



TOWN OF NORTON CHARTER COMMISSION

Board of Selectmen Meeting Room
Town Hall, 1st Floor

Monday, January 27, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Town Clerk Date/Time Stamp

RECEIVED
NORTON TOWN CLERK
2020 FEB 12 P 2:04

~MINUTES~

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

The January 27, 2020 meeting of the Charter Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM, by Ms. Laura Parker, Chair.

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

Members Absent: Mr. Dave Heaney

2. Public Comment – Open forum

No members of the public wished to speak.

3. Acceptance of prior meeting minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Luciano to accept the minutes of January 13, 2020. Second by Ms. Goodwin. Vote: Unanimous.

4. Discussion of administrative items, as needed

Ms. Parker shared notes on her conversation with Lauren Goldberg. She is penciled in to come to the following meetings: 2/10, 3/9, 3/23, 4/20, 6/1, and 6/15. Ms. Goldberg has a template that can be used to draft the charter. She suggested going through the existing charter and decide what to keep and what to get rid of. Ms. Ollerhead will reach out to her after any meetings that she doesn't attend to give her a brief update.

Ms. Parker passed out a revised timeline and major milestone schedule that included all of the decisions that need to be made. July 1 is the target date for draft charter completion.

Ms. Parker received an email from a resident asking who would get to vote on an override. She stated for the record that overrides are governed solely by Mass State Law which dictates that any override has to go to a ballot vote. The Charter Commission cannot change that regardless of what type of government we have.

5. Discussion and potential vote(s) of Charter elements:

a. Decisions pertaining to the Legislative Branch

Discussion and debate continued on the number of members on the town council and whether the councilors should be all at-large or a combination of precinct councilors and at-large councilors. The votes on the number of members, how the members would be chosen, and whether to have term limits were tabled until the next meeting. Ms. Parker asked anyone who has new suggestions that they email it out prior to the meeting and everyone be prepared to vote on these items at our next meeting.

Role of Council President

It was agreed that the town council president will:

- Be a voting member of the town council with the same voting powers as the other members and not have veto power
- Preside over all meetings of the council and set the agenda
- Jointly with the town manager present an annual state of the town message
- Perform all of the duties specified by the council
- Be recognized as the head as of the town government for all ceremonial purposes and by the governor for purposes of military law but shall have no administrative duties
- Perform such other functions as may be assigned by the charter, by ordinance or by vote of the town council
- Appoint the members and officers of council committees whether standing or adhoc
- Call for one public hearing annually for input on policy

There will be a vice president who is elected in the same manner as the president and who will fulfill the duties in the absence of the town council president.

(Ms. Luciano left the meeting at 8:27 PM and returned at 8:54 PM)

There was discussion about whether the town council president should have a seat on the school committee. It was agreed that it shouldn't be a responsibility of the president, but to instead include in the charter a requirement to hold a quarterly joint meeting between the town council and school committee.

Filling Vacancies on the Town Council

Various options for filling vacancies within town council were discussed including going back to the person who had the next highest votes at the previous election, holding a special election, or having the town council appoint someone to fill the seat until the next regular election. The final decision was tabled until the next meeting and Ms. Parker asked that everyone be prepared to vote on this at the next meeting.

b. Decisions pertaining to the Executive Branch

Appointment of Town Manager

The town manager will be appointed by the town council by a majority of the full council for an indefinite term. The town council will fix the compensation for the town manager. There will not be a residency requirement for the town manager.

Removal

A $\frac{2}{3}$ majority will be required to remove the town manager.

Acting Town Manager

Ms. Snyder would like to ask Lauren Goldberg whether it's ever an issue to give the town manager full authority to appoint someone to replace him or her.

Discussion will continue on this at the next meeting.

Powers and Duties

It was suggested that the town manager have the power to appoint and suspend or remove all town employees with the stipulation that the town manager may authorize any administrative officer subject to the manager's direction and supervision to exercise these powers with respect to subordinates in that officer's department, office or agency.

The question was raised on whether to allow the town manager absolute authority to appoint boards/commissions/committees or whether the town council should have the power to rescind these appointments within a certain number of days. The final decision on the appointing authority of the Town Manager was postponed until the next meeting. Ms. Parker would like to ask Lauren Goldberg if there was any reason for the amount of detail in the duties of the town manager in our current charter.

6. Next Meeting: February 10, 2020

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Snyder at 10:20 PM. Second by Ms. Goodwin.
Vote: Unanimous.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Dana A. Allread

Minutes approved by the Board or Committee on: 2/10/20

Chairman Signature: Lauren Goldberg