

## Plan E Charter\*

\*Please note that the full text of the Cambridge Plan E Charter, as amended by three amendments effective January 1, 2022 (one added a paragraph to Section 105, and the two others added two subsections to Section 116), appears in its entirety below. It exists without the three amendments of January 1, 2022 within separate sections of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 43, beginning with Section 93 and continuing in separate listings. See link immediately below:

<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter43>

### **PLAN E: Government by a city council including a mayor elected from its number, and a city manager, with all elected bodies elected at large by proportional representation (from Chapter 43 of the Massachusetts General Laws)**

*Chapter 43:  
Section 93. Plan E; effective upon adoption*      **Section 93.** The method of city government provided for in the following twenty-three sections shall be known as Plan E. Upon the adoption by a city of Plan E, it shall become operative as provided in sections one to forty-five, inclusive, except as otherwise provided by the following sections.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 94.  
Definitions*      **Section 94.** The terms “city clerk” and “registrars of voters” when used in sections ninety-three to one hundred and sixteen, inclusive, shall have the respective meanings given them by section one of chapter fifty.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 95.  
Governing power of city council, etc.*      **Section 95.** The government of the city and the general management and control of all its affairs shall, except as otherwise provided in this chapter, be vested in a city council, which shall exercise its powers in the manner hereinafter set forth, but subject to sections one to forty-five, inclusive, insofar as not inconsistent; except that the city manager shall have the authority hereinafter specified, that the general management and conduct of the public schools of the city and of the property pertaining thereto shall be vested in the school committee, and that the city clerk, the city auditor, any official of the city appointed by the governor and any trustees or other officers whose election by the voters of the city is required by reason of the fact that the city has accepted any gift, devise or bequest shall have the powers and duties which may be conferred and imposed upon them by law.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 96. City council; membership; tenure*      **Section 96.** The city council shall consist of seven or nine members, as provided in this section, all of whom shall, at each regular municipal election, be elected at large for terms of two years each by proportional representation as hereinafter provided and shall serve until their successors are qualified. The city council in any city having seven wards or less at the time of adoption of this plan shall be composed of seven members and the city council in any city having more than seven wards at the time of adoption thereof, nine members. Section eight of chapter thirty-nine shall apply to members of the city council. All trustees or other officers mentioned in section ninety-five shall at each regular municipal election be elected at large for terms of two years each by [proportional representation](#) as hereinafter provided.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 97. City council; powers and duties; organization*      **Section 97.** The city council shall have and exercise all the legislative powers of the city, except as such powers are reserved by this chapter to the school committee and to the qualified voters of the city.  
The city council, elected as aforesaid, shall meet at ten o’clock in the forenoon of the first Monday of January following the regular municipal election, and the members of the city council shall severally make oath, before the city clerk or a justice of the peace, to perform faithfully the duties of their respective offices, except that any member-elect not present shall so make oath at the first regular meeting of the city council thereafter which he attends. For the purposes of organization, the city clerk shall be temporary chairman until the mayor or vice-chairman has qualified.

Thereupon the city council shall, by a majority vote of all the members elected, elect a mayor and a vice-chairman from its own members and the persons elected as such shall likewise make oath to perform faithfully the duties of the respective offices to which they are so elected, and they may so make oath at the same meeting at which they are so elected. The organization of the city council shall take place as aforesaid, notwithstanding the absence, death, refusal to serve or non-election of one or more of the members; provided, that a majority of all the members elected to the city council are present and have qualified. If the office of mayor or vice-chairman becomes vacant, the city council shall in like manner elect one of its members to fill such office for the unexpired term; provided, that no such vacancy shall be filled so long as there is any vacancy in the council.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 98.  
Meetings of city  
council*

**Section 98.** The city council shall fix suitable times for its regular meetings. The mayor, or the vice-chairman of the city council, or any four members thereof, or any three members thereof in the case of a city council composed of seven members, may at any time call a special meeting by causing written notices, stating the time of holding such meeting and signed by the person or persons calling the same, to be delivered in hand to each member of the city council, or left at his usual dwelling place, at least twelve hours before the time of such meeting. Meetings of the city council may also be held at any time when all the members of the city council are present and consent thereto. Except in the cases of executive sessions authorized by section twenty-three A of chapter thirty-nine, all meetings of the city council shall be open to the press and to the public, and the rules of the city council shall provide that citizens and employees of the city shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any such meeting in regard to any matter considered thereat.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 99.  
Quorum;  
presiding officer;  
duties of city  
clerk; voting  
procedure*

