

## Charlotte – Mecklenburg County I (1969-1971)

### Summary of proposed consolidation plan

#### Governing Board

The proposed charter would have established a governing board, called the Council, with eighteen members, six elected at large and twelve elected by and from electoral districts. (The existing board of county commissioners had five members, all elected at large; and the existing city council had seven members, also all elected at large.) Members would have been elected in partisan elections, although held in odd-numbered years on the municipal election cycle. (At the time Charlotte used nonpartisan elections.) The members would have been elected to staggered, four-year terms.

#### The Mayor and the Form of Administration

Although both the city and county operated with professional managers, the proposed charter would have significantly modified the form of administration. It called for a full-time mayor with authority to appoint, with council approval, a professional chief administrative officer. The appointment of various department heads was divided among the council, the mayor, and the chief administrative officer. In addition to having these executive powers, the mayor would preside at council meetings (as is the case with North Carolina mayors generally). The proposed charter gave the mayor a veto over council actions, but this simply continued an existing city charter provision.

#### Law enforcement

At the time of this consolidation effort, both the city and county had police departments. (Mecklenburg had received authority from the General Assembly for its police department in the 1920s.) As a result, the sheriff was not involved in law enforcement, and provision of law enforcement services was not an issue in this consolidation effort. The proposed charter called for the merger of the two departments, with a single chief appointed by the council with the approval of the mayor. The merged department would have been subject to a civil service system, as were both of the existing departments.

#### Schools

The proposed charter did not make any change in the relationship between the county and the school administrative unit, but it did restructure the Charlotte-Mecklenburg board of education. The existing school board had nine members, all elected at large to staggered six-year terms. The proposed charter would have left the membership at nine, but would have elected three at large and six from districts. (Each school board district would have been comprised of two council districts.) Members would have been elected to staggered four-year terms.

#### Fair Representation

The proposed charter directed the Council, in appointing persons to boards and commissions, to “secure reasonable representation on each board, commission, and authority of all sexes, races, income groups, geographic sections of the county and political parties.”