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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1967

Frank Rab

For Better County Government:

Nonpartisan Elections

THE TIMES agrees with the position taken by the Municipal League last week — that King County officials should be chosen in nonpartisan elections.

There is more than ample evidence locally to support the Municipal League's generalized declaration that:

"Most American counties are under partisan government and their record isn't too good. A majority of cities are under nonpartisan charters and their standards of service efficiency are generally better than those of counties."

We are not going to hold here that Seattle's nonpartisan elected municipal government is a paragon of efficiency. But when it is compared to King County's partisan-elected government, the city government here is far superior.

THE King County government has been rocked in recent weeks by disclosures of scandalous inefficiency and lack of diligence in managing the business of the taxpayers and in providing first-grade public services within its jurisdiction. This negligence has occurred over a long period of time. It embraces a span of time when both Republicans and Democrats have been in charge of the county commission.

Hence, the Municipal League is clearly on the right road to improved efficiency and reform when it advocates that the commission of freeholders to be elected November 7 provide in the county charter for nonpartisan elections as a substitute for the present system of partisan elections.

The Times believes, however, that nonpartisan elections alone will not be enough. Civil service

also should be established in the county government—as it now exists in the Seattle municipal government—if the evils of the political spoils system are not to take further tolls in county inefficiency.

A GAIN, we do not hold that a civil service is without disadvantages. But when we compare the ravages of the spoils system in the county over many years with the stability of employment of career personnel in the municipal government, the city looks awfully good.

The rule in county government has been that employes there can count on their tenure only as long as they play the political game of their elective superiors, and this often includes payments into political funds from pay levels that are small enough anyhow.

The Seattle municipal employe enjoys the dignity of political independence and does not have to dig into the family purse to help his boss get votes in order to insure his own tenure.

IT is the average citizen, however, in terms of the level of taxes he must pay and the level of services he may receive, who is the biggest loser from the county government's political spoils system. The turnover of personnel in the county government is much higher than in city government, and that takes a huge toll in efficiency.

Therefore, The Times will advocate, during the convention of freeholders who will draft a county charter, that the county political spoils system be attacked with nonpartisan elections and civil service.

Controls Voters Should Retain

IT struck us during the recent county freeholder election campaign that an oversimplified fascination was attached to the desirability of a "short" election ballot.

Indeed, there are too many elective state and city offices listed on the voting machines each time an election rolls around. Ballots can and should be shortened by elimination of offices that perform only ministerial functions as contrasted to policy-making and administrative duties that require the ability of judgment not precisely defined by statute.

Yet, we believe that the ballot-shortening process could be carried too far by those who draft the new county charter—so far that the administration of county affairs would become so centralized that officials would be irresponsible to the electorate in areas where the people can and should make decisions.

CLEARLY, it is axiomatic that county commissioners must continue to be elected, and that the number on the board should be enlarged in a framework in which that body serves largely as a legislative and policy-setting group. A county administrator also should be provided, to be elected directly by the people or by the Board of Commissioners.

We doubt if the electorate, even for the sake of a county home-rule charter, will be willing to relinquish its prerogative of selecting the assessor at the ballot box. To make this office appointive would be to place the power to establish levels of property taxation in the hands of officials who establish the spending levels.

The proposed county charter submitted to the electorate in 1952, we well recall, was defeated largely on the issue of removing the election of the assessor from the people to the Board of Commissioners. The freeholders will be well advised to avoid this boobytrap, which surely would make their efforts fail of ratification by the voters who will make the final decision.

MOREOVER, we would not like to see the offices of auditor and sheriff removed from

conclusively that the "watchdog" office of auditor must be strengthened and maintained as an independent arm of the electorate to guard against mismanagement and the threat of corruption. Under no circumstances should the Board of Commissioners be permitted to appoint its own tethered "watchdog."

