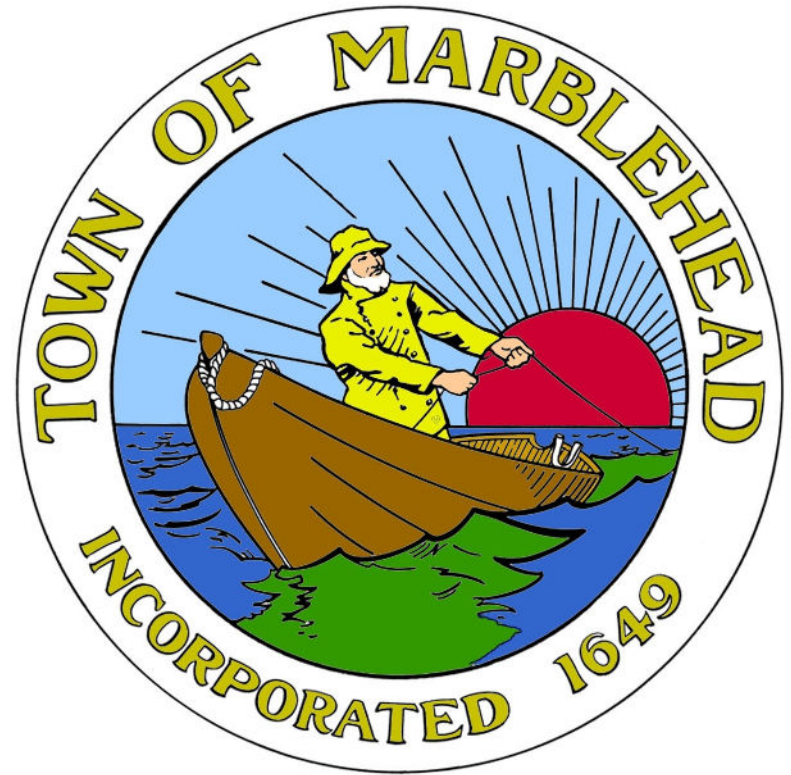


Marblehead Charter Committee

Progress Report to Town Meeting



May 5, 2025

SLIDE ONE: OPENER

Good evening.

Amy Drinker, 30 Gregory Street
chair of the Marblehead Town Charter Committee

I'm here to provide a brief update on the charter committee's activities.

Marblehead Charter Committee

Convened by the Select Board in May 2024

- **Amy Drinker**, Chair
- **Rossana Ferrante**, Vice-Chair
- **Sean Casey**
- **Bill Conly**
- **Amy Danforth** (2024)
- **Ron Grenier**
- **Seamus Hourihan**
- **Tom Massaro**
- **Caleb Miller**
- **Victor Wild**
- **Jim Zisson**

- **Thatcher Kezer**, Town Administrator
- **Karen Canfield, Mel Kleckner**, Collins Center for Public Management
- **Moses Grader**, Liaison to Select Board
- **Kyle Wiley**, Select Board Admin. Aide, Charter Committee Assistant

Marblehead Charter Committee

The charter committee was convened a year ago by the select board.

Committee members are volunteer town residents who share a common goal: we care about our town and we're working together to present a charter proposal to Marblehead voters for their approval.

The committee is supported by town staff, the select board, and the Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston.

Marblehead Charter Purpose

- ✓ Clearly define town government structure, organization, and essential functions

A Charter Does:

- ✓ Describe key governance principles beyond bylaws and regulations
- ✓ Create a primary, clear source of information about how Marblehead operates to improve transparency and community understanding

A Charter Does NOT:

- x Resolve financial challenges impacting department budgets, staffing needs, or services
- x Dictate every-day operational tasks for town employees, boards, and committees

Marblehead Charter Purpose

Currently, Marblehead has no charter. The purpose of a charter is to “Clearly define town government structure, organization, and essential functions.” For instance, the committee’s draft language includes that Marblehead’s legislative powers should remain as they are: exercised by Marblehead voters at open town meeting.

A charter describes key governance principles beyond bylaws and regulations. It creates a primary, clear source of information to improve transparency and community understanding about how Marblehead operates.

A charter does NOT resolve financial challenges impacting department budgets, town staffing needs, or services.

A charter does NOT dictate every-day operational tasks for town employees, boards, and committees.

Marblehead's Charter Timeline

- **June 2024 – April 2025:**

Gather input from department heads, town officials, boards, and residents
Draft and review charter language

- **May 2025:**

Three public forums—input on draft charter language

- **June 2025 – March 2026:**

Further revision, forums, legal review of charter language
Final language submitted to Select Board for review

- **May 2026 Town Meeting:**

Vote to approve Marblehead's charter

- **If approved by Town Meeting:**

Charter submitted to MA Legislature as a Home Rule Petition for review
of legal conformity with Mass General Laws

- **June 2027 town election:**

Marblehead must vote approval before charter becomes law

Marblehead's Charter Timeline

Since June 2024, the charter committee has met in open session 21 times. It has gathered input from department heads, town officials, boards, and residents.

Since January, the committee has been reviewing draft A language written by committee member Sean Casey with draft assistance from committee members Victor Wild and Jim Zisson. The draft includes annotations and footnotes which greatly inform both the charter committee and the public. The draft is posted online as a public document.

At the end of this month, the committee will host three public forums to gather input from Marblehead residents.

Over the next ten months, the committee will continue to meet with town committees, officials, staff, and the public to further refine charter language.

The charter will also be reviewed by the Collins Center and town counsel.

The final draft will be submitted to the select board in March of next year for consideration and presentation to town meeting in May 2026.

If approved at that town meeting, the charter will be submitted for review and approval by the Commonwealth's legislature to be signed by the governor.

The charter will then come back to Marblehead for a townwide vote for approval.

ONLY IF APPROVED BY MARBLEHEAD VOTERS WILL THE CHARTER BECOME LAW.

Upcoming Public Forums, May 2025

- **Tuesday, May 27, 7pm: Abbot Hall**
Comprehensive overview, public comment
- **Thursday, May 29, noon: Council on Aging, Jacobi Center**
Brief overview, public comment
- **Friday, May 30, 9am: online webinar**
Brief overview, public comment

Upcoming Public Forums, May 2025

Public outreach is a crucial component of developing Marblehead's charter. At the end of this month the charter committee will hold three forums in different venues to gather feedback.

The first forum will be a hybrid evening meeting held at Abbot Hall. It will begin with a comprehensive charter overview followed by public comment.

The second forum will be in person at lunchtime at the Jacobi Community Center, sponsored by the Council on Aging.

The third forum will be a morning online webinar.

This fall there will be additional forums and ad-hoc presentations as the charter committee continues to review draft language.

Learn More About Marblehead's Charter

- Online (agendas, minutes, charter draft, documents)

marbleheadma.gov/Town-Charter-Committee

- Watch charter meetings either in-person or hybrid link:

Abbot Hall, 6:30pm

2nd Thursday and 4th Tuesday of the month

Learn More About Marblehead's Charter

Any document the charter committee reviews, including draft charter language, is posted on the committee's web page. Please note that the town website domain has changed to marbleheadMA.gov (but Marblehead.org still works).

All charter committee meetings are posted with an agenda and are open to the public.