

## **Interview results for proposed changes to sections 4-5-2 and 6-2-12.**

**Department Head interviews conducted by Michael Cohen and Chris Rocca from 3/5/2025 through 3/7/2025.**

### **Key Takeaways**

- Overall, the department heads support making these changes.
- People feel that non-directive communication should be allowed.
- People want to know how they can “say no” to a request.
- The department heads and the Town Manager must have clear mechanisms to coordinate responses to requests or other communications.

### **Supportive Comments**

- Department heads have the judgment to communicate with Select Board members and Committee Chairs.
- Limiting these interactions to department heads is a good idea.
- It is more efficient to allow direct communication; bottlenecking all communication through the Town Manager is inefficient.
- People want to be “treated like adults.”: “It is insulting to suggest that I can’t speak directly with a Select Board member or Committee Chair.”
- This will build a better culture.
- I am on board with this language, with the changes you are talking about.
- I’ve worked in multiple Cape communities; this is the most restrictive town.
- This is long overdue.

### **Recommendations**

- We need a “relief valve” if too many requests are being made.
- It is a good idea for department heads to have the discretion to decline answering questions.
- Select Board interactions can become political — treat Select Board and Committees differently.
- Department heads must be able to control the volume of requests.
- Select Board members and Committee Chairs generally should not attend operational meetings.

### **Concerns**

- We can’t let department heads get overloaded.
- We need a process for informing the Town Manager if questions fall into a gray area.
- The language could be clarified.

- “There is only concern if the Board and Committees impose deadlines.”
- “If the proposed language is added to 4.5.2 I feel very strongly that there be additional language prohibiting any involvement of town staff in the performance review of the Town Manager.”

#### **Examples of Directive Communications**

- Providing deadlines.
- Asking for information that will take significant time and effort to compile, potentially impacting other priorities.
- Political influence.

#### **Updates to Consider**

- Explicitly state that department heads can decline requests from the Select Board or Committee Chairs.
- Are there different considerations for Select Board and Committee Chairs that should be addressed?

**Updated language based on Department Head feedback:**

**Proposed Changes to Section 4-5-2**

Except for the purposes of investigation in accordance with section 4-4-1 of this Charter, the Select Board shall deal with employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the Town Manager solely through the Town Manager, and neither the Board nor its members shall give orders to any such employee, the single exception being the Administrative Secretary who reports both to the Town Manager and the Select Board.

However, nothing in this Charter shall prohibit **informational, non-directive conversations** between Select Board members and Department Heads, provided that such interactions occur at the discretion of the Department Head.

**Proposed Changes to Section 6-2-12**

Multimember bodies and their members shall deal with employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the Town Manager solely through the Town Manager, and neither the multi-member body nor its members shall give orders to any such employee.

However, nothing in this Charter shall prohibit **informational, non-directive conversations** between Select Board members and Department Heads, provided that such interactions occur at the discretion of the Department Head.

## **Interview 1**

### **Department Head Interview**

**Date of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_ 3/5/2025 \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer (Questioner):** \_\_\_\_\_ Michael Cohen \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer (Note-taker):** \_\_\_\_\_ Chris Rocca \_\_\_\_\_

#### **1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?**

No questions.

#### **2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?**

Does the Select Board need to check in with the town manager? That seems grey. We need something in there, language that keeps checks (defines the process). I always reported up when I spoke with a Select Board member. Politics can get sloppy and messy.

MC: How to fine tune the Select Board language?

The political stuff is really hard to deal with.

People on the SB have their own agenda, it gets rocky.

#### **3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?**

The Committee side is “not as dangerous”.

#### **4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?**

Appreciate language clarification. SB and Committee need to be kept separate.

### **Main Concerns Raised**

Political influence from the Select Board

There was no way for us to talk to the Select Board other than in an investigation.

Changes need to be made, be careful not to cause other issues.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

Separate Select Board and Committees.

**Note-taker Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 2

**Date of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_3/5/2025\_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer (Questioner):** \_\_\_\_\_Michael Cohen\_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer (Note-taker):** \_\_\_\_\_Chris Rocca\_\_\_\_\_

### **1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?**

Is an example : the beach advisory committee needs numbers to do their job?

MC : yes.

### **2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?**

More reserved with 4.5.2. I work with the chairs of 5 committees. It is a little - "should I let the town manager know." I don't see a problem, but this takes me back to think about it.

I've not had instances of question that I felt needed to go back to the town manager.

### **3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?**

No reservations.

