

Observer Corps Report

Town of Plymouth Charter Commission

Meeting of August 15, 2022 (Hybrid – In-Person and via Zoom)

Commissioners in Attendance: Peck, Brewster, Hall, Malaguti, Abbott, Keohan, Mand, Vecchi

From Collins Center: Ward, Corbo, Lloyd

New way to organize and present budget to Town Meeting: Finance Director Lynn Barrett

presentation: Detailed presentation by Barrett, including that now there are 7 pages (A – G) that cover all departments, that are each voted separately by TMM. Each page includes several departments, and the details are explained by 2 large books available to AFC and TMM.

Peck reviewed what he is proposing - that AFC change their presentation to TMM so that TM can vote on each department separately. He is not proposing that F. Director change her way of developing the budget. But Barrett said it would change and increase her department's work. Further discussion led to language changes agreeable to Director and Commissioners.

Regarding another budget matter, Hall asked Barrett how TMM can get all the costs for each dept., including benefits for each dept. Barrett suggested she contact her or go to the Finance Department on-line site to the transparency page.

Conflict of Interest: Collins Center agreed, with a few minor suggestions, with the removal of Town Employee words part and “collapsing” the two paragraphs into one. Vecchi is only in favor of the removal of T. Employee words. But all others present voted, again, in favor of the two changes.

Charters 1 and 2: (to top of page 22 in Aug.8 Master Draft). Hall motioned to accept both chapters. Collins noted they do not yet have an answer to 2 yellow highlighted sentences in Town Moderator section. Abbott clarified that ‘COPC vetting Moderator candidates’ need only be advisory. Chapters 1 and 2, except 2 highlighted parts, were accepted 7 – 1.

Town Manager Brindisi Mark-ups: Commissioners are aware that By-laws only need to be updated if new charter proposal passes into law May 2023.

Regarding 3-5-1a in current Charter, all agreed 15 days is too long to wait for suspension/paid admin. leave action and agreed to have Collins provide suggested new language to Abbott who will review with Brindisi. Several other mark-ups addressed specific credentials for new hires or appointments. After discussion commissioners agreed to remove specific credentials from the Charter in favor of adding them in the By-laws, and agreed to add the Director of Finance language (3-9-1): ‘shall be especially fitted by education, training, and experience to perform the duties of the office’ to other Director sections.

8:30pm Public Comment: Pat McCarthy Pct 18, with the following questions/concerns:

What are the detailed dates/timeline for electing and/or appointing COPC and FC? Is it workable?

How will COPC find citizens to appoint to FC, especially quickly as is sometimes necessary.

Mc Carthy does not agree with COPC appointing FC members.

What if a citizen's name is on both COPC and Town Moderator lists?

Where will the salary money come from for COPC support staff?

What are the details for Appointments Board?

How will the town be divided into two north and south districts for the proposed 2 SB members who would not be at large candidates?

Her comments have been sent to each commissioner and will be posted on Charter web page.

Ken Cristifori, via Zoom, suggested dividing town N-S by population, keeping in mind precinct lines as well as possible.

Collins Question regarding appointments recommended by advisory Appointment Committee. Commissioners clarified that the Appointment Committee would help make all committee appointments, except those to the Finance Committee, which is already specified in the Charter.

Enforcement 7-5-1: Collins will provide language, guided by public records law, about how COI complaints will be handled in terms of public/private issues.

Next Meeting: Chapter 3, which addresses Executive Branch: SB, PB and town Manager plus memo 8 about Communications and Engagement (of Town Government with town citizens). Per Collins, this topic is not currently in any other MA charter, but it is recommended to be in town charters by National Civics Chapter. Collins suggests keeping it simple, implemented by Town manager.

Next Meeting: August 22, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Vautrain

LWV Observer Corps