

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
September 26, 2023
10 Meetinghouse Road**

ROLL CALL: A meeting of the Bedford Charter Commission was held on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, 10 Meetinghouse Road. Participating were Terry Wolf (Chair), Kelleigh Gleason (Vice Chair) and members: Susan Labrie, Jeff Kerr, Linda Camarota, Paul Brock, Bryan Lord, Matt McLaughlin, and Lori Radke. Also present was Town Manager Rick Sawyer.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Ms. Labrie.

Article 2: A formation of Charter Commission proposed by citizen’s petition

Shall a Charter Commission be established for the sole purpose of establishing Official Ballot voting under the current form of government? **Yes – 2304** No – 891 72% approval

All materials and presentations to the Commission are available on the Town of Bedford website at Bedfordnh.org – Boards & Commissions – Charter Commission.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

MOTION by Vice Chair Gleason to open the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Brock. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 9-0.

Chairwoman Wolf thanked everyone for coming. They had 9 meetings together, and they were close to the end of the process they’re supposed to be following. They made proposed recommendations to changing the Charter per their charge and have drafted a preliminary report. The public hearing was to get their feedback; up to five minutes of comment. It’s not going to be a Q & A, but if there was a factual question that they could easily answer, they would go ahead and do that.

Mr. Kerr wanted to know if there were any comments submitted by email and Chairwoman Wolf responded not that she was aware of.

Jay Nash, Seton Drive, 33 Seton Drive, thanked each of the Commission members and the work that they did. The work they did since March was an example for public boards. They’ve been clear, transparent, thorough and efficient. They set a high standard for how public boards and commissions can behave when established to further a charge like they have. They did what the voters asked them to do. They drafted and recommended legally acceptable changes to the Charter that were required to allow Bedford voters to use a ballot to vote on the Town budget. He encouraged all of them to put the changes to the voter. He thought their report was fantastic and the changes were what’s required. He encouraged unanimous approval from the Commission. This process started with more than 2,000 voters wanting to put the budget on the ballot; it’s a very simple premise. Since thousands of them were showing up to vote on a Tuesday, vote on the Town budget then as well. In their form of government, whether you raise your hands or fill out an oval, the Bedford voters were required to approve the Town budget. It’s 2023, not 1823; let’s

mark their choice on a paper ballot on the same day they're voting for everything else. Waiting until the next night in a dark auditorium ignores the effort and time of the thousands that already turned out to vote. The changes they've made were simple; not dramatic or radical in any way. Putting the budget on the ballot was an easy and straightforward way to vote and it encourages more of their citizens to participate in the process. He thanked all of them for their effort; they should be proud of what they accomplished. He asked Bedford voters next March to show their appreciation and vote in favor of putting the budget on the ballot.

Patrick Kelly, 19 Ledgewood Road, stated that he read the draft; it was fantastic. After 25 years of working for the Federal government, it was very well prepared. He had not questions and thanked them for giving up their time and he appreciated the work.

MOTION by Vice Chair Gleason to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Brock. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 9-0.

4. PROPOSED CHARTER CHANGES

Chairwoman Wolf stated that there were a couple of potential tweaks to the Charter, but nothing substantial. They need to do those first, because they are part of the report.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that he read the entire Charter from front to back. He came up with three things that he thought were worth discussion. He sent an email to Chairwoman Wolf who forwarded to Mr. Sawyer and he has Mr. Sawyer's comments.

C2-5 Conduct of elections

Date of elections. The election officers, whose duty it is to conduct regular elections, shall use a nonpartisan official ballot system as detailed in the election laws of the State of New Hampshire, on the second Tuesday in March **to choose Councilors and such other officials as specified by this Charter**, each of whom shall be elected by the voters of the entire Town.

