

## Town Charter Committee

### August 8, 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, remote	Victor Wild
Thomas Massaro	Thatcher W. Kezer III, Town Administrator, Staff Support

The Chair called the meeting of August 8, 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.** The Chair asked for a motion made to approve the minutes of July 23, 2024. Victor Wild related to the Chair that after a discussion with the Attorney General's Open Meeting Law Division he would like to put on record that while he is an official of the Department of Justice, and an attorney, nothing he says or does in connection with the committee constitute legal advice or legal opinion, and as each member is entitled to read materials, he, as well as any member of the committee may do research that is brought back to the committee for review and to draw your own personal conclusion. Victor sought guidance from the Attorney General's office as it relates to members volunteering to take on specific tasks and advised the Chair that according to his discussion with the AG's office it is entirely appropriate for committee members to volunteer on their own initiative to take the lead on an issue brought up during a meeting, and to note this in the meeting minutes. Further discussion was had on the use of subcommittees. The Committee will continue for now with the process of one or two members volunteering to take on a task and if a topic comes up that may require a subcommittee, then one will be formed and adhere to Open Meeting Law. The minutes of the July 23, 2024 meeting will be voted at a later meeting pending notations to be added by Victor Wild per above.

**Charter Objectives.** The Chair opened a discussion on the objectives of the Town Charter. Seamus Hourihan proposed that there needs to be a higher-level statement around what the committee views is the objective of the Charter. Seamus sees reducing costs and improving services is at the highest level of meaning. A lengthy discussion followed on what committee members believed the objective of the Charter should be. A mission statement was proposed that could encompass costs and services and still create the Charter as the guiding document that will be the most impactful to residents and that incorporates what is stable and permanent. Ron Grenier volunteered to draft a mission statement for the committee to review at its next meeting.

**Sequencing. Creation of Charter.** The Chair asked the Committee what approach they should take to drafting the Charter; should they start with how the Town already does things or look at things and propose some fundamental changes or possible a combination of both? Discussion followed with the committee generally feeling the Charter should be a higher-level document

because the Town Bylaws are prescriptive as to how management happens. Members pointed out that review of other Town's Charter are not very detailed and that this committee will most likely land somewhere in the middle.

The Committee decided before drafting language it will set up a schedule to ask the various Town Boards and Department Heads to a committee meeting to get their input and ask questions. The Chair will prepare questions in advance for them to facilitate and guide this discussion and assist the committee in drafting charter language.

**Discussion. Executive Branch Language.**

The Committee continued its review of the draft language for the Select Board. Sean Casey will revise the draft language of the Select Board based on the committee feedback for review at the next meeting.

**Town Moderator.**

Jack Attridge, Town Moderator, joined the Committee at the table. Discussion ensued regarding educating the community on how town meeting works and how we can engage more people in Town Meeting, as well as the efficiency of Town Meeting. Representative Town Meeting was discussed as well as reconsideration procedures. The Committee will request information from the Collins Center on representative vs. open town meeting structures and then have further discussion on this topic at a future meeting. Reconsider procedures were discussed as well as the term of the Town Moderator and whether the Finance Committee should be appointed by the Town Moderator versus the Select Board (current practice). The Committee will also consider inviting a moderator from a town with representative town meeting to speak at a future meeting. Sean Casey volunteered to draft initial language on town meeting/moderator role for the next meeting. The Committee will discuss the appointment process for the Finance Committee after they meet with members of the Finance Committee.

**Public Comment.** None.

Next Meeting will be held on August 27, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion made to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. Moved by Ron Grenier, seconded by Rossana Ferrante. On a roll call vote the Board voted as follows: Wild, in favor; Massaro, 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.



Kyle A. Wiley  
Administrative Clerk

List of documents used: TCC Sequencing; Collins Center Legislative Branch Memo/DLS Guide to Financial Management/ Select Board Draft 1.1 Annotated/