

Asheville – Buncombe County (1981-1982)

Summary of proposed consolidation plan

Governing board

The proposed charter would have created a Board of Commissioners comprised of eight commissioners and the Chief Executive. All nine officers were elected at large in partisan elections to four-year terms, with elections being held on the county cycle. The Chief Executive was to preside at commission meetings and act as the consolidated government's manager.

Form of administration

The proposed charter provided for an elected Chief Executive, who was to combine the roles of a mayor, or county board chair, with those of a manager. The Chief Executive was to appoint an administrator, who was to serve at the Chief Executive's pleasure, and the head of each department whose appointment was not otherwise provided for; these appointments, however, were subject to the approval of the Board of Commissioners. The Chief Executive was also given the power to appoint and remove all other consolidated government employees. The charter distinguished in one respect between staff departments and operating departments: the Chief Executive was entitled to remove, with Commissioners' approval, the head of any staff department, while the administrator was entitled to remove, with both Chief Executive and Commissioners' approval, the head of any operating department.

Civil service

Asheville operated under a civil service system that applied to most city employees. The city's civil service board was entitled to hear appeals from personnel actions taken by the city manager and to order the reversal of those actions. The proposed charter required creation of an Employee Relations Board, with a comparable appeal jurisdiction, that was to be applicable to most employees of the consolidated government. It also provided for a Sheriff's Personnel Advisory Board, which was actually a continuation of an existing entity.

Law enforcement

The proposed charter did not attempt to create a single law enforcement agency after consolidation. It specifically left the sheriff with the full range of law enforcement powers given sheriffs by general law. But it also clearly anticipated that there would continue to be a police department, presumably for the Asheville urban service district, inasmuch as police was listed as one of the initially-required operating departments.

Asheville's debt

The proposed charter provided that the new government would not assume liability for the outstanding general obligation debt of the city of Asheville. (In this way it differed from all the other consolidation efforts.) Rather, the new government was to levy taxes within the former area of Asheville to be used to pay the necessary debt service on the Asheville debt.