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OTHER SORT OF POLICIES THAT INCREASE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE -- OF THE POSITION, THAT IT WOULD STILL BE VIABLE.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: WITHOUT MAKING ANY OTHER POLICY CHANGES, I WOULD BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE JUST AS INEFFECTIVE AS IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST.

WE MUST MAKE CHANGES TO THE POLICY AS FAR AS PROVIDING MORE CLARITY AND WHAT -- AND THE EXPECTATIONS ARE, AND WE HAVE

TO FURTHER DEFINE THE ROLE OF THAT OFFICE.

OTHERWISE IT'S JUST GOING TO BE AS INEFFECTIVE AS IT WAS BEFORE.

YOU KNOW, AGAIN, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH TWO IPAs, AND AGAIN, PERHAPS BOTH OF THEM WERE BAD SELECTIONS.

AGAIN, I CAN'T REFLECT UPON THAT, BUT WE CAN'T JUST SIT HERE AND ASSUME THAT IT'S JUST THE INDIVIDUAL'S FAULT THAT WAS SITTING IN THAT OFFICE.

I TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AS A COMMISSIONER TO MAKE SURE THAT IN THE FUTURE THAT THE ROLE OF THAT OFFICE IS MORE CLEARLY DEFINED, AND AGAIN, I'VE SAID THAT EVEN WHEN MR. BARNES WAS HERE, THAT THAT NEEDS MORE CLARITY, AND -- AND AGAIN, ALTHOUGH MR. BARNES I THINK HAD SOME LEADERSHIP ISSUES, I, AGAIN, AS A COUNTY COMMISSIONER, TAKE RESPONSIBILITY THAT I THINK WE NEED TO FURTHER DEFINE THOSE ROLES AS A BOARD.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. FISHER, AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO STOP.

>>RALPH FISHER: I APOLOGIZE FOR THIS QUESTION, BUT THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE TO ASK YOU SOMETHING, SIR.

RIGHT NOW YOU-ALL VOTED TO RAISE THE SALES TAX FROM 6% TO 7% TO FUND THE TRAIN AND THE OTHER --

>>KEVIN BECKNER: WELL, ACTUALLY, WE DID NOT VOTE TO RAISE THE TAX.

>>RALPH FISHER: YOU PUT IT TO VOTE IT ON THE BALLOT.

I APOLOGIZE.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: TO PUT IT ON THE BALLOT, CORRECT.

>>RALPH FISHER: YES, SIR.

THANK YOU.

IS THERE ANY LIMIT TO WHAT YOU THINK THE SALES TAX SHOULD BE IN THIS COUNTY?

IS THERE ANY LIMIT, 8%, 9%, 12%, 15%?

IS THERE ANY LIMIT THAT YOU CAN SAY IN PUBLIC RIGHT NOW THAT YOU WOULD SUPPORT TO INCREASING THE SALES TAX IN THIS COUNTY?

>>KEVIN BECKNER: WELL, I THINK -- AGAIN, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE LEGAL LIMITS WOULD ACTUALLY BE, BUT --

>>RALPH FISHER: ASSUME THERE ARE NONE.

>>KEVIN BECKNER: WELL, THEN I THINK THAT'S UP TO THE PEOPLE.

I THINK IT DEPENDS UPON WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT AND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING TO FUND WITH THOSE REVENUES, SO AGAIN, I BELIEVE THAT THE PEOPLE NEED TO DECIDE THAT.

THIS ISN'T JUST OUR COMMUNITY, THIS THE PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY. IT'S YOUR, YOUR TAX DOLLARS, IT'S NOT OURS TO SAY THAT WE NEED TO GO TO THIS LIMIT.

OUR JOB IS TO PUT FORTH WHAT WE BELIEVE ARE OPTIONS AND IDEAS THAT AGAIN MAY BE -- MAY HELP BRING THIS COMMUNITY FORWARD, AND IT'S THE PEOPLE'S JOB TO DECIDE WHETHER, YOU KNOW, THEY ACCEPT THOSE PLANS OR NOT AND HOW TO FUND THOSE PLANS.

>>RALPH FISHER: SO YOU DON'T SEE ANY PERSONAL LIMIT TO  
WHAT --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. FISHER, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO STOP  
BECAUSE WE'VE GOT A TIME CERTAIN, AND I WANT TO GET ON TO  
SHERIFF GEE.

THANK YOU, COMMISSIONER BECKNER, FOR COMING BEFORE US.

YOU ARE GOING TO BE INVITED LATER, AND ALL THE  
COMMISSIONERS ARE GOING TO BE INVITED ALONG WITH ALL OF THE  
CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS AND ALL OF THE MAYORS IN OUR COUNTY  
WILL BE INVITED, AND AT THAT POINT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO  
ADDRESS OTHER QUESTIONS.

SO THANK YOU, COMMISSIONER --

>>KEVIN BECKNER: THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN.

THANK YOU, BOARD MEMBERS.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WE HAVE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE  
SIGNED UP FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

I GUESS THE QUESTION IS, SHERIFF GEE, WOULD YOU MIND --  
WELL, LET ME SEE.

WE'VE GOT A TIME CERTAIN FOR YOU, AND YOU'RE ALREADY PAST  
THAT.

>>DAVID GEE: [INAUDIBLE]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: AND WE'VE GOT 7:00 FOR PATRICK  
MANTEIGA.

>>DAVID GEE: I WORK FOR THE PEOPLE.

LET THEM GO FIRST.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A HARD TIME  
GETTING THROUGH ALL THESE PUBLIC COMMENTS.

IS THERE ANYONE WHO'S OUT THERE FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS WHO HAS  
TO SPEAK, WHO WANTS TO SPEAK, OR ARE THERE SOME OF YOU THAT  
COULD WAIT TO THE VERY END?

ANYONE WHO COULD WAIT TO THE VERY END?

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. DAVIS.

>> [INAUDIBLE]

[LAUGHTER]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: IT COULD BE A LONG NIGHT, BUT WE'RE  
GOING TO TRY TO GET THROUGH THIS AS QUICK AS POSSIBLE.  
SO IT COULD -- WE'VE GOT A LOT OF ITEMS ON OUR AGENDA  
TONIGHT.

IT COULD BE A PRETTY LONG NIGHT, BUT WE'LL TRY TO GET  
THROUGH IT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO WAIT TILL THE END, THAT WOULD BE  
GREATLY APPRECIATED.

>> I'LL YIELD, MR. CHAIRMAN.

[INAUDIBLE]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

THANK YOU, MR. DAVIS.

IS ANYONE ELSE WHO SIGNED UP -- IS THERE ANYONE THAT FEELS  
THAT THEY HAVE TO SPEAK RIGHT NOW?

OKAY.

WE WILL MOVE ON TO SHERIFF GEE, AND I APPRECIATE YOU HOLDING -- ALLOWING US TO CONTINUE WITH COMMISSIONER BECKNER.

>>DAVID GEE: THANK YOU, MR. CHAIR.

GOOD EVENING, MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

I'LL JUST TAKE FIVE MINUTES AND GO THROUGH A COUPLE OF THINGS, AND THEN I'LL BE GLAD TO ENTERTAIN ANY QUESTIONS. LAST TIME I WAS HERE, OBVIOUSLY FIVE YEARS AGO, AND AT THE TIME I WAS INTRODUCING A STRATEGIC OPERATIONS PLAN TO YOU, AND I'M HAPPY TO REPORT, AS PUBLISHED ON OUR WEB SITE, THAT WE HAVE COMPLETED THAT PLAN, WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY FOCUSED ON 26 INITIATIVES AND HAVE DONE WELL WITH IT, AND THAT PERTAINED TO GANGS, DRUG DEALERS, SEXUAL PREDATORS, OFFENDERS, AND HABITUAL CRIMINALS, AND ALSO TAKING ON THE NEW HOMELAND SECURITY ISSUE THAT WAS AT THE FOREFRONT AT THAT TIME AND OF COURSE STILL IS.

TODAY AND REALLY PUSHED BY THE UNRELENTING BUDGET PRESSURES AND THE EVOLVING PUBLIC SAFETY NEEDS, WE HAVE REDEFINED OUR FOCUS, AND WE HAVE FOUR BASIC AREAS OF -- OF OUR PRIMARY PLAN THAT'LL TAKE US THROUGH 2010, AND I'M JUST GOING TO TAKE A MINUTE OR SO ON EACH ONE OF THOSE.

FIRST OF ALL, CRIME, OBVIOUSLY THAT'S WHAT EVERYBODY EXPECTS OF THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, AND I WILL TELL YOU WHAT WE'RE DOING AT THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE RIGHT NOW, WE'RE MOVING INTO A MODEL THAT YOU'LL HEAR A LOT MORE ABOUT OVER THE

NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS, AND IT'S CALLED INTELLIGENCE LED POLICING, AND WE'VE BEEN DOING THAT FOR THE LAST YEAR AND A HALF, AND YOU'VE -- THIS PAST YEAR YOU REALIZED SOME REALLY GOOD RESULTS IN YOUR CRIME NUMBERS IN THIS COUNTY.

I WILL TELL YOU AND REMIND YOU THAT THE CRIME IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PER CAPITA AT 39 CRIMES -- A LITTLE OVER 39 CRIMES PER CAPITA IS THE LOWEST IN AT LEAST OUR 25-YEAR HISTORY AND PROBABLY THE LOWEST OF ANY URBAN OR SUBURBAN AREA AROUND HERE.

CERTAINLY IT IS THE LOWEST IN OUR COUNTY.

I'M VERY PROUD OF THAT.

WE WERE AT 65 CRIMES PER CAPITA JUST TEN YEARS AGO, SO WE HAVE SEEN A REDUCTION IN CRIME TRAFFIC.

ONE OF THE ISSUES -- AND I KNOW THAT COMMISSIONER BECKNER WAS JUST HERE.

THE COUNTY COMMISSION'S GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE THIS ISSUE BACK UP ABOUT RED LIGHT CAMERAS NOW THAT THE LAW HAS BEEN CHASED -- HAS BEEN CHANGED.

THAT IS AN ISSUE THAT WE PRESSED FORWARD WITH HERE IN THIS COUNTY, AND JUST TO CLARIFY ANY MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THAT, THOSE RED LIGHT CAMERAS ARE DESIGNED TO REDUCE THE RISK OF THE RIGHT ANGLE COLLISIONS, AND THOSE ARE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS, AND WHAT WE DID HERE IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY IS LIMIT THE -- SOME OF THE MUNICIPALITIES HAVE THE RIGHT TURN ON RED WHERE ANY RIGHT TURN ON RED ARE GOING PAST THE LAW

WILL GET YOU A TICKET.

IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, IN THE WAY IT WAS SET UP HERE -- AND AGAIN, THAT'S GOING TO BE FOR THE COUNTY COMMISSION TO DETERMINE IF THEY STAY WITH THAT, BUT YOU HAVE TO BE GOING ABOVE 15 MILES AN HOUR ON THAT RIGHT-HAND TURN BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT EVEN THOUGH THOSE ARE VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW, THEY DON'T INVOLVE THE VERY DANGEROUS COLLISIONS, THE RIGHT ANGLE COLLISIONS THAT THE LEFT -- TAKING THE IMPROPER LEFT TURN MADE, SO THAT'S ONE OF THE ISSUES THAT WE'VE DEALT WITH MOST RECENTLY REGARDING TRAFFIC.

TAXPAYER VALUE, I'VE WORKED VERY HARD OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS TO BRING EFFICIENCY TO THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, AND WE'VE DONE SOME THINGS HERE, WE'VE DONE SOME CONSOLIDATIONS.

WE TOOK ON COUNTY SECURITY HERE THIS PAST YEAR, AND I WILL TELL YOU IT'S KIND OF MY -- TALK ABOUT CONSOLIDATION. THAT'S A VERY TOUGH ISSUE.

IT'S EVEN -- JUST TO GIVE YOU -- IT WAS TOUGH FOR US INTERNALLY HERE.

IT WAS A VERY UNPLEASANT THING, AND IT'S A VERY DIFFICULT THING TO DO, SO BEFORE WE EVER TAKE ON -- TALK ABOUT BIGGER CONSOLIDATIONS, WE HAVE TO DO IT INTERNALLY, BUT WE DID SAVE ALMOST \$350,000 OF REAL MONEY, ACTUAL BUDGET MONEY, THAT -- AND I WILL TELL YOU -- AND OUR BUDGET -- AND I REALIZE THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE SPENDS A LOT -- A LOT OF THE

TAXPAYERS' MONEY, BUT OUR BUDGET -- OUR PROPOSED BUDGET THIS YEAR IS \$11 MILLION LESS THAN THE 2000 -- \$11 MILLION LESS THAN THE 2008 FISCAL YEAR, SO THE PLANNED BUDGET FOR FY 11 IS \$11 MILLION LESS THAN OUR BUDGET WAS IN 2008, SO WE'VE DONE SOME GOOD THINGS, AND WE'RE RUNNING -- I HAVE ALMOST 200 VACANCIES RIGHT NOW IN LAW ENFORCEMENT ALONE, AND WE'RE JUST TRYING TO MOVE FORWARD AND CONTINUE TO DELIVER GOOD SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE.

AND LASTLY, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAMS HAVE GROWN BY 67 IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS ALONE, AND THE CITIZENS ON PATROL PROGRAM THAT WE STARTED ALMOST THREE YEARS AGO HAS TRIPLED IN THAT AMOUNT OF TIME, AND THAT -- THAT IS A GREAT -- A GREAT PROGRAM. WE'VE HAD GREAT SUCCESS WITH IT.

AND ALSO THE AMOUNT OF GRANTS THAT WERE GIVEN BACK FROM DRUG SEIZURES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY -- YOU MAY BE FAMILIAR WITH OUR COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT GRANTS, BUT WE GIVE SMALL GRANTS BACK TO COMMUNITIES WHO PROPOSE PLANS TO US TO BETTER THEIR COMMUNITY AND HAVE CRIME PREVENTION NEXUS. AND REALLY, THAT'S -- THAT'S IT FOR THE OVERVIEW OF THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

I HAVE COMMENTS AND THINGS ON CONSOLIDATION, BUT IN THE INTEREST OF TIME, MAYBE THOSE WILL -- BETTER WOULD COME OUT IN A QUESTION, SO I WOULD THROW IT -- GIVE IT BACK TO YOU, MR. THROWER.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. TOKLEY, QUESTION.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: SHERIFF GEE, FIRST OF ALL, I NEED TO, ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US, THANK YOU FOR THE MAGNIFICENT JOB YOU ARE DOING AND HAVE DONE UP TO THIS POINT, BUT OF COURSE, YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE CURRENT NEWS WHICH INVOLVES THE CITY OF CLEARWATER AND PCSO, PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, WITH SHERIFF COATS.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT SOMETHING THAT MONUMENTAL MIGHT WORK HERE IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY?

SAY, FOR INSTANCE, WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE TAMPA POLICE DEPARTMENT.

DO YOU THINK THAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO THAT OR THAT IT MIGHT EVEN BE WISE FOR IT TO BE DONE?

>>DAVID GEE: WELL, THANK YOU FOR THE QUESTION.

LET ME JUST SAY -- AND I SEE COMMISSIONER PLATT.

OVER THE YEARS THAT I WAS A DEPUTY THAT WAS AN ISSUE WE TALKED ABOUT A LOT OVER MY 33 YEARS AT THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

I TELL YOU, I LOOK AT THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE.

LET ME JUST SAY GENERALLY IN CONSOLIDATION -- AND THERE'S A LOT WRITTEN PROS AND CONS, BUT ONE THING FOR SURE IS YOU TEND TO HAVE A LEVELING-UP EFFECT THAT -- MOST OF THE COST IN PUBLIC SAFETY ARE IN THE SALARIES OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT

OFFICERS, AND THAT'S 80% OF EVERYTHING, AND IT DOESN'T FLOW TO THE LOWEST POINT, IT ALWAYS FLOWS TO THE HIGHEST POINT. THEY -- THERE'S A TENDENCY TO PICK AND CHOOSE THE BEST BENEFITS THAT EACH AGENCY MIGHT HAVE AND ADOPT THAT MODEL. I DON'T THINK IT'LL SAVE YOU MONEY, AND IT WILL GIVE YOU BIGGER GOVERNMENT AND IT CERTAINLY WILL GIVE YOU A BIGGER BUREAUCRACY, THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

SIMPLE THINGS LIKE A GARAGE THAT -- YOU KNOW, WE HAVE A 24-HOUR-A-DAY GARAGE TO KEEP OUR CARS ON THE ROAD.

IF IT'S ONE BIG DEPARTMENT, YOU NEED A REALLY BIG GARAGE, SO ALL OF THOSE THINGS COME INTO PLAY WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT A COUNTYWIDE CONSOLIDATION, SO I WOULD SAY IN PRINCIPLE I HAVE NOT BEEN A BIG FAN OF IT.

I LOOK AT THE CITY OF TAMPA AND HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY AND I LOOK AT JACKSONVILLE, AND I'D RATHER LIVE HERE.

OUR CRIME IS HALF THE NUMBERS.

THE MURDER RATE THERE IS -- AT ONE TIME WAS TRIPLE OR MORE THAN TRIPLE WHAT WE HAVE HERE, AND THEY'RE HAVING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, SO I DON'T THINK IT'S NECESSARILY A GOOD THING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT.

HOPEFULLY THAT ANSWERS YOUR QUESTION.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. ROBINSON AND COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: DAVID GEE, THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE.

>>DAVID GEE: YES, SIR.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I'VE KNOWN YOU A LONG, LONG TIME.  
ONE THING I WANT TO ASK, ACTUALLY THE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN  
ASKING ME ABOUT THIS.  
THERE'S AN ISSUE.  
WE HAD MET WITH -- THE NAACP HAD MET WITH THE SUPERVISOR OF  
ELECTIONS, MR. LENNARD, DR. LENNARD.

>>DAVID GEE: YES.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: ONE OF THE THINGS THAT'S BEEN PRESSING  
IS HOW CAN PEOPLE IN JAIL VOTE IF THEY'RE NOT CONVICTED  
FELONS, THEY STILL HAVE THE RIGHTS, AND THE SUPERVISOR OF  
ELECTIONS HAS SAID THAT HE'S WILLING TO BRING SOMEBODY OUT  
THERE TO ALLOW THOSE PEOPLE TO VOTE.  
I KNOW IT'S ALWAYS BEEN SOMEBODY GETTING WITH THE SHERIFF'S  
DEPARTMENT, SOMEBODY GETTING WITH THE SUPERVISOR OF  
ELECTIONS OFFICE, AND THAT WAS ONE OF MY ISSUES WHEN I RAN  
FOR SUPERVISOR IN 2000, SO IS THERE ANY WAY THAT THAT CAN  
BE DONE, THAT PEOPLE IN JAIL WHO HAVE A CONSTITUTIONAL  
RIGHT TO VOTE -- BECAUSE I KNOW IT'S A SAFETY ISSUE.  
THEY BROUGHT THAT UP.  
BUT SURELY THERE SHOULD BE A WAY, IF IT'S BY PAPER VOTE,  
VOTE BY MAIL OR SOMETHING --

>>DAVID GEE: RIGHT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: -- BUT IS THERE SOMETHING THAT YOU AND  
THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS CAN WORK OUT?

>>DAVID GEE: I'D BE GLAD TO WORK -- I KNOW IN THE PAST

PEOPLE HAVE VOTED AND THEY VOTED BY ABSENTEE BALLOT.

I ACTUALLY HAD SOMEBODY RUN AGAINST ME ONE TIME, AND I THINK WE HAD TO DELIVER AN ABSENTEE BALLOT TO HIM AT THE TIME, SO IT'S NOT UNPRECEDENTED AND WE CAN DO THAT.

SO, YEAH, ABSOLUTELY, YES, SIR.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: TO FOLLOW UP, MY LAST QUESTIONS TOO, THERE'S THE OTHER ISSUE THAT'S BEEN PRESSING WITH THE NAACP IS JUVENILE CRIME --

>>DAVID GEE: YEAH.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: -- AND JUVENILE JUSTICE, AND I THINK THE SUPREME COURT JUST RULED THAT YOU CAN'T -- YOU GOT -- YOU CAN'T CONVICT -- UNLESS IT'S A CAPITAL MURDER, YOU CAN'T REALLY PUT SOMEBODY FOR LIFE IN -- WITHOUT THE CHANCE OF PAROLE AS A TEENAGER.

AND I KEEP HEARING THESE PEOPLE DEMONSTRATING AND TALKING ON THE RADIO THAT, MAN, THEY'RE JUST NOT RIGHT ABOUT JUVENILE JUSTICE.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'RE DOING IN YOUR OFFICE TO DEAL WITH THAT SITUATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY?

>>DAVID GEE: YEAH.

WELL, WE'RE REALLY FOCUSED ON JUVENILE CRIME.

I WILL JUST SAY IN GENERAL -- AND AGAIN, THE SUPREME COURT DECISION'S REALLY OUTSIDE OF MY PURVIEW, BUT ALL OF US SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE -- NOT JUST THE -- THE CRIME

BUT THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE YOU SEE IN JUVENILE OFFENDERS,  
AND I'LL -- YOU KNOW, THIS PAST WEEKEND WE HAD AN INCIDENT.  
WE HAD ONE A WEEK OR TWO AGO BEFORE IN BRANDON WITH 16- AND  
17-YEAR-OLDS.

I WILL TELL YOU IN GENERAL WHAT YOU'RE SEEING RIGHT NOW AND  
WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN THIS COUNTRY IN BIG URBAN AREAS IS  
YOU'RE SEEING 15-YEAR-OLDS WHO WERE AT ONE TIME INVOLVED  
MAYBE IN SHOPLIFTING WHERE THEY'RE KIND OF EXPERIMENTING A  
LITTLE BIT WITH THE SYSTEM, AND NOW THEY'RE INVOLVED IN  
RAPES, ROBBERIES, AND MURDERS, AND WE SHOULD ALL BE VERY,  
VERY CONCERNED ABOUT IT, AND I THINK LAW ENFORCEMENT SHOULD  
REALLY FOCUS, I THINK THE JUSTICE SYSTEM SHOULD FOCUS AND  
GIVE THE COURTS DIFFERENT AVENUES BECAUSE RIGHT NOW THERE'S  
NOT A LOT YOU CAN DO.

YOU KNOW, WE -- WE -- WE'RE JUST NOW DOING HOUSE ARREST,  
AND WE'RE GETTING SOME OF THE JUDGES WHO ARE PARTICIPATING  
WITH SOME OF THAT, BUT WE'VE GOT TO PUT SOME TEETH INTO  
THIS OR WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A GENERATION THAT'S GOING TO BE  
A VERY VIOLENT GENERATION, AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE WHAT  
WE SEE.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JAN PLATT: WE'RE VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE YOU AS SHERIFF.

>>DAVID GEE: THANK YOU.

>>JAN PLATT: YOUR INTEGRITY AND YOUR EXPERIENCE SERVES US WELL IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, AND THANK YOU FOR STICKING WITH IT.

>>DAVID GEE: THANK YOU, COMMISSIONER.

>>JAN PLATT: MANY PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS AND THE PROCESS AND THE PROCEDURE. THEY VIEW COUNTY GOVERNMENT TO BE EXACTLY LIKE CITY GOVERNMENT IS STRUCTURED, AND IT'S NOT, AND WHENEVER THEY TALK ABOUT A MAYOR, THEY THINK, OH, IT'S GOING TO OPERATE LIKE THE CITY OF TAMPA WHERE THE MAYOR IS SELECTED BY THE - - THE CHIEF OF POLICE IS SELECTED BY THE MAYOR AND ALL THAT.

WOULD YOU JUST GIVE A THUMBNAIL OF THE PROCEDURE AND THE PROCESS THAT YOU OPERATE UNDER AS A CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER AS IT DEALS WITH THE BUDGET AND CIVIL SERVICE AND THAT SORT OF THING.

>>DAVID GEE: THANK YOU.

>>JAN PLATT: AND THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND THE ADMINISTRATOR BECAUSE -- WOULD YOU.

>>DAVID GEE: YES.

AND I'LL TRY TO ANSWER ALL THOSE QUESTIONS.

>>JAN PLATT: SURE.

>>DAVID GEE: ESSENTIALLY, AS ALL OF YOU KNOW, I AM -- THE SHERIFF -- THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER'S FUNDED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSION, BUT BASICALLY WE ARE RUNNING OUR

OFFICE, AND A LOT OF TIMES WE HAVE SUGGESTIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS, AND I AM ACCOUNTABLE IN THAT SENSE BECAUSE OF -- OF THE FUNDING THAT WE'RE GIVEN, AND I FEEL THAT OBLIGATION, BUT THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER -- AND, YOU KNOW, THE PROPOSED MAYOR QUESTION HAS TWO ISSUES.

ONE WORKS IT AFFECT THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS?

IT DOES IN SOME COUNTIES.

OR WOULD THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS REMAIN -- AND I THINK THE LAST VERSION THAT I'VE SEEN WHAT'S GOING TO BE POTENTIALLY BEFORE THE VOTERS WOULD BE THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS WOULD REMAIN INDEPENDENT, BUT I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT, YOU KNOW, YOU'RE -- OF COURSE, I CAN ONLY SPEAK FOR THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF, BUT IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT I AM ACCOUNTABLE, YOU KNOW, TO THE VOTERS AND THAT A SITUATION LIKE YOU HAVE, AS COMMISSIONER PLATT SAID, IN THE CITY OF TAMPA WOULD NOT -- THAT WOULD NOT BE THE SAME SITUATION THAT YOU WOULD HAVE IN THIS PROPOSED -- THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER WOULD, AS I UNDERSTAND IT -- WOULD STILL HAVE SOME -- WOULD BE INDEPENDENT.

NOW, I WILL TELL YOU, IT WOULD BE AN INTERESTING QUESTION AS TO HOW IT ALL WORKS.

YOU KNOW, THE COUNTY MAYOR QUESTION IS -- IS CERTAINLY OUT THERE, AND I ALWAYS THINK MAYBE THAT'S -- THAT'S AS STRONG AS THE PERSON IS WHO MAY BE IN THE OFFICE AT THE TIME, BUT

AGAIN, IT WOULD BE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SITUATION THAN YOU WOULD HAVE BECAUSE OF CHAPTER 30 AND THE STATE STATUTES THAT SURROUND THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF.

IT WOULD NOT BE THE SAME SITUATION THAT YOU WOULD SEE IN THE CITY OF TAMPA, AND IT WOULD BE AN INTERESTING -- IT WOULD BE AN INTERESTING SITUATION.

>>JAN PLATT: WOULD YOU EXPLAIN THE BUDGET PROCESS.

>>DAVID GEE: THE BUDGET -- ESSENTIALLY WHAT WE DO, WE LOOK -- AND WE ZERO -- AND I STARTED THIS IN 2005.

WE ZERO-BASE OUT EVERY YEAR, AND I MEAN A REAL ZERO-BASE OUT.

WE TAKE EVERYTHING FROM YOUR PENCILS TO YOUR YELLOW STICKUM PADS AWAY FROM YOU, AND YOU REJUSTIFY IT EVERY OTHER YEAR, AND IT'S A TWO-YEAR BUDGET CYCLE, BUT I PROPOSE THE BUDGET -- I -- GENERALLY WHAT HAPPENS IS I DO MEET WITH THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR, WITH ERIC JOHNSON, SOMEONE IN THE OFFICE, AND WE TALK, AND I TRY TO GET SOME GUIDANCE EARLY ON FROM THE COMMISSION WHERE THEY'RE AT AND WHAT KIND OF SITUATION THEY THINK THEY'RE IN, AND THEN I -- BEFORE I PROPOSE A BUDGET, I TRY -- I'M TRYING TO WORK WITH THE ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE.

GENERALLY WHAT'S HAPPENED IN THE PAST IS THE BUDGET THAT I PRESENT, IT'S NO SURPRISE TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR. THEY KNOW -- AS A MATTER OF FACT, I'VE ALREADY HAD MY MEETING WITH MR. MERRILL AND WITH ERIC JOHNSON A COUPLE

WEEKS AGO, WELL BEFORE I PRESENTED THE BUDGET ON THE MAY -- ON THE MAY 1st DEADLINE, SO THEY KNOW WHAT THAT BUDGET IS, AND I DON'T THINK IT'S ANY REAL SURPRISE WHEN I COME OVER HERE, AND REALLY, I'M TRYING TO WORK WITH THE COUNTY AND FIND OUT WHERE WE'RE AT BEFORE I PRESENT IT.

>>JAN PLATT: SO THAT YOU'RE REALLY PRESENTING IT TO A PROFESSIONAL, SOMEBODY WHO'S IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, IT'S NOT A POLITICIAN BECAUSE IT'S THE ADMINISTRATOR WHO PIECES ALL OF THE BUDGETS TOGETHER FROM ALL OF THE INDEPENDENTLY ELECTED CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS?

>>DAVID GEE: IT IS, AND THAT'S EXTREMELY IMPORTANT BECAUSE --

>>JAN PLATT: AND THAT'S WHAT'S CRITICAL.

>>DAVID GEE: IT IS CRITICAL BECAUSE IT IS AN EXTREMELY COMPLICATED PROCESS.

AND AGAIN, YOU KNOW, WITH A -- IF YOU HAD A MAYOR AND YOU DIDN'T HAVE A PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATOR, IT WOULD BE A DIFFICULT THING.

IT'S -- YOU KNOW, OURS IS A BIG PIECE OF THE PUZZLE, BUT THERE'S A LOT OF PIECES TO THIS PUZZLE, AND YOU KNOW, EVERY TIME I SPEAK WITH -- WITH MR. JOHNSON OR MR. MERRILL OR PREVIOUS TO THAT MS. BEAN, THERE'S ALWAYS THINGS THAT ARE OUT THERE THAT THEY'RE POINTING OUT TO ME THAT -- DIFFERENT DYNAMICS THAT COULD AFFECT ALL THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS' BUDGETS.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. WHITE.

>>GERALD WHITE: WELL, I HAVE THREE CONCERNS, BUT FIRST, I WANT TO ASK HAVE YOU TAKEN A POSITION ON THIS COUNTY MAYOR INITIATIVE?

DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE IT AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL HERE IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY?

>>DAVID GEE: WELL, I ALWAYS SAY PRINCIPALLY I HAVE NOT BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF IT.

AGAIN, IT'S AN ISSUE FOR THE -- FOR THE CITIZENS OF THE COUNTY, NOT FOR ME.

IT'S NOT A SHERIFF'S ISSUE.

I TELL YOU WHERE I -- I STAND ON IT.

I -- AGAIN, I THINK THOSE THINGS ARE MADE ON THE STRENGTH OR WEAKNESS OF THE PERSON WHO MIGHT BE IN THAT OFFICE.

IF IT WAS AT THE RIGHT TIMING AND AN EXTREMELY STRONG PERSON THAT COULD PULL IT TOGETHER, MAYBE THINGS WOULD WORK OUT, BUT, YOU KNOW, THESE ARE CHALLENGING TIMES RIGHT NOW AND I'M NOT SO SURE THAT WE SHOULD BE VENTURING OFF.

I THINK THE CHARTER HAS SERVED US WELL.

I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU.

I THINK THAT THE CHARTER WAS WELL THOUGHT OUT.

I THINK IT HAS SERVED US WELL.

