

**Charter Review Committee (CRC)**  
**Town of Groton, Groton, MA 01450 978-448-1100**

**Meeting Minutes – August 19, 2015**

**Present:** Jane Allen, Michael Bouchard, Robert Collins, Michael Manugian, Bud Robertson

**Not Present:** Stuart Schulman

**Recorder:** Michael Bouchard

Chairman Manugian called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The Minutes of August 5, 2015 were reviewed, and approved as amended. 3 In Favor; 2 Abstain (Allen, Collins).

Mr. Manugian asked if the committee would want to accept Mr. Haddad's offer to ask the department heads to deliver a presentation of the charter and how it guides the operations of the town. The committee responded that it would like the presentation. Mr. Collins suggested a day meeting, but Mr. Manugian suggested the meeting be kept in the evening. Mr. Bouchard will contact Mr. Haddad for his preference between the committee's first choice of September 2 and second choice of August 26, either at 7:00 PM.

Mr. Bouchard reviewed the list of public comment submissions received to date. New receipts since last meeting were from MS. Jennings, Sewer Commission, Water Commission and Mr. Wallens. A report of all submissions is available on the Charter Review Committee web page at [www.townofgroton.org](http://www.townofgroton.org).

Mr. Manugian initiated a review of outreach efforts:

- Around Town                      September 3                      Robertson, Schulman
- Veterans' Breakfast              September 3                      Robertson
- Women's Club Luncheon        September 16                    Bouchard
- Nashoba Tech Luncheon        September 30                    Manugian
- Youth Sports Leagues
  - Communication memo sent to the addresses provided by Ms. Allen by Mr. Bouchard. No responses.
- Boy Scouts
  - Mr. Robertson contacted the organization and is waiting for a response.
- Newcomers Club
  - Mr. Robertson emailed to the Newcomers address and has not heard any response. Ms. Allen volunteered to attempt communication via the Newcomers groups' Facebook account.
- Fireman's Muster

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- The Muster will be held September 3 from 11:30 to 5:00. Suggestion was that the committee person a table in shifts. Members would be available to discuss any specific (or general) topics. Comment forms would be available. There was discussion about the productivity of committee resources in attending the Muster. The committee voted 4 In Favor and 1 Opposed to not attending (the net result of the vote being that the committee will not have a formal presence at the Muster). Mr. Manugian was the dissenting vote.
- Mr. Manugian submitted articles to be published in the Council on Aging and in the School Superintendent newsletter.
- Mr. Bouchard reported that the communication flyer to be distributed in the GELD electric bills has been submitted.

Mr. Manugian introduced the organization chart of the town, which is available on the town's web site. The town organization is complex, consisting of town employees, elected officials and appointed officials and committees. Members had questions on reporting relationships and authority. The organization chart shows a mixture of "solid line" and "dotted line" reporting relationships. Members were asking exactly what each relationship type entailed; i.e., is this a supervisory relationship, an ability to "hire/fire", an ability to direct activities or something else. The organization is further unique in that elected officials report to the electorate and not to an organizational entity.

There were also some different reporting relationships for what appeared to be similar roles. Examples:

- Most departments have the "dotted line" relationship to the commission and "solid line" to the Town Manager.
- The Housing Coordinator and the Council of Aging Director each have Department each have two "solid line" reporting relationships, one to their committee and the other to the Town Manager
- The Water Department and Sewer Department each have two "solid line" reporting relationships, one to its commission and the other to the Town Manager.
- The Electric Light Department has a "solid line" relationship to the Electric Light Commission and a "dotted line" relationship to the Town Manager. Mr. Bouchard stated this was a function of MGL Chapter 164 MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF GAS AND ELECTRICITY (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXXII/Chapter164>)
- The Library Director has a "solid line" relationship to the Trustees of the Library and a "dotted line" to the Town Manager. The Trustees are responsible for hiring and evaluating the Director according to Section 3-8 (b) of the charter.
- The elected Town Clerk is shown to have a "dotted line" relationship to the Town Clerk's Office. The Town Clerk's Office has a "solid line" relationship to the Town Manager. The Town Clerk supervises the office, but does not appoint the Clerk's Office staff.

Mr. Bouchard stated that the town organization is complex, given the mix of elected and appointed officials, and employees. There are many concepts attempting to be depicted in the organization chart. He further stated that the charter requires coordination of elected officers with the Board of Selectmen (Section 3-1 ( e)).

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Mr. Collins offered that he thought the charter was misleading in that it implies that too much power is given to certain authorities. Ms. Allen held that the opposite might be true. Mr. Robertson stated that the “right side” of the chart (i.e. town employees) was clear, but less so on the left side with the boards and committees.

Mr. Pease, from the audience, asked Mr. Bouchard (who is also the Town Clerk) if the reporting relationship of the Town Clerk was “broken”. Mr. Bouchard stated it was not. Mr. Collins stated that nothing in the organization chart took away from Planning Board’s statutory authority, and that the Land Use Department’s “solid line” reporting to the Town Manager actually had made things run more efficiently. Mr. Robertson observed that the structure was centralized.

The discussion continued so the members could try to better understand the organization’s environment. Mr. Bouchard pointed out that any appointments made by the town manager had to be ratified by the Board of Selectmen or the appointment would not stand.

The next phase of the discussion focused on committees. Mr. Manugian composed a spreadsheet listing committees from the town’s web site, their make-up, and how they are appointed (or if elected). He asked how the authority for a committee came to be, where it got direction and to where it reported. Mr. Collins and Mr. Bouchard stated that committees have “charges”, sometime from a statute or bylaw, and report to the appointing authority. In their experiences, committees operate independently with guidance from the appointing authority as needed. It wasn’t clear where, and if, committee authority was documented. Mr. Manugian and Mr. Bouchard were authorized to request clarifications, as possible, from Mr. Haddad, both for the town organizational structure and committee authority.

Mr. Manugian asked that members identify “key” committees from the list so that the Charter Review Committee can research them in anticipation of questions from the public. Twenty-three town committees were so indicated on the list.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Bouchard, Clerk