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Charter Commission Meeting Sept 13th, 2021

By Paul Cunningham, TMM-pct 8\

I am addressing this commission for the second time after reviewing some of your documentation in your decision making process.

I find questions that pop up in many of the research documents such as The Collins Center Charter and related documents findings which outlined current charter activity from towns of all sizes, updated June 2021.

It showed towns like Amherst, Eastern, East Longmeadow changing from town to city with population totals 38,000, 25,000 16,000 of the 29 towns listed. The others were tweaking their charters or like most cities they provided a 5 year review a standard feature of their charter.

I then saw the document which showed the 3 selected charters to study by each of you 9 members and after reviewing these charters and making notes I would state that you can't get the feel that an in person visit would create vs your previous study. This especially true of a town like Braintree that owns the electric service, a golf course and a few other businesses. I speak to you as one of the few town meeting members that visited and interviewed the first time mayors of 3 towns, Weymouth, Braintree and Framingham. It's easy to get a 45 minute review with each executive officer and sometimes key members of their staff.

The visit should include the business development groups in these towns and what they do to attract and develop new businesses, which has to be a top priority of any Plymouth politician. We do a miserable job at identifying and preparing sites to be developed and we have to have economic contributors not just big houses.

We hear the term "just rubber stampers" to describe some levels of our current organization and talking to a senior citizen who was 7 years at the head of the A&F group he said his group would have challenging votes of 7-4 or 8-3 instead of today's "in a vote of 11-0-1, or 12-1-0 this article was approved etc.

As for my fellow town meeting members I will repeat what I have written on a number of occasions, namely we have had 125 voting members in the last 3 elections and omitting the charter question, there were 38 votes taken and the average YES vote was 121 and the average NO vote was 4. We rubber stamped the last \$ 277.7 budget in 6.5 hours and by my count with less than 12 questions.

Should we continue with this result as the budget heads above the ¼ billion dollar mark?

I leave you with a few questions, after a board member stated, we can stick with this form of government due to PLYMOUTHIAN EXCEPTIONALISM. Could someone define this for us?

Also, would you please investigate charter commission results which took place in towns of 60,000 population, or 50,000 population or even 40,000 population and tell us in writing what they recommended.

And would you especially interview a city/council government, which changed back to the Representative Town Form in all of the commonwealth's history ,including those small towns of under 15,000 population that have a city/council type.

Thank you for your attention to these points.