

Home Rule Study Group Considers Charter

Sherman Is First State County To Draft Proposed Charter

Sherman county is the first Oregon county to have a proposed draft of a home rule charter, Orval Etter, research attorney for the bureau of municipal research, reported to the Jackson county home rule committee last week.

The Sherman county charter proposes a board of supervisors representing five elementary school districts which is given complete control over county administration. The board operates through an executive officer directly responsible to the supervisors.

The board would have the power to appoint all county officials and employees, prescribe their duties and set their salaries, appoint officials, boards and commissions they think necessary, require bonding of all county officials and employees they think require bonding.

Publish Set of Rules
The supervisors would publish and enforce a set of rules "consistent with the charter and the general laws of Oregon." Such rules would describe the duties of all officials. The board, under the charter, would also let all contracts for public works.

The county executive officer is responsible for enforcing all ordinances, resolutions, orders or regulations passed by the board. The executive officer is required to attend all meetings of the supervisors, prepare an annual budget, keep the board informed of financial condition of the county, and report on general and special funds.

Such an officer would be in charge, also, of all county buildings and property, examine and verify all claims against the county and act as county purchasing agent, according to the proposed charter.

However, the county executive is limited in his powers. He would not have any legislative authority, cannot spend any money not provided in appropriations, ordinance or resolution of the board.

He cannot sell or dispose of any county property, real or personal, grant or revoke any franchise.

A county judge, who is a non-voting member of the board of supervisors, would have judicial powers, according to the proposed charter. He apparently would be in charge of a small claims court and act as juvenile court judge. This is the same judicial authority possessed by county judges in many small eastern Oregon counties. However, they act as chairmen of the county court, and are voting members of that body.

Term of Office
The county judge's term of office is four years. He is elected on a non-partisan ballot and elected at large, the charter proposes.

The board of supervisors is charged, also, with assessing property and collecting taxes "under the general laws of Oregon."

The budget committee membership is set by state law. And this doesn't change. The board would appoint one citizen from their respective districts to serve on the committee.

The Sherman county charter would set up stricter supervision over the county budget by the taxpayers. An election would be held after public hearings on the budget. Then citizens would vote on budget items "separately by classification."

Other Stipulations
Other stipulations under the charter state that no monies can be withdrawn from pub-

lic funds unless the board of supervisors orders it. No county officer is allowed to have any business interest in any county contract or is his public interest allowed to conflict with his private interest.

Resident requirements for a supervisor are that he must have lived in Sherman county for five consecutive years prior to his election, and have full-time residence in the district he represents.

Terms of office are four years. These would be staggered to provide carry over board members. The first election would set a two-year term for members from odd numbered districts and a four-year term for members from even numbered districts. After that all members would be elected for four-year terms.

Supervisors' Compensation
Supervisors' compensation is \$50 a month and 10 cents a mile for official travel. A board chairman would be elected at the first meeting of each year, and cannot serve more than two consecutive years.

All board actions would require approval of a majority of the board. Regular meetings are established and these would be open to the public. Public notice must be given of all adjourned meetings.

Final power under the charter remains with the voters. They would have the right to propose laws (initiative power), or resolutions and to amend the county charter. Ten per cent of the voters participating in the last election must sign a petition to propose any resolution. Then the board must call an election within 60 days. A majority vote of the citizens voting is required for approval of any resolution.

Preliminary Approach Is What Powers County Should Assume

What powers would Jackson county have under a home rule charter?

The Jackson county home rule study committee made a preliminary approach to this question last week by reviewing illustrative provisions for home rule charters for Oregon counties as presented in tentative form by Orval Etter, research attorney, for the bureau of municipal research, Eugene.

Chief aim of the committee should be to draw a charter which will be brief, flexible and general in terminology, the research attorney suggested.

The committee should decide first, tentatively, what powers the county could and should have under a charter. Then, the committee should "lie into the administrative set up," he explained.

The kind of powers assumed may indicate whether legislative and administrative powers of the county government should be separate, Etter explained.

Completes Draft
Sherman county, in eastern Oregon, completed its proposed draft last week and will hold a hearing some time in May, Etter announced.

Prime mover has been Giles French, publisher of a weekly newspaper in the eastern Oregon wheat country. The Sherman county charter proposes a five-man board of supervisors, all county officials appointed and centralized county administration.

