



# City of Methuen, Massachusetts

## OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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### CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 15, 2025

7:00 PM

**MEETING LOCATION:**      **Great Hall**  
**Methuen City Hall**  
**41 Pleasant Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**  
**Methuen, MA 01844**

### MEETING AGENDA

1. **Call to order – 7:00 PM**
2. **Roll call – All Members Present – Chair Steve Saba, Jennifer Kannan, Eleni Varitimos, John Cummings, Ian Gosselin, Dennis DiZoglio and Sharon Pollard – Also attending – Methuen’s Acting City Solicitor Paul O’Neill and remotely attending – Anthony Wilson from UMASS, Boston’s Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management**
3. **Acceptance of agenda – Motion by Sharon Pollard, seconded by Dennis DiZoglio – Unanimous.**
4. **Approve minutes of previous Public Hearing and meeting April 10,2025 – Motion to approve 4-10-2025 meeting minutes by Sharon Pollard, seconded by Ian Gosselin – Unanimous – Approval of the minutes of the 4-10-2025 Public Hearing - Jennifer Kannan, seconded by John Cummings – Unanimous**
5. **Public Participation - NONE**
  1. **Collins Center Representative- review answers to questions and general questions with Collins Center and the Acting Solicitor** – Chair Saba recognized Anthony Wilson from the Collins Center. Anthony Wilson said, “Thank you for having me. I’ve been with the Collins Center for just over three years now. I lead our charter and organizational practice. The Collins Center, as many of you know, was formed in 2008 by the state legislature inside UMass Boston with a particular purpose of providing technical assistance to cities, towns and state agencies in Massachusetts. One area that we work in a lot is exactly what you’re doing, which is Charter review, Charter drafting in different forms of government. We’ve worked on Charter projects in more than two-thirds of the communities across Massachusetts --- big and small cities and towns of all various shapes and sizes. So, we’re excited to work with you. This team will be comprised of myself as well as Marilyn Contreras. Marilyn couldn’t be here tonight but she’s reviewing the documents, and we’re sort of going through the questions and the Charter that was sent over. I do have one question for the Committee. I sent over a response to the questions earlier today. I know that’s cutting it close, so I just want to make sure people have it.” Chair Saba recognized Dennis DiZoglio, “I saw your responses but there’s also a reference to attachment A. We don’t have attachment A unless I didn’t get a copy.” Anthony Wilson replied, “It should have been attached to the e-mail. It’s a spreadsheet of communities in response to the question about the city solicitor.” Chair Saba said, “I have the summary, and Anthony can give us the summary when we get to that on how many communities have the City Solicitor and under the Mayor and how many have the City Solicitor under the City Council, but he also gave us a breakdown of every single town and city. Anthony, thanks for the

introduction. What we normally do in these meetings is talk back and forth and discuss but because of Zoom we want to make this clear. If you have a question, please just signal me and I'll call on you. We'll keep this orderly." Chair Saba suggested to go over the questions that the CRC sent to the Collins Center. Anthony, do you want to give us a quick rundown, or do you want us to just ask you questions based on your response?" Anthony Wilson replied, "I can go do a quick rundown and then we can sort of go back and people want to dig into particular questions."

2. **Q1. Ask whether to leave the history of the act at the end or create a history section at the end of the charter. Article 2-1** Chair Saba said, "Okay let's start with question one." Anthony Wilson said, "You have the language in front of you. Based on what I received, it was a very good job of the committee to note a particular article or sections of the charter that they thought the question was addressing. The version of the charter that I have. Section 2-1 refers to the City Council. I'm assuming that question one about leaving the history in is in reference to this introductory section which goes through all the iterations of the charter or amendments through the years. So, if that's the section we're talking about, then we would recommend pulling some of that language out as it can become cumbersome to maintain over time so we that's not something we usually see in charters, and we'd recommend for ease of maintenance to remove it." Chair Saba said, "Okay so we gave you Article 2-1 as an example and it's you know some of them we included some are just scattered but like you say these are basically a little historical blurb of the question so if you're recommending that we take those out." Chair Saba recognized Ian Gosselin, "I think he may be referring to the summary at the beginning that has a whole list of histories." Steve Saba said, "We're talking about the summary at the beginning but more importantly after each article in some of these paragraphs there's a little blurb and that's what we're initially referring to." Sharon Pollard said, "My only comment about the summary of all of the past goings-on is that we keep it somewhere --- maybe an appendix at the back because it's a very useful reference tool and it doesn't it won't clutter up the body of the charter but that might be a good place for it." City Solicitor Paul O'Neill said, "That would be my strong recommendation that it stay in, at least in the appendix section, because it's very useful for us historically. When the Charter Commission is no longer around, there are often questions by the City Council so it's not that difficult for the City Solicitor's office to maintain that in the legal office because it only changes really when the charter changes."
3. **Q2. Since this is a -special Act Charter, can the Charter be changed to reflect changing the Mayor's 3-2-year terms to 2 – 4-year terms? Article 3 S3-1-b** Chair Saba said, "All right let's move on to question two." Anthony Wilson said, "So this is around changing the length of the Mayor's term. You also have a limitation on how many consecutive times an individual can run or serve in this office. As a special act that would go for approval by the Legislature; This is something that you could put in because it would have to be approved by the State Legislature. It's not required that it be ratified by the voters after it comes back. That is best practice, and we do see that as something that the Legislature wants to see, if it's going to approve of that type of change. You don't have to have a vote before it goes up but if the City Council approves sending the Special Act forward, we do recommend for approval of the state that it includes a provision that there be a ratification on the next regular election." Dennis DiZoglio said, "Mr. Chair, I agree with the concept of having it be voted on by the citizens. But I wonder when we submit our recommendations to the City Council, should we make a recommendation on that provision, or should we just let the City Council decide on whether they want to have a special article relative to referendum or should we recommend they do such an action?" Anthony Wilson said, "My understanding of a CRC like this and your CRC may be operating differently, is that as you review the Charter, you'd be putting together a package of recommendations --- perhaps the actual legislative language --- that the City Council would be voting on to send to the State Legislature as a Special Act. Some committees do and I don't necessarily recommend this, but it depends on the circumstances. You could break your recommendations into individual Special Acts. I guess this usually comes up in the case where they're worried that the community is worried that certain provisions may not be approved by your City Council to go forward but usually it's like an Omnibus Bill that would go up for a modified Charter to be adopted." City Solicitor O'Neill said, "He's correct. Obviously, what you provide to the City Council will be recommendations that have to pass by a two-thirds majority vote, and they must also be approved by the Mayor. Otherwise, they don't go anywhere so both have to accept that. They can modify and amend them any way they like. I know there was a second question here, should they be separate questions? I would say

