



# TOWN OF NORTON CHARTER COMMISSION

Norton Media Center

Monday, February 24, 2020  
7:00 P.M.

Town Clerk Date/Time Stamp  
RECEIVED  
NORTON TOWN CLERK  
2020 JUN -4 P 12:03

## ~MINUTES~

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

The February 24, 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**

Motion was made by Ms. Luciano to accept the minutes of February 10, 2020. Seconded by Ms. Snyder. Vote: Unanimous.

**4. Discussion of administrative items:**

**a. Upcoming changes of venue**

Meetings during the month of March will be at the library. The April 6th and May 4th meetings will be held at the Norton Media Center and the April 13th meeting will be at the Norton Public Library.

**b. May 19<sup>th</sup> space availability**

The library and Norton Media Center are both unavailable on May 19th. Mr. Schleicher will look into holding the meeting at the Police Department conference room

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

**a. Remaining decisions pertaining to the Executive Branch**

Motion was made by Ms. Snyder to accept the right of Town Council to disapprove an appointment of the following department heads: Police Chief, Fire Chief, Planning Director, Highway Superintendent (or DPW Director), Treasurer, Water and Sewer Superintendent (or DPW Director). Town Council would need to disapprove the appointment within 14 days of being notified by the Town Manager of the appointment and they have the opportunity to approve it sooner than the 14 days allowed. Seconded by Mr. Schleicher. Vote: Unanimous.

Motion was made by Ms. Snyder to have Town Council unilaterally appoint Town Accountant and to appoint in consultation with the Town Manager a Clerk of the Town Council if funded. Seconded by Ms. Goodwin. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Silver arrived at 7:20 PM

Motion was made by Ms. Luciano to have all multiple member bodies appointed by the Town Manager, subject to confirmation by Town Council within 14 days or sooner if they choose to vote to approve or reject. Seconded by Mr. Schleicher. Vote: Unanimous

The following changes will be made to Section 4-2 of the current Norton charter:

- Change Board of Selectmen and/or Town Meeting references to Town Council in the following: Preamble, a, f, g, h, n, s
- 4-2g: Change quarterly to annually
- 4-2l: Strike "Members of the Board of Selectmen may attend negotiation sessions, but only as observers. Members of the Board of Selectmen may not directly participate in collective bargaining sessions. Attendance by members of the Board of Selectmen shall be limited in such a way that no more than two designated members of the Board will have attended any or all of the negotiations sessions leading to a particular collective bargaining agreement. All contracts shall be subject to ratification and execution by the Board of Selectmen."
- 4-2l: Add: "Appropriations required by such contracts shall be subject to a vote of the Town Council"
- 4-2m: Add "Town Manager shall approve all contracts and sign all warrants"
- 4-2m: Add "services" to the first sentence
- 4-2o: Change "whether appointed or elected" to "under the Town Manager's authority"

The following will be added to the powers and duties of the Town Manager. The Town Manager shall:

- Prepare or update in conjunction with department heads, boards of the town, the Town Council and residents a long range plan every 5 years
- Communicate regularly with the public regarding local issues, proposal, actions, and challenges
- Unless otherwise provided by inter-municipal or regional agreement, measure, or general law, serve as the Town's liaison to any regional entity of which the Town is a member and explore opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation
- Promote dialogue and partnerships among the Town Council, Town employees, residents, businesses, and other local entities

Ms. Ollerhead will ask Lauren Goldberg whether state law requires the following:

- Have the authority to prosecute, defend, and compromise all litigation to which the Town is a party and employ special counsel whenever it may be necessary
- Sign all bonds and notes for the borrowing of money

If those are not included under state law, they should be added to the charter as well.

#### **b. Water and Sewer**

Ms. Parker went through a summary that she created of the twelve towns closest in size to Norton with a Town Council form of government. Eleven of the twelve towns have a Department of Public Works. Included in her summary was whether they had an advisory board or commission, whether they had an engineer on staff, other professional staff included in the department, and the person or body that sets the water rates. She also went through which divisions were included within the Public Works Department for each town.

Everyone was in agreement with including the formation of a Department of Public Works in the charter along with a strong preference for a DPW director who has an engineering background. Everything currently under the Highway Department and the Water and Sewer Department would be included in the DPW.



Ms. Parker raised the question of whether there should be continue to be a separate Water and Sewer Commission, how they should be appointed and what their responsibilities would be. Other options discussed were having the town council or a subcommittee of the town council serve as the water and sewer commissioners. It was decided that the town council would serve as the water and sewer commissioners and set the water rates. Ms. Parker will email everyone with the model water and sewer commission from Massachusetts General Law which contains a list of powers that will be considered at our next meeting. Mr. Wrenn suggested including appeals under the powers of the water and sewer commissioners

**6. Education and public outreach discussion**

Ms. Parker noted that the public has been taking more notice and asking questions of the decisions that have been made. She questioned whether some information should go onto the website to make people aware of the changes within the legislative branch that have been decided at this point. She also suggested that it might be beneficial to start keeping track of the rationale for some of our decisions and to keep a running list of things that will need to be addressed when it comes time to present the recommendations to the public.

It was decided it would be best to hold off on putting any information on the website given that decisions may change. Individual members will continue taking questions as they come until it gets to a point when that becomes unmanageable.

Ms. Parker will forward an email that Ms. Ollerhead received which Ms. Luciano will use to draft a standard response that commission members can use when receiving future questions.

**7. Next Meeting: March 9, 2020 in Norton Public Library**

- Review of draft of the charter from Lauren Goldberg
- Finish decisions on DPW
- Boards and Committees

**8. Adjournment**

Motion was made by Ms. Snyder to adjourn the Charter Commission meeting at PM.  
Seconded by Ms. Goodwin. Vote: Unanimous.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Danica M Ollerhead

Minutes approved by the Board or Committee on: 3/9/20

Chairman Signature: Laura L Parker