Only concern if the board and committees give deadlines.

<discussion about deadlines being directive>

### **4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?**

No recommendations.

### **Main Concerns Raised**

For me, with 4.5.2, it is however the town manager is looking for communications - we had a town manager who told us they didn't want us communicating with the Select Board at all.

Need more of a guidance on what we have to share.

Department heads know where the informational vs directive (line) is.

I have found that my committees are doing more of a directive communication.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

Needs more of a balance.

Giving the committee their limits / directive would be helpful.

**Note-taker Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 3

### Department Head Interview

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_3/5/2025\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Questioner): \_\_\_\_\_Michael Cohen\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Note-taker): \_\_\_\_\_Chris Rocca\_\_\_\_\_

**1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?**

None.

**2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?**

None.

**3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?**

None.

**4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?**

Informational makes sense

Directive can be a problem - conflict with Town Manager's directions

Previous town manager (before DT) said never talk to anyone.

Just makes a big obstacle

There should be open communication, but there should be clear directions on scope of request

MC: What are your thoughts on "deadlines"

That is directive.

CR: Select Board vs Committee?

I see them as the same, but Select Board has more weight.

To say every conversation needs to be reported, just does not make sense. It is the responsibility of the person (town employee).

It would be a rabbit hole to detail out all scenarios for a communications

Department heads have the judgement

Could it be for everyone who works for the town? - people are aware enough

People should be able to talk just at a human level

### Main Concerns Raised

### Suggestions for Improvement

Note-taker Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 4

### Department Head Interview

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ 3/5/2025 \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Questioner): \_\_\_\_\_ Michael Cohen \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Note-taker): \_\_\_\_\_ Chris Rocca \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?**

No, but two concerns.

**2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?**

Same concerns on both Select Board and Committee heads

**3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?**

As long as it's not constant, or inserting yourself into operational meetings.

The volume and being in the wrong meetings, at job sites.

**4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?**

Don't know how you can manage that, can't be a high volume.

Needs to be at the discretion of the Department Head.

Needs to be able to control the volume of the visits.

**Main Concerns Raised**

Volume and context of the interaction.

**Suggestions for Improvement**

Helpful to have informational conversation to understand issues that will be discussed at larger more formal meetings.

It should just be department heads.

Anything more than once a week is excessive.

**Note-taker Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 5

### Department Head Interview

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ 3/5/2025 \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Questioner): \_\_\_\_\_ Michael Cohen \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Note-taker): \_\_\_\_\_ Chris Rocca \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?

The intent is to restrict it to the chair?

#### 2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?

The intent is clear. Gives the people with a question a path to get it answered.

#### 3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?

None.

#### 4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?

None.

### Main Concerns Raised

No concern, this is one of the few segments that I have seen added that is clear and not open to interpretation.

### Suggestions for Improvement

To have it in black and white "thou shalt not" is not a good working environment. Having to ask the town manager if I can answer a 10 minute question is offensive. There should be restrictions, I don't have to say how high when someone says jump. If a committee member comes in and ask, it's reasonable to ask if they ran it by the chair.

How do we educate people on the right patterns of communication?

This is long overdue.

Note-taker Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Interview 6

### Department Head Interview

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ 3/5/2025 \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Questioner): \_\_ Michael Cohen \_\_

Interviewer (Note-taker): \_\_ Chris Rocca \_\_

**1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?**

None.

**2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?**

This is fine too.

**3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?**

This is fine.

**4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?**

None.

### Main Concerns Raised

People may be concerned about confidentiality.

In general the amount of interactions from chairs is fine.

It is important to educate chairs.

### Suggestions for Improvement

If you Trust your employees, you know what they are going to say.

People may be worried or afraid of speaking.

In the past you did have to go through the manager - long way around and less efficient.

You have to have an open line of communication.

If you don't trust your employees, you have to address that.

"I think these are both perfect".

**Note-taker Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 7

### Department Head Interview

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_3/5/2025\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Questioner): \_\_\_\_\_Michael Cohen\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Note-taker): \_\_\_\_\_Chris Rocca\_\_\_\_\_

**1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?**

None.

**2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?**

Language is fine.

**3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?**

Language is fine.

**4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?**

People want data, it turns into a project

Everything becomes I need to set aside time.

### Main Concerns Raised

They have to be reasonable requests.

How do we bound the work?

How can we know what is needed?

### Suggestions for Improvement

Working through the double negatives. (Re the proposed language)

Formalize and define the process.

