

Town Charter Committee

August 27, 2024



Board met in HYBRID session at 6:30 p.m. at Abbot Hall, 188 Washington Street
The following Board members were present constituting a quorum:

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

Mel Kleckner, Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management, remote
Karen Canfield, Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management, remote

Moses Grader, Select Board Liaison to the Charter Committee, was present at the meeting.

The Chair called the meeting of August 27, 2024 to order and 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 July 23, 2024. All in favor.
Motion made and seconded to approve the Minutes of August 8, 2024. All in favor.

Jim Zisson joined the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Recreation and Parks Commission. The Committee invited the following Recreation and Park Commissioners to the table: Linda Rice Collins, Shelly Bedrosian and Karen Ernst. The Chair asked the Rec and Park Commission a set of basic questions prepared in advance regarding the current structure, budgeting process, and overall management of the department.

Discussion. Executive Branch Language. The Committee continued its review of the draft language for the Select Board. With input from the Collins Center the committee agreed on the appropriateness of the proposed language.

Representative versus Open Town Meeting. The Collins Center discussed the differences between representative and open town meetings, highlighting the former's relative rarity and the benefits of a representative meeting. They suggested the committee consider the pros and cons outlined in the memo provided and to ask questions. The Committee all agreed that due diligence was needed before making any decisions and recommended that the committee continue their discussions and emphasized the importance of presenting any proposed changes as part of a due diligence process, rather than as a predetermined outcome.

Legislative Branch Language. The Committee reviewed a draft of the legislative branch's language. The discussion focused on the distinction between bylaws and charters, with Mel

Kleckner explaining that the charter is a fundamental document that requires a more rigorous process to change, while bylaws can be amended more easily, subject to Attorney General approval.

Public Forum. The Committee discussed scheduling of a public forum and proposed having questions structured to encourage discussion and to have a more approachable explanation of the town's governance structure. Discussion was had on the format, venue, and potential presentations for the forum, with a focus on engaging the community and the importance of marketing the event to increase awareness. Amy Danforth and Tom Massaro volunteered to work on drafting materials for the public forum.

Seamus Hourihan volunteered to draft Charter Committee Objective language for the committee to review.

Public Comment. None.

Next Meeting will be held on September 12, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. All in favor.



Kyle A. Wiley
Administrative Clerk

List of documents used: Collins Center Memo Legislative Branch/Acton Area LWV Report/Marblehead Finance Commission By-Law/Marblehead Town Meeting By-Law/MGL Chapter 43A/Secretary of State Citizens Guide to Town Meetings/Town of Winchester Town Meeting Charter Provision/Drafts Charter Executive Branch, Elected Boards and Officials, Legislative Branch.