AS MUCH AS WE COMPLAIN AND AS MUCH AS MADE ABOUT THINGS THAT WE HAVE FROM TIME TO TIME, WHEN I LOOK AT HILLSBOROUGH

-- I MAKE MY JUDGMENT BASED ON WHEN I TALK TO OTHER SHERIFFS, AND I TALK TO ALL OF THEM, AND THE PROBLEMS THAT THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE HAVING, AND WE'RE IN A MUCH BETTER SITUATION THAN OTHER SHERIFFS, AND I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO CAME BEFORE US REALLY PUT SOME THOUGHT INTO IT, SO I DON'T THINK IT'S AS BAD BECAUSE WE DO GET CAUGHT UP IN THINGS THAT -- THE CURRENT ISSUE YOU WERE JUST DISCUSSING, AND THOSE THINGS DISTRACT, BUT I THINK OVERALL THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN PRETTY STRONG, AND I THINK WE'RE IN GOOD SHAPE CONSIDERING, YOU KNOW, WHERE THE COUNTRY'S AT RIGHT NOW.

>>GERALD WHITE: OKAY.

MY SECOND CONCERN IS THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY EMERGENCY POLICY GROUP.

WE'VE LOST THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR, PAT BEAN, AND I'M DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE CITIZENS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

WE HAVE THIS ACTING GUY, MR. MERRILL, AS ADMINISTRATOR.

I'M NOT SURE WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE HE HAVE, AND SO AS A MEMBER OF THE EMERGENCY POLICY GROUP, AS SHERIFF I WANT TO PUT YOU ON NOTICE OF MY CONCERN ABOUT PUBLIC SAFETY IN THE EVENT OF A HURRICANE.

>>DAVID GEE: I WOULD TELL YOU -- AND AGAIN -- BECAUSE I'M NOT TRYING TO -- I DON'T WANT TO MAKE A POWER GRAB HERE, BUT I WILL TELL YOU IN PRINCIPLE I'VE ALWAYS FELT -- YOU KNOW, IF YOU GO TO OTHER COUNTIES -- AND AGAIN, A HURRICANE

OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YOU GO TO CITRUS COUNTY, THE SHERIFF IS IN CHARGE OF THAT.

THAT DEPARTMENT IS UNDERNEATH HIM.

AND WE HAD THIS DISCUSSION LAST YEAR IN THE BOARD.

I BELIEVE THAT THE SHERIFF IS MORE SUITED TO DEAL WITH THOSE TYPES OF CONCERNS.

YOU'RE TRAINED WHERE WE'RE USED TO DEALING WITH THAT.

AGAIN, THE BOARD MANY YEARS AGO, UNDER MR. KLEMAN, THEY VOTED DIFFERENTLY IN THIS COUNTY, BUT THIS COUNTY IS

DIFFERENT FROM A LOT OF OTHER ONES WHERE IN A TIME OF EMERGENCY THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICE OF SHERIFF WOULD BE THE -- THE POINT POSITION TO HELP MAKE THOSE DECISIONS.

THERE ARE -- TO BE A SHERIFF RIGHT NOW, THERE ARE SO MANY SCHOOLS THAT -- INVOLVED IN THE -- THAT ARE INVOLVED -- THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REQUIRES RIGHT NOW THAT YOU HAVE TO TAKE THAT OTHER PEOPLE WOULD NOT NORMALLY TAKE AS FAR AS INTEGRATED CHAINS OF COMMAND AND ALL OF THOSE THINGS THAT ARE REQUIRED.

THERE ARE SO MANY HOURS THAT ARE REQUIRED, AND THOSE ARE NOT REQUIRED OF ANY OTHER PUBLIC OFFICIAL OTHER THAN THE SHERIFF OR FIREFIGHTING PERSONNEL AND PEOPLE LIKE THAT, SO I AGREE -- WE'LL MAKE IT WORK, DON'T WORRY, AND MR. MERRILL'S CERTAINLY A GREAT PERSON, AND WE'LL DO WHATEVER WE HAVE TO TO GET IT TO WORK, BUT I DO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

>>GERALD WHITE: WELL, AS THE CHIEF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER HERE IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, IF YOU GIVE THIS BOARD SOMETHING IN WRITING, IT WILL BE AN HONOR TO MAKE THE MOTION TO MOVE IT FORWARD TO BALLOT LANGUAGE, TO INSERT SOMETHING IN THE CHARTER TO MAKE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR WHO'S IN CHARGE IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS, OF A HURRICANE, THINGS OF THAT NATURE BECAUSE JUST LIKE YOU, LAST SEASON OR BEFORE THERE WAS A PUBLIC ISSUE WAS WHO WAS IN CHARGE, AND SO IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN SUBMIT TO THIS BOARD, IT WOULD BE AN HONOR TO MOVE THAT ISSUE FORWARD.

>>DAVID GEE: I APPRECIATE THAT, AND I'LL GET YOU SOME MODELS FROM OTHER COUNTIES SO THAT YOU CAN LOOK AT THAT, SO IT'S NOT COMING FROM ME, YOU CAN JUST SEE WHAT OTHER COUNTIES THAT ARE COMPARABLE, HOW THEY HANDLE IT.

>>GERALD WHITE: AND MY FINAL CONCERN, MR. CHAIRMAN, IF YOU'D INDULGE ME.

THE CITY OF TAMPA, YOU KNOW, IS SUFFERING OF A SERIOUS FINANCIAL DEFICIT, AND I KNOW YOU HAVE YOUR OWN CONCERNS, YOUR OWN BUDGET, BUT I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO REALLY MIRROR -- COME CLOSER TO THE CITY.

I KNOW YOU'RE WORKING WITH THE CITY OF TAMPA POLICE DEPARTMENT.

I WOULD HATE TO SEE OUR CRIME RATE IN THE CITY OF TAMPA GO UP BECAUSE OF THESE BUDGET PROBLEMS, AND SO PLEASE STAY ON TOP OF THAT.

>>DAVID GEE: WE WILL.

>>GERALD WHITE: PLEASE WORK WITH THE CHIEF OF TAMPA POLICE DEPARTMENT AND KEEP OUR CITY OF TAMPA WHOLE AS IT RELATE TO LOW CRIME.

>>DAVID GEE: I ABSOLUTELY -- YOU HAVE MY ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE.

I TALK TO CHIEF CASTRO DAILY, AND WE WORK ON A LOT OF THESE ISSUES TOGETHER, AND WE'LL BE VERY SUPPORTIVE OF THEM.

>>GERALD WHITE: THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MRS. REBACK.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: I JUST WANT TO SAY THANK YOU AGAIN FOR ALL OF YOUR SERVICE, AND I CERTAINLY RESPECT THE TERRIFIC JOB THAT YOUR DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN DOING, BUT TO THE EXTENT THAT MR. WHITE IS MAKING A FORMAL PROPOSAL THAT THIS BOARD TAKE UP A CHARTER CHANGE WITH RESPECT TO THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND PLACING THAT UNDER YOUR JURISDICTION, I JUST WANT TO SAY I DON'T THINK THIS IS AN APPROPRIATE SETTING TO DISCUSS THAT, AND I WOULD STRONGLY RESIST THAT PROPOSAL, AND TO THE EXTENT THAT IT DOES COME BEFORE THE BOARD, I WOULD INVITE YOU BACK AT THAT TIME --

>>DAVID GEE: RIGHT.

YEAH.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: -- TO ADDRESS IT AND PERHAPS IN THE CONTEXT OF ANOTHER PUBLIC HEARING, BUT I JUST KNOW THAT THERE ARE VIEW -- STRONG VIEWS THAT WHILE LAW ENFORCEMENT

HAS A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT,  
IT'S NOT NECESSARILY THE ONLY ROLE, AND IT SHOULDN'T  
NECESSARILY BE THE PARAMOUNT ROLE.

>>DAVID GEE: YEAH.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: AND SO I JUST WANT TO STEP BACK.  
I WANT TO WALK THAT BACK A BIT.

>>DAVID GEE: NO, I UNDERSTAND.  
I'M MERELY ANSWERING HIS QUESTION.

YOU ASKED ME MY OPINION, AND --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU.

I JUST WANTED -- SHERIFF GEE, IF YOU DO HAVE INFORMATION  
THAT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL, I WOULD APPRECIATE -- I THINK AS  
BOARD MEMBERS ANY INFORMATION WE CAN GET.

WE CAN READ IT, WE CAN LOOK AT IT, AND WE CAN DECIDE AS A  
BOARD WHAT WE WANT TO DO WITH IT, BUT YOU IF YOU HAVE  
INFORMATION YOU'D LIKE TO PROVIDE, I WOULD WELCOME THAT.

>>DAVID GEE: CERTAINLY, I WILL DEFINITELY MAKE THAT  
AVAILABLE TO YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I'D WELCOME THAT.  
COMMISSIONER PLATT AND THEN MR. ROBINSON.

>>JAN PLATT: I HAD ONE MORE QUESTION, AGAIN, PROCESS  
BECAUSE WE'RE REALLY HERE TO TALK ABOUT STRUCTURE.  
THAT'S WHAT THE CHARTER'S ALL ABOUT, NOT ALL THESE OTHER  
LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES.

YOU'VE TALKED ABOUT THE BUDGET, BUT YOUR EMPLOYEES'

SALARIES, ARE THEY SET BY THE STATE CIVIL SERVICE BOARD,  
THE CIVIL -- THE LOCAL CIVIL SERVICE BOARD?

>>DAVID GEE: THEY ARE, AND I MEANT TO ANSWER THAT  
QUESTION.

YES, MA'AM.

THE -- THE DEPUTIES' SALARY IS UNDER THE CIVIL SERVICE  
BOARD.

AS YOU RECALL, THREE YEARS AGO WE WERE UNIONIZED.

WE DO NOT HAVE A UNION TODAY, AND SO THOSE SALARIES AT THE  
TIME WERE NEGOTIATED.

THEY'RE NOT NEGOTIATED NOW.

THEY'RE UNDER CIVIL SERVICE, AND THEY'RE -- THEY'RE IN  
PARITY WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER COMPARABLE COUNTY  
DEPARTMENTS.

THE ONLY ONES THAT AREN'T ARE THE UNCLASSIFIED POSITIONS,  
ATTORNEYS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS.

THOSE ARE SET BY ME, AND I WILL TELL YOU THERE'S BEEN -- AT  
THE UPPER LEVEL THERE'S BEEN NO SALARY INCREASE IN MY  
DEPARTMENT IN THREE YEARS BY ANYBODY WITH A RANK OF --  
ABOVE THE RANK OF MAJOR, SO --

>>JAN PLATT: YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE BASICALLY STATE EMPLOYEES  
IN A WAY.

THEY GET THE PENSION JUST LIKE WITH THE COUNTY -- THOSE WHO  
ARE UNDER THE COUNTY COMMISSION, ALL THE CONSTITUTIONAL  
OFFICERS -- TELL ME IF I'M CORRECT OR WRONG, BUT THEY'RE

ALL CONSIDERED STATE EMPLOYEES, AND THEY'RE -- THEY'RE PART OF THE STATE SYSTEM AS IT DEALS WITH PENSIONS.

COMMISSIONERS, THEIR SALARIES ARE BASED ON -- OR SET IN TALLAHASSEE, NOT HERE, AND I THINK YOURS ARE -- ISN'T YOURS TOO?

>>DAVID GEE: MY PERSONAL SALARY IS SET BY THE POPULATION. IT WAS SET MANY YEARS AGO, AND IT'S A FUNCTION OF POPULATION, BUT EVERYBODY ELSE THAT IS IN CIVIL SERVICE, YOU'RE RIGHT.

>>JAN PLATT: AND THEN IF YOU WANT TO BUILD A JAIL OR ADD ANY ADDITIONS, YOU NEED THE CAPITAL MONEY TO DO THAT, HOW DO YOU GET THAT?

>>DAVID GEE: I COME TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THAT.

>>JAN PLATT: SO YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE ADMINISTRATOR -  
-

>>DAVID GEE: YES.

>>JAN PLATT: -- WHO RIGHT NOW WHO IS A PROFESSIONAL, NOT POLITICIAN, WHO IS PARTISAN NOW WITH THE NEW MAYOR SITUATION -- THEY'VE PUT ON PARTISAN, BUT YOU'RE -- RIGHT NOW YOU WOULD BE GOING THROUGH THE PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATOR TO GET THE MONEY TO BUILD MORE JAILS?

>>DAVID GEE: YES, MA'AM, AND I -- I AGREE THAT THOSE THINGS CAN BE POLITICIZED.

BUILDINGS OF JAILS CAN BE A DETRIMENT, AND I'M HAPPY TO SAY

THAT WE BUILT A LOT OF JAILS UNDER THEIR TENURE, BUT OUR JAIL POPULATION'S DOWN FROM JUST OVER 5,000 TO JUST OVER 3,000 IN THE LAST YEAR OR TWO, SO WE'RE HOLDING OUR BREATH RIGHT NOW.

>>JAN PLATT: OKAY.

>>DAVID GEE: YES, MA'AM.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. ROBINSON.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I'M GOING TO SAY THIS.

IF SOMEBODY ASKED ANYBODY SPEAKING UP THERE TO PRESENT INFORMATION TO THE BOARD, THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE GOING TO GET FIVE VOTES TO DO IT BECAUSE REMEMBER -- AND I SAID THIS IN THE BEGINNING AND I'M GOING TO SAY IT AGAIN, THAT WE LOOK AT THE CHARTER AND ANY AND ALL PHASES OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT, ANY AND ALL PHASES OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT, OKAY, WHICH IS THE SHERIFF, THE WATER DEPARTMENT, ANY AND ALL PHASES OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT, NOT JUST THIS CHARTER, SO I WANT TO GET ANY INFORMATION.

IF I ASK FOR SOME INFORMATION, WHETHER IT BE VOTED UP WITH FIVE VOTES TO HAVE IT HEARD, WHETHER IT BE VOTED AT ALL, JUST -- WE GOT PLENTY OF INFORMATION THAT WE'RE COLLECTING TO LEARN, AND I JUST WANT TO SAY DAVID GEE, SHERIFF GEE, IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU WANT OR THINK THAT SHOULD BE CHANGED IN THE CHARTER AT THIS TIME?

>>DAVID GEE: NO, THERE'S NOTHING THAT I WOULD SUGGEST.

I BELIEVE GENERALLY -- I MEAN, THERE'S ALWAYS THINGS WE CAN

PICK APART, BUT I THINK GENERALLY THE CHARTER WAS WELL THOUGHT OUT, AND AGAIN, I GO BACK TO MY THING, I THINK WE'RE IN GOOD SHAPE COMPARED TO MOST OTHER CITIES AND COUNTIES.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

ANY FINAL QUESTIONS FOR SHERIFF GEE?

>>GERALD WHITE: WELL, I JUST WANTED TO SAY SINCE THERE WAS SOME QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT PROCESS, ANY MEMBER CAN PLACE A MOTION ON THE FLOOR --

>>DAVID GEE: RIGHT.

>>GERALD WHITE: -- AND GET A SECOND AND CREATE A DISCUSSION, SO AS A CHIEF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER HERE IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, YOU'VE RAISED A CONCERN, AND I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION ON WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SHERIFF.

>>DAVID GEE: WE'LL DEFINITELY GET THAT TO YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU, SHERIFF GEE.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: SHERIFF GEE, ON A DAILY BASIS I SPEAK WITH YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO WOULD LOVE TO WEAR THE UNIFORM THAT YOU REPRESENT.

I SIMPLY WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW.

>>DAVID GEE: THANK YOU.

WE COULD USE THEM.

WE'RE SHORT DOWN THERE.

THANK YOU.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU, SHERIFF GEE.

OKAY.

WE HAVE PATRICK MANTEIGA.

HE'S GOT A TIME -- MR. MANTEIGA, CAN -- WE'VE GOT TEN MINUTES, REAL QUICK.

CAN YOU HOLD ON BECAUSE YOU HAVE A TIME CERTAIN AT 7:00.

I WAS GOING TO LET MARY HELEN -- I WAS GOING TO JUMP TO MARY HELEN FARRIS.

SHE WAS -- SHE CAME IN TODAY.

SHE'S NOT FEELING VERY WELL, AND I WAS GOING TO TRY TO SEE IF WE COULD JUMP AHEAD TO THE AGENDA SINCE MR. MANTEIGA'S NOT SET TO COME ON UNTIL 7:00.

I'M GOING TO JUMP TO NUMBER 8, THE CHARTER ISSUES, AND I'M GOING TO LET MARY HELEN FARRIS GO FIRST.

THANK YOU FOR COMING IN.

I KNOW YOU'RE NOT FEELING VERY WELL.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: I TORE UP MY BACK THIS WEEKEND SOMEHOW.

I'M NOT AS YOUNG AS I USED TO BE APPARENTLY.

I JUST WANTED TO FOLLOW UP QUICKLY ON SOME QUESTIONS FROM LAST MEETING, ONE REGARDING THE VETO LANGUAGE, AND MR.

WHITE HAD A QUESTION ABOUT WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT AS IT WAS PRESENTED TO THE BOARD AT A RETREAT.

THERE ARE SOME ARGUMENTS THAT IT IS INCONSISTENT WITH GENERAL LAW, AND AS I POINTED OUT AT THE VERY BEGINNING, OUR CHARTER THAT'S ONE OF OUR -- ONE OF OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES IS WE CAN'T BE INCONSISTENT WITH GENERAL LAW. I WAS NOT AT THE RETREAT, BUT RENEE PRESENTED THAT TO THE BOARD, AND THEY CHOSE, FOR WHATEVER REASON, NOT TO GO FORWARD.

IT MAY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE AT THAT POINT IN TIME, YOU KNOW, THE MAYOR HADN'T PASSED, AND SO THAT VETO PROVISION, AS I SAID BEFORE, IS NOT EFFECTIVE.

IT MAY BE SOMETHING THAT THE CHARTER REVIEW BOARD WANTS TO LOOK AT, DEPENDING ON WHAT HAPPENS DOWN THE LINE, SO I JUST WANTED TO PUT THAT ON THE RECORD.

I BELIEVE MR. ROBINSON, TOO, YOU ALSO HAD A QUESTION ABOUT THE PRECLEARANCE THAT WAS IN THE PACKAGE.

IT'S KIND OF A STRANGE TURN OF EVENTS.

THAT PRECLEARANCE LETTER WAS REGARDING THE MAYOR PROPOSAL ITSELF, NOT THE VETO, WHICH WAS A SEPARATE PROPOSAL.

WHAT HAD HAPPENED IS --

>>JAN PLATT: EXCUSE ME.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JAN PLATT: CAN WE -- CAN WE ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH -- EACH ISSUE BEFORE SHE GETS GOING ON THE NEXT ISSUE --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YES.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: I'M SORRY.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YES, IF WE HAVE TIME.

>>JAN PLATT: -- IF YOU DON'T MIND --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THAT'S FINE.

>>JAN PLATT: -- BECAUSE SHE TALKED ABOUT THE VETO AND NOW WE'VE GONE ON TO SOMETHING ELSE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YES.

>>JAN PLATT: MAY I ASK A QUESTION ABOUT THE VETO?

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: I'M SORRY.

>>JAN PLATT: WE HAD THAT OPINION FROM RENEE LEE THAT BASICALLY GAVE THE BACKGROUND ABOUT SEEKING I THINK A DECLARATORY JUDGMENT IN COURT.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: YES, MA'AM.

>>JAN PLATT: DOES -- DOES OUR CHARTER REVIEW BOARD HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO PURSUE THAT AND SEEK A DECLARATORY JUDGMENT?

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: DEBORA ACTUALLY LOOKED AT THAT TODAY. I'LL LET HER --

>>JAN PLATT: OKAY.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: GOOD EVENING.

DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY, COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE.

MS. PLATT, I DID LOOK AT THAT, I DID A CURSORY REVIEW OF THAT.

BASED ON MY LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF DEC ACTIONS, THERE NEEDS TO BE TWO PARTIES, TWO PARTIES WITH ADVERSE INTERESTS, TWO PARTIES THAT HAVE AFFECTED RIGHTS, AND BONA

FIDE DISPUTE OVER THE ISSUES THAT'S THE SUBJECT OF DECLARATORY ACTION, SO I'M NOT SURE EXACTLY WHAT THE WILL OF THE -- OF THE BOARD IS, BUT THE BOARD CERTAINLY COULD NOT ON ITS OWN GO AND INITIATE A DECLARATORY ACTION WITHOUT THERE BEING SOME BONA FIDE DISPUTE AND SOME PARTY WITH AN ADVERSE INTEREST.

>>JAN PLATT: CAN I ASK A QUESTION FOR CLARIFICATION.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JAN PLATT: SAY IF THERE WERE ENOUGH VOTES TO TAKE A POSITION AND SEEK A DECLARATORY JUDGMENT.

WELL, OBVIOUSLY THE PEOPLE WHO PROPOSED THAT LANGUAGE WOULD NOT BE HAPPY ABOUT IT, AND THEY WOULD PROBABLY -- I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'D DO, BUT THEY WOULD -- YOU KNOW, THEY WOULD BE THE ADVERSE PARTY, WOULDN'T THEY, I MEAN OR NOT? I'M NOT AN ATTORNEY, AND THAT'S WHY I'M ASKING THE QUESTION.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: I CAN CERTAINLY LOOK INTO THAT FOR YOU.

I LOOKED AT IT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DEC ACTIONS, BUT CERTAINLY WHATEVER THE WILL OF THE BOARD IS, I'LL BE HAPPY TO DO THAT RESEARCH AND BRING THAT MATTER BACK TO YOU, BUT THERE WOULD NEED TO BE TWO PARTIES WITH ADVERSE INTERESTS WHO FEEL THAT THEIR INTERESTS AND RIGHTS ARE BEING AFFECTED BY WHATEVER THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE DEC ACTION IS, AND THERE NEEDS TO BE

SOME BONA FIDE DISPUTE, SO IT CAN'T JUST BE THE BOARD GOING AND ASKING THE COURT TO ADDRESS A MATTER BECAUSE THIS PARTICULAR KIND OF ACTION CAN'T BE USED AS A VEHICLE TO ASK FOR LEGAL ADVICE FROM THE COURT.

THAT'S PRETTY MUCH THE STANDARD FOR A DEC ACTION, BUT CERTAINLY I'LL BE HAPPY TO LOOK INTO THAT IF THAT'S THE WILL OF THE BOARD.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MS. REBACK.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: WHAT I HEAR YOU SAYING IS THE CONTROVERSY HAS TO BE RIPE.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: EXACTLY.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: IT CAN'T BE A HYPOTHETICAL CONTROVERSY?

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: IT CANNOT.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: SO --

>> DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: AND IT CAN'T BE SOME MEDIUM OR METHOD BY WHICH YOU-ALL WOULD TAKE THIS ACTION TO THE COURT AND ASK FOR SOME LEGAL ADVICE.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: IN A WHAT-IF CIRCUMSTANCE THAT --

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: EXACTLY.

IT'S GOT TO BE A BONA FIDE DISPUTE BETWEEN TWO PARTIES WITH DIVERSE INTERESTS, YES.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. ROBINSON.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: WE'RE TALKING -- I GOT SORT OF SWITCHED HERE.

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE VETO NOW?

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: I'M ADDRESSING MS. PLATT'S QUESTION.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I KNOW, BUT SHE'S TALKING ABOUT THE VETO --

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES, I BELIEVE SO.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: -- THAT AMENDMENT THAT PASSED?

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES.

WHETHER OR NOT THIS CHARTER REVIEW BOARD CAN TAKE THAT MATTER AND INITIATE A DEC ACTION --

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: WELL, WE CAN DO THIS.

WE CAN GET TEN VOTES AND ASK THE VOTERS TO TAKE IT OUT.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YOU CERTAINLY CAN.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: THAT'S THE EASIEST WAY TO DO IT; RIGHT?

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES, THAT IS AN OPTION FOR YOU.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: SO IF WE FEEL THAT THAT VETO IS NOT RIGHT, WE GET TEN VOTES, TAKE IT OFF; RIGHT?

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES, ABSOLUTELY.

YES.

THANK YOU.

>>GERALD WHITE: I'M WITH YOU ON THAT.

IF YOU MAKE A MOTION TO DO THAT -- IF WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING THAT GOES WITH IT, I THINK WE SHOULD PUT IT ON THE BALLOT AND TAKE IT OUT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I AGREE, BUT I AIN'T GOING TO DO THAT

NOW, I'M GOING TO LET YOU DO IT.

I MIGHT SECOND YOU.

I WANT TO HEAR A LITTLE MORE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MRS. FARRIS.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: OKAY.

IF THERE'S --

>>GERALD WHITE: WELL, SO I GUESS MY OVERALL CONCERN BASED ON THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S BRIEFING TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS -- AND I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID TO COMMISSIONER PLATT -- ARE THERE ANY OTHER LEGAL ACTIONS THAT THIS BOARD CAN TAKE WITH THIS -- THIS ISSUE?

CAN WE FILE SUIT AS A BOARD TO TAKE IT OUT?

CAN WE TAKE IT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TAKE IT OUT?

WHAT CAN WE DO OTHER THAN THIS --

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: LET ME LOOK INTO WHAT OTHER ASPECTS MIGHT -- WE CAN TAKE REGARDING THIS.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL GENERALLY WILL GIVE YOU OPINIONS TO CERTAIN PEOPLE ON LIKE STATE LAW.

THEY GENERALLY DO NOT LIKE TO INTERPRET CHARTERS, BUT I CAN LOOK INTO THAT AGAIN AND SEE WHAT THEIR POSITION WOULD BE AND WOULD BE HAPPY TO BRING THAT BACK SO THE BOARD HAS THE OPTIONS, YOU KNOW, INCLUDING TAKING OUT THE BUDGET LANGUAGE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THAT SOUNDS GOOD.

>>GERALD WHITE: ALL POSSIBLE -- ALL POSSIBLE LEGAL

REMEDIES TO REMOVE THIS ACTION, THIS VETO ACTION THAT DOESN'T HAVE A MAYOR ATTACHED TO IT FOR THE REASONS -- SOME OF THE REASONS THAT WERE CITED IN COUNTY ATTORNEY RENEE LEE'S BRIEFING TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: WE CAN BRING THAT BACK AT THE NEXT MEETING.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: VERY BRIEFLY, JUST TO EXPLAIN THIS PRECLEARANCE LETTER, THE -- THE MAYOR ISSUE, THERE WAS A LOT OF QUESTIONS, AS YOU RECALL, MR. WHITE, ABOUT PRECLEARING IT BEFORE IT WENT TO THE VOTERS.

SURPRISINGLY TO ME THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TOOK THE POSITION THAT THEY WERE NOT GOING TO PRECLEAR IT BEFORE IT WENT TO THE VOTERS, THEY WOULD ONLY DO IT AFTERWARDS, WHICH IS INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT THEY HAVE DONE IN THE PAST WITH CHARTER REVIEW BOARD PROPOSALS.

NEVERTHELESS, AT SOME URGING OF SEVERAL CITIZENS, THE BOARD SENT A LETTER TO JUSTICE JUST ASKING FOR THEM TO PRECLEAR THE MAYOR.

THEY DIDN'T SUBMIT ANYTHING, JUST ASKING THEM IF THEY WOULD CONSIDER, YOU KNOW, ALLOWING US TO SUBMIT SOMETHING.

THIS IS WHAT WE GOT BACK, THAT IT'S BEEN PRECLEARED PURSUANT TO OUR SUBMITTAL THERE WAS NEVER A SUBMITTAL FOR THE MAYOR, BUT BY THE TIME ALL OF THIS KIND OF UNFOLDED,

THERE WAS A LAWSUIT.

IT WAS TAKEN OFF THE BALLOT, SO THIS LETTER WAS ATTACHED TO THAT MAYOR POSITION THAT WAS TAKEN OFF THE BALLOT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: WAS THE LANGUAGE ATTACHED TO THAT LETTER WHEN IT WAS SENT UP TO JUSTICE DEPARTMENT?

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: I'D HAVE TO PULL THE LETTER AGAIN, AND CAN I FORWARD THE LETTER TO YOU.

I THINK IT JUST HAD, YOU KNOW, PLEASE LOOK AT THIS, THESE ARE THE REASONS WE THINK YOU SHOULD LOOK AT IT BEFORE IT WENT TO THE VOTERS, AND THIS IS WHAT WE GOT BACK IN RESPONSE.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: IT GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY APPROVED IT.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: IT CERTAINLY --

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

IT SAYS THEY HAVE NO OBJECTION, BUT THERE WAS NO SUBMITTAL, BUT IT -- BUT THIS WAS TIED TO THE MAYOR POSITION, THE BALLOT LANGUAGE THAT WAS PULLED OFF THE BALLOT.

>> THEY'RE SAYING PURSUANT TO A SUBMITTAL, BUT THERE WAS NONE.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: CORRECT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I'M SORRY --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU'RE RECOGNIZED.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I'M SORRY.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. ROBINSON.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: THANK YOU, MR. CHAIR.

SO ONCE AGAIN, WE GO BACK TO THE QUESTION.

THE VETO PORTION NEVER WENT TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT?

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: CORRECT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: OKAY.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: THAT'S CORRECT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: BUT IT WAS APPROVED BY THE VOTERS?

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: CORRECT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: OKAY.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

>>MARY HELEN FARRIS: ALL RIGHT.

THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU, MRS. FARRIS.

OKAY.

NEXT UP -- OH --

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: I BELIEVE THERE WAS ONE MORE  
ITEM.

THIS PERTAINS TO THE ABOLISHING OF THE INTERNAL PERFORMANCE  
AUDITOR POSITION.

YOU SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED A DRAFT, VERY STRAIGHTFORWARD  
DRAFT OF OUR RESOLUTION PROPOSING TO ABOLISH THAT  
PARTICULAR POSITION AND THE FUNCTIONS THAT COME ALONG WITH  
THAT POSITION.

I'M HERE IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE FOR US TO

MAKE ANY AMENDMENTS OR CHANGES TO THIS PROPOSAL.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MRS. REBACK AND COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: I HAVE JUST A PROCEDURAL QUESTION.

IF THIS BOARD DETERMINES TO -- RATHER THAN ABOLISH THE POSITION, TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF THE POSITION OR TO -- AMEND IT OR ADD LANGUAGE OR DETRACT FROM THE TITLE THAT CURRENTLY EXISTS, WE DON'T HAVE TO GO BACK TO YOU IN ADVANCE OF THAT, DO WE?

WE CAN DIRECT YOUR OFFICE TO PREPARE LANGUAGE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT OUR VOTE IS; RIGHT?

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: ABSOLUTELY.

AS A BOARD, YOU CAN DIRECT US TO MAKE WHATEVER CHANGES, AND WE'LL BRING IT BACK TO YOU AT THE NEXT MEETING JUST AS WE DID WITH THIS ONE, ABSOLUTELY.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JAN PLATT: MR. CHAIRMAN, FROM A PROCEDURAL STANDPOINT, I WONDER -- AND THIS JUST A SUGGESTION --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YES.

>>JAN PLATT: -- THAT AS WE HAVE SUGGESTIONS LIKE THIS IN THE BALLOT LANGUAGE, IF WE JUST PUT IT ASIDE UNTIL WE GET ALL OF THEM -- BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, DURING THE PROCESS WE'RE GOING TO PROBABLY GET OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR BALLOT LANGUAGE SO THAT WE DEAL WITH ALL OF THEM AT ONE TIME BECAUSE IT WOULD BE RIDICULOUS FOR US TO HAVE FIVE DIFFERENT PUBLIC HEARINGS ON FIVE DIFFERENT ISSUES.

YOU'D JUST HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING ON ALL THE ISSUES THAT YOU'VE GOT THE VOTES FOR TO LISTEN TO.

