

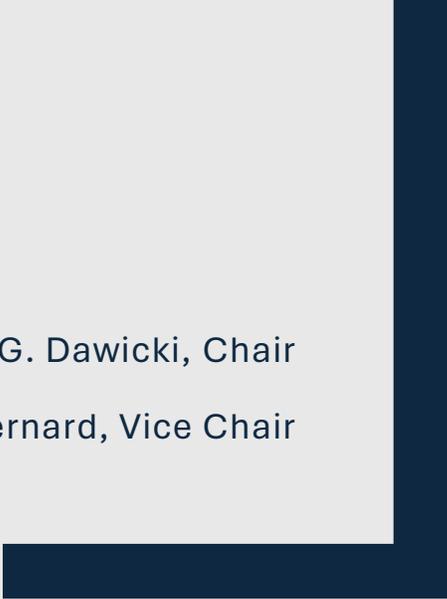
TOWN OF FAIRHAVEN

CHARTER COMMITTEE UPDATES

MAY 2024

Mr. Morgan G. Dawicki, Chair

Ms. Lilia Cabral-Bernard, Vice Chair



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Latest Annual Report:

On June 12th, 2020, Town Meeting convened to vote on a total of 60 articles, one of these items including action on Article 48, citizens petition calling for the creation of a nine-member Charter Committee. By 139-32 votes, your representatives at Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved this article.

This group's charge is reviewing all aspects of local government organization and structure, including, without limitation, regional relationships and the operation of all Town departments, boards, committees and commissions, elected and appointed, and make a report or recommendations to the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, or such later town meeting as the Moderator may approve, with the goal of presenting a proposed charter at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, which special legislation would be forwarded to the General Court for review and approval, in accordance with the Home Rule Amendment, Section 8, and further to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of \$10,000.00 to pay for the expenses of such Committee, or take any other action relative thereto.

The committee has been working to finalize a draft charter with the assistance of Ms. Heather White from Petrini & Associates. The committee worked with the Town Administrator and Town Moderator to allocate the \$10,000 towards Town Counsel expenses to ensure the charter meets legal standards and does not conflict with Massachusetts General Law.

Overall, the committee is looking to present a charter that does not make substantive alterations to the Town's governance structure, but which condenses the Town's governance into a singular document, the Town of Fairhaven Charter. For example, the Town Counsel has assisted with incorporating the Town's existing special acts into the Charter. The committee's goal is to present a charter to the town meeting that is clear, concise, and ensures that moving forward there should be few questions regarding Fairhaven's governance.

More information, including our documents and contact information, are available on the town's website <https://www.fairhaven-ma.gov/charter-committee>

Submitted,

Mr. Morgan G. Dawicki, Chair

Ms. Lilia Cabral-Bernard, Vice Chair

Additional Information:

- *Feedback and Next Steps*

Following Town Meeting, the committee will be working to solicit feedback from relevant committees and departments on the draft charter.

Following review of the feedback from committees and departments, the committee will then publish a full draft of the document that has been reviewed by the Town Counsel on the committee's website and distribute it for public comment.

The committee plans to engage in a public information campaign and solicit feedback from the public over a period of several months.

- *Information about the draft*

In general, the committee has sought to merge the special acts and governance documents that oversee the Town's governance structure into the single charter document. This should make the Town's governance going forward less confusing for the public.

- *Submission to Town Meeting*

The charter will be ready to be submitted at the next Town Meeting for a vote. The vote will be to send the charter to the Massachusetts Legislature for review and approval.

- *Public Comments*

For public comment, please attend a charter committee meeting which is typically held once per month or contact the committee chair, Mr. Morgan G. Dawicki at mgdawicki@gmail.com

Public comment that is submitted will be reviewed at committee meetings.