Mr. McLaughlin was wondering if they should add, '**To vote on all warrant articles**' or '**To vote on all warrant articles approved at the Deliberative Session.**' Mr. McLaughlin stated that Mr. Sawyer didn't recommend that change. His comment was, 'Article 2 was about elections and in his opinion, having the budget process would not be appropriate.' Mr. McLaughlin stated that they were talking about conduct of elections, and they're going to put the budget on the election, and wanted to know if they needed to say more than they were just voting for Councilors and officers. Vice Chair Gleason thought that was covered in the Official Ballot Voting sections and would agree with Mr. Sawyer. Mr. McLaughlin stated that when Mr. Sawyer emails, he generally agrees with him too. Mr. Brock thought that paragraph was dealing more with the election of officers, not with that which was being voted on. Mr. Sawyer stated that Section 5 was dealing with finance; they've spelled out a whole new process for that in Section 5. This was about the election of officers as in the title of Article II: Elections; Election of Officials; Conduct of Elections, not finance.

C5-2 Budget procedure.

At such time as may be requested by the Manager or specified by the Administrative Code, each officer or director of a department shall submit an itemized estimate of the expenditures for the next fiscal year for the departments or activities under his control to the Manager. The Manager shall, based on these estimates and other data, the Town Manager shall prepare a recommended budget which he shall, together with these department estimates, **be submitted** to the Council on such date as the Council shall establish.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that they struck out 'submit' and put in 'be submitted', but it makes the sentence read, 'these estimates and other data, the Town Manager shall prepare a recommended budget which he shall, together with these department estimates, **be submitted** to the Council'. Vice Chair Gleason stated that it should just be 'submit'. Mr. Sawyer agreed; it would be one less change they would have to make.

Chairwoman Wolf wanted to know if they needed 'he shall'. It says, 'the Town Manager shall prepare a recommended budget which **he shall**, together with these department estimates' She wanted to know if it should read, "the Town Manager shall prepare a recommended budget, together with these department estimates'. Vice Chair Gleason stated that it would then say 'which shall **be submitted** to the Council'. Chairwoman Wolf stated they would just need to remove the word 'he' on line 439. Mr. Lord suggested taking out the 'he' and leave 'be submitted'. The change would be to keep it as drafted and just delete the word 'he'. Mr. McLaughlin thought that sounded right.

C8-7 Budget process

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Charter, this article shall not apply to Article V of this Charter or any actions taken pursuant thereto.

Mr. McLaughlin didn't know what that meant, so he didn't know if it should be in there. Mr. Sawyer's comment was 'It should be in there, because it makes it clear that the budget cannot be amended using Chapter 8.' Mr. Sawyer stated that in Article VIII, the title was Citizen Concerns; Initiative Petition; Referendum; Recall. The budget process they've laid out would not have any of those provisions and would not be typical anywhere in the State. Mr. McLaughlin stated that in reading the whole Charter, those were the only three things he flagged and two out of three, Mr. Sawyer corrected him on them.

Chairwoman Wolf asked for any more changes to the Charter and there were none. She wanted to know if the removing of the word 'he' was just considered a grammatical change, and Mr. Sawyer responded sure. Chairwoman Wolf wanted to know if Mr. Sawyer could add a footer on both copies that says, 'Proposed changes by the Bedford Charter Commission' and put the date. If they look at the subsequent pages, it looks like it's the Town Charter. She would also note the revised section, so it would be clear for people.

Mr. Sawyer stated that there was one comment from the attorney that came after the last meeting. Chairwoman Wolf stated that he sent an email on Monday, September 11th and said that C5-4 was superfluous, so they would delete lines 546 – 549. Mr. Brock wanted to know if that required they renumber all of the remaining 'C' paragraphs. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if they could just put 'C5-4 – Removed xx/xx/xxxx'; the date would be next March's date. That way nothing had to be renumbered or do they go through and

renumber them all. Chairwoman Wolf thought renumbering them would be a housekeeping issue. Mr. Sawyer stated that it would be and the codifying company would take care of it. He thought there were other places in the Charter where it just says 'intentionally left blank'. Chairwoman Wolf stated that they would just remove it.

Ms. Camarota stated that on line 254 it says 'is vested in an Official Ballot Town Meeting.' and wanted to know if it was proper to have Town Meeting in there when they're talking Official Ballot. Mr. Sawyer stated that it occurs a few places in the Charter, and they ran it by the Town attorney and he felt like Official Ballot voting was a form of Town Meeting and it did not need to be corrected in other locations. Mr. Sawyer stated that if they wanted to take the word 'Town' out or take both out of that spot, they were welcome to do so. Ms. Camarota thought if the attorney and Mr. Sawyer were comfortable with it, it looks fine.

