



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**

**Minutes and Summary of Inaugural Event
Strengths and Weaknesses of the Strong Mayor and Council Manager
Forms of Local Government Panel Discussion**

Monday, January 30, 2006
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
Ray Goode Room, Ballroom Level
1601 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

[Regular Business Meeting postponed to our February Board Meeting]

I. Welcome and Introductions: Barry Johnson, President, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

Welcome The League is a Member of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

Board Members Introduce Moderator and Panel: Judy Cannon, President, League of Women Voters of Miami-Dade County

- Lumane Pluviose Claude Moderator, Dr. Ralph Lewis
- Angela Gittens Former Mayor Raul Martinez
- Cathy Lynch Mayor Otis Wallace
- Mayra Morales Mayor Fred Schorr
- Dorrit Marks Commissioner Barbara Jordon
- Yvonne Grassie Former Manager Merrett Stierheim
- Judy Cannon Manager Michael Levinson

II. Introductory Statement Dr. Ralph Lewis

III. Opening Remarks Panelists

IV. List Strengths and Weaknesses of each Form of Government

V. Open Discussion with Audience

VI. Summary of Discussion During Event:

Moderator, Dr. Ralph Lewis' Comments

Before we start tonight's panel discussion I want to say a few words that I hope will help provide a framework for the way you listen to and evaluate the presentations of the panelists.

First, I want to read you the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States. I am doing this because I believe that in the final analysis the Preamble provides the mission and goals for all levels of government in the United States.

U. S. CONSTITUTION

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Now in your mind I want you to underline the key phrase in the Preamble:

- In order to form a more perfect union,
- Establish justice,
- Insure domestic tranquility
- Provide for the common defense,
- Promote the general welfare,
- And secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

This is the purpose of government in the United States and these are the goals that you must think about tonight.

Next, I want to provide you with some definitions to help structure your thinking as the evening progresses.

First, the basic definition of government is:

A system (organization) for the administration of political units.

Second, the definition of organization that I would like you to use tonight is:

Social entities that are goal directed with structured activity systems and permeable boundaries:

- Social entities are created by people (in the case of government, its citizens) and have structures, sub-structures, roles, rules, and goals.
- Goal directed means that these social entities are intended to produce outcomes. In my view, the intended outcomes are presented in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- Structured activities means that there are mechanisms for getting work done in order to produce the desired outcomes.
- Permeable boundaries means that we are able to distinguish between what is inside and what is outside the organization --- the **internal** and the **external** environments.

Third, there are five major functions that must be performed well by any organization (including governments) in order for it to fulfill its mission and achieve its goals. These functions are:

- **Boundary Spanning:** Managing the relationships between the internal and the external environments in order to obtain inputs for the organization and to provide goods and services to the external environment.
- **Production:** Creating the goods and services desired by members of the external environment – in the case of government its citizens and other constituents.
- **Maintenance:** Maintaining the internal physical, social, and economic factors needed to support the ongoing activities of the organization.
- **Adapting:** Preparing the organization to deal with changes in the external environment. For example, helping the organization prepare for changes in the availability of resources such as water.
- **Managing:** Directing and co-ordination of the sub-systems of the organization.

Fourth, the structure of a government is the system for administering that organization. It provides the framework in which the five functions identified above are performed.

Now I would like to provide some criteria that can be used to assess the desirability of various forms of government. I call them the three “E’s” or “E cubed.”

I am presenting these in what I believe to be the appropriate rank order. The first criterion is **Ethical Conduct**. In my system, Ethical Conduct has three dimensions and I will present these dimensions in what I believe to be the appropriate rank order:

- **First:** Honesty – Honesty in the management of resources and power.
- **Second:** Responsiveness – Responsive to the needs of citizens and other constituents.

- Third: Fair – Fair in the treatment of all constituents both as individuals and as members of groups.

The second criterion is **Effectiveness**. Effectiveness addresses the degree to which the organizational mission is fulfilled and its goals achieved.

The third criterion is **Efficiency**. Efficiency focuses on producing the desired result (mission fulfillment and goal achievement) with the least effort, expense, and waste. Effectiveness comes before efficiency because without being effective is a lesson in futility.

You may add your own criteria to this list as you listen to and evaluate this evening's presentation but I believe the Three "E's" will provide the core foundation for these activities.

Closing

In the field of real estate there is a mantra that goes: location, location, location.

If you listened carefully to the members of the panel you should go away from this session with two new mantras:

- **The Person, The Person, The Person** – The quality of people in the positions is more important than the particular structure in which they may operate.
- **The Details, The Details, The Details** – The Devil and the Angel are in the details. **Pay attention to the details.**

Please give the members of the panel a round of applause and have a good evening.

Summary of Panel's Comments **List of Strengths and Weaknesses of the** **Council Manager Plan and the Strong Mayor** **Forms of Local Government**

Moderator, Dr. Ralph Lewis, Former First Director, Florida Institute of Government at Florida International University
Former Mayor Raul Martinez, Former Commission Member and Mayor for 30 years, City of Hialeah in Miami-Dade County
Mayor Otis Wallace, Mayor City of Florida City in Miami-Dade County
Mayor Fred Schorr, Mayor and former City Commissioner, City of Lighthouse Point in Broward County
Commissioner Barbara Jordon, Miami-Dade County Commissioner and former Assistant County Manager
Former Manager Merrett Stierheim, Former Miami-Dade County Manager [Dec.1976-Jan.1986 and Oct.1998-Feb.2001]; Former Pinellas County Administrator; Clearwater City Manager; Miami Assistant City Manager 1960-

1967 and Miami City Manager for 60 days in 1996 to conduct the Crisis Management Task Force Study and produce a Recovery Plan; First Town Manager for the Town of Miami Lakes to inaugurate the Council Manager Plan of local government in 2001.

Manager Michael Levinson, City Manager, City of Coral Springs in Broward County

Council Manager Plan **Strengths**

- Selection process is strong
- Continuity of service to another professional manager
- Minimize political foreplay
- Service excellence is more easily accomplished
- Experience of manager is known
- Easily fired if not effective
- Consensus building important and takes place more
- Odds are better on getting a professional with recruitment process
- Team Work
- Have a larger universe to select a manager.... A mayor is one of a few
- A good manager is willing to put their job on the line to do the right thing
- Accountable to the people through their elected officials

Weaknesses

- Technical (non-people oriented) individuals
- City Managers are hired to be fired
- Only accountable to a few individuals
- More political pressure than a mayor
- More time spent convincing commissioners
- Need to be good at managing "MASTERS"
- May end up with "BAD" manager

Strong Mayor Form **Strengths**

- Accountability – You are ultimately responsible
- Easier to get something through
- He or she is elected by the people
- Bad manager can succumb to political pressure to keep job strong mayor does not have to
- Mayor can balance politics with good administration
- Council can temper strong mayor

Weaknesses

- May end up with “BAD” mayor
- Need checks and balances
- Political appointments versus professional
- Political administration
- A manager can be fired in 15 minutes not so with a seated mayor
- Eliminates the need for consensus building
- Not accountable to electorate in contracting process
- May end up with politician not administrator
- Turnover a concern