

Wilmington – New Hanover County III – Summary

Governing board. The proposed charter would have established a governing board, titled the board of commissioners, with six board members, all elected at large for four-year staggered terms. In addition, there was to be a separately elected mayor, also elected to a four-year term, who was to preside at commission meetings and vote on all matters. Elections were to be nonpartisan and held on the municipal election cycle.

Form of administration. The consolidated government would have operated under the manager system. Under the proposed charter, the governing board was to appoint the manager, the attorney, the clerk, the tax supervisor, and the tax collector. In addition, the board was to appoint the police chief and fire chief, but those officers served at the pleasure of the manager; that was the current arrangement in Wilmington. The diffused appointment system for county government established by state law was also to remain in place. Otherwise, all appointments were by the manager. The major change from existing arrangements was that the charter did not include a civil service system.

Law enforcement. The proposed charter called for a single police agency, providing law enforcement throughout the consolidated government. The proposed charter directed the first board of commissioners to name the sheriff as chief of that single police agency but went on to provide that “at any time thereafter” the board could appoint any other person as police chief. If someone other than the sheriff was appointed chief, the proposed charter provided that the person so appointed was to serve as chief at the pleasure of the manager.