to you that there have been several Charter Commissions that have failed to be able to get changes through that were probably important. And that there are a series of changes that you are proposing, from my review, that are non-controversial --- that are designed to improve efficiency and things like that. I think you may want to consider if you're going to touch term limits or the terms of office --- those are more controversial hot button issues that generate a lot more controversy. You may, indeed, want to recommend that they be voted on separately because otherwise you may end up throwing the baby out with the bathwater --- where people get polarized on these issues and if they're all together, they can get voted down. So, you do have that option to present to the City Council --- it will be up to the City Council, obviously, whether they do it in a single package or they do more than one home rule petition. And it is true, if it's a home rule petition, it does not have to be voted on but typically the Legislature wants it voted on and oftentimes they will even add that provision in, if it comes in without that. I think, in this community, it would make sense to have it voted on.” Jennifer Kannan said, “Thank you, Anthony. Dennis, as you know, you served on both of the latest Charter committees. Those were the two basically only Charter Review Committees. Your elected commission failed because of term limits, and it was a very contrast of what the committee wanted, and it went out that there were going to be no term limits at all. And so that's one of the reasons why it failed. Your group did a great job. It was established by a special act, that's why I thought that we could make some changes to the terms. We weren't looking to change whether there could be lifetime term limits, consecutive term limits or no term limits. But we did have a discussion on this table --- do we think that the Mayor of Methuen should be a four-year term? That was our discussion, and we wanted to know if this was allowed for this group to impose, because we were an appointed group and Anthony said yes, which is great. As a group, we couldn't say, and I respect the City Solicitor's opinion. But, if we, as a body, want to say, why don't we put it in if we want to leave it the same but then when the Council gets our final document, they can make an amendment to it --- they could say ‘we really wanted the Charter Committee to put four-year term for the Mayor. So, we're going to, on the Council floor, make that change too because we like everything else, but we really think that maybe the Mayor should be four years or we could do it and then have them say well we really don't want to touch that. I think that whatever this body comes up with. It's a tough position for the Mayor to come in and then right away they're automatically running for office so I'm glad that they clarified it. Before, as you remember, we had somebody telling us we couldn't touch that and I'm glad we got the clarification.” Sharon Pollard said, “Just a point of information, Paul, so that we all remember this or know this --- every vote we take on this, no matter what it is, we're separating something out or including something as in the whole --- everything requires a two-thirds vote of the council?” City Solicitor O'Neill said, “Correct, for them to initiate this process, with the approval of the Mayor, they could vote to approve it and if the Mayor doesn't agree, he can veto it. It has to be with the agreement of both the Council and the Mayor.” Eleni Varitimos said, “I just want us to restate then what the process would be if we wanted to have sort of all the non-controversial and then the hot-button issue if we wanted to look at term limits or something. So, we would send the Council packet A and packet B?” Steve Saba said, “Not necessarily. I think what we want to do is send the Council the updated Charter for approval and not touch a controversial item like term limits. Then say to the Council, if you want to, because I know there are some Councilors that want to do this. If you want to change term limits, put that as a separate question to the state then to the voters. The question would be, ‘Do you approve of changing the terms of the Mayor to from 3 two-year terms to 2 four-year terms?’ This way, the Charter overall, with all the changes we're making, doesn't die. If the voters don't want to change term limits, the rest of the Charter can still get approved. That's the mistake I think that was happening in the past. It gives us the ability to break it out. We'll recommend that the Council not amend, by the time we're done --- after working on this for a year --- that if they want to change term limits put a separate question on the ballot.” Sharon Pollard said, “Steve, under that explanation, does everything that we recommend go in the Charter as presented to the Council and let them take out whatever they want to take up.” Steve Saba replied, “Right now, we have a yellow-highlighted edited version, and we have a clean version. At the end of the day, after we continue reviewing this, is submit it to the Council. We'll probably vote to give them the clean version and the edited version. They're going to work off the clean version and then hopefully they're going to vote yes on the proposed edited Charter. I know that in 2019, the Charter Commission spent a year and a half doing this and then it went before the Council and this Council spent two days tearing it apart --- it was disgusting, it was horrible --- and in this case, we're all capable --- we're all giving this a thorough review and more reviews and talking to Anthony and Paul and

then we're going to give the best version of this to the Council.” Sharon Pollard said, “My question is anything like a term limit change would be in that and if they wanted to take it out they could.” Steve Saba said, “I was suggesting we separate the controversial items --- like term limits --- I would not include in the final version of the Charter because if it goes through, there's a there's an 80% chance it's going to fail. So, if we want this approved, present all the changes we've made and then ask if they want to put something like term limits before the Council. Last time we did this, there was extensive discussion over having a city manager --- that hasn't come up here. I think 80% failure would be with the voters. I would say if we want this Charter to go through, then let's present the Council with the clean version and then have the controversial issues submitted separately.” Anthony Wilson said, “Mr. Chair, just if I may on this on this topic. In terms of the output from this CRC to the Council, because ultimately when this document leaves the body, the only people with authorities to send this to the Legislature are your Council and your Mayor. What I would recommend is in addition to the whatever the legislative language is that this CRC produces a report about its deliberations and why it made the decisions that it's made. That way, the CRC can look at that. One of the benefits of doing a report to sit us alongside your legislative language is that you can put items in the report. Just as an example, this idea about term limits and for the reasons that you guys are discussing, we didn't put it in our actual document but if the CRC wants to say here's the language we would have used, and you can add that to the document. The report could be a good outlet. It's not the language that will go to the State to be voted on but can be a good outlet for some ideas that number one may not be appropriate for the Charter but maybe things the CRC wants to raise for the Council to look into or ideas about the Charter that you're not sure if you want to include in your final document but you want to have on the Council's mind or agenda so I'm just putting that forward as a suggestion as you piece this together.” Eleni Varitimos said, “In the report, is that also a place where the Charter Commission might opine on what they have learned and maybe not recommending. For example, one of the things we looked at was the number of communities, for example, Gateway Cities, places of similar composition to Methuen that had four-year terms versus two-year terms? Would that be a place where we said, look, we are not touching that section however we recommend that the Council may consider this, given the fact that there are several different communities that have done this, and it's resulted in this. Is it possible to opine or is it literally just a statement of deliberation?” Anthony Wilson replied, “The short answer is yes. The longer answer is yes; the report is the place where you can put some of your questions, in terms of opining. I've seen reports that had a majority and minority opinion. Maybe the CRC voted to do this, but you still put that minority opinion. We considered this --- people wanted to do it but we didn't do it for X Y & Z reasons. The short answer is yes but I want to be careful. You don't want it to get too voluminous. This CRC will be putting that together so you want to make it something you can do. You want to highlight the important things you want to tell the Council that can't be in the legislative language.” Sharon Pollard asked, “I know that you put together a spreadsheet of some items that we were interested in. Did you include, in that spreadsheet, a list of cities and what their term limits are for both the Mayor and Council?” Anthony Wilson said, “For the spreadsheet that was provided, it was purely looking at the Solicitor and the relationship between the Mayor and the City Council. We're still researching the questions and going through the changes that you have already sent. We will have more memos-data documents that will cover some of what you're talking about.” Dennis DiZoglio said, “My understanding is there's only two communities that have term limits for Mayor --- Lawrence and Methuen in the entire state. Is that correct Anthony?” Anthony Wilson said, “I think there are others but I'm not sure.” Eleni Varitimos said, “I found that data on the MA Municipal Association's website. They did talk about four-year terms and two-year terms and if there were term limits.” Anthony Wilson said, “I didn't look at it in preparation for this meeting so I will be sending that to you.”