THAT'S ALL YOU'RE GOING TO DO IS LISTEN.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I GUESS --

>>JAN PLATT: IN OTHER WORDS, I -- IN OTHER WORDS -- YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYING?

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: YEAH.

THAT'S MY QUESTION.

>>JAN PLATT: THAT WE COULD JUST SORT OF STOCKPILE THEM ALL --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WELL, WE HAVE TWO DIFFERENT TIMELINES.

>>JAN PLATT: YEAH.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WE'VE GOT THE 2010 AND WE'VE GOT THE 2012.

I MEAN, WE'RE CUTTING IT CLOSE ON THE 2010.

BASICALLY, IN ORDER TO DO THE 2010, MY UNDERSTANDING, WE'LL HAVE TO HAVE THE PUBLIC HEARINGS EARLY JULY.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: BY THE END OF JULY.

I BELIEVE THE BALLOTS WILL BE PRINTED BY AUGUST 24th, SO --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: SO, I MEAN, IF WE'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING FOR 2010, IT'S GOT TO BE PRETTY QUICK.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: NOW, WE'VE GOT 2012, AND MY UNDERSTANDING -- I'D HAVE TO LOOK AT THE TIMELINE, BUT WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF TIME FOR 2012.

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS WE HAVE TO HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR EACH ISSUE, BUT --

>> ISN'T THIS THE PUBLIC HEARING?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: NO, NO, NO, NO.

WE HAVE TO HAVE A SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARING -- TWO PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR EACH ITEM, AND THEN AT THE END OF THE PUBLIC HEARING WE'LL VOTE, AND IF TEN OF THE 14 OF US APPROVE THAT ITEM, THEN IT WILL GO AS A REFERENDUM ON THE BALLOT.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: BUT MY QUESTION PROCEDURALLY IS DOES THE LANGUAGE HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY THIS BOARD AND DRAFTED BY THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC HEARING?

IN OTHER WORDS --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

I SEE WHAT --

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: -- IS THE PUBLIC HEARING ON SPECIFIC LANGUAGE OR GENERAL ISSUE?

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: THERE'S ACTUALLY TWO STAGES TO THIS.

YOU WILL BE APPROVING THE RESOLUTION THAT WILL GO BEFORE THE VOTERS OR WHAT HAVE YOU AT THE PUBLIC HEARING, AND THEN ONCE THE PUBLIC HEARING TAKES PLACE, THOSE TWO PUBLIC HEARINGS, THEN I BELIEVE THERE IS A TWO-THIRDS VOTE THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: THAT'S NOT MY -- MY QUESTION IS BEFORE

THAT.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: I APOLOGIZE.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: YOU'VE ADDRESSED THE LATER ISSUES.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YOU'RE ASKING SPECIFICALLY DO WE HAVE TO HAVE THAT SPECIFIC WORDING IN PLACE BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEARING?

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: RIGHT.

CORRECT.

THAT'S MY QUESTION.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THE QUESTION GOING FARTHER, IF WE HAVE IT SET AND WE DO THE PUBLIC HEARING AND IT CHANGES --

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: RIGHT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: -- ARE WE ALLOWED -- WOULD WE HAVE TO DO A NEW PUBLIC HEARING OR COULD IT --

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: RENOTICE IT -- RIGHT.

WILL WE HAVE TO RENOTICE --

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YEAH.

AS LONG AS THERE'S NO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES, THIS RESOLUTION FOR YOU-ALL ACTS VERY SIMILAR TO THE ORDINANCE THAT GOES BEFORE BOARDS.

AS MUCH OF THE LANGUAGE AS POSSIBLE WOULD NEED TO BE IN PLACE PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC HEARING.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: WELL, I DON'T WANT TO --

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: AND AS LONG AS THERE'S NO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES HAPPENING AT THE PUBLIC HEARING, THEN

WE CAN MOVE FORWARD.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: WELL, I DON'T WANT TO JEOPARDIZE ANYTHING BECAUSE WE DIDN'T FOLLOW PROPER PROCEDURE, BUT FOR EXAMPLE, THE LANGUAGE THAT WE'VE REQUESTED THAT YOU BRING BEFORE US NOW ABOLISHES THE POSITION IN TOTAL, BUT, YOU KNOW, THERE HAS BEEN DISCUSSION ABOUT SIMPLY CHANGING THE LANGUAGE OF THE CURRENT EXISTING CHARTER PROVISION, THE DESCRIPTION OF THE POSITION, AND THE TITLE OF THE POSITION.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: TO ME I WOULD IMAGINE THAT WOULD BE A SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCE FROM ABOLISHING THE POSITION IN TOTAL.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: ABSOLUTELY.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: SO MY QUESTION WOULD BE IS IT ACCURATE THAT THIS BOARD HAS TO RESOLVE FIRST -- BEFORE SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING ON A MEASURE, THIS BOARD HAS TO RESOLVE THE MEASURE AND WHAT THE LANGUAGE WOULD BE THAT THIS BOARD SEEKS TO PLACE --

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: SURE.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: -- ON THE BALLOT AND THEN SET THE PUBLIC HEARING?

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES, BECAUSE THAT ISSUE WOULD NEED TO BE ADVERTISED, SO WE WOULD CERTAINLY NEED TO KNOW WHAT IT IS WHEN -- YOU KNOW, WILL BE AT THE PUBLIC HEARING PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC HEARING, YES.

>>JAN PLATT: WAIT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JAN PLATT: YOU KNOW, I THINK YOU NEED TO THINK THROUGH YOUR ANSWER BECAUSE AS A COUNTY COMMISSIONER, WHEN WE WOULD ADVERTISE ORDINANCES --

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES.

>>JAN PLATT: -- THERE WOULD BE LANGUAGE, AND THE PURPOSE OF A PUBLIC HEARING IS TO HEAR FROM THE PUBLIC ABOUT POTENTIAL CHANGES.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES.

>>JAN PLATT: AND SO THEN WHEN YOU -- IN THE PUBLIC HEARING, AT THE END OF THE FIRST PUBLIC HEARING, YOU WOULD THEN

SAY -- WELL, YOU'D TELL -- YOU'D TELL THE STAFF TO AMEND AND YOU'D OFFER THE AMENDMENTS, AND THEN YOU WOULD HAVE FURTHER PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THAT AMENDED LANGUAGE.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES.

>>JAN PLATT: AND SO YOU'RE -- YOU'RE IMPLYING THAT YOU HAVE TO COME UP WITH THE CONCLUSION BEFORE YOU HAVE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THEN YOU DON'T REALLY NEED TO HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING UNLESS --

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: IF THAT'S WHAT I SAID, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

>>JAN PLATT: OKAY.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: NO, IT'S CERTAINLY NOT WHAT I MEANT.

>>JAN PLATT: YOU START WITH ABOLISHING THE WHOLE THING.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: YES.

>>JAN PLATT: THEN EVERYBODY WILL COME AND THEY'LL SAY, OH, THAT'S TERRIBLE, AND THEY'LL GIVE YOU ALL THESE THINGS THAT THEY WANT --

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: ABSOLUTELY.

>>JAN PLATT: -- AND THEN YOU AMEND IT IF YOU WANT TO AMEND IT, AND THEN YOU HAVE OTHER PUBLIC HEARINGS WITH THE AMENDED LANGUAGE.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: WELL, CERTAINLY WE NEED TO HAVE A STARTING POINT AT LEAST BEFORE WE GET THERE.

>>JAN PLATT: WE'LL HAVE A STARTING POINT RATHER THAN STARTING WITH THE CHANGES, THEN IT'S A FOREGONE CONCLUSION THAT THAT'S WHAT -- LET -- THAT'S WHY YOU HAVE PUBLIC.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: WHAT WE NEED TO HAVE BEFORE WE GO TO THE PUBLIC HEARING IS SOMETHING, AND IF THERE ARE CHANGES IN AUDIENCE MEMBERS THAT COME UP AND MAKE COMMENTS AND YOU-ALL WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGES TO THAT DRAFT, WE'LL -- WE CAN DO THAT, BUT BEFORE WE EVEN GET TO THAT POINT, THERE NEEDS TO BE SOMETHING, SOMETHING, AND THIS IS -- I THINK THIS WAS THE FIRST OF SOMETHING THAT WE BELIEVE MAY BE GOING FORWARD.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: LET ME LET MR. AMON ASK A QUESTION,

AND THEN WE HAVE A TIME CERTAIN, AND WE'RE ALREADY PAST THAT TIME CERTAIN FOR MR. MANTEIGA, SO I WANT TO LET HIM COME IN AND SPEAK, AND WE CAN CONTINUE THIS ISSUE LATER.

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YEAH.

WE'VE GOT QUITE A BIT OF DISCUSSION ON THIS ISSUE.

IT'S OBVIOUS.

>>JOE AMON: I'M A LITTLE BIT CONCERNED.

LAST MEETING WE VOTED TO PUT THIS -- START THE LANGUAGE.

I WAS AGAINST IT THEN.

I'M STILL AGAINST IT NOW BECAUSE WHAT WE WERE TOLD WAS IT'S SOMETHING WE COULD START THE DISCUSSION.

WE'RE JUMPING ALL THE WAY TO A PUBLIC HEARING, AND WE HAVEN'T EVEN HAD A TIME TO VET OUT WHAT IT IS WE'RE GOING TO PUT ON A PUBLIC HEARING, AND I'M HEARING YOU SAY THAT WE CAN TAKE THIS DOCUMENT THAT WE'VE BEEN -- THAT WE'VE CURRENTLY GOT.

I THINK THAT'S TOTALLY WRONG.

THAT DOCUMENT IS TOTALLY INADEQUATE.

MAYBE THERE'S NOT AS MUCH OF A DESIRE TO REMOVE THE POSITION RATHER THAN TO ADJUST THE POSITION AND MAKE IT MORE PRODUCTIVE.

BUT WE'RE NOT -- THIS IS TOTALLY AGAINST WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT LAST -- LAST TIME WE GOT TOGETHER.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YEAH.

WE DO HAVE A LOT OF TO DISCUSSION ON THIS ISSUE STILL, AND  
IF WE DON'T GET -- WE MAY NOT HAVE TIME AT THIS MEETING TO  
GET IN DETAIL ON THIS.

WE MAY HAVE TO ADD IT TO THE AGENDA AND DEDICATE QUITE A  
BIT OF TIME NEXT MEETING FOR THIS ISSUE.

COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JAN PLATT: I WOULD SUGGEST THAT YOU MEET WITH STAFF AND  
COME UP WITH A WAY TO HANDLE ANYTHING THAT WE GET THE VOTES  
FOR TO -- TO DRAFT LANGUAGE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I WILL DO THAT.

>>JAN PLATT: REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE ISSUE IS, STAFF NEEDS  
TO TELL -- YOU-ALL NEED TO WORK OUT A SYSTEM --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: AND I'VE BEEN TALKING TO MARY HELEN  
FARRIS ABOUT THIS, I SPOKE WITH HER EARLIER TODAY, THIS  
EXACT ISSUE --

>>JAN PLATT: YEAH.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: -- BECAUSE THAT WAS ONE OF MY  
CONCERNS.

MY CONCERN WAS IF WE TOOK THIS TO PUBLIC HEARING AND THEN  
WE DISCUSSED IT AND THEN IT WAS VOTED DOWN OR WHATEVER,  
THEN WE'D BE STARTING OVER FROM SCRATCH AGAIN, AND THE --

>>JAN PLATT: BUILD ON IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YEAH.

THAT WAS MY CONCERN.

I DIDN'T KNOW IF WE COULD JUST GO FROM, YOU KNOW,

ELIMINATING THE POSITION TO THE CHANGES, SO -- BUT I WILL GET WITH MARY HELEN FARRIS AND DISCUSS IT SOME MORE.

>>GERALD WHITE: AND MR. CHAIR, I REALLY WOULDN'T WANT TO TAKE THIS ISSUE UP UNTIL WE HEAR FROM THE MAJORITY OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ON THEIR VOTED-OUT FIX. I WANT THE BOARD OF -- I WOULD HOPE THAT THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TAKE A FORMAL POSITION ON THE APPROPRIATE FIX NOW THAT WE'VE OPENED THIS ISSUE UP SO THAT WE CAN INSERT THEIR FIX INTO WHATEVER LANGUAGE AND LET THE PUBLIC HAVE A WEIGH -- A WEIGH-IN ON IT, AND WE CAN VOTE IT UP OR DOWN THAT WAY.

LET'S HEAR FROM THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, THE MAJORITY OF THE BOARD, ON WHAT'S THE APPROPRIATE FIX FOR THIS INTERNAL PERFORMANCE AUDITOR/BUDGET ANALYST POST, AND THEN WE CAN TAKE THEIR FIX ALONG WITH OUR ADDITIONAL CONCERNS TO PUBLIC HEARING.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

COMMISSIONER PLATT, AND THEN --

>>JAN PLATT: I'M GOING TO GET IN TROUBLE FOR SAYING THIS -  
-

>>MITCHELL THROWER: -- I NEED TO GET TO MR. MANTEIGA.

>>JAN PLATT: I'M GOING TO GET IN TROUBLE FOR SAYING THIS, BUT I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY THINK. THEY'VE BEEN THERE, AND THEY COULD HAVE MADE CHANGES A LONG TIME AGO.

MR. BECKNER, WHO WAS HERE, HAS ONLY BEEN ON THE BOARD, I THINK, TWO YEARS.

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>>JAN PLATT: I MEAN IF THEY HAD WANTED TO DO RIGHT, THEY COULD HAVE DONE IT, AND THEY HAVEN'T.

WE'RE HERE TO REPRESENT CITIZENS, NOT POLITICIANS WHO ARE IN ELECTED OFFICE.

THEY COULD HAVE DONE WHAT THEY COULD HAVE DONE.

>>GERALD WHITE: I'M WITH YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I WILL GET WITH MRS. FARRIS AND WE'LL ADD THIS TO THE AGENDA.

MR. MANTEIGA.

THANK YOU FOR COMING BEFORE US.

>> THANK YOU.

I HAVE -- CAN I --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YES.

>> THANK YOU.

THANK YOU FOR THE INVITE.

MY NAME'S PATRICK MANTEIGA, CITIZEN OF TEMPLE TERRACE, AND I HAVE THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL TROUBLEMAKER, ALSO KNOWN AS A NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER.

I WOULD LIKE TO ADVANCE TO THE CHARTER REVIEW BOARD THE IDEA THAT IT IS NOW TIME TO BRING THE COUNTY COMMISSION CLOSER TO ITS CONSTITUENTS.

I HOPE AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION THIS COMMISSION WILL

HOPE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICT SEATS TO SIX FROM THE CURRENT FOUR AND TO KEEP THE NUMBER OF AT-LARGE COUNTY COMMISSIONWIDE -- COUNTYWIDE SEATS AT THREE. THIS WOULD CREATE A COUNTY COMMISSION WITH NINE MEMBERS, THREE COUNTYWIDE AND SIX SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS.

COUNTY MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS PROVIDE THE MOST BASIC SERVICES TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS.

THIS IS THE MOST LOCAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND SHOULD BE CLOSE TO THE POPULATION IT SERVES.

THIS LEVEL PROVIDES FOR OUR LOCAL ROADS AND PARKS, ESTABLISHES ZONING, PROTECTS CONSUMERS, PROVIDES OUR WATER, AND COLLECTS OUR GARBAGE.

IT IS NORMALLY THE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT WE CONTACT THE MOST TO FILL A POTHOLE, TO PICK UP A STRAY DOG, COMPLAIN ABOUT AN OVERGROWN LOT, OR SEEK A VARIANCE TO BUILD A CARPORT. FOR THIS REASON, COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SHOULD BE CLOSE TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS.

THE RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE INTIMATE.

WE, THE PEOPLE, NEED TO FEEL THAT WE CAN BE HEARD AND THE RESPONSES QUICK AND ADEQUATE.

BECAUSE OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY'S GROWTH AND THE LIMITED POPULATION SERVED BY MUNICIPALITIES, PEOPLE HAVE BECOME FURTHER SEPARATED FROM THEIR REPRESENTATIVES.

HILLSBOROUGH, UNLIKE MANY LARGE URBAN COUNTIES, HAS FEW CITIES, ONLY THREE, TAMPA, PLANT CITY, AND TEMPLE TERRACE.

CITIES BRING GOVERNMENT CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE.

YOUR LOCAL CITY COUNCIL PERSON IS MORE LIKELY TO FREQUENT EVERY PART OF HIS OR HER DISTRICT THAN A COUNTY COMMISSIONER.

IT'S A MATTER OF POPULATION AND GEOGRAPHIC SIZE SERVED.

IN 1980, JUST THREE YEARS BEFORE THE CURRENT SYSTEM WAS PUT INTO PLACE, THE POPULATION TOTAL IN THE THREE CITIES WAS 299,738.

THE POPULATION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY WAS 646,960.

THAT MEANT 54% OF OUR POPULATION WAS NOT SERVED BY A MUNICIPALITY.

THE CURRENT POPULATION ESTIMATES OF THESE CITIES IS 396,282 WITH 1,180,784 CITIZENS LIVING IN THE ENTIRE COUNTY.

THIS MEANS THAT 784,522 PEOPLE OR 67% LIVE IN UNINCORPORATED HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

THIS GROUP HAS ONLY THE COUNTY COMMISSION TO GO TO FOR THEIR NEEDS.

THEY DESERVE REPRESENTATIVES WHO ARE CLOSER TO HOME AND ON A MORE PERSONAL BASIS.

A SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICT COUNTY COMMISSIONER REPRESENTS CLOSE TO 300,000 PEOPLE, WHICH IS ALMOST AS MANY AS THE MAYOR OF TAMPA WHO HAS AN ESTIMATED 340,000 CONSTITUENTS, BUT THE CITY RESIDENTS HAVE A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR GOVERNMENT BECAUSE A SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICT CITY COUNCIL MEMBER HAS AN AVERAGE OF 85,220 CONSTITUENTS.

IF WE WERE TO ADD TWO SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO THE PRESENT COMMISSION, THEIR CONSTITUENTS WOULD SHRINK BELOW 200,000.

A SMALLER POPULATION AND A SMALLER GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED TRANSLATE TO BETTER REPRESENTATION AND A STRONGER, MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ADVOCATE.

THE SIZE OF OUR COUNTYWIDE DISTRICTS DEMONSTRATES JUST HOW LARGE AND DISTANT OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT HAS GROWN.

JIM NORMAN, MARK SHARPE, AND KEVIN BECKNER HAVE A CONSTITUENCY LARGER THAN SEVEN GOVERNORS.

STATES WITH A SMALLER POPULATION THAN HILLSBOROUGH ARE WYOMING, VERMONT, NORTH DAKOTA, ALASKA, SOUTH DAKOTA, DELAWARE, AND RHODE ISLAND.

THAT'S RIGHT, JIM NORMAN GOT MORE VOTES FOR COUNTY COMMISSION THAN SARAH PALIN DID FOR GOVERNOR.

IN FACT, OUR AT-LARGE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPRESENT MORE PEOPLE THAN ANY OTHER COUNTY COMMISSION IN THE STATE.

OUR COMMISSION NEEDS TO EXPAND AS OUR POPULATION GROWS, OR IT WILL BECOME MORE OUT OF TOUCH AND HARDER TO APPROACH BY THE AVERAGE CITIZEN.

GROWING THE COMMISSION IS A NORMAL PATTERN FOR COUNTIES AS THEY GET LARGER AND MORE URBAN.

ALMOST ALL SMALL FLORIDA COUNTIES HAVE FIVE AT-LARGE COUNTYWIDE -- COUNTYWIDE COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICTS, BUT AS THEY BECOME LARGER, THEIR COMMISSIONS EXCHANGE AT-LARGE

SEATS FOR SINGLE-MEMBER ONES OR THEY ADD SEATS OR THEY DO BOTH.

THIS HELPS THESE COUNTIES BETTER REPRESENT THEIR DIVERSE POPULATIONS, URBAN, SUBURBAN, AND RURAL, WHITE COLLAR, BLUE COLLAR AND AGRICULTURAL, WHITE, BLACK, AND HISPANIC, THE RICH AND THE POOR.

THESE COUNTIES HAVE OUTGROWN THE SIMPLE RULE OF THE MAJORITY ELECTING THE MAJORITY OF THE COUNTY COMMISSION. I'VE PROVIDED YOU WITH A CHART TO SHOW HOW THE TOP SEVEN COUNTIES COMPARE.

AS YOU CAN SEE, HILLSBOROUGH HAS THE LARGEST CONSTITUENCY PER ELECTED SINGLE-MEMBER COUNTY COMMISSIONER.

ALL THE COUNTIES LARGER THAN US HAVE ABANDONED AT-LARGE DISTRICTS.

THE ONLY COUNTY WITH THE SAME COUNTY COMMISSION STRUCTURE AS WE IS PINELLAS COUNTY, BUT THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND PINELLAS.

PINELLAS HAS 24 MUNICIPALITIES COVERING 64% OF ITS POPULATION.

IT HAS ONLY 280,000 PEOPLE LIVING IN THE UNINCORPORATED COUNTY COMPARED TO 784,522 IN HILLSBOROUGH, SO EVEN THOUGH PINELLAS HAS THE SAME SETUP AS HILLSBOROUGH, A LARGE MAJORITY OF ITS POPULATION HAS A MORE IMMEDIATE FORM OF GOVERNMENT THAN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

THE CURRENT COUNTY COMMISSION STRUCTURE DOES NOT PROMOTE

GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY ON THE COUNTY COMMISSION.

SOUTH TAMPA HAS HISTORICALLY HAD A LION'S SHARE OF THE COMMISSIONERS, AND RECENTLY WHEN BRIAN BLAIR WAS ON THE COMMISSION, HE, JIM NORMAN, AND KEN HAGAN LIVED IN THE SAME NEIGHBORHOOD JUST A FEW MILES FROM EACH OTHER.

OUR COUNTY DESERVES TO HAVE REPRESENTATION THAT LIVES SOUTH OF THE ALAFIA RIVER OR IN BRANDON OR WEST TAMPA OR TOWN 'N COUNTRY OR NEW TAMPA, BUT IF WE CONTINUE TO DIVIDE THE PIE INTO FOUR SLICES, THAT GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY IS UNLIKELY TO BECOME A REALITY.

SUN CITY'S REPRESENTATIVE SHOULDN'T LIVE 33 MILES FROM THAT COMMUNITY.

PEOPLE DESERVE TO HAVE THEIR LOCAL COUNTY COMMISSIONER LIVE, WORK, AND SHOP IN THEIR AREA.

DIVIDING THE COUNTY INTO SIX DISTRICTS INSTEAD OF THE CURRENT FOUR WILL OPEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREATER RACIAL DIVERSITY ON THE BOCC.

THE CURRENT DISTRICT LINES HAVE CREATED A DISTRICT WHERE THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION IS LARGE ENOUGH FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLITICIANS TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE ELECTED, BUT IN ORDER TO CREATE THIS PROMINENT BLACK DISTRICT, HISPANIC POPULATION HAS BEEN DIVIDED AMONGST THREE DISTRICTS, THEREBY DISENFRANCHISING THAT POPULATION. SINCE THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN IN PLACE NO ONE WITH A HISPANIC SURNAME HAS BEEN ELECTED TO THE COUNTY COMMISSION.

THIS IS IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT HISPANIC POPULATION HAS OUTGROWN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN TO BECOME THE LARGEST MINORITY GROUP IN THIS COUNTY WITH AN ESTIMATED 22% WHILE AFRICAN-AMERICAN HAS SLOWLY DECLINED OR REMAINED CONSISTENT AT 16%.

THE SCHOOL BOARD WAS A 3-4 SYSTEM LIKE THE COUNTY COMMISSION UNTIL RECENTLY.

ALSO LIKE THE COMMISSION, NO ONE WITH A HISPANIC SURNAME WAS EVER ELECTED TO THE BOARD, BUT THE BOARD HAD BLACK REPRESENTATION.

AS SOON AS THE BOARD WAS CHANGED TO TWO AT-LARGE AND FIVE SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS, SUSAN VALDES, THE FIRST HISPANIC BOARD MEMBER, WAS ELECTED.

AS SOON AS THEY CHANGED THE PIE TO DIVIDE IT TO FIVE INSTEAD OF FOUR, WE ENDED UP WITH A HISPANIC ON THE SCHOOL BOARD.

WITH 259,772 HISPANICS IN THE COUNTY, THEIR ABSENCE ON THE COMMISSION SPEAKS VOLUMES ON OUR NEED TO FOSTER DIVERSITY. BY DIVIDING THE COUNTY INTO SIX PIECES, WE CAN CREATE ONE COMPACT AND CONTIGUOUS DISTRICT WITH A 37% HISPANIC POPULATION WHICH WOULD GIVE HISPANIC CANDIDATES THE BASE THEY NEED TO GET ELECTED.

THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA RULED IN 2006 ON OSCEOLA COUNTY'S REDISTRICTING.

CLAIMS HAD BEEN MADE THAT OSCEOLA'S SYSTEM WAS

DISCRIMINATORY TO HISPANICS.

THE COURT FAVORED ONLY SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS, FINDING THAT, AND I QUOTE, HISPANICS IN OSCEOLA COUNTY HAVE NO REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY TO ELECT MEMBERS IN AN AT-LARGE ELECTION; THEREFORE, GIVEN THE HIGH DEGREE OF HISTORICALLY POLARIZED VOTING, THE EXTRA TWO AT-LARGE SEATS ARE COMPLETELY OUT OF THE REACH OF THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY. SORRY.

I LOST MY LAST PAGE HERE.

ANOTHER REASON TO MOVE TO A SYSTEM MORE DOMINATED BY SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS IS ACCOUNTABILITY.

CONSTITUENTS IDENTIFY WITH THEIR SINGLE-MEMBER COUNTY COMMISSIONER MORE THAN THE AT-LARGE MEMBERS.

EVEN THOSE WHO CALL IN WITH PROBLEMS ARE OFTEN ASKED FOR THEIR ADDRESS SO THEY CAN BE REFERRED TO THEIR SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICT COUNTY COMMISSIONER.

ONE REASON FOR THE 3-4 SYSTEM WAS THAT EVERY VOTER COULD VOTE FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

IN THEORY, THIS SOUNDS GOOD, BUT IN PRACTICE, FEW VOTERS KNOW THEIR FOUR COMMISSIONERS.

IT'S BETTER TO IDENTIFY WITH A LOCALLY ELECTED COMMISSIONER AND HOLD HIM OR HER ACCOUNTABLE THAN TO VOTE FOR FOUR WHO YOU CAN'T REMEMBER.

IT'S UNUSUAL IN OUR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY TO VOTE FOR MORE THAN ONE REPRESENTATIVE FOR A LEGISLATIVE BODY OR EVEN

RARER TO VOTE FOR A MAJORITY OF THAT BODY.

WE DON'T PRACTICE THIS IN THE U.S. SENATE, U.S. HOUSE,  
STATE SENATE, OR STATE HOUSE.

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO GROW OUR COUNTY COMMISSION TO MEET THE  
NEEDS OF OUR EVER-EXPANDING AND DIVERSIFYING COUNTY.

ADOPTING THIS PLAN WILL, IN ESSENCE, REDUCE THE SIZE OF  
GOVERNMENT, MAKE GOVERNMENT MORE RESPONSIVE, CREATE  
COMMUNITY COMMISSIONERS, ADD GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY TO THE  
BOCC, AND ADD ETHNIC DIVERSITY TO THE BOCC AND MAKE  
COMMISSIONERS MORE ACCOUNTABLE.

I APPRECIATE YOUR TIME, AND I'M WELCOMED TO ANSWER ANY  
QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. TOKLEY, FIRST.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: SENOR MANTEIGA.

>> YES, SIR.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: [SPEAKING SPANISH]

WHEN YOU MAKE MENTION OF THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE NO LATINO  
REPRESENTATION, FORGIVE ME, EDUCATE ME.

>> SURE.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: IS ROSE FERLITA --

>> ROSE FERLITA HAS AN ITALIAN LAST NAME.

ITALIANS HAVE DONE VERY WELL IN THE COMMUNITY.

NICK NUCCIO WAS A MAYOR, DICK GRECO, BUT HISPANICS HAVE NOT  
DONE NEARLY AS WELL IN ELECTIONS.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: SYLVIA RODRIGUEZ?

>> SYLVIA KIMBALL RODRIGUEZ WAS AN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCE. OF COURSE, SHE WAS AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND HISPANIC AND WAS ELECTED, AND I HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT HER AND I APOLOGIZE, SO YOU'RE RIGHT, WE HAVE HAD ONE, BUT SHE WAS ELECTED IN A SINGLE-MEMBER BLACK DISTRICT AND WAS NOT ELECTED COUNTYWIDE, SO I DON'T KNOW IF SYLVIA KIMBALL RODRIGUEZ WOULD HAVE HAD MUCH HOPE IF SHE WOULD HAVE HAD TO HAVE RUN COUNTYWIDE OR OUTSIDE OF HER OWN DISTRICT.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: GRACIAS, SENOR.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JAN PLATT: I WAS JUST GOING TO ASK YOU ABOUT SYLVIA RODRIGUEZ KIMBALL BECAUSE I SERVED WITH HER --

>> SURE.

>>JAN PLATT: -- AND I WANTED TO STAND UP FOR HER.

>> WELL, AND, YOU KNOW, I FEEL ASHAMED FOR FORGETTING HER, BUT LIKE I SAID, IT WAS A UNIQUE SITUATION, AND OUTSIDE OF THAT DISTRICT, I SERIOUSLY DOUBT SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BE ELECTED.

>>JAN PLATT: I THINK MORE OF HER THAN YOU DO THEN BECAUSE I THINK SHE COULD HAVE DONE WHATEVER SHE --

>> YOU KNOW, IT ISN'T --

>>JAN PLATT: I WON'T QUIBBLE WITH YOU.

>> I UNDERSTAND.

>>JAN PLATT: I JUST WANT TO SAY --

>> BUT TO DENY THAT PEOPLE STILL VOTE BASED ON RACE IS

HOPING FOR MORE THAN ACTUALLY EXISTS OUT THERE TODAY IN THIS COUNTY A LOT OF TIMES.

>>JAN PLATT: AND I WAS JAN KAMINIS PLATT WHICH IS GREEK, SO WE'VE HAD A DIVERSE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. FISHER.

>>JAN PLATT: I USED TO PUT KAMINIS ON THE NAME TAG EXCEPT IT GOT TOO LONG.

>>RALPH FISHER: [INAUDIBLE]

I JUST DON'T AGREE AT ALL.

I MEAN, I LIKE YOU, PAT, AND I LOVE YOUR NEWSPAPER BECAUSE YOU PUBLISH ALL MY LEGAL NOTICES, AND ALL MY FORECLOSURES GO THROUGH BECAUSE OF YOU.

>> WE APPRECIATE THE BUSINESS, SIR.

>>RALPH FISHER: WELL, YOU'RE A GREAT ASSET TO THE COMMUNITY, BUT I TOTALLY, TOTALLY DISAGREE WITH YOU.

I DON'T THINK ANYONE THAT VOTES IN THIS COMMUNITY VOTES ON ANYTHING DEALING WITH RACE OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND, I THINK THEY VOTE ON WHO IT IS THAT'S RUNNING AND WHAT THEIR IDEAS ARE AND WHAT THEY BELIEVE ABOUT TAXES AND SPENDING AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES, AND I CHALLENGE YOU TO TELL ME A SINGLE INSTANCE IN WHICH SOMEONE WHO WAS QUALIFIED, WHO LOST AN ELECTION, WHO RAN BECAUSE OF RACE?

