

TOWN OF PLYMOUTH

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

JUNE 18, 2024

*Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18 and further updates, this meeting was conducted in a **Hybrid format**. A Zoom Meeting link was provided.*

These minutes are not verbatim – they are the recording secretary's interpretation of what took place at the meeting, per Open Meeting Law, G.L. C 30A, § 22.

The Charter Review Committee held a scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, 6 PM, at the Plymouth Townhall, Ropewalk Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, 26 Court Street, Plymouth, MA 02360.

In attendance: Alan Costello, Chair, Steve Bolotin, Vice Chair, Len Levin, Clerk and members, Betty Cavacco via Zoom, Mike Hanlon, Joseph Hutchinson, Tim Lawlor, Laurence Pizer via Zoom and Martha Vautrain. Staff assistant, Michelle Turner, was present, via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER

Alan Costello, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Minutes of June 4, 2024

Martha Vautrain MOTIONED to approve the Minutes, as amended, 2nd Steve Bolotin.

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN			YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Steve Bolotin, VCH	X				Len Levin	X		
Betty Cavacco			X		Laurence Pizer	X		
Alan Costello	X				Martha Vautrain	X		
Mike Hanlon	X							
Joe Hutchinson	X				All members are full standing members.			
Tim Lawlor	X							

MOTION PASSED 8-0-1

There was no PUBLIC COMMENT at this time.

The Committee began their discussion of the Charter Version 6.14.24

Mr. Levin asked everyone to review the document closely comparing it to meeting minutes. It is important that all proposed changes voted on and approved are included.

The subcommittee met with Town Counsel prior to this evening's meeting and Mr. Bolotin reviewed what was discussed.

He explained that the draft "Revision 240602-2" was provided to each member to demonstrate what the new chapters/sections would look like in a reordered/reformatted. That document did not contain all of the votes taken.

The goal of meeting with counsel is to determine how the proposed charter should be presented to the Representative Town Meeting. Several motions will be drafted. The first motion would be to ask for support to re-ordering the existing charter (as if no changes were proposed). If Town Meeting approves this and no other changes, the existing charter will be organized to read/understand it easily.

The changes will be defined and explained for each Chapter.

Laurence Pizer asked if two documents would be presented to town meeting – the charter that is being reviewed at this meeting Version 6/14/24 and Revision 240602-2.

Mr. Bolotin believed only one charter will be presented and it will be Version 6.14.24 with all the final edits made. Each chapter will be a discussion and a vote of town meeting.

Mr. Pizer believed that a second document displaying all changes made would be helpful.

Mr. Bolotin agreed that could be done, also.

There would be potentially 11 motions

Discussion ensued over the presentation of the charter to Town Meeting.

Martha Vautrain would like to see the Executive Branch as it currently exists, the Town Moderator moved back into the Legislative Branch, and she had concern with Chapter 4 – Elections.

Mr. Bolotin suggested that the Executive Branch is part of Chapter 2 – **Town Wide Elected Town Boards and Officers**. He further explained that the Moderator is part of the Executive Branch, elected by the people. In the Table of Contents – the Executive boards could be delineated there.

Mr. Bolotin suggested that Ch. 2 could be renamed Executive Branch and include the Select Board and the Planning Board.

Ch. 3 – Other Elected Town Wide Boards and Officers and include the School Committee, Moderator and others.

Ch. 4 – Legislative Branch

Mr. Pizer noted that the School Committee's role in the School Department is similar to the Select Board for the town side of government.

Mr. Bolotin asked the Committee to think of reading the Charter as an average citizen, rather than a Charter Committee member. He does not think most people understand Plymouth's form of government. He hopes the renumbered Charter will make understanding the form of government more easily.

Discussion ensued over the Moderator's position as executive vs. legislative. Mr. Bolotin's opinion was the Moderator is a town-wide elected position by the people and has other duties beyond reporting to Town Meeting. The position goes beyond a legislator.

Ms. Cavacco hopes the new Charter is simpler to understand Plymouth's form of government. Ms. Vautrain believes because the Moderator reports to Town Meeting, the position should be under the Legislative chapter.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Al DiNardo, Precinct 17 – Town Meeting is the basis for Plymouth's government and should be first in the Charter. He offered some history that originally town meeting was a gathering of citizens, and the first appointment was a constable, followed by a town clerk and then when towns became too large to manage by the people, "selectmen" were chosen.

