

## Minutes Accepted 5/8/2024

**Charter Review Committee Minutes  
(Charter Review Committee Attendance at the Select Board's Meeting)  
Monday April 1, 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**

Co-Chair, Paul Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 6:09pm

### **Present via Remote Participation**

Paul Fitzgerald-Co-Chair, 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.

### **Recommendation from the Charter Review Committee**

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the Charter Review Committee met this morning, and recommended that the articles be withdrawn from the Warrant.

The Finance & Warrant Commission felt that they did not have enough information to consider the articles at their Public Meeting and the debate should be about the merits of the articles.

The Charter Review's desire is to continue to work and tweak the articles.

Mr.Loughnane: Tie to the mission of the Charter,

We need a working document and need to review it every 10 years.

The Committee has been at this for the past 2 years, and has held 30 meetings which concluded in December.

We did get some feedback and tried to adjust it.

We believe changes should be made to the Charter, but getting it right is more important.

We have an obligation to polish a presentation to understand the changes being presented to town.

Mr. Loughlance asked the Select Board to allow The Charter Review Committee to continue the work and bring it back to the Select Board.

It is our governing document.

### **Select Board Comments:**

- Ms. LeBlanc Cummings was in favor of withdrawing the articles, and wanted the process performed.
- Mr. Gotti was in favor of withdrawing the articles.
- Mr. Gotti, Did the committee think there is more staff needed? *Mr. Fitzgerald: We received excellent staff help. We thought that all the information was received. We will ask for services if they are needed. We may need more resources in engagement.*

### **Public Comments:**

- Kathy Wallace, 283 Farm Lane typed in chat: Chair Fitzgerald is glossing over the (f)act that FinCom members had legitimate concerns about the merits of the Quorum and Town Clerk Articles.The Charter Review Commission is doing FinCom and the residents a disservice to not acknowledge that. *Ms. LeBlanc Cummings: What is being said is that we want to get the process right. Mr. Fitzgerald: Not glossing over anything. There are questions on the merits.*
- Nada Milosavljevic-Fabrizio, 32 Webster Street typed in chat: Was it not inappropriate for our current Town Clerk to lobby FinCom for its affirmation of the charter change elected to appointed proposed by the Charter Review Committee, as it directly affected her position?It seemed to be a clear conflict of interest for her, and Town Clerk's recusal was unequivocally called for in that

instance, especially given that our Town Clerk directs all members of our public boards and committees to take the ethics training classes. *Mr. Ahern the Town Clerk does not give up her First Amendment right to political free speech by taking her position, so he did not see it as an ethical problem. The Town Clerk is free to talk on political issues. Ms. Powers: Worked with the committee for the past 2 years, it is the will of the voters, she gave an opinion of what is being done statewide. She did not lobby for Fin Com, she was giving some facts. What the Town decides is for the Town to vote on.*

Board Comments:

- We did engage with all committees and we want to get it right.
- Was 8 articles too much? We were trying to be transparent.
- Looking for feedback from FinCom, should we consolidate the Articles? We need a clearer understanding from FinCom and how we may best present it. Would like to revisit it.
- Mr. Gotti: Does the Charter call for the number of members for this committee? *5 is the minimum, but not more than 9 members.*

Public Comments:

- Nada Milosavljevic-Fabrizio, 32 Webster Street typed in chat: This is all debatable. Clearly, I asked for a redlined version of the changes proposed by the Charter Review Committee. What I got published to the town's website was black lined version that was almost impossible to decipher. *Ms. LeBlanc Cummings: There is a commitment to making sure that this work is transparent and clear. Having 8 Articles is probably easier to review by FinCom.*

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 withdraw the 8 Select Board Articles submitted by the Charter Review Committee for consideration.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. LeBlanc Cummings-Yes  
Mr. Robert Gotti-Yes  
Mr. Joseph Previterra-Yes

Final Comments:

- Appointments for the Charter Review Committee are up in June and will need to be reappointed.
- The Charter Review Committee will wait until June and will revisit after the Town meeting.

Adjournment

On a motion made by Ms. Hyde and seconded by Mr. Loughnane, the Charter Review Committee voted in favor (5-0) via roll call vote to adjourn at approximately 6:36p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

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