I JUST DON'T BELIEVE IT'S GOING ON IN THIS MODERN WORLD, AND I APOLOGIZE FOR FEELING THAT WAY, BUT THAT'S WHAT THE

AMERICAN DREAM IS, AND I DON'T THINK THAT WE SHOULD GERRYMANDER AND CREATE DISTRICTS THAT BASICALLY WALL PEOPLE OFF ACCORDING TO RACIAL OR ETHNIC LINES, SO I DISAGREE WITH YOU, SIR.

>> WELL, YOU KNOW, LET ME CITE OSCEOLA COUNTY WHICH ELECTED THE FIRST PUERTO RICAN TO ITS COUNTY COMMISSION, AND AS SOON AS IT DID -- THEY CHANGED THE WAY THE DISTRICTS WERE LAID OUT AND WENT WITH AN ALL AT-LARGE SYSTEM.

AFTER THAT THEY COULD NEVER GET A HISPANIC EVEN THOUGH ALMOST A -- I THINK THEY'RE CLOSE TO A MAJORITY HISPANIC IN THAT COUNTY.

THE SECOND THEY CHANGED THIS TO SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS, THEY ENDED UP WITH TWO HISPANICS ON THEIR COMMISSION.

I CAN SHOW YOU, MR. FISHER -- AND I'VE BEEN A STUDENT OF POLITICS HERE FOR A LONG TIME.

I CAN PREDICT WHICH PRECINCTS WILL NOT VOTE FOR A HISPANIC. THAT'S TOUGH TO DO IF THERE ISN'T SOMETHING GOING ON OUT THERE.

IT IS DIFFICULT.

I DO BELIEVE THE VOTING BOOTH IS THE LAST BASTIAN OF RACISM BECAUSE IT'S A VERY PRIVATE, QUIET PLACE TO DO IT, BUT LET'S DISREGARD THE HISPANIC SIDE OF THIS.

I'D LIKE YOU TO THINK ABOUT BRINGING GOVERNMENT CLOSER TO YOU.

RIGHT NOW IT IS SO DIFFICULT FOR THE AVERAGE PERSON TO

ENGAGE THEIR COUNTY COMMISSIONER.

THESE PEOPLE HAVE -- THEY'RE BIG OFFICE HOLDERS.

AL HIGGINBOTHAM HAS A HUGE DISTRICT.

HE ISN'T LIKELY TO FREQUENT SUN CITY CENTER.

HE HAS TO MAKE A TRIP ACTUALLY TO GO DOWN THERE.

>>RALPH FISHER: HE'S THERE ALL THE TIME.

>> TO DO THAT, BUT IT'S A TRIP.

IT'S NOT A NATURAL ASPECT OF HIS DRIVE LIKE IT MIGHT BE FOR A ROSE FERLITA TO STAY CLOSE TO HER SOUTH TAMPA DISTRICT, SO DIVIDING THE PIE BY SIX, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE ACTUAL PROBLEM IS BY DIVIDING IT.

LIKE I SAID, WE'RE AN UNUSUAL COUNTY.

WHAT DOES MIAMI HAVE WRONG, WHAT DOES THE OTHER COUNTIES

THAT HAVE DONE THIS -- WHY ARE THEY WRONG?

SHOULD WE ALL BE AT-LARGE?

IF THERE'S NO PROBLEM, WE SHOULD PROBABLY GO TO AN AT-LARGE SYSTEM COMPLETELY, BUT MS. PLATT HELPED DESIGN THIS SYSTEM, AND I THINK ONE OF THE REASONS WHY SHE HELPED DESIGN IT WAS THAT SHE FELT THAT WE DID NEED SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS.

>>JAN PLATT: WELL, BUT WE DESIGNED IT SO THAT EVERY --

EVERY VOTER HAD A MAJORITY OF THE BOARD ANSWERABLE TO THEM.

THAT'S THE WHOLE THEORY.

EVERY -- EVERY PERSON WHO STANDS BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HAS FOUR PEOPLE, THREE AT-LARGE AND ONE SINGLE-MEMBER, THAT THEY PLAYED A ROLE IN ELECTING THAT

PERSON, AND THAT'S THE STRENGTH OF THE 4-3.

>> BUT WHY NOT ALL COUNTYWIDE, THEN YOU WOULD ELECT ALL OF THEM?

>>JAN PLATT: NO, BECAUSE WE WANTED TO GIVE THAT -- WE WANTED TO -- WE WANTED TO GIVE SOME OF EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

>> WAS THERE ANY DECISIONS ABOUT AFRICAN-AMERICANS HAVING A BETTER SHOT AT DIVERSITY ON BEING ON THE COUNTY COMMISSION?

>>JAN PLATT: WELL, YOU CAN CHECK THE RECORDS BECAUSE THAT VERY ISSUE IS WHAT WENT UP TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND IT GOT CLEARED.

>> I MEAN, WE DO HAVE A JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO DEAL WITH, AND THERE'S A REASON WHY WE DO IT.

THERE HAS BEEN DISCRIMINATION IN THIS COUNTY.

WE DO HAVE A RECORD OF IT.

YOU KNOW, WE CAN DENY IT ALL WE WANT TO, BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, THERE ARE NO HISPANIC COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SITTING NOW, AND THERE ARE NO HISPANICS SITTING ON THIS BOARD.

>>RALPH FISHER: WHY DON'T YOU RUN?

>> WELL, LIKE I SAID, IT WOULD -- IT HELPS TO BUILD UP A PLACE TO BE NURTURED.

IT'S GREAT TO HAVE A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN BUILD ON.

IT'S VERY EXPENSIVE TO RUN FOR COUNTY COMMISSION CURRENTLY, AND HISPANICS NEED A PATHWAY TO RISE UP THROUGH THE RANKS, BUT LIKE I SAID, PLEASE DISREGARD THE LAST PAGE OF THE

COMMENTS AND LET'S JUST TALK ABOUT HAVING A COUNTY COMMISSION THAT'S CLOSER TO OUR -- TO US.

LIKE I SAID, ALL OTHER URBAN COUNTIES HAVE GROWN.

I DON'T KNOW WHY WE HAVEN'T.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. REDDICK AND THEN MRS. GRIMES.

>>FRANK REDDICK: THANK YOU.

PATRICK, I WANT TO JUST THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY TO COME AND SPEAK WITH US.

I AGREE WITH YOUR ASSESSMENT AND YOUR PRESENTATION.

I THINK MR. FISHER NEED TO GO AND LOOK AT HISTORY.

HE'LL UNDERSTAND BETTER THE POLITICAL PART OF IT AND THOSE WHO'VE BEEN NOT VOTED INTO OFFICE BECAUSE OF CERTAIN -- CERTAIN BELIEFS, BUT THIS IS -- THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO A LOT OF CONSTITUENTS IN THIS COUNTY, AND MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE EXPRESSING THOSE SAME SENTIMENTS THAT YOU SPOKE OF THIS EVENING, THAT THIS BOARD NEED TO EXPAND, WE NEED THE HISPANIC -- A PERSON THAT YOU CAN IDENTIFY AS A HISPANIC.

NOW, WE CAN COME IN HERE AND PUT ALL OF THESE -- PEOPLE PUT THESE SUBNAMES AND ALL OF THIS OTHER STUFF AND CONSIDER THEM TO BE HISPANIC, BUT ACTUALLY I'M LOOKING AT TRUE HISPANIC, I'M LOOKED AT THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE ADDITIONAL AFRICAN-AMERICANS SITTING ON THE COUNTY COMMISSION, AND I THINK YOU OUTLINED IN THIS PRESENTATION -- YOU GAVE US A STARTING POINT, THAT THIS IS WHERE WE -- HOW THIS NEED TO

BE DONE, AND I TRULY BELIEVE -- I'M GOING TO SUPPORT THIS, AND IF I'M THE ONLY ONE THAT HAS TO NOT ONLY PUT THE MOTION ON THE FLOOR BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE THAT VOTE ON IT, I'M GOING TO BE ON RECORD SUPPORTING IT BECAUSE I TRULY BELIEVE IT NEED TO BE DONE, AND WE CAN SIT AROUND THIS BOARDROOM AND THINK OTHERWISE, BUT I THINK THE PEOPLE OF THIS COMMUNITY, THEY'RE ASKING FOR THIS.

I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRESENTATION.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HERE THIS EVENING.

>> THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MRS. GRIMES.

>>GINA GRIMES: I HAVE A QUESTION.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE THE HISPANIC INDIVIDUAL AND HOW DO YOU DEFINE THE LATIN INDIVIDUAL, AND WHAT'S -- WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE IN YOUR MIND?

>> WELL, "LATIN" IS AN UNUSUAL TERM IN TAMPA.

I THINK IT'S THE ONLY PLACE IN THE NATION THAT INCLUDES ITALIANS BECAUSE OF THE UNIQUE WAY THAT OUR MINORITY COMMUNITY CAME TOGETHER.

HISPANIC IS A UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WORD, AND IT'S SOMEBODY WHO COMES FROM A COUNTRY OF SPANISH-SPEAKING -- A SPANISH-SPEAKING COUNTRY WHO'S ORIGIN IS THERE.

I THINK IT EXCLUDES SPAIN, THOUGH.

>> YES, IT DOES.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

>>GINA GRIMES: SO WHO WOULD IT INCLUDE?

>> IT WOULD INCLUDE PEOPLE FROM COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA,  
MEXICO, PUERTO RICO, ALTHOUGH PUERTO RICO'S, YOU KNOW, PART  
OF THE UNITED STATES.

IT WOULD INCLUDE CUBANS, DOMINICANS.

I THINK THERE'S ABOUT 22 NATIONS, SO PLEASE DON'T TEST ME.

I WOULD HATE FOR SOMEBODY TO FEEL BAD ABOUT ME LEAVING THEM  
OUT.

>>GINA GRIMES: BUT IT DOESN'T INCLUDE ITALIANS, BUT

"LATIN" --

>> NO, BECAUSE ITALIANS SPEAK --

>>GINA GRIMES: -- THE TERM "LATIN" DOES?

THE TERM "LATIN," THOUGH, DOES INCLUDE ITALIANS?

>> IN TAMPA IS THE ONLY PLACE IN THE NATION WHERE THE TERM  
"LATIN" MEANS THAT.

>> YES.

>> ONLY IN TAMPA.

>>GINA GRIMES: I THINK IT MIGHT BE IN THE DICTIONARY THAT  
WAY TOO.

>> NO.

WELL, LOOK -- NO.

IF YOU GO AND YOU GO TO LOS ANGELES AND YOU SAY LATIN,  
LATINO, LATINA, YOU GO TO NEW YORK, YOU GO TO CHICAGO, YOU  
WILL NOT END UP WITH ITALIANS.

>>GINA GRIMES: SO THEY'RE NOT WITHIN A PROTECTED CLASS?

>> NO.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. WHITE AND THEN MR. ROBINSON.

>>GERALD WHITE: THANK YOU FOR COMING, AND I STRONGLY SUPPORT THE INITIATIVE OF INCREASING THE BOARD TO NINE MEMBERS TO HOPEFULLY HAVE A HISPANIC CITIZEN ELECTED IN A SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICT TO SIT ON THIS BOARD.

I'VE LONG SUPPORTED THIS INITIATIVE, AND YOU GAVE AN ADDITIONAL ARGUMENT TONIGHT WHY WE NEED TO EXPAND THIS BOARD TO NINE.

IT IS JUST UNIMAGINABLE THAT A COMMISSIONER OR A SINGLE-MEMBER COMMISSIONER CAN REPRESENT AND REACH 295,196 CONSTITUENTS.

THAT'S JUST -- THAT'S -- THESE HUGE, AND I COUNT, MR. CHAIRMAN, THE COMMISSIONERS SIT ON ABOUT 35 BOARDS AS A WHOLE, SPORTS AUTHORITY, AVIATION AUTHORITY, HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, CHILDREN'S BOARD.

YOU JUST NAME IT.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

THEY'RE JUST STRETCHED TOO THIN, AND I THINK THAT'S ONE OF THE PROBLEMS, THAT OUR COMMISSIONERS AND SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS ARE JUST STRETCHED TOO THIN, AND ONE OF THE -- ONE OF THE WAYS THAT THE HISPANICS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BE SERVED A LITTLE BIT IS THAT THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS POINT HISTORICALLY TO SOMETHING OR SERVE

AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN/HISPANIC AND TRY TO BALANCE IT OUT, AND IT'S JUST TOUGH, AND SO, PATRICK, YOU'RE RIGHT.

AND I KNOW MR. REDDICK'S GOING TO EVENTUALLY MAKE A MOTION, BUT HE HAS A SECOND, AND WE'RE GOING TO FLUSH THIS OUT AND -- AND HOPEFULLY CREATE SOME BALLOT LANGUAGE SO THAT WE CAN SOLVE THIS LONGSTANDING PROBLEM HERE IN THIS COMMUNITY THAT HAVE OVER -- HOW MANY CITIZENS DO WE HAVE NOW, OVER A MILLION?

ONE MILLION ONE HUNDRED AND -- WE'RE ALMOST AT 1.2, I MEAN, RIGHT AT IT.

>>GERALD WHITE: AND SO WE'RE GROWING, AND THE HISPANICS, THEY DESERVE A SEAT ON -- THEY SHOULD HAVE A SEAT.

I MEAN, LOOK AT THE NUMBER OF CITIZENS.

22%?

>> YES.

>>GERALD WHITE: 22% OF THE POPULATION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, BUT THEY DON'T HAVE THE REPRESENTATION IN ONE OF THE HIGHEST OFFICES HERE IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THAT, AND I BELIEVE AS A CHARTER REVIEW BOARD, WE NEED TO SOLVE IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

LET ME MAKE A COMMENT REAL QUICK.

WE'VE GOT MR. ROBINSON, THEN MR. SULLIVAN.

WE DO HAVE MR. DAWSON, A TIME CERTAIN AT 7:30.

I'LL -- OUR SCHEDULE WAS PUSHED BACK BECAUSE WE STARTED

LATE BECAUSE OF THE LIVE TV, SO IF MR. DAWSON DOESN'T MIND,  
WOULD YOU MIND GIVING US TEN MORE MINUTES?

>> YES, SIR.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

IS THAT OKAY WITH YOU?

>> YEAH.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

ANOTHER ISSUE I WANTED TO MAKE.

BEFORE ANY MOTIONS ARE MADE ON THIS TOPIC SINCE IT JUST  
CAME UP TODAY, I WOULD PREFER TO HAVE THAT ON OLD -- WE CAN  
LIST IT ON OUR AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING IF IT'S SOMETHING  
THAT WE WANT TO DISCUSS BECAUSE I DON'T WANT A MOTION  
THROWN OUT WITHOUT GIVING THE PUBLIC AN OPPORTUNITY TO COME  
IN AND SPEAK ON THAT ISSUE AND BEING AWARE THAT IT'S GOING  
TO BE BROUGHT UP.

I'D HATE TO HAVE SOMEBODY MAKE A MOTION AND SECOND IT --

>>FRANK REDDICK: MR. CHAIR, I HAD NO INTENTION OF MAKING A  
MOTION TONIGHT.

[INAUDIBLE] APPROPRIATE TIME.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YEAH.

I JUST WANTED TO MENTION THAT BEFORE.

I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE, MR. REDDICK.

I JUST DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE MADE AND THEN HAVE TO GET INTO  
THAT DISCUSSION.

SO MR. ROBINSON, THEN MR. SULLIVAN, AND THEN MR. AMON.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: MR. MANTEIGA, NOW YOU'RE ON THAT SIDE,  
I'M ON THIS SIDE.

YOU KNOW WHAT, I'M GOING TO TELL YOU, HISTORICALLY THERE  
HAS, MR. FISHER -- IS IT FISHER OVER THERE?

I KEEP FORGETTING YOU GUYS' NAMES.

THERE HAS BEEN DISCRIMINATION IN THIS COUNTY AND THERE  
CONTINUES TO BE DISCRIMINATION IN THIS COUNTY.

THAT IS WHY WE'RE UNDER JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REVIEW.

THEY DIDN'T LET US GO YET.

DIDN'T YOU JUST HEAR WE'VE GOT TO PRECLEAR EVERYTHING?

WE'RE ONE OF THOSE FEW COUNTIES THAT STAFF GAVE US TWO  
MONTHS AGO TELLING US THAT WE'RE ONE OF THE FEW COUNTIES

THAT GOT TO BE PRECLEARED IN FLORIDA BECAUSE OF RACE

DISCRIMINATION, RACE DISCRIMINATION SPECIFICALLY WITH

AFRICAN-AMERICANS, OKAY, AND I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT IT

IS.

THERE IS RACE DISCRIMINATION, AND PEOPLE DO VOTE BY WHETHER  
YOU'RE BLACK OR WHITE.

PEOPLE DO LOOK AT THAT.

THAT'S A REALITY.

DON'T THINK THAT THAT IS NOT TRUE.

THAT IS A REALITY, OKAY.

SAYING THAT PEOPLE DON'T IS NOT REALITY.

PEOPLE DO.

HAVING RUN FOR OFFICE FIVE TIMES AROUND HERE AS A BLACK

REPUBLICAN, SO PEOPLE DO LOOK AT RACE.

I THINK THAT YOU GOT AN INTERESTING POINT.

WHEN I GOT HERE I WAS LOOKING AT MORE OF NINE, EXPANDING THE COUNTY COMMISSION, BUT YOU CAME UP WITH AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL OF INCREASING THE SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS, AND ONE OF THE PROBLEMS HAS BEEN IS THAT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DOESN'T LOOK AT REALLY HISPANIC, IT JUST LOOKS AT BLACKS AND WHITES.

LOOK AT THE NUMBERS THAT THE STAFF GAVE US.

THEY LOOK AT BLACK AND WHITE.

DOES IT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT HISPANIC?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF WE KEEP HISPANIC RECORDS AT THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS OFFICE FOR RACE BECAUSE THIS WAS ORIGINALLY A BLACK-WHITE ISSUE.

BLACKS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ON THE FOREFRONT OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE ON THE FOREFRONT OF CIVIL RIGHTS.

NOW, HE BRINGS AN INTERESTING PROPOSAL ABOUT HISPANICS NOT BEING ELECTED.

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: AND I BELIEVE AFTER THE CENSUS -- AND THAT'S WHY I HAD PUT INTO THE RECORDS OF THIS BOARD THE SUPREME COURT CASE THAT CAME OUT TALKING ABOUT CROSSOVERS. IT WAS A VERY CLOSE 5-4 RULING ABOUT STACKING UP DISTRICTS AND SO FORTH, AND I HOPE WE GET INTO THAT, BUT I'M HERE TO SAY THAT I'M WILLING TO SUPPORT SOMETHING, AND I BROUGHT

THIS UP.

THAT'S WHY I WAS ASKING EARLY ON WHEN WE FIRST STARTED WAY BACK IN FEBRUARY BRING ME THE NUMBERS OF POPULATION WHEN THE CHARTER WAS STARTED AND WHAT IS IT NOW.

BRING ME THE NUMBERS FOR WHEN THE CHARTER STARTED, WHAT IS IT NOW, SO WE CAN SEE THE GROWTH.

AND I THINK YOU'VE DETAILED A LITTLE BIT MORE SPECIFICALLY TO BRING OUT THAT WE'VE GOT MORE POPULATION AND WE HAVE LESS REPRESENTATION.

WHY?

BECAUSE IF YOU HAVE ONE PERSON REPRESENTING 200,000, NOW THEY'RE REPRESENTING 300,000, THAT'S LESS REPRESENTATION. THAT'S ALMOST DILUTION.

THAT IS THE ISSUE HERE.

YOU KNOW, WE START TALKING ABOUT DRAWING LINES.

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT DEMOCRAT -- MOSTLY BLACKS AND HISPANICS ARE DEMOCRAT.

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT.

THAT'S NO SECRET.

THAT IS NO SECRET.

THAT IS A FACT.

THAT'S A REALITY.

OKAY?

THAT IS THE REALITY.

AND THIS COUNTY IS NO DIFFERENT, SO WHAT I'M HERE TO SAY IS

THAT I'M WILLING TO SUPPORT YOU, MR. REDDICK, IF SOMEBODY MAKES A MOTION TO THAT EFFECT, AND I DON'T KNOW IF WE'VE GOT TO HAVE FIVE OR WHAT BECAUSE WE NEED TO GET STRAIGHT WHAT IS OUR QUORUM NOW THAT WE AIN'T GOT BUT 13 MEMBERS BECAUSE IT DON'T LOOK LIKE WE'RE EVER GOING TO GET 14.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: ACTUALLY, I WAS GOING TO MENTION COMMISSIONER HAGAN HAS APPOINTED ANTHONY ARENA TO THE CHARTER REVIEW BOARD.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: OKAY.

SO HE'S GOING TO BE COMING ONBOARD?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I WAS JUST NOTIFIED PRIOR TO THIS MEETING THAT HE'S BEEN APPOINTED.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: AND THEN A MAJORITY IS A MAJORITY OF MEMBERS PRESENT?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: A MAJORITY -- A MAJORITY WOULD BE -- THE QUORUM IS EIGHT.

MAJORITY IS A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS PRESENT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: OKAY.

TO GET SOMETHING LIKE WE DID ON THE COUNTY -- THE INTERNAL PERFORMANCE AUDITOR, WE WERE 6-5 VOTE --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YEAH, IT'S A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS PRESENT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: WHOEVER'S PRESENT AT THE TIME?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: [INAUDIBLE] HAVE THE COUNTY ATTORNEY DRAFT THE WORDING.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: OKAY.

MR. PATRICK, I APPRECIATE YOU COMING DOWN, AND I AGREE WITH YOU, AND I'M A BLACK REPUBLICAN AGREEING WITH YOU BECAUSE I'VE EXPERIENCED RACIAL DISCRIMINATION WHEN I RAN FOR OFFICE, OKAY, AND I DONE RUN FOR THE CITY, THE COUNTY, AND EVERYBODY ELSE, INCLUDING A CONSTITUTIONAL, SO WHAT I'M SAYING IS I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, AND I APPRECIATE YOU COMING OUT, AND I WILL BE ONE MEMBER TO SUPPORT TAKING A LOOK AT THAT.

AND LET'S HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING ON IT IS WHAT I'D LIKE TO HAVE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

I WANTED TO MAKE A QUICK COMMENT TOO.

MR. ROBINSON BROUGHT UP A POINT ABOUT DOES THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS KEEP VOTER INFORMATION FOR HISPANICS.

WE DID GET SOME INFORMATION IN A PACKET EARLIER IN OUR SESSIONS.

I BELIEVE IT CAME FROM EDITH STEWART, AND IT -- IT'S VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION, AND IT SHOWS AS OF MARCH 2nd, 2010, 12.10% OF THE POPULATION WERE HISPANIC VOTERS, REGISTERED VOTERS FOR THE FOUR SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS. 14.85% WERE BLACK, 66.15% WERE WHITE, AND 6.9% WERE OTHER. SO IT IS BROKEN DOWN.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: BY HISPANIC RACE?

>> EXCUSE ME.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: IT SAYS, WHITE, HISPANIC, BLACK, AND OTHER.

>> THE HISPANIC NUMBER IS DILUTED.

IT WAS NOT KEPT AS A STATISTIC UNTIL I BELIEVE 1986, SO THE OLDER THE HISPANIC A VOTER YOU ARE, THE LESS LIKELY YOU ARE TO BE REGISTERED AS A HISPANIC, AND GENERALLY THE OLDER THE VOTER, THE BETTER THE VOTER YOU ARE.

SO THE RACIAL NUMBERS REGARDING VOTERS -- SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS DATA HAS ALWAYS BEEN SKEWED AND ALWAYS BEEN OFF IN REGARDS TO HISPANIC IDENTIFYING IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

THANK YOU.

MR. SULLIVAN AND THEN MR. AMON.

>>DAVID SULLIVAN: PATRICK, THANK YOU FOR COMING.

I HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT FOR YOU AND YOUR PAPER AND APPRECIATE YOUR INPUT.

YOU OBVIOUSLY SPENT A LOT OF TIME WRITING THIS ARTICLE.

I THOUGHT THAT WAS VERY WELL SAID, AND I APPRECIATE THAT.

I DON'T AGREE WITH YOU.

I DON'T THINK BIGGER GOVERNMENT IS ALWAYS BETTER.

WHILE WE HAVE CLOSE TO 300,000 PEOPLE BEING REPRESENTED IN THE SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS AS YOU'VE POINTED OUT, I DON'T KNOW THAT GOING TO 200,000 MAKES THAT ANY MORE MANAGEABLE FROM AN ACCESS STANDPOINT.

WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW, IN YOUR RESEARCH OF THESE OTHER

DISTRICTS THAT HAVE GONE TO -- LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE, MIAMI-  
DADE THAT HAVE GONE TO SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS, HOW DOES  
THAT BETTER SERVE THE MINORITY POPULATION WHEN THEY HAVE --  
NOW HAVE ONE VOICE ON THE COMMISSION AS OPPOSED TO HAVING  
FOUR AS WE DO CURRENTLY WITH THREE AT-LARGE AND A SINGLE  
MEMBER, AND I'D ALSO LIKE TO KNOW INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT, I  
KNOW I HEAR VERY FREQUENTLY FROM PEOPLE THAT WORK IN THE  
COUNTY HOW HAVING THE COMMISSIONERS THAT WE HAVE NOW AND  
THEIR STAFF ADDING MORE WOULD JUST MAKE THE PROCESS OF  
GETTING THINGS APPROVED MUCH MORE CUMBERSOME AND WOULD  
ACTUALLY IMPEDE THE GOVERNMENT -- THE COUNTY'S GROWTH AND  
THE PROCESSES THAT WE HAVE?

HAVE YOU DONE ANY RESEARCH IN THAT AREA?

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS?

>> WELL, WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT, YOU KNOW, BEING SERVED, WHAT  
HAPPENS WHEN YOU LOOK AT A MAYOR FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND THE  
MAYOR'S MAKING APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND THINGS LIKE THAT,  
THE MAYOR IS REALIZING THAT SHE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY FOR  
BALANCE, SO IF SHE IS GOING TO PUT SOMEBODY ON THE SPORTS  
AUTHORITY, SHE'LL LOOK AROUND AND SHE'LL SAY, YOU KNOW  
WHAT, I'M GOING TO APPOINT SOMEBODY FROM THE MINORITY  
COMMUNITY.

I THINK I'LL APPOINT AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN.

I'LL FIND A QUALIFIED PERSON, BUT I THINK THAT WE SHOULD  
HAVE DIVERSITY ON THAT BOARD.

AND THEN THE MAYOR ON HER NEXT APPOINTMENT MIGHT SAY, WELL,  
YOU KNOW, I DID THAT ONE.

LET ME ROTATE.

LET ME PUT A WOMAN ON THERE.

THEN NEXT SHE MIGHT SAY LET ME PUT A WHITE MAN AND THEN  
NEXT MAYBE A HISPANIC.

BUT WHEN YOU HAVE A BOARD LIKE THE COUNTY COMMISSION  
WITHOUT SOMEBODY LOOKING OUT FOR YOUR INTEREST, NOBODY ELSE  
IS EITHER.

EACH COUNTY COMMISSIONER HAD TWO APPOINTMENTS TO THIS BOARD  
HERE.

I DON'T THINK ANY ONE OF THEM FELT A RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE  
TO LOOK OUT FOR THE HISPANIC MINORITY COMMUNITY.

NOW, MAYBE BY ACCIDENT THEY WOULD, BUT I ASSUME THAT KEVIN  
WHITE THOUGHT TO HIMSELF, LISTEN, I NEED TO MAKE SURE  
THERE'S SOME AFRICAN-AMERICAN REPRESENTATION ON THE CHARTER  
REVIEW BOARD, AND HE MADE SURE THAT HE DID WHAT HE NEEDED  
TO DO TO MAKE SURE HIS COMMUNITY WAS REPRESENTED, THAT  
THERE WAS DIVERSE VOICES ON THE CHARTER REVIEW BOARD, SO  
WHILE YOU MIGHT HAVE FOUR COMMISSIONERS, THESE  
COMMISSIONERS SERVE 1.2 MILLION PEOPLE, AND YOU'RE JUST A  
MINORITY TO THEM.

AND IF YOU'RE NOT THEIR MINORITY, THEN THEY DON'T PAY  
ATTENTION TO YOU.

THAT'S THE WAY MINORITY POLITICS IS.

YOU KNOW, IF YOU ARE A REPUBLICAN COUNTY COMMISSIONER AND YOU FEEL YOU GET THERE BY WHITE SUBURBAN VOTE, YOU DON'T PAY TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO THE BLACK COMMUNITY.

THAT'S HARSH TO SAY, BUT I'M IN A BUSINESS THAT LOOKS AT THINGS VERY HARSHLY, AND THAT'S THE WAY IT IS.

IF YOU FEEL THAT HISPANIC VOTE ISN'T YOUR VOTE, YOU DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

SO BY NOT HAVING SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS, YOU CREATE A SITUATION THAT THE MAJORITY IS NOT NECESSARILY LOOKING OUT FOR THE MINORITY.

THESE OTHER COUNTIES HAVE FOUND THAT HAVING MINORITY REPRESENTATION REPRESENT MINORITIES GIVES THAT KIND OF DIVERSE VOICE, AND I DON'T KNOW WHY WE CAN'T EMBRACE IT. YOU KNOW, WE CAN STICK OUR HEAD IN THE SAND AND SAY IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IF WE JUST LET IT HAPPEN, BUT IT ISN'T HAPPENING.

YOU DON'T SEE IT ANYWHERE, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU START TO TALK ABOUT NEWER IMMIGRANTS.

AND YOU ASKED ABOUT ITALIANS AND DIFFERENT FROM HISPANICS. ITALIANS CAME IN THE DOOR A LITTLE BIT LONGER AGO THAN THE HISPANICS.

GENERALLY THE LAST MINORITY THROUGH THE DOOR IS THE ONE MOST DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, NOT THE -- THE IRISH HAD THEIR TURN AND THE GERMANS HAD THEIR TURN AND THE ITALIANS HAVE HAD THEIR TURN, AND THE AFRICAN-AMERICANS HAVE HAD THE

LONGEST TURN OF ALL, BUT HISPANICS ARE NOT HAVING THEIR  
TURN.

SO THAT'S THE REASON WHY SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT  
THESE THINGS AND BE A LITTLE SENSITIVE.

LIKE I SAID, I DON'T THINK ANYBODY HAS THE WRONG IDEA IN  
THEIR HEART ON THIS BOARD, BUT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WHEN  
THEY'RE FACING A BALLOT, THEY CAN SEE HISPANIC ON THE  
BALLOT.

THEY CAN'T NECESSARILY SEE BLACK, BUT MARTINEZ IS HARD TO  
HIDE WHEN IT'S A MARTINEZ VS. A SMITH, AND WHILE WE CAN  
OVERCOME THESE THINGS, THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO MIGHT  
THINK THAT MARTINEZ DOESN'T SOUND LIKE MY KIND OF A PERSON,  
AND THEY JUST WON'T VOTE FOR THAT PERSON.

THEY END UP VOTING FOR A SMITH.

THAT HAPPENS.

IT HAPPENS A LOT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

WE -- I'M GOING TO ALLOW THREE MORE QUICK QUESTIONS.

WE'VE GOT MR. AMON, MR. TOKLEY, AND COMMISSIONER PLATT, AND  
THEN I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CUT IT OFF BECAUSE I'VE GOT MR.  
DAWSON WHO IS WAITING PATIENTLY, AND I APPRECIATE THAT.

