

Received: 5-12-26 3:45pm Nicole Charest, TC

Town of Durham

Charter Revision Commission

Wednesday, May 6, 2026 7:00pm

Community Center Meeting Room 1, and Remote via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/QbEDtIAAGiH6P0qQnUjN8UU4vB3G-ypA2BCelK2yZtx9WffL001Ey5_3CKydz0.bptnc6nlMffRR8RF

Passcode: m?38eKcG

Call to order

Co-chair Laura Francis called the Special Charter Revision Commission meeting of Wednesday, May 6, 2026 to order at 6:00 pm

Also present: Matt LaFayette, Christian Godbout, Eileen Buckheit, Christian Godbout, Al DiVincentis, Nick Charest: Town Clerk and Recording Secretary

Absent: Martin Anderson

Members of the public present: Richard Parmelee, Roger Kleeman, Maya Perry Liss, Eileen Bob Booz, Lynn Johnson, other members of the public

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. **MOTION BY AL DIVINCENTIS SECONDED BY SEVERAL TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED.**
3. Approval of Minutes
 - a. April 8, 2026
 - i. **MOTION BY MATT LAFAYETTE, SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 8, 2026 MEETING AS PRESENTED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**
 - b. April 11, 2026
 - i. **MOTION BY MATT LAFAYETTE, SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 11, 2026 MEETING AS PRESENTED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**
 - c. April 15, 2026
 - i. Noted day of the week in meeting title should read "Wednesday" instead of "Saturday"
 - ii. **MOTION BY MATT LAFAYETTE, SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 15, 2026 MEETING AS CORRECTED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

d. April 29, 2026

- i. Add Maya Perry Liss, Bob Booz, and Lynn Johnson to the attendance
- ii. **MOTION BY AL DIVINCENTIS, SECONDED BY MATT LAFAYETTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 29, 2026 MEETING AS PRESENTED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

4. Public Comment

- a. Maya Perry Liss, library board member, spoke on the proposed section on library. Expressed that the section is unnecessary, there has never been an issue. The library director works directly with the town and follows the procurement procedure. Noted history of the town deferring library maintenance and the library procuring grants or fundraising
- b. Bob Booz, library board member, noted that in the minutes of April 29th, Maya Perry Liss, Lynn Johnson, and himself were present
- c. Lynn Johnson, library board member, noted her experience with the library and its various projects. Stated that the library has initiated all projects and most funds came from grants, fundraising, or from PALS. Stated that the proposed language removes the trustees from responsibility for buildings and grounds and nothing will be done unless the library pushes for and manages the project
- d. Richard Parmelee made a public comment noting that the Building Official, Fire Marshal, and Sanitarian are not properly utilized. Supports keeping the Library Board of Trustees and Fire Trustees in place. Expressed that the Compensation Review Board is not properly utilized and the town has not been an equal opportunity employer. Also suggested that zoom be used for more meetings

5. Presentation or Guests

- a. None

6. Correspondence

- a. none

7. Old Business

- a. None

8. New Business

- a. Approve Invoice for Secretarial Services from Nicole Charest for \$425.00 dated 4-30-26
 - i. **MOTION BY MATT LAFAYETTE, SECONDED BY EILEEN BUCKHEIT TO APPROVE INVOICE FOR SECRETARIAL SERVICES FOR NICOLE CHAREST DATED 4-30-2026 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$425.00. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**
- b. Approve Invoice for Legal Fees from Halloran & Sage for \$292.50 dated 4-17-26
 - i. **MOTION BY MATT LAFAYETTE, SECONDED BY CHRISTIAN GODBOUT TO APPROVE INVOICE FOR LEGAL FEES FROM HALLORAN & SAGE DATED 4-17-26 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$292.50. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

- c. Approve Invoice for Legal Fees From Halloran & Sage for \$450.00 dated 3-16-26
 - i. **MOTION BY MATT LAFAYETTE, SECONDED BY CHRISTIAN GODBOUT TO APPROVE INVOICE FOR LEGAL FEES FROM HALLORAN & SAGE DATED 3-16-26 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$450.00. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

