

## Town Charter Committee

### September 12, 2024



Board met in HYBRID session at 6:30 p.m. at Abbot Hall, 188 Washington Street  
The Chair called the meeting of September 12, 2024 to order. By roll call vote 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, remote
Victor Wild	Thomas Massaro
Thatcher W. Kezer III, Town Administrator, staff support	

Moses Grader, Select Board Liaison to the Charter Committee, was present for the first half of the meeting.

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.

**Website.** The town's website has a dedicated page, Town Charter Committee, <https://www.marblehead.org/town-charter-committee> where residents can find meeting agenda's, minutes, and related documents.

**Grants. Funding.** The agreement with the Collins Center to support the Town Charter Committee is funded through an allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Thatcher Kezer noted the town is applying for Community Compact funds as well with the town wide phone system a high priority. The Town is a member of a Collaborative and is currently working with them to pursue grant options.

**Meeting Dates.** Due to the holidays the Committee will meet on December 12, 2024 and will not meet on December 24, 2024.

Victor Wild and Rossana Ferrante joined the meeting.

**Language Review.** The Chair discussed the need for language reviewers; someone to review draft language proposed by the committee. Victor Wild volunteered to do this along with Sean Casey. Documents reviewed by the committee and moved forward to the 'hold bucket' will then have a further review by Victor Wild and Sean Casey as to spelling, punctuation, grammar, and brought back to the committee at a future date. The Collins Center will also review the drafts and will raise any "red flag" issues with the committee. This will save the committee time by not reviewing the documents multiple times as a corporate body. Any substantive issues should be brought to the committee's attention, while procedural matters will initially be left to Victor Wild and Sean Casey.

**Mission Statement.** Ron Grenier spoke regarding a draft Mission Statement he prepared, which he based on his understanding of the committee's discussions. Feedback and suggestions for improving the document were made and Ron Grenier will incorporate these to the draft language and bring back to the Board at its next meeting.

**Vision Statement.** Seamus Hourihan spoke to a draft Vision Statement he prepared. Discussion followed on the objective of a vision statement and what the committee would achieve through this statement. Members discussed whether such statement could be in conflict with the Vision Statement of the Select Board, who annually reviews their vision, goals and objectives. The need for the TCC to have a vision statement was not embraced by the committee.

**Preamble.** Caleb Miller spoke to the draft 1.0 Preamble he prepared. Discussion followed on the language and Caleb will refine the preamble draft based on the committee suggestions.

**Executive Branch Language.** The Committee reviewed draft language 1.3 for the Select Board section. Sean Casey and Victor Wild will refine the draft incorporating language based on discussion and comments by the committee.

**Legislative Branch Language.** The Committee reviewed draft 1.2 of the Legislative Branch language. Discussion was had regarding possible preambles to certain sections of the Charter, i.e. Town Meeting, whether this “preamble” information would/should live on the website. Sean Casey will refine the draft incorporating language based on discussion and comments by the committee.

**Town Moderator.** The Committee reviewed draft 1.2 for Town Moderator language. There was only one minor edit made. Sean Casey and Victor Wild will refine the draft language.

**Framework for Elected and Appointed Positions.** The committee had a lengthy discussion on the framework for various town bodies, emphasizing the need to decide on their scope, powers, and responsibilities while flexible enough to accommodate ad hoc committees, and the need to distinguish between enumerated boards and others. Also discussed was the structure and control of various municipal boards in Marblehead, the appointment process of elected boards, and the identification of appointed board members in the town bylaws. It was proposed to have a section on appointments, removals, recalls, and vacancies, highlighting the importance of open meeting laws for all committees. The Committee will continue this discussion at their next meeting and continue to gather information and receive feedback from the various boards and committees.

**Public Forum.** The Committee briefly discussed the structuring of future public forums; how to get the message out, what venues to use, what to present and how. It was agreed that a key component of the forums initially will be on educating the public about what the committee is doing and why, and to allow plenty of time for public engagement and comment. The committee will look at reaching out to various civic groups to make presentations as well. Amy Danforth and Tom Massaro will continue to work on the forum outline and presentation and committee members can send suggestions or comments to the Chair for future discussion.

The Chair updated the Committee on scheduling efforts being made to bring the various boards and commissions into a Charter Committee meeting to get their feedback.

**Public Comment.** None.

Next Meeting will be held on September 24, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion made to adjourn at 9:04 p.m. Move by Tom Massaro, seconded by Jim Zisson. On a roll call vote the Committee voted as follows: Massaro, in favor; Wild, in favor; Zisson, in favor; Hourihan, in favor; Grenier, in favor; Casey, in favor; Danforth, in favor; Ferrante, in favor; Drinker, in favor; Kezer, in favor.



Kyle A. Wiley  
Administrative Clerk

List of documents used: Collins Center Memo Elected and Appointed Bodies/Framework for Considering Elected and Appointed Offices/Document Drafting Process/Updated Marblehead Charter Syllabus