Our reasons for favoring retention of the elective office of sheriff are these: In most Seattle municipal elections, especially when the office of mayor is at issue, the Police Department and law-enforcement generally — including the element of "tolerances" which city officials say do not exist — often become the "tail that wags the dog."

Election-time controversy over the Police Department, in which the mayor names the chief, too often subordinates other and more important municipal election issues. Moreover, we have seen evidence often enough of a corrosive influence of "pinball" and other monies flowing into municipal election campaigns because in reality the mayor, City Council and Police Department hold the powers to establish the "tolerance" policies that wink at activities of doubtful legality.

To make the office of sheriff appointive, we suggest, would expose the Board of County Commissioners even more than at present to those corrosive influences that pay the piper in the form of election contributions from those who benefit by the county's system of tolerances.

THE offices of county clerk and treasurer are largely ministerial and could be made appointive to shorten the ballot. Clearly, the clerk—whose duties mainly concern custody of court records—should be named by the Superior Court, as the clerk of the State Supreme Court is named by that body.

The office of coroner, we believe, should be made a part of a medical-examiner system and taken off county election ballots. The freeholders, we hope, will give consideration to transferring the administration of the King County Airport to the Port Commission as a matter of efficiency and joint operation with Sea-Tac. It is completely illogical to have two agencies of gov-

PI-12-7-67
**Freeholders
Will Meet
January 3**

King County freeholders will meet January 3 in the County Courthouse to set up their permanent organization, Richard R. Albrecht, temporary chairman said last night.

The 15 freeholders, elected in November to draft a charter to submit to the voters for the operation of the county, met Tuesday night to form a temporary organization.

ALBRECHT was elected temporary chairman; Simon Wampold temporary vice chairman, and Mrs. Virginia Gumby, secretary.

Wampole also was named chairman of a rules and organization committee to recommend what the permanent organization will be.

Jack Geoffrey was named to head a housekeeping committee to obtain staff and facilities for the group.

~~Shepley 5/29/67~~
**Freeholder Vote
OK, Says Carroll**

King County Prosecutor Charles Carroll issued a legal opinion stating county commissioners have authority to call a primary election for the nomination of freeholder candidates. The freeholders would draft a new county charter to be placed before the voters.

1-4-68 SEATTLE TIMES-

Freeholders Adopt Bylaws; Division Is Clear

A division in the King County Board of Freeholders was clearly defined last night as the board adopted rules and bylaws to govern the drafting of a county charter.

THE PROPOSED amendments were backed by Don McDonald, Robert Eberle and Howard E. Bothell. McDonald and Eberle contended the amendments were needed to prevent a "dictatorship" by the chairman,

win confidence of the voters and provide for hearings in various parts of the county. Members of the majority argued that the bylaws already contained adequate protections against "dictatorship," that committees could be established as needed and that a two-thirds approval requirement might block adoption of any charter.

In other action, the board

voted to ask the King County Commissioners for more than \$75,000 to finance its operations in the next 10 months.

THE BUDGET request contained about \$22,000 for an executive director and secretary, \$10,000 for printing the completed charter and a \$20,000 fund to finance expenses of county government experts with whom the board might want to consult.

However, the freeholders said all of the appropriation might not be spent. Expenditures would be governed by the same rules county agencies follow in spending tax money, they said.

Over an objection by McDonald, the freeholders voted to make their temporary officers the permanent officers of the board. They are Richard R. Albrecht, chairman; Simon Wampold, vice

chairman, and Mrs. Virginia Gunby, secretary. Tentative plans were discussed for holding board meetings throughout the county to give residents a chance to be heard, and for a series of indoctrination meetings with county officials.

The next board meeting will be at 7:30 p. m. Wednesday in Room 402, of the courthouse.



Split On Charter Possible

By HERB ROBINSON
Associate Editor, The Times

The split in the King County Board of Freeholders which came to light during last week's organizational meeting raises the possibility that voters may be asked to consider alternate provisions in a proposed county charter.

