



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

**MINUTES**

October 21, 2021, 5PM

Members present:, Zoe Iacovino, Ona Ferguson, Laura Pitone, Beverly (Bev) Schwartz, Lucas Schaber, William (Bill) White, Kat Rutkin, Jessica Lieberman, Emily Monea, Meagan Benetti, Ben Echevarria

Members not present: Crystal Turner

Staff attending: Anna Corning, Hope Williams, Collins Center - Elizabeth Corbo

Other attending: Stephen Mackey

Meeting started at 5:05PM

**Decisions:**

1. Committee approved minutes from 10/7
  - a. Seven 5s
2. Committee approved the proposed ground rules
  - a. Eight 5s
3. Committee approved the general decision making process
  - a. Seven 5s
  - b. One 4
  - c. One 3
4. Committee approved the overall proposed topics work plan, noting the importance of flexibility throughout the process
  - a. Nine 5s
  - b. One 4
5. Committee approved the proposal general structure of the final report, noting the appendix would be interview *summaries*, not transcripts
  - a. Eight 5s
  - b. One 4
6. Committee approved to write charter text in language that is as simple and clear as possible
  - a. Nine 5s
7. Committee approved the overall proposal
  - a. Eight 5s
  - b. One 4

*The committee uses the Fist to Five method of voting, a technique for gauging consensus. Voting ranges from 0 to 5. The scale is: 0 - no way, 1 - major issues to be resolved now, 2 - minor issues to be resolved now, 3 - minor issues to*

*be resolved later, 4 - comfortable with this as it is, 5 - love this and will champion it. 0-2 is considered a lack of consensus, while 3-5 is considered consensus.*

## NOTES

1. Welcome 5:03
  - a. Anna welcomed the committee and community members
2. Approve 10/7 Minutes 5:05
  - a. Meeting minutes from 10/7 were approved
3. Public Comment 5:08
  - a. There were no public comments
4. Next Steps Proposal - Coordinating Team 5:10
  - a. The coordinating team, project managers, and committee members presented the proposed work plan.
  - b. Anna presented the proposed deliberation ground rules. The committee was supportive of the ground rules and brought up how important it is to stay on task.
    - i. **Committee approved the proposed ground rules - Eight 5s**
  - c. Ona presented the context for the next phases of the committee, explaining how the work plan was created. The work plan is focused on topics that either (a) *must* go into a charter or (b) are important to this committee to discuss as *potential* additions to the charter. Ona also explained the process per topic and reviewed the fist-to-five voting method to gauge the committee's opinions and gather level of agreement over time.
    - i. Ona also explained that the committee will not take a final vote on individual topics until the end of this phase of deliberations. If needed, with  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the present committee members voting at a 3 or higher (fist to five), the committee may table current discussions and move to the next topic.
    - ii. There was some clarification on who will be calling for votes, how we will be monitoring topics, and facilitating. It was also brought up that we need to ensure we have enough community engagement on big topics before deliberation.
    - iii. Lastly, Ona explains that at the end of the process, there will be a yay/nay/abstain vote to pass the final report. It will only pass with a supermajority of 8 yays out of 12 votes. Unanimity is the ultimate goal of the committee.
    - iv. **Committee approved the general decision making process - Seven 5s, One 4, One 3**
  - d. Emily presented the overall proposed topics work plan, explaining that this list is not exhaustive or set in stone, but instead a guide of the umbrella topics for deliberation. The coordinating team chose to include some non-controversial topics at the beginning to get in the flow of deliberation
    - i. **Committee approved the overall proposed topics work plan, noting the importance of flexibility throughout the process - Nine 5s, One 4**

- e. Bev presented the proposed final report structure. Bev explained the potential structure and how the coordinating team created this potential final report structure, along with the proposed appendixes.
    - i. There was some discussion to ensure that the interview appendixes is a summary, not necessarily a person-by-person breakdown.
    - ii. **Committee approved the proposal general structure of the final report, noting the appendix would be interview *summaries*, not transcripts - Eight 5s, One 4**
  - f. Bev presented the proposed final report language and drafting, specifically using the [federal plain language guidelines](#) and creating a drafting team. Bev encouraged committee members to consider if writing and drafting would be of interest to them.
    - i. Some committee members brought up not specifically using the federal plain language guidelines, but instead just using as simple language as possible.
    - ii. **Committee approved to write charter text in language that is as simple and clear as possible - Nine 5s**
  - g. Meagan presented on committee expectation setting, specifically how important it will be to have tasks delegated to committee members. She explains that there will be a lot to do - drafting, community engagement, deliberation planning, and more - and we want to be intentional about utilizing the committee's skills and expertise.
    - i. Support for more commitment was echoed by committee members.
  - h. **Committee approved the overall proposal - Eight 5s, One 4**
5. Interview Presentation - Collins Center 6:30
- a. Libby of the Collins Center presented key takeaways from the interviews she held with experts selected by the committee. Key takeaways included: recall would be okay with a high bar, having a Chief Administrative Officer was of interest, balancing power is important, and more.
6. Community Engagement Update and Conclusion 6:55
- a. Anna explained that the community meetings have been going extremely well, and the fourth community meeting on citizen participation mechanisms was moved to November 8th at 6pm.