Mr. Kerr stated that there was a line that says, 'The capital reserve budget shall be voted on as its own warrant article or articles, clearly enumerating each capital reserve fund category' and wanted to know if that meant every single capital reserve item was going to be on the ballot listed to be approved. Chairwoman Wolf responded no, that was what they said if there was a new capital reserve. Mr. Kerr stated that the sentence after that talks about new ones. The sentence before that says, 'The capital reserve budget shall be voted on as its own warrant article or articles, clearly enumerating each capital reserve fund category.' If there were 15 existing capital reserve categories, he wanted to know if each of the 15 had to be listed on the ballot or was it just going to say all of the existing funds and categories were in there and how long that sort of ballot question was going to be if they had to enumerate every single reserve fund category. Mr. McLaughlin stated that they had a sample ballot and they listed them; it's not all that long. It's each reserve budget and a number next to it; they were really just voting on the total. Mr. Sawyer thought they left it up to the Council to decide how many articles there would be, but in general as it was described by the Commission, their intent was there should be one that collects the majority if at all possible. There would be separate ones for any new reserves and any time a reserve was modified, removed, or changed its purpose, that would have to be a separate article as well. Mr. McLaughlin had the 2023 Town Meeting, and it would be a full page. Mr. Kerr stated that that was his concern, whether it was a page or three pages long. Mr. McLaughlin stated that it was still one vote, but that's how they did it at Town Meeting last year. Chairwoman Wolf stated that all of the major items would be listed. Mr. Sawyer stated as potentially one, but the Council could break it up into 50 or 5. Mr. Brock stated that it was the Council's discretion as to how they display it. Mr. Kerr wanted to make sure they weren't tying the Council to something that was going to be onerous. Vice Chair Gleason thought they picked the language that they did, so they could break out a particularly controversial item in the event that they needed to.

Chairwoman Wolf wanted to know if they needed a motion and a vote or was it more of a housekeeping piece. Mr. Sawyer thought that at some point they were going to vote to move their language forward along with the report.

Chairwoman Wolf stated that a couple of people came in since they closed the public hearing and wanted to know if any of them wanted to speak, because they should reopen the public hearing if that was okay with the Commission members.

MOTION by Vice Chair Gleason to open the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Kerr. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 9-0.

Susan Tufts-Moore, 27 Bedford Center Road, stated that she had an editorial thing she noticed. She printed out the Bedford Town Charter proposed changes, and that's not the one that was on the screen. Under 'Budget Procedure', there's a place where the subject and verb didn't agree and thought they may want to change it if they hadn't already done that. Chairwoman Wolf stated that they had already fixed that. Ms. Tufts-Moore stated that there was one other place where they didn't capitalize 'session' after 'Deliberative'. She thought for consistency they should capitalize 'session'.

MOTION by Mr. Brock to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Camarota. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 9-0.

5. PRELIMINARY REPORT

Chairwoman Wolf went through her changes to the report:

She understood that 'Town Meeting' was officially called '**Budgetary Town Meeting**'. Sometimes they call it 'Town Meeting' or 'Budget Town Meeting', so she suggested that they change it to '**Budgetary Town Meeting**' throughout the whole document.

Page 1, right hand column, 'A hearing was held in June for the public to share comments. **A second public hearing is scheduled for September 26, 2023** at 6pm to receive feedback on the preliminary report.' They will update the language to say that they actually had the second public hearing.

Moving down to the paragraph, 'The charter commission voted 8-1 to accept the proposed charter recommendations. In March 2024, Bedford voters will vote on the proposed charter changes. **Approval of the changes means that future elections would be by official ballot.** Non-acceptance means the town would continue to vote on budgetary items in person at town meeting.' She would change it to say, '**Approval of the changes means that future elections would be through official ballot.**' It really didn't make a huge difference. Mr. Brock wanted to know if they wanted to leave the first sentence, '**The charter commission voted 8-1 to accept the proposed charter recommendations**', open since they hadn't voted yet on the final report. Chairwoman Wolf stated that they were going to go back to that later in the evening.