During last week's action to adopt bylaws and rules to govern the writing of a charter, argument developed over a plan to require a two-thirds vote of the freeholders for approval of a final draft.

The two-thirds-vote proposal, advanced by Don McDonald, Robert Eberle and Howard E. Bothell, was beaten by majority members, who expressed belief that such a requirement conceivably could produce a stalemate that would block the adoption of any charter.

Elected last November, the 15 freeholders are to draft a charter that would involve sweeping changes in county government and then submit it for voter approval. The present plan is to offer a charter proposal in the November general election, but there is no strict time limit. A freeholders' commission elected in 1950 did not complete its work until two years later and the charter it placed on the ballot was rejected.

In the new freeholders' commission, the presence of a minority group that has expressed concern over "dictatorship" by the majority suggests that unanimous agreement on a charter will be difficult to achieve.

It is conceivable that the dissenters will write a minority report. Although the minority could not submit a separate charter proposal in a single package, the State Constitution provides that alternate articles or propositions may be presented for the choice of the voters and may be voted on separately without prejudice to the others.

OUTLOOK: It is expected that there will be general accord among the freeholders on such matters as the enlargement of the Board of County Commissioners, creating the post of county administrator, civil service for county employes and others.

The critical issues that could result in the submission of alternate charter provisions involve which presently elective county offices should be abolished or made appointive, and whether all county offices should become nonpartisan.

Considerable argument has developed already on the partisanship issue and there are strong feelings on both sides of the question of whether such posts as sheriff, auditor and assessor should be filled by appointment or be subject to periodic election.

The board's next meeting is scheduled at 7:30 p. m. tomorrow in Room 402 of the Courthouse.

Freeholders Want Executive Director

By JERRY BERGSMAN

Appointment of an executive director for the King County Board of Freeholders is essential, most members of the board agreed last night.

A six-member committee will begin screening applicants for the job even though the Board of King County Commissioners not yet has appropriated funds for it.

Richard Albrecht, chairman of the freeholders, appointed himself to the committee along with Simon Wampold, vice chairman, and James N. O'Connor, Robert J. Block, Paul Friedlander and Terry McKenna. Albrecht will be ex officio chairman of the group.

THE AIM IS TO BE ready to make the appointment as soon as the commissioners

act on the freeholders' request for up to \$75,000.

Albrecht said the commissioners have indicated they will act favorably on most funding requests.

Wampold said that while the freeholders will make the policy decisions on drafting a County Charter, the executive director will do the all-important research.

Don McDonald, one of several freeholders opposing the hiring of an executive director, said the voters gave the responsibility to the 15 freeholders. If research is required, he said, it should be obtained by hiring consultants for specific projects.

Robert Eberle and Howard E. Bothell said they also oppose hiring of an executive director, for whom a salary range of \$16,666 to \$20,000 a

year has been proposed.

FREEHOLDERS received an opinion by Prosecutor Charles O. Carroll stating that the commissioners and not the freeholders would hire an attorney for the freeholders. Carroll said that because the prosecutor's budget does not provide for such an attorney, the commissioners would have to contract with a law firm and obtain approval of the contract from a majority of the Superior Court judges.

The freeholders will meet again January 31.

Albrecht is arranging a series of orientation meetings with county officials for the interim. The board already has met with the clerk, assessor and election officials. The next study session will be Saturday, with the sheriff.

County to Provide

STimes

\$42,200 for Work ¹⁻²⁸⁻⁶⁸

Of Charter Group

By JERRY BERGSMAN

King County officials will provide freeholders with up to \$42,200 for staffing and supplies this year, The Times learned yesterday.

The freeholders, who will draft a County Charter, had sought appropriations of up to \$77,000.

But Simon Wampold, vice chairman of the freeholders, said he feels the county has made fair provision for the group.

THE MONEY would be for 10 months. This assumes that a charter will be presented for voter approval in November.

