

**A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**

January 17, 2023 @ 5:30 p.m.  
REMOTE ONLY – VIA ZOOM

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this meeting will be REMOTE ONLY via ZOOM.

The zoom link is: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/83253118929>

Meeting ID: 832 5311 8929

One tap mobile +13092053325,,83253118929# US

Agenda Items – Tuesday, January 17, 2023

- I. Roll Call
- II. Introduction by Chair, Kathy Born
- III. Adoption of Meeting Minutes from meeting January 3, 2022
- IV. Meeting Materials Submitted to the Committee to be placed on file
  - Communications from Committee Members
  - Communications from Council Members
  - Communications from the Public
  - Other Meeting Materials
- V. Updates: Community Engagement
  - **Facilitator:** Anna
- VI. Budget Presentation and Q&A
  - **Facilitator:** Finance Team & Anna. **Goal:** 30 minute presentation from Finance Team on current budget process and budget requirements, and 30 minutes for Q&A.
- VII. Review Collins Center memo on budget article with example changes
  - **Facilitator:** Mike/Pat & Anna **Goal:** Review and discuss opportunities to make changes to the budget process.
- VIII. Public Comment
  - Members of the public are invited to share their ideas or comments with the committee.

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE  
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Kathleen Born, Chair  
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo  
Mosammat Faria Afreen  
Nikolas Bowie  
Kevin Chen  
Max Clermont  
Jennifer Gilbert  
Kai Long  
Patrick Magee  
Mina Makarios  
Lisa Peterson  
Ellen Shachter  
Susan Shell  
Jim Stockard

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, December 20, 2022. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30p.m. by the Chair of the Committee, Kathleen Born. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this meeting was remote via zoom.

**At the request of the Chair, the Clerk called the roll.**

Kaled Abebe – Present  
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present  
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present  
Nikolas Bowie – Absent\*  
Kevin Chen – Absent  
Max Clermont – Present  
Jennifer Gilbert – Present  
Kai Long – Present  
Patrick Magee – Present  
Mina Makarios – Absent\*  
Lisa Peterson – Present  
Ellen Shachter – Present  
Susan Shell – Present  
Jim Stockard – Present  
Kathleen Born, Chair – Present

**Present – 12 Absent – 3. Quorum established**

\*Nikolas Bowie and Mina Makarios were both marked present at 5:42p.m.

**Chair Born opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes from the December 20, 2022, Charter Review meeting and the December 13, 2022 Charter Review Subcommittee meeting.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born, Chair – Yes

**Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passes.**

**The Chair noted that there was two Communications submitted from the Public (Attachment A and Attachment B).**

**Chair Born recognized a motion from member Jim Stockard and seconded by member Kaleb Abebe to place the two Communications on file.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born, Chair – Yes

**Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passes.**

Anna Corning began the meeting by reviewing the next steps of the Charter Review, which included an overview of the panel, upcoming city presentations from the Finance Department and Election Commission, interviews, and a community engagement update.

Member Ellen Shachter had clarifying questions about relaying the basic fundamentals of the charter to the public, Anna Corning responded by noting she has documents that members can use to help the public have a better understanding.

Elliot Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor for the Law Department, commented that because the Charter Review Committee may be starting to take official actions with scheduling community engagement and reaching out to the public, he advises that members should be taking formal votes because they are official acts being taken by the Committee, and by doing this there is an official record. He advised the members that any official action that the committee is taking, there should be a roll call vote so the Clerk can record it.

The Chair, Kathleen Born had a clarifying question about votes being taken at Planning Subcommittee meetings. Elliot Veloso responded by noting that if there were a decision by the Planning Subcommittee, the Subcommittee can take a vote, but that would be a vote to refer it to the Committee as a whole.

Anna Corning opened up conversation to members of the Committee for comments and concerns about the discussion notes from the December 20, 2022 meeting, titled “Summary of 12/20 Round Table Discussion” (Attachment C).

Member Ellen Shachter asked if Anna Corning would be able to add Ward versus At Large to the discussion notes, to which Anna Corning agreed to add.

Member Susan Shell had a clarifying question about rank choice voting. Anna Corning responded by noting rank choice voting was not a topic that was brought up in the previous discussion but would add it as a piece members would like to talk about.

Elizabeth Corbo, Human Resource Auditor an Employment Operations Analyst for the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management, offered comments and suggestions to the members of the Committee about the discussion notes, stressing the importance of engagement with community by using a form of government to do that, increasing the transparency and accountability with voters, creating a balance of authority with the legislative and executive branches of authority, and making a change in government more accessible to voters.

Elliot Veloso advised the Chair, Kathleen Born, to entertain a motion to place the December 20, 2022 meeting notes on file.

