

## Town Charter Committee November 14, 2024



Committee met in HYBRID session at 6:30 p.m. at Abbot Hall, 188 Washington Street

The Chair called the meeting of November 14, 2024 to order.

The following committee members were present constituting a quorum:

Amy Drinker, Chair	Seamus Hourihan
Rossana Ferrante, Vice Chair	Sean Casey
Jim Zisson	Caleb Miller, remote
Ron Grenier	Tom Massaro
Bill Conly	Victor Wild
Amy Danforth	Thatcher W. Kezer III, Town Administrator, staff support

The Chair announced that the meeting is utilizing a webinar platform and anyone wishing to speak at public comment should raise their hand to be acknowledged by the Chair.

**Minutes.** Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes of October 10, 2024. Moved by Tom Massaro, seconded by Rosanna Ferrante. On a roll call vote the Committee voted as follows: Ferrante, in favor, Casey, in favor; Conly, in favor; Danforth, in favor; Grenier, in favor; Hourihan, in favor; Massaro, in favor; Miller in favor, Wild, in favor; Zisson, in favor; Drinker, in favor.

Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes of October 22, 2024, 6:00 p.m. and October 22, 2024 7:00 p.m. Moved by Tom Massaro, seconded by Amy Danforth. On a roll call vote the Committee voted as follows: Drinker, in favor; Ferrante, in favor, Casey, in favor; Conly, in favor; Danforth, in favor; Grenier, in favor; Hourihan, in favor; Massaro, in favor; Miller in favor, Wild, in favor; Zisson, in favor; Drinker, in favor.

**Boards/Commission/Committees.** The following Boards/Commission joined the Charter Committee for discussion and the opportunity to answer questions from the Committee regarding the current structure of their Board or Commission, delivery of services and their budget process.

**Water & Sewer Commission.** The following Water and Sewer Commissioners joined the Charter Committee: Greg Bates and Barton Hyte. The Chair stated that the Committee understands that Water & Sewer is governed by state regulations. The Committee is interested in how they conduct their business and what, if any, recommendations or suggestions they may have. The Commission reviewed the structure of the Water & Sewer Commission and their budget process. The Committee members asked questions.

**Marblehead Municipal Light Commission.** The following Marblehead Municipal Light Commission members joined the Committee: Lisa Wolf, Chair, Jean Jacques-Yarmouth and Mike Hull, as well as Joseph Kowalik, General Manager. Joe Kowalik made a brief PowerPoint presentation that reviewed the overall structure of the Marblehead Light Department, including budgeting and staffing. Marblehead Light Department is governed by MGL Chapter 164.

Commission members spoke about their roles on the Light Commission. The Committee members asked questions.

**Marblehead Planning Board.** The following members of the Planning Board joined the Committee: Bob Schaeffner, Chair, Ed Nilsson and Barton Hyte. The Board gave a brief overview of the structure and purpose of their Board. Bob Schaeffner explained that the Planning Board endeavors to provide a unique perspective: to find harmony between a developer and the local community. What is the vision for Marblehead, how do we allow for growth and keep everybody happy? The Planning Board's budget falls under the Select Board. Bob Schaeffner noted that under the restructuring of the department, with the addition of a new Director of Community Development and a new Town Planner, along with the Sustainability Coordinator, the Planning Board's efficiency and capacity to address the issues of the town has improved. The Committee members asked questions.

### **Housekeeping items**

The Committee discussed future scheduling and the Charter timeline. The Committee determined, by consensus, that a draft charter will not be ready for presentation to the Select Board until the spring of 2026 (to be placed on the warrant for Town Meeting 2026). This schedule will provide the time necessary for the Charter Committee to discuss draft language and engage the public in forums to provide information and receive feedback.

In the coming months the Charter Committee will continue its work, including public forums, with the intention of providing an update report to May 2025 town meeting. The Charter Committee will ask that the Select Board make a request to the Town Moderator for the Charter Committee be recognized in order to present a progress report at May 2025 Town Meeting.

After discussion the Committee agreed to continue meeting with additional Department Heads and Committees in January 2025 and then begin discussion of Charter language.

**Public Comment.** None

Next Meeting Date. December 12, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Moved by Grenier, seconded by Ferrante. On a polled vote the Committee voted as follows: Miller, in favor; Massaro, in favor; Conly, in favor; Zisson, in favor; Hourihan, in favor; Casey, in favor; Grenier, in favor; Danforth, in favor; Ferrante, in favor; Drinker, in favor; Wild, in favor; Kezer, in favor.



Kyle A. Wiley, Administrative Clerk

List of documents used: