

Minutes Accepted 3/13/2024

**Charter Review Committee Minutes
(Charter Review Committee Attendance at the Select Board's Meeting)
Monday February 26, 2024
6:00 PM
Via Zoom Remote Participation
Westwood, MA 02090**

The Charter Review Committee attended the Select Board Meeting on Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles to participate in the discussion and presentation of annual town meeting warrant articles.

Call to Order

Ms. Nancy Hyde called the meeting to order at 6:12pm.

Present via Remote Participation

Peter Cahill-Co-Chair, Nancy Hyde, John Loughnane and Dottie Powers, Town Clerk.
Ex-Officio Member: Christopher Coleman, Town Administrator & Patrick Ahearn, Town Counsel.
Jessica Cole recorded the minutes.

Charter Review Committee Update to the Select Board:

Ms. Hyde gave a quick update on what the Charter Review has been up to. The committee shared what changes that the Charter Review has changed. Section 7-2.1. We are presenting a new version. It specified there will not be more than 15 and the Moderator will have discretion and can determine the size of the Finance & Warrant Commission, and allow members to be on other committees in an ex-Officio capacity. Mr. Cahill clarified that the Moderator will make all efforts to have 15 members.

Comments:

- The Select Board was satisfied with the efforts of the Charter Review Committee.

Action Taken:

Upon a motion made by Mr. Cahill and seconded by Ms. Powers, the Charter Review Committee voted in favor (4-0) via roll call vote to approve this language of the presentation at the Finance & Warrant Commission Public Hearing.

Roll Call Vote:

Dottie Powers-Yes
Peter Cahill-Yes
John Loughnane-Yes
Nancy Hyde-Yes

Elected Officers Article:

Ms. Hyde asked the Select Board who should the appointed authority be for the Town Clerk?
Asking for the Select Board's consideration.

Comments:

- Ms. LeBlanc Cummings is comfortable with the Town Administrator making the appointment.
- Mr. Gotti was in agreement with the Town Administrator making the appointment.
- Mr. Previterra agrees with appointing the Town Clerk, but he would like the Select Board to make the appointment.
- Ms. Powers: The position is very professional. There are certain criteria that the appointing authority will need to look for such as: the person has worked in a clerk's office, has certifications, has knowledge about elections and the duties of a Town Clerk. It will be beneficial to the Town.
- Attorney Goldberg stated that the trend is from elected to appointment due to all of the vast important duties of the Town Clerk. The shift will get you a person with proven experience. The Town Administer can consult with the Select Board.
- Ms. LeBlanc Cummings: The appointment can be made by the Town Administrator and consulted with the Select Board.
- Mr. Ahearn stated that it is the same path as the Finance Director.

- Attorney Goldberg: There is a transition provision, from today to appointing a new Town Clerk. The process must involve the Select Board.

Action Taken:

Upon a motion made by Mr. Gotti and seconded by Mr. Previterra, the select Board voted in favor (3-0) via roll call vote to provide direction and agreement with the language as recommended that the Town Administrator be the appointing authority for the appointed Town Clerk in consultation with the SelectBoard.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Previterra: Yes

Mr. Gotti: Yes

Ms. LeBlanc Cummings: Yes

Ms. Hyde went on to say that the Charter Review Committee heard from the Town Moderator, he has concerns with the appointments in Chapter 12. Require that the Charter Review Committee meet every 10 years. We stopped taking up new matters in December.

Public Comments

F. Fusco, 20 Pine Lane typed in chat: Asking the residents to give up the right to choose the person who runs our elections, without articulating a solid plan for voters to evaluate is not OK. We do not need any more cronyism at Town Hall. The Secretary of State is elected at the state level. This position oversees elections. Why would Westwood be any different? The choice of Town Clerk should remain in the hands of the residents. I also would like that we ensure that the town clerk position/person lives in Westwood. *Ms. LeBlanc Cummings said that she believed that we have addressed this.*

Adjournment

On a motion made by Mr. Cahill and seconded by Ms. Powers, the Charter Review Committee voted in favor (4-0) via roll call vote to adjourn at approximately 6:40p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

Peter Cahill-Yes

Nancy Hyde-Yes

Dottie Powers-Yes

John Loughnane-Yes