# WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 7A ARTICLE 3

WV Legislature

## §7A-3-1. Initiating consolidation.

(a) Consolidation may be initiated by:

(1) A petition signed by at least twenty-five percent of the qualified voters of each affected municipality for a municipal consolidation, each affected county for a county consolidation or each affected principal city and of the entire county excluding the principal city for a metro consolidation; or

(2) A resolution by the governing body of each affected municipality for a municipal consolidation, each affected county for a county consolidation or each affected principal city and county for a metro consolidation.

(b) The petition or resolution shall be submitted to the county commission of the affected county for all types of consolidation.

(c) Upon receipt, the county commission shall, within thirty days, verify the petition or resolution and either oversee the establishment of a charter review committee as provided in this chapter or reject the petition or resolution for insufficiency.

(d) If the county commission rejects the petition or resolution, the rejection shall be in writing stating how the insufficiency may be corrected and that the petition or resolution may be resubmitted within ninety days.

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**§7A-3-2. Municipal charter review committee.**

(a) A municipal charter review committee shall be established within thirty days of the county commission verifying the petition or resolution proposing consolidation.

(b) A municipal charter review committee consists of the following members:

(1) Two government officials or their designees from each affected municipality appointed by their respective governing bodies;

(2) One county commissioner or his or her designee appointed by the county commission from each county where the affected municipalities are located; and

(3) Two or three public members elected during executive session by the other members to make the number of charter review committee members an odd number.

(c) A municipal charter review committee continues to exist until it is dissolved pursuant to the charter or the final disapproval of the charter.

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**§7A-3-3. County charter review committee.**

(a) A county charter review committee shall be established within thirty days of the county commissions verifying the petition or resolution proposing consolidation.

(b) A county charter review committee consists of the following members:

(1) Two county commissioners or their designees from each affected county appointed by their respective county commissions; and

(2) Three public members, including one from an unincorporated area, elected during executive session by the other charter review committee members.

(c) A county charter review committee continues to exist until it is dissolved pursuant to the charter or the final disapproval of the charter.

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**§7A-3-4. Metro charter review committee.**

(a) A metro charter review committee shall be established within thirty days of the county commission verifying the petition or resolution proposing consolidation.

(b) A metro charter review committee consists of the following members:

(1) Two government officials or their designees from the principal city appointed by the governing body of the principal city;

(2) Two county commissioners or their designees from each affected county appointed by their respective county commissions;

(3) If the principal city is located in two counties and one is not participating in consolidation, then one county commissioner or his or her designee from the county not participating in consolidation appointed by the county commission; and

(4) Two or three public members, including one from an unincorporated area, elected by the other members to make the number of charter review committee members an odd number.

(c) A metro charter review committee continues to exist until it is dissolved pursuant to the charter or the final disapproval of the charter.

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**§7A-3-5. Duties and powers of charter review committee.**

(a) A charter review committee shall study consolidation and the feasibility of consolidation.

(b) A charter review committee shall:

(1) Elect officers from committee members;

(2) Adopt rules;

(3) Prepare a budget; and

(4) Conduct public hearings;

(c) A charter review committee may:

(1) Create subcommittees and working groups to include other government officials and diverse public representatives;

(2) Prepare a written charter;

(3) Employ staff;

(4) Contract with consultants;

(5) Work with agencies of affected local governments; and

(6) Engage in other activities necessary to facilitate the intent of this chapter.

(d) A majority of committee members is a quorum for transaction of business and adopting the charter.

(e) Vacancies on the charter review committees shall be filled in the same manner as provided for in this article.

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## §7A-3-6. Expenses of charter review committee.

Members of a charter review committee serve without compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement by the charter review committee for necessary expenses incurred by them in the performance of their official duties.

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## §7A-3-7. Budget of charter review committee.

(a) A charter review committee shall submit a budget to the governing bodies of each affected municipality for a municipal consolidation, each affected county for a county consolidation and each affected principal city and county for a metro consolidation. A charter review committee shall pursue public and private funds to augment its budget. The budget shall state in writing the amount each governing body shall pay, which shall be proportionately based on population.

(b) Within thirty days of receiving the charter review committee's budget, the governing body of each affected municipality, county and metro government shall either approve the budget or recommend written amendments to the budget.

(c) If amendments are recommended, then the charter review committee shall reconsider the budget and resubmit the budget to the governing bodies for approval within thirty days.

(d) The governing body of each affected municipality, county and metro government shall assist the charter review committee and provide office space if needed.

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