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## TOWN OF NORTON

### CHARTER COMMISSION

### MINUTES

Date: June 3, 2019

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: Norton High School Library

**1. Call to Order: Roll Call, Ask / Announce Recording, Pledge of Allegiance**

The June 3, 2019 meeting of the Charter Commission was called to order at 5:32 PM, by Ms. Laura Parker, Chair.

Members Present: Ms. Janey Goodwin, Mr. Dave Heaney, Ms. Denise Luciano, Ms. Sandy Ollerhead, Mr. Kevin Schleicher, Mr. Keith Silver, Ms. Kerry Snyder, and Mr. David Wrenn.

**2. Public Hearing pursuant to MGL Chapter 43B**

**a. Introduction**

Ms. Parker thanked everyone for coming and for all those who voted to approve forming the Charter Commission. She noted that the question passed at the polls by a 4 to 1 margin. Ms. Parker gave an overview of the handout of the timeline, explaining that the Charter Commission is established under MGL 43B which gives us the guidelines for the timeline. The Commission will spend the first 4-6 months gathering information including meeting with all town officials, gathering input from the public, and looking at other town charters. All meetings are open to the public with every agenda dedicating a section for public input. The town website has a section for the Charter Commission which has been updated. Ms. Parker explained that our goal is to ensure our charter meets the needs of Norton. The Commission has no preconceived notions, is open to everything and wants to hear your input.

**b. Public Comment -- Open Forum**

Peg Dooley spoke about Norton being a pleasant place to live. She has only ever known this form of government and has been very pleased with the selectmen form of government.

Peter Carrigan is a current member of the finance committee and was on the previous charter review committee. He is willing to answer any questions that we have in the future.

Bill Gouveia advised us to look at the charter as completely and as objectively as we can. He offered to give us a copy of the Town Government Review Committee report that he

worked on with others. He also shared that his son moved from Norton because he felt the town wasn't meeting the needs of his family. He moved to a town with a different form of government because he didn't like the fact that in Norton the budget was decided by whoever showed up to a town meeting.

Margaux Holcomb has concerns about the funding for the town and schools. She doesn't like that major changes and decisions are made on a single night that you could miss if you are not available or out of town.

Oren Sigal stated he thinks that people were anxious to explore our charter because they are not comfortable with the way a town meeting runs and they are looking to find out what other options there are. Too few people are deciding what's going to happen in the town and they are not given much information ahead of time. He would also like to see someone in town that can help residents when there are larger projects in town that might affect them and feels town boards should be doing more to represent the townspeople. He suggested we reach out to Wheaton to get their input as well.

Sara Lyons asked whether the charter will need town meeting to approve. Ms. Parker responded that it will be a ballot vote at the town election and town meeting approval isn't necessary

Sharyn Stedman stated she thinks it's time to look at other forms of government. She feels Open Town Meeting isn't working for a town our size. She would also like to look more into how appointments are made and feels there are not enough programs for seniors or adults in general. She is a member of the Council on Aging.

Zack Tsillis wants us to find a middle ground and put something forward that will pass.

Barbara Sigal thanked us for taking this on and being open to hearing from everyone. She finds the handbooks that the boards are using are antiquated. She spoke about the option of Representative Town Meeting.

Tim Long suggested a mass mailing from the Charter Commission to every person in town in order to ensure people give input to the commission.

Robin Monti asked if we could look into making the town more business friendly.

### 3. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:48 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Dan m Ollerhead

Minutes approved by the Board or Committee on: 6/10/19

Chairman Signature: Laura L Parker