4. **Q3. The charter review committee would like to know whether the prohibition of the school committee members can be increased from one year to two years. Article 2 S2-4 & Article 4 S4-3** – Anthony Wilson said, “This is a short answer in terms of making this prohibition against compensated municipal employment after an elected official served their term. The short answer is I'm not aware of any prohibition against making that prohibition longer than one year. I can't point to another community that has something longer than one year --- that doesn't mean there isn't one, but it would be unusual for it to be longer based on the research that we've done.” Steve Saba said, “Let me ask you this, Anthony. This change was initiated to bring it to two-year prohibition. We also said that the Mayor can put a person before the Council as an exemption but it

would require the unanimous vote of the Council. The goal is to eliminate somebody running for an office just to try to secure a job after serving that term. There's always been an argument that sometimes we need a good person, and my argument has been in the past is unless you're a nuclear physicist and we have a nuclear crisis in the City of Methuen where you are the best qualified person, we're going to find, aside from that, get in line with everybody else. Is it reasonable to say that if I'm a City Councilor and I want to take a job as the Business Manager at the School Department, I'm going to need, as soon as I get off the Council or even maybe while I'm still on the Council, I'm going to need the unanimous vote of the Council to support that." Anthony Wilson said, "In terms of this reasonableness analysis, that's on the CRC. It sounds reasonable to have an outlet, especially for such a period to allow for an outlet tool. To say we do need this talent on both sides of government, the Mayor and the Council must be involved, and the Council have a unanimous vote. It sounds like it makes sense to me. That is this committee's judgment. I think one of the reasons for the one-year prohibition is that it mirrors the one-year cooling off period in the state ethics law. Perhaps Attorney O'Neill can opine a little bit more on that but what you're saying makes sense to me. There are similar outlets around, for example, residency where they allow the Mayor with the approval of the Council, to waive residency." Chair Saba said, "We had a couple of instances, several years ago, where existing City Councilors got jobs while they were still City Councilors within another department in the City and it turned out to create a lot of headaches and a lot of problems. That's what we're driving towards." Solicitor O'Neill said, "It's perfectly within your authority to do that --- to recommend that --- if that's what you choose to do. It would be legal to commit to, and you could structure that restriction any way you want. You could say two years waivable by unanimous vote of the Council two years waiver or two-thirds majority waivable with Council and Mayoral approval. I would note that some of those prior appointments did receive approval by the Legislature and that would override you --- there were Home Rule Petitions with respect to some of those that overrode your Charter. I understand the intent." Chair Saba said, "And keep in mind everyone what we're doing is we're getting guidance but we're going to go through the Charter and make our own decisions as we go."

5. **Q4. The charter review committee would like to know what the requirements are for publishing in at least one local newspaper of general circulation (define how this is determined) in the city a notice of the general summary of the proposed operating budget as submitted by the Mayor-to expand the notification to include, at minimum, the City's website or sending a postcard to residents, in English and Spanish, of the municipal budget process. Article 6 S6-4, 6-6, Article 9, S1-a** - Anthony Wilson said, "This is posting notices in a local newspaper of general circulation. The section that you pointed out to me was around the budget. The municipal City budget is governed by Chapter 44 Section 32 which has the same language about posting a newspaper of general circulation. There's a definition section to that Chapter of state law. It also doesn't define local newspaper. I'm not aware of any other definition, at least in state law, so you could define it, but I don't think we'd recommend that. It's generally understood that the administration or the City Clerk often just determines what paper they believe is the one of general circulation and that's where they post the notices. You also have two good points here --- one about technology posting to the website as well as bilingual posting. With regard to the posting of the website, that's something we're seeing more and more. Communities are adopting or adding this provision to their Charter saying any place where you're posting or where you have to do a posting to the newspaper. We also want it posted on the bulletin board but also on the town website which is the City's digital board. I see the provision around Spanish language less common. I would say where I see communities discussing it, some of the concerns are that it can be somewhat cumbersome to do that --- to make sure you have the staff or can translate things into all these different languages. It's something you can do if you put in the Charter." Jennifer Kannan said, "This question is either to Anthony or Paul. I noticed on here, it says as technology has changed, there is a strong trend around the Commonwealth to add the City website but if the language in the state, if it's MGL Chapter 44. If there's an ambiguity in that law and it doesn't stress that you must advertise in the paper. To me, as time is evolving, what do we do? We're not even putting the full budget in the paper, but the website would allow you to post the entire budget in formatted form. To me, that's the ideal disclosure and transparency versus a little link in requiring a community to put that link in the paper where is it Methuen Life magazine versus other magazines? Especially where there's ambiguity and since local constitutions can be stronger, are we able to put just our website and require our city to post everything on our website versus in adding into this charter? And then

two years from now, maybe the Legislature put something that we don't have to do that. Could we put that in our Charter and still be within the law? Anthony Wilson said, "I'll say two things --- I wouldn't say it's ambiguous it just doesn't provide you criteria with determining the local news. In many ways, your local officials have the discretion to designate whatever the newspaper in general circulation is. I would say that this is a place where your local officials have discretion to determine the newspaper. On the other hand, the Association of City Clerks has been, for years, advocating for removing the provision of posting to the newspaper. It can be expensive. A lot of communities, as it sounds you were saying here, are losing their dailies or they're not having the same level of coverage. The Legislature has specifically not done that and has kept the language in about publishing in newspapers. In theory you can put it in your special act, but I don't think it would be looked upon favorably at the State." Solicitor O'Neill said, "I agree. I think you have to put it in the newspaper which still can be, like you said, you can define that. There are a few publications here that still work. It can be everywhere else, and it should be everywhere else on the website and posted wherever we normally post things. Our website is available in Spanish. You can click on it, and it'll turn into Spanish. It's not perfect but it works pretty well. We are trying to encourage and move toward having dual-language things available, especially when it involves important issues and benefits and things like that." Sharon Pollard said, "It's probably not something that we want to debate but as long as we meet what the law requires us to do, which is a still a newspaper. Now that won't be the case when there's no newspaper." Eleni Varitimos said, "But I think to Jen's point is this idea of publishing it on the website is really good."