The county will provide space for the freeholders on the ninth floor of the Courthouse. The county will contract for the services of an executive director instead of hiring one full-time.

In addition, commissioners will give consideration to hiring an attorney when one is proposed. Prosecutor Charles O. Carroll has said that a contract for legal services would have to be approved by a majority of the Superior Court judges.

THE COUNTY will furnish office equipment, supplies and printing. Contingency funds will be provided as requested.

Freeholders were told that expenditures should not exceed these amounts:

\$15,000 for an executive director; \$5,700 for a secretary, \$2,500 for extra help; \$10,000 for an attorney; \$1,500 for printing, and \$7,500 for advisory fees.

Freeholders plan to contract for studies that would be paid for out of contingency funds.

Originally, the freeholders were considering spending \$16,600 to \$20,000 for an executive secretary and \$20,000 for an attorney. They had asked \$20,000 for contingencies and \$10,000 for printing.

WAMPOLD SAID the freeholders are continuing orien-

tation meetings. They met yesterday with Stanley Gallup, manager of Boeing Field, and representatives of the Seattle-Tacoma Airport.

There have been proposals to consolidate the two airfields under the Port of Seattle.

Meyer to Direct Freeholders

By JERRY BERGSMAN

The County Board of Freeholders today recommended to the Board of King County Commissioners that Paul R. Meyer, for more than three years assistant executive director of the State Association of County Commissioners, be hired as the freeholders' executive secretary.

Meyer, 31, said he would be able to report for work next week.

Rihard R. Albrecht, chairman of the freeholders, said he will recommend the commissioners approve hiring Meyer on a 10-month contract at \$1,500 a month.

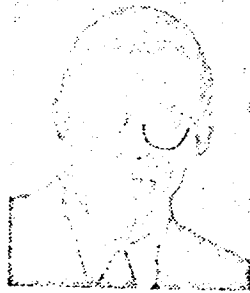
THE FREEHOLDERS hope to place a proposed new charter on the November ballot.

Appointment of an executive secretary has been seen as the first big step toward developing a charter. The freeholders also will seek college students to serve as part-time assistants without pay.

Terry McKenna, a freeholder, is in charge of finding interested students.

A paid legal adviser will be hired.

A committee interviewed nine applicants for executive secretary.



PAUL R. MEYER

Meyer, a native of Elma, Grays Harbor County, was reared in Tacoma. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Washington. He attended the U. W. Law School one year. He is a captain in the Army Reserve and served in budgeting and administration for Army intelligence while on active duty.

MEYER SAID, "If this charter is successful it will point to a whole new direction for county government in this state. New attitudes will develop. Out of this a new shape of county government will evolve."

Albrecht said Meyer will ties and gather information.

coordinate the group's activities. With an executive secre-

tary, Albrecht said, the freeholders will be able to schedule public hearings and meetings as well as develop work schedules.

Meyer said he will evaluate home - rule charters in other parts of the country.

He said he will take a neutral position on all questions so he can point out the advantages and disadvantages of various charters.

The policy decisions will rest with the freeholders although Meyer would assist in the formal drafting of a charter.

Freeholders Name Executive

County Freeholders recommended yesterday that Paul Meyer, 31, be hired as Freeholders' executive secretary.

County Commissioners were asked to employ Meyer for 10 months at \$1,500 monthly.

Meyer is assistant executive director of the State Association of County Commissioners.

Bellevue, Wash.
American
(Cir. W. 12,641)
FEB 14 1968

Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1888

A REPORT TO THE PEOPLE:

Freeholder Charter Ready In November--Wampold

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Voters of King County turned out in record numbers for a special election Tuesday to endorse many forward-looking issues of the Forward Thrust package.

(If this is an indication that the citizens of Washington's most populous county have indeed decided that it is time to look into the future . . . and to do something about it now . . . then they will be interested in another issue which plans for the great future of King County, the Freeholder Charter which will probably be ready for their approval in November.