>>JOE AMON: THANK YOU, PAT.

THANK YOU FOR COMING.

GREAT PRESENTATION, BY THE WAY.

>> THANK YOU.

>>JOE AMON: I DON'T AGREE WITH EVERYTHING YOU SAID, BUT I AGREE WITH ENOUGH OF IT TO BELIEVE THAT WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH REPRESENTATION, SO I THINK IT'S AT LEAST WORTH -- WORTH THE EFFORT TO PUT IN FRONT OF THE BOARD TO -- THE COMMISSION TO HAVE A GOOD DISCUSSION.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU.

MR. TOKLEY.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: KEVIN BECKNER APPOINTED ME TO THIS -- THIS COMMITTEE.

>> YES, SIR.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: I -- YOU AND I HAVE BEEN FRIENDS FOR YEARS.

I RECALL THE FACT THAT THE CITY OF TAMPA HAD HAD A LATINO MAYOR.

IT HAS YET TO HAVE AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAYOR.

>> CORRECT.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT LATIN HISPANICS ARE NOW THE LARGEST MINORITY ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, DO YOU BELIEVE THAT HERE IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY THAT WOULD MEAN A MORE PRONOUNCED POLITICAL MOVEMENT WITH THE -- WITH THE OVERALL LATIN HISPANIC COMMUNITY?

HAVE YOU SEEN THAT?

ARE YOU PART OF THAT?

>> YOU HAVE A -- A -- THE LATIN COMMUNITY IS -- HAS A HISPANIC COMMUNITY AS FRAGMENTED IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

AS -- MORE SO THAN ANYWHERE ELSE, AND THAT'S BECAUSE OF OUR DIVERSITY.

YOU LOOK AT LOS ANGELES AND YOU HAVE A MAJORITY OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION.

MOST CITIES HAVE, YOU KNOW, HEAVY PUERTO RICAN OR MEXICAN-AMERICAN, IN MIAMI YOU HAVE A DOMINANCE OF CUBANS, BUT IN TAMPA IT IS SO SPLIT UP, IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY IT'S SO SPLIT UP, AND IT'S EVEN SPLIT UP THAN WHEN PEOPLE CAME OVER.

YOU HAVE FAMILIES LIKE MINE THAT MY GRANDFATHER CAME OVER IN 1913 VERSUS SOMEBODY THAT CAME OVER TEN YEARS AGO.

THE ISSUES ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.

THEY DON'T EVEN LOOK AT ME AS BEING PART OF THE LATINO COMMUNITY, SO IT'S VERY FRAGMENTED.

I DON'T SEE OR NECESSARILY SEE A MOVEMENT, BUT, YOU KNOW, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN SENSITIVE TO THIS AND I'VE ALWAYS LOOKED OUT FOR IT, AND I JUST BELIEVE IT'S TIME TO ADDRESS IT, AND THIS IS CERTAINLY THE BOARD TO DO IT, AND THE PROPOSAL I'M ASKING IS NOT DRASTIC.

I MEAN, WE'RE NOT SWITCHING ALL THESE PEOPLE TO SINGLE MEMBERS, WE'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING, WE'RE GROWING, AND THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE HISPANIC SIDE OF IT, LIKE I SAID, PLEASE THROW AWAY THE LAST PART OF THE PRESENTATION.

PLEASE LOOK AT THE MERIT OF HAVING A COUNTY GOVERNMENT THAT

IS MORE DIVERSE IN A GEOGRAPHIC MANNER.

PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AT HAVING A COUNTY COMMISSIONER THAT ONLY REPRESENTS 200,000.

WHILE YOU SAY IT MIGHT NOT BE A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 200 AND 300, WELL, IN A FEW MORE YEARS IT'S GOING TO BE 400,000, AND SO IT'S GOING TO KEEP GROWING, AND THIS IS LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE SMALL.

I LIVE IN TEMPLE TERRACE.

I GOT A COUNTY -- CITY COUNCIL PERSON I THINK REPRESENTS ABOUT, YOU KNOW, 4- OR 5,000, AND YOU HAVE AN INTIMATE FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

YOU NEED SOMETHING DONE, IT'S DONE.

WHY CAN'T THE PEOPLE IN BRANDON HAVE THAT SAME FORM OF GOVERNMENT?

WHY CAN'T YOU REDUCE IT A LITTLE BIT?

LIKE I SAID, THIS ISN'T BIG, AND IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT GROWING GOVERNMENT, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SIX POSITIONS.

NOW, WITH THE BUDGET OF THIS COUNTY, I CAN'T IMAGINE HIRING OR FIRING SIX POSITIONS AS EITHER GROWING OR SHRINKING HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY GOVERNMENT, YOU KNOW.

DEMOCRACY IS EXPENSIVE.

YOU WANT TO SAVE MONEY, LET'S GO TO DICTATORSHIP.

WE ONLY HAVE TO PAY ONE PERSON.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JAN PLATT: WHAT IS JOE CHILLURA?

>> JOE CHILLURA IS ITALIAN.

>>JAN PLATT: WELL, LET ME JUST SAY, PATRICK, NINE TIMES OUT OF TEN I AGREE WITH YOU, BUT THIS IS THE ONE TIME I DON'T.

I JUST THINK IT'S DIVISIVE AND IT'S REGRESSIVE, YOU KNOW, TO SAY ITALIANS DON'T COUNT.

I MEAN, YOU KNOW --

>> I'M SORRY, MS. PLATT.

I DON'T THINK I SAID THAT ITALIANS DON'T COUNT.

>>JAN PLATT: BUT YOUR WHOLE THING IS AIMED AT HISPANICS.

>> I'M TALKING ABOUT A NEWER GROUP OF IMMIGRANTS.

>>JAN PLATT: THE GENERAL PUBLIC -- THE GENERAL PUBLIC DOESN'T -- WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, I DON'T THINK THE GENERAL PUBLIC UNDERSTANDS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ITALIAN AND A SPANIARD OR A GREEK OR ANY OF THEM.

I MEAN, IT'S --

>> I AGREE.

>>JAN PLATT: ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, AND I THINK THAT'S WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO AIM FOR IN THIS COUNTRY IS TO ELIMINATE THOSE DIFFERENCES, AND THAT'S WHY I THINK THIS IS REGRESSIVE.

IF YOU JUST STUCK WITH THE NUMBERS, BUT ONCE YOU STARTED GETTING INTO THE OTHER, I THINK IT'S -- I THINK IT'S SAD.

IT'S A STEP BACKWARD IN TIME.

I WAS HOPING THAT WE'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT SEPARATING PEOPLE ON BASIS OF THINGS LIKE RACE AND WHETHER THEY'RE A WOMAN OR A MAN OR WHETHER THEY'RE HISPANIC OR FROM ITALY OR FROM AFRICA.

>> I'M SORRY TO HAVE DISAPPOINTED YOU.

>>JAN PLATT: I KNOW, BUT WE AGREE ON THE NINE OTHER THINGS.

>> WELL, LIKE I SAID, I'M VERY SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU BECAUSE THIS IS REALLY SOMETHING I BELIEVE IN, SO OBVIOUSLY IT'S A DISAPPOINTMENT THAT I FEEL THAT I'VE DONE TO YOU, AND I APOLOGIZE FOR THAT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. MANTEIGA, I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR COMING BEFORE US.

I KNOW WE STILL HAVE BOARD MEMBERS WHO HAVE QUESTIONS, AND I APOLOGIZE --

>>GERALD WHITE: ONE QUESTION.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. WHITE, I'VE GOT TO CUT IT OFF.

>>GERALD WHITE: WE'VE GOT TO ASK HIM ABOUT THE COUNTY MAYOR.

WE'VE GOT THE HISPANIC LEADER HERE.

WE'VE GOT TO ASK IF HE SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE COUNTY MAYOR.

>> HE CAN STAY AND TALK AT THE END.

>>GERALD WHITE: WE GOT TO HAVE AN ANSWER FOR THAT.

DO YOU HAVE A POSITION ON THAT?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

LET -- I'VE GOT TO CUT IT OFF.

IF MR. MANTEIGA WANTS TO STAY TO THE END AFTER MR. DAWSON,  
HE'S WELCOME TO COME BACK.

>>GERALD WHITE: WE'VE GOT TO HAVE AN ANSWER ON THAT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WELL, WE CAN HAVE HIM COME BACK, AND  
ACTUALLY, I'VE JUST GOT TO CUT IT OFF BECAUSE THIS COULD GO  
ON FOREVER.

>> I AGREE.

I AGREE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. DAWSON.

>>FRANK REDDICK: MR. CHAIRMAN, WHILE MR. DAWSON IS COMING  
UP, I WOULD LIKE FOR THIS TO BE AN AGENDA ITEM FOR THE NEXT  
MEETING.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I'LL MAKE SURE THAT'S ADDED ON TO THE  
AGENDA.

>> WHOA, WHOA, WHOA, WHOA.

>>GERALD WHITE: WILL IT BE ADDED TO THE AGENDA ITEM?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: ACTUALLY, IT'S -- IF YOU WANT TO MAKE  
A MOTION --

>>GERALD WHITE: YEAH.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: IT DOESN'T ALWAYS HAVE TO BE A MOTION  
FOR --

>>GERALD WHITE: YEAH, THAT'S TRUE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: -- FOR -- YOU KNOW, WITH THE RULES OF

ORDER, BUT MR. --

>>FRANK REDDICK: I MOVE THAT --

>> SECOND.

>>GERALD WHITE: SECOND.

>>FRANK REDDICK: -- THIS ITEM BE PLACED ON THE AGENDA FOR  
NEXT MEETING.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WE'VE GOT A SECOND.

ALL IN FAVOR TO ADDING THIS ITEM TO THE AGENDA FOR NEXT  
MEETING TO DISCUSS.

>> AND THE ITEM EXACTLY IS WHAT?

>>FRANK REDDICK: MR. MANTEIGA'S PRESENTATION ABOUT  
INCREASING --

>> HIS INCREASED PROPOSAL?

[INDISCERNIBLE CROSS TALK]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: INCREASING THE DISTRICT TO NINE.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: HE DIDN'T SAY THAT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: INCREASING THE COMMISSIONERS TO NINE.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: HE DID NOT SAY IT.

>> IT SAYS IT IN BLACK AND --

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: HE SAID TO CHANGE IT TO SIX -- HE SAID  
KEEP IT SEVEN BUT MAKE IT SIX SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS IS  
WHAT I HEARD.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: NO, HE SAID INCREASE IT TO NINE WITH  
SIX SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS, THREE COUNTYWIDE.

>> THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: OH, OKAY.

OKAY.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: NOW, THIS IS NOT THE PUBLIC HEARING?

YOU'RE MOVING --

>> NO.

[INDISCERNIBLE CROSS TALK]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: NO, NO, NO.

THIS IS JUST TO ADD IT TO THE AGENDA SO THE PUBLIC IS AWARE  
THAT WE'RE GOING TO BE DISCUSSING IT, SO IF ANYONE WANTS TO  
COME AND LISTEN TO IT OR INPUT, I THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA.  
SO ALL IN FAVOR RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND.

ANYONE OPPOSED TO ADDING IT TO THE AGENDA?

THAT MOTION PASSES.

MR. DAWSON, WELCOME.

THANK YOU FOR WAITING PATIENTLY, AND BEGIN.

LET ME JUST ASK REALLY QUICKLY, I KNOW WE DID NOT HAVE A  
RECESS, AND DOES ANYONE -- DOES ANYONE HAVE TO HAVE A  
RECESS BEFORE -- A BREAK?

ANYONE HAVE TO HAVE A BREAK?

MR. DAWSON, WOULD YOU MIND IF WE TOOK A FIVE-MINUTE RECESS?

I DON'T WANT ANYONE STEPPING OUT AND MISSING YOUR  
PRESENTATION IF THEY NEED TO USE THE RESTROOM OR ANYTHING.  
DO YOU MIND?

FIVE MINUTES.

I APOLOGIZE.

>> MR. CHAIRMAN, CAN WE NARROW IT DOWN TO TWO MINUTES?

WE'VE ALREADY --

CAN WE NARROW IT DOWN TO TWO MINUTES?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THAT'S FINE.

I WOULD HATE PEOPLE TO MR. DAWSON'S PRESENTATION.

I'M GETTING SIGNS FROM INDIVIDUALS THEY NEED TO TAKE A  
BREAK.

>> SO WE'RE ON A BREAK?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YEAH, WE'RE ON A BREAK FOR FIVE  
MINUTES.

[RECESS TAKEN]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

NEXT ON OUR AGENDA WE HAVE MR. WARREN DAWSON.

WELCOME.

>> WELL, THANK YOU, AND GOOD EVENING.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: GOOD EVENING.

>> MY NAME IS WARREN HOPE DAWSON.

I RESIDE AT 3508 RIVER GROVE DRIVE, TAMPA, FLORIDA, AND I  
AM AN ELECTOR CITIZEN OF THIS COUNTY.

I AM -- FIRST OF ALL, I APPRECIATE THE INVITATION TO COME.  
YOU ARE ENGAGED IN A TASK THAT I DO KNOW A LITTLE SOMETHING  
ABOUT HISTORICALLY AND -- AND OTHERWISE.

I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE IN THE EARLY '70s TO SERVE ON A  
CONSOLIDATION GROUP THAT WAS PUT TOGETHER WHEN THEY WERE  
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING CONSOLIDATING THE MUNICIPALITIES AND

THE COUNTY WITHIN THIS COUNTY ALL INTO ONE.

WE HAD THE OCCASION THEN TO LOOK VERY CAREFULLY AT WHAT WAS BEING DONE IN DUVAL COUNTY AND WHAT WAS BEING DONE IN DAVIDSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE, WHERE THE CITY, I BELIEVE, OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY WERE MERGED TOGETHER AS ONE. THOSE TWO WERE THE EXAMPLES, AND OF COURSE, ULTIMATELY WE DECIDED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THIS COUNTY TO CONSOLIDATE IN THAT MANNER, AND IT TOOK A RATHER STRANGE AND INTERESTING COMBINATION OF PEOPLE SITTING ON THAT COMMISSION TO COME TO THAT DECISION.

IT WAS RACIALLY DIVERSE TO SOME EXTENT, IT CERTAINLY WAS GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE, AND THOSE WHO LIVED IN THE -- IN THE UNINCORPORATED PART OF THE COUNTY ALONG WITH THOSE WHO WERE FROM THE MINORITY POINT OF VIEW ULTIMATELY AGREED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THIS COUNTY TO CONSOLIDATE THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS INTO THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

SO I KNOW SOMETHING IN REGARDS TO WHAT YOU'RE DOING IN THAT CONTEXT HISTORICALLY AND IN THIS COUNTY.

I ALSO AM FAMILIAR WITH THE PROCESS OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING BECAUSE IT WAS I WHO -- ALONG WITH SOME OTHER PEOPLE WHO CHANGED THIS COUNTY COMMISSION THAT YOU HAVE THE OCCASION TO ADVISE FROM FIVE ELECTED AT-LARGE TO WHAT YOU NOW HAVE AS A 4-3, FOUR BY DISTRICTS AND THREE AT-LARGE, SYSTEM.

I WAS THE LAWYER INVOLVED IN THAT.

I'M THE LAWYER THAT STOPPED THE COUNTY COMMISSION ELECTION SO THAT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT COULD LOOK AT WHAT WE WERE DOING BECAUSE, FRANKLY, AT THAT TIME WE WERE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH THE NOTION OF 4-3, WHICH ULTIMATELY GOT ADOPTED.

THAT GOT ADOPTED LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE OTHER LAWSUIT THAT I WAS INVOLVED IN, AND THAT WAS WITH THE CITY OF TAMPA, WHICH QUICKLY FOLDED ITS TENT AND WENT TO A 4-3 SYSTEM. THERE AGAIN THEY HAD FIVE ELECTED AT-LARGE, FIVE CITY COUNCIL PERSONS ALL ELECTED AT-LARGE.

I SHOULD TELL YOU VERY -- SO IN THAT -- IN THOSE TWO REGARDS, I'M VERY FAMILIAR WITH -- WITH WHAT YOU ARE FACED WITH DOING, AND I LIKE THE IDEA OF HAVING THIS BODY ASSEMBLED PERIODICALLY TO LOOK AT THE CHARTER TO SEE IF IT DOES INDEED NEED TO BE -- TO BE CHANGED TO BETTER -- TO BETTER SERVE THE PEOPLE IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL.

I'M SURE THAT YOU -- THAT YOU AGREE WITH THAT.

NOW, I SHOULD TELL YOU THAT WHEN WE WENT TO BAT AND SUCCEEDED IN CAUSING THIS COUNTY -- AND I NEVER SHALL FORGET THE DAY THAT WE WENT FOR PRECLEARANCE.

REECE SMITH AND FORMER -- HE WAS THEN I GUESS THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR -- NO, HE WASN'T.

HE WAS A LAWYER THAT REECE SMITH HAD ATTRACTED --

>>JAN PLATT: [INAUDIBLE]

>> WELL, JOHN LAWSON, BUT ALSO LATER -- LATER THE COUNTY

ADMINISTRATOR AND THE --

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>> FRED KARL.

FRED KARL.

FRED KARL WAS ON THE PLANE WITH ME AND REECE SMITH WAS ON THE PLANE AND ALL OF THE LOCAL MEDIA WAS ON THE PLANE, AND WE WERE GOING UP TO WASHINGTON TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WOULD PRECLEAR THIS PROPOSAL OF 4-3 FOR THIS COUNTY, AND IT'S A HUMOROUS STORY THAT I DON'T NEED TO TAKE UP MY TIME TO SHARE WITH YOU NOW, BUT IF YOU EVER WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT, JUST CALL ME.

I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT.

I -- SO I -- I DO HAVE SOME FAMILIARITY WITH THIS, AND IT IS FROM THAT BACKGROUND THAT I'M HERE NOW TO TELL YOU THAT THAT MAJOR CHANGE AFTER A HUNDRED YEARS OR MORE OR LESS OF THE STANDARD FIVE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS IN EVERY COUNTY IN FLORIDA, ALL ELECTED AT-LARGE, DIDN'T GET CHANGED UNTIL THE TIMING WAS RIGHT, WHEN FINALLY WE WERE ABLE TO CONVINCED THE SUPREME COURT AND OTHERS -- SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING PATENTLY UNFAIR ABOUT THE MANNER OF ELECTING AT-LARGE AS IT HAD BEEN DONE AND WAS BEING DONE, AND BIT BY BIT AND PLACE BY PLACE AND COUNTY BY COUNTY ALL OVER THIS COUNTRY, AND PARTICULARLY IN THOSE AREAS WHERE THERE WERE THE PRESENCE OF SIGNIFICANT

MINORITIES, BLACKS IN PARTICULAR, WE SUCCEEDED IN -- FROM THE TIMING PERSPECTIVE IN DOING AWAY WITH THAT DISCRIMINATORY PROCESS BY WHICH BLACKS AND OTHER MINORITIES WERE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATING, AND OF COURSE, YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE CITY OF TAMPA'S CITY COUNCIL AND THE COUNTY COMMISSION DID NOT GET A BLACK ON IT UNTIL THAT CHANGE CAME ABOUT.

YEAH.

AND -- BUT IT WAS A MATTER OF TIMING.

NOW, I SHOULD TELL YOU ALSO THAT YOU HAVE TO -- I SUGGEST THAT YOU OUGHT TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO WHAT YOU'RE DOING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TIMING AND THE MATTER THAT IS PRESENTED TO YOU.

WELL, WHAT AM I TALKING ABOUT?

I'M TALKING ABOUT THE FACT THAT RIGHT NOW THE 4-3 SYSTEM THAT YOU HAVE IS UNDER ATTACK, AND I MIGHT ADD UNDER SIGNIFICANT ATTACK, MONIED ATTACK THAT HAS THE POSSIBILITY OF DERAILING AND DISENFRANCHISING AND -- IT IS -- ESSENTIALLY IT BORDERS ON A COUP D'ETAT.

THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE ADVISING A GOVERNMENTAL BODY THAT IS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED INTO A 4-3 SYSTEM, THAT A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE HAVE DECIDED THAT THEY ARE GOING TO GET RID OF IT IF THEY CAN AND MUDDIED THE WATER BY GETTING A PORTION OF IT PASSED.

IT GOES TO SHOW YOU HOW UNFORTUNATELY THE GENERAL

POPULATION DOES NOT FOLLOW SOME OF THIS STUFF, THAT THEY WOULD PASS ONE PIECE AND -- AND, OF COURSE, I GUESS THE OTHER GOT KNOCKED OUT, BUT THAT THEY WERE NOT WISE ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE THAT IT WOULDN'T -- YOU DON'T NEED A VETO POWER IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE OTHER LEG TO STAND ON, AND IT'S -- IT IS AKIN TO THE NOTION THAT IF YOU PUT CERTAIN THINGS TO THE PUBLIC -- AND WE DON'T BELIEVE IN ELITISM, BUT RIGHT NOW THERE'S A LAWSUIT PENDING IN THE STATE BECAUSE THE LEGISLATURE HAS DONE AN EFFORT TO POISON PILL CURRENT AMENDMENTS ON THE BALLOT FOR PUBLIC CONSIDERATION AND CONFUSE PEOPLE.

PEOPLE DO THAT, YOU KNOW.

IT IS NOT ALWAYS THE EFFORTS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS THAT -- THAT PEOPLE DEAL HONESTLY WITH THE PROBLEM PRESENTED.

BUT LET ME COME BACK TO -- TO WHERE YOU ARE.

YOU ARE FACED RIGHT NOW WITH SOMEONE WHO IS ATTEMPTING TO MOVE THIS GOVERNMENT TO THE POINT THAT ALL OF THESE POWERS AND REFINEMENTS THAT YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT ABOUT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, THEY WON'T REALLY BE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AS THAT HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR SOMETIME IF THIS COUNTY MAYOR THING PASSES.

THEIR POWERS AND CAPACITIES WILL BE DIMINISHED SUBSTANTIALLY, AND ONLY IF YOU FAVOR THAT SHOULD YOU IGNORE IT, AND -- AND I MIGHT ADD THAT THEY HAVE BEEN ACTING AS A BODY AS IF THEY ARE INCLINED TO IGNORE THE FACT THAT THERE

ARE THOSE WHO WOULD CHANGE --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: NEVER MIND THAT.

SINCE YOU WAITED SO PATIENTLY, I'LL GIVE YOU MORE MINUTES.

>> AM I UNDER SOME LIMIT?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: NO, NO, NO.

WELL, ACTUALLY, THERE'S A LIMIT, BUT YOU WAITED PATIENTLY.

>> I'M A LAWYER.

I'M LONGWINDED, AND --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I DON'T WANT TO CUT YOU OFF AFTER YOU WAITED SO PATIENTLY.

>> I APPRECIATE THAT SO MUCH.

I SHOULD -- SO THAT'S THE ISSUE AT HAND IS -- IS -- IS ADVISING THE PEOPLE AND THE COUNTY COMMISSION AND ALL ELSE THAT -- THAT WHAT IS ON THE AGENDA OUT IN THIS LAND NOW IS WHETHER OR NOT THEY'RE GOING TO CANCEL OUT OUR COMMISSION WITH A -- WITH A COUNTY MAYOR, TO ELIMINATE ESSENTIALLY THE EXECUTIVE POWERS OF THE CURRENT COUNTY COMMISSION, TRANSLATE THEM INTO ESSENTIALLY A LEGISLATIVE BODY, AND IF THAT'S WHAT YOU FAVOR, THEN YOU SHOULD BE GIVING CONSIDERATION TO ALL THESE OTHER MATTERS.

NOW IS NOT THE TIME, FOR EXAMPLE, TO TRY TO INCREASE OR TO RECONFIGURE THE CURRENT SYSTEM BY MAKING IT -- AND I WOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT PROBABLY WOULD -- BY MAKING IT MORE DEMOCRATIC.

ADDING THREE SEATS -- TWO SEATS REALLY WOULDN'T HURT

ANYTHING EXCEPT THAT NOW MAY NOT BE THE TIME TO DO THAT.  
NOW MAY NOT BE THE TIME TO TRY TO TINKER EVEN IN THE WAY OF  
IMPROVEMENT WITH THE CURRENT CONFIGURATION BECAUSE SOMEONE  
WILL TAKE THAT AND THEY'LL USE THAT AS A BASIS OF SAYING,  
WELL, IT'S NOT -- THERE AGAIN, THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE NOW  
WHO ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT SYSTEM, AND YOU START  
ADDING UP ALL THE PEOPLE WHO COULD CLAIM THAT THEY'RE  
DISSATISFIED, ALTHOUGH FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, AND THE NEXT  
THING YOU KNOW, YOU'VE GOT A COUNTY COMMISSION -- YOU COULD  
HAVE A HUNDRED OF THEM, AND IT WOULDN'T REALLY MEAN  
ANYTHING.

YOU'D HAVE A HUNDRED VERY IMPOTENT COMMISSIONERS WHO WOULD  
HAVE NO REAL SAY--SO WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS COUNTY.

IT'S A MATTER OF TIMING, AND NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO DO  
THAT.

THE --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WHEN YOU CONCLUDE, YOU'LL HAVE AN  
OPPORTUNITY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.

>> I WILL.

AND TO MAKE IT EVEN WORSE, THERE IS THE TALK OF MAKING  
THESE ELECTIONS PARTISAN.

INTRODUCING ESSENTIALLY A PARTISAN MAYOR, THAT'S BEEN  
BANTERED AROUND.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY ARE ON THAT, BUT ALL THE MORE  
REASON WHY THIS SHOULD NOT.

AND I SHOULD TELL YOU, I HEARD THE DISCUSSION YOU HAD WITH MR. MANTEIGA, AND I HEARD YOU, SIR, REMIND US OF SYLVIA RODRIGUEZ KIMBALL.

UNFORTUNATELY, THAT HISPANIC NOTION THAT THERE ARE BLACKS WHO ARE HISPANIC GETS BY SOME PEOPLE.

I TAKE THE OCCASION TO REMIND YOU THAT THE LAWYER WHO STARTED MUCH OF WHAT WE KNOW NOW IN THIS COUNTY, FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ, HER UNCLE, WHO WAS HISPANIC AND SPOKE THE SPANISH LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH VERY WELL, BUT HE WAS -- HE WAS -- HE WAS BLACK -- A BLACK HISPANIC, AND YOU'VE GOT A LARGE COMMUNITY OF -- HERE IN TAMPA THAT GOES BACK TO THE 1800s THAT ARE IN THAT CATEGORY, AND YES, THEY OUGHT TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE REPRESENTED, BUT -- AND I DON'T WANT TO SOUND LIKE SOME WHO USED TO SAY TO CERTAIN OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS, WELL, NOW IS NOT THE TIME.

NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO TRY TO ADDRESS THAT RIGHT NOW BECAUSE YOU INVITE NEW ENEMIES TO THE CURRENT SYSTEM AND YOU'LL MESS AROUND AND LOSE IT ALL IF YOU MESS AROUND WITH IT AT THIS JUNCTURE.

NOW -- AND I'M ALMOST FINISHED.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

>> THE UNIQUE THING ABOUT TAMPA, ABOUT THE -- I AGREE WITH MR. MANTEIGA.

NOWHERE IN THE COUNTRY THAT I KNOW OF -- AND I'VE BEEN ALL OVER THIS COUNTRY AND ALMOST ALL OVER THE WORLD -- DO YOU

FIND THAT LATINO INCLUDES ITALIANS.

IT DOES NOT, AND IT DOESN'T EVEN INCLUDE PEOPLE FROM SPAIN.

IT DOES NOT INCLUDE EUROPEANS.

EUROPEANS, SPAIN, ITALY ARE EUROPEANS, AND HISPANIC HAS TO DO WITH SOUTH AMERICA AND WITH PUERTO RICO AND CUBA AND OTHER PLACES OF THAT KIND.

TAMPA IS UNIQUE.

THERE'S BEEN A SITUATION -- SOMEONE SAID, AND I DON'T KNOW IF I AGREE OR NOT, SAID THAT TAMPA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, MAY BE THE ONLY PLACE WHERE YOU CAN FIND SOMEONE NAMED MARTINEZ WHO'S A REDNECK, SOMEBODY NAMED SMITH WHO DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH.

IT'S JUST THAT KIND OF AMALGAMATION THAT HAS OCCURRED IN THIS COUNTY.

NOW I'M ABOUT FINISHED.

LET ME URGE YOU TO FOCUS ON ADVISING THE PEOPLE AND THE COMMISSION TO DEAL WITH FIGHTING OFF WHAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE BY EXTENDING DEMOCRACY.

RIGHT NOW BLACKS, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE 1/7 AT LEAST OF THE POWER ON THE COMMISSION.

I DON'T EXPECT -- YOU TALK ABOUT NOT GETTING A HISPANIC ELECTED TO THE COMMISSION.

I DON'T EXPECT YOU'LL GET A HISPANIC ELECTED AS MAYOR OF THIS COUNTY EITHER OR A BLACK ELECTED AS MAYOR OF THIS COUNTY.

I PROBABLY HAVE A PESSIMISTIC VIEW ABOUT THAT.

I THINK THE SAME THING IS TRUE WITH THE CITY OF TAMPA IN SPITE OF ALL OF THE ELECTIONS THAT WE'VE HAD OF MINORITIES TO MAYOR OF EITHER THE COUNTY OR THE CITY THAT I WOULD PROJECT THAT 50 YEARS FROM NOW IT WON'T HAPPEN FOR THE CITY OF TAMPA AND PROBABLY MORE THAN THAT FOR HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY OF GETTING A BLACK MAYOR OR MAYBE EVEN A HISPANIC MAYOR.

SO YOU WANT TO KEEP WHAT YOU GOT, AND YOU'VE GOT TO UNDERSTAND -- I'LL SAY THIS IN CLOSING, MR. WHITE, IF YOU'LL JUST GIVE ME ONE MORE MINUTE.

>>GERALD WHITE: YES.

>> YOU HAVE THE SITUATION WHERE -- TALK ABOUT THE TIMING.

I'LL USE THIS EXAMPLE, AND I DO CLOSE.

I'VE HAD THE OCCASION TO ADVISE AS A LAWYER A NUMBER OF MINISTERS WHO WERE FACED WITH CONGREGATIONS WHO WERE INTERESTED IN TAKING A VOTE AS TO WHETHER TO TERMINATE THEM OR TO RETAIN THEM, AND THEY SOUGHT MY ADVICE, AND I TOOK AN OCCASION ONE TIME TO SAY THAT, WELL, IN CHURCHES AS WELL AS WITH THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL, YOU CAN'T TELL BEFORE THE VOTE EXACTLY WHETHER PEOPLE ARE WITH YOU OR NOT.

YOU CAN'T TELL WHETHER THE PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTY WOULD VOTE FOR THAT OR NOT.

YOU PUT IT ON THE BALLOT, LOOK WHAT THEY DID.

THEY VOTED WITH THE VETO THING WITHOUT ANYTHING ELSE THERE

TO GO WITH IT, SO YOU CAN'T EVER TELL.

SO WHAT I DID WAS I TOLD THIS MINISTER, I SAID, WHAT WE WILL DO IS WE'LL SET IT UP WHERE WE'LL TAKE A TEST VOTE. WE'LL PUT A MOTION THAT SAYS WE'RE GOING TO INCREASE THE PASTOR'S SALARY BY 10%.

IF THAT MOTION FAILS, THEN THE MODERATOR SHOULD ADJOURN THE MEETING BECAUSE OBVIOUSLY, PASTOR, YOU DON'T HAVE THE VOTES IN THE ROOM TO STAY HERE.

