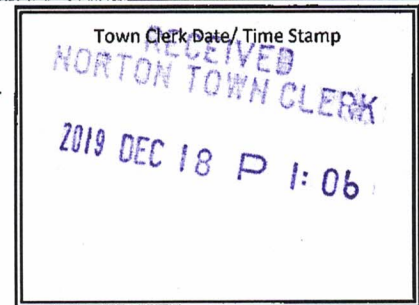




TOWN OF NORTON CHARTER COMMISSION

Board of Selectmen Meeting Room
Town Hall, 1st Floor

Thursday, November 7, 2019
7:00 P.M.



~MINUTES~

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

The November 7, 2019 meeting of the Charter Commission was called to order at 7:00 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 Comment -- Open forum

No members of the public wished to speak.

3. Presentation by the Form of Government Committee of the Massachusetts Municipal Association followed by Q&A, as needed

William Keegan—Foxboro Town Manager

- Charter is unique to what you want and how you want your community to run
- Not a fan of Open Town Meeting because it lends itself to be run by special interest groups as opposed to what's good for the whole
- Once you make charter changes, it's important to have an educational series so that everybody fully understands what those changes mean
- Budget process in Foxboro doesn't work well because it is unclear who presents the budget and the role that the Advisory Committee serves
- To have one person control all the appointments on the Advisory Committee is dangerous
- Should be clear in charter that manager appoints all department heads and employees
- Foxboro has a DPW Director as well as a Town Engineer
- Town engineer runs a lot of the major construction projects including all road projects
- Randolph really turned things around when went to Town Council/Town Manager form of government
- Open Town Meeting can have people showing up for one issue and then leave; Representative Town Meeting members tend to take the time to understand the issues and understand the process and issues better
- Special interest groups are an issue in RTM but it's more predictable; can reach out to that group to talk to them about the pros and cons of their issue
- Isn't an issue in Dedham or Shrewsbury to get people to run for RTM; North Attleboro could get people to run for RTM but struggled to get members to show up for meetings

Michael Dutton—Bridgewater Town Manager

- Was a Town Administrator in Martha's Vineyard which was an actively engaged community and OTM worked for that community
- Bridgewater changed from OTM to Council/Manager form of government
- Important to consider the transition if decide to change the form of government
- Town Manager in Bridgewater formulates and proposes budget; Town Council holds hearings and then has 45 days to vote on it

- Town Manager appoints members of all committees except Finance Committee and Council ratifies appointments
- Finance Committee has 3 members appointed by Town Council, 3 by Town Manager, and 3 by Town Clerk
- Finance Committee struggles with their role; created as a compromise to pass the charter
- Council has 5 Standing Committees with 3 councilors on each--Budget and Finance, Community and Economic Development, Public Safety, Rules and Procedures, and Partnership
- Total of 9 councilors who serve 3 year terms--7 precinct councilors and 2 at large
- Maintain elections in April because they are part of regional school district with Raynham
- Important to streamline the financial piece of the charter with clear lines of responsibility
- Town Engineer works with superintendent of water/sewer and highway superintendent but DPW exists in name only; need to hire a DPW director who will be tasked with creating a true DPW
- Town Council creates more structure

(Note that Ms. Luciano left the meeting at 8:04 and returned at 8:35)

4. Discussions with Lauren F. Goldberg, Esq., of KP | LAW (Town Counsel)

- Council President sets the agenda for every meeting, serves as the ceremonial head of government, and makes all appointments to council committees
- Downside to voting in a council president separately is that there could be two great candidates running for council president and the person who loses doesn't get on the council at all
- Try to find the form of government that most reflects the government that you think you need
- Can write in a public hearing requirement if DPW director wants to increase fees
- North Attleboro has boards that are partly appointy and partly elected
- Can change when an elected official (such as Planning Board) takes office so that there is more flexibility if a project continues past election day
- Look at election records over the past several years to see which offices are contested
- To determine the number of RTM members, look at how many people currently attend town meeting
- Towns choose to have Finance Committee chosen by the moderator so that they are independent from other boards and committees
- Quorum for boards and committees is a majority of the members of the entire body not a majority of the members then in office; can only change this in the charter
- Need to think about what you can get people to agree to in terms of changes
- Charter Implementation Committee can be created to figure out how to figure out how to do what needs to get accomplished
- Charter contains directions but not all of it is enforceable
- Finance Director can also serve as accountant or treasurer is common; this gives flexibility to later be funded as a separate position
- Common to have a Finance Committee subcommittee of Town Council; can also add people from outside the Town Council to that subcommittee
- Want a recall act that does the least damage; thinks people will get sued if charter includes that you can't be a candidate to succeed yourself

5. Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

Remote Participation: review of Town policy, discussion and vote

Motion to accept the remote participation policy of the Town of Norton adopted by the Board of Selectmen on October 21, 2019 made by Ms. Snyder. Second by Mr. Schleicher. Vote: 8-yes; 1-no (Ms. Goodwin)

6. **Next Meeting: November 18, 2019 (to be held at the Norton Public Library)**

7. **Action Items: Clerk to review**

No action items.

8. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Heaney at 10:50 PM. Second by Mr. Schleicher. Vote:
Unanimous.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Dana Mollerhead

Minutes approved by the Board or Committee on: 11/18/19

Chairman Signature: James H. Baker