Chairwoman Wolf stated that she didn't spell Dawn's last name correctly, so they would be fixing that.

Mr. McLaughlin wanted to go back to the sentence, '**Approval of the changes means that future elections would be by official ballot.**' Chairwoman Wolf thought that was fine. For some reason she wanted to change 'by' to 'through', but 'by' was fine. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if they wanted to put the word '**budgetary**' in the sentence, because in the sentence afterwards they say, 'Non-acceptance means the town would continue to vote on **budgetary** items in person at town meeting.' He thought '**budgetary**' needed to be in both places. He might write it, '**Approval of the changes means that future budgetary elections would be by official ballot.**' Mr. Brock wanted to know if it was a budgetary

election or a budgetary vote. Elections sounds like it applies to people. Chairwoman Wolf stated that she would say, 'Approval of the changes means that future town budgets are approved by official ballot.' Mr. McLaughlin liked that; it just had to have budgets in there somewhere. Especially where they put it in the 2nd sentence.

Chairwoman Wolf wanted to know if Mr. Sawyer could find out when the SAU was formed. Mr. Sawyer wanted to clarify she wanted to know when it adopted official ballot. Chairwoman Wolf responded, no, she wanted to know when the SAU was formed. Mr. Brock clarified when SAU 25 come into existence; he thought it was late 80's. Mr. Sawyer stated that he would find that answer.

At the very bottom of that column, she didn't like the sentence, 'to vote across multiple hours and by absentee ballot.' She didn't think it made any sense. It's not very clear. Councilor Radke stated that they could say, '7-7' if they wanted to get specific. 'Have 12 hours to vote in addition to voting absentee if they were unable to make that day'; something to that effect. Chairwoman Wolf wrote, '7am to 7pm and by absentee ballot.' Mr. Kerr wanted to know if they wanted to specify the time in case it changes at some other point. He wanted to know why they would put it in there with the time. Chairwoman Wolf thought it was factual, specific, and it is what it is. It's been that way for years. Mr. Kerr thought they could say, 'while the polls are open.' Mr. Brock stated that at this point it's not a Charter issue, it's the report. Chairwoman Wolf stated that it only needed to be good until March 2024.

On the right column, 2nd paragraph, 'Prior to this, most school town meetings'. She wanted to replace 'town' with 'budget'. Further down, they use 'town' again. Also it says 'SB2' and she wanted to add, '/official ballot voting', because they use it interchangeably, but other people may not understand what that was.

In the next paragraph down it says, 'In 2004, a petitioned warrant article was put on the ballot to adopt official ballot voting as well as create districts for the Town Council.' She wants to insert 'for the town' after 'official ballot voting'.

In the last sentence where it says, 'the Commission was created as a result of the petitioned warrant article.' She wants to put 'the Bedford Charter Commission was created as a result of the petitioned warrant article.'

Page 3, Commission Research, 2nd bullet, 'Town council: the town charter'. She wants to change 'the town charter' to 'a town charter', because they were just describing the concepts.

Bullet 4, 'Council-Manager: the mayor is elected or appointed by the council, a city manager is appointed by the council'. She wants to put, 'A mayor is elected or appointed by the council or a city manager is appointed by the council.' Then end the parenthesis, '(Berlin, Concord and Dover are a few examples)'. Councilor Radke questioned 'Council-Manager'. Mr. Sawyer stated that the 3rd bullet was 'Mayor-Alderman' where a mayor was elected. 'Council-Manager' there could be a mayor, but there may not be a mayor as well. There could just be a Council and a Manager. Chairwoman Wolf stated that she pulled it from the NHMA presentation. Vice Chair Gleason stated that it was a little bit different, because in Portsmouth, the highest vote getter on the Council becomes the mayor in that

type of a situation and Dover was similar where the council appoints the manager they hire. Mr. Sawyer stated that in those examples, there were mayors in those cities as well; Berlin, Concord and Dover also have mayors. He thought the Chair was on the right track. Chairwoman Wolf stated that if it says, 'A mayor is elected or appointed by the council, or a city manager is appointed by the council' was correct. Mr. Sawyer pointed out that they just don't have to have mayors, but it was fine for this.