(In approving many of the Forward Thrust proposals, the voters still kept an eye on their pocketbooks. A majority of the issues passed . . . but less than half the money asked for was approved, since the rapid transit issue failed, a \$385 million item in the \$820 million package.)

By JACK YEAROUT

Since last September, 15 elected freeholders have been going through the organizational processes of developing a new governmental charter for King County.

The deliberations have been very time consuming . . . rules of procedure had to be adopted, a \$45,000 budget had to be approved by the King County Commissioners, and an executive secretary had to be agreed upon by the majority of the committee.

By Wednesday of last week this had all come to pass . . . and a Bellevue man has been playing a major role in these tedious procedures, which will lead to the development of a charter which will streamline King county government.

Simon Wampold, Bellevue attorney, is the Eastside's representative on this council of freeholders. As chairman of the rules committee he was largely responsible for the by-laws under which the freeholders now operate. He is also vice-chairman of the 15-member freeholder committee.

Soft spoken, (his voice reflects his home state . . . he was graduated from the University of Alabama) he reiterated his original stand on what he thinks should be included in the charter. He is hopeful that the new charter will lead to the establishment of a county manager or administrator; a legislative body of education;



SIMON WAMPOLD
Bellevue Freeholder

Meyer, who was elected unanimously by the freeholders last Wednesday.

Meyer, a former assistant executive secretary of the state's county commissioner association, brings vast experience in the types and the operation of types of county governments. A public administration major, Meyer will be going into teaching following the completion of this \$1,500 a month position with the freeholders.

Much of the groundwork has been laid for the new executive secretary. The freeholders

have met every Saturday and one night a week with county officials, to orient themselves with the present county government. They also met at 7:30 a.m. weekly to screen and meet the eight applicants for the executive secretary job.

"We plan a series of public hearings throughout the county to find out what the people think should be in the charter," Wampold said. "I have been promised that one of the first of these important hearings will be held in Bellevue."

Among the items in the budget allowed by the commissioners was a \$10,000 item for an attorney and \$7,000 for "outside experts." Instead of traveling throughout the county to see how other model county governments operate, the freeholders will have the experts come to them in their offices on the 7th floor of the County-City building.

Wampold contributes all time required for freeholder meetings, but he does enjoy one remuneration . . . he gets free parking at the county-city building.

King County Freeholder Tells of Work

What the board of directors of the King County Freeholders have done to "tool up to do the job" was explained to a community planning workshop Friday at Pacific Lutheran University.

Richard Albrecht, chairman of the King County Freeholders, said his group hopes to complete its job of preparing a proposed new charter for public vote by the end of 1968.

"Up to this point, we have been electing officers, hiring a secretary and sort of tooling up to do the job ahead," Albrecht said.

The King County Freeholders were appointed last November and held their first meeting in December.

Albrecht was the featured speaker at the all-day PLU conference held on campus. The conference is the third of four planned for this school year by PLU to look into the problems and functions of local government in this area.

Cooperation Stressed At PLU Meeting

By HOWARD FERGUSON

The resources of universities are "committed to the needs of the community," Tacomans attending a Pacific Lutheran University sponsored community planning workshop were told Friday.

Dr. Thomas H. Langevin, PLU's academic vice president, told some 75 community and business leaders that he sees more cooperation in the future between schools and local government to "find the answers to the many pressing problems that we have."

He added:

"We here at the university are committed to the needs of the community."

Langevin's remarks opened the one-day workshop, the third of four such affairs planned for this school year by the university.

Dr. Lowell W. Culver, PLU assistant professor of political science and chairman of the workshop, reported on the actions of the first two workshops, during which elective and appointed officials discussed various forms of local government.

Culver said "we have to watch what takes place in King County, what happens there will have a great effect here. The choice is yours — we still have time to plan for coordinated growth rather than a chaotic type of growth."