SO THAT TEST VOTE WILL TELL YOU WHERE YOU ARE.

UNFORTUNATELY WE DON'T HAVE A TEST VOTE SITUATION ON THIS. THE IDEA BEING IS LET'S KEEP WHAT WE GOT AND PROTECT IT AND THEN AS WE GO ON DOWN THE ROAD, TO TRY TO IMPROVE UPON IT, BUT NOW MAYBE IS NOT THE TIME TO DO THAT.

I'LL TAKE ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU HAVE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

FIRST WE HAVE MR. WHITE, THEN MR. TOKLEY.

>>GERALD WHITE: ATTORNEY WARREN HOPE DAWSON, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING AND PROVIDING THIS BOARD AND THE CITIZENS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY WITH YOUR WISDOM, AND THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE THAT TROUBLES ME GREATLY AND IT KEEP -- KEEPS ME AWAKE IS THAT MARY ANN STILES, THIS LEADER OF THIS INITIATIVE FOR AN ELECTED COUNTY MAYOR, HAVE NOT COME TO THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY, HAVE NOT BROUGHT THIS PROPOSAL TO THE BLACK CITIZENS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, AND THAT JUST TROUBLES ME DEEPLY THAT SHE WOULD SEEK TO CHANGE

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND LITERALLY IGNORE THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CITIZENS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

WHY IS THAT?

WHAT IS GOING ON?

>> WHY WOULD YOU ASK ME THAT?

[LAUGHTER]

I HAVE NO IDEA EXCEPT THAT LOGIC WOULD TELL ME, IF I HAD TO ANSWER IT ON THE BASIS OF LOGIC, IS THAT THE BLACK AND THE HISPANIC COMMUNITIES MAY VERY WELL BE THE ONES THAT HAVE THE MOST TO LOSE, SO THEY POTENTIALLY WOULD BE OPPOSED TO IT, SO YOU DON'T -- YOU DON'T GO WHERE YOU WON'T GET SUPPORT, YOU GO WHERE YOU COULD FIND SUPPORT OR WHERE PEOPLE DON'T REALLY CARE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

AND OF COURSE, I MIGHT ADD THEY'RE AMONG SOME -- THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE, AS THERE ALWAYS IS, WHO ARE BLACK WHO DO STAND WITH THAT CAUSE AND WHO DO SUPPORT WHAT SHE'S DOING.

>>GERALD WHITE: YEAH.

AND THE HISTORY -- I'LL CLOSE --

>> IT'S LIKE THE POOR.

THEY WILL ALWAYS BE WITH US.

>>GERALD WHITE: THE HISTORY OF THIS CHARTER REVIEW BOARD, ATTORNEY DAWSON, IS THAT HISTORICALLY THIS BOARD HAS TAKEN UP AMENDMENTS AT THE VERY END.

WE SET THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR, LIKE, MAYBE THE MEETING BEFORE THE END OF OUR ADJOURNMENT.

THAT WOULD BE AFTER THIS MAYOR INITIATIVE IS VOTED ON, AND SO THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE HISPANICS' CONCERN, NOT NECESSARILY FOR THIS BALLOT, THIS NOVEMBER BALLOT BUT THE WINDOW FOR THE NEXT ELECTION CYCLE IS OPEN TO ADDRESS THEIR CONCERN.

>> YEAH.

WELL, JUST SO THAT YOU'RE ABLE TO ADDRESS -- SOMEBODY'S ABLE TO ADDRESS THIS COUNTY MAYOR THING BEFORE YOU GET TO THE POINT OF TRYING TO CHANGE THE CONFIGURATION OF THE CURRENT COMMISSION IS MY POINT BECAUSE I THINK THAT IF YOU -- IF YOU -- IF YOU TRY TO CHANGE IT BEFORE THEN, IT IS -- IT'S LIKE A -- A SMELL OF BLOOD ON THE WATER, AND IT WOULD INVITE MORE ENEMIES TO IT WHO WOULD COME OUT AND HELP TO CHANGE -- FIX IT WHERE THE COUNTY COMMISSION SEAT WON'T MEAN VERY MUCH, AND THAT'S WHAT THE COUNTY MAYOR'S PROPOSAL DOES.

IT REDUCES AND MINIMIZES WHAT A COUNTY COMMISSION IS AS WE KNOW IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. TOKLEY.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY'S GREAT MISFORTUNE MUST BE THAT ONLY UP UNTIL RECENTLY IT HAS STOPPED TO EMBRACE SUCH WONDERFUL AND GREAT VOICES AS THE MANTEIGAS AND THE WARREN HOPE DAWSONS.

WE THANK YOU EVER SO MUCH.

FOR YOU ARE HISTORY AND YOU ARE WISDOM TALKING, AND WE ARE

GLAD THAT WE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BREATHE THE SAME AIR THAT YOU BREATHE.

MY QUESTION IS SIMPLY THIS: I KNOW THAT YOU ARE A MAN OF WORDS, BUT I'M GOING TO ASK YOU, IF YOU DON'T MIND, WHAT YOU MEANT WHEN YOU SAID THAT THE 4-3 SYSTEM UNDER ATTACK BORDERS ON A COUP D'ETAT.

COULD YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC, IF YOU DON'T MIND, AS TO WHAT YOU MEANT.

>> THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS I GUESS TO SKIN A CAT AND THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO DEFEAT A GOVERNMENT.

YOU CAN DO IT BY FORCE, YOU CAN DO -- IT CAN BE A -- A NONVIOLENT COUP, BUT TO TOTALLY CHANGE THIS GOVERNMENT AT THE HANDS OF VERY FEW PEOPLE WHO HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO HIRE PEOPLE TO SIGN PETITIONS TO GET IT ON THE BALLOT AND THE ABSENCE OF THE VOTER EDUCATION, YOU PUT IT ON THE BALLOT AND YOU RUN THE POTENTIAL OF GETTING IT PASSED, AND IF YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH MONEY TO GET IT ON THE BALLOT BY HIRING PEOPLE TO GET PEOPLE AT GROCERY STORES COMING OUT OF THE GROCERY STORE AND SAY, SIGN THIS, AND THEY SAY, WELL, YEAH, I'LL SIGN IT.

THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S ON IT AND DON'T GIVE A DAMN WHAT'S ON IT.

THEY'LL SIGN IT, AND THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW IT'S ON THE BALLOT, AND THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW IT'S PASSED.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: AND THIS IS WHAT WE'RE FACING?

>> IT'S WHAT WE'RE FACING.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. REDDICK.

>>FRANK REDDICK: I JUST WANT TO FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR COMMENT ABOUT -- ABOUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME AND PARTICULARLY WHEN YOU SPEAK OF BLACK MAYOR IN TAMPA OR A BLACK COUNTY MAYOR.

IF YOU'RE SAYING NOW IS NOT THE TIME, THEN I QUESTION WHEN IS THE TIME BECAUSE IF NOW IS NOT THE TIME, WHY IS THERE A BLACK MAYOR IN POLK COUNTY AND LAKE LAND?

>> I'M SORRY, I'M HAVING DIFFICULTY IN HEARING YOU.

>>FRANK REDDICK: IF NOW IS NOT THE TIME AND IF THAT'S THE CASE, IT TROUBLED ME WHEN I CAN LOOK UP AND SEE THERE'S A BLACK MAYOR OVER IN LAKE LAND, I COULD SEE A BLACK MAYOR -- THE FIRST BLACK MAYOR IN TARPON SPRINGS, SO IF NOW IS NOT THE TIME, WHEN IS THE TIME?

>> WELL -- AND I HEAR YOU, AND LET ME ANSWER YOU VERY STRAIGHT AWAY.

C. BETTE WIMBISH WAS THE VICE-MAYOR OF ST. PETERSBURG IN 1973

IT WAS A FULL TEN YEARS LATER, IN 1983, BEFORE THEY EVER GOT A BLACK ELECTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL IN TAMPA, OKAY. YOU HAVE HAD BLACK MAYORS IN BARTOW, SEVERAL OF THEM, LAKE LAND SEVERAL OF THEM, EVEN FROM PLANT CITY.

YOU REMEMBER, WE HAD A BLACK WOMAN WHO WAS THE MAYOR OF PLANT CITY, OKAY.

YES, TAMPA IS VERY UNIQUE.

TAMPA IS VERY UNIQUE, AND WHEN I SAY NOW IS NOT THE TIME, YOU HAVE TO ATTACH THAT TO SOMETHING.

NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR WHAT?

NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO TINKER WITH THE CURRENT CONFIGURATION OF THE COUNTY COMMISSION UNTIL YOU SAVE IT FROM BEING ABOLISHED THROUGH A VOTE FOR A COUNTY MAYOR.

THAT'S WHAT I MEANT WHEN I SAID NOW IS NOT THE TIME.

YOU GOT TO ATTACH IT TO WHAT I MEANT.

YOU SHOULD NOT BE TINKERING WITH THAT RIGHT NOW, ELSE YOU MAY MESS AROUND AND HAVE IT SO THAT YOU HAVE NO COUNTY COMMISSION REALLY TO -- THAT WAS WORTH ANYTHING THAT YOU KIND OF KNOW ABOUT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. ROBINSON.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: MR. DAWSON, I'M GOING TO USE YOUR OWN ANALOGY.

YOU SAID WITH THE MINISTERS THAT, YOU KNOW, PUT THAT YOU WANT TO GET A 10% RAISE TO THEM, AND IF YOU COULDN'T GET THAT VOTE, THEN YOU PROBABLY DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT KEEPING YOUR JOB.

I GUESS THAT'S THE WAY YOU PUT IT.

I'M GOING TO SAY THAT SAME ANALOGY'S TRUE ABOUT THE COUNTY

MAYOR.

PEOPLE VOTED FOR AN AMENDMENT, SO THAT GIVES THE INDICATION THAT THEY MAY WANT TO VOTE FOR THE COUNTY MAYOR.

SO, YOU KNOW, THAT WAS NOT THE COUNTY MAYOR LANGUAGE, BUT IT WAS DEALING WITH THE ISSUE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR DEALING WITH VETO, AND PEOPLE PASSED IT.

>> THAT'S RIGHT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: SO THAT'S AN INDICATION TO ME THAT IT - - NOT NECESSARILY THEY DIDN'T READ IT, THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND IT.

I THINK THAT THAT'S AN INDICATION TO WHOEVER'S TRYING TO PUSH IT, BE IT STILES OR WHOEVER -- MY OPINION ABOUT THEIR PETITION IS THAT THEIR PETITION IS WRONG AND IT WON'T SUPPORT MERGING INTO THE CHARTER.

EVEN IF IT PASS, THE LANGUAGE DOESN'T MATCH AND DOVETAIL WITH THE EXISTING CHARTER, SO I THINK EVEN IF IT DID PASS, THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE SOME ISSUES BECAUSE IT DIDN'T GO THROUGH THE COUNTY ATTORNEY FOR REVIEW, SEE.

WE'VE HAD THAT DISCUSSION IN HERE, AND WE HAVE A COPY OF THEIR PETITION THAT THEY'RE PASSING, AND I LOOKED AT IT, AND I SAID IT DOESN'T EVEN MATCH WITH THE NUMBERING SYSTEM, JUST LIKE OUR OWN CHARTER DOESN'T MATCH.

WE DON'T HAVE A NUMBER IN THERE NOW FOR THAT VETO.

IT'S NOT IN THAT LITTLE BOOK THAT THE PUBLIC GET.

THAT ONLY CAME ABOUT FROM THIS CHARTER REVIEW BOARD TAKING

A LOOK AT IT.

SO YOU'RE SAYING NOW IS NOT THE TIME.

WELL, I THINK THAT MIGHT BE TRUE --

>> NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR WHAT?

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: FOR TINKERING IS WHAT YOU SAID.

>> THAT'S RIGHT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I DISAGREE WITH THAT.

I THINK ANY TIME IS THE RIGHT TIME OR WE WOULDN'T HAVE A BLACK PRESIDENT IF NOW IS NOT THE TIME.

I'M FROM IMPERIAL POLK COUNTY JUST LIKE YOU ARE, OKAY, IMPERIAL POLK COUNTY, AND, YOU KNOW, I UNDERSTAND ISSUES IN POLK COUNTY, AND I THINK THAT HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY AIN'T NO DIFFERENT, OKAY.

I THINK THAT WE SHOULD TAKE A LOOK AT IT, IT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED, IT SHOULD BE VETTED OUT BECAUSE WE ONLY GET AN OPPORTUNITY AS A CHARTER REVIEW BOARD TO REVIEW THESE TYPE OF ISSUES EVERY FIVE YEARS.

WE WAIT FIVE YEARS, IT'S GOING TO BE, WHAT, 2012 -- 2015, 2015, YOU KNOW, so -- AND THEN IF WE DON'T DO IT THEN, IT'S GOING TO BE 2020.

I THINK THE TIME IS RIGHT, AND I THINK THE REASON IS IS BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE SAYING IT'S NOT TIME TO TINKER BECAUSE IT MAY CAUSE MORE PROBLEMS FOR BLACKS GETTING ELECTED AND ALL, BUT TRULY THERE IS A MOVE OUT THERE.

I THINK THAT IT SHOULD BE GUIDED REVIEW.

IT SHOULD BE LOOKED AT, BUT I'M NOT THE TYPE PERSON THAT'S NOT GOING TO LOOK, I'M NOT GOING TO ASK.

I'M GOING TO ASK, I'M GOING TO LOOK, AND I'M GOING TO EXPLORE IT.

WE GET NOWHERE BUT STATUS QUO.

STATUS QUO AIN'T WORKING, AND SO I THINK THE TIME IS NOW.

>> AND THAT'S THE VERY POINT THAT I THINK COULD BE CARRIED IN THE MESSAGE OF TRYING TO CHANGE IT IS THAT THE STATUS QUO IS NOT WORKING, AND I DON'T THINK THAT MR. MANTEIGA'S POINT OF VIEW, I DON'T THINK, IS THAT THE STATUS QUO IS NOT WORKING.

HIS POINT OF VIEW, I BELIEVE, IS THAT IT COULD WORK BETTER, OKAY, AND -- AND I DON'T -- AND DON'T TAKE ANYTHING THAT I SAID TO SUGGEST THAT I DON'T AGREE THAT IT COULD WORK BETTER.

I'M SIMPLY SAYING, THOUGH, AS WITH ALMOST EVERYTHING IN THIS LIFE, IT'S A MATTER OF TIMING.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: LET ME -- FINAL MR. THROWER, IF I CAN.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. ROBINSON, THAT'S FINE.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: IT IS A WELL-KNOWN FACT BY, WHAT, 2020, THE MAJORITY OF THE UNITED STATES IS MOST LIKELY GOING TO BE MINORITY ANYWAY, SO WHETHER WE TAKE IT NOW OR WE WAIT TEN YEARS FOR IT TO HAPPEN, MINORITY POPULATION IS INCREASING, BLACK AND HISPANIC, EVENTUALLY. LOOK AT YOUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

50-SOME PERCENT IS HISPANIC OR BLACK ALREADY BUT NOT YOUR TEACHERS, NOT YOUR SUPERINTENDENT, SO, YOU KNOW, I'M SAYING THAT JUST FROM THE STUDENT POPULATION ALONE, I THINK THAT THE TIME IS NOW TO LOOK AT IT.

DON'T MEAN WE GOT TO DO ANYTHING, BUT WE NEED TO VET IT OUT SO THAT ALL THIS THAT WE LOOK AT NOW CAN GO TO THE NEXT CHARTER REVIEW BOARD, BUT WE NEED TO TAKE A LOOK AT IT. THAT'S ALL I'M SAYING.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: COMMISSIONER PLATT.

>>JAN PLATT: I JUST WANT TO SAY THIS COUNTY AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE ARE INDEBTED TO THIS GENTLEMAN.

HE HAS TAKEN POSITIONS ON HIS OWN.

NOBODY PAYS HIM TO STAND UP AND TAKE THE POSITIONS THAT HE HAS OVER THE YEARS, BUT HE HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE, AND I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU, WARREN.

YOU KNOW, WHEN -- WHEN WE WROTE THE CHARTER, IT WAS -- HE TOOK IT ON HIMSELF TO TAKE US TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, AND IT MADE US SEARCH OUR SOULS.

IT MADE THE COMMUNITY SEARCH ITS SOULS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS WAS TRULY THE BEST THING FOR THE COUNTY.

HE HAS BEEN THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE ALL ALONG THROUGHOUT HISTORY, SINCE YOUR LIFETIME, AND I JUST WANT TO SAY THANK YOU.

WE'RE ALL INDEBTED TO YOU, WARREN.

THANK YOU FOR -- YOU NEVER HESITATE TO STAND UP FOR WHAT

YOU THINK IS RIGHT, REGARDLESS OF WHAT KIND OF AN IMPACT IT MAY HAVE ON YOU PERSONALLY, AND HE DOES IT WITHOUT GETTING A DIME FROM ANYBODY, AND WARREN, YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, AND THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU.

THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR MR. DAWSON?

MR. WHITE.

>>GERALD WHITE: YES, AN ISSUE THAT I'M BRINGING TO THE FLOOR AND -- IS THE ORANGE COUNTY MODEL.

IF THIS COUNTY MAYOR ISSUE MAKE THE BALLOT, MY PROPOSAL IS TO THIS BOARD THAT WE HAVE A COUNTER-ARGUMENT, WELL --

>> ON THE BALLOT?

>>GERALD WHITE: ON THE BALLOT.

>> YES.

>>GERALD WHITE: THE FIRST STEP WOULD BE, I THINK -- GOING TO COUNTY MAYOR IS DRASTIC, UNJUSTIFIED AT THIS POINT.

I'M AN ADVOCATE IF THERE WAS A CHANGE AND THAT WOULD BE A FIRST STEP, AND THAT WOULD BE AN ELECTED COUNTY CHAIRMAN THAT SIT AS A PART OF THE BOARD, THE ORANGE COUNTY MODEL.

CAN YOU COMMENT ON THAT?

>> SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA TO ME, MY -- MY FRIEND.

I SHOULD TELL YOU THAT THE PROPOSAL AS WE KNOW IT SHOULD BE AVOIDED ALMOST WITH ALL COST, AND IF YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE

THE PEOPLE AN OPPORTUNITY, THEN GIVE THEM A CHOICE.

>>GERALD WHITE: YEAH.

>> AND -- AND I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY THE COMMISSION ITSELF HAS NOT GENERATED ANOTHER CHOICE THAT CONFIRMS WHAT WE HAVE.

I DON'T SUGGEST THAT THEY NECESSARILY ARE COMMITTED TO PROTECT AND DEFEND THE STATUS QUO, BUT TO SOME EXTENT THEY ARE.

IF THEY CAN'T DEFEND WHAT THEY HAVE, THEN THEY SHOULDN'T BE ON THERE.

YOU SHOULDN'T NEVER HAVE BEEN A COUNTY COMMISSIONER IF YOU HAD SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH WHAT IT DOES AND WHAT IT WAS INTENDED TO DO, SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH IT.

YOU SHOULDN'T BE A COUNTY COMMISSIONER IF YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND ITS CONTINUANCE.

NOW, OBVIOUSLY ANYTHING CAN GET BETTER, AND WE TALKED ABOUT THAT, BUT YES, YOU KNOW, PUTTING AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PEOPLE THAT HAVE THE EFFECT OF CONFIRMING THE CURRENT PROCESS -- BECAUSE THERE TRULY IS NOTHING WRONG WITH THE CURRENT PROCESS.

IT'S ALL ABOUT PEOPLE, AND -- AND I MIGHT ADD THAT BEING A LAWYER WHO TRIED CASES IN THIS COUNTY FOR 42 YEARS -- IT IS 42 YEARS THAT I'VE BEEN DOING IT.

>>GERALD WHITE: WOW.

>> WORST THING YOU CAN HAVE IS TO HAVE A JUDGE WHO SITS IN A PARTICULAR DIVISION AND WON'T MOVE, THAT ONE JUDGE.

EVERY CASE YOU GOT YOU GOT TO COME BEFORE THAT ONE JUDGE.

I WOULD HATE TO BE IN A COUNTY WHERE THEY ONLY HAD ONE JUDGE, OKAY, AND THAT'S WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOU GET A COUNTY MAYOR AS COMPARED WITH SEVEN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

YOU GET ONE PERSON WHO ULTIMATELY -- HOW MUCH IS THE BUDGET, SOME SEVERAL BILLION DOLLARS ALL BEING ESSENTIALLY CONTROLLED BY THAT ONE PERSON.

IF YOU'RE IN, YOU'RE IN.

IF YOU'RE IN ON IT, YOU'RE UP ON IT, AND IF YOU'RE OUT ON IT, YOU'RE DOWN ON IT, AND THAT'S EXACTLY -- AND YOU GOT ONE PERSON TO -- ESSENTIALLY TO CONVINCING OR NOT, AND I'D TAKE MY CHANCES WITH A MORE DIVERSE BROAD GROUP SUCH AS WE HAVE NOW, AND I SAY LET'S TRY AND DO WHAT WE CAN TO PROTECT WHAT WE HAVE NOW, AND THAT IDEA THAT YOU JUST MENTIONED IS AS GOOD A ONE AS I'VE HEARD.

>>GERALD WHITE: ALL RIGHT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MRS. REBACK.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: MR. DAWSON, OBVIOUSLY THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE --

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: I'M SORRY.

OBVIOUSLY THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO ANY CITIZEN INITIATIVE TO PUT A COUNTY MAYOR IN CHARGE OF LOCAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT ON THE BALLOT, AND THAT, OF COURSE, IS VOTING NO, AND I MEAN, THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE, AND EVERY CITIZEN WHO

DOESN'T AGREE THAT HAVING A COUNTY MAYOR IS A GOOD IDEA  
SIMPLY NEEDS TO VOTE NO, SO THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE.

I'M NOT SURE THAT THIS BOARD, YOU KNOW, NEEDS TO TAKE  
ANOTHER STEP BEYOND THAT, BUT IF YOU'RE ASKING US TO TAKE  
ANOTHER STEP BEYOND THAT, I WANT TO BE CLEAR ON WHAT YOU'RE  
REQUEST IS BECAUSE AS -- AS I SIT HERE NOW, I'M NOT CLEAR  
ON THE REQUEST.

I HEAR THAT YOU ARE AGAINST THE COUNTY MAYOR PROPOSAL THAT  
IS BEING PROMOTED BY MARY ANN STILES AND HER GROUP.

I DON'T HAVE A POSITION ON IT AS I SIT HERE NOW, BUT YOU  
OBTAIN DO, AND THE FREEDOM TO LOBBY AGAINST THAT CITIZEN  
INITIATIVE REMAINS WITH YOU AND EVERY OTHER CITIZEN, AND I  
APPRECIATE HEARING YOUR POSITION ON IT, BUT I'M NOT SURE  
WHAT, IF ANYTHING, BEYOND HEARING YOUR POSITION YOU'RE  
ASKING THIS BOARD TO DO BECAUSE AS I -- AS YOU SEE IT, THE  
ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO SIMPLY VOTE NO AND TO URGE CITIZENS  
TO VOTE NO, AND EACH OF US HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO THAT  
INDIVIDUALLY, BUT AS A BOARD NEITHER THIS BOARD NOR THE  
COUNTY COMMISSION I THINK HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO AS A  
BOARD LOBBY ON THAT -- ON A CITIZEN INITIATIVE, AND I  
WOULD, AS A CITIZEN, REALLY OBJECT TO MY COUNTY COMMISSION  
EXPENDING ANY FUNDS TO LOBBY AGAINST A CITIZEN INITIATIVE  
LIKE THAT THAT AFFECTED THE BOARD ITSELF.

>>GERALD WHITE: IT CAN'T.

IT'S NOT LEGAL.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: RIGHT.

THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING.

>>GERALD WHITE: WE WOULDN'T DO THAT.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: SO I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHAT YOU'RE ASKING BE DONE.

>> I DIDN'T HEAR WHAT YOU SAID.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

>>GERALD WHITE: THE -- ANY ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SPEND PUBLIC FUNDS --

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: RIGHT.

>>GERALD WHITE: -- TO LOBBY AGAINST A BALLOT QUESTION.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: RIGHT.

OR EVEN AS -- TO SPEAK AS -- AS THE COMMISSION ABOUT THE BALLOT MEASURE I THINK IS INAPPROPRIATE, SO I'M -- I'M NOT REALLY SURE --

>>GERALD WHITE: I DON'T THINK HE SAID THAT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: LET ME --

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHAT YOU'RE ASKING THIS BOARD TO DO.

>> OKAY.

WELL, FIRST OF ALL, LET ME -- IF I MAY --

>>JAMES TOKLEY: UNLESS I MISUNDERSTOOD, WHAT I HEAR ATTORNEY DAWSON ASKING US TO DO IS TO LISTEN AND TO UNDERSTAND.

I DON'T BELIEVE HE HAS ASKED US TO DO ANYTHING OTHER THAN

THAT.

IS THAT NOT --

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: IS THAT CORRECT?

>> NOT EXACTLY.

THE GOOD THING ABOUT BEING IN THE POSITION THAT I AM, I CAN ASK YOU TO DO ANYTHING I WANT TO ASK YOU TO DO.

[LAUGHTER]

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: YES, YOU CAN.

>> THAT'S THE REAL DEAL ON THAT, AND I'M NOT BASHFUL ABOUT ASKING YOU.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: RIGHT.

I JUST WANT TO BE CLEAR ON WHAT IT IS THAT YOU'RE ASKING.

>> I WANT TO -- I WANT TO RESPOND TO YOUR COMMENT IN THAT -- IN THIS REGARD, WHICH IS WHY YOU GENERALLY WILL HAVE OTHER -- THERE ARE MANY MATTERS THAT DON'T MAKE THE BALLOT BECAUSE OF THE -- HOW THEY ARE ARTICULATED.

IT CAN BE CONFUSING SOMETIMES, AND I COULD PROPOUND A MOTION THAT IF IT WERE SECONDED, THAT MIGHT CONFUSE YOU JUST IN THE WAY I SAID IT AND YOU MAY VERY WELL WIND UP VOTING FOR SOMETHING THAT YOU REALLY DIDN'T NECESSARILY INTEND TO VOTE ON.

ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME OTHER PERSON ON THIS BOARD COULD PROPOUND A MOTION, THAT SAME MOTION, BUT THE WAY THEY WORD IT GOES IN ANOTHER DIRECTION, AND THAT -- THEREIN LIES THE LACK OF EQUALITY OF SAYING YES OR NO.

YES, THOSE WHO ARE AGAINST IT CAN SAY NO IF YOU -- IF YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND IT, BUT IF IT -- YOU KNOW, IT'S LIKE TAKING A PUSH POLL.

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH A PUSH POLL?

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: YES.

>> YOU CAN SUGGEST THE ANSWER IN YOUR QUESTION, AND FOR THE UNINITIATED, OKAY, IN A PUSH POLL THEY FALL RIGHT INTO IT. YEP, I AGREE WITH THAT, AND REALLY MAYBE THEY DIDN'T, BUT IT WAS PUT TO THEM IN SUCH A WAY, AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS ON A NUMBER OF BALLOT QUESTIONS.

IT DEPENDS ON HOW IT'S PUT.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: OKAY.

BUT AGAIN, WHAT, IF ANYTHING, ARE YOU ASKING THIS BOARD TO DO?

>> WELL, IF THIS BOARD CAN AND WOULD -- AND I'LL DEFER TO THIS BOARD AS TO WHETHER IT CAN, BUT IF YOU CAN, THEN DO IT, DO SOMETHING ABOUT GETTING SOMETHING ON THE BALLOT THAT WOULD MORE CLEARLY -- AND I SUGGEST TO YOU THAT YOU OUGHT TO DECIDE THAT THE COUNTY COMMISSION AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED AND CONFIGURATED IS NOT INHERENTLY BAD AND DOES NOT NEED TO BE GOTTEN RID OF.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: YOU WANT SOMETHING LIKE THAT ON THE BALLOT, IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE ASKING THIS BOARD TO DO?

>> ABSOLUTELY.

>>GERALD WHITE: WHY NOT?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: ACTUALLY, LET ME -- I WANT TO SEE.  
HAS ANYONE NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASK A QUESTION THAT  
WOULD LIKE TO ASK A QUESTION?

WE ARE STARTING TO RUN OUT OF TIME, AND I WANT TO GIVE  
EVERYBODY AN OPPORTUNITY IF THEY HAVE A QUESTION AND THEY  
HAVEN'T ASKED A QUESTION.

OTHERWISE I AM GOING TO HAVE TO CUT IT OFF, SO ANYONE HAVE  
A QUESTION THAT HASN'T ASKED YET?

I WANT TO GIVE EVERYBODY AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK IF THEY  
WOULD LIKE TO.

>> THANK YOU VERY, VERY MUCH FOR INVITING ME.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU, MR. DAWSON, FOR COMING  
BEFORE US.

>> GREAT JOB.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: NEXT UP -- ACTUALLY, I'M GOING TO LET  
MR. MANTEIGA COME UP AND ANSWER THE QUESTION ABOUT THE  
COUNTY MAYOR REAL QUICK.

BECAUSE OF THE TIME FACTOR, THAT'S THE ONLY QUESTION -- I  
JUST WANT HIM TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION FOR US, AND THEN --

>> AT THIS TIME I DO NOT BELIEVE WE WILL BE SUPPORTING THE  
COUNTY MAYOR POSITION.

WE FIND IT CURRENTLY ADDING TO THE DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF  
THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

IT ADDS ANOTHER COUNTYWIDE SEAT TO THE COUNTY COMMISSION,  
THEREBY MAKING IT IN EFFECT A 4-4 SYSTEM.

WE DON'T LIKE THE CURRENT 3-4 SYSTEM, SO WE CERTAINLY  
AREN'T GOING TO LIKE THE CURRENT 4-4 SYSTEM THAT IS  
PROPOSED.

I'VE HAD THIS CONVERSATION WITH MARY ANN AND ASKED HER TO  
ADJUST TO MAKE THEM ALL SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS.

I THINK THAT WOULD BE A BETTER FIT WITH THE COUNTY MAYOR.  
FRANKLY, I FIND THE SITUATION OF ADDRESSING COUNTY MAYOR,  
COUNTY COMMISSION, ALL THESE THINGS SEPARATELY TO BE A VERY  
POOR WAY OF ADJUSTING COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

IT MIGHT BE GOOD TO HAVE A DEBATE ABOUT A COUNTY MAYOR, BUT  
IT'S ONLY GOOD TO HAVE THAT DEBATE IN THE ALIGNMENT OF ALSO  
WHAT WE'RE DOING WITH THE COUNTY COMMISSION.

TO TRY AND FIX JUST ONE LITTLE PORTION OF THE COUNTY SYSTEM  
AND NOT PAY ATTENTION TO ALL PORTIONS IS KIND OF LIKE, YOU  
KNOW, TRYING TO FIX YOUR CAR AND YOUR ENGINE AND THE  
TRANSMISSION'S STILL BROKEN.

AT THE END OF THE DAY IT AIN'T GOING TO GO NOWHERE.

THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU.

THANK YOU.

NEXT UP ON OUR AGENDA WE HAVE THE MINUTES FROM APRIL 30th  
AND MAY 3rd.

TO BEGIN WITH, DO WE HAVE A MOTION --

>>GERALD WHITE: MOTION TO APPROVE.

>>JOE AMON: SECOND.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THOSE ARE THE MINUTES FOR APRIL 30th.

