

# Charter Review Committee - Remote Meeting

5/26/2021 - Minutes

## 1. Call To Order And Pledge Of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm. The pledge of allegiance was said.

**Attendance** (Charter Review Committee Members attended via remote connection): Matt Jussaume (Chair), Ramona Reed (Clerk), John Ladik, Harvey Serreze, Marilyn Tremblay, Absent: Caroline Ahdab (Vice Chair), Bob Newton

### Housekeeping:

Matt Jussaume mentioned that some guidance is coming soon from the state regarding remote meetings, so we may be able to meet in person in the coming months.

Matt also mentioned that he received notice that his term on the Charter Review Committee will be expiring soon and was asked to renew this. The rest of the CRC will likely be receiving notice as well. Ramona Reed commented that she read our terms expire in June. She also mentioned that she received notice from the Town Clerk that she will need to take the Conflict of Interest training again, as the certificates expire after 2 years. Other members might receive this notice too, depending when they last took the training.

## 2. Acceptance Of Minutes

The minutes from the meeting on May 12, 2021 were reviewed.

Marilyn Tremblay made a motion, seconded by John Ladik, to accept the meetings minutes from 5/12/2021.

The motion carried unanimously.

## 3. Public Comments On The Agenda

None.

## 4. Public Feedback Received

None.

## 5. Discussion / Action Items

### 5.1. Review Prev. Tabled Complex Issues For Charter (Start At #18)- See List In Agenda Packet

The Charter Review Committee continued the review of a list of complex issues that were tabled during earlier passes

through the Charter. The purpose of this initial review is as follows:

1. Determine if these items should be addressed in the Charter
2. If it's agreed they should be addressed in the Charter, determine if they're currently addressed adequately

It was noted that #18 was discussed and recorded in the minutes of the prior CRC meeting on 5/12/2021, so this meeting's review began with item #19

**Item #19**

**Motion:** John Ladik made a motion, seconded by Marilyn Tremblay, that Charter section 2-3 b needs to be re-written. The motion carried unanimously.

Note: Charter section 2-3 b covers the Finance Committee members' requirements and current restrictions about serving on multiple member bodies.

#### **Item #20 Charter Changes outside of the Normal Review Cycle**

**Motion:** John Ladik made a motion, seconded by Marilyn Tremblay, that Charter section 7-6 Periodic Review, be added as a future agenda item to incorporate an "out of cycle" review of the Charter (e.g. review earlier than 10 years) for a targeted review of specific areas, if needed. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion: Harvey Serreze commented that the beginning part of the first sentence of section 7-6, which mentions that "...The initial review committee shall convene five (5) years after the adoption of this Charter..." is obsolete, so that can be removed.

#### **Item #21 Glossary**

**Motion:** John Ladik made a motion, seconded by Ramona Reed, that we revisit adding a glossary to the Charter after the rest of the Charter review is complete.

Discussion: The CRC agreed the glossary explaining terminology would be beneficial to have but it may take a lot of time to create so we'll leave it until the end. We can also consider reviewing other Charters for examples.

#### **Item# 22 Finance Committee Holding Public Hearings to Discuss Town meeting Warrants**

**Motion:** John Ladik made a motion, seconded by Marilyn Tremblay, that we do not need to cover this in the Charter.

Discussion: This was specifically related to warrants on which the Finance Committee makes recommendations. This is currently not mentioned in the Charter. The CRC agreed that it was not necessary to require this in the Charter.

#### **Item# 23 How By-laws are Created**

**Motion 1:** John Ladik made a motion, seconded by Marilyn Tremblay, that the Charter should have a statement that mentions how by-laws are created.

Discussion: The CRC discussed that this might be added in Charter section 2-7 Initiation of Warrant Articles, or possibly briefly described in a glossary item. Harvey Serreze reminded the committee that this was already covered by revisions that we previously made in section 2-12 General Powers and Duties of the Town Meetings.

Given this, John rescinded his motion.