**Section 99.** A majority of all the members elected to the city council shall constitute a quorum. The mayor, if present, shall preside at the meetings and may vote. In the absence of the mayor, the vice-chairman of the city council shall preside and, in the absence of both, a temporary chairman shall be chosen, who shall serve during the absence of both the mayor and the vice-chairman. The city clerk shall be, ex-officio, clerk of the city council, and shall keep records of its proceedings; but, in case of his absence or disability or of a vacancy in the office, the city council shall elect a temporary clerk, who shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of his duties and shall act as clerk of the city council until the city clerk resumes his duties or a new city clerk is qualified. All final votes of the city council on questions involving the expenditure of fifty dollars or more, or upon the request of any member any vote of the city council, shall be by yeas and nays and shall be entered on the records. The affirmative vote of a majority of all the members elected to the city council shall be necessary for the passage of any order, ordinance, resolution or vote, except that the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present shall be sufficient to adjourn any meeting of the city council.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 100.  
Mayor; official  
head of city;  
powers and  
duties; vice-  
chairman*

**Section 100.** The mayor shall be recognized as the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes and shall be recognized by the courts for the purpose of serving civil process and by the governor for military purposes. In time of public danger or emergency, as determined by the city council, he may, with its consent, take command of the police, maintain order and enforce the laws; and he shall have all the authority and powers conferred upon mayors by sections eighteen and nineteen of chapter thirty-three. He shall be chairman of the city council and chairman of the school committee. He shall have no power to veto but shall have the same powers as any other member of either such body to vote upon all measures coming before it. He shall perform such other duties consistent with his office and with sections ninety-three to one hundred and sixteen, inclusive, as may be imposed upon him by the city council. During the absence or disability of the mayor, or during the time such office is vacant, his duties shall be performed by the vice-chairman. In case, at any time, there shall be neither a mayor nor a vice-chairman, the member of the council senior in length of service, or, if more than one have so served, then the member senior both in age and length of service shall perform the duties of mayor until a new mayor has qualified. The mayor shall have no power of appointment, except of the employees mentioned in section twenty-five and except as provided in section one hundred and two.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 101.  
Repealed, 1952,  
259, Sec. 3*

*Chapter 43:  
Section 102.  
Vacancies in  
elective bodies*

**Section 102.** Except as provided in this section, a vacancy in any elective body shall be filled in the manner provided in section thirteen of chapter fifty-four A. If, under said section, no regularly nominated candidate of the city council or school committee remains, the vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the remaining members, except that if the remaining members fail to fill such vacancy within thirty days after they shall have been notified by the city clerk that such vacancy exists, such vacancy shall be filled by the appointment of any qualified voter of the city by the mayor, or, if there is no mayor, by the vice-chairman, or if there is no mayor or vice-chairman, by the member of the council or of the school committee, as the case may be, senior in length of service, or, if more than one have so served, then the member senior both in age and length of service.

*Chapter 43:* **Section 103.** The city council shall appoint a city manager who shall be sworn to the faithful performance of his duties and who shall be the chief administrative officer of the city and shall be responsible for the administration of all departments, commissions, boards and officers of the city, whether established before its adoption of this plan or thereafter, except that of the city clerk, city auditor, any official appointed by the governor or any body elected by the voters of the city. He shall be appointed on the basis of his administrative and executive qualifications only, and need not be a resident of the city or commonwealth when appointed. He shall hold office during the pleasure of the city council and shall receive such compensation as it shall fix by ordinance. No member of the city council shall during his term of office be chosen as city manager, and no person who has within two years been elected to or served in any elective office in the city or in the county in which the city is located shall be chosen as city manager.

Before the city manager may be removed, if he so demand, he shall be given a written statement of the reasons alleged for his removal and shall have the right to be heard publicly thereon at a meeting of the city council prior to the final vote on the question of his removal, but pending and during such hearing the city council may suspend him from office. The action of the city council in suspending or removing the city manager shall be final, it being the intention of this provision to vest all authority and fix all responsibility for such suspension or removal in the city council. In case of the absence, disability or suspension of the city manager, the city council shall designate the head of some department to perform the duties of city manager during such absence, disability or suspension, and, in case the office of city manager becomes vacant, the city council shall designate the head of some department to serve as acting city manager until a new city manager is appointed.