Next paragraph towards the bottom it says, 'which ranked 11th among New Hampshire's incorporated cities and towns.' She thought it should say, 'which ranked **the largest** 11th among New Hampshire's incorporated cities and towns.' Mr. Brock wanted to know where '**the largest**' was going. Chairwoman Wolf stated that she was going to put 'which ranked **the largest** 11th'; it should be, 'which ranked **the 11th largest** among New Hampshire's incorporated cities and towns.'

On page 5, she wanted to change the introduction. She knew when she did it, it was a little odd. Just to explain the difference between the school district election and the town election. The text she has is, 'One the second Tuesday in March, elections are held on school district and town warrant items. School warrant items include elected officials, the operating budget, and any proposed bonds and negotiated agreements. Town of Bedford warrant items include elected officials, any proposed bond and zoning amendments. The Town operating budget and negotiated agreements are voted upon at Town Budgetary Meeting the next day at 7:00 PM.' That would be the introduction about the data. Then adding the word '**school**' in the text at the top of the chart, 'Voter turnout at **school** and town election' and then the same language would be done on the chart below, the number of absentee ballots cast at **school** and town elections.'

Page 7, on the right hand column, September 6, 2023, the word '**scheduled**' needed to be deleted. It would say, 'Commission members reviewed the preliminary report and accepted the proposed Charter recommendations.' The language for tonight would be updated. 'Commission members held a public hearing. Commission members reviewed and revised the preliminary report.' Ms. Camarota wanted to know if they wanted to add public hearing on September 26th. Chairwoman Wolf stated that she already added it. Mr. McLaughlin stated that she had one bullet point that they reviewed the report. He wanted to know if she wanted another bullet point that they reviewed the Charter and made their final changes on the Charter. Chairwoman Wolf responded yes. Mr. McLaughlin thought if they take a vote on it that might also be a bullet point for September 26th. Mr. Kerr thought they were being more conservative with making motions to vote this time.

Page 8, Next Steps, on the right hand column, File Final Report – By January 15, 2024, in the middle of the paragraph is says what the final report had to have 'as an indication of the major differences between the current form of government and the proposed Charter'. Mr. Brock wanted to know if they wanted to strike the first paragraph on the left, public hearing, since it's no longer a next step. Chairwoman Wolf stated yes. She stated at the bottom of the right column, Warrant Article – March 2024 Election, they need **3/5** or **60%**; not 50%+1. That needed to be updated. She also wanted to add '**warrant**' to 'If the **Warrant** Article does not achieve a majority, then Bedford's traditional method of voting at Town Meeting will continue.' Mr. Brock stated it's no longer 'does not achieve a majority'. Mr. Sawyer suggested they could say 3/5 or 60%. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if it was State law and Mr. Sawyer responded that it was. Under RSA 49-B:6 (IV) 'If

at least 3/5 of the ballots cast on any question under paragraph I in favor of acceptance, the new charter, or charter revision shall become effective'. Paragraph 1 was revisions, paragraph 2 was amendments. Amendments were 50%, revisions were 60%.

Attorney Opinion on page 9, they have the letter and wanted to know if they would drop the letter in there. He already wrote a preliminary letter, which said great job, looks good.

Proposed March 2024 Warrant Article, they have text for that.

Under Proposed Charter Changes, she wanted to add the sentence going back to what she just pointed out for the Final Report, and put 'The proposed version changes Budgetary Town Meeting to Official Ballot Voting.' Just adding that one sentence into the Proposed Charter Changes section makes sure they fulfill the requirement specifically.

