

Town Charter Committee

June 12, 2025



Committee met in HYBRID session at 6:30 p.m. at Abbot Hall, 188 Washington Street
The Chair called the meeting of June 12, 2025, to order.

Amy Drinker, Chair	Seamus Hourihan
Rossana Ferrante, Vice Chair, arrived at 7:30 p.m.	Sean Casey
Caleb Miller, absent	
Ron Grenier	Tom Massaro
Bill Conly	Victor Wild
Thatcher W. Kezer III, Town Administrator, staff support	

The Chair announced that the meeting is utilizing a webinar platform and is being recorded.

The Chair announced as the first order of business the committee acknowledges that Jim Zisson was elected to the Select Board on Tuesday, June 10th, and was sworn in yesterday. As a member of the Select Board he is no longer able to serve on the Charter Committee because the Town Charter Committee is a subcommittee of the Select Board. The Chair thanked Jim for all his time and efforts on behalf of this committee. The Chair congratulated Jim on being elected to the Select Board. Jim was in attendance remotely and thanked the committee and stated he is planning on continuing to attend meetings moving forward in his role observing as a Select Board member.

Minutes. No minutes were approved.

Daft A. Discussion.

Finance Committee. Article 9. Alec Goolsby, Chair, Finance Committee, and Aleesha Benjamin, CFO, appeared before the Charter Committee. The Charter Committee reviewed Article 9, allowing Alec and Aleesha the opportunity to make comments and suggestions on the proposed language. A lengthy review and discussion on Article 9 continued. Sean will rework Article 9 to incorporate proposed edits and Aleesha will work with the Finance Committee to draft language describing the Finance Committee's budget hearing process and voting on individual department budgets.

The Committee continued their review of Draft A, starting at Article 8.1, Establishment of Standing Boards and Committees and Article 10, Elections.

The committee completed its review of Draft A. Sean will incorporate the changes discussed and prepare Draft B for distribution to the committee before their next meeting on July 22, 2025.

Housekeeping.

State Representative Jenny Armini will attend one of the Charter Committee meetings in September to discuss the Charter process at the State level.

Meeting Dates: the Committee discussed their meeting schedule as follows:

NO Meeting on June 24, 2025

July 22, 2025

August 26, 2025

September 11, 2025, and September 23, 2025

October 9, 2025, and October 28, 2025

November 13, 2025

December 11, 2025

The Vice Chair stated she would like the committee to actively promote Representative Armini's attendance at their meeting in September.

Q&A Summary Report from Public Forums. Seamus Hourihan commented on some edits he would like to make to the Q&A Summary. Seamus is concerned that some residents feel the Charter will override existing bylaws and special acts. He feels the committee needs to be consistent and should stress the fact that this is an overview document and that the Charter preserves all existing bylaws, all existing special acts and all Mass General Laws. The Chair asked him to send his edits to her, and she will review and incorporate as needed.

A short discussion followed on the current process the town is going through to recodifying our existing bylaws. This is being completed under the direction of the Town Clerk.

Victor Wild would like to add to the next agenda a discussion on Article 10, Elections, suggesting adding language stating the town of Marblehead's elections will be non-partisan, and that candidates will not be supported by state or local components. The Chair will take this under consideration.

Artificial Intelligence – Ron Grenier suggested the committee discuss the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) at a future meeting as it relates to communication received from a resident suggesting the use of artificial intelligence in analyzing draft charters. The Committee expressed concerns about the current lack of a comparable benchmark for charter comparisons and agreed to have a broader discussion on AI's potential applications in charter analysis at a future meeting.

Public Comment. None

Next Meeting Date. Tuesday, July 22, 2025. 6:30 p.m.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. All in favor.



Kyle A. Wiley, Administrative Clerk

List of documents used: Draft A, January 25, 2025/Committee holds

June 12, 2025