Sullivan charter commission calls for county executive form of government

MONTICELLO – The Sullivan County Charter Review Commission formally presented its report to the county legislature on Thursday recommending a switch from an appointed county manager to an elected county executive. (Read full report)

The report cited “some of the most compelling testimony heard” dealt with Ulster County and elected County Executive Michael Hein. County Attorney Beatrice Havranek told the Sullivan County task force that when Hurricane Irene hit in 2011, “the county was fortunate to have a single individual with the authority to act quickly under emergency conditions.”

While the costs of operating county government may increase with the county executive structure, the commission pointed to testimony from Dr. Gerald Benjamin, director of the Benjamin Center at SUNY New Paltz, who noted that could be offset by increased efficiency.

In the greater Hudson Valley/Catskills region, county executives serve in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Ulster and Westchester.

The charter commission also recommended creating the position of elected county comptroller to serve as the chief accounting and auditing officer of the county.

The commission also suggested that the nine member county legislature be voted in staggered terms.

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