

**Essex Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes
(Draft)**

Town of Essex Charter Review Committee
Draft Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday October 18, 2022

Charter Review Committee: Lauren Layman, Charles Tabone, Alexis Dubief, Bruce Post, Margaret Smith, Dawn Hill-Fleury (on Teams).

Administration and Staff: Cheryl Brown

Others Present: On Teams – Lorraine Zaloom, Gina Halpin, Tanya Vyhovsky

1. Call to Order

- a. Ms. Layman called the Essex Charter Review Committee to order at 5:29 PM.

2. Agenda Additions/Changes

- a. None.

3. Approve Minutes

- a. Changes to minutes from 2022-10-11. Lines 42 and 51 change the word less to fewer
- b. Mr. Post made a motion seconded by Ms. Dubief to approve minutes: October 11, 2022. Motion passed 4-0, Ms. Smith abstain

4. Public Comment

- a. Tanya Vyhovsky (on Teams)
 - i. Suggested we use postmark dates to determine if tax payments were sent to the town on time.
 - ii. Spoke about the licensing of contractors with the town.
 - iii. Recall provision should not be for people that did not like a decision that did not go their way.
 - iv. Voting wards will build engagement and community connection.

5. Member Recommendations to Charter

- a. Reorganize the flow of the Charter
 - i. Preamble with DEI and Mission of such as a theme
 - ii. We can reorganize the structure of the Charter as we finalize changes to individual sections.
 - iii. Ms. Dubief suggested we use the model charter she provided as a guide on how to organize our Charter.
- b. § 117-103 (c) – Ensure consistency and clarity of manager and Selectboard roles regarding committees, commissions, employees, departments, divisions, etc.
- c. § 117-103 (d) - Strike
- d. § 117-105 (a) – Revise text to reflect the purpose of section: the Selectboard may enforce ordinances
- e. § 117-106 (a)(b)(c) – Revise language regarding publishing in newspaper of general circulation in town. Consider revisions to improve access and inclusion.
- f. § 117-107 – Specify which passage
- g. § 117-108 – Allow/require electronic maintenance and access in addition to book.
- h. § 117-109 – Replace legal voters with registered voters.

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- i. § 117-110 – Move this section to powers of town
- j. § 117-203(a) – good as is
- k. § 117-203(c) – Who is eligible to fill a vacant position. Add “until the next annual meeting after a person eligible to fill that position.”
 - i. What do we do in case of a Town Moderator vacancy?
- l. § 117-205(a) – Consider revising to make more accessible and inclusive
- m. § 117-206(a) -Add cemetery commission. For DRB, add it and give a timeline of 7/1/2024 to be enacted by.
- n. § 117-206(b) – Include committees as well as commissions.
- o. § 117-207 – Ensure it is consistent with § 117-209(b)(1)
- p. § 117-208 – Increase minimum to \$1500.00
- q. § 117-209(b) – Ensure consistent with other power granting authorities
- r. § 117-302(a) – Change time to 7:00 PM.
- s. § 117-303 – Change Town to Annual meeting
 - i. Revise to reflect current process of Australian ballot
- t. § 117-304 – Bullet point this section for clarity and change qualified to registered.
- u. § 117-305 – good as is
- v. § 117-401 DRB will need enforcement powers.
 - i. Add a section 402 for the DRB
- w. § 117- Subchapter 5 – Change to Department of Assessment
- x. § 117-501 – Change to Department of Assessment
- y. § 117-502 – Change to Department of Assessment
 - i. This section needs research and clarification before moving forward
- z. § 117-504 – Refer to other Charters to see what language they use
- aa. § 117-505 – Move this up higher in the Subchapter
 - i. Need more information on why these changes might be appropriate
- bb. § 117-602 – Eliminate positions that are no longer relevant. Consider adding Fire Chief. Also, define Selectboard approval process.
- cc. § 117-701 – Strike last sentence
- dd. § 117-702(b) – Revise for clarification. Define the terms of the process.
- ee. § 117-705 – Conform to Australian ballot
- ff. § 117-802 – Provide a 5 day grace period before the 8% additional late charge
- gg. § 117-901 – Make consistent with state law and refer to federal laws regarding layoffs, or strike sentence altogether as needed.
- hh. § 117-903
 - i. See Civics document from Ms. Dubief for examples of conflict of interest.
 - ii. Replace with language that clarifies the intent of this section aka. Town officials (elected or employed) and appointees may not bribe or accept bribes. Also add conflict of interest language.
- ii. Recall Provision
 - i. Define the conditions for recall
 - ii. BCA can verify petitions for recall
 - iii. Twenty percent was discussed as the number to use
 - iv. Would apply to all commissions not just Selectboard

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v. Who would assess the reason?

1. Possibly BCA appoints a three-person committee?

vi. What problem does this solve

vii. Needs to be enforceable and meet state guidelines.

jj. Executive Sessions

i. Is it enforceable to limit Executive sessions.

ii. Is it legal to restrict the number of Executive sessions.

kk. Voting Districts

i. Civic and Democratic Participation Committee

1. This is a proposal for a study on this?

ii. Do we need it. The new town needs time to settle (gel)

iii. The Charter may not be the right place for this

iv. What problem are we solving

v. Do people feel at-large represents their interests

vi. Does the Selectboard reflect the will of the people after the election

vii. The KSV report may no longer be reflective of Essex

viii. The Selectboard can appoint a Civic and Democratic Participation Committee

6. Next Meeting

a. The next scheduled meeting of the Essex Charter Review Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at 5:30 PM at Town of Essex 1st Floor Conference Room.

7. Adjourn

a. Mr. Post made a motion seconded by Ms. Dubief to close the meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

b. Meeting Adjourned 7:31 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charles Tabone

Minute taker