**CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**UN-APPROVED**

**JULY 10, 2025**

**Present:** Peter Cunningham, Chair; Rebecca Weksner, Vice Chair; Mark Haddad, Clerk; Brenden Mahoney; Bob Collins;

**Members Absent:** Kristen Frank; Michael Sulprizio;

**Also Present:** Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant.

Chair Cunningham called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. Chair Cunningham presented the Agenda for the meeting.

**Discuss Outcome of the 2025 Spring Town Meeting Vote on Proposed Charter Amendments and Determine How to Proceed, including Revising Original Proposals and/or Providing New Recommendations to the 2-25 Fall Town Meeting.**

Mr. Cunningham explained that a presentation was given at the 2025 Spring Town Meeting. When the motion to amend the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Town Clerk Appointment Policy was put to a vote, a resident made a motion to keep the current appointment authority of the Town Manager and not adopt the proposed language. That motion to amend failed. Mr. Cunningham explained the final Charter motion failed by three votes. During the presentation, there was some pushback regarding the provision that allowed Select Board Members to serve on other elected boards.

Mr. Haddad stated that there was angst at the Town Meeting regarding the Community Preservation Projects, and many people were upset about the Affordable Housing Trust proposal, Article 11: Disposition of Town-Owned Land on Hoyts Wharf Road. Mr. Haddad said the Charter amendment was after those articles. Mr. Collins believes the Proposed Amendments to the Groton Charter may require more time. Mr. Cunningham asked if another public hearing should be held. The members agreed that one should be held. Ms. Weksner stated that three votes out of the 150 votes are not representative of the majority.

It was discussed that one consideration could be to split the questions instead of presenting the Charter as a single document. Mr. Haddad recommended scheduling a public hearing to gather feedback from the community, proposing the removal of the Select Board section of the Elected Multiple-Member Body, and seeing where it goes from there. Ms. Weksner mentioned that removing that part feels reactive because it failed by three votes. Mr. Haddad explained that a public hearing is necessary for this reason. The Town Clerk, Ms. Dunbar, suggested using a consent agenda for the Charter, noting that any section could be pulled from the agenda if the Town Meeting wants to discuss it further.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Town Clerk, Ms. Dunbar, is leaving her position in the Town of Groton to become the Assistant Town Manager and Human Resources Director in the Town of Harvard. Mr. Haddad explained that two candidates must be presented to the Select Board by August 11th for consideration for the appointment of a new Town Clerk. If this deadline is not met, the Town will be without a Town Clerk, as the Charter does not allow for appointing an acting Town Clerk. He said that the Town is fortunate because Ms. Dunbar is leaving the office in excellent shape, and there are two excellent Assistant Town Clerks available. He emphasized that this situation highlights the need for amendments to the Charter.

**Determine if Another Public Hearing Should be Called/Considered.**

The Committee agreed that another public hearing should be scheduled. Mr. Haddad explained the proposed Fall Town Meeting timeline and noted that the Select Board and Finance Committee will hold the public hearing on the Fall Town Meeting Warrant on Monday, September 15th. He also believes the Charter Review Committee should hold a public hearing around the same time. Mr. Collins suggested holding the public hearing in early September, proposing both September 4th and September 11th. Mr. Haddad will email Members Sulprizio and Frank to ask about holding the public hearing on September 4th at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Weksner said that asking initial questions at a Town Meeting is not a good time and does not demonstrate good faith investment in your town.

Being no further business, Chair Cunningham adjourned the meeting at 4:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Cruikshank