

# Charter Review Committee

10/16/2019 - Minutes

## 1. Call To Order And Pledge Of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm. The pledge of allegiance was said.

Attendance: Doug Adams, Caroline Ahdab, Matt Jussaume, John Ladik, Bob Newton, Ramona Reed, Harvey Serreze      Absent: Michael Tang, Marilyn Tremblay

## 2. Acceptance Of Minutes

### Minutes from Meeting on September 25, 2019

A motion was made by Caroline Ahdab, and seconded by Bob Newton to accept the minutes from the September 25, 2019 meeting.

These were accepted by a vote of 6: Doug Adams, Matt Jussaume, John Ladik, Bob Newton, Ramona Reed, Harvey Serreze, with 1 member abstaining, Caroline Ahdab

## 3. Public Comments On The Agenda

None

## 4. Discussion / Action Items

### 4.1. Status Of WIP Artifacts And Editable Charter Doc. File (Tang/Reed)

Doug Adams and Ramona Reed were provided an editable Charter document in a MS Word® document format. It needs to be confirmed whether or not it is the final version. The CRC agreed we could begin edits with this document as long as it matches the final posted version of the Charter document.

**Action item:** Matt Jussaume will do a compare of the documents to confirm whether it is feasible to use this version of the Word document to begin the Charter edits.

### 4.2. Status - Email To Town Staff, Town Meeting Slide, Notice On Cable Channels And CRC Page (Tang)

Email to Town Staff - Ramona Reed confirmed this was sent (e.g. library staff received it).

Slide for Town Meeting presentation - Mike Tang drafted a slide. The CRC agreed on minor edits and then it could be submitted for the Town Meeting presentation.

Notice on Cable Channel and CRC Web page - TBD

Ramona provided example of survey form that Marilyn Tremblay created for physical feedback boxes at Senior Center and Library; CRC provided feedback for minor edits (e.g. request justification/references to support requested changes)

#### Action items:

- Doug Adams will make edits to slide, then submit it for the Town Meeting.
- Ramona Reed will follow up with Mike Tang to determine if info was submitted for Cable

Channel.

- Ramona Reed will follow up with Marilyn Tremblay for edits to survey form.

### 4.3. Senior Center And Housing Authority Newsletters (Tremblay)

Status TBD; Ramona Reed will confirm with Marilyn Tremblay

### 4.4. Status Of Charter Section Review Action Items (Reed/Tremblay)

**Charter Section Review - Status of Action items from meeting minutes of 9/25/2019:**

**Section 1.2 Short Title:** Investigate the origin of the Charter document name "Pepperell Home Rule Charter". CRC will consider changing this to exclude "Home Rule". (CRC) - **Action:** Research to be continued

**Section 1.4 Division of Powers:** Research the Town "Executive Branch" – Who does this include besides Board of Selectmen? (Marilyn Tremblay) - **Action:** Research to be continued

**Section 1.7 Precedence of Charter Provisions:** Research other Town Charters to see how this is worded and review minutes from the original Charter Committee for possible clarification. The text about the preceding laws/rules - "...which are not specifically or by implication repealed directly or indirectly hereby, shall continue..." can be ambiguous. (Ramona Reed)

**Status:** Ramona started research by reviewing other Town Charters (e.g. Groton, Westford, Lunenburg, Billerica). Caroline Ahdab provided background on current text.

**Action:** Research to be continued by Ramona and Caroline to determine origins of current text and where there could be possible conflicts/ambiguities with Town Bylaws.

**Section 1.8 Ethics Standards:** Re-write this to keep the gist, but make it more succinct and include a reference to the applicable Mass. General Law. (Marilyn Tremblay)

**Status:** Marilyn Tremblay provided draft text for Section 1.8. This was reviewed and most of it will be considered for Section 1.8. The document, **2018 Pepperell Selectboard Code of Conduct**, will also be reviewed so that language referencing this can also be added to this section. Specifying who is responsible for future reviews and revisions of this document may also be added to Section 1.8.

**Action:** Caroline Ahdab will download copy of the 2018 Pepperell Selectboard Code of Conduct document and forward to the board for review and further discussion at the next CRC meeting.

**Section 2.1 Town Meeting:** Strike out text: "continue to". (Mike Tang) - **Action:** "To Do" once edits to document begin.

### 4.5. Continue Review Of Section 2 And Start Section 3

CRC agreed that as public feedback is received, this will be categorized by Charter section and discussed during the applicable section reviews. **Action:** Ramona Reed will keep and organize the received feedback.

CRC agreed to have a "standing" meeting agenda item to review new public feedback received since the prior CRC meeting. This will be read aloud for the public record.

CRC will request that a justification and/or supporting reference info. be included with feedback. If feedback is received without this, it will be requested before the feedback is discussed.

Public Feedback received since the 9/25/2019 was read. These will be reviewed when the CRC reviews

the applicable sections of the Charter:

1. Request to review the Board of Selectmen Code of Ethics (CRC to review with Section 1.8)
2. Implement Five member BOS (CRC to review with Section 3.2) - **will request supporting info. from sender**
3. Guidelines for how committees function. Committees notoriously last too long and tend to get bogged down. (CRC to review with Section 2.3)- **will request supporting info. from sender**
4. Planning board review? Is it time to hire a 'planner' full time? (CRC to review with Section 5.5) - **will request supporting info. from sender**

Sections 2-4 through 2-12 were reviewed. There were extensive discussions on the following sections:

**Section 2-4 Annual Town Meeting:** Bob Newton proposed revisions to this section to allow for the Annual Town Meeting to be held on a Saturday at 1 PM. The currently required Monday evening/7:30 pm start time (Town Bylaw 40, sections 1 and 3) makes it difficult for many to attend. **Action:** CRC to further review after gathering more feedback. It needs to be determined how to best accommodate special needs of different sectors of the Town population (e.g. Seniors). Fix typo (remove extra period on the sentence).

**Section 2-11 Report to Voters:** Feedback was provided by Town Administrator to consider removing the paragraph requiring the Capital Program appendix to be included in the report for the Annual Town Meeting because it's managed elsewhere. The CRC discussed it may be appropriate to leave it here, as this was purposely added by the first Charter Committee for transparency on future Capital projects. **Action:** Get further clarification from Town Administrator. (Ramona Reed)

Review of Section 3 will begin at the next CRC meeting on 10/30/2019

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

None

## 6. Adjournment

Bob Newton motioned to adjourn the meeting, Matt Jussaume seconded this. By unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

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