**6. Q5. The charter review committee would like further guidance on the 2nd paragraph of Section 6-5.**

Chair Saba said, Question 5. Anthony's response is that they'll get back to us. They're still working on these questions.

**7. Q6. The charter review committee wants further guidance and to know how other cities and towns act on the old Section 5-5 – newly amended Section 6-9.** Chair Saba said, Question 6. Anthony's response is that they'll get back to us. They're still working on these questions.

**8. Q7. The charter review committee would like further guidance to strengthen the language to add, 'in person' to the Mayor, CAFO, and Department Heads job description. Article 7-4-b** - Anthony Wilson said, "I would just stop on Question 7. We went through this question of "in person" when discussing the Mayor and CAFO. I guess we're not sure exactly what this question is asking so I guess I'd be curious if you could clarify maybe a little bit for our benefit." Chair Saba recognized Jennifer Kannan, "To me, this is self-explanatory. If the Mayor of Methuen is elected, he or she should be here, in person, and the CAFO is a very high-level employee. Department heads are very high-level employees. The majority of their work should be in person. I think having it in the Charter, just like it talks about what each of their duties are and it's the reason why I specifically, at first, said the CAFO because I know that that was dictated to the City through Chapter 278. In thinking about all the top level positions, every department head, in the city including the Mayor, should be considered an in-person job and if it's in the Charter and ten years from now and they're doing job descriptions, they'll be able to just look at this document and say part of the job description requires that you be on the premises." Anthony Wilson said, "I don't have any qualms with what you described. I would say that that type of thing is about the nature of the work. We would say that that's a little bit too nitty-gritty for the Charter. That's the type of thing that we would say is more appropriate for the City's Personnel Policy or Human Resources Department. That would be appropriate for policy rather than the Charter level. We would say that that would be more towards policy --- something you want to have to be more flexible." Jennifer Kannan said, "I disagree with that, but I appreciate your opinion. But I think this paper that we've been working on for a year and a half is the Constitution of the City, and I think the Mayor is an elected body position so no personnel ordinance should be dictating to the Mayor so that's why I think it should be here. And again, it just is very clear to describe when people come to the community what is expected from them. It also talks in the Charter about what level in one department from what the City Council has when they have to appoint. In the Police Department, any officer from Sergeant to the Chief has to be approved by the City Council. I'm happy it's in there because it dictates what the job is of the elected body. So, I'll discuss that with my fellow members as we go into the second read, but I've said it when I brought it up --- that's something that I strongly believe that should be in here. And we'll take a vote on this committee and see what the rest

feel and if they feel the same way. Then the City Council can make it and the Mayor can make their determination --- whether they agree with it, in their part of the process.” Solicitor O’Neill said, “Certainly, as Anthony said, that’s within your purview to recommend that and it’s certainly within the purview of the City Council to add that. This is not legal advice. I would just note that you may want to speak with the director of HR and take a look at the difficulty the City has had in filling many high-ranking positions. There are a lot of people out there who value work flexibility and that’s part of the recruitment process --- it’s not a legal issue though --- but it’s something that affects whether the city can get things done. We are facing several retirements of some high-ranking folks that are working for the City. The other thing I would say is that in a lot of communities, the language is more akin to --- I haven’t seen what the language is that you’re proposing --- for Mayors, it’s typically something like the Mayor shall devote his full time to the duties of his office during regular business hours of X. Or they shall not engage in any other business during or after business hours or things like that. Those kinds of restrictions for these higher-ranking positions in the City are essentially on call all the time. My position, the CAFO position, the Chief of Staff and a lot of department heads so you need to think about if you restrict hours or things like that, you may cut off some of that after-hours work. I’d just be careful about what wording you propose but it’s with a legal thing that you can certainly recommend, in fact and if the City Council goes along with it, they can put it in.” Sharon Pollard said, “I have a tendency to agree with you, Anthony and I think that as we go through the Charter and we’ll work this through and talk about it and make decisions but I think there are many things in the Charter that probably do not belong in the City’s governance Charter but are better placed elsewhere like a personnel policy or the rules of the City Council. I just think that too much has been loaded into this document. As you help us go through analyzing and making sure that what we do is correct, if you run across those things, as one member of this Commission, I would be really interested in having you guide us as to what probably is better placed elsewhere other than in the City’s Charter.” Anthony Wilson replied, “We can discuss, when we finish the questions how you want the work plan to go. I don’t know if everyone saw the contract but we’re going to answer your question but also, now that we have the document, we’re going to go through it with a fine-tooth comb. And that’s one of the reasons we haven’t answered some of those questions is that we would address that whole section and propose suggested language along with an explanation. Again, the CRC can do whatever it wants but we do plan to, in certain areas, say here’s what we recommend and here’s why and then the committee can decide what it wants to do with that information.” Chair Saba said, “For the record, we can do it but it’s not recommended that we put those requirements in but we’ll discuss that further.

9. **Q8. The charter review committee would like further guidance to weigh in on the original charter language of Sections 9-2, 9-3, 9-5(b), and 9-5 (c) and the 2019 CRC draft language for those sections. (Citizen Initiative Measures and Citizen Referendum Procedures.)** - A8. *The Project team is researching this question and will respond with a detailed response.*
10. **Q9. There was a recent issue defining the prevailing side when discussing a reconsideration of a vote. Could a clear definition of “the prevailing side” be added to the Charter.** A9. *The project team does not recommend adding this clarification to the charter. Matters of parliamentary procedure fall under the City Council’s rules, not the charter. While \*Robert’s Rules of Order\* is the most commonly used parliamentary authority in the United States, the Council may choose to adopt a different set of rules or amend its own procedures to suit Methuen’s needs. Including this language in the charter would limit the Council’s flexibility and could result in unintended consequences.* Anthony Wilson said, “This was a question about defining the prevailing side for the reconsideration of a vote. This is part of the rules of procedure for the operation of the Council, so I’ll just summarize here. We would say that this is not appropriate for the Charter, the rules of procedure are not set in stone. While in America, we’re most used to seeing Roberts Rules of Order. There are other rules of order that places can be used and for instance most State Legislative bodies use something called Mason’s Rules, towns use something called Town Meeting Time which is another set of parliamentary rules. I’m just illustrating that there are a number of parliamentary rules out there that bodies could adopt to use. We think it’s best practice to allow the Council have the flexibility of adopting its own rules of order and again the Council has its own Council Rules which it can use to modify its rules as well. We wouldn’t recommend putting this in the Charter and then I was just going on to say that this could be one of those things that would be good to go into the report of the committee --- to say this is something we looked at --- here’s what we

understand the issue to be and the Council should really look into this and if there are solutions or if you're going to propose solutions that can go on the report as well. We could theoretically just put as a recommendation in the report that the Council perhaps clarify this in the rules and procedures." Solicitor O'Neill said, "I think it's on the agenda for the City Council meeting coming up. We had a discussion about that, and it's been addressed. As you said, it's their rules and they can change them anytime they want." Jennifer Kannan said, "That is why we put that there because a City Councilor came to our Public Hearing with a counselor a counselor and we had a discussion with the Chair." Solicitor O'Neill said, "I believe it's on the agenda for the next City Council meeting."

