



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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By Town Clerk GP at 7:41 am, Sep 24, 2024

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Charter Review Committee

Date: 2024-06-10

Time: 7:30 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Berger Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Chris Haley, Vice Chair Phil Pacino, Jesse Arnold, Jonathan Barnes (remote), Geoffrey Beckwith (remote), Chuck Robinson

Members - Not Present:

Alan Foulds, Andrew Grimes, William Brown

Others Present:

Town Clerk Laura Gemme, Town Manager Matt Kraunelis (remote)

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Jacquelyn LaVerde

Topics of Discussion:

This meeting was held in-person in the Berger Conference Room of Town Hall and remotely via Zoom.

Chair Chris Haley called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm and reviewed the evening's agenda.

Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

Brief Overview of Charter changes to date

The Committee briefly reviewed the suggested changes to the Charter to date and did not have anything to add.

Review Charter changes submitted by Boards and Committees

Mr. Haley explained that Town Clerk Lauran Gemme solicited feedback from Boards and Committees on the proposed Charter changes to date.

Section 4.11 for the Town Forest Committee was changed to be consistent with the description of other Committees and removed the Select Board "shall determine the number of members", and added that "three years terms so arranged that as near an equal number of terms as possible shall expire each year". The same changes were made to the Historical Commission Section 4.8.

Adding the Permanent Building Committee to the Charter was discussed, but the Committee agreed to leave it as a bylaw, as it would be easier to change if needed.

There were no additional comments or changes from the Board of Library Trustees, RMLD Citizens Advisory Board, School Committee, Community Planning and Development Commission, or Conservation Commission. Trails Committee is covered under Section 4.14.

The Cultural Council questioned whether they could increase the number of members, and whether that would be done through the Charter or bylaw. Ms. Gemme opined that the Cultural Council does not belong in the Charter, as it would limit what they could do. Committee members agreed.

The Committee discussed questions posed by the Finance Committee about defining what employee means in Section 2.12.1, and whether to clarify "compensated" employee. Mr. Haley stated that he will consult with Town Counsel on the matter.

Review Charter changes submitted by RMLD

Vice Chair Phil Pacino provided a memo prepared by legal counsel Duncan & Allen. He noted that currently, RMLD does not follow what is in the Charter, rather it follows Mass General Laws Chapter 164. The Committee reviewed the recommended changes in the memo. The memo will be reviewed by Town Counsel for comment.

Public Outreach Forum Ideas, Participation and Scheduling

The Charter Review Committee will host a Public Forum to review the proposed changes to the Charter for the public. In past forums, each member picked a section to review. This forum will be hybrid and be recorded. The Committee will then hold a follow-up meeting to address any concerns raised at the forum, and to review any items remaining from Town Counsel. Anyone who is unable to attend will be able to submit comments ahead of time to be addressed at the forum. The Committee discussed and agreed to schedule the public forum for Thursday, August 29th at 7:00 pm, assuming Town Counsel is available.

Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be held on September 9th at 7:00 pm.

Future Agenda Items

The Committee will review the RMLD changes and legal opinions on various items at their next meeting.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Phil Pacino, seconded by Chuck Robinson, the Charter Review Committee voted 6-0-0 to approve the meeting minutes of January 29, 2024.

Roll call vote: Phil Pacino – Yes, Jesse Arnold – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Geoffrey Beckwith – Yes, Jonathan Barnes – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes.

On a motion by Phil Pacino, seconded by Chuck Robinson, the Charter Review Committee voted 6-0-0 to adjourn at 8:50 pm.

Roll call vote: Phil Pacino – Yes, Jesse Arnold – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Geoffrey Beckwith – Yes, Jonathan Barnes – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes.