

**Town of Sturbridge
Charter Review Committee**

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Meeting Minutes, September 29, 2015

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All of the Committee members, whose respective appointments by the Town Administrator had been confirmed by the Board of Selectmen, convened at 6:30 pm at the Center Office Building (COB) to organize. In attendance: Bruce Boyson (BB), William Haggerty (WH), Sandra Gibson-Quigley (SG-Q), Laurance Morrison (LM) and Paul Zapun (PZ). It was determined that the members had been sworn, except BB, who noted his intention to be sworn the next day; he attended as a member of the public and did not vote.

By separate motions, seconds and discussion, WH was elected as Chair, SG-Q as Vice Chair and LM as Clerk, each by a vote of 4-0.

Presiding, BH invited each member to touch on one's own background, which would help the members to become acquainted with one another.

It was agreed that subsequent meetings would usually be held at 6:30 pm on alternate Wednesdays at the COB, subject to specific circumstances that may from time to time arise. The next two meetings were set for October 7, 2015, and October 21, 2015, and WH will arrange for their postings (and all subsequent postings) on the Town website and at other places where Town government meetings are made known to the public. Each posting will include the respective anticipated agenda and include language stating that while the agenda shows the Committee's best understanding of the agenda items, other items may be added as circumstances or developments may

require. WH will also arrange for the updating, on the Town website, of the names of the current Committee's members, thereby replacing those of the last Committee. WH will also set up in his own computer a separate gmail account specifically for Committee purposes, a step he has taken when he chaired other Town bodies. LM will compile the members' contact information and distribute it to them.

WH asked the members to comb through both the current Charter and the final report of the last preceding Charter Review Committee for the full range of possible action, from punctuation and grammar to accuracy, completeness, clarity and omissions, with an eye toward an eventual Committee report on discrepancies, if any, between the Charter and the Bylaws. It was noted that any such discrepancies would require adjustment to the Bylaws, not the Charter, with both documents preserving compliance with State and Federal statutes and regulations. The current Charter can be found on the Town website and in the Town Annual Report.

It was agreed that even with all Committee meetings held in public, a specific meeting will be held to hear ideas, views, opinions and concerns of the townspeople, if any. It was further agreed that a schedule for meetings with Town department heads/representatives will be set. Further, it was agreed that the Chair, and in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair, will serve as the Committee's spokesperson for all media contacts; the other members, it was agreed, will refer all media inquiries first to the Chair and will themselves refrain from commenting on behalf of the Committee.

LM, who was appointed as a resident, stated that he will seek clarification from the Finance Committee, of which he is a member, with respect to the Finance Committee's policy of allowing any of its members who are appointed in their Finance Committee capacity to serve on another Town body to vote only once on any given matter,

either at the other Town body or at the Finance Committee, but not at both. He also stated that he will abide by the weight of opinion rendered by the Finance Committee.

There was general discussion about the Committee's scope of work, historical perspective, broad context and the contemplation of possible required content in the Charter now under review, which may come into being if and when the Town's documented population reaches or exceeds 10,000 persons (it is now approximately 9,700). WH said that he would pursue the subject of population threshold with the Town Clerk.

WH said that the main purpose of the next meeting will be to organize a plan of work to examine the Charter, section by section, and the Bylaws as well as possible staffing functions/levels.

Moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurance S. Morrison, Clerk