Mr. Brock wanted to clarify that she said they had the text of the warrant article. Chairwoman Wolf stated that they didn't have it. They would submit the preliminary report. Three government agencies have 45 days, so they'll come back and do a final report. She thought they could throw the warrant article in then. Mr. Brock wanted to know if that was something drafted by their attorney. Chairwoman Wolf thought in partnership would be a very good idea. Once they get the feedback on all of the language, which hopefully would be approved, then she thought it would make sense to draft the language. Mr. Sawyer stated that drafting the language of the actual text on the ballot came straight out of the RSA. Chairwoman Wolf stated that the attorney gave her some specifics; it's not that complicated. Mr. Sawyer stated that it was a single line, 'adopt the Charter as proposed by the Charter Commission'; something along those lines. Don't quote him verbatim on that, but that's essentially what it says.

Chairwoman Wolf stated that she got some feedback regarding capitalization. They talked about Budgetary Town Meeting. She wanted to know if Charter Commission and Commission be capitalized and Official Ballot voting. She didn't know if people had preferences. Mr. McLaughlin didn't think it was going to matter much one way or another. Vice Chair Gleason stated that her personal preference was to see it capitalized when it refers to THE Charter Commission as in this body that was voted in, because she thought it was a proper noun at that point. Chairwoman Wolf thought a lot of people were chronic capitalizers. Vice Chair Wolf stated that at Boston College they were, because that's the way she was taught. Chairwoman Wolf stated that she was often given that feedback. At this point she really didn't care. Ms. Camarota thought either way it should be consistent.

Ms. Camarota stated that on the first page, they list Dawn and wanted to know if the reader needed to know her position. Chairwoman Wolf responded sure and wanted to know her position and Mr. Sawyer responded Executive Assistant.

Chairwoman Wolf stated that on page 1, they have a Charter, they made updates, and the Charter Commission voted 8-1 to accept the proposed Charter recommendations. She wanted to know if there were any changes or keep the document as is. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if they were going to take another vote on the final version of the Charter. He thought they should, because there was too much discussion at the last meeting about what they were actually putting in front of people. It wouldn't hurt them to take another vote on it. Mr. Brock agreed with Mr. McLaughlin. In hindsight, he wasn't

sure that they actually were voting on the Charter changes. Ms. Radke thought they were just voting to bring it to public hearing. Mr. McLaughlin stated that that's all they voted on.

Chairwoman Wolf thought before they make any motions, they should think about what they might look like hypothetically. They have made proposed changes to the Charter. She thought they approved proposed changes to the Charter, but others were interpreting it differently. They've proposed changes to the Charter and wanted to know the vote of the body on approving those changes. Mr. Lord didn't think they needed a final, final. The final, final would take into account the minor changes they talked about tonight and also reach back to capture if there was anything else that they did the night before; particularly after they took the vote to send it to the public hearing. Mr. McLaughlin thought they just keep it simple and vote on the changes as they debated them tonight. Mr. Brock wanted to know if there was a possibility that once it gets sent to Concord and reviewed, the Charter would change again, in which case, should they hold the vote until they have what they really know was the final Charter. Ms. Radke agreed with that. Chairwoman Wolf wanted to know why they wouldn't just do it again. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to send it to Concord with a vote, so they know. Ms. Camarota thought that while they were hypothetically talking about it, she wanted to make sure that Chairwoman Wolf's comment that the motion may contain both the preliminary report and the Charter and wanted to know if they wanted that in one motion. Mr. McLaughlin thought they should do it in two. Chairwoman Wolf thought they should definitely be two.

Chairwoman Wolf wanted to go back and look at the process. They're going to submit this to the Municipal Clerk, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and the Commissioner of the Department of Revenue Administration. They have 45 days to review it, and hopefully they approve it, then in theory they're done, because they approved it. Ms. Radke thought they should wait and then as soon as they get the word they come back and reconvene and vote whether to move it forward to the ballot. Chairwoman Wolf stated it wasn't a choice; read the charge at the top of the agenda. Ms. Radke wanted to clarify that it was going on the ballot no matter what and Chairwoman Wolf stated that it was definitely going on the ballot. They were supposed to write changes to recommend it; that's the charge. She thought she was hearing that this vote was an old vote. Mr. McLaughlin responded definitely. Mr. Lord wanted to know why and have it explained to him. Chairwoman Wolf stated that what she was hearing right now was everybody saying they should do an updated vote based on the changes that they've made, so if they sent it this way without doing another vote, it's based on the previous discussion. Mr. McLaughlin stated that the 8-1 vote was on something that had changed, so if they were going to send it to Concord, he thought they needed to send it with a vote on what was reflecting the most recent changes. Chairwoman Wolf responded that was exactly what she was saying. If Concord changes it, they come back and there's a process for them to make revisions to that. That's part of this timeline. Vice Chair wanted to know if they had to vote on it tonight. Chairwoman Wolf stated that she didn't want to come back another night if they didn't have to. Vice Chair Gleason stated that she was on the same page. Chairwoman Wolf stated that as soon as they clean it up they could send it. They didn't have to wait until October 15th. Mr. McLaughlin thought they should send it right away.