**Chair Born recognized a motion from member Jim Stockard and seconded by member Susan Shell to add the “Summary of 12/20 Round Tanle Discussion (Attachment C) to the record of the meeting minutes and place them on file.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Yes  
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes  
Kai Long – Yes  
Patrick Magee – Yes  
Mina Makarios – Yes  
Lisa Peterson – Yes  
Ellen Shachter – Yes  
Susan Shell – Yes  
Jim Stockard – Yes  
Kathleen Born, Chair – Yes

**Yes – 14, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passes.**

The Chair, Kathleen Born offered comments about the December 20, 2022 discussion notes and suggested that members think about the Council making policy, how the Manager implements the policy, and how residents might be able to influence and communicate with the City Manager.

Members Susan Shell, Kai Long, Jim Stockard, Mina Makarios, Jennifer Gilbert, Ellen Shachter, Lisa Peterson, Nikolas Bowie, Kathleen Born voiced their concerns and shared opinions on legislative and executive branches forms of government, policy and administration, and the current government system in Cambridge. They also offered suggestions on ways members should be engaging with the public and how they want to see the government represented. Many members stressed the importance of citizen participation and involvement.

**Chair Born recognized a motion from member Mina Markarios and seconded by member Kaleb Abebe, that the Committee will designate the Charter Review Committee staff to plan public engagement events on January 21, 2023 and February 2, 2023. The staff will use the prepared flier (Attachment D) and public information available on <https://www.cambridgema.gov/charterreview> in order to publicize engagement efforts. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Kaleb Abebe – Yes  
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes  
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes  
Nikolas Bowie – Yes  
Kevin Chen – Absent  
Max Clermont – Yes  
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes  
Kai Long – Yes  
Patrick Magee – Yes  
Mina Makarios – Yes  
Lisa Peterson – Yes  
Ellen Shachter – Yes  
Susan Shell – Yes  
Jim Stockard – Yes  
Kathleen Born, Chair – Yes

**Yes – 14, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passes.**

Elizabeth Corbo noted that she was accompanied by her colleagues Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd, and they did an overview of their presentation titled “Example Baseline Cambridge Charter in Modern Format” (Attachment E).

Members of the Committee had clarifying questions and comments throughout the presentation to which Elizabeth Corbo and Michael Ward were able to respond respectively.

Member Ellen Shachter suggested that the Committee form smaller working groups to focus on specific parts of drafting new articles going forward.

**Anna Corning opened public comment.**

**Public Comment**

John Hawkinson spoke on comments made by members of the Committee, statutory deadlines, and the City’s budget.

Jameson Quinn spoke on participation as it relates to a voting system, moving elections to even years, filling vacancies, and campaign financing and democracy vouchers.

**The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion that was seconded by member Patrick Magee to amend the previous motion to read “That the Committee will designate the Charter Review Committee staff to plan public engagement events on January 21, 2023 and ~~February 2, 2023~~ February 4, 2023. The staff will use the prepared flier (Attachment D) and public information available on <https://www.cambridgema.gov/charterreview> in order to publicize engagement efforts.”**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born, Chair – Yes

**Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passes.**

**The Charter Review Committee was adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.**

Two written Communications were received from the public, Attachments A & B.

Attachment C - Summary of 12/20 Round Table Discussion

Attachment D – Your Guide to the Cambridge Charter Review Flier

Attachment E – Example Baseline Cambridge Charter in Modern Format

**Clerk’s Note:** The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/387?view\\_id=1&redirect=true&h=22e978a469c4e8a2261ec1d6b4f3c6e](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/387?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=22e978a469c4e8a2261ec1d6b4f3c6e)

## Thoughts on Jan-3 Meeting

John Hanratty <jhanratty@gmail.com>

Mon 1/9/2023 8:16 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Hi,

I listened to the January 3 meeting with interest and thought the discussion was on point. Here are some other thoughts to forward to the committee.

1. Austin, TX went through the process of changing its city government over the last ten years, which might be instructive. Austin is a bigger city and has grown much faster than Cambridge but has many of the same aspirations.
  - They started with a city council (all elected at large) and a city manager.
  - In 2012, they changed to a "10-One" government, where ten councilors represent different city districts with an elected at-large mayor. One reason for the change was low public participation - only 10% voted. [2015 article](#)
  - The transition to the 10-One configuration had its challenges/benefits, but voter turnout increased from 10% to 70%. [2018 article](#) Voter turnout is shown in the chart at the very end.
  - In 2021, there was a push to amend the chart with a 'strong mayor.' [2021 article #1](#).
  - A petition to place an amendment for a strong mayor on the ballot. [2021 article #2](#)
  - In 2022, voters rejected the strong mayor amendment—[2022 article](#).
2. Cambridge has a low voter turnout for city elections. I'll guess 90% of residents could not name half of our city councilors. In addition, tracking nine at-large councilors and finding a way to provide meaningful input is difficult. The ranked voting doesn't help. Most people have no idea who they're voting for after the first 3 or 4 candidates. When I have an issue for the city, I email all city councilors and the city manager. I sometimes get one response. This situation is not a good model for community involvement.
3. Our current government does not have a unified mission, which often results in conflicting actions. For example, there is an active affordable housing effort in Cambridge, but at the same time there are actions that would increase rents and costs to property owners (e.g., property reassessments that increase taxes, requiring replacement of gas furnaces). Councilors have their pet projects / missions that result in conflicts.
  4. I'm concerned about budget transparency in our government. The council passes laws and orders without proper budget controls or community benefit goals. Cambridge is rich, but we should not waste taxpayers' money.

