



November 8, 2016

Mayor John W. Holic
Venice City Council
401 West Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285

Dear Mayor Holic,

As Chairman of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Committee for the updating and revising the existing Interlocal Agreement and By-laws for the RPC, I would like to obtain your input on a few issues before we take any revisions of these documents to the full Council for approval.

Background

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) was originally formed by an Interlocal agreement that was signed by six counties in 1973 and amended in 1980. At that time, the Council was established so that each of the six member counties received two seats on the Council and there was a third seat for each county to assign to a municipality within the county. This is where the concept of the "free municipal seat" originated. Based on State statutes, each county must be a member of a regional planning council. The Interlocal Agreement and the By-Laws require the member counties to pay their proportionate share of the SWFRPC budget. Originally, each county decided who got the free municipal seat. In 1988 the Council's rules were changed to allow the cities to decide who would fill the free municipal seat.

In 1988, the City of Fort Myers approached the Council stating that they did not want to share in the one free municipal seat but wanted a permanent seat on the SWFRPC. Shortly thereafter, the City of Cape Coral made the same request. These requests were granted and the City of Fort Myers and the City of Cape Coral paid their own assessment, which was deducted from Lee County's proportionate share. In 1995, the By-Laws were amended to allow any city to have a seat and pay their own assessment. The Town of Fort Myers Beach came to the table in 1997 and the City of Bonita Springs came to the table in 2000. At the current time the City of Cape Coral, the City of Fort Myers, the Town of Fort Myers Beach, the City of Bonita Springs and the City of Sanibel have a seat and pay their own assessments. It should be noted that all counties except Lee County cover the cost of membership for their cities.

Revisions to the Interlocal Agreement and By-Laws

Before any revisions can be made to the Interlocal Agreement and By-Laws, the membership issue must be addressed. There are several alternatives for addressing membership on the SWFRPC:

Option 1. Leave the practice as it currently is operating with Charlotte, Collier, Hendry, Glades and Sarasota Counties paying the full assessment, which entitles them to two county seats and municipal seats for the cities in the county that chose to participate. Lee County would have two county seats and one free municipal seat. All other municipalities in Lee County pay for their seat. The free seat is to be filled according to the existing By-Laws, which states that the municipalities that are not paying for a seat determine which city gets the free seat.

Option 2. Leave the practice as it currently is operating with Charlotte, Collier, Hendry, Glades and Sarasota Counties paying the full assessment, which entitles them to two county seats and municipal seats for the cities in the county that chose to participate. Lee County would have two county seats and one free municipal seat. All other municipalities in Lee County pay for their seat. The free seat is to be filled according to the existing By-Laws which state that the municipalities that are not paying for a seat determine which city gets the free seat. **The free seat may be held by a municipality for only one year and must be rotated among the other cities within the member county.**

Option 3. All member counties follow the practice of Lee County which provides for two county seats and one free municipal seat determined by the cities. Cities may chose to have a seat on the Council, but must pay their proportional share which will be deducted from the County's proportionate share.

Option 4. There are no free municipal seats. Any city desiring to have a seat on the SWFRPC must pay its proportionate share which will be deducted from the county's proportionate share.

Option 5. Each member county gets two county seats and one municipal seat, which is determined by the county. Other municipalities are not allowed to pay for a seat. Accordingly, the number of seats is limited to three per member county.

Option 6. Each member county gets two county seats and one municipal seat which are determined by the municipalities. Other municipalities are not allowed to pay for a seat. Accordingly, the number of seats is limited to three per member county.

Your input is important to us. Please chose an option or in the alternative, please provide us your thoughts on how we should address the membership issue. I have provided a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience. We would like to address this issue by the end of the year and would appreciate your comments by November 30, 2016. Thank you for helping us to find a solution to these very challenging issues.

Sincerely,

Jim Burch

Jim Burch, Chairman
SWFRPC Interlocal Agreement Committee



Name: _____

Position: _____

Municipality: _____

County: _____

Date: _____

I vote for:

_____ Option #1

_____ Option #2

_____ Option #3

_____ Option #4

_____ Option #5

_____ Option #6

I have a better idea:

Additional Comments:
