

Minutes of
Town of Truro, MA Charter Review Committee Meeting
October 23, 2024

The October 23, 2024 meeting of the Charter Review Committee (CRC) was held remotely by Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Chair Michael Cohen at 5:00 p.m. EDT. A quorum of committee members was present.

In attendance were CRC members David Bannard, Brian Boyle, Michael Cohen, Fred Fehlau, Chris Lucy, Chris Rocca, and Selectboard representative, Nancy Medoff. Susan Areson, Darrin Tangeman, Michael Forgione also joined the meeting.

Chris Rocca, new member, introduced himself.

There was public comment from Michael Forgione. Mr. Forgione submitted written comments to Chair Cohen. He would like the CRC to discuss Charter section 5-5-4. His question is what is the meaning of “funded”? He recommends additional language to clarify this provision.

Sue Areson, as private citizen, noted that the Charter was amended to provide flexibility for Town election, but it has not been amended to provide flexibility in the date of the annual Town Meeting. She recommends that the Town Moderator be consulted and this provision also modified.

Darrin Tangeman joined the meeting to state that he has a legal opinion regarding the interpretation of Section 5-5-4.

Minutes of the June 13, 2024 and August 13, 2024 meetings were approved.

Fred moved to approve June the June minutes, motion was seconded, 3 members in favor, and 3 abstentions. Brian moved (with correction of spelling of MC’s name) approval of the August minutes, motion was seconded. 5 members in favor, 1 abstention.

Charter Modernization – On-line Access

Darrin Tangeman provided information on the Town’s digitizing process for the Charter and other Town bylaws and materials. The Town has signed an agreement with Unico to digitize the Charter, Bylaws, regulations, and similar materials. The project kicked off this week. The project will include the history of changes made and will be searchable. It is expected to be completed within 6 months or so. Barbara Carboni is leading the project for staff. Mr. Tangeman took questions from members of the CRC. Fred asked to be included in the invitation to next digitization committee meeting. Mr. Tangeman will provide scope of services for the work. Chris expressed interest in participating as well. Ms. Medoff will provide specific guidance/requests from CRC re: functionality.

Revisiting amendment of Charter Sections 4-5-2 and 6-2-12.

The April 1, 2024 meeting minutes were cited to review the process from August 2023 – April 2024 of developing the proposed amendment to these Charter sections. Chris discussed the process

with Selectboard, when this proposed amendment was not considered. The proposed amendment to the Charter not placed on warrant for Town Meeting. Sue Areson as citizen, supports effort by CRC. "Deal with" is very vague. Important for Selectboard and committee members to talk with staff. Fred agrees with Sue and Chris. Brian expressed disappointment with the Selectboard's not considering the proposed amendment. Chair Cohen suggested a work session with everyone together, including CRC, Town Manager, Town department heads, and Town legal counsel. Chris offered to put together packet of materials from past CRC consideration of this issue. Mr. Tangeman can get Town department heads and Town Counsel, and suggested that the Town Moderator also attend. Mr. Tangeman indicated that he was not sure if he should attend. Mr. Tangeman can also find independent municipal consultant regarding the history of this provision nationally. Brian also noted that the Charter does not state the consequences of a violation of the Charter and brought that topic up for later consideration.

New Business

Chair Cohen is reaching out to the Town Moderator. Dave suggested that we review Charter Section 5-5-4, as requested by Mr. Forgione); Fred suggested that we consider section 2-1-2; and Chris asked that we consider penalties for violation of the Charter. Dave offered to research other town charters for penalties. Mr. Tangeman indicated that Town Counsel has this information. He also suggested that we also coordinate with Selectboard's Code of Conduct that is under development. Chris asked that we budget our timeline, as this might need review (in December).

Next Meeting

CRC's next meetings will be held November 20, at 5 p.m., December 11, also at 5 p.m.

There being no further business, Dave moved to adjourn, the motion was seconded and it passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Bannard, Clerk