Mr. Sawyer wanted to know if they were trying to decide if they were having any more meetings or not. Chairwoman Wolf stated that they weren't discussing that right now. They were staying focused on what they were going to do about the Charter changes.

Mr. Lord stated that Ms. Radke voted 'no' for a different reason. She was saying they were moving it forward, not making a final vote. It also confirmed the fact that they didn't make a vote, because Ms. Radke was voting for a different reason. Chairwoman Wolf didn't think it was a final vote; just a vote. They might vote again. Mr. Kerr thought if they phrased it as they were going to vote on what they were going to send to Concord that would be appropriate. Mr. Lord was confused, because at the end of the day, they also said that they didn't care what Concord came back with. Ms. Camarota thought they did care. Mr. Lord thought that with a properly constructed motion they could approve it in a final vote subject to; he wanted to know if it came back 'approved', would they need to reconvene another meeting to vote on it in a final fashion and keep the question open; he would argue they didn't. Vice Chair Gleason agreed with Mr. Lord. Mr. Lord stated they should just draft the motion properly. Chairwoman Wolf stated that they needed to come back with warrant article language; they definitely had to have another meeting. If they sent the report and it came back that it was perfect, best they've ever seen, they still had to have one more meeting. Mr. Lord thought then they had another vote; that works. Mr. McLaughlin stated that another reason they would want another vote was if there was somebody who was against the Charter or more than one person was against the Charter, they would have to commission someone to write a minority report. Chairwoman Wolf thought that was a whole other topic. Mr. McLaughlin thought if they were unanimous they wouldn't need a minority report. That's another reason why he thought they needed to vote on the most recent changes that had been proposed to the Charter. Mr. Brock wanted to know if the result of that vote became whatever the paragraph was in the Executive Summary. Chairwoman Wolf thought it would update that. Mr. Brock wanted to know if they get changes back from the various people in Concord that were going to review it, they could potentially have another vote. Chairwoman Wolf stated that anybody that votes on the favoring side had the right to make a motion.

Vice Chair Gleason wanted to know if they were voting to move the preliminary report with the proposed Charter changes to the next... Chairwoman Wolf stated that they were talking about the Charter changes only first. Vice Chair wanted to clarify that they were doing two separate votes. Mr. Brock thought they were dealing with the sentence that says 'The Charter Commission voted to x-y to accept the proposed Charter recommendations.' The report was a different issue. Mr. Brock thought the question was did they accept the Charter recommendations as amended this evening.

MOTION by Mr. Brock that the Charter Commission had a vote to accept the proposed Charter recommendations as amended this evening. Seconded by Vice Chair Gleason. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 9-0.

Ms. Radke wanted to tell them why she voted 'aye'. She thought long and hard about it and they were at the point to be a democracy and let the people vote on it. She thought their changes were good. Personally, when she gets into the voting booth she would vote 'no', because she thought it was flawed. She thought the Budgetary Town Meeting was flawed. She personally thought there was a better way. She would support the board, because they worked hard on it and it wasn't a bad job and it met the petitioner's goal to get everyone involved with voting. She's a big a fan of democracy, but she thought the whole process was flawed. She, personally, when she gets into the voting booth, she would vote 'no'. She wanted to be transparent. She would vote 'yes' on all the proposed

changes, because she wanted the people to make that decision. She wanted to be fair with the group so they understood where she was coming from. She supported them all, but personally, she thought it was flawed. Mr. Lord wanted to know if she thought there was a 3rd way and Ms. Radke stated there was.