Ms. Vautrain MOTIONED to organize the chapters as follows: Ch. 2 Legislative Branch include the Moderator, Chapter 3 the Executive Branch include the Select Board, Planning Board and School Committee, 2nd Joseph Hutchinson. This motion did not include Housing Authority and Redevelopment.

Discussion ensued the chapter the Housing Authority and Redevelopment Authority would go into (Town Wide Elected Town Boards and Officers?)

Mr. Hanlon explained the order of the Federal Govt as Legislative, followed by Executive. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Vautrain could not recall a discussion of the reorganized Table of Contents and Mr. Levin explained that it was drafted from the previous Charter draft Revision 240602-2. Mr. Lawlor suggested that Ms. Vautrain offer the Committee a draft of how she believed the Charter should be organized.

Ms. Vautrain withdrew her motion, followed by Mr. Hutchinson withdrawing his 2nd. She will submit a draft at the next meeting.

It was noted that the fall warrant opens on July 23rd and closes on August 9.

Ms. Cavacco noted that all of the changes in the Charter have been voted on and approved.

Mr. Bolotin noted that the Committee has not yet voted on the reorganized Table of Contents. He also noted that Ms. Vautrain is not offering language changes – she has an opinion of the order of chapters/sections (which has not been voted on).

Discussion continued on the reordered charter and Ms. Vautrain's recommendations.

Mr. Lawlor MOTIONED to repeat Ms. Vautrain’s original motion
“to organize the chapters as follows: Ch. 2 Legislative Branch include the Moderator, Chapter 3 the Executive Branch include the Select Board, Planning Board and School Committee”. This motion did not include Housing Authority and Redevelopment.

2nd Betty Cavacco.

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN			YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Steve Bolotin, VCH		X			Len Levin		X	
Betty Cavacco		X			Laurence Pizer		X	
Alan Costello		X			Martha Vautrain	X		
Mike Hanlon		X						
Joe Hutchinson	X				All members are full standing members.			
Tim Lawlor		X						

MOTION FAILED 2- 7-0

Mr. Pizer would like a consensus from the Committee that time is of the essence and the next meeting should be the final discussion.

Again, Mr. Levin stressed how important it was that everyone review the minutes and notes and make him aware of any discrepancies.

Ms. Vautrain discussed the Town Manager’s duties, section 3-5-1. She would like to see the prior Charter Commission’s rewrite of that section incorporated into the charter.

Another lengthy discussion ensued over this section.

RE: DEFINITIONS (Ch. 1, Section 6)

- i) Precinct-The word “precinct” shall mean the areas into which the Town is divided.

Mr. Bolotin MOTIONED to add the words “for voting purposes” to the end of the sentence, 2nd Mike Hanlon.

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN			YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Steve Bolotin, VCH	X				Len Levin	X		
Betty Cavacco	X				Laurence Pizer	X		
Alan Costello	X				Martha Vautrain	X		
Mike Hanlon	X							
Joe Hutchinson	X				All members are full standing members.			
Tim Lawlor	X							

MOTION PASSED 9-0-0

Mr. Bolotin would like to add a definition for “Town Meeting”.

Mr. Pizer believed this to be infringing on MGL and asked Mr. Bolotin to bring this forth at the next meeting.

Mr. Bolotin agreed.

Mr. Costello would like a discussion on the town political committees and holding 2 positions. Town meeting members should be exempt, and this should be memorialized in the Charter.

Mr. Bolotin offered that political committees are not bodies of the town. He suggested adding “**of the Town**”, as shown below.

h) Multiple-Member Body - The words “multiple-member body” shall mean any board, commission or committee or subcommittee **of the Town**, thereof consisting of two or more persons authorized to act collectively, whether elected or appointed but shall not include town meeting

Mr. Costello would like the words...(but should not include town political committees) to the end of the sentence.

No action taken on making changes to this definition. Mr. Costello will prepare some text for the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle A. Turner
Michelle A. Turner

Minutes Approved on: July 16, 2024