**Note-taker Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 8

### Town Charter Review Committee – Interview Record Form

#### Department Head Interview

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ 3/6/2025 \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Questioner): \_\_\_\_\_ Michael Cohen \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Note-taker): \_\_\_\_\_ Chris Rocca \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?**

No questions.

**2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?**

As a department head I do not.

I worry that it might not be clear enough, but I always worry about things like this.

I also consider direction going from Department head to Select Board member.

I think the language is good because it covers both directions.

I've worked in multiple Cape communities; this is the most restrictive town.

**3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?**

Applying the same approach to both groups makes sense.

**4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?**

MC : do you find Select Board or Committee member ask an unreasonable number of questions?

No.

#### Main Concerns Raised

Does this apply both ways.

The previous language was one way, I think it is good that this could go both ways

#### Suggestions for Improvement

The directive should apply in both directions - to avoid inside lobbying / dealing under the table.

**Note-taker Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 9

### Department Head Interview

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ 3/6/2025 \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Questioner): \_\_\_\_\_ Michael Cohen \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Note-taker): \_\_\_\_\_ Chris Rocca \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?**

My only question is: what is the intent of the language?

MC: Clarify the charter to allow Informational, non-directive communication.

**2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?**

**3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?**

**4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?**

### Main Concerns Raised

### Suggestions for Improvement

I don't have issues with this.

I think the language is good, non-directive.

I think the intent was to channel communication so there was not cross direction.

We don't want to place an unfair burden on the town manager to be a forced bottleneck for all communications.

**Note-taker Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 10

### Department Head Interview

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_3/6/2025\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Questioner): \_\_\_\_\_Michael Cohen\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Note-taker): \_\_\_\_\_Chris Rocca\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?
2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?
3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?
4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?

### Main Concerns Raised

Is it limited to chairs only. This is important.

### Suggestions for Improvement

Agrees training is important.

There needs to be a discussion about the Public Records law regarding information being shared.

This isn't a heavy lift, I have just CCed the town manager.

We also need to be careful that the laws of open meetings are not violated.

"When in doubt, reach out."

What is the relief valve? - Bring in the town manager.

Note-taker Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 11

**Date of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_3/7/2025\_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer (Questioner):** \_\_\_\_\_Michael Cohen\_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer (Note-taker):** \_\_\_\_\_Chris Rocca\_\_\_\_\_

### **1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?**

MC: Provided background on the goals.

Background and on history, one Select Board Member was very aggressive on getting staff to do things.

I understand the motivation; I would coordinate with DT we would coordinate to get permission.

### **2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?**

### **3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?**

### **4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?**

I understand the goal is to make the town function and not be bogged down in bureaucracy.

### **Main Concerns Raised**

Every conversation is politically motivated to some extent, everyone has goals and preferences.

There is not a conversation I have with the Select Board that is not politically motivated.

It has historically been a good working relationship with the Select Board

Define what the definition of "Department Head". Department Head vs Division Head.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

- Don't want to call out a department
- Draw a line and the department head is able to push back
- Possibly have a no retaliation clause to protect Department Heads
- MC : should the finance department be separate.
- I see the bind you are in, you are just trying to enable workflow
- Know where you are coming from, lets not gum up the works
- Current cast is not a issue, they are very respectful
- When there are bad actors, it is hard to manage through

- Adding language about collaboration could help
- The key is don't prohibit business from happening

**Truro-ma.gov/personnel**

**Note-taker Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Interview 12

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_3/7/2025\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Questioner): \_\_\_\_\_Michael Cohen\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (Note-taker): \_\_\_\_\_Chris Rocca\_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Do you have any questions about the background or existing language in the charter?

What does informational mean?

MC : Town Manager is a release value

Yes that is true in any management scenario

### 2. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 4-5-2?

I don't have a problem with it generically, is that related to 4.4.1 (yes re investigations)

Is this about Select Board evaluating Town Managers performance? (MC: not specifically limited to that)

I would not feel comfortable talking about the Town Manager's performance

I would exclude performance reviews.

### 3. Do you have any concerns or comments about the proposed changes to charter section 6-2-12?

### 4. Do you have any additional concerns or recommendations?

#### Main Concerns Raised

Committee Chairs need to be educated on the impact of their requests.

Select Board should not be allowed to have conversations with employees as part of a performance review of the town manager.

#### Suggestions for Improvement

Kelly instructs department heads to come to her if they are overloaded and need help balancing incoming requests.

I am on board with this language with the changes you are talking about

Note-taker Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_