Featured speaker was Richard R. Albrecht, chairman of the Board of King County Freeholders.

Albrecht told of the work of the Freeholders since they took office late last year.

Albrecht said the Freeholders hope to have their job completed before the end of 1968. Their final proposal for a new King County charter will then be put before the voters, he said.

Also speaking was State Rep. Slade Gorton, Seattle.

PI 2-23-68

Director Picked For County Post

John N. Porter, former director of the Puget Sound Governmental Conference, has been offered the \$20,000-a-year job of King County administrator, The Post-Intelligencer learned last night.

County Commissioner John D. Spellman proposed Porter's name a few days ago to his fellow commissioners, it was learned. Both Commissioners John T. O'Brien and Ed Munro were agreeable to the choice of Porter.

Porter, up to last night, had not notified commissioners of his decision, but is expected to do so today.

2-23-68 S. Times

Porter Agrees To Be County's 1st Administrator

By JERRY BERGSMAN

John Porter, 41, former executive director of the Puget Sound Governmental Conference, today agreed to become King County's first administrator.

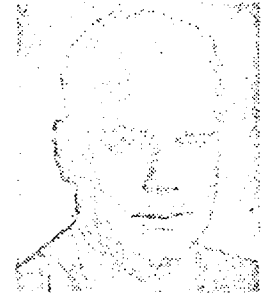
Commissioner John T. O'Brien, chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, said Porter will begin work by April 1, or sooner if he completes his work with the Consulting Services Corp. of Seattle and St. Paul.

Porter has been director of the firm's governmental services work since leaving the conference post last year. He had been with the conference since 1962.

O'Brien said the salary will be \$24,600 a year.

O'Brien said the positions of county personnel director and budget analyst will be filled now that an administrator has been chosen.

The personnel director and budget analyst will serve



JOHN PORTER

under Porter, who will oversee the activities of all county departments headed by appointed officials.

Porter, a native of Detroit with bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from the University of Washington, has served as planning director of Chelan and Spokane Counties.

Porter endorsed the idea of a merit system for county employes and said it could be put into effect in a few months after a personnel director is named.

2-23-68 S. Times

New Deputy Director Appointed For Puget Sound Conference

Einar M. Syvertsen, Snohomish County Planning director, has been appointed deputy director for planning of the Puget Sound Governmental Conference.

Syvertsen, 38, succeeds Rudolf Gast, who resigned at the request of the conference executive director, Robert McAbee.

Syvertsen was assistant director of the conference from 1960 to 1962 and has been in the Snohomish Coun-



EINAR M. SYVERTSEN

ty post since 1966. He also is an instructor in the Universi-

ty of Washington College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

He received a bachelor's degree from Franklin (Ind.) College in 1957 and a master's degree in urban planning from the U. W. in 1964. A native of Dubuque, Iowa, Syvertsen is the father of two children.

He will assume the \$17,000-a-year post April 1. The appointment has been confirmed by the conference executive committee.

C

Clash Between Freeholders, Commissioners Seen Over Atto

By JERRY BERGMAN

Selection of an attorney for the County Freeholders could bring the first showdown with the Board of King County Commissioners.

Simon Warmold, vice chairman of the freeholders, said he would oppose accepting any attorney other than the one recommended by the County Commissioners.

A six-member selection committee has been interviewing attorneys and will make its recommendation to the freeholders.

The possible clash arose when Richard Albrecht, chairman, yesterday said the commissioners would be advised in advance of the committee's nominees, but he assured Warmold that commissioners will not influence the choice.

It has been indicated the freeholders want to be given a choice of three commissioners, Warmold said. He said the choice should be made by the freeholders with complete independence.

Up to now, at least, the commissioners have accepted the staff recommendations of the freeholders. Some consider it critical in the selection of a charter, however, drafting of a charter, however, the attorney will complete the staff.