**Motion 2:** Marilyn Tremblay made a motion, seconded by Harvey Serreze, that the Charter adequately covers the process of how by-laws are created based on the prior revisions in section 2-12. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Item# 24 Housing Authority (Section 3-4)**

**Motion:** Marilyn Tremblay made a motion, seconded by Ramona Reed, that the Charter adequately covers the Charter section, 3-4 Housing Authority. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion: The CRC reviewed section 3.4 and it was noted that some revisions were already made to describe the state-mandated composition of the Housing Authority membership (section 3.4 a). For section 3.4 b, Powers and Duties, the existing text was replaced to describe the Housing Authority and its powers and duties based on the specific MGL chapters. This was because Marilyn Tremblay advised that the original description of section 3.4 b described the role of the town Affordable Housing Committee, rather than the Housing Authority. The CRC decided to add an item #27 to our working complex issues list from 4/7/2021, to review if the Affordable Housing Committee should be further addressed in the Charter.

#### **Item# 25 Transitional Provisions**

**Motion:** John Ladik made a motion, seconded by Marilyn Tremblay, that the transitional provisions sections (in Charter article 8) be addressed after other format changes are completed in the Charter to ensure references to updated section numbers are correct. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Item# 26 Multi Member Body Residency Requirement**

**Motion:** Harvey Serreze made a motion, seconded by Ramona Reed, that a residency requirement to serve on a multi member body should not be added to the Charter. The motion carried 4-0, Yes: Ramona Reed, Marilyn Tremblay, John Ladik, Harvey Serreze, and Matt Jussaume abstained.

Discussion: The committee discussed the motion. It was clarified that the motion pertained to a multi member body generally comprised of volunteers, not hired employees. Matt Jussaume commented that he thought that a town should be run by its residents as much as possible. It was questioned by others whether limiting the multi member bodies to only residents might exclude individuals with necessary skills, though in some instances, consultants could be hired if a specific expertise was needed. It was also noted that it's usually unlikely that people would volunteer for another town's committees.

Pepperell resident, Ms. Maureen Bolger, suggested that rather than requiring residency, we could require that out of town volunteers not have a vote on the multi member body, and/or, that the number of out of town members on a multi member body be limited.

#### **Item# 27 Affordable Housing Committee**

**Motion:** Marilyn Tremblay made a motion, seconded by Ramona Reed, that the Charter does not adequately cover the Affordable Housing Committee. The motion carried by a 3-1 vote, Yes: Harvey Serreze, Marilyn Tremblay, Ramona Reed, No: John Ladik. Matt Jussaume abstained. More work is needed to address this in the Charter.

Discussion: Marilyn Tremblay mentioned that the Affordable Housing Committee is becoming more active in town, as the Town Administrator has prioritized ensuring that the town is in compliance with the state requirements. It would be the Affordable Housing Committee's responsibility to make studies of the town's housing needs, not the Housing Authority's, which is a state agency. Pepperell resident, Mr. Rob Rand, mentioned that the Master Plan committee has also been discussing this and the Affordable Housing Committee was revised and restructured in the Master Plan. He believes it's important to describe in the Charter to distinguish it from the Housing Authority, and also because the Affordable Housing Committee will be responsible for pursuing grants for the Town. Ramona Reed commented that it would be worthy to describe it better in the Charter because it seems to be often confused with the Housing Authority, as noted by Marilyn in the original description of the Housing Authority's duties in Charter section 3-4 b. It was noted by Matt Jussaume that the Affordable Housing Committee is already referenced in Charter section 5-5 as a town committee. John Ladik suggested since we don't describe every committee on the lists in section 5-5, this one should not need further description. Marilyn suggested adding an item c to section 3-4 to briefly describe the Affordable Housing Committee, but Matt Jussaume pointed out that section 3-4 relates to committees with elected members, so it would likely need to go under article 5. It was also discussed that a description could be possibly included in a Charter glossary.

The CRC completed the review to identify which of the complex issues on the list would be further addressed. Marilyn Tremblay suggested that these issues be placed in order of the numerical Charter articles to be worked on. Matt Jussaume advised that he would create an updated list like this. Once he completes this, he will recommend the items to be worked on at the next CRC meeting.

## **6. Other Matters Which Could Not Be Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours Prior To Meeting**

None.

## **7. Adjournment**

Marilyn Tremblay motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by John Ladik. By unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm. The next Charter Review Committee meeting is planned for June 9, 2021.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ramona Reed, Clerk, Charter Review Committee