>> SECOND.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: SECOND.

ALL THOSE IN FAVOR OF APPROVING THOSE MINUTES RAISE YOUR  
RIGHT HAND.

OKAY.

NEXT UP -- BEFORE WE GET A MOTION, LET ME JUST MENTION I DO  
HAVE A CORRECTION ON PAGE 3.

IT SPECIFICALLY STATES CHAIRMAN THROWER CLARIFIED  
DISCLOSURE EXEMPTIONS AND EXPLAINED IPA WORK WAS NOT  
CLASSIFIED AS AN AUDIT AND WAS NOT EXEMPT.

THAT'S TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT.

IF THE IPA -- I WOULD SUGGEST IT JUST SAY CHAIRMAN THROWER  
CLARIFIED DISCLOSURE EXEMPTIONS BECAUSE IF THE PERFORMANCE  
AUDITOR'S DOING AN AUDIT, THOSE AUDIT WORK PAPERS WOULD BE  
EXEMPT, AND I DID BRING A COPY OF FLORIDA STATUTE  
119.07132, WHICH SPECIFICALLY STATES AUDIT WORK PAPERS AND  
NOTES RELATED TO SUCH AUDIT REPORT ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND  
EXEMPT FROM 119.07 DA, DA, DA, DA, DA, UNTIL THE AUDIT IS  
COMPLETED AND THE AUDIT REPORT BECOMES FINAL, SO I WOULD  
JUST SUGGEST THAT THAT SENTENCE BE CLARIFIED TO STATE -- OR  
CHANGED TO STATE CHAIRMAN THROWER CLARIFIED DISCLOSURE  
EXEMPTIONS, PERIOD.

THAT'S IT.

>> ALL RIGHT.

MOVE TO MAKE AMENDMENTS TO THE MINUTES WITH THE NECESSARY  
CORRECTIONS.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

THANK YOU.

IS THERE A SECOND?

>> SECOND.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

ALL IN FAVOR RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND.

OKAY.

THOSE MINUTES ARE CHANGED.

NEXT UP WE'VE GOT OLD BUSINESS.

ANY OLD BUSINESS?

>>GERALD WHITE: YES.

I WANT TO MAKE SURE I UNDERSTOOD FROM THE COUNTY ATTORNEY  
RELATED TO THE BONDING OF ELECTED OFFICIALS BECAUSE THAT  
WAS A CONCERN I HAD.

DID SHE GO OVER THAT?

DID I MISS THAT?

DID SHE LEAVE?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THE BONDING?

>>GERALD WHITE: YES.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I'VE GOT NOTES.

>> SHE PASSED OUT THE -- IT WAS SELF-EXPLANATORY.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WE HAVE THE E-MAIL.

>>GERALD WHITE: LET ME JUST COMMENT ON THAT, MR. CHAIRMAN,

BECAUSE THE CONCERN I HAD -- I JUST WANTED TO PUT ON THE RECORD MY CONCERN IF YOU --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

>>GERALD WHITE: THE COUNTY COMMISSION SITS ON ABOUT 35 DIFFERENT BOARDS IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY AND THEY SERVE AS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, AND I'M JUST CONCERNED THAT THE INSURANCE THAT COVERS THE COMMISSIONERS AND BONDING IS NOT ADEQUATE, AND SO I REALLY WOULD LIKE TO GET A BRIEFING ON THAT, ON WHAT'S THE STATUS OF THAT.

THESE COMMISSIONERS HAVE YOUNG FAMILIES, AND I WOULD HATE FOR SOMEONE NOT TO COME TO -- AND BE INVOLVED IN GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF THESE ISSUES RELATED TO BONDING AND INSURANCE WHILE THEY'RE SERVING IN PUBLIC OFFICE, AND I SERVED ON A BOARD WITH AN ELECTED OFFICIAL, A FORMER ELECTED OFFICIAL, AND HE MADE IT CLEAR -- THAT ELECTED FORMER OFFICIAL MADE IT CLEAR TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR THAT HE WASN'T GOING TO BE SERVING ON ANY BOARDS UNTIL HE WAS PROPERLY COVERED BY INSURANCE AND BONDED, AND SO I'M JUST CONCERNED ABOUT THAT, AND I WOULD JUST LIKE TO GET A BRIEFING ON -- ON WHAT'S THE STATUS RELATED TO BONDING AND INSURANCE OF OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS THAT SERVE THE PEOPLE OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

LET ME LET -- MR. AMON.

>>JOE AMON: I'M A LITTLE CONFUSED ABOUT THE QUESTION. THERE'S INSURANCE AND THERE'S BONDING.

THEY'RE NOT THE SAME THING, SO --

>>GERALD WHITE: I KNOW.

I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY'RE PROPERLY PROTECTED WHILE THEY'RE SERVING THE PUBLIC.

>>JOE AMON: BONDING DOESN'T PROTECT THE INDIVIDUAL, THE BONDING PROTECTS YOU, THE CITIZEN.

BONDING IS TO PROTECT FROM A MEMBER OF THE -- THE ADMINISTRATOR OR WHATEVER DOING SOMETHING FIDUCIARY TOTALLY IRRESPONSIBLE, AND BEING ABLE TO COVER THAT, THE BONDING WOULD COME INTO PLAY AND COVER THAT.

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH PROTECTING THE INDIVIDUAL.

INSURANCE IS A DIFFERENT ISSUE, AND I THINK THAT'S IMPORTANT.

IF THAT'S AN ISSUE, WE NEED TO DISCUSS IT.

>>GERALD WHITE: THAT'S AN ISSUE.

>>JOE AMON: BUT THE BONDING HAS TO DO WITH THE MALFEASANCE OF THAT INDIVIDUAL.

>>GERALD WHITE: I JUST WANT TO BE EDUCATED ON THE ISSUE BECAUSE MY NUMBER ONE CONCERN IS PROTECTING THE GENERAL FUND OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY BECAUSE A PERSON SERVE IN ELECTED OFFICE, SO IF WE CAN GET A BRIEFING --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I'LL TALK TO MARY HELEN FARRIS.

I'M A LITTLE CONFUSED ON THIS ISSUE TOO THE WAY -- I MEAN, THE DIFFERENCE -- I HAD THE SAME QUESTION AS MR. AMON IN TERMS OF THE BONDING AND INSURANCE, BUT I'LL TALK TO HER

AND FIND OUT.

THERE WAS AN E-MAIL FROM MARY HELEN FARRIS WHERE IT DISCUSSED THE BONDING OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR.

>>GERALD WHITE: RIGHT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: IT SPECIFICALLY ANSWERED THAT QUESTION CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATOR.

I GUESS LEGALLY THERE'S NO REQUIREMENT, AND I -- IF I MISSTATE ON THAT, IT SAYS IN THE CHARTER, THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR SHALL BE REQUIRED TO PLACE A PERFORMANCE BOND IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL LAW.

THERE IS NO GENERAL LAW REQUIRING IT, THEREFORE, YOU KNOW, IT'S NOT A REQUIREMENT, SO THAT COULD BE SOMETHING THE BOARD COULD LOOK AT OR THAT COULD BE SOMETHING WE COULD LOOK AT AND DISCUSS LATER, BUT I THINK WE'VE KIND OF -- WE'VE KIND OF BEATEN THAT TO DEATH.

AND LET ME MENTION, WE CAN -- WE CAN BRING THIS BACK AND PUT IT ON AGAIN IF WE WANT --

>>GERALD WHITE: I JUST NEED A REPORT TO MAKE SURE THAT THE ELECTED OFFICIALS, THE SEVEN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, ARE PROPERLY INSURED --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. WHITE, I'LL TALK TO MARY HELEN FARRIS BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING ABOUT THAT.

>>GERALD WHITE: I WANT TO KNOW THAT, AND IF WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY'RE PROPERLY INSURED.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I WANT TO GET ON BECAUSE WE'VE GOT

QUITE A FEW PEOPLE WITH PUBLIC COMMENT, AND I DON'T WANT TO SHORTCHANGE THEM.

>>GERALD WHITE: I HAVE -- WHEN YOU GET TO NEW BUSINESS.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

ANY OTHER OLD BUSINESS?

NEW BUSINESS.

>>GERALD WHITE: NEW BUSINESS IS I PASSED OUT SOME NEW ARTICLES, PUT THEM IN THE RECORD, AND I ALSO GAVE SOME DOCUMENTS TO EDITH RELATED TO STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT, AND I ALSO WANT TO REPORT THAT THE PINELLAS COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW BOARD VOTED TO FINISH TALKS RELATED TO THE ELECTED COUNTY MAYOR.

THEY TOOK UP THE ISSUE, THEY RECEIVED SOME INFORMATION, AND THEY DECIDED NOT TO GO WITH IT, SO THEY -- UNLESS SOME MIRACLE HAPPENS, THEY'VE -- THEY'RE DEAD WITH THE ISSUE IN PINELLAS COUNTY.

>>JAN PLATT: DID YOU NOTICE THAT THE PRESS WAS SILENT?

>>GERALD WHITE: VERY SILENT, BUT I FOLLOWED IT VERY CLOSELY.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: LET ME JUST MAKE A COMMENT REAL QUICK BEFORE I FORGET ABOUT THIS.

I JUST WANTED TO MENTION THAT THE LAST -- THE TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC FORUM, MR. REDDICK, MR. WHITE, MR. AMON, AND MYSELF ATTENDED.

WE HAD A TABLE SET UP.

A LOT OF INDIVIDUALS PICKED UP OUR SCHEDULE, PICKED UP COPIES OF THE CHARTER.

I THINK IT WAS A GOOD EVENT TO ATTEND, SO I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE GOT A LOT OF INFORMATION, SO I JUST WANTED TO THANK THE BOARD MEMBERS WHO ATTENDED.

I THINK IT WAS -- IT WAS A GOOD TURNOUT.

SO MR. ROBINSON.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I WANT TO MAKE A REQUEST TO STAFF.

I'VE BEEN GOING TO TAMPA GENERAL HOSPITAL MEETINGS, AND THE ONE RECENTLY WAS VERY INTERESTING, SO I'D LIKE THE ATTORNEY TO BRING FORWARD A COPY OF THE LEASE, SPECIFICALLY THE SECTION THAT DEALS WITH MINORITY BUSINESS REPORTING.

I THINK IT'S ON PAGE 55.

ONE OF THE ISSUES IS IS THAT THAT LEASE IS PRETTY MUCH IN LOCKDOWN.

IT'S VERY RARELY THAT IT EVER GETS REVIEWED, AND IT'S A LEASE BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND TAMPA GENERAL HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, IF THAT'S A REAL BOARD, I GUESS.

I THINK ONE OF OUR PEOPLE HERE SERVES ON IT.

AND I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THAT LANGUAGE BECAUSE IT IS A COUNTY ISSUE.

ONE OF THE REASONS IS RIGHT NOW THEY'RE HAVING TO CHANGE IT, AND IT'S VERY RARE THAT TAMPA GENERAL HOSPITAL CHANGES THAT LEASE.

IT'S NEVER BEEN CHANGED.

SO I WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT THAT BECAUSE RIGHT NOW THE IRS HAS GOT SOME CHANGES IN THE LAW, AND THEY'RE REVIEWING THE LIST -- REVIEWING THE LEASE RIGHT NOW, SO WHILE THEY'RE REVIEWING THE LEASE, I'D LIKE TO GET UP TO SPEED SINCE THAT'S A COUNTY ISSUE ON THE LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN TAMPA GENERAL HOSPITAL AND HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, WHICH I BELIEVE IS THROUGH THE TAMPA HOSPITAL AUTHORITY BOARD, OKAY, SPECIFICALLY THE SECTION DEALING WITH THE REPORTING OF MINORITY BUSINESS BECAUSE I WAS -- I WAS INVOLVED WITH THE ORIGINAL LEASE DRAFTING BACK WHEN THEY HAD THE BIG HEARING FOR EIGHT HOURS, SO I'D JUST LIKE TO GET SOME INFORMATION ON THAT FROM THE ATTORNEY.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. AMON.

>>JOE AMON: MR. ROBINSON, YOU ALWAYS ASK FOR GREAT THINGS, BUT I GOT ONE QUESTION.

HOW DOES THAT AFFECT THE CHARTER?

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: IT AFFECTS HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

REMEMBER I KEEP TELLING YOU, WE DON'T HAVE TO SIT HERE AND TALK ABOUT THE CHARTER.

>>JOE AMON: I KNOW YOU KEEP SAYING THAT AND I LIKE LISTENING TO YOU.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: IT DOESN'T AFFECT THE CHARTER, IT AFFECTS ISSUES WITH HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

I ASKED THAT FROM DAY ONE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: LET ME ADD IN, I BELIEVE MR. ROBINSON

IS CORRECT.

IT SAYS, SUCH BOARD WILL BE -- AND I KNOW YOU GUYS ALL KNOW THIS, BUT I JUST WANT TO STATE IT.

SUCH BOARD SHALL BE EMPOWERED TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF ANY OR ALL PHASES OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT, SO I BELIEVE YOU ARE CORRECT; HOWEVER, I WOULD SUGGEST IN THE INTEREST OF TIME, WE DO NOT HAVE A LOT OF TIME HERE.

MY THOUGHT IS -- I MEAN, THAT COULD -- YOU COULD -- YOU COULD MAKE THAT REQUEST AS A PUBLIC RECORD REQUEST TO LEGAL ON YOUR OWN AND THEN BRING --

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I WANT TO MAKE IT ON THIS BOARD LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE DOES, AND I WANT TO BE RESPECTED TO GET IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

YOU WANT TO MAKE A MOTION TO --

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: WE DIDN'T HAVE TO MAKE A MOTION TO GET FRANK'S REQUEST, WE DIDN'T HAVE TO MAKE A MOTION TO GET OTHER PEOPLE'S REQUEST.

WHY WE GOT TO HAVE A MOTION IF IT SAYS IN THE BYLAWS --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WELL, THIS IS MY CONCERN.

WE CANNOT BE ASKING LEGAL TO RUN AROUND GRABBING --

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: THEN I'M GOING TO OBJECT EVERY TIME ANYBODY ASKS FOR ANYTHING FROM LEGAL UNLESS A MOTION PASS.

>>FRANK REDDICK: I SECOND YOUR MOTION, JOE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

YOU MADE -- DID YOU MAKE A MOTION?

AND MR. REDDICK --

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: YEAH, I MADE A MOTION IF I CAN'T GET IT BY JUST ASKING.

>>FRANK REDDICK: I SECOND YOUR MOTION.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

SECOND.

ALL IN FAVOR OF HAVING LEGAL GET THE AGREEMENT FOR MR. ROBINSON FOR TAMPA GENERAL -- BETWEEN TAMPA GENERAL -- THE LEASE BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND TAMPA GENERAL.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: SPECIFICALLY THE SECTION DEALING WITH THE MINORITY UTILIZATION.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

ALL IN FAVOR RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND.

ALL OPPOSED.

OKAY.

SO CAN YOU PLEASE -- THOSE WHO WERE IN FAVOR PLEASE RAISE YOUR HAND SO I CAN MAKE SURE THE SECRETARY -- OR THE CLERK.

MR. FISHER IS OPPOSED, MR. ROBINSON --

>>RALPH FISHER: I WAS FOR.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: FOR.

FOR.

MR. FISHER'S FOR IT, MR. ROBINSON'S FOR IT, MR. TOKLEY'S FOR IT, MR. REDDICK IS FOR IT.

OKAY.

THOSE WERE THE ONES ON THE LOSING SIDE.

THE ONES ON THE WINNING SIDE COMMISSIONER PLATT,  
MRS. REBACK, MYSELF, MR. THROWER, MR. PRESEAU, MRS. GRIMES,  
MR. WHITE, MRS. LEYTHAM, MR. SULLIVAN, AND MR. AMON.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: LET'S VOTE ON EVERY TIME WE MAKE A  
REQUEST TO THE ATTORNEYS NOW.

EVERY TIME I WANT A VOTE.

>>GERALD WHITE: MR. CHAIRMAN.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YES, MR. WHITE.

>>GERALD WHITE: I WOULD LIKE TO PUBLICLY DISCLOSE THAT I'M  
THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, AND FRANK  
REDDICK ALSO SITS ON THAT BOARD, AND WE HEAR HIS CONCERNS  
AND THEY'RE DULY NOTED, AND FOR THE RECORD, THE CONTRACT IS  
CONSTANTLY AND CONSISTENTLY REVIEWED BY THE HOSPITAL  
AUTHORITY, AND FOR THE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, TWO COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS SITS ON THAT BOARD, SO I HEAR HIS CONCERN,  
BUT I REALLY BELIEVE THAT IT DOESN'T RISE TO THE LEVEL OF  
BEING ADDRESSED BY THE CHARTER REVIEW BOARD OF HILLSBOROUGH  
COUNTY.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: LET ME SAY THIS BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T AT  
THE LAST MEETING FOR THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, WERE YOU?  
WERE YOU AT THE MEETING THAT THIS WAS HELD A WEEK AGO?

>>GERALD WHITE: I JUST STAND WITH THAT STATEMENT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: OKAY.

I'M JUST --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: LET ME MENTION SOMETHING REAL QUICKLY.

MR. ROBINSON, YOU STILL HAVE THAT OPTION OF GETTING THE LEASE ON YOUR OWN.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I'M THROUGH WITH IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YOU CAN MAKE COPIES AND DISTRIBUTE THEM.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: I'M JUST TELLING YOU WE'RE GOING TO FOLLOW THE PROCEDURE TO THE GNAT'S HAIR.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I'M FINE WITH THAT.

MY CONCERN IS I DON'T WANT -- I DON'T WANT US JUST RUNNING OFF --

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: TO THE GNAT'S HAIR.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MRS. GRIMES.

>>GINA GRIMES: I JUST WANT TO EXPLAIN THE WAY I VOTED. I AGREE WITH YOU, JOE.

YOU'VE POINTED OUT WHAT THE CHARTER SAYS ABOUT US REVIEWING ANY AND ALL PHASES OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

I AGREE WITH THAT, BUT I THINK THAT WORDING MEANS IS THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT OR FORM OF GOVERNMENT OR ANYTHING RELATED TO THAT, AND I THINK WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT IS JUST A SPECIFIC TRANSACTION BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND THE TGH BOARD, SO I'M NOT OPPOSED TO YOU ON YOUR OWN WITHOUT A VOTE BRINGING SOMETHING THAT RELATES TO ANY AND ALL PHASES OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT, BRING IT BEFORE THIS BOARD.

I'M NOT OPPOSED TO YOU DOING IT ON YOUR OWN, I JUST DON'T

THINK THAT PARTICULAR ISSUE IS RELATED --

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: EVERYBODY ELSE -- TO THE GNAT'S HAIR.

>>GINA GRIMES: -- TO THE FORM OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: TO THE GNAT'S HAIR.

[INDISCERNIBLE CROSS TALK]

>>FRANK REDDICK: MR. CHAIRMAN.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

YES.

>>FRANK REDDICK: THE MOTION FAILED, AND I THINK ONCE THE MOTION FAILED, YOU NEED TO MOVE ON.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WE ARE.

MR. WHITE.

>>GERALD WHITE: MR. CHAIRMAN, THIS HASN'T BEEN DONE.

I WANTED TO PUBLICLY -- PUBLICLY INVITE THE LEADER OF THIS PETITION FOR ELECTED COUNTY MAYOR, MARY ANN STILES, TO MAKE A PRESENTATION TO OUR BOARD.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: ARE YOU MAKING A MOTION, MR. WHITE?

>>GERALD WHITE: IF IT NEEDS TO BE.

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THAT A MOTION.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: DOES ANYONE WANT TO SECOND?

>> SECOND.

>>JOE AMON: SECOND.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

WE'VE GOT A SECOND.

OKAY.

ANY DISCUSSION FOR THIS MOTION TO INVITE MARY ANN STILES?

OKAY.

ALL IN FAVOR RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND.

>>JAN PLATT: WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: TO INVITE MARY ANN STILES TO THIS  
CHARTER REVIEW BOARD TO DISCUSS THE COUNTY MAYOR.

OKAY.

ANYONE OPPOSED?

WE'LL MAKE SURE WE INVITE HER.

OKAY.

IF THERE'S NO FURTHER NEW BUSINESS -- MR. FISHER AND  
MR. TOKLEY.

>>RALPH FISHER: I WOULD LIKE US TO DISCUSS THE APPROPRIATE  
LEVEL OF SALES TAX BURDEN ON THE CITIZENS OF HILLSBOROUGH  
COUNTY.

I WANT US TO HAVE A DISCUSSION, AND I MOVE OR I REQUEST  
THAT THIS BOARD HAVE A DISCUSSION ABOUT WHAT IS AN  
APPROPRIATE LEVEL -- WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM LEVEL.

I WANT TO MAKE A FIREWALL.

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S 7%, 8%, 22% LIKE IT IS IN EUROPE, BUT  
WE'RE ON A BAD PATH, AND I WANT TO STOP IT, AND I THINK WE  
NEED TO PUT A FIREWALL THAT IT DOESN'T GET ANY WORSE THAN  
8% IF THIS THING PASSES IN THE FALL.

THAT THEY CAN'T NEXT YEAR SAY LET'S MOVE IT TO 9% TO BUILD  
SOMETHING, AND I THINK WE NEED TO PUT A FIREWALL AROUND

POLITICAL AMBITION, AND THE ONLY WAY TO DO THAT IS FOR US TO STOP IT NOW, SO I WANT US -- I'M ASKING THAT WE HAVE A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE APPROPRIATENESS OF LIMITING THE RATE OF SALES TAX IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YOU MADE A MOTION?

>>RALPH FISHER: MY MOTION IS THAT WE HAVE A DISCUSSION ABOUT WHAT IS AN APPROPRIATE MAXIMUM LEVEL OF SALES TAX IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: IS THERE A -- CAN I ASK HIM A QUESTION?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: LET ME SEE IF THERE'S A SECOND BEFORE WE HAVE DISCUSSION.

IS THERE A SECOND?

>> SECOND.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

DISCUSSION, MRS. REBACK.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S APPROPRIATE FOR THIS BOARD TO HAVE THAT DISCUSSION?

ARE YOU SEEKING -- ARE YOU SEEKING A CHARTER AMENDMENT --

>>RALPH FISHER: YEAH.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: -- TO LIMIT SALES TAX?

>>RALPH FISHER: THAT IT CAN'T GO ANY HIGHER THAN 8%.

THAT'S WHY I WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.

I MEAN, I WANTED TO MAKE IT AT 7%, BUT I THINK IT'S A FAIT ACCOMPLI THAT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A VOTE ON IT TO MOVE IT TO 8%.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THIS IS BASICALLY A MOTION HERE JUST TO ADD IT TO OUR AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES.

OKAY.

MR. WHITE.

>>GERALD WHITE: WELL, HE POINTED OUT THE MERIT OF THE DISCUSSION, AND I THOUGHT THAT WE HAD NO AUTHORITY TO TAMPER WITH GENERAL LAW, AND SALES TAX IS GENERAL LAW. I'D LIKE THE COUNTY ATTORNEY TO RESPOND TO THAT.

>>RALPH FISHER: I'M TALKING ABOUT THE COUNTY COMPONENT. THERE'S 6% --

>>GERALD WHITE: I THOUGHT --

>>RALPH FISHER: THERE'S 6 --

>>GERALD WHITE: WE CAN'T PUT A CAP ON ANYTHING.

>>RALPH FISHER: WE CAN PUT A CAP ON THE AMOUNT THAT THE COUNTY IMPOSES ON TOP OF THE 6% THAT THE STATE IMPOSES. WE CAN ABSOLUTELY DO THAT.

>>GERALD WHITE: WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS BEFORE --

>>RALPH FISHER: YEAH, WE CAN.

>>GERALD WHITE: -- AND WE WERE TOLD WE COULD NOT.

>>RALPH FISHER: I'LL GUARANTEE YOU OUR CHARTER COULD SAY YOU CAN'T HAVE IT ANY HIGHER THAN A CERTAIN AMOUNT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: LET'S JUST --

>>GERALD WHITE: I NEED TO HAVE HER RESPOND TO THOSE --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: COULD YOU PLEASE RE-REPEAT THE

QUESTION.

>>GERALD WHITE: I THOUGHT TAXES -- SALES TAX WAS GENERAL LAW AND THAT WE COULD NOT TAMPER WITH ANYTHING RELATED TO GENERAL LAW AND PLACE INSIDE OF A CHARTER.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: I REALLY DON'T WANT TO GUESS ON THAT ANSWER.

I DO BELIEVE, IT'S MY GUT, THAT MOST OF IT IS BY GENERAL LAW, BUT I'M NOT SURE, BUT I'LL BE HAPPY TO LOOK INTO IT FOR YOU.

>>RALPH FISHER: THE COUNTY COMPONENT.

I'M NOT REFERRING TO THE STATE COMPONENT, I'M REFERRING TO THE COUNTY OPTION ADD-ON COMPONENT.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: AGAIN, I DON'T WANT TO MAKE MY GUESSED STATEMENTS ON THE RECORD.

>>RALPH FISHER: I'M AN ATTORNEY.

I CAN GUARANTEE YOU THAT'S WITHIN OUR BAILIWICK.

>>DEBORA CROMARTIE-MINCEY: I WOULD LOVE TO LOOK INTO IT IF THAT'S THE WILL OF THE BOARD.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WELL, WE DO HAVE A MOTION ON THE FLOOR TO DISCUSS IT TO ADD IT TO OUR AGENDA.

ANY FURTHER DISCUSSION BEFORE WE VOTE?

>>GERALD WHITE: WELL, I JUST WANT TO SAY, WHAT, OVER 500 PEOPLE WENT TO A PUBLIC HEARING AND THE CONSENSUS WAS -- WHAT I TOOK FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING THAT THE PEOPLE GRANTED THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PERMISSION TO PLACE THE

ISSUE -- THE SALES -- THE TRANSPORTATION TAX ISSUE ON THE  
BALLOT, SO I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING WITH THIS, BUT  
THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS JUST A WEEK AGO.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: LET'S -- ACTUALLY, IF WE VOTE FOR  
THIS, WE CAN BRING IT FORTH, WE CAN GET A LEGAL OPINION AT  
THE SAME TIME, AND WE CAN DISCUSS IT.

SO ALL IN FAVOR -- NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

ALL IN FAVOR PLEASE RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND.

>> THIS IS JUST TO BE ON THE AGENDA FOR --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: YEAH, JUST ON THE AGENDA FOR  
DISCUSSION PURPOSES.

OKAY.

ANYONE OPPOSED?

OKAY.

ANYONE -- OKAY.

COMMISSIONER PLATT, WERE YOU OPPOSED?

>>JAN PLATT: NO, I'LL VOTE FOR IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

ANYONE OPPOSED PLEASE RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND.

OKAY.

NO ONE WAS OPPOSED?

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: I'M OPPOSED.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OH, OKAY.

MRS. REBACK IS OPPOSED.

MRS. REBACK IS OPPOSED.

ALL OTHERS WERE IN FAVOR.

WE WILL ADD THAT TO OUR AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING.

>>GERALD WHITE: AND THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY FOR THE NEXT MEETING, BUT I HAVE AN ISSUE, AND I MENTIONED IT LAST MEETING.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: LET ME JUST REMIND YOU, WE DO HAVE A LOT OF PUBLIC COMMENT.

>>GERALD WHITE: UNDER NEW BUSINESS.

LET ME GET THIS IN.

RELATED TO A CHARTER AMENDMENT TO GIVE THE CITIZENS THE ABILITY TO PLACE A REFERENDUM ON THE BALLOT.

I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A DISCUSSION ON THAT, AND IF YOU LOOK AT THE ORANGE COUNTY CHARTER, THEY HAVE AN AMENDMENT IN THEIR CHARTER WHERE CITIZENS IF THEY COLLECT ENOUGH SIGNATURES, SIMILAR TO A CHARTER AMENDMENT, THEY CAN WRITE AN AMENDMENT AND PLACE IT ON THE BALLOT TO RECEIVE A MAJORITY VOTE.

THEN IT --

>> IT'S IN THERE NOW.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WE HAVE THAT NOW.

>>JAN PLATT: WE HAVE THAT.

>>GERALD WHITE: WE DON'T HAVE THE ABILITY TO PLACE AN ORDINANCE --

>>JAN PLATT: WE DO.

THAT'S WHAT THAT --

>> CITIZEN INITIATIVE IS IN THERE.

>>GERALD WHITE: IT'S -- THAT'S -- THAT'S THE CHARTER AMENDMENT, BUT IF YOU WANTED TO ACTUALLY -- AN ORDINANCE, THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS IN OUR COUNTY, I UNDERSTAND, THEY'RE THE ONLY BODY THAT CAN PASS AN ORDINANCE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I BELIEVE WHAT YOU'RE ASKING FOR IS ALREADY IN PLACE.

>>GINA GRIMES: I THINK THERE'S A STATUTE THAT ADDRESSES THAT.

I THINK THERE'S A STATUTE THAT ADDRESSES INITIATIVES FOR ORDINANCES.

>>GERALD WHITE: WELL, CAN THE COUNTY ATTORNEY JUST GET THE ANSWER FOR THAT BECAUSE WE CAN HAVE AN AMENDMENT, BUT AFTER THE AMENDMENT PASSES AND THE COUNTY --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I'LL TALK TO MARY HELEN FARRIS.

I'LL BE GETTING WITH HER THIS WEEK.

I'LL TALK TO HER.

>>GERALD WHITE: LET ME FINISH.

PLEASE, LET ME FINISH.

THE WAY I UNDERSTAND THE CHARTER IS THAT THE CHARTER REVIEW BOARD VOTES OUT A CHARTER AMENDMENT AND PLACES IT ON THE BALLOT.

ONCE THE BALLOT INITIATIVE PASS, THEN THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WRITE THE ORDINANCE.

THAT'S THE WAY I UNDERSTAND HOW IT WORKS.

>> [INAUDIBLE]

>>GERALD WHITE: MY ISSUE IS I WANT TO GIVE THE CITIZENS THE ABILITY TO PLACE AN ORDINANCE ON THE BALLOT, RECEIVE A MAJORITY VOTE, AND THEN IT BECOMES AN ORDINANCE, A LAW OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: WE HAVE THAT NOW.

THE BOARD CANNOT CHANGE THE LANGUAGE OF A CITIZEN INITIATIVE.

THE WAY THE LANGUAGE APPEARS ON THE PETITION IS --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MRS. REBACK.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: -- IS THE WAY -- I LITIGATED THAT CASE, AND I KNOW THAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE THE LANGUAGE OF A CITIZEN PETITION.

IT'S THE LANGUAGE THAT THE CITIZENRY SIGNS AND APPROVES THAT GETS PLACED ON THE BALLOT AND THAT THEN BECOMES OR DOESN'T A MATTER OF LAW.

>>GERALD WHITE: THE DIFFERENCE IS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT A CHARTER AMENDMENT.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: NO, I'M TALKING ABOUT A CITIZEN INITIATIVE.

>> POINT OF ORDER, MA'AM.

THERE WAS NO MOTION PASSED.

WHY ARE WE DISCUSSING THIS >>MITCHELL THROWER: LET'S COMPLETE THIS.

WE'VE GOT TO GET TO PUBLIC COMMENT, OKAY.

>>GERALD WHITE: CAN THE COUNTY ATTORNEY JUST GET THAT INFORMATION FOR ME, THE DIFFERENCE.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: NOT WITHOUT A MOTION.

>>ROCHELLE REBACK: NOT WITHOUT A MOTION.