**11. Q10. The Committee discussed indemnification which is not included in the Charter but is in the Council Rules and Procedures or the municipal code. Should indemnification be addressed in the Charter?** *A10. Section 9-4 of the current charter addresses indemnification of municipal officials.*

Anthony Wilson said, "In your current Charter, there is a provision --- Section 9-4 --- that indemnifies municipal officials. I'll turn to Attorney O'Neill if I'm misunderstanding. When I read the Charter, I did see that section." City Solicitor O'Neill said, "That's correct. That's in the current Charter under Section 9-4. The new Charter is in Section 10-14. I have and Anthony is probably sensitive to this --- to the extent you do drafting and re-drafting of the Charter, it would be extremely helpful if you could keep the sections the same. The entire Code of Municipal Ordinances references the Charter and if you make all those changes, we're going to spend months and months having to go through the ordinances and update the proper reference points. There'll be some changes but to the extent that you don't renumber, that would be extremely helpful. I would just ask you to try to do that where you can because a lot of the ordinances that have been passed over the years will say "as per section ..." of the Charter and the worst thing is to go to the Municipal Code. As a resident, to open it up and it says as per Charter Section 2-5 C and you look at that and either there's no 2-5 C or it's something completely different." Chair Saba said, "What we have is when we get to Article 6, Chapter 268 creating the CAFO. We had to add into the Charter. The current Charter does not include anything so therefore Chapter 6 became that Section, dealing with Chapter 268 and the CAFO and then every other article was renumbered by one." Solicitor O'Neill said, "Well, I'm going to take a look at that for you and see if I can help you with that because just from a selfish standpoint..." Chair Saba said, "If you can do that and make the recommendation for the next meeting that would be helpful." Anthony Wilson said, "Mr. Chair, I'll make a note as well because I could see that fitting into either your Article about financial procedure or your administrative department section, in terms of simplifying it so you don't have to add or subtract." Solicitor O'Neill added, "Or it can be a new section. There's no problem with that at the end." Dennis DiZoglio said, "Can I just clarify? It sounds like the indemnification language that we have in the Charter is sufficient to indemnify public officials. But practice-wise, we had to have a vote every time. Do you have to have a vote even though it's in the Charter and it's indemnifying it you still need the vote to enact it? Is there some way to avoid having a vote to have a public official indemnified?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "I don't think you can do that legally, but I can look into that question for you. Typically, cities and towns are essentially the Commonwealth --- they're an extension of the Commonwealth --- and in order to pledge the indemnity of the Commonwealth, there must be votes. There usually has to be votes but I could look at that for you. That's why it's structured that way. You could add more clarification to it as to what vote was required or you know different things like that, but I do believe it requires a vote, but I will verify that for you." Jennifer Kannan said, "Anthony do you have anything to opine on? Did you see, in other communities, Charters that address indemnification a little differently or no?" Anthony Wilson said, "I'll double-check. Your language seems pretty like what I've seen in other charters. I'll check to see if there are any unique nuances they'll take note of. I would say that I don't think that the vote is unusual in the sense that if you look at this, this all comes from a state statute around indemnification of municipal officials, and it says this city may indemnify its municipal officials. Operationally, there can be the question around do we want to indemnify this individual for this reason? I can see the benefits of taking the vote and saying that in every case, we'll look at and decide if we want to put the city's resources on the hook for this lawsuit. Operationally, I can see I can see the pros and cons." Jennifer Kannan said, "We discussed this with Marilyn Contreras at one time and her answer was very similar. Now my question is going to the City Solicitor --- Boards and Commissions --- when you say city officials, would they be included in this? Just in case, say there was somebody that wanted to go after



the zoning board, is it the City Council that would take the vote to indemnify them?" City Solicitor O'Neill said, "Right now, it's the City Council that votes on it." Jennifer Kannan continued, "And then there was a situation when you were on the council. When does the indemnification process take place because when your Council got elected in 2020, there was a resolution to indemnify the members of that sitting council by name, prior to. Is that unusual?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "No, you can do that." Jennifer Kannan said, "So you can do that. My question that I think would go to where Dennis is saying if a Mayor is in office and the City Council, again, at their first organizational meeting, just when they announced their Chair, do they, at that point, say within the scope of his duty not if he's on vacation in Florida and he does something silly --- we're not going to be on the hook for that --- but at that point does the City Council have the right to say we're going to indemnify our Mayor, within the scope of his duty, so that he or she doesn't have walk on eggshells during their term." Steve Saba said, "Can I correct that? We voted for the Council and Mayor to be indemnified because we were threatened with legal action as we're trying to stop a very controversial issue. We discussed this earlier, if you just put it in there that everyone's indemnified, it almost gives a free ticket to a City employee to be rude or do whatever they want. Whereas if the Mayor or if a City employee or if a Councilor or the group in general says something that all of a sudden someone's suing us, then it gives the Council the ability to look at the situation to say no --- they were acting on behalf of the City and we're going to indemnify them rather than just saying everyone's indemnified." Solicitor O'Neill said, "It usually has to be connected to a specific instance, event or case. It's not a blanket type of indemnification and I would note also that all city officials enjoy governmental immunity, too. There's an immunity statute for acts that are within your official duties." Jennifer Kannan asked, "And that is different than this?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "It is different, yes." Jennifer Kannan said, "Steve, again, I'm not saying blanket indemnification because I watched that meeting that you guys had, and I was all for that --- I probably would have supported that if I was on the Council. But that was my question --- rather than have each Council do that at different times, was there something that the law would say?" Steve Saba said, "We had three controversial issues that came up over my six-years term as a Councilor. Then we would need to be indemnified three different times. When we indemnified the Council and the Mayor, we were specific due to the ongoing issues with the Police Superior Officer's Union. That was one of the times we did that. So, it didn't indemnify us for everything." Eleni Varitimos said, "My follow-up question is regarding the boards and commissions. Do we need to explicitly state that in Article 10-14 that boards and commissions are included or are we leaving it more on a case-by-case basis? It's just simply because it says all city officers and employees and to me it's unclear if boards or commissions falls under that?" City Solicitor O'Neill said, "No, they're included as a city officer. It includes all appointed and elected officials. It has to come before the Council. The Mayor could come before the Council and say the DPW director is being sued personally we can't get him out of the case for whatever reason. There could be a million reasons why and the Council can say yes, he was doing that while he was working which has to do with work. It can involve both indemnification and involve defense --- sometimes there's a reason that they need their own counsel. It wouldn't typically involve where they were adverse to the City, we wouldn't do that but if they weren't adverse to the city and we were on the same side. Sometimes that happens, even at the state level, where somebody's allowed to retain personal counsel for whatever reason --- there could be a conflict --- it could be somebody's brother that's serving in a role --- things like that." Sharon Pollard said, "I was just going to say I think the way you approached it is correct. I mean, blanket indemnification gives a license to anybody to act inappropriately or outrageously or whatever knowing that someone's going to provide them with counsel."

