

Charter Committee Minutes

February 22 , 2024

Members Present: Morgan Dawicki, Lilia Cabral-Bernard , Cathy Melanson , Brendalee Smith, Marybeth Vargas

Absent: Robert Grindrod

Others Present: Fairhaven TV , Town Moderator Mark Sylvia

Meeting called to order by Morgan Dawicki at 6:53 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll call of committee members: Cathy Melanson, Marybeth Vargas, Morgan Dawicki, Lilia Cabral-Brenard and Brendalee Smith. Absent: Bob Grindrod

Approval of minutes

Approval of 02/08/24 minutes. Lilia notes correction need to spelling for Town Counsel and sentence following Bob's comment. Corrections to be sent to Morgan prior to submitting. Motion to approve by Lilia , seconded by Brendalee. Vote for approval unanimous 5-0

Public Comment:

None initially then Town Moderator joined meeting

Mark Sylvia Town Moderator offering support and any clarification on recommendations made to committee for Charter.

Discussion/Action

- Individual feedback about Charter with plan to walk through each item discussed. After meeting Morgan will take everyone's feedback and incorporate it into the draft and will distribute it to all members.
- Before discussion started the Town Moderator Mark Sylvia arrived. Morgan described what the group's plan was and asked if Mark would like to speak first as it may be a lengthy meeting. Mark asked to speak first and the Committee agrees to take review of Charter out of order so questions can be asked of Mark .
- Mark spoke briefly to group regarding committee's work and thanks committee for doing due diligence to create a Charter for the Town. Mark offered to answer any questions regarding recommendations he suggested or concerns committee might have moving forward.
- Clarification asked for Section 4-2 Town Moderator : Question regarding last line and added section in blue regarding assistant moderator. Explanation given by Mark then discussion by committee on section. Agreed that 3-year concurrent term should be added to assistant and to keep recommendation in blue. Mark recommends asking

Town Counsel if last line legally needed to cover if Moderator is fired/resigns. Discussion continues on where Mark previously worked, his opinion on current document and progress.

- Also, discussion regarding public safety , Town Counsel felt it should be removed and Mark's opinion on whether it should be included in document. Discussion from group on matter. Also, discussion regarding including organizational chart, suggested that we could assign a department to keep chart updated as part of charter
- Lilia questioning about having six members on the school committee and if that makes sense. Discussion regarding the boards that have even numbers and what if our committee makes recommendation and they say no. Mark stating that at the end of the day , in those instances where you think there are compelling reasons to make change, or recommend changes that will allow for a more effective form of government , you need to discuss and debate this and bring it to Town Meeting. Suggests having direct conversations with those boards and get feedback and if for example they don't want recommended change it would probably be opposed and debated on Town Meeting floor. Doesn't mean should/shouldn't do this but recommends meeting with them first because they might have an opinion for example 5 or 7 members.
- Question brought up do we need to have a public meeting as all our meetings are open to public. Mark states Selectboard would have to review, and would be public meeting. If any financial implications the finance committee would feel they have responsibility to review and have public meeting. Always good to have final meeting and encourage the public to review what you're recommending to the town.
- Morgan asking how do we direct review of bylaws? Can we have a transitional item at end of charter that dictates who should be reviewing the bylaws. Mark states he wondered this and Town Counsel stated its standard and it takes full year after a Charter approved to be sure bylaws consistent. Would be combination of certain boards , TA and Selectboard. Could be Bylaw Committee or Charter Committee continues in that function.
- Discussion continues with group about Charter with Mark. He left the meeting after no more questions from the group.
- Morgan initiates discussion of each article by the group. And for group to decide if any changes to Heather's recommendations or questions.
- Article I :no changes
- Article II Discussion regarding(k), number of days . After discussion the group is good with 180 days and Section 2-2 k Last line: approve and executed by Selectboard(adding) and subsequently by vote of Town Meeting. Part M: all highlighted TA did not feel necessary, Lilia feels it makes the process easier to understand . Discussion regarding this section , decision made to leave it in.
- Article III:3-2 Discussion regarding term and number of members on Planning Board. Recommend Planning Board have 7 members for 3 years , committee agrees
3-3:Discussion regarding keeping description eliminating mission. Group agrees to keep first sentence. 3-6 Goard of Public works, Discussion of duplication of services and Town

meeting members on boards voting on financial issues affecting their boards , being conflict of interest. Issues. Morgan to check with Town Moderator on this issue of voting. Recall of elected officials: Discussion of the 50 and 20 percent. Group have agreed to leave it as is.

- Article IV: 4-2 Town Moderator discussed previously, 4-3 (c)Warrants: Leave posting to Town Hall and voting location along with website, (d)Circulation of Warrant: change to 21 calendar days
- Article V: As recommended by Town Counsel . moved Finance Committee to Legislative section, Finance Department no changes 3-2 Director of finance ? who is this
- Article VII:A: Members agree to School Committee change to 7 members
- Remaining Articles no changes from Town Counsel recommendations. Discussion on all articles completed

Next meeting: Next meeting week of March 11-16th , at 6:30 pm Morgan will send email

During discussion Proposed meet week March 4-8 Wednesday 6th or Thursday 7th

Other/New Business: Discussion regarding being able to meet deadline for spring Town Meeting. Group agrees to keep moving forward with plan to do so.

Action Items:

1. Morgan to incorporate approvals in draft and contact Heather
2. Morgan to send separate emails to Planning Board and School Committee regarding changes to numbers recommended by committee
3. Morgan to reach out to committee members regarding next meeting date

Question/Comments: none

Motion to adjourn

Motion made to adjourn by Lilia , seconded by Brendalee. Vote to adjourn unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Marbeth Vargas

Secretary for Charter Committee