

Accepted 1/3/2024

Charter Review Committee Minutes
Wednesday November 29, 2023 -8:00am
Champagne Meeting Room - 50 Carby Street
Westwood, MA 02090

Welcome

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 8:03am by Co-Chair Paul Fitzgerald.

Present

Paul Fitzgerald-Co-Chair, Peter Cahill, Co-Chair, Nancy Hyde, John Loughnane and Dottie Powers, Town Clerk.

Ex-Officio Member: Patrick Ahearn, Town Counsel and Christopher Coleman, Town Administrator.
Jessica Cole recorded the Minutes.

Review and Discuss Charter Updates

Ms. Hyde wanted to follow up on the Town Moderator 1-year vs. 3-year term.

Jim O'Sullivan, is he really okay with the time limits

The Co-Chair polled the Board:

- Do not want to force it on the moderator.
- Focus on things that absolutely need to be done.
- A 3 year term is consistent with other towns especially when administering elections.
- Want people in town supportive
- Do what is best for the town
- It is about the position

Mr. Ahearn spoke with the Moderator a few times.

- He wanted to be included in the selection of the Charter Review Committee moving forward.
- Or at least have the Select Board consult with him on the appointments.

The Moderator's role is Town Meeting, we should see if other towns do.

Mr. Ahearn stated that the Town Moderator is non-committal on changing the term limit, but thinks the Charter Review Committee should leave it as a 1-year term.

The Board is good at leaving it.

Mr. Ahern will speak to the Select Board with the Moderator's suggestion.

Mr. Ahearn also stated that he spoke to Michael Walsh and he wanted the Charter Review Committee to include: If people do not show up for meetings they cannot use their participation on the Commission on their resume. Mr. Ahearn reviewed the Charter and said that the Select Board and Moderator have the power to rescind appointments.

The Charter Review Committee felt that it was not a Charter matter.

Action Taken:

Motion to close the draft

Upon a motion made by Ms. Hyde and seconded by Mr. Cahill, the Charter Review Committee voted in favor (5-0) to close the discussion of items to include a pursuit of a revised Charter for purposes of going to the Select Board.

Discussion

Recommendations are finalized for the purposes of the Select Board.
Will consider if the Charter Review Committee can reopen the draft.

Review and Discuss Charter Review Committee attending Select Board Meeting on December 4, 2023. (or December 18, 2023)

Mr. Coleman reminded the Charter Review Committee that the packet for the Select Board needs to be done by tomorrow and the Charter Review is on the agenda for December 4, 2023 and can be placed on the agenda for the December 18, 2023 meeting.
Most Board members want to get in front of the Select Board on December 4th.

Co-chair Cahill has a draft of a summary of changes. It is an aid for the Select Board members.
Draft of a PowerPoint with bullet points. The Select Board will want to see the language, but we will need to speak to Attorney Goldberg.

Share the Draft after Dec 4th, share the Draft with the Select Board. The Charter Review Committee will be on the agenda for the Dec 18th Select Board meeting for feedback.
Then forward it to the Finance & Warrant Committee.

The Board was in agreement that the 7 articles are needed.

The Board wants to take this in stages and get the articles approved at Town Meeting.

There was a quorum discussion, the Board feels that it should be reduced. We still have the ability to reduce the quorum until March 2025. The Bylaw committee will be after the Charter Review Committee. The Bylaw committee is different from the Charter Review Committee and will be appointed by the Select Board.

Select Board Meeting:

Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Cahill will present at the Dec 4th meeting.
At Town Meeting and the Finance & Warrant Committee, we will have a member be in charge of 1-2 articles.

Mr. Cahill went through what will be discussed at the Select Board meeting.

- The Power Point Presentation
- The Summary Chart
- The Draft Warrant Articles
- The actual Charter coming by separate cover

The Charter Review Committee would like a final revision Draft to the Select Board by Monday, ask Attorney Goldberg.

Mr. Cahill will send it to Mr. Coleman this afternoon and it can be added to the Select Board packet.
The Charter Review is on agenda for 6:35 pm on December 4, 2023.

After the Town meeting, the Bylaw Review committee will be appointed by the Select Board.

Discuss and vote on future meeting dates

December 4, 2023 Select Board Meeting

December 18, 2023 Select Board Meeting

January 16, 2024 Finance & Warrant Commission

Approval of Minutes: November 2, 2023

Will be added to a future meeting agenda.

Public Participation

None.

Other Business not anticipated by the Chair

None.

Adjournment

Upon a motion made by Mr. Loughnane and seconded by Mr. Cahill, the Charter Review Committee voted in favor (4-0) to adjourn at 8:52am.