>>GERALD WHITE: WAIT A MINUTE.

ONE TIME THERE'S A MOTION.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: YOU ESTABLISHED PRECEDENCE TONIGHT.

>>GERALD WHITE: I HAVE THE FLOOR.

CAN I PLEASE FINISH WHAT I'M TRYING TO --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: GERALD, YOU'VE HAD THE FLOOR A LONG TIME.

WE'VE GOT TO MOVE ON.

>>GERALD WHITE: POINT OF ORDER.

POINT OF ORDER.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A MOTION, MAKE A MOTION.

>>GERALD WHITE: POINT OF ORDER, PLEASE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MAKE A MOTION.

YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A MOTION RIGHT NOW.

>>GERALD WHITE: THE MOTION IS, MR. CHAIR, PLEASE HAVE CONSISTENCY WITH YOUR RULES.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I'M GOING TO TELL YOU, MR. WHITE, I'VE BEEN VERY GENEROUS, AND I'VE TRIED TO NOT CUT ANYONE OFF. I'VE PROBABLY BEEN TOO GENEROUS, AND I KNOW SOME OF THE OTHER BOARD MEMBERS --

>>GERALD WHITE: IT'S NOT ABOUT CUTTING OFF, IT'S ABOUT HOW  
[INDISCERNIBLE CROSS TALK]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I WANT TO GIVE EVERYBODY -- I WANT TO  
GIVE ALL BOARD MEMBERS HERE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK.  
IF YOU HAVE -- IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A MOTION --

>>GERALD WHITE: IT'S NOT ABOUT SPEAKING, IT'S ABOUT  
GETTING WORK DONE.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: I KNOW.  
I AGREE.

>>GERALD WHITE: ONE MINUTE YOU DON'T NEED A MOTION TO GET  
WORK DONE, ANOTHER MINUTE YOU NEED --

>>MITCHELL THROWER: AS CHAIR, I'LL TRY TO BE MORE  
CONSISTENT.

>>GERALD WHITE: THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: MR. WHITE, MAKE A MOTION IF YOU WANT  
TO MAKE A MOTION.

>>GERALD WHITE: I'LL ASK THE COUNTY ATTORNEY FOR THE  
INFORMATION.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

IF THERE'S NO FURTHER NEW BUSINESS --

>>JAMES TOKLEY: I HAVE ONE COMMENT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. TOKLEY.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: MY COMMENT IS SIMPLY THIS.

WE HAVE ENDURED THE ISSUE OF MR. BARNES.

WE DID NOT ATTACK THE MAN, BUT WE SIMPLY CRITIQUED THE INFORMATION WHEREIN THE MAN WAS FEATURED.

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH ADMINISTRATOR PAT BEAN'S POSITION IS COMING TO WHATEVER SOLUTION IT'S COMING TO, BUT THE PEOPLE I'VE TALKED WITH CONTINUE TO WONDER WHAT THE COUNTY IS GOING TO DO WITH RENEE LEE, WHOM THEY BELIEVE HAS DONE NO WRONG.

EVEN THOUGH WE ARE A CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE, I WOULD LIKE FOR US TO SIMPLY CONSIDER AT A FUTURE MEETING OUR DEVELOPING A FRIENDLY MEMO TO THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO AT ALL COSTS DO THE RIGHT THING FOR RENEE LEE, FOR IF THEY DO NOT DO THE RIGHT THING, ALL OF THE SUGGESTIONS WE MAKE HERE ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTY WILL BE FALSE, AND I'M NOT ASKING FOR -- FOR A VOTE -- A MOTION, BUT I'M SIMPLY ASKING FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT WHAT I HAVE SAID AND IN THE FUTURE PERHAPS TO DO SOMETHING OFFICIALLY ABOUT IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU, MR. TOKLEY.

MRS. STEWART.

>>EDITH STEWART: VERY QUICKLY, BOARD MEMBERS, I'D LIKE YOU TO KNOW THAT TWO FIRMS HAVE PUT THEIR NAMES FORWARD TO SERVE AS CONFLICT COUNSEL, AND I'M ASKING YOUR PERMISSION TO INVITE THEM TO MAKE PRESENTATIONS AT THE NEXT MEETING.

>>JOSEPH ROBINSON: WHAT ARE THEIR NAMES?

>>EDITH STEWART: IT'S THE FIRM OF SAXON GILMORE AND THE FIRM OF GRAYROBINSON, AND THEY HAVE NAMED PRINCIPALS.

>>GERALD WHITE: I MAKE A MOTION THAT THEY BE PLACED ON THE AGENDA.

>> SECOND.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

ALL IN FAVOR PLEASE RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND.

OKAY.

ANYONE OPPOSED?

THEY WILL BE ADDED TO THE AGENDA.

>>FRANK REDDICK: WILL THEY HAVE A LIMIT TO THEIR PRESENTATION TIMES?

>>MITCHELL THROWER: WE'LL LIMIT IT.

I'M GOING TO GET WITH MARY HELEN FARRIS, AND WE'LL DISCUSS THAT AND GET THAT TAKEN CARE OF.

OKAY.

LET'S MOVE ON TO PUBLIC COMMENT, IF ANYONE'S STILL HERE.

MR. DAVIS, AL DAVIS.

>> HE LEFT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: HE LEFT?

OKAY.

MRS. ANN SANKEY-WHITE.

MRS. WHITE.

PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF, AND YOU HAVE THREE MINUTES.

>> I AM ANN SANKEY-WHITE, AND I'M A LOCAL EVANGELIST AND EDUCATOR HERE IN TAMPA-HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, AND I WANT TO SAY GOOD EVENING TO THIS BOARD, AND I WANT TO FIRST COMMENT

ON ATTORNEY WARREN DAWSON, IF I MAY, HIS PRESENTATION.

I WANT SIMPLY TO SAY THAT I AM VERY PLEASED TO HAVE SEEN HIM TONIGHT AND TO HAVE HEARD FROM ATTORNEY WARREN DAWSON. HE HAPPENS TO BE ONE OF OUR PREMIER COMMUNITY LEADERS AND A PRAISEWORTHY CHAMPION FOR CIVIL RIGHTS.

ATTORNEY DAWSON IS TO BE CELEBRATED AND APPRECIATED FOR HIS MANY CONTRIBUTIONS TO TAMPA AND HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY AND TO THE NATION AT-LARGE.

THANK YOU, MR. DAWSON.

SECONDLY, I WANT TO COMMENT ON SOMETHING I HEARD HERE TONIGHT ABOUT RACE, AND I WILL TELL YOU THAT RACIAL ISSUES STILL EXIST IN THIS COUNTY, AND I MAKE NO BONES ABOUT IT. I LIVE THROUGH IT FROM TIME TO TIME, ON A DAILY BASIS SOMETIMES.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY IS NOT READY FOR A LOT OF THINGS.

I LOVE LIVING IN THIS PLACE, BUT FOR A PLACE TO BE AS DIVERSE AS THIS PLACE IS, THIS SHOULD BE A PARADISE.

WE'VE GOT PEOPLE HERE FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE, EVERY ETHNIC GROUP, EVERY RACIAL BACKGROUND.

THERE IS NO REASON FOR THIS COUNTY TO BE A HUNDRED TO A MILLION TIMES FARTHER AHEAD THAN IT IS IN ALL OF ITS RELATIONS.

I MEAN, EVEN WHEN WE TAKE FLIGHT TO THE SUBURBS OR WHEREVER WE WANT TO GO, WE FIND EVENTUALLY, FOR WHATEVER REASONS, GOVERNMENT OR JUST PERSONAL, PEOPLE WIND UP COMING BACK TO

THE CITY ANYHOW, SO WE JUST NEED TO LEARN HOW TO GET ALONG,  
AND WE SHOULD BE A MODEL FOR THE REST OF THE NATION  
CONSIDERING THE VAST NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT WE DO HAVE HERE  
FROM VARIOUS BACKGROUNDS.

I DON'T KNOW WHY WE'RE NOT, BUT ONE OF THE COMMENTS THAT  
ATTORNEY WARREN DAWSON MADE ABOUT THE NAME AND THAT THAT  
PERSON COULD STILL BE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLES WHO IS NOT SO  
PARTIAL TOWARDS OTHER GROUPS, I JUST THOUGHT THAT THAT WAS  
SO REALISTIC BECAUSE SO MANY OF US EXPERIENCE THAT ON A  
DAY-TO-DAY BASIS.

IT IS NOT OVER YET, AND IF YOU THINK IT IS, YOU NEED TO  
WALK IN MY SHOES AND IN THE SHOES OF HISPANICS AND IN THE  
SHOES OF OTHER PEOPLE FROM OTHER BACKGROUNDS IN THIS  
COUNTY.

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL PLACE, TROPICAL, SUNNY, OH, YES, IT IS,  
BUT IT DEFINITELY NEEDS SOME CHANGES FROM THE INSIDE OUT,  
FROM THE HEART.

YES, FROM THE HEART.

AND I WANT TO SAY TOO TO SOMETHING I HEARD HERE THIS  
AFTERNOON -- THIS EVENING THAT CAME FROM MR. -- OH, MY  
GOODNESS -- MY NAMES -- MR. ROBINSON ABOUT EVERY ASPECT.

I DO AGREE WITH YOU THERE IN THAT IT IS IN THE BOOK, AND I  
DON'T AGREE WITH ALL THESE MOTIONS.

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON HERE?

EVERYTHING YOU DO YOU GOT TO HAVE A MOTION?

I'M GETTING EMOTIONAL JUST THINKING ABOUT THE MOTIONS.

THEY'RE JUST TOO MANY, THEY'RE TOO VAST, AND WE JUST NEED TO REVISIT THAT WHOLE AREA.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

>> OH, YES, I KNOW I HAVE THE MIKE.

SOMETIMES I DON'T SPEAK INTO IT, BUT TONIGHT I JUST FELT SO MANY DIFFERENT EMOTIONS AS I LISTENED TO EVERYTHING THAT WAS SAID HERE TONIGHT, AND HE WAS RIGHT ON SOME THINGS, AND ONE THING -- THAT ASPECT THING AND THE -- LET'S TRY TO -- I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT BECAUSE I KNOW YOU CAN'T COVER EVERY ISSUE, BUT JUST TO HAVE TO HAVE -- SUPPOSE THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS ON THIS BOARD DON'T WANT TO GO ALONG WITH SOMEBODY AND THEN YOU RAISE A MOTION AND NOBODY VOTES WITH YOU.

COME ON NOW, SOME THINGS WE, THE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, WE WANT TO HEAR.

I WANT TO HEAR FROM EVERYBODY UP HERE.

YOU HAVE A YEAR TO DO THIS THING.

I WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU, YOU, ALL OF YOU.

IF YOU WANT TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE COUNTY THAT YOU SEE THAT IS WRONG OR COULD BE CHANGED, SAY IT AND LET THEM SAY IT AND STOP OBJECTING TO EVERYTHING THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE DOING HERE.

IT'S RIDICULOUS.

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO HAVE A MOTION FOR EVERYTHING THAT

COMES OUT OF YOUR MOUTH JUST BECAUSE YOU WANT IT ADDRESSED  
OR JUST BECAUSE YOU WANT STAFF TO LOOK AT IT.

WHY NOT?

THIS ROOM IS NOT PACKED.

THERE'S JUST A HANDFUL OF US DOWN HERE.

I MEAN, LET'S JUST GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF THE CHARTER  
IN ANY WAY THAT YOU CAN.

OKAY.

I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S MY FINAL BUZZER.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THAT IS.

>> ALL RIGHT.

WELL, THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH AND HAVE A WONDERFUL NIGHT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU.

NEXT UP IS ELIZABETH BELCHER.

>> BELCHER.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: BELCHER.

WELCOME.

PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

>> GOOD EVENING.

MY NAME'S ELIZABETH BELCHER.

I'M FROM SEFFNER, FLORIDA, AND I'M HERE -- THERE'S TWO  
POINTS, BUT ONE ESPECIALLY IS I WANT TO BRING THIS  
COMMITTEE TO BECOME AWARE OF A PARTICULAR SITUATION.  
RIGHT NOW COMMISSIONER KEN HAGAN IS RUNNING FOR -- HE'S  
ANNOUNCED HE'S RUNNING FOR A DISTRICT AT-LARGE SEAT.

HE IS REPRESENTING JUST ONE DISTRICT RIGHT NOW, DISTRICT 2.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: 2.

>> YES.

HE HAS TO PUT IN HIS -- HE HAS TO PUT A RESIGNATION LETTER  
IN PRIOR TO THE ELECTION DAY, BUT HE HAS NOT DONE SO.

HE HAS TO DO THAT ON THE DAY -- THE WEEK -- DURING THE WEEK  
THAT HE QUALIFIES.

AT THAT POINT ALL HE HAS TO DO IS SAY I AM GOING TO RESIGN,  
SAY, THE DAY BEFORE THE ELECTION, AND AT THAT POINT BECAUSE  
THERE'S ONLY 24 -- THERE'S LESS THAN 24 MONTHS REMAINING IN  
HIS TERM, THE GOVERNOR WILL APPOINT SOMEBODY TO FILL HIS  
SLOT.

WE HAVE SPOKEN ALL NIGHT LONG ABOUT OPENNESS AND FAIRNESS  
AND MORE PEOPLE ON THE -- ON THE BOARD.

THIS IS NOT THE WAY TO DO IT IS TO -- TO ALLOW SOMEBODY TO  
MANIPULATE THE SYSTEM SO THAT SOMEBODY GETS APPOINTED BY  
THE GOVERNOR.

THAT'S THE ONE THING.

THE SECOND ISSUE THAT I HAVE COME ACROSS IS THE FACT THAT  
IF -- IF A PUBLIC -- A LANDOWNER IS DELINQUENT IN HIS  
TAXES, HIS PROPERTY TAXES, HE CAN STILL COME INTO THE  
COUNTY AND REQUEST A REZONING.

THE PARTICULAR INSTANCE THAT I'M TALKING ABOUT IS THAT  
THIS -- THE LANDOWNERS PURCHASED THE PROPERTY IN 2006.  
THEY HAVE NOT PAID A PENNY IN PROPERTY TAXES SINCE THEN.

THE PROPERTY HAS GONE TO TAX CERTIFICATE SALE TWICE, AND YET THEY WERE ALLOWED TO COME INTO THE COUNTY AND RECEIVED SPECIAL ZONING PRIVILEGES WITHOUT BEING CURRENT ON THEIR PROPERTY TAXES.

NOW, I -- I WENT TO THE COUNTY EMPLOYEES AND ASKED THEM OR TALKED TO THE COMMISSIONERS AND ASKED THEM WHY THIS WAS OCCURRING.

WELL, THE RESPONSE I GOT WAS, WELL, IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER BECAUSE EVENTUALLY WE'LL GET THE TAXES, THE PROPERTY TAXES, BECAUSE IT WILL GO TO A TAX CERTIFICATE SALE.

WELL, THAT'S NOT ACCEPTABLE.

WE SHOULD NOT HAVE TO SPEND RESOURCES, THE EMPLOYEES AND THE MONEY OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, TO COLLECT TAXES THAT ARE PROPERLY DUE US AND AT THE SAME TIME GIVE SOMEBODY A PRIVILEGE THAT HE -- THAT THEY'RE NOT SUPPORTING.

OKAY.

THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU.

NEXT UP, MIKE SUAREZ.

GOOD EVENING.

PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

>> GOOD EVENING.

I'M MICHAEL SUAREZ.

I LIVE IN THE CITY OF TAMPA.

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT TODAY.

WE FEW -- WE HAPPY FEW THAT ARE HERE, PART OF THE PUBLIC,  
WE APPRECIATE WHAT YOU DO.

NOW, HAVING SAID THAT I'M HERE TO SUPPORT WHAT PATRICK  
MANTEIGA HAD TO SAY ABOUT EXPANDING THE COUNTY COMMISSION.  
THERE WAS A LOT OF DISCUSSION ABOUT HISPANIC, BLACK, OTHER  
RACES.

THAT IS NOT IN MY MIND, ALTHOUGH I AM HISPANIC, WHY I WOULD  
SUPPORT HAVING AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS.

THERE'S BEEN SOME ARGUMENT AS TO WE DON'T WANT TO ADD TO  
GOVERNMENT.

I THINK THAT THE GENTLEMAN, MR. SULLIVAN HERE, HAD  
MENTIONED THAT.

FROM 1960 UNTIL NOW WE'VE HAD 435 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.  
WE HAVE GROWN SIGNIFICANTLY AS A COUNTRY, BUT YET WE STILL  
HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES.

NOW, ARE WE MORE REPRESENTED WHEN WE HAVE 1.3 MILLION  
PEOPLE REPRESENTED BY A CONGRESSMAN OR BY LESS PEOPLE?

NOW, THAT'S -- THAT'S AN ISSUE AND A QUESTION THAT YOU HAVE  
TO ANSWER WHEN IT COMES TO THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE.

IT IS NOT A MATTER OF WHAT IS THE PERFECT WAY TO PROVIDE A  
GOVERNMENT?

WHAT IT IS IS WHAT IS THE BEST WAY OR AT LEAST THE BEST WAY  
AT THAT MOMENT?

I WANT TO COMMEND COMMISSIONER PLATT WHO -- AT THE TIME

WHEN THIS WAS BROUGHT IN, WE WERE A MUCH SMALLER COUNTY.

WE ARE A UNIQUE SITUATION IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA.

THERE ARE ONLY THREE MUNICIPALITIES IN THIS COUNTY, VERY DIFFERENT THAN ALMOST EVERY OTHER PLACE IN FLORIDA.

WE HAVE ONE CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT UP IN DUVAL COUNTY, WHICH INCLUDES JACKSONVILLE, AND THEN WE HAVE CITIES IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, BROWARD COUNTY, PINELLAS COUNTY THAT ARE ABLE TO REPRESENT THOSE PEOPLE THAT ARE VOTERS THERE.

NOW, I HAVE A LOT OF REPRESENTATION BECAUSE I AM A PART OF THE CITY OF TAMPA, BUT I MUST SAY THAT MY CONNECTION TO HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS VERY TENUOUS.

VERY FEW TIMES HAVE I EVER MET MY COUNTY COMMISSIONER.

VERY FEW TIMES HAVE I EVER SEEN A COUNTY COMMISSIONER IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD.

NOW, WHEN IT COMES TO A CITY COUNCILMAN, I HAVE SEEN THEM QUITE A BIT.

NOW, AGAIN, THIS IS NOT GROWING GOVERNMENT.

THE GROWING OF THE GOVERNMENT IS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE COUNTY COMMISSION THEMSELVES.

YOU CAN SHRINK GOVERNMENT AND STILL HAVE NINE MEMBERS ON THAT BOARD.

YOU CAN GROW GOVERNMENT AND STILL HAVE FIVE MEMBERS ON THAT BOARD.

IT IS THE DECISIONS THAT THEY MAKE AT THE TIME THAT THEY'RE ELECTED, AND I THINK THAT IT WAS MR. FISHER THAT SAID

PEOPLE GET ELECTED BASED ON WHAT THEY BELIEVE AND WHAT THEY'RE ABLE TO COME OUT THERE AND CONVINCED PEOPLE OR PERSUADE PEOPLE TO DO.

I BELIEVE THAT HAVING A MORE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF SHRINKING THE SIZE OF PERSON TO MEMBER OF THE COUNTY COMMISSION, AND I WOULD SUGGEST THAT YOU LOOK AT IT VERY STRENUOUSLY, AND I HOPE THAT YOU VOTE FOR IT.

THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU.

NEXT UP, MR. AL FREDERICK.

>> HI.

MY NAME'S AL FREDERICK.

I REPRESENT THE TAMPA LATIN CHAMBER, THE HISPANIC ALLIANCE OF TAMPA BAY, AND I JUST RESIGNED FROM LULAC.

WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY IS THAT EVEN THOUGH PATRICK'S THROWING OUT HIS LAST PAGE, I THINK IT'S RELEVANT, AND I'LL SHOW YOU.

RIGHT NOW WE HAVE 14 PEOPLE IN FRONT OF ME.

FOUR OUT OF 14 ARE AFRICAN-AMERICANS.

WE HAVE 28.6% REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS ON THIS BOARD.

WE HAVE FIVE WOMEN, WHICH IS 36%.

POPULATION'S 50 MORE OR LESS, AFRICAN AMERICANS, IT'S ABOUT 16.

WHO HERE'S HISPANIC?

RAISE YOUR HAND.

ONE.

ALMOST ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR RESIDENTS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY IS HISPANIC, AND NOT ONE OF YOU GUYS ARE HISPANIC, SO THAT GIVES YOU MORE POINT TO WHAT PATRICK WAS SAYING.

WHY?

BECAUSE IF YOU HAD A COMMISSIONER THAT WAS -- THAT WAS INTERESTED IN HIS HISPANIC COMMUNITY, WE'D HAVE AT LEAST ONE HISPANIC PERSON ON THIS BOARD.

TWO THINGS I WANT TO CLARIFY.

THE WORD "LATIN" MEANS YOU COME FROM -- YOU COME FROM A ROMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRY, WHICH IS FRANCE, ITALY, PORTUGAL, SPAIN, ROMANIA, AND ANYBODY FROM THOSE IS KNOWN AS A LATIN.

>> THANK YOU.

>> AND IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HISPANIC AND LATIN.

HISPANIC IS NOT A RACE, IT'S AN ETHNICITY.

THAT'S WHY YOU HAVE WHITE HISPANICS, BLACK HISPANICS, ASIAN HISPANICS.

AND IT'S VERY DIFFERENT.

THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU.

NEXT UP, MR. DANIEL ALVAREZ.

>> GOOD EVENING.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: GOOD EVENING.

PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

>> MY NAME IS DANIEL ALVAREZ, SR.

I'M A LOCAL ATTORNEY HERE IN TOWN.

I PRACTICE IN SOUTH TAMPA.

GENERALLY I PRACTICE RENT LAW WHICH MEANS ANYTHING THAT  
PAYS THE RENT, SO ...

LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT WE WOULD HAVE SUCH EMOTION AT THE  
END, AND I THANK YOU, AS OUR EVENING HAS BEEN PROTRACTED.  
WHEN WE FIRST GOT HERE I WAS LITERALLY ABOUT TO TALK ABOUT  
HOW I WANTED A REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, HOW I WANTED IT  
TO BE NOT BIGGER BUT SMALLER AND HOW I THOUGHT GROWING IT  
WOULD MAKE IT SO, BUT I'VE GOT TO DIVERT MY TALK FOR JUST A  
LITTLE BIT BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, I KNOW I LOOK WHITE, I AM  
WHITE, BUT I IDENTIFY MYSELF AS AN AMERICAN, AND THE BEST  
PART ABOUT THAT IS THAT I'VE GROWN UP IN A CULTURE AS A  
FIRST-GENERATION AMERICAN WHERE I'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
HAVE, YOU KNOW, A LOT OF DIVERSITY IN MY LIFE.

I CAN HIDE SOMETIMES BECAUSE I CAN COME IN AND OUT OF  
DIFFERENT CULTURES AND NO ONE KNOWS WHAT I REALLY AM, BUT  
I'VE SEEN RACISM, I'VE SEEN MY FRIENDS SUFFER THROUGH IT,  
BUT I THINK WE'VE GOTTEN BETTER, BUT WE'RE DEFINITELY ON A  
JOURNEY, AND THE JOURNEY IS NEVER-ENDING, SO WHEN YOU ASK  
WHEN'S THE TIME, THE TIME IS ALWAYS RIGHT NOW.

IF WE CAN GRAB, GRAB.

IF WE CAN TAKE IT, LET'S TAKE IT.

THIS ISSUE, I'D LOVE TO PEG IT AS A HISPANIC, A BLACK --  
IT'S NOT.

IT'S GOING TO BENEFIT THOSE PEOPLE.

WHY?

BECAUSE IT'S WHO WE REPRESENT.

WE'VE GOT HISPANICS.

BOY, DO WE HAVE HISPANICS.

HAS ANYONE DRIVEN DOWN HILLSBOROUGH AVENUE?

IT REMINDS ME OF MY HOMETOWN, MIAMI, FLORIDA.

BUT WE'VE GOT BLACK FOLKS TOO.

WE ALSO HAVE ASIAN FOLKS TOO.

WE AREN'T TRYING TO CARVE OUT A SPECIAL PART OF THIS

GOVERNMENT JUST FOR THEM.

WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO SAY IS A GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, FOR  
THE PEOPLE.

NOW, LET'S PUT OUR MONEY WHERE OUR MOUTH IS.

THAT'S IT.

THAT'S ALL WE'RE ASKING.

HAVE WE GROWN?

THE PLAN IS AND CONTINUES TO BE GREAT, AND I WILL APPLAUD

MS. PLATT FOR IT.

SHE'S DONE A WONDERFUL JOB.

THEY DID A GREAT JOB.

THAT WAS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE 1980s.

WE'RE GOING INTO 2010, AND IT WOULD BE INCONCEIVABLE TO BELIEVE THAT IT DOESN'T AT LEAST MERIT A LOOK.

IT DOES.

I DID A WHOLE LOT OF RESEARCH FOR THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT, AND IF WE DECIDE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A DISCUSSION, I'M GOING TO COME BACK, I PROMISE, BECAUSE I LIKE TALKING TO YOU, AND IF YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME, I'D BE HAPPY TO DO IT. BUT I'LL TELL YOU THIS: IT DESERVES A CHANCE.

AT LEAST IT DESERVES A DISCUSSION, AND I PROMISE YOU THAT IF WE TAKE IT TO THE PEOPLE AND LET THEM DECIDE, I THINK THAT'S THE MOST RIGHT THING TO DO.

IT'S HOW OUR COUNTRY WAS FOUNDED.

I REALLY DON'T WANT TO SOUND LIKE A CLICHE, BUT I THINK I'M GOING TO BE THE NUMBER ONE CLICHE, GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE.

IT'S IN YOUR HANDS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>>JAMES TOKLEY: MR. ALVAREZ, YOU REMIND ME OF A COMMENT I HEARD YEARS AGO.

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

>> [SPEAKING SPANISH]

>>MITCHELL THROWER: OKAY.

MR. WILLIAM DENNIS.

MR. WILLIAM DENNIS?

HE'S GONE?

OKAY.

MRS. MARILYN SMITH.

GOOD EVENING.

>> [INAUDIBLE]

HERE I AM.

MARILYN SMITH.

I LIVE HERE, OKAY.

[LAUGHTER]

I THINK YOU KNOW THAT.

I WANT TO SAY QUE LASTIMA BECAUSE OF ALL THE WHINING GOING ON, BUT I'M GLAD MR. DAWSON WAS HERE BECAUSE THE LONG HARD-FOUGHT BATTLE WASN'T HIS ALONE.

BOBBY GILDER HAD PLENTY OF BUMPS ON HIS HEAD, AND HE TOOK THOSE, AND HE ALWAYS USED TO SAY WHEN HE CAME BEFORE THIS COMMISSION TO SPEAK HE'S THE BLACK AGITATOR IN THE WHITE WASHING MACHINE.

BOB GILDER, HE'S GONE, BUT WE WHO ARE HERE DON'T FORGET BOB, AND I KNOW WARREN WOULD AGREE WITH ME.

YEAH, BOB WAS VERY, VERY PARAMOUNT IN THE WHOLE EFFORT, SO LET ME GO ON NOW.

JUST LET ME FINISH EVERYTHING I WANT TO TALK ABOUT.

THE OPINIONS THAT ARE GIVEN BY THOSE WHO HAVE NOT VERY MUCH EXPERIENCE AS ELECTED OFFICIALS LET ALONE THIS BOARD BUT ON ANYWHERE ELSE, YOU HAVE TO TAKE THAT WITH A GRAIN OF SALT. THEY DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHERE OR WHAT THEY ARE SPEAKING.

I'M REFERRING TO THE FACT THAT THE PEOPLE WERE WISE ENOUGH TO OPEN UP THE CHARTER AND PUT IN AN INTERNAL PERFORMANCE AUDITOR.

LET'S DON'T GET PERSONALITIES MIXED UP.

TWO FAILURES DON'T MEAN YOU THROW THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATHWATER.

I THINK WE NEED TO KEEP THAT IN THERE EVEN THOUGH SOMEONE WHO REALLY HAS ONLY BEEN AROUND A YEAR AND A HALF THINKS THEY GOT THE ANSWER.

WE NEED TO KEEP THE INTERNAL AUDITOR BECAUSE WE NEED OVERSIGHT ON PROCEDURE AND POLICY AND HOW IT'S BEEN USED AND ABUSED BY ADMINISTRATION.

OKAY?

THAT'S THE ONLY REASON WHY I'M SAYING THAT.

LOTS OF PERSONAL POINTS OF VIEWS HERE.

TERM LIMIT'S A VERY, VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE RIGHT NOW.

WE HAVE -- IT WAS TALKED ABOUT EARLIER.

I CALL THEM THE CLAIM JUMPER.

WE'VE GOT THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF A CLAIM JUMPER.

HERE'S HAGAN WHO IS THE CHAIR SITTING THERE, MOVING OVER TO AN AT-LARGE SEAT.

HE HASN'T DONE A GREAT JOB AS THE CHAIR ANYWAY, BUT THAT'S NOT THE POINT.

I WILL CALL HIM A CLAIM JUMPER.

I DON'T WANT THAT MAN FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS OR EIGHT

YEARS.

THAT'S WRONG.

YOU DO -- WE SHOULD LIMIT IT TO EIGHT YEARS NO MATTER AND JUST CHANGE THE CHARTER TO REFLECT EIGHT YEARS EACH MAXIMUM, THAT'S IT, AND YOU GOTTA GO.

WE'RE DONE.

YOU'RE NOT THAT WONDERFUL.

NOT EVERYBODY -- YOU KNOW, JIM NORMAN GOT AWAY WITH IT, BUT GOD ONLY KNOWS WHY.

YOU KNOW HERE WE ARE SITTING HERE TALKING ABOUT RACIAL OR ETHNICITY WHICH WE HAVE TRIED TO AMALGAMATE PEOPLE TOGETHER.

WELL, IF YOU'RE GOING TO ENTERTAIN THE IDEA OF ANY KIND OF RACE HAVING A SEPARATE DISTRICT, HOW'S ABOUT WE JUST MAKE ONE FOR WOMEN?

HOW ABOUT THAT?

AND SHE CAN BE ANY COLOR SHE WANTS TO BE, ANY ETHNICITY SHE WANTS TO BE BECAUSE WOMEN ALWAYS DIDN'T HAVE THE VOTES.

SOME OF YOU GUYS HAD THE VOTE BEFORE WE DID.

WE HAD TO FIGHT REALLY HARD TO GET IT.

NOT ALWAYS BEEN THAT EASY.

SO THERE HAVE BEEN QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT THIS, AND WE NEED TO RAISE THE -- LET ME FINISH THE POINT.

WE NEED TO RAISE THE SURETY BOND ON THE COMMISSIONERS.

IT NEEDS TO GO UP.

THEY HAVE A LOT OF MONEY INVOLVED, AND WE CAN PUT A SURETY  
BOND ON THE ADMINISTRATOR BY MERELY MAKING AN  
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDINANCE TO GO WITH IT.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: THANK YOU, MRS. SMITH.

>> YAY GIRLS.

>> THANK YOU.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: IF THERE'S NO FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENT -

-

>> MOTION TO ADJOURN.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: SECOND?

>> SECOND.

>>MITCHELL THROWER: ALL IN FAVOR.

[CHORUS OF AYES]

ANYONE OPPOSED?

MEETING'S ADJOURNED.