

The nineteenth meeting of the Uxbridge Charter Review Committee, held on a Zoom platform, was called to order by Chair Patrick Stephan at 6:37 PM, Monday, April 5, 2021.

Members Present: Patrick Stephan, Chairman; Ron Parsons, Melissa Desmarais, Chief Jeff Lourie and Michael Potaski

Members Absent: Ray Talke, Clerk; including Committee Members: Atty. Rob Knapik, Dr. Joann Lindenmayer, and Barry Desruisseaux.

OLD BUSINESS:

REC'D UXB TOWN CLERK
2021 MAY 11 AM 7:39

Review the timeline for Committee deliverables:

At the SATM, a spokesperson for the group will discuss their deliberation of topics to the residents. Following this town meeting, the committee will seek additional comments from Uxbridge residents, then work toward preparing a petition to get on the warrant for FATM with proposed changes to the Charter. As discussed previously, several members of the committee will prepare proposed changes to the Charter for final deliberations by the committee prior to submitting the petition.

Meeting Minutes:

MOTION by Chief Lourie to accept the amended meeting minutes of March 1, 2021. Motion was seconded by Mr. Parsons. Motion carried 5-0.

MOTION by Chief Lourie to accept the amended meeting minutes of March 15, 2021. Motion was seconded by Ms. Desmarais. Motion carried 5-0.

Input from the Community:

No other input has been received from surveys. Mr. Potaski came up with an idea to have at least 100 surveys printed up and give them directly to residents coming into the next town meeting. Mr. Stephan will contact the Town Clerk and Moderator for approval and procedures for handouts at town meeting.

Input from Mr. Knapik on Grafton Sewer and Water organization:

Postponed until the next meeting when Attorney Knapik will be available.

NEW BUSINESS:**Review Order of Topics for Deliberations:****Deliberation of topics – Budget**

The committee discussed alternative and additional options to newspapers for official publication of town notices, including budgets. Suggestion included using social media and placing notices on the Town of Uxbridge website with a drop-down menu.

Article 6, Sections 2 & 3 – The School Committee budget must be published in a local newspaper & must submit a budget to the Town Manager at least 75 days ahead of town meeting. All Department Heads have to submit budgets to the Town Manager with sufficient time to enable the Town Manager to meet obligations for preparation of a budget summary and presentation of a budget.

Article 6, Section 4 – Town Manager must present a budget to the Board of Selectmen prior to presenting a proposed budget to the Finance Committee 60 days before town meeting convenes. Public notice of a budget summary is simultaneous to presentation of the budget to the Finance Committee. The Selectmen and Finance Committee may make recommendations on each line of the budget. The committee discussed whether a recommendations report from both the Selectmen and Finance Committee should be included in the Charter.

Article 6, Section 7 – Only the Finance Committee is required in the Charter to deliver a detailed report after a budget review, which is to be published and available to the public seven days before town meeting. The Charter Review Committee would like to discuss Charter language with the Finance Committee after the town meeting. Mr. Stephan will contact Mr. Demers of the Finance Committee to arrange a meeting.

The committee discussed the source of reserve funds which are normally from free cash. Taking funds from the stabilization fund must have a 2/3rds vote from Town Meeting.

Chief Lourie left the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Deliberation of topics – Add Assistant Positions

The possibility of having various Assistant positions was discussed in case of absence from office. This might include an Assistant Town Manger and Assistant Department Heads, for example. While recognizing some potential benefits, the committee noted that this idea does not appear to be necessary at this time and it would add unnecessary expense.

Deliberation of topics – Zoning Board of Appeals

The committee questioned if the language in the Charter can be changed to provide for five members on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). It has been noted that this topic is covered in the Town Bylaws. The ZBA has a panel of 3 full time members and 2 associate members in case one full time member is unable to attend. This matter will be referred to the Bylaws revision committee.

Deliberation of topics – Vacancies (Article 3 Section 1g)

During interviews, a suggestion was made by Dr. Black to fix the language in the Charter regarding time frames for filling vacancies. The suggestion was to consider adding a requirement that an elected board with a vacancy is given written notice of the 30-day requirement or that the time period to hold a joint meeting is extended.

Deliberation of topics – Moderator (Article 3, Section 4)

Discussions for powers and duties of the Moderator are to be started at the next meeting on April 19, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna C. Hardy, Uxbridge Charter Review Committee Assistant