- 12. Q11. How many cities have the City Solicitor under the Mayor's authority?** *All. Please see Attachment A.* Anthony Wilson said, "So, the last question is question 11 on the appointment of the City Solicitor. I think when I looked at it again, I may have sent you an older version of it, but I did another version of it, which I just emailed out. So, we sent a spreadsheet with about 43 communities that we looked at that have a Mayor-City Council structure similar to yours. In 40 of those 43 communities, the Solicitor's appointed by the Mayor and the vast majority of those Mayor appointed systems have a Council ratification or Council approval of that appointment. I will say that in Massachusetts, we've got the plan charters from state law, so a lot of communities are coming from plan A and are adopting their own charters. Under plan A, that appointment authority was solely vested with the Mayor. I would say that there is a trend across Massachusetts where

communities want to have the Council at least have the ability to weigh in on that appointing authority to be a check and balance there. Some of the issues that crop up around here are around the vote count. How many votes do you need to oppose an appointment? And timing --- how much time do we allow between when the appointment is to be brought to the Council and when they have to act? So, usually it's between the majority and two thirds to oppose an appointment and usually they provide between 30 and 45 days for the Council to act on the appointment or else it automatically becomes valid. Also, the spreadsheet, when you get a chance to look at it, I know it's long --- the last row is deep, and it actually put the language around the appointing authority for all the various communities right there for you to see. It'll be a lot to read but we can provide some draft language." Steve Saba said, "Are there any other questions that we had for Anthony? I do have a couple. Anthony and Paul, we're trying to understand the timeline --- we have X amount of time to get this before the Council. The Council and the Mayor would have to approve it. Then it goes to the Legislature. If the goal is to get it in front of the voters, what is our timeline? How long does it take on average, for the Legislature to approve this Charter?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "Sometimes they never approve it. That's what happened to the last one. It got lost in the Legislature and it was buried." Steve Saba continued, "We would be aware of that and watch for it. Under normal conditions, do you have an estimate of how long it should take?" Anthony Wilson replied, "So, a couple things. I'm going to refer to a Medford in terms of getting lost for not being excellent I just want to address that part for so Medford. Several years ago, they adopted a charter. The Council sent the special act to the Legislature. It was basically a 51% vote --- it was just a majority. The Legislature didn't act on it because they didn't feel like it had strong enough support. Whatever you produce and send to the Council, the higher consensus you get in terms of the vote output is going to be beneficial to its ultimate adoption. We also recommend as you get near the end of the process that you have some conversations or bring in your State Delegation at least to talk to them about what you're doing. that stuff that That sort of pre-groundwork really helps to the success of these things in terms of what happens when it gets to the Legislature assuming the Council and the Mayor adopted. We recommend that communities get their charters to the Legislature at the latest by the end of April. If you get it in later, you're going to bump against the budget, and you probably won't get anything back before the end of the term because you're going to get lost in the shuffle. Whenever you finish it and the Council has adopted it, we recommend that all happens by early Spring. The earlier the better. You're trying to pick a year to finish in which you'll have a municipal election if you have something that will be on the ballot for voters to vote on. If that's the case, then you want to send it up on a year where you have a municipal election or at least put that in the language that it should be on the next regular municipal election and so it can come back for the for the Clerk to have time to print the ballots and put it before the voters. If you get it up there in April, you're usually looking at getting it back late-Summer-early-Fall assuming there aren't any other concerns from the Legislature. You're looking at a five-to-six-month window of deliberation. There are cases where the Legislature has questions. That depends on how experimental you are in terms of what you send up. There are times, as Attorney O'Neill stated earlier where Legislative Counsel may call and ask to say, 'you did this we want to change it' or 'we have this question' and that can also extend it. You're looking at five to six months from the time it gets sent up to the time it gets back and can be put on the ballot." Sharon Pollard said, "Anthony, when the Home Rule petition is filed, who is it in the Legislature that reviews it other than House or Senate Counsel? Is there anyone else that's looking at it?" Anthony Wilson said, "There's a Committee on Municipalities and Local Government. It starts with that committee and once it goes to that committee then it goes to the full body for them to vote on it. The people who will be shepherding it through the whole way --- you have to depend on your local delegation. Usually, communities have a lead sponsor with multiple State Representatives reps and a State Senator. I don't know who's got seniority, but usually you'd want that person being the lead advocate for it at the on Beacon Hill." Steve Saba said, "Anthony, we kicked off this committee in November. The committee was approved but the committee wasn't selected by the Council and the Mayor until late last year and then we kicked off in November. Obviously, it sounds like we've missed that deadline already. Knowing that there's going to be a municipal election and the City Council can be a totally different Council. Theoretically, it could be a different Mayor. Do you recommend that we keep working on this and then present this to the Council next January? Or, if we presented it to the Council now, it's going to sit there and there's a very good chance it's going to get lost. What would you recommendation be?" Anthony Wilson said, "Well, if I can ask some questions of the committee. How was the committee formed? Do you have a

charge and a timeline for when you're supposed to be done?" Steve Saba replied, "The committee was initially created early last year but then they never acted on it. So, then I asked them when they were going to select us which ended up happening in October of last year. I asked him to put it before the Council, again, to start the clock over again and they did and then they created this committee. It was selected with three members selected by the Chair of the Council, at the time, and three by the Mayor and then myself was recommended by the Chair and the Mayor. I'm not sure what the timeline was but I think the way it was worded it was as soon as possible --- there was no date on the second one." Solicitor O'Neill said, "There is no date that I'm aware of. It is a strategic decision." Sharon Pollard said, "I think it was self-imposed." Steve Saba said, "It was self-imposed by us and then now we're looking at --- do we speed this up to have a meeting every week or do we just keep going the way we are? Because we want to take the time to get it right. Do we go through this and then you have the summer coming and then do we have it prepared for January?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "I think you would need to have a conversation with the Council and the Mayor about that. I think that there are Councilors, just from my experience, that are hoping to see this before they leave. There are several councilors leaving because their term limited out." Sharon Pollard said, "Just trying to deal with the timeline issue. I think what we don't want to do is a rush job and have an imperfect document, from our point of view, that you can't put a local issue on a state ballot --- it would have to be a separate piece of paper, correct?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "I don't honestly know the answer to that question. I would have to check." Anthony Wilson said, "We have seen some communities do that --- go through that process of putting it on the ballot at the same time as the state election or the presidential election. I would just say I wouldn't count on it. It's very hard. The Secretary of State does not like people to do that." Solicitor O'Neill said, "I think it must be part of the Home Rule Petition --- like it has to say it can go on a state ballot." Sharon Pollard said, "We've done it before in Methuen. Many years ago, I believe the issue was that what was required was a separate ballot. When you went to vote, you were handed two ballots." Dennis DiZoglio added, "That's what we did when we added the Mayor to the School Committee. It was voted on a non-municipal year. That was on a state ballot, and we had separate ballots." Jennifer Kannan said, "I know, Anthony, that you mentioned that the Special Act Charter goes to the governing body which is the City Council and the Mayor. Then, if they approve it, which as Paul said, a lot of the Councilors are in their last term, and they really wanted to see some of the ambiguities here cleared up and that's why they tasked us. Once it goes to them while they're in their office, even if it's as late as September, and they agree and then we pass it off to our delegation. I think that our State delegation tends to work closely together. Once the State Legislature passes it, is our Charter now a binding document? And if they wanted it on the state ballot but if not --- let's just say the City decided not to or the Secretary of State says we should have it on the ballot for the next municipal election --- is it in effect once the House Counsel passes it?" Anthony Wilson said, "Let me just do one clarification. At the start of the meeting, we had this conversation. Every item doesn't have to have voter ratification. You'd make that decision based on what you put in there. If you're making a lot of these more administrative or grammatical changes, you wouldn't want to burden the voters with the ratification process. If you do things like changing term limits, then that's something that you'd want your voters to weigh in on. That's just one piece of it. It depends on what your output is in terms of whether or not that even makes sense to have voter ratification. I just want to put that out there first. Then on the second piece, assuming that it's the type of Charter where you want to get it ratified, it wouldn't be effective until it's been ratified by the voters. Because until you have that election, they're not saying that it should happen. In theory, there's a couple different ways to structure it so I guess in another way you could say let's put the things that we want to happen immediately on another special act. Let's send up two, one that must be ratified and one that can be effective immediately. There are ways to structure it but if you put it all in one package that has to be ratified by the voters, those would not become effective until that election." Solicitor O'Neill said, "But I think your question is, if the Legislature passes it, can it go on the next regularly scheduled municipal election? If that's two years from now, I believe it can wait until then, if they've enacted it. The problem is the session ends and things die so if it's filed now at budget time and the session ends in December, it could just fall away and then it would have to be the subject of the new City Council. The Council could still take the recommendations again and take them up again." Steve Saba said, "If the session ends, it dies, correct? We may want to get this in before --- the new session would start in January --- so we can just go ahead and do this. I think that for the basic Charter, they may not want to put it before the voters but the other issues we're talking about are sensitive, we're going to have to

wait until the next election. If we do this and we get it to the Council in June what sounding like we're going to it's going to die." Solicitor O'Neill said, "It has to go to this City Council to be approved. If it were recommended to the City Council and approved before the end of their terms --- that would be January --- Inauguration is in January --- you could hold the act and send it later. You'd have to talk to the Council and the Mayor about the timing." Steve Saba said, "If this current Council approves it and then can the next Council still send it?" Eleni Varitimos said, "Just for clarification, they would have the right to not send it as well." Steve Saba said, "I'll have a meeting with the Chair and with the Mayor and talk about the situation and tell them where we're at and that we're trying to get this finished up." Solicitor O'Neill said, "You're not necessarily on a bad schedule because you want it filed in the early Spring. If the Council voted to approve it at the end of December, that would effectively be February, and that's not too early. The session starts in January so you're at the beginning of a session, so the timing could work if it were done and passed by the current Council. You just run the risk it may not be passed by this Council and there would be a new Council if we don't know how many new members." Steve Saba said, "Let's say in November or December and then the new Council could still choose to have to vote on it again, correct?" Solicitor O'Neill said, "I don't think they would have to vote on it again. There are Council rules that prohibit that within a year. They can waive their rules." Anthony Wilson said, "I'm not that familiar with Methuen but my understanding is what they would be voting on is sending a special act to the Legislature. If that Council voted on it before the end of their term, it would go to the Legislature." Solicitor O'Neill said, "It would make no sense to file it at the end of December. You would vote to file it in the new session --- like that would be part of the vote to file the special act at the beginning of the new session or something to that effect because you would never file something in December because it wouldn't go anywhere. Sharon Pollard said, "I'm just thinking between us chickens --- what is it that you think the Council really wants? I would only preface it by saying, just in the community, there's no general knowledge or information about the City Charter. I'm not quite sure there's a lot of what's in here that the normal person over the course of their life would be interested in. But there are certain hot buttons that people would be interested in. Maybe you can do it in two pieces. Maybe you want to segregate out those things do you think that the people would have a very good healthy robust debate about." Jennifer Kannan said, "Agreed. The Constitution is basically for the government --- how the government functions so like you said, the people that are living their fine lives, it probably isn't of high importance, but it does give the groundwork on how government runs, and I think having a lot of ambiguities. I've heard from the experience of prior people who served. The third time that people want the elected officials to provide a bit more clarification so there's not a lot of infighting between the Councils and the Mayors. Regarding procedure, I think I like the idea of not touching term limits --- we didn't really talk about term limits as far as consecutive terms --- the only thing we really talked about was the time limit of the Mayor and I think if we stick to our original goal and clean up this document and then do what we said. As far as we're concerned in this document, we're going to leave it the way it is. Maybe in the September election, in the grand scheme of things, what would it cost for us to print up a ballot that says at the state election separately --- do you want the term of the Mayor of the City to be four-year term or stay at two-year terms? Let's just say on November 4th and we get the results, maybe we add an addendum to the document that we gave them to say the voters have spoken and the Mayor will serve a four-year term or if they don't then they just send it in February." Dennis DiZoglio said, "Why not send it earlier but let the voters change it the following November?" Steve Saba said, "We'll send it to the Council without the controversial issues, and they can vote on it the end of the year and then the next Council in January would pass it on to the State Delegation. One real quick question is --- to the issue of term limits, does that have to go through the Legislature as a Special Act before it goes to the voters or does it matter?" Anthony Wilson said, "The Council could put a non-binding question on the ballot. In order for it to become effective, you would have to go to the Legislature first." Steve Saba said, "I think plan would be to give them a clean charter and let the future Council deal with term limits." Sharon Pollard said, "It'd be very interesting too because I'm sure there are Councilors that have talked to all of us and the Councilors that have approached me have asked about term limits. Would you agree with that issue pro or con? I'm not saying they're all for it." Jennifer Kannan said, "If we want and when we get to that portion and we can take it from each Mayor - Council and we want to say listen, we now know that it must go to the State Legislature. We're going to wait. You guys can vote on this in November or December. We're not going to send it until February. Some of you might not be here but if it's important to the ones that are leaving, like