For the first time since the charter committee has been holding its weekly meetings, a number of people made up the audience. Most of them were college students. One was a barber and another an engineer.

Seeks Answer
William Doernbach, 143 Mace ave., Medford, asked how the committee could decide what powers it should assume under a charter when neither it nor the county court knows what powers it already has.

Etter offered to bring a booklet from Multnomah county which lists its powers. Doernbach said the League of Women Voters, Jackson county chapter, had published a booklet describing the structure and duties of local county government, but the booklet does not give the powers.

The main questions to be answered by the committee in its charter work are: (1) should the county merely continue with the powers authorized by the Oregon constitution or should it adopt new or added powers? (2) should the governmental structure be changed? or, (3) should a charter provide both new powers and government structure changes?

Purpose of Charter
Main purpose of a charter is to give the county government authority over county affairs without requesting new laws from the legislature, Etter said.

Earl Day, former Jackson county judge, questioned what good a charter would be if it only allows a county to continue to perform under the same powers.

The committee agreed to await appointment of a ninth member to the committee to replace recently resigned Eugene K. Ricker, and the return of Frank Farrell, Medford attorney.

Humble Cancels Lake County Lease

Salem—Humble Oil and Refining Co. has canceled its oil and gas exploration lease with the state on 55,476 acres in Lake county.

The State Land Board said Humble exercised a 60-day cancellation clause in the lease. The action means a loss of \$13,000 in annual rentals to Oregon.

E. T. Pierce, board clerk, said Humble contracted for about 300,000 acres in Lake county, the rest from the federal government and private parties.

The Humble operation was the only major oil drilling operation in Oregon. Pierce said Humble drilled two wells on the state land, one 12,000 feet and the other 9,000. Both were dry.

CONTRACT TALKS OPEN
Portland—UPA—Contract negotiations between the International Woodworkers of America and the Timber Operators Council representing employer groups in the lumber and plywood industry opened here today.

home rule provisions, and this would probably be true of county home rule charters.

May Accept Little Power
The county may accept as little power as it wants or even parts of specific grants of powers, Etter explained. The power to pass ordinances could apply to counties as it does now to cities, he added.

If both the county and state legislate on the same thing, then the state would be given preference, according to the law, the research attorney explained.

Initiative and referendum powers included in a charter will give the people a chance to prevent the county from assuming too much power, Etter indicated.

