



## TOWN OF CHARLTON

Minutes of Government Study Review Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting ID: 894 0867 1292

Zoom Passcode: 903228; Phone Access: +1-646-558-8656

In-Person: Meeting Room 1 - Town Hall

### **Committee Members Present:**

Mr. Joseph Haebler, Chairman

Mr. Adam Kelly, Clerk

Ms. Jeanne Costello, Committee Member

Mr. James Nee, Committee Member

### **Committee Members Absent:**

Mr. Gerald Doble, Vice Chairman

### **Others Present:**

Ms. Virginia Porter, Town of Charlton Collector/Treasurer

Mr. Curt Meskas, Town of Charlton Building Commissioner & Zoning Enforcement Official

Mr. Ross Lemansky, Planning Board

### **I. Call to order:**

A. J. Haebler called the meeting to order at 5:58 p.m.

### **II. Approval of previous minutes:**

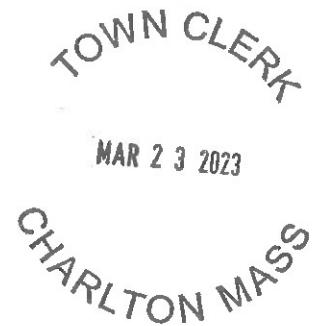
A. Motion by J. Nee to amend the December 20, 2022 minutes regarding Bill Keegan, seconded by J. Costello, unanimous vote.

B. Motion by J. Nee to approve the December 20, 2022 minutes, seconded by J. Costello, unanimous vote.

### **III. Interviews:**

A. The Committee met with the Town Collector/Treasurer, Ms. Virginia Porter, to better understand her position and the functions of the Town Collector/Treasurer's office. Below is a summary of the primary talking points:

1. Ms. Porter has been working for the Town since 2005
2. Ms. Porter has been the Collector/Treasurer since July 2022
3. Goals
  - a) Bill payments on-time by residential and commercial accounts
4. Committee: are you involved in investments?
  - a) Yes. There are different bonds for funds to be placed into.
5. Things are running smoothly and efficiently, no major complaints or problem areas
6. Teams and departments are working together



7. Recommendation for better location of various offices based on their typical level of interactions/dependencies (i.e. Finance, Collector/Treasurer, etc.)
  8. Town finances are relatively stable
  9. Amazon funding
    - a) Bandshell
    - b) Fire apparatus and training
    - c) Schools (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)
    - d) Sidewalks on Main Street
    - e) MassDOT smart streetlights on Route 20
    - f) 3rd party inspector
- B. The Committee met with the Town Building Commissioner, Mr. Curt Meskas, to better understand his position and the functions of the Town Building Commissioner's and Zoning Enforcement Official's office. Below is a summary of the primary talking points:
1. Previous Government Study Review Committee's recommendations were good, things are much better off now
  2. Human Resources was critical
  3. New hires have been helpful
  4. Cemetery space and garage are lacking
  5. Time to seriously consider consolidation of facilities/services/etc.
  6. Perhaps the Town should seek a Facilities Manager/Supervisor? (Town Administrator pursuing and/or creating position description?)
    - a) Department Heads are pulling double duty currently – e.g. shouldn't expect the Head of the Library to know about HVAC systems and building maintenance
  7. Formalizing Department of Inspection Services
    - a) Moving part-time inspector to full-time next year
    - b) Plumbing inspector is paid per-job
    - c) Electrical inspector is paid per-job (also works 2 other jobs)
      - (1) Great inspector – but time of availability is a narrow window
      - (2) Begg the question: what's the level of service provided for fees paid?
  8. Time and resources are the limiting factors for the building office
    - a) Currently on 3rd permitting program (1.5 years thus far)
    - b) Can't add a fee for paper applications, but can discount application submitted via the online system/application
    - c) Building permit module is about \$5,000 per year; Board of Health module is about \$11,000 per year; also used for burn permits, etc.

- 9. Zoning compliance shouldn't be punitive, it should be voluntary (ideally)
  - 10. Digitization of paper records would be very helpful
    - a) Some records must be kept "forever"
    - b) Optical Character Recognition, for searching capabilities, is a must-have
    - c) Record finding is very time consuming and costly
      - (1) Payroll records, land ownership, meeting minutes, legal documents, historical artifacts, etc.
  - 11. The Committee asked: how often are state building codes changed?
    - a) Depends on structure of Government for implementation
    - b) The Town of Charlton follows NFPA and ICC
    - c) Codes are review every 5 years (always lags current technologies)
- C. The Committee met with a representative of the Town Planning Board, Mr. Russ Lemansky, to better understand his position and the functions of the Town Planning Committee. Below is a summary of the primary talking points:
- 1. The Town Planner is full-time and a great, stable, asset
  - 2. Interactions are far better with interested companies, parties, etc. that wish to conduct business within the Town
  - 3. Much better collaboration and communication across Boards and the Town Administrator is great to work with
  - 4. Technology improvements are great addition to Town resources
  - 5. Town Counsel is very responsive (must be coordinated through the Town Administrator)
  - 6. Meeting times could be better/more conducive to volunteer members
  - 7. Elected vs. appointed is a good way to determine people's level of commitment
  - 8. Goals
    - a) Route 20 development
  - 9. Economic Development Commission
    - a) Town Planner used to be head of the EDC
    - b) Roles are now split
    - c) 2 members on the Planning Board are also on the EDC
    - d) Good partnership so far with Planning Board since EDC revived

**IV. Old business:**

A. Survey

- 1. Need to keep the survey simple with only 1-2 questions
- 2. "Pulse" surveys could be okay (i.e. a new 1-2 questions survey every month for a certain period of time – beware of "survey fatigue")

**V. New business:**

- A. Need to submit a Town Report for the Committee's activities by March 2, 2023

1. Required of all Department and Boards
2. Send ideas to J. Haebler

**VI. Other business:**

- A. None discussed.

**VII. Next meeting and adjournment:**

- A. Motion by J. Nee to adjourn, seconded by A. Kelly, unanimous vote at 7:30 p.m.
- B. Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in Meeting Room 1 at Town Hall and also available on Zoom.

**VIII. Contact:**

- A. Any questions, comments or concerns should be addressed to the Committee via email at [GovStudy@townofcharlton.net](mailto:GovStudy@townofcharlton.net)

**Respectfully submitted by:**

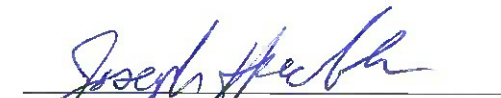


Mr. Adam D. Kelly

Clerk

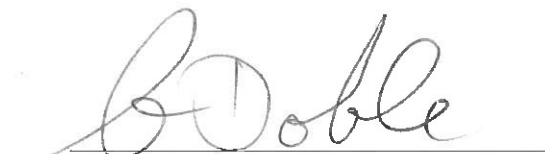
Government Study Review Committee

**Accepted by:**



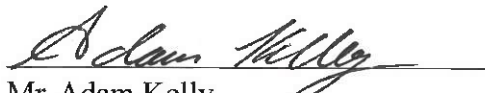
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Mr. Joseph Haebler  
Chairman



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Mr. Gerald Doble  
Vice Chairman



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Mr. Adam Kelly  
Clerk



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Ms. Jeanne Costello  
Committee Member

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Mr. James Nee  
Committee Member