

The twenty-sixth meeting of the Uxbridge Charter Review Committee, held at the Uxbridge Police Station, 275 Douglas Street, was called to order by Chair Patrick Stephan at 6:30 PM, Monday, August 2, 2021.

**Members Present:** Patrick Stephan, Chairman; Ray Talke, Clerk;  
Committee Members: Atty. Rob Knapik, Michael Potaski & Dr. Joanne Lindenmayer

**Members Absent:** Chief Jeff Lourie, Barry Desruisseaux, Melissa Desmarais and Ron Parsons

**OPEN PUBLIC FORUM:**

No one present from the public.

REC'D UXB TOWN CLERK  
2021 SEP 29 AM 9:11

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Review timeline for Committee deliverables –**

Chairman Stephan inquired with Atty. Knapik if any other questions or comments were directed by the Town Clerk or Town Moderator about the process for submitting proposed Charter changes for inclusion on the Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Potaski mentioned that it must go to the Town Clerk's office to get it time stamped. A report will also be prepared and presented at the Fall Town Meeting.

**Meeting Minutes:**

**MOTION** by Dr. Lindenmayer to accept the amended meeting minutes of July 12, 2021. Motion was seconded by Mr. Talke. Motion carried **5-0-0**.

**MOTION** by Mr. Talke to accept the meeting minutes of July 19, 2021 as written. Motion was seconded by Mr. Potaski. Motion carried **4-0-1**.

**Input from the community**

Chairman Stephan mentioned that a few people started the survey, but stopped after the second question if they answered "no" instead of "yes" about concerns about town government.

One resident inquired about a Water and Sewer Commission vs. Board of Public Works.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairman Stephan mentioned that a public information campaign will be conducted by the committee through public meetings and information in the press and social media.

Chairman Stephan reached out to the Fairhaven community for information about their Board of Public Works. Fairhaven is a town similar in size to Uxbridge, and their Board of Public Works functions successfully.

Chairman Stephan met with Town Manager Steve Sette to go through the proposed change to the town charter. The Town Manager had one concern about how the position of Superintendent of Public Works would be compensated within the Uxbridge system.

Selectman John Wise joined the meeting at 6:46 pm.

Selectman Wise is aware of the proposed establishment of a Board of Public Works. If it's adopted, MGL Chapter 41, Section 69C through Section 69F must be accepted. Mr. Potaski mentioned that members elected to the board/commission must have experience with the DPW, along with management and financial experience. Mr. Potaski questioned where we would find people with these skills.

Alternatively, Selectman Wise recommended an Advisory Committee for the DPW that could include DPW department heads, elected officials, and appointed officials. He noted that it wouldn't be adding a whole new commission but would instead report to the Town Manager.

Selectman Wise mentioned that the Water and Sewer Commissioners are having a meeting on August 24 at the town sewage plant. Selectman Wise mentioned that a lot occurs behind the scenes with the Board of Selectmen, including updating the wells and cisterns. He noted that everyone in town is a rate payer in the water and sewer system. For example, he cited those who need to get their septic system pumped. Their service providers must pay Uxbridge dumping fees, and these fees get passed along to the consumers.

Dr. Lindenmayer commented that many residents feel that water and sewer bills are unsustainable and some residents are moving out of Uxbridge for this reason. Selectman Wise commented that the water fees are very competitive. Sewer fees are high for various reasons. Selectman Wise is leaning towards having the Board of Selectmen to keep the Water and Sewer Commissioner responsibilities with them, instead of creating another board. It was noted that previous interviews with all of

the Selectmen reflected that they wished to have water and sewer responsibilities in a separate Water and Sewer Commission.

Chairman Stephan mentioned that a presentation will be made to the Board of Selectmen at their next meeting.

Mr. Talke asked if there was too much on the Board of Selectmen's plate and perhaps someone with Selectmen Wise's background might want to be on the Board of Public Works rather than the Board of Selectmen. Chairman Stephan has engaged residents in a discussion about water and sewer bills. Selectman Wise mentioned the different tiers that are shown in water and sewer bills and how water usage drives the charges to users.

Mr. Talke requested a clarification in Article 3, Section 2 where the committee approved language for a provision for censure of Selectmen. As it reads now, we can only censure the entire Select Board but not the individuals on it and he questioned if that is to be the intent. Mr. Potaski confirmed that was the intent of the language.

Mr. Talke also inquired if there were any typos or grammatical errors in the document. No members of the committee found any errors. The team thanked Mr. Talke for his work on the amended charter document.

**Comments on completed deliberations document:**

Chairman Stephan directed comments to Atty. Knapik asking about highlights and FAQs. Mr. Potaski needs a more thorough presentation to have it placed in the newspaper by August 15<sup>th</sup>.

FAQs could include a reasoning behind why something was not included in the Charter, e.g. Board of Public Works vs. Water and Sewer Commission.

**Plans for future meetings, including public forum:**

No presentation to residents is scheduled until the committee can get information about the report distributed, possibly in late September or early October Mr. Potaski suggested having a meeting at the Uxbridge Senior Center.

The next meeting of the charter review committee will be Monday, August 16<sup>th</sup>.

Discussions also included how each article will be written, along with any amendments that are presented at the Town Meeting floor. These issues will be addressed with the Town Moderator.

Chairman Stephan will be speaking with Benn Sherman/DPW Director and the Board of Selectmen, and Atty. Knapik will be speaking with Moderator Ed Maharay.

**MOTION** to adjourn by Dr. Lindenmayer and seconded by Mr. Potaski. Motion carried 6-0-0. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:11 PM.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Ray Talke - Clerk**