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute,

John Hanratty  
Porter Square





## Memorandum

**TO: Cambridge Charter Review Committee**  
**FROM: The Collins Center Charter Project Team**  
**DATE: January 13, 2023**  
**RE: Sample Charter Finance Article Language**

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### OVERVIEW

In order to assist the Committee with its preparation for a discussion surrounding finance and budget, the project team wanted to provide the Committee with examples of language that could be found in a modern charter, as well as some examples of innovative provisions that may align with some of the Committee’s articulated values and emerging themes.

### EXAMPLE OF MODERN CHARTER LANGUAGE

Provided below is the outline of a generic modern charter finance article. The City’s current charter has the equivalent of Section 6-3 (flagged with blue text), but the remaining provisions are not included. This illustrates how sparse Cambridge’s current charter is regarding financial management and budget development, although it does not mean that the City does not engage in a similar process in practice.

## ARTICLE 6 FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

### SECTION 6-1: FISCAL YEAR

- confirms the fiscal year of the City (which is established by state law as July 1-June 30)

### SECTION 6-2: ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

- establishes the timeframe for any initial budget meeting(s) and any required participants

### SECTION 6-3: SUBMISSION OF OPERATING BUDGET; BUDGET MESSAGE

- establishes the process for budget development and the timeframe for budget submission

#### SECTION 6-4: ACTION ON THE OPERATING BUDGET

- establishes the protocols for adopting the budget, including holding of public hearings, ability to modify, reject, timeframe for adoption and posting requirements

#### SECTION 6-5: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- establishes the protocols for creating and adopting the capital budget

#### SECTION 6-6: INDEPENDENT AUDIT

- authority and protocol for independent audit process

#### SECTION 6-7: EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF APPROPRIATIONS

- restatement of prohibition of expenditures beyond appropriations

### **ADDITIONAL CHARTER FINANCE LANGUAGE**

In addition to the more standard provisions above, some cities and towns have enacted finance provisions that shape the budget process in different ways. Below are some examples of these provisions for the Committee's review. Please note that most of the municipalities below have a government framework that is different than Cambridge, and references to roles such as "mayor," would need to be examined closely and aligned with Cambridge's City Manager structure, if it is kept.

#### **WATERTOWN: BUDGET HEARING AND GOAL SETTING:**

The president of the city council shall call a meeting of the city council prior to the commencement of the budget process, but not later than October 30, to review the financial condition of the city, revenue and expenditure forecasts, and other information relevant to the budget process. The president also shall invite the city's state legislative delegation and representatives of the school committee and library board of trustees to attend this meeting. Subsequent to this meeting, the city council shall meet to set policy goals with input from the city manager and the community. Based on these goals, the city manager will develop budgetary goals and the city budget.

#### **AMHERST: PUBLIC FORUM**

Not later than March 15, but before the Town Manager submits a proposed budget to the Town Council, the President of the Town Council with the cooperation of the Town Manager shall call at least 1 public forum on the topic of the proposed budget. This forum is intended for the Town Council and the Town Manager to present priorities, context based on prior years' budgets, revenue and expenditure forecasts, and other relevant information, and to solicit feedback from the public.

#### **CHELSEA: LONG TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST**

The city manager shall annually prepare a long-term financial forecast of city revenue, expenditures, and the general financial condition of the city. The forecast shall include, but not be limited to, an identification of factors which will impact on the financial condition of the city, revenue and expenditure trends, potential sources of new or expanded revenues and any long or

short term actions that may be taken to enhance the financial condition of the city. The forecast shall be submitted to the city council and shall be available to the public for inspection.

**FALL RIVER: SECTION: PUBLIC ACCESS TO FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS.**

Copies of the annual budget, capital improvement program, long term financial forecast, debt management plan and the annual independent audit shall be made available on the city website and for public inspection, at the same time they are made available to the council, and when the council receives the independent audit report. Copies of such documents shall also be filed in the office of the city clerk and the main public library.

**FRAMINGHAM: STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (SIFOC):**

There shall be a strategic initiatives and financial oversight committee (SIFOC) to advise the mayor, council and school committee on the status of Framingham's long range strategic plan in accordance with Article III, section 11(b), the state of the municipal economy, sufficiency of municipal revenues, and other fiscal matters that may from time to time be referred to it by the mayor, council or school committee. The Committee shall be comprised of nine (9) members appointed to staggered three-year terms, three (3) chosen by the council, three (3) chosen by the school committee, and three (3) chosen by the mayor, including its chair. Members shall be residents of the municipality and shall not hold any other elected or appointed office in the municipality and shall not receive any compensation. Each appointing authority shall select at least one member with expertise in finance and one member who is a member of the local business community. SIFOC will report annually to the mayor, council and school committee and shall file all of its reports with the city clerk