



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

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

**MINUTES**

November 4, 2021, 5PM

Members present:, Zoe Iacovino, Ona Ferguson, Laura Pitone, Beverly (Bev) Schwartz, William (Bill) White, Kat Rutkin, Jessica Lieberman, Meagan Benetti, Crystal Turner

Members not present: Lucas Schaber, Ben Echevarria, Emily Monea

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

Other attending: Stephen Mackey, Klaus Schultz, Meredith Porter, Barry Rafkind, and Pat Cain

Meeting started at 5:05PM

**Decisions:**

1. Committee approved minutes from 10/21.
  - a. Eight 5s
2. Committee approved Meagan, Zoe & Jess as members of the writing working group.
  - a. Nine 5s
3. Committee approved decision to include city website in posting requirements and to affirm OML requirements in definitions of posting requirements.
  - a. Two 4s, Seven 5s
4. Committee approved to not include addition of domicile requirements in the charter.
  - a. Three 4s, Six 5s
5. Committee approved to table the start date language decision until the 11/18 meeting, Hope and Anna will bring two proposed options and the committee will vote.
  - a. One 4, Eight 5s
6. Committee approved keeping the City Council President and Mayor as members of the School Committee.
  - a. Nine 5s
7. Committee approved keeping the current composition of 7 ward school committee members.
  - a. Eight 5s, one abstain
8. Committee approved enshrining compensation for the school committee in the charter.
  - a. Nine 5s

*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. Hope welcomed the committee and community members.
2. Approve 10/21 Minutes 5:05
  - a. Meeting minutes from 10/21 were approved.
3. Public Comment 5:05
  - a. Committee heard one public comment from Meredith Porter on the lack of posted information and requirements related to a number of city committees and councils.
4. Ground Rules & Deliberation 5:07
  - a. Writing Group Nomination
    - i. Committee members discussed a few writing team logistical questions and process clarifications.
    - ii. Committee approved Meagan, Jess, Zoe for standing group members, and agreed the group would have rotating members.
  - b. Hope reviewed the deliberation ground rules, deliberation process and fist to five process
5. Deliberation Topic 1: Posting Requirements 5:20
  - a. Committee discussed required locations for posting in relation to boards, commissions, councils and committees of the city.
    - i. The question of OML requirements, language accessibility and charter boundaries of posting requirements. Language accessibility and translations were tabled for another time.
  - b. Committee approved decision to include city website in posting requirements and to affirm OML requirements in definitions of posting requirements.**
6. Deliberation Topic 2: Domicile 5:40
  - a. Committee discussed adding domicile language to eligibility sections throughout the charter. Presently to run for office in Somerville you must be a registered voter, the committee discussed additionally requiring a candidate's primary residence be Somerville to run for office.
  - b. Committee approved to not include addition of domicile requirements in the Charter**
7. Deliberation Topic 3: Start Date for Taking Office 6:00
  - a. Committee discussed the official start date of the Mayor, School Committee and City Council to ensure no conflicts with cultural, religious or federal holidays. The committee discussed a number of options for revised language to accommodate the number of holidays at the beginning of the year.
  - b. Committee approved to table the start date language decision until the 11/18 meeting, Hope + Anna will bring two proposed options and the committee will vote.**

8. Deliberation Topic 4: City Council President and Mayor serving on School Committee 6:15
  - a. Committee discussed the current structure of the school committee that includes the City Council President and Mayor as members of the committee. The committee overall agreed this structure works well for collaboration and efficiency of school operations.
  - b. Committee approved keeping the City Council President and Mayor as members of the School Committee.**
  
9. Deliberation Topic 5: Ward vs. At-large School Committee members 6:35
  - a. Committee discussed the composition of the School Committee, and the addition or switch to at-large school committee members.
    - i. Committee members voiced support for keeping the ward committee structure to ensure representation and ease of access. Multiple members expressed concern regarding converting entirely to an at-large structure. Committee discussed positives adding at-large members that could improve representation across groups not centralized in specific wards.
  - b. Committee approved keeping the current composition of 7 ward school committee members**
  
10. Deliberation Topic 6: School Committee Compensation 6:50
  - a. Committee discussed the option to enshrine compensation for the school committee in the charter. Committee members emphasized the importance of compensation and that alignment with the committee's values.
  - b. Committee approved enshrining compensation for the school committee in the charter.**
  
11. Closing:
  - a. Hope provided an update on the committee's budget.
  - b. Hope reminded people about the community meeting on Monday 11/8 at 6pm, topic is Participation Mechanisms