

John Donohue - Chair
Tasha Buzzell - Vice-Chair
Melinda Bernardo Cuerda -
Secretary



Laura Wagner
David Sequeira

Town of North Attleborough
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
43 South Washington Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760
Phone: (508) 699-0100 ext. 2555

3/20/2025 - Minutes

I. Pledge Of Allegiance

Meeting called to order 6:30 PM

Members present: John Donohue (JD), Laura Wagner (LW), Melinda Bernardo Cuerda (MBC), David Sequeira (DS)

Members absent: Tasha Buzzell (TB)

II. Approval Of Minutes

a. Approval of March 6, 2025 minutes

Motion by Wagner to approve 3/6/2025 minutes. Seconded by Bernardo Cuerda

Approved (3-0-1), DS abstained

III. Community Announcements

a. none

IV. Resident And Community Comment

a. none

V. Old Business

a. none

VI. New Business

a. Steven Cabral, Vice chair, Board of Electric Commissioners

Interview with Steven Cabral (SC), Vice Chair - Board of Electric Commissioners

Background and Role

- **JD:** Asks for introduction and background
 - **SC:** Shares background on overall involvement with town government. Ran for BPW and served 17 years. Later, ran for Board of Electric Commissioners (BEC). Notes BEC's financial independence and ability to source energy from various suppliers (hydro, solar, wind, nuclear).

Board Structure and Challenges

- **JD:** Asks how the expansion from 3 to 5 members on board is working.
 - **SC:** Prefers a 3-member board but recognizes that with 5, there's more community feedback. Notes low public awareness of BEC and BPW, which he believes leads to low competition for seats.
- **MBC:** Cites BOH interested in moving from 3 to 5 member board for purposes of research. Asks if concerns.
 - **SC:** Notes BEC has no subcommittees. Agrees that 5 allows more feedback, but capable members could handle research in a 3-member format.

Finances and Procurement

- **JD:** Asks about financial aspects
 - **SC:** Indicates that there are financial benefits to town such as ability to allocate funds to town projects and funds that are paid in lieu of taxes (PILOT). Notes that PILOT number is now based on a specific formula that uses property and equipment value, depreciation, and the tax rate. This formula replaced what seemed to be an arbitrary number. Further notes that net income over the year (2024) will allow for a reduction in an upcoming bill for residents and a credit to the town. Town also receives interest on funds set aside for future expenses.
- **JD:** Recalls prior failed attempt to merge the electric department into town government
 - **SC:** Notes the department's ~100-year history and the benefit of staying separate. It allows for separate funds and for focus on securing best source of energy to ensure services are reliable.
- **MBC:** Asks how procurement is handled
 - **SC:** Explains the department handles its own procurement but investments are overseen by the town treasurer. Notes they're over-saving and are working to remedy.
- **JD:** Asks about rebates
 - **SC:** Notes that rebates weren't offered for short period of time. Indicates that during COVID they created a stabilization account instead of rebates. Goal was to protect customers from anticipated cost spikes. Indicates that while other towns have raised rates, North has had rate reductions.

Board Size and Recruitment

- **LW:** re: board size. Asks if improved communication within the town (e.g. podcast, website) might affect his thoughts on board size.
 - **SC:** Notes he would be satisfied with 5 members if there was increased public interested in positions.
- **LW:** Asks about qualifications to serve
 - **SC:** Says it's open to any resident willing to learn; no electrical expertise required. Notes benefit of having different opinions.

Charter Changes and Budget

- **JD:** Asks if the charter changed any of BEC's responsibilities.
 - **SC:** Notes that only change was the move to 5 members; budget process remains the same.
- **JD:** Asked about NAED General Manager/Town Manager relations.
 - **SC:** Notes when they were hiring for position, they stressed collaboration skills. Indicates that GM works well with with town and that collaboration is BEC's expectation. Notes NAED's ability to share resources (e.g.staff w/ GIS skills) with other town departments..

General Observations

- **SC:** Notes while non-charter related, thinks elected and appointed positions could benefit from a formal training by the town. Suggests that some boards may not fully understand staff responsibilities.

b. Preliminary discussion about topics to address in CRC report

- Group discussion of potential report categories
- Whiteboard with complete list for discussion
- Post-discussion categories for further consideration
 - procurement challenges
 - stipends
 - board membership numbers
 - strong chief statute
 - council elections (terms)
 - scrivener's errors
 - budget cycle
 - election date
 - TCP opt-out process - JD to look for more information on this topic
 - licensing
 - voter apathy
 - write-in candidates: minimum vote requirement
 - attracting candidates to elected boards

- Decision: reading of Charter articles will be done asynchronously

VII. Items Unforeseen By The Chair

- a. none

VIII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting by Bernardo Cuerda. Seconded by Wagner
Unanimous approval. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM