

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

Meeting called to order

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

Members absent: Tasha Buzzell (TB)

4/3/2025 - Minutes

I. Pledge Of Allegiance

II. Approval Of Minutes

a. Approval of March 27, 2025 minutes

- Motion by Wagner to approve 3/27/2025 minutes. Seconded by Sequeira
- Approved (4-0)

III. Community Announcements

a. none

IV. Resident And Community Comment

a. JD: Congratulations to LW on election to Town Council

V. Old Business

a. none

VI. New Business

a. Richard McQuade, Police Chief

Introduction

1. **JD**: welcomes RM and asks for background on role
 1. **RM**: Notes he became Chief in June 2021. Indicates that department has grown and stabilized after an earlier period w/ retention issues. Currently has 52 officers and specialized units. Notes that recent projects include HVAC, new RMS system and radio & dispatch consoles. Indicates that body camera project was “smashing success”

Current State of Department

1. **JD**: Asks about department's challenges
 1. **RM**: Notes that currently negotiating a new contract. Indicates that retention has improved, but prior exit interviews indicate that salary was a deciding factor. Dept wasn't able to match offers from other departments.
2. **LW**: Mentions listening to a podcast featuring K9 officer
 1. **RM**: Indicates that officer and police dog are wrapping up training. Officer is one of few female K9 officers
3. **LW**: Remarks on culture shift
 1. **RM**: Notes importance of training and support from TM on training budget. Indicates range of training types (e.g. custody procedures, firearms, martial arts, wellness). Emphasizes importance of mental health resources. Gives example of stress team being brought in after an incident. Notes strong partnership with state training programs.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

1. **JD**: Asks how involved PD is in emergency preparedness
 1. **RM**: Notes regular coordination with the Fire Department. Notes recent attendance at cross-dept tabletop exercise (PD, FD, Superintendent). Remarks that exercises were very realistic and useful.
2. **JD**: Asks about opioid response
 1. **RM**: Notes that officers carry Narcan and automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Indicates that PD is working on a co-response model with a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) using opioid settlement funds from the state. Goal is de-escalation and ability to section for substance-related emergencies. Cites success story about officers securing a voluntary commitment.

Charter and Governance

1. **JD**: Asks for thoughts on the Strong Chief statute.
 1. **RM**: Strongly supports it. Indicates it let's Chief manage department operations while the TM manages administrative matters.

1. **MBC**: Asks if that authority is codified or by practice
 1. **RM**: Notes it's in his contract and town bylaws.
2. **JD**: Asks if charter has simplified the budget process
 1. **RM**: Yes. Explains that their EA has strong understanding of budget process, which is extremely helpful
 2. **MBC**: Asks if the simplification is b/c of charter or staff
 1. **RM**: Notes it probably more because of staff
3. **JD**: Asks if there's anything he wishes the charter did differently
 1. **RM**: Wishes that departmental advice was followed in certain circumstances. Declines to give examples.
4. **DS**: Asks about role in liquor licenses or event permits
 1. **RM**: Notes Capt Roy represents PD on Special Events and Licensing Committee. Notes that past bylaws prohibited public alcohol consumption, but this was changed. Now permits follow strict guidelines.
5. **DS**: Asks if 5-year window for capital planning is reasonable
 1. **RM**: Says yes. Notes that building is aging and HVAC issues have persisted for years. Other repairs are being planned (e.g. clock tower and roof).
6. **MBC**: Asks how procurement process is working
 1. **RM**: Indicates that it's challenging. Notes that HVAC project required navigating waivers through DCAM. He doesn't have procurement credentials which makes it harder. Observes that there's no centralized procurement department in town. Believes that would be beneficial.
 1. **MBC**: Asks what a procurement department would solve
 1. **RM**: Believes it would streamline vendor onboarding. So once vendors are secured, PD can manage implementation.
7. **MBC**: Asks about technology needs
 1. **RM**: Interested in plate reader (LPR) technology. State Police use it; Believes it would help identify hot-listed vehicles since current process is manual.
 1. **DS**: Asks how does the tech is structured
 1. **RM**: Involves annual fee and setup. Would require procurement and maintenance planning.

b. Discussion on Articles 4-7, as needed

- Discussion of 5-4 (BOH) and 5-7 (Licensing Board).

- Question about whether there's an appeals process for licensing board.
- Discussion of public petition process and intent of the word "citizen". [HTTPS://ECODE360.COM/39066947#39066947](https://ecode360.com/39066947#39066947).
 - Note to clarify how this mechanism can be used / was intended to be used.
- Discussion of budget timing.
 - Question on whether date should be moved from 1/15 to 2/15
- Discussion of nonpartisan elections and related charter language.
- MBC explains rationale of spreadsheet -- to evaluate how similar towns handle TC elections (staggered or concurrent) and election of TCP. 3

c. Discussion of report categories

Provisional discussion of categories

1. **Procurement**: discussion on topic. Lack of consensus. DS to research.
2. **Voter apathy**: out of scope
3. **Attracting candidates to elected boards**: out of scope
4. **Stipends**: discussion of math and potential to include. MBC to get TM presentation
5. **Board membership numbers**: lack of consensus. JD to inquire with DPW.
6. **Strong Chief Statute**: Keep as provisional until we verify location in charter. JD to inquire with Chief and TM.
7. **Council elections (terms)** - discussion of terms and potential value of of change. Lack of consensus.
8. **Scrivener's errors** - JD to inquire with Clerk
9. **Budget cycle** - discussion.. Question on whether date change has implications beyond TC. LW to inquire w/ TM.
- 10 **Election date** - discussion. Lack of consensus. MBC to research.
- 11 **TCP opt-out process** - discussion. Decision: worth including.
- 12 **Licensing** - Discussion. DS to research.
- 13 **Write-in candidates**: Discussion of minimum vote requirement. May be out of scope for CRC / in scope for TC
- 14 **Bylaw wait period** - discussion. Question about whether this is state law.

Action Items

JD

1. Follow up on Strong Chief statute
2. Request scrivener's errors list from Patty
3. Poll DPW on board structure

MBC

1. Get copy of TM presentation on stipends
2. Research on election date impacts

DS

1. Investigate procurement and licensing structures
2. Review state law on bylaw waiting period
3. Clarify Section 8 petition language

LW

1. Follow up with Borg/Council on budget timeline implications

VII. Items Unforeseen By The Chair

- a. none

VIII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting by Wagner. Seconded by Bernardo Cuerda
Unanimous approval. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM