

Charter Review Committee- Remote Meeting

6/01/2022

A recording of this meeting is available on the Pepperell Community Media website at:

[HTTPS://WWW.PEPPERELLCHANNEL.ORG](https://www.pepperellchannel.org). Follow the link path:

Video on Demand>Charter Review Committee>June 1, 2022

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm. The Pledge was said.

Attendance: (Charter Review Committee members attended via remote connection.)

Matt Jussame, Chair; Caroline Ahdab, Vice Chair; Rob Rand; Harvey Serreze; John Ladik and Marilyn Tremblay. Absent: Ramona Reed

2. Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes from the 5/11/2022 and 5/18/2022 meetings were to be reviewed.

A motion was made by Marilyn to accept the 5/11/2022 minutes as presented. After checking to be sure there was a quorum, the motion was seconded by Harvey. Roll call: Approved by J. Ladik, R. Rand, H. Serreze, M. Tremblay and M. Jussame. Abstained: C. Ahdab

The minutes from the 5/18/2022 meeting were tabled until the next meeting . Two members would be abstaining and one absentee, so no quorum.

3. Public Comments on the Agenda

None.

4. Public Feedback Received

Margaret Scarsdale sent an email confirming the Civic Engagement Night (CEN) with a target date of July 21, 2022. We also received a note from the Town Administrator informing us that we most likely will not receive feedback/comments from Town Counsel until June 10. Suggestion was made to take next week off.

5. Discuss Steps for Reviewing the Charter

Matt considered having the slide presentation on the Pepperell public channel in order to drive the public's interest prior to the CEN. Matt would present. Caroline asked if the goal of the committee was still the fall town meeting? Her concern is whether we will have time to review and make any changes that we receive from the public and Town Counsel? Caroline wondered if we might need to double up on the meetings. Matt said it would depend on the amount of feedback we receive. Caroline reminded us that any changes from the public would have to go back to Town Counsel. Matt feels that the changes will be minimal. Not as much as what we have already submitted to Town Counsel. Harvey's fear is that we will get inappropriate comments that will slow us down, citing the Select Board member controversy. Matt said that he will work with the Pepperell channel to get this presentation out on the website as soon as we go through it and make changes.

5.1. Review Presentation -Slide Deck, Committee roles, etc.

The committee proceeded to walk through the slide presentation that John had prepared some time ago. Caroline commented that we only clarified some of the topics that were listed on the slide entitled 'Charter Highlights', we did not make changes. Matt suggested that we delete the verbiage about the 3 / 5 member

Select Board so as not to open it up again. Harvey commented that we could not make that change anyway. Caroline commented that we did make some good changes with regards to the Grievance Path and reporting structure of the Human Resource employee doing what's best for the town employees. Matt suggested that we start at the beginning of the slide presentation.

Ethical Standards - Section 1-8:

Caroline commented that she did not see any changes. Her fear is that the review will get voted down if there are, what looks like too many changes. Matt said that the last bullet was new. It was a clarification of a requirement that was not in the original Charter. Harvey commented that we are not trying to rewrite the Charter so we should keep it simple. Marilyn suggested that we should just be presenting the significant changes that we made, what was not in the original document. The first two paragraphs under this section were deleted.

Finance committee - Section 2-3:

Although there was originally a great deal of discussion with regards to this section, the committee inevitably made no significant changes. It was agreed to remove this section from the highlights. There was a lot of discussion regarding those sections that we spent a lot of time on but if we were to present one, we should present them all and that could potentially be a significant problem for people to approve the Charter based on just the changes that were made. The group was confident that if there were questions from anyone regarding the sections that were discussed and not changed, we would be prepared to answer those concerns. Harvey then made the suggestion that we change the opening statement to say that we went through the whole document and these are the changes.

Publication of Notices - Section 2-7b:

This is new.

By-laws - 2-12:

This is new

Select Board - 3-2:

Deleted member composition. Last paragraph was kept.

Town Administrator - Section 4-2:

Caroline commented that this is not really a new change, just a clarification. Matt commented that we did separate into two paragraphs appointments and removals. Harvey was asking about the civil service law. Marilyn commented that she thought they were waiting on Town Counsel for that answer. Marilyn also commented that we leave the verbiage on the slide exactly the way it is written in the Charter, because it's a change.

Section 4-2 d:

There was a lot of discussion with regards to the Personnel By-law paragraph. We did not clarify the Personnel By-law but the role of the TA with regards to the Personnel By-law. The whole change that was made was put on the slide for a clearer understanding.

Deleted some paragraphs that were not changes. Clarified some verbiage.

Committees - Section 5-5:

This entire slide was an addition to the Charter.

Finance and Fiscal Procedures - Article 6:

Tighten Up Procedures

Caroline questioned the budget review bullet. Matt said it's in there. Harvey questioned the six to seven weeks. Shouldn't it just be the seven weeks. Matt commented that we should table this question until we hear from counsel. John commented that the paragraphs here are all still correct

Clarify Procedures - Section 7-8:

No changes made to the slide.

Summary

Matt commented that we might not have time to do this slide. Caroline commented that we did not make changes to the operation of government. The summary slide was changed.

We did end up finishing the slide presentation.

We are now waiting on Town Counsel to get back to us. We won't have anything from him until June 10th. Caroline wanted to know if Matt wanted to do a dry run with the presentation.

6. Other matters

None

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Marilyn, seconded by Harvey to adjourn at 9:02 pm. The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Tremblay

The completed slide presentation will accompany these minutes.