

What is the Charter Commission?

The Charter Commission is a group of 9 elected members who are responsible for reviewing the Norton Town Charter (essentially the “constitution” of the town). The Commission was formed by majority vote at the April 23, 2019 Town election. At the same time, 9 residents were elected as members of the Commission.

What will the Charter Commission do?

[Massachusetts General Law Title 43B](#) governs the formation and responsibilities of the Charter Commission, including identifying certain deadlines for Charter Commission business.

The Charter Commission will take 18 months to review Norton’s charter, and other relevant information to determine whether changes might make it work better for the Town of Norton and its residents. It will do this by taking testimony from town residents, staff and officials. The Commission will also invite testimony from officials in similar and neighboring towns. The Commission aims to be as transparent and open as possible to ensure everyone has the opportunity to be heard.

The goal of the Commission is to make sure that Norton’s government works as efficiently as possible for its residents. If the Commission believes the goal can only be accomplished by making changes to the existing charter, those changes will be incorporated into a final report and put to a vote by all residents of Norton on **April 27, 2021**.

What’s the timeline for the Charter Commission to accomplish its goal?

[Massachusetts General Law Title 43B](#) identifies specific deadlines for accomplishing its task. The Norton Town Clerk held the first meeting of the Charter Commission so that the Commission could elect officers and start to get organized. This meeting was held on May 9, 2019.

- Initial meeting called by the Town Clerk—May 9, 2019
- Public Hearing—June 3, 2019
- Preliminary Report—August 23, 2020
- Public Hearing—September 20, 2020
- Final Report—October 24, 2020
- Ballot Question to Adopt or Reject New Charter—April 27, 2021

The Commission will hold regular meetings (currently scheduled for every other Monday in the Board of Selectmen’s meeting room) to solicit input from the public and key personnel and officials from Norton and elsewhere. **We want to know what’s working, what’s not working, and what changes residents would like to see in town.**

Also note, the preliminary report will be widely available for comment by the public. Additionally, the Attorney General will review and comment on it prior to the Commission's final report.

What kinds of changes could the Commission recommend?

The Charter Commission may recommend no changes, a complete revision of the Town Charter, or something in between. This potentially includes:

- Identifying the [form of government](#);
- Creating, dividing or consolidating town departments;
- Distributing powers, duties and responsibilities among local offices;
- Establishing the procedure to be followed by each.

How can I be involved in the process?

The Charter Commission aims to be as open and transparent as possible. Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend public hearings and meetings to voice their opinions. Additionally, town residents, employees and officials can email the Commission at Charter@nortonmaus.com

Further information and updates can be found at <https://www.nortonma.org/charter-commission>