

**Charter Review Committee
Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2019, 6:30 p.m.
City Hall Hearing Room 18
210 Main St., Northampton, MA 01060**

Meeting Minutes

Present: Stan Moulton (ward 1), Robbie Sullivan (ward 2), Dylan Gaffney (ward 3), Sam Hopper (ward 4), Bob Boulrice (ward 5), Patty Healey (ward 6, arrived at 6:36 p.m.), Lyn Simmons, former Chief of Staff (Executive Branch), City Councilor Bill Dwight (Legislative Branch)

Absent: Mollie Fox (ward 7), Attorney Alan Seewald, City Solicitor (non-voting member)

The meeting opened at 6:35 p.m.

1) Approval of minutes for Oct. 29, 2019, public forum

Councilor Dwight moved approval of the October 29, 2019, meeting minutes. Sam Hopper seconded. The motion to approve the minutes as written passed unanimously 8-0.

2) Public comment

None

3) Updates from committee members

None

- 4) Continued discussion and vote on request by City Council President Ryan O'Donnell to include in the charter the prohibition on privatizing municipal water resources and infrastructure that was adopted by ordinance in 2016. The ordinance (325-1) reads: *The public water resources and infrastructure of the City of Northampton, including systems and facilities related to the supply, storage, treatment and distribution of water, shall be owned or leased by the City of Northampton and controlled by the City of Northampton. Such resources and infrastructure shall not be sold, leased or transferred into private ownership or control.***

Councilor Dwight moved to take this agenda item off the table for purposes of discussion. Sam Hopper seconded. The motion passed unanimously 8-0.

The clerk handed out hard copies of a document (attached) prepared by Julia Sullivan (Robbie Sullivan's daughter) on public water in the United States. Julia Sullivan is a graduate student specializing in Water Resource Science and Management at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies.

Chair Moulton read Attorney Seewald's email (attached) aloud relating to this agenda item.

Councilor Dwight stated that the document reinforces that the ordinance is a good law and he understands Councilor O'Donnell's concern for wanting it memorialized in the charter for more protection. However, Councilor Dwight agrees with the opinion expressed by Bob Boulrice at the last meeting questioning the need to add this measure to the charter. Councilor Dwight furthered that he understands the charter shouldn't be loaded up with ordinances and at this time, he does not feel comfortable introducing it into the charter.

Patty Healey agreed with Councilor Dwight's sentiments.

Robbie Sullivan concurred as well.

Chair Moulton pointed out that there was no motion on the floor, therefore no further action will be taken on this item.

5) Continued discussion and possible vote on final report, including the committee's summary of recommendations (see Attachment1) and annotated copy of the charter (see Attachment2)

Chair Moulton explained that Attorney Seewald signed off the on the final report and only made a few housekeeping changes.

Councilor Dwight moved final approval on the two documents to be submitted to the city clerk. Patty Healey seconded. The motion passed unanimously 8-0 by a roll call vote.

In an effort to get a unanimous vote of the committee, Chair Moulton proposed an additional special meeting on Thursday, Dec. 5, prior to the presentation to City Council, so that Mollie Fox can record her vote for the record.

The clerk will secure a meeting room for Thursday, Dec. 5, at 6:30 p.m.

6) Discussion of presentation to City Council on Dec. 5

Chair Moulton asked the committee what it envisioned for the presentation to the City Council.

Lyn Simmons suggested emphasizing the public forums that the committee held and to also go through the first part of the report.

Bob Boulrice stated it is important to note that for virtually all of the recommendations there was a unanimity of support, and even with the big and controversial topics, there was very little opposition.

Chair Moulton and Sam Hopper will present to the City Council.

Bob Boulrice stated that the committee should invite all the newly elected city councilors to the December 5 meeting.

Chair Moulton agrees and will invite the councilor-elects and will also send out a press release.

Dylan Gaffney pointed out that the presentation should make mention that there was a unanimity with the committee's votes as well because looking back at previous charter review committee debates, there were contentious votes which were not unanimous. However, with this committee, everyone felt on the same page and in line with the topics.

Robbie Sullivan stated it is not only important to stress the public forums but also wanted to point out that the forums brought clarity to the votes, at least for her. She stated that the forums not only gave people the opportunity to be heard but that they were incredibly educational.

Bob Boulrice pointed out that unlike the predecessor committee, which left many items on the table for its successor to grapple with, this committee took on all the issues that were presented to it, and then some.

Patty Healey stated she is grateful for the staff who worked on the committee because they were responsive, professional, and provided information that was needed in a timely fashion and gave good advice.

Chair Moulton pointed out that this is the last substantial meeting. He stated that the committee should be proud of the work that was done and if adopted in whole, or substantially, the document will be something that is viewed as extremely important in Northampton's history because it addresses equity, access and diversity. He furthered that everyone brought different perspectives and should be very proud of essentially reaching unanimity in all positions, which speaks volumes.

Chair Moulton thanked the clerk, Annie Lesko, for her conscientious and diligent service. Chair Moulton thanked Lyn Simmons for her contributions and all the work that she did behind the scenes. Chair Moulton thanked Councilor Dwight for being the city council liaison, although consistently making it clear that he was not speaking for the whole council, and for his knowledge, good humor and sage advice. Chair Moulton thanked Sam Hopper for her tremendous work as vice-chair and for successfully taking on all significant responsibilities. Chair Moulton concluded by saying that the strength of the committee was in its members and that it was a pleasure to work with everyone.

Councilor Dwight stated that the unanimity and the civility was due to Chair Moulton's guidance. Councilor Dwight pointed out that this is one of the more effective committees he has been a part of and the content is not easy stuff. He stated that the good work of the committee had to do with Chair Moulton.

Bob Boulrice seconded Councilor Dwight's sentiments and added that the pace of the committee, while frustrating at times, allowed for the quality of the product resulting from Chair Moulton's leadership.

7) Adjourn

Sam Hopper moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 p.m. Councilor Dwight seconded. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously 8-0.