Clr. Faretra. He was the Chair at the time, and he really wanted this document cleaned up. Well, he's not going to be here but say he supports this document, and he says I'm with you guys. Then it's up to that body, not us, and if they say guess what guys, we're going to change term limits. Then we're going to send it to the House Counsel in February and maybe they might not be on the council but some of them will be I think some of them are still up for reelection and they're just new and then if it comes back then it goes to the voters in two years from now." Sharon Pollard said, "So, we're saying then, if I understand what you said correctly, Jen, that we're kind of bifurcating this whole process. Term limits, although it belongs in the Charter, as we're talking, would be a totally separate ballot initiative." Steve Saba said, "We're all agreeing on that --- term limits should be a separate item." Jen Kannan said, "The Council might feel differently. If they feel different. And that's OK." Steve Saba said, "We will make our presentation to the Council and talk to them about the history and honest feelings of why we didn't include it and if they want to take a chance and have the whole Charter fail, they can vote to add term limits that into the Charter but I think it would be a mistake. We could tell them that but that's up to the Council. I think that there are many Councilors that want this Charter cleaned up, I certainly do. And then whatever their opinion is on term limits, they can deal with that separately." Jennifer Kannan said, "I think it would be a good thing for all of us, considering we have former mayors and we have people who really take stock in the community, to tell the Council because, again, we're doing the job and the Councilors are busy doing the other things and we have the City Attorney here and again Anthony to explain the process. We're going to put that in there because then we could do exactly what they said --- we could put it on the ballot separately." Sharon Pollard said, "So the goal then, based on this conversation, would be to continue to work on the Charter because I think a lot of the language needs to be cleared up --- some of it is really kind of obtuse --- but continue to work on the Charter and perfect it as well as we can. Then send it to the Council under those arrangements and our goal would be to have the Council hopefully pass on something that we've agreed on and have them do it late in the year and then send it to the Legislature with the goal of filing this in January." Steve Saba said, "I think our goal should be, on a certain date, maybe October 15<sup>th</sup>, have this to the Council. In consideration of those Councilors who are term limited out but really wanted to vote on this, we give them that opportunity. We can do that, and we can update the Council as to what we're doing." Eleni Varitimos said, "And honestly, there has to be some initiative and effort by the Legislative delegation to get this done. It's important to mention that because, yes, as the term comes to an end more and more business gets done, particularly for small things like bridge naming --- all the stuff that was held up and then suddenly, it all comes out in a fast and furious fashion. My point is, I think we have a good delegation and if we told them that we really needed to get this done by this time period, then they need to be aware of that." Sharon Pollard said, "I think they'll be good partners with us because I think they all understand that the document, if you took out the controversial piece, no one has to make a big decision." Jennifer Kannan said, "And I'll make a note to remind us because if we're going to spread out our meetings now, if that's going to be the will of the CRC, then we go to the Council. I think we should, as a committee, have the Chair of the Council invite the Legislative delegation to that meeting so we're in the audience and they are in the audience and let them know that we did our duty and we expect them to take care of it." There was a discussion of the Council-Legislative Delegation – CRC meeting should take place. They agreed that Great Hall would be their best option. Steve Saba continued, "I think I heard discussion that we've got a good Legislative delegation, and we might be able to get this to them early enough to get this through this year. And then we've also discussed getting it to the Council near the end of the year so they can vote on it and have it ready to go in January. So, what is our goal?" Sharon Pollard and Jennifer Kannan said, "The later. I'd like to see do just what you outlined." Steve Saba continued, "I have one more question. While we have Anthony and Paul here --- I have one question about the Mayor. There was talk about how now our Charter says that the Mayor cannot hold any other job or business. Basically, the Mayor has to be 100% dedicated to the community. And then there was talk recently, at a meeting, that maybe we say that we take out the wording so that a Mayor could have a business but still has to dedicate their time to the City. Do you know what requirements have gone to other Mayors and communities? Are they limited to just their full-time job or are they limited that they can't have other businesses on the side?" Anthony Wilson said, "For a community of the size of Methuen with a Mayor-Council form of government, I would say the vast majority --- over 75% --- the language is that they're devoting their full time to serving as Mayor and that they cannot have any other business outside of outside of that." Steve Saba said, "OK, so we might want to talk about putting that back

in when we get to that section --- we made that change using vague language – that has to be clarified. Anthony, thank you for your time. I think what we're going to do is wait for your other responses. We're also going to get back to starting at the beginning of the Charter and reviewing it again. Once we get maybe three-quarters or halfway through --- once we have enough questions, we'll invite you to another meeting. Otherwise, we'll email you with questions as we go through the process.” Anthony Wilson said, “That makes sense. I wanted to ask you, because you did send me what you've currently worked on. What we were doing was going through that section by section to provide you with some comments. Would you want that, or do you want us to wait for your questions and for you to send us a section?” Steve Saba said, “It depends on how fast you can turn around on it. Instead of waiting, I think we'd like to start reviewing it again. We're going to make another read of this and we're going to try to further clarify. When we first started this, there was so much discussion because the current Charter is a mess. So, we cleaned it up, but we still have to do some fine-tuning here. Even if you send it to us in pieces or you can just send the whole thing but I'm thinking we can begin and then when you do send your notes on it, we can go back and edit anything that you're strongly recommending and then the goal will be to finish the second reading of this. We're going to have a public hearing, at some point, again but then get it to you and say here's what we consider the final version. Can you just go through this with the fine-tune comb finally and go through it? Does that make sense? That makes sense. We can fit in there. I'm hearing there seems to be a lot of attention on the Mayor's section as well as the section particularly around the CAFO. I can maybe get you our specific thoughts on those areas in two weeks? Would you be able to say that you'll get us chapters 1 through 4 at least in two weeks?” Anthony Wilson agreed. What we'll do at our next meeting, and we'll schedule it for three weeks from now, to give you some time. We're going to count on you having your notes back on that and then we'll plan on going through Chapters 1 through 4 and then and then hopefully, you'll soon get the rest of it done or even if you get the next three chapters done --- we'll make that our follow-up meeting. We'll plan the next meeting in three weeks. Paul, I think it would be advantageous if you could try to attend every meeting moving forward now that we have got stuff. And then we'll call Anthony in when we need him. Anthony, as we agreed, we'll be able to send you questions as we go along but we're going to wait for the answers to some of these questions and your edits to Chapters 1 through 4.” There was a discussion regarding scheduling the next meeting. Steve Saba said, “Let's plan our next meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup>, as long as Great Hall is available.”

**13. Confirm the next meeting date and time – June 12, 2025.**

**14. Adjourn -** Jennifer Kannan made a motion to adjourn, seconded by John Cummings – Unanimous - 8:38 PM