By coincidence, John T. O'Brien, chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, is scheduled to speak to the freeholders Wednesday night. The attorney will be selected at that meeting.

O'Brien's budget director, John Hammond, predicted yesterday that county employes will come under a merit system, including tenement, this year. He told the freeholders: "There is a strong indication already that elected department heads will want to bring their employes under it."

Otherwise, a merit system would affect only 1,000 employes in appointed departments. The county has 2,300 employes.

Hammond said not more than one per cent of the employes are hired with political consideration and those are for top positions. "He was quick to note, even under a civil-service system the top positions would be excluded."

Hammond said state laws should be changed to allow counties to adopt performance budgets and include steps in pay scales. He said the present system prevents the hiring of some employes at lower wages than those with years of experience.

Leroy B. Johnson, county purchasing agent, said large

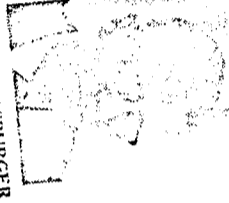
Board of Freeholders Picks Attorney

The firm of Short, Cressman & Cable, will be recommended to the Board of King County commissioners to handle legal work for the Board of Freeholders.

Commissioner John Spellman said today he expected the commissioners to approve hiring the firm in view of the near unanimity of freeholders in making the choice.

Spellman said the decision probably will be made Monday. A majority of the Superior Court judges then would have to approve the contract for it to take effect.

THERE WAS some feeling among the freeholders at last night's meeting, however, that it was premature to name an attorney.



JOHN STRASBURGER
John Strasburger, 30, a member of the firm, would have the chief responsibility for handling the work. Others in the firm who will participate are Philip Offenbacher, Robert E. Hansen, Mrs. Joan E. Ferrall, and Donald W. Ferrell.

IT WAS NOTED that seven of the 15 freeholders

are attorneys and the drafting stage has not been reached. But Lois North, freeholder, said it would be advantageous to have an attorney not involved in the policy decisions.

The six-member selection committee was unanimous in its choice. Of 15 freeholders, 13 were present and 12 approved the selection. McDonald voted against it.

Strasburger, a native of Dallas, received his law degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1961 and a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University school of advanced international studies. He was in law top 10 per cent of his law class. Strasburger has been in private practice in Seattle since 1964.

County Changes

Some basic changes in the administration of King County government are in the offing which, theoretically at least, will improve the efficiency of the governmental machinery.

John Porter, former executive director of the four-county Puget Sound Governmental Conference, will become the county's first administrator, at a salary of \$24,600 a year, by April 1. He will be joined shortly by a new personnel director and budget analyst.

Meanwhile, Prosecutor Charles O. Carroll has produced an opinion that the county commissioners may, under state law, establish a merit system for county employes under a p p o i n t i v e department heads. A merit system, however, cannot be made compulsory for departments whose chiefs are elected, according to the prosecutor.

Indications are that the commissioners will adopt a merit system and this coupled with Porter's appointment and those of a personnel director and budget analyst should free the three commissioners for more effective performance at the policy making level.

A REMAINING weakness in the county system, we believe, will be the lack of a merit program in the county's elective departments, where the hiring and firing of employes have been imbued with politics. This is among the areas that should receive attention from the freeholders engaged in drafting a new county charter.

Ex-Dallas Man to Handle Freeholder Legal Tasks

A lawyer who came to Seattle four years ago from Dallas, Texas, will be recommended to the county Board of Freeholders tonight as the attorney to handle its legal responsibilities in drafting a new county charter.

He is John Strasburger, Bellevue, who was the unanimous choice of the freeholders' attorney-selection committee.

Strasburger, 30, is a member of the Seattle law firm of Short, Cressman & Cable. His selec-

tion, which is expected to be approved by the full group tonight, was a turnaround for Prosecutor Charles O. Carroll. Carroll had sought to preserve a degree of control over actions of the freeholders through selection of an attorney of his own choosing — preferably a deputy prosecutor from his own staff or a former deputy.

