

## Town Charter Committee July 11, 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, remote
Bill Conly	Victor Wild
Thomas Massaro	Thatcher W. Kezer III, Town Administrator, Staff Support

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

The Chair called the meeting of July 11, 2024 to order and welcomed the Select Board to the meeting.

Caleb Miller is attending remotely.

**Minutes.** Chair made a motion to approve the minutes of June 25, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Conly. On a roll call vote the Committee voted as follows: Massaro, in favor; Conly, in favor; Zisson, in favor; Hourihan, in favor; Grenier, in favor; Casey, in favor; Danforth, in favor; Ferrante, in favor; Miller, in favor; Drinker, in favor.

Victor Wild joined the meeting.

### **Discussion of Foundational Questions with the Collins Center and Select Board**

The Chair asked that the committee review some foundational questions before reviewing the executive branch items and the purpose of the foundational questions, which the chair has amassed from various feedback from the committee, in order to get everyone on the same page as well as seek guidance from the Collins Center on some general guidelines on the various components of a Charter. and to seek input from the Select Board on any particulars they see in a charter for Marblehead, specifically to ensure that the committee touches on these issues. Mel Kleckner and Karen Caufield of the Collins Center emphasized the importance of a charter, highlighting that it allows a community to define its own governance and create a document specific to its needs. Marblehead has many state laws, special acts and bylaws as well as policies and traditions that have evolved over time. A charter lets you create a document that is specific to your community and its needs that will increase engagement and transparency.

The Chair opened discussion up to the Select Board. Select Board members discussed creating a town charter to improve transparency, clarity, and organization around the roles and responsibilities of Marblehead's government bodies. They see the charter as a high-level constitutional document that codifies current practices while allowing for future revisions. Capturing institutional knowledge and decision-making processes in a unified reference is viewed

as important for efficiency and public understanding. The Town Administrator reviewed organizational charts highlighting where the decision-making currently lies. The Select Board discussed their thoughts on the role and responsibilities of the Town Administrator and what they would want to delegate to the Town Administrator.

The Select Board encouraged the committee to proceed with eyes open to all ideas and to focus on putting together the best document with all the input and information gathered and by seeking feedback from departments and the community.

Chair Noonan advised the Chair that Moses Grader will be the Select Board Liaison to the Town Charter Committee, and he will bring forward regular updates to the Select Board at their meetings, and asked the Chair to reach out to Moses to coordinate times when the Committee would like to attend a Select Board meeting to present and get feedback. The Collins Center will help facilitate getting public feedback as well.

### **Homework**

The Committee will familiarize themselves with the Town's bylaws that are referenced in the draft charter, and the draft charter language provided, and be ready to discuss at the next meeting.

The Chair reminded members to forward any "rainy day" items they wish to add to a spreadsheet for future discussions and to also send along any language to be considered for the Preamble of the charter.

### **Public Comment**

None

Next Meeting will be held on July 23, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. Moved by Mr. Zisson, seconded by Ms. Ferrante. On a roll call vote the Committee voted as follows: Massaro, in favor; Conly, in favor; Zisson, in favor; Hourihan, in favor; Grenier, in favor; Casey, in favor; Danforth, in favor; Wild, in favor; Ferrante, in favor; Miller, in favor; Drinker, in favor.



Kyle A. Wiley  
Administrative Clerk

List of documents used: Collins Center memo/Excerpt Town of Longmeadow, Foundational Questions/Marblehead Charter Syllabus/MGL 23A Town Administrator/Town of Grot Charter process and Charter