

Town Charter Committee July 23, 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	
Ron Grenier	Caleb Miller
Bill Conly	Victor Wild
Thomas Massaro	Thatcher W. Kezer III, Town Administrator, Staff Support

The Chair called the meeting of July 23, 2024 to order and welcomed Moses Grader, Select Board Liaison

Minutes. Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes of July 11, 2024. All in favor.

Collins Center. Contract. The Chair advised the committee that the Collins Center is under contract with the Town to attend 10 meetings in person with the Town Charter Committee and to date they have attended 3 meetings. The Chair will coordinate scheduling the Collins Center at future meetings dependent on the committee's agenda. The Collins Center, through the Chair and Town Administrator, is available for questions that come up with the committee.

Discussion. Executive Branch Language.

The Chair shared a report generated using artificial intelligence that contained language from 4 different charters and the different capacities of what the Select Board responsibilities are, and as an example of how you could compile language from various charters related to the Select Board. This report could be generated for each topic in the proposed Charter i.e. Legislative Branch (*Town Clerk and Moderator*). The committee agreed to review this language in multiple meetings. The Chair emphasized the importance of having open discussions about the language and its depth, rather than trying to edit everything all at once. The Committee discussed the cumbersome nature of attempting to write a topic section of the proposed Charter at a meeting among all Committee members. The committee also discussed the need for efficiency in their process, with suggestions that different members of the Committee might volunteer to look at specific topics in parallel. In general, committee members feel the Charter should resist defining authorized policy components and be written at higher level language that does not outline specifics that may change at a future date.

The Committee continued to review each category as outlined in the Collins Center Memo of 7.17.24. Emphasis was made of the importance of the Select Board as the policy setter and budget leader and highlighting the need for cooperation and coordination in policymaking among elected town offices and multiple member bodies. The discussion also touched on the recent adoption of human resources policies for departments under the Select Board's jurisdiction, and the question of whether employees of other boards would need to follow these policies. The Town Administrator addressed the potential complications of introducing additional policies, the

need for careful consideration in defining the roles of the Select Board and other elected bodies, and the importance of human resource policies being adhered to by all employees within the town.

Discussion concluded with the following next steps:

1. Sean Casey volunteered to draft proposed language for the Select Board composition, term of office, existing structure, length of terms, and rotation position components based on the Collin Center's memo and feedback and discussion from the Committee at tonight's meeting, and share it with the Committee at our next scheduled public meeting for review and markup. Sean will draft a proposed charter language regarding the Select Board topic by next week.
2. Caleb Miller and Tom Massaro volunteered to assist Sean.
3. Victor Wild volunteered to contact the AG's office to clarify the open meeting law and ensure compliance for the Committee's use of volunteers in this manner
4. Jim Zisson volunteered to research and submit extensive language on recall procedures to the Committee for review in the next meeting.
5. Rosanna Ferrante volunteered to coordinate with Jack Attridge, Town Moderator, to ensure his attendance at the next meeting for discussion on the Select Board's language and responsibilities.

Public Comment

Amy McHugh, Superintendent, Water & Sewer Commission and Director of Public Works, addressed the committee remotely, and stated the W&S Commission has worked with the Select Board hand in hand over many years and that the Commission meets regularly to address and review many issue; developing a 5-year capital plan, rate study reviews, and continues to meet all Federal and State requirements as well as attending Finance Committee meetings and participating regularly in Town Meeting. She expressed concern that this level of detail will get lost if these elected boards are controlled by just the Select Board. W&S Commission currently works together with the Town Administrator and the Human Resource Director as well. The Town is also working hard to move the Department of Public Works forward but it is difficult with budget constraints.

Next Meeting will be held on August 8, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. All in favor.



Kyle A. Wiley
Administrative Clerk

List of documents used: Collins Center memo/Sample Executive Branch Language w.notes/Drinker research: Chat GPT