*Chapter 43:* **Section 104.** Except as otherwise specifically provided in this chapter, it shall be the duty of the city manager to act as chief conservator of the peace within the city; to supervise the administration of the affairs of the city; to see that within the city the laws of the commonwealth and the ordinances, resolutions and regulations of the city council are faithfully executed; and to make such recommendations to the city council concerning the affairs of the city as may to him seem desirable; to make reports to the city council from time to time upon the affairs of the city; and to keep the city council fully advised of the city's financial condition and its future needs. He shall prepare and submit to the city council budgets as required of the mayor by section thirty-two of chapter forty-four and, in connection therewith, may, to the extent provided by said section thirty-two in the case of a mayor, require the submission to him, by all departments, commissions, boards and offices of the city, of estimates of the amounts necessary for their expenses. He shall make all appointments and removals in the departments, commissions, boards and offices of the city for whose administration he is responsible, except as otherwise provided in this chapter, and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this chapter or be required of him by ordinance or resolution of the city council. The city manager shall have and possess, and shall exercise, all the powers, rights and duties, other than legislative, had, possessed or exercised, immediately prior to the adoption of this plan, by the mayor, board of aldermen, common council and all other boards, commissions and committees of the city and their members, severally or collectively, except such as are by this chapter conferred upon the school committee or are otherwise provided for thereby.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 105. City  
officers and  
employees;  
appointments  
and removals*

**Section 105.** Such officers and employees as the city council, with the advice of the city manager, shall determine are necessary for the proper administration of the departments, commissions, boards and offices of the city for whose administration the city manager is responsible shall be appointed, and may be removed, by the city manager. The city manager shall report every appointment and removal made by him to the city council at the next meeting thereof following such appointment or removal. The city manager may authorize the head of a department, commission or board, or the holder of an office, for whose administration he is responsible, to appoint and remove subordinates in such department, commission, board or office. All appointments by, or under the authority of, the city manager, if subject to chapter thirty-one and the rules and regulations made under authority thereof, shall be made in accordance therewith, and all other appointments as aforesaid shall be on the basis of executive and administrative ability and training and experience in the work to be performed.

The City Manager shall refer to the City Council and simultaneously file with the Clerk the name of each person the City Manager desires to appoint or reappoint as a member of a board or commission. Appointment of a member of a board or commission made by the City Manager will be effective upon a majority vote of the city council, which vote shall occur within 60 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed with the City Clerk. The appointment may be approved or rejected by a majority of the full City Council before 60 days. An appointment or reappointment shall take effect if the City Council fails to act within those 60 days.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 106.  
Officers and  
employees;  
regulations;  
penalty for  
violations*

**Section 106.** Officers and employees of the city appointed by, or under the authority of, the city manager shall perform the duties required of them by the city manager, under general regulations of the city council. Any violation of this section shall constitute sufficient grounds for removal of any such officer or employee.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 107.  
Interference with  
city manager by  
council  
forbidden;  
penalty*

**Section 107.** Neither the city council nor any of its committees or members shall direct or request the appointment of any person to, or his removal from, office by the city manager or any of his subordinates, or in any manner take part in the appointment or removal of officers and employees in that portion of the service of said city for whose administration the city manager is responsible. Except for the purpose of inquiry, the city council and its members shall deal with that portion of the service of the city as aforesaid solely through the city manager, and neither the city council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinate of the city manager either publicly or privately. Any member of the city council who violates, or participates in the violation of, any provision of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both, and upon final conviction thereof his office in the city council shall thereby be vacated and he shall never again be eligible for any office or position, elective or otherwise, in the service of the city.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 108.  
Solicitation of  
political  
contributions by  
employees;  
penalties*

**Section 108.** No employee of any department, board or commission of the city shall, directly or indirectly, solicit or receive, or in any manner be concerned in soliciting or receiving any assessment, subscription or contribution for any political party, for any candidate for city office or for any political committee organized on behalf of such candidate. This section shall not prevent such persons from being members of political organizations or committees. The soliciting or receiving of any gift, payment, contribution, assessment, subscription or promise of money or other thing of value by a non-elected political committee organized to promote the candidacy for city office of an employee of any department, board or commission of the city shall not be deemed to be a direct or indirect solicitation or receipt of such contribution by such person, provided, however, that no such gift, payment, contribution, assessment, subscription or promise of money or other thing of value may be solicited or received on behalf of such a person from any person or combination of persons if such person so employed knows or has reason to know that the person or combination of persons has an interest in any particular matter in which the person so employed participates or has participated in the course of such employment or which is the subject of his official responsibility. A person who violates any provision of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both such fine and imprisonment, and upon final conviction thereof the office or position in the service of the city held by such person shall be vacated and such person shall not be eligible for an office or position, elective or otherwise, in the service of the city.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 109.  
Regular  
municipal  
election; date*

**Section 109.** The regular municipal election under this plan shall take place on the Tuesday next following the first Monday of November in every odd numbered year, and all members of the city council, the school committee and any board of trustees or other officers referred to in section ninety-five, and no others, shall be elected at each such election.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 110.  
Candidates;  
statement and  
petition*

**Section 110.** Any registered voter of the city who is eligible for election to any elective municipal body shall be entitled to have his name printed as a candidate therefor on the official ballot to be used at the regular municipal election; provided, that at least twenty-eight days prior to such election there shall be filed with the city clerk a statement in writing of his candidacy, signed by him, and with such statement the petition of not less than fifty nor more than one hundred registered voters of the city, whose signatures shall have been certified as required by law. Except as aforesaid, no person shall be entitled to have his name printed as a candidate on such ballot. Said statement and petition shall be in substantially the following form:

Statement of Candidate

I ( ), on oath declare that I reside at (number, if any) on (name of street) in the city of ; that I am a voter therein, qualified to vote for a candidate for the hereinafter mentioned office; that I am a candidate for the office of (name of office) to be voted for at the regular municipal election to be held on Tuesday, the day of , nineteen hundred and ; and I request that my name be printed as such candidate on the official ballot for use at said election.