The selection also was a surprise to all three county commissioners, each of whom had favorites waiting in the wings they probably would have pushed if they had been consulted.

Despite this, it is expected all three commissioners will concur in Strasburger's nomination, which is considered likely at tonight's meeting. Strasburger has not taken part in political activities since moving to Seattle.

Freeholders Huddle

King County freeholders exposed some of their thinking on writing a county charter last night by discussing possible advantages of enlarging the present three-man Board of Commissioners.

County Commissioner John Spellman, present as an invited guest, was used as a sounding board.

He said he thinks the state legislature will come up with some form of municipal government for counties at its next or following session.

BEFORE questioning Spellman, the freeholders voted to recommend to the commissioners the employment of John Strassberger of the Seattle legal firm of Short, Cressman & Cable as counsel to the freeholders.

The commissioners will have to get final approval from the county's superior court judges, after negotiating with the law firm.

SPELLMAN, one of a series of public

officials the freeholders plan to interview, said he likes the present system of electing commissioners from a specific district but with all county voters participating. He advocated retaining this system, on the present partisan basis, if the board is enlarged.

"As to the numbers game, I have no fixed opinions," he said. "It wouldn't do to make it too cumbersome — initially, certainly no more than nine members, and maybe less."

The commissioners, he said, could find plenty to do as full-time legislators for the county.

"I do favor also a strong county executive elected on a partisan basis, if an employee merit system goes with it," he said.

He suggested the county executive probably should be paid \$24,000 or \$25,000 a year, or somewhere in that range.

"The municipal system has prestige and recognition by the people," he said.

County Commissioner Sees Airport-Merger Study

By JERRY BERGSMAN
County Commissioner John Spellman predicted yesterday that the Puget Sound Governmental Conference will study the possible merger of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and Boeing Field.

Spellman had asked the conference to include the merger proposal in an airport study. No decision has been announced, but Spellman said he understands the study will be made.

Spellman spoke to the Board of County Freeholders last night. John T. O'Brien, chairman of the Board of Commissioners, had to postpone his appearance because of day-long air-pollution-control hearings.

"THERE SHOULD be some coordination between the two air fields," Spellman said. "A very likely way to do it is by combined management."

Spellman said the merged fields could be under the

Port of Seattle or some other agency. He dismissed the idea that the county could take over because, he said, the county then would have to develop an expert staff.

Paul Friedlander, a freeholder, accused the Boeing Field management of harassing The Boeing Co., one of the tenants. Friedlander obviously referred to Stanley R. Gallup, airport manager.

Gallup today said: "Mr. Friedlander is misinformed. The airport management is doing everything it can to cooperate with all tenants and obtain a reasonable rental on taxpayers' property."

Spellman said, "I'll say this: The present airport administration is doing a better job than the previous administration."

Simon Wampold, vice chairman of the freeholders,

contended the county should decide if Boeing should receive special treatment because it is the chief employer in the county.

Spellman said that decision may be made in connection with renegotiation of the Boeing lease at Boeing Field. But, he said, the renegotiation could end up in arbitration. Lease negotiations involving more than 5 million square feet have been under way since July.

SPELLMAN said he favors a single road district. "I think we will merge the two road districts; I predict we will this year," he said.

Spellman said, "It is anticipated that in addition to business management and coordination, the county administrator will be an idea man, someone who will

study the present performance and make recommendations not only on personnel but methodology."

Spellman endorsed the present system of nominating commissioners by districts and electing them at large, and supported the idea of a strong elected county executive and retention of the political system as long as it is joined by a merit system for personnel.

"I don't see any particular reason why the assessor should be elected," Spellman said. "I would like to see some uniformity in assessments."

Counties should offer the same municipal functions as cities, he said. In the next few years the legislature will allow this as well as lay the groundwork for a metropolitan county, he predicted.