- d. New Timeline for Completion
 - i. Board of Selectmen approved one month extension. Briefly discussed new timeline and noted additional meetings on May 13th and May 20th. New public hearing date is June 10th, June 17th meeting scheduled to make changes based on feedback. Draft charter will be given to Board of Selectmen July 1st
 - ii. **MOTION BY AL DIVINCENTIS, SECONDED BY MATT LAFAYETTE TO APPROVE TIMELINE AS PRESENTED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

- e. Set Date for Public Hearing and discussion format
 - i. Public hearing date of June 10th included with approval of timeline

9. Commission Work Session

a. **Section 6.22 Department of Emergency Management**

i. **Current Language**

There shall be a department of Emergency Management and a Director of Emergency Management appointed by the Board of Selectmen and it shall function in accordance with Chapter 517 of the General Statutes

ii. **Proposed Language**

The Town shall maintain an Emergency Management Organization for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of the residents of the Town and ensuring continuity of government in the event of natural or man-made disasters. The Emergency Management Organization shall function in accordance with Chapter 517 of the General Statutes.

The First Selectman shall appoint an Emergency Management Director pursuant to section 28-7 of the General Statute, and such deputies as necessary. The Emergency Management Director will serve at the will of the First Selectman and may be removed by the First Selectman at any time for cause. The Emergency Management Director shall report directly to the First Selectman and will advise the First Selectman on matters pertaining to civil preparedness and disaster emergency operations.

The Emergency Management Director is authorized to prepare and maintain a Local Emergency Operations Plan consistent with state and federal requirements and to activate said plan during emergencies. In the event of a declared emergency, the Director may issue orders necessary to protect public health and safety, request mutual aid, and expend funds as authorized by law. All emergency powers granted herein shall be exercised in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes and shall cease upon termination of the emergency declaration.

- iii. Discussed adding language to institutionalize the practice of the convening of the Chiefs council, Laura Francis suggested not including the process and leaving it up to the administration. Noted that the charter is a guide not a

policy manual. Discussed whether to include Fire Marshal and Animal Control. Laura Francis indicated she would distribute draft language

- iv. Discussed statutory requirement for Emergency Management Director.
- v. **MOTION BY EILEEN BUCKHEIT SECONDED BY MATT LAFAYETTE TO ACCEPT SECTION 6.22 AS PROPOSED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

b. **6.9.1 Fire Department**

- i. Briefly reviewed language, noted addition of capital improvements language and ownership of equipment, trucks, and apparatus.
- ii.

c. **Section 6.12 Conservation Commission**

- i. Noted that language should be consistent across boards and commissions regarding town owned property and equipment. Discussed authority of Conservation Commission to purchase open space. Generally agreed to modify language to be more consistent with statute

d. **New Chapter: Public Safety**

e. **New 6.17.1 Public Library – Capital Improvement and Emergency Operations**

- i. It was noted that library projects must follow town procedures, language should not affect Library Trustees operations. Discussed previous library projects and the process for applying for grants and managing projects

f. **New Section: Town Administrator**

g. **Treasurer and Financial management**

- i. Al DiVincentis indicated he added general statement from financial management chapter to section 5.1, adding language which specifies that the Board of Finance serves as the Town's fiscal policy and oversight body. Reviewed previously approved sections, new sections, and new numbering
- ii. Discussed removing \$40,000 threshold for special appropriations to go to town meeting. Discussed current process causing delays in purchasing which does not allow town to take advantage of current pricing, raising costs overall. Noted that statute states reserve fund expenditures must have approval of the legislative body.

h. **New Chapter: Transition Provisions**

- i. Laura Francis indicated she is drafting language

i. **Any Section needing a second look as recommended by commissioners**

j. **Other**

- i. Discussed adding language for consistency between departments, boards, and commissions which notes that those agencies are operating as part of the town and that property, assets, and equipment are owned by the town. Primarily focused on real estate and improvements to town facilities and language which requires the town and these agencies to be consulted during planning and design
- ii. Discussed facilities management position and responsibilities/powers of trustee boards to maintain town buildings while adhering to town policies

11. Adjourn

MOTION BY AL DIVINCENTIS SECONDED BY SEVERAL TO ADJOURN. ALL AYE

Meeting adjourned at 9:09pm,
Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Charest