Chairwoman Wolf stated that the motion passed 9-0. Mr. Brock stated that they would make the appropriate edit to the report. He assumed that implied that they could strike the paragraph for the minority report, at least for now. Chairwoman Wolf agreed.

Chairwoman Wolf stated that they were moving on to the preliminary report, which they called a 'draft' preliminary report. This became the official preliminary report as required. She wanted to know if someone wanted to make a motion to approve the preliminary report as amended.

MOTION by Vice Chair Gleason to approve the preliminary report as amended. Seconded by Mr. Brock. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 9-0.

Mr. Brock wanted to know if they could get a clean copy and Chairwoman Wolf responded absolutely.

6. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

Chairwoman Wolf stated that they were going to get this in two weeks before the timeline. They had to get it in by October 15th. She thought they should stick with the timeline. If they get it in by the 15th, the officials would have to get it in by November 29th, even if they got it in a week or so earlier. That's the week of Thanksgiving. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to clarify that when she said they have to get it in, it meant they had to get it back to the Commission. Chairwoman Wolf stated that they had 45 days to respond. If they get it back a week earlier or two, they wouldn't want to be meet Thanksgiving week. She was thinking that they set two tentative dates, because she wanted to assume when they were looking at those that they do give them feedback where they needed to make changes; just in case there was something they may have to come back, make changes, and resubmit. She was thinking setting one meeting in early December and one meeting possibly in early January. They could tentatively do it and then decide based on the results. Mr. Brock suggested December 6th, but Vice Chair Gleason stated that she couldn't do the 6th; she could do the 5th. Mr. Lord stated that he would be out of Town on the 5th; he could do the 4th. Vice Chair Gleason stated that she could do the 4th.

Mr. Sawyer stated that the room was almost always used on Monday and Tuesday nights. He thought it was scheduled for the Planning Board that night. Chairwoman Wolf suggested the 7th. Vice Chair Gleason stated that she had a Little League board meeting at 8, but she could work around it. Mr. Brock wanted to know if the 7th worked. Mr. Sawyer stated that there was nothing scheduled on the Town calendar at the moment. He didn't think there was anything that they couldn't move. Mr. Lord stated that he may be out of Town, but it didn't sound like it was going to be a huge lift and wanted to know if he could have the Chair's permission to dial in if necessary. Chairwoman Wolf wanted to know if that was still allowed and Mr. Sawyer stated as long as they had a quorum present. Chairwoman Wolf stated that they would start at 7PM. Vice Chair Gleason stated that her only caveat was if her husband ended up travelling for work for some reason, she had

two kids to get to different practices in different towns, but she could tentatively commit. Mr. Brock stated that was the 1st and Chairwoman Wolf wanted a 2nd. Chairwoman Wolf confirmed 7PM on December 7th. She wanted to know if they had to submit changes, how long it would take for the officials to turn it around. Mr. Sawyer thought it was 30 days. He didn't think the 2024 calendar was populated yet. Vice Chair Gleason thought the 2nd Wednesday of the month was usually free and Mr. Brock suggested the 10th. Vice Chair Gleason stated that the Council was 1st and 3rd. Mr. Sawyer stated not in January. Chairwoman Wolf wanted to know about Thursday. Vice Chair Gleason stated that her daughter had tournament softball. Mr. Sawyer thought the Council was the 10th and 24th. Mr. Sawyer reminded them that the final report needed to be submitted by January 15th. He thought they may want two meetings in December rather than January. Vice Chair Gleason stated that she could do the 4th. Mr. Lord stated that he could do the 4th. Chairwoman Wolf thought they should do the 4th. They could always change it. In theory, the December 7th meeting could be their last meeting. They could do the final report then. If they come back with positive then they're done. This was just so everybody blocks off their calendars. Ms. Camarota wanted to know when the two meetings were. Chairwoman Wolf stated December 7th and January 4th; 7 PM for both meetings.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting – September 6, 2023

MOTION by Mr. Kerr to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Mr. McLaughlin. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 9-0.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Brock to adjourn at 7:07 PM. Seconded by Ms. Camarota. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Boufford