County wants to expand committee on home rule

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The committee to study home rule and government efficiency may have to drag a few more chairs around the table.

The Pennington County Commission agreed Tuesday to participate in the study but wanted to increase membership on it.

Rapid City Mayor Keith Carlyle proposed the committee be formed to look at ways to increase government efficiency, including the possibility of home rule. The Rapid City Common Council approved of a 20-member committee, with 10 members appointed by the city and 10 by the county commission.

At Tuesday's commission meeting, Commissioner Louis Freiberg made a motion to join the study committee, but add members to it.

The commission voted 2-1 (two members were absent) to nominate five people for the study commission, have five elected county officials each suggest a committee member and have seven municipalities in the county (excluding Rapid City) name a member.

So instead of the city's proposal for 10 members from the county, the commission wants 17 members that would give the committee a total membership of 27.

The commission will present its plan to the mayor and city council.

Commissioner Cheryl Kandaras said the motion adopted by the city council directed the committee to look at home rule, a flexible form of government, while Carlyle had told the commission earlier the committee would look at overall government efficiency.

"This is a substantive change from what we were presented," Kandaras said.

Kandaras urged the commissioners to meet with their city counterparts and decide the study committee's goal and size before passing "inappropriate" motions.

Freiberg said elected county officials should have a say in any "radical change" in local government, like home rule, while Commission Chairman Shirley Alexander said the small towns in the county also should be represented.

In other county business:
- The commission voted 2-1 to stop appointing constables when the current commissions expire in 1991.
- The commission-appointed constables serve legal papers for a fee. Until several months ago, there was only one company - A. Klapkin & Associates of Rapid City - with appointed constables.

Several months ago, the commission divided the county into districts and appointed a third constable, Mark Jacobs of Dakota Detective and Security Agency of Rapid City.

Since then, a series of complaints have come before the commission about the constable appointments.

Tuesday, the commission heard a complaint that Jacobs' business card advertises that he also operates an investigation agency, which violates a county policy forbidding constables from running private investigation businesses.

Freiberg said the county was "sponsoring private enterprise" by commissioning constables.

- Sheriff Don Holloway presented a letter from State Radio Communications Administrator Robert Hardwick that said radios recently purchased by the sheriff's department should work properly.

Freiberg criticized Holloway at the commission's last meeting for writing specifications for the radios that locked the department into one brand of radio.

But Hardwick's letter said he had reviewed the equipment and "all of the items appear that they will function properly for your application" and other brands could be added to the system with proper modifications.

"It's a good system and properly 'spaced' (specifications) out," Holloway said.

Freiberg said he was not satisfied.

"He investigated himself," Freiberg said of Holloway's review of the contract.