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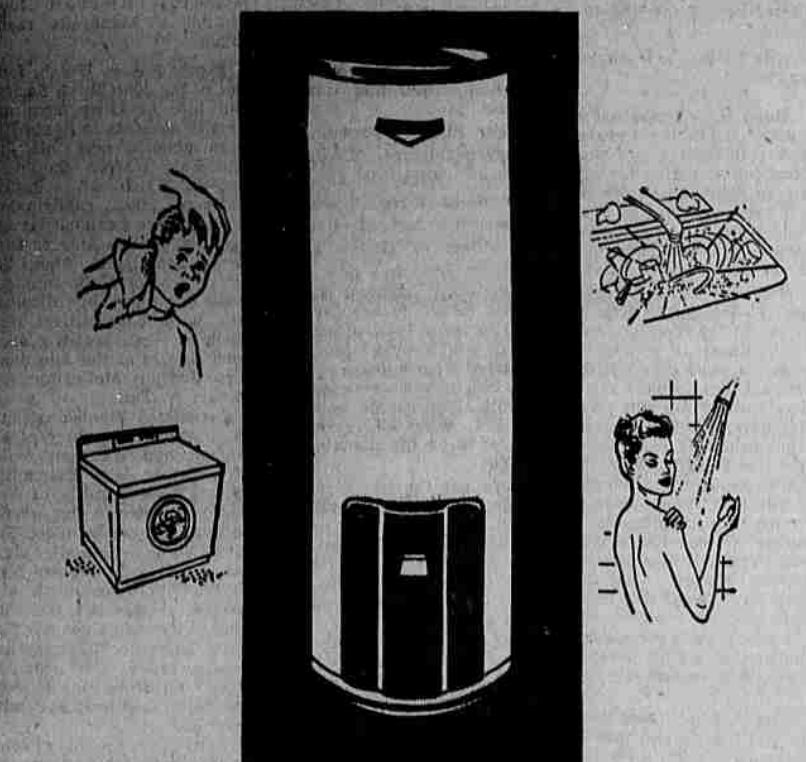
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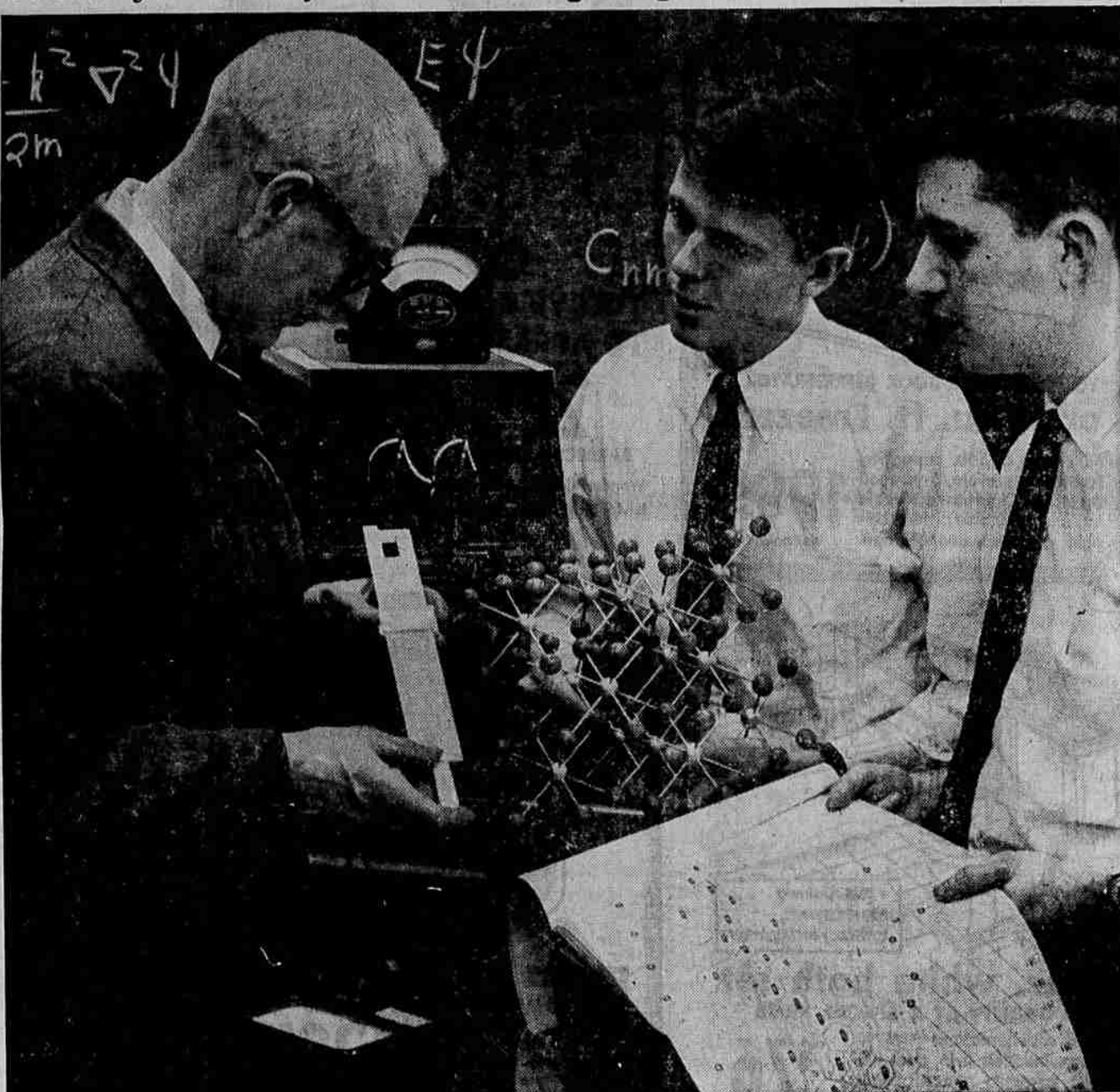
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