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**Meeting Minutes**  
**Natick Charter and Bylaw Review Committee**  
**Established, 2022 Fall Annual Town Meeting**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 218 – 117 East Central Street, Natick, MA**  
**March 7, 2023 – 7:00 PM**

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### **Call to order**

Member Attendees: Harriet Merkowitz, Member; Robert Awkward, Member; Saul Beaumont, Member; Paul Griesmer, Member; Christine Weithman, Member; Donna McKenzie, Associate Member; Paul Connolly, Associate Member

Member Absentees: William Proia, Member; Anne Continelli, Member;

**Meeting called to order with duly posted notice as an in-person meeting and agenda: 7:03 PM quorum present**

### **Agenda Item 1. Citizen's concerns**

- Discussion of dates when Charter changed to increase Selectboard from 3 to 5 members  
Fall 1993 – legislature passed a special act which would take effect when voters change the charter to increase the selectboard to 5 members.
- MGL requires a special act to change the # of elected officials in town – this would also impact changing the size of the town meeting body if the 180 members were to be changed to a new number.
- Charter change passed by the voters in spring 1996.
- First elected members of 5 member Selectboard in spring 1997.

### **Agenda Item 5 taken out of agenda order – Motion for Spring TM Warrant article.**

- Review of motions for TM report and discussion of amount requested for proposed CBRC legal counsel. Motion A is to provide a report to town meeting. Motion B seeks an amount of \$50,000, funded by free cash to support CBRC legal counsel request.
- Discussion on rationale for the expense given this is a special area of the law, town Charters.
- Christine Weithman moved to accept motion as presented and seconded by Harriet Merkowitz.
- Motion was approved by unanimous vote 7-0.
- Discussion of need to complete and present to Fin Com answers to their standard questionnaire – Paul to suggest answers and provide to committee at a future date.

### **Agenda Item 6- Correspondence from member of town Governance Committee**

- Committee discussed options and communication back to the sender.

### **Back to Agenda Item 2**

- Review of Charter Article 3 section 3-11 Planning board discussion
  - Discussion of term of 5 years and whether need to review if too long.
  - Reminder that Planning Board is responsible for making plan for the development of the town vs Selectboard creates policies for the town

- Another possible area where a group may need their own dedicated legal counsel
- Section 3-12 Recreation and Parks Commission discussion – handout provided of MGL 45 section 2 identifying when the selectboard would become the parks commissioner – pertinent to Natick given only half the board is elected and the remaining board members are appointed by the Select Board
- Other discussion of this section:
  - Reminder that this board is only an advisory board
  - Possible conflict with MGL – powers and duties direct board to advise town administration when Selectboard per above MGL are the parks commissioners.
- Section 3-14 Housing Authority discussion – noted that this section of the charter was recently amended
- Begin Article 4 Town Administrator – receive input from initial reviewers.
  - Is it necessary to have legal review MGL for differences between Town Administrator and Town Manager?
  - Punctuation note – TA Section 4-1 sections are (a), (b), (c) where Section 4-2 has sections 1;2;3
  - Need for cross- referring to by laws related to TA position -should the by-laws expand on the background and training to be considered by a screening committee?
  - This section of the charter needs to be cross referenced with sections 7-10 of the charter
  - General note frequently made by members that the definition of a town bulletin board requires clarification given use of electronic media and website
  - Section 4-2 number 13 – a full and complete inventory of all town owned property ... consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles is the wrong standard to hold the TA to – these principles are complex and only a CPA can meet these standards.
  - Section 15 – the question was raised if the outlined practices are followed –
  - Section 19 could be a duplicate section.
  - Section 4-3 – Acting TA - clarity may be needed if a TA is unable to file the required letter indicating they are unable to perform the duties and responsibilities for a period of time; the section on vacancy should be evaluated
  - Section 4-3 Removal and Suspension [of TA] – should have review of by-laws and evaluation if this section needs revision.

## Meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM

Moved by Saul Beaumont and seconded by Bob Awkward

Respectfully submitted,



Christine K Weithman

Accepted on \_\_\_\_April, 4, 2023 \_\_\_\_