(Signed) Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts

ss.

Subscribed and sworn to at ( ) on this day of , nineteen hundred and before me,

(Signed)

Justice of the Peace.

(or Notary Public).

Petition Accompanying Statement of Candidate

Whereas (name of candidate) is a candidate for the office of (state the office), we, the undersigned, voters of the city of , duly qualified to vote for a candidate for said office, do hereby request that the name of said (name of candidate) as a candidate for said office be printed on the official ballot to be used at the regular municipal election to be held on the Tuesday of , nineteen hundred and . The petition may be on one or more papers and need not be sworn to.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 111.  
Nomination  
papers*

**Section 111.** Any nomination papers filed under section one hundred and ten bearing more than the maximum number of signatures permitted thereby shall be invalid. No voter may sign the nomination papers of more than one candidate for election as a member of any elective municipal body; and if a voter signs nomination papers of more than one such candidate his signature shall be invalid on all such papers except the one first acted upon by the registrars of voters.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 112.  
Ballots; form  
and contents*

**Section 112.** There shall be a separate form of ballot for each body to be elected, and each such separate form of ballot shall be of a different and clearly distinguishable color from that of any other form of ballot prepared and furnished at the public expense for use at the same election. On such ballots for use in electing members of any elective body there shall be printed the following directions to voters, the first sentence under the heading to be printed in prominent bold faced type:

#### DIRECTIONS TO VOTERS

Do not use X marks.

Mark your choices with numbers only.

Put the figure 1 opposite your first choice; the figure 2 opposite your second choice; the figure 3 opposite your third choice; and so on. Mark as many choices as you please.

Do not put the same figure opposite more than one name.

If you spoil this ballot, tear it across once, return it to the election officer in charge of the ballots and get another from him.

No official ballot used at any regular municipal election shall have printed thereon any party or political designation or mark, and there shall not be appended to the name of any candidate any such party or political designation or mark, or anything showing how he was nominated or indicating his views or opinions.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 113.  
Preparing  
ballots, etc.;  
procedure*

**Section 113.** The provisions of sections five, six and seven of [chapter fifty-four A](#) and so much of section eight thereof as relates to the order of polling places by which ballots are to be counted shall apply with respect to municipal elections in a city adopting this plan.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 114.  
Counting of  
ballots;  
procedure*

**Section 114.** As soon as the polls have closed, the election officials at each polling place shall seal the ballot box without opening it, and in such manner that ballots cannot be removed therefrom or inserted therein without breaking the seal, and shall deliver such ballot box at once, as the city clerk may direct, to the central counting place, together with the voting lists, a record of the ballot box register, a record of the number of ballots given out, the ballots spoiled and returned, and the ballots not given out, all of which shall be enclosed in an envelope, and the election officials shall certify thereon as to the identity of the contents thereof. At the central counting place the ballot boxes shall be opened and the number of ballots found therein recorded and compared with the records sent from the polling places. Any discrepancies discovered shall be recorded and dealt with according to the principles laid down by the general election laws, so far as such principles may be applicable. The ballots for the city council shall be counted first and the ballots for the school committee shall be counted second. Ballots cast for other purposes than the election of members to elective bodies shall be counted at the central counting place in accordance with the laws otherwise applicable to the counting thereof. No information regarding the state of the balloting shall be disclosed before the close of the polls.

*Chapter 43:  
Section 115.  
Repealed, 1972,  
596, Sec. 1*

*Chapter 43:  
Section 116.  
General election  
laws;  
applicability*

**Section 116.** Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, all regular elections held under this plan shall be subject to all general laws relating to elections and corrupt practices, so far as applicable and not inconsistent with this chapter.

**Section 116(a).** Annually the City Council shall prepare and deliver to the City Manager a written review of the City Manager's performance in a manner provided by ordinance.

**Section 116(b).** Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 2, the City Council shall provide for a review to be made of the city charter by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the special committee shall be voters of the city not holding elective office. The special committee shall file a report with the City Council within 1 year of its appointment recommending any changes to the city charter which it deems necessary or desirable, unless an extension is authorized by vote of the City Council. Action on any proposed charter changes shall be as authorized by the Massachusetts constitution or general laws