



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne

MINUTES

January 13, 2022, 5PM

Members present: Zoe Iacovino, Ben Echevarria, Ona Ferguson, Emily Monea, Laura Pitone, Beverly (Bev) Schwartz, Crystal Turner, Kat Rutkin, Jessica Lieberman, Meagan Benetti, Matthew McLaughlin

Members not present: Lucas Schaber

Staff attending: Anna Corning, Hope Williams, Collins Center - Elizabeth Corbo, Collins Center - Steve McGoldrick

Other attending: Derrick Rice, Carol H, Barry Rafkind, Jack Perenick, Klaus Schultz, Mo Latmin, Crystal Huff, Jess Smith, Meredith Porter, Bill Valletta

Meeting started at 5:05PM

Decisions:

1. Committee approved minutes from 12/16.
 - a. Ten 5s
2. Committee voted to recommend RCV in some form.
 - a. Nine 5s
3. Committee voted to keep the current drawing by lot practice for determining ballot position.
 - a. Eleven 5s
4. Committee voted to create a study committee to explore public financing of campaigns.
 - a. Nine 5s

The committee uses the Fist to Five method of voting, a technique for gauging consensus. Voting ranges from 0 to 5. The scale is: 0 - no way, 1 - major issues to be resolved now, 2 - minor issues to be resolved now, 3 - minor issues to be resolved later, 4 - comfortable with this as it is, 5 - love this and will champion it. 0-2 is considered a lack of consensus, while 3-5 is considered consensus.

NOTES

1. Welcome 5:03
 - a. Hope welcomed the committee and community members.
 - b. Kat led an icebreaker, where committee members went around and shared their current drinking vessel.

2. Approve 12/16 Minutes 5:09
 - a. **Meeting minutes from 12/16 were approved**
3. Public Comment 5:10
 - a. Committee heard public comments on a number of issues from Crystal Huff (RCV), Jess Smith (Public Campaign Finance & Balance of Power), Barry Rafkind (approval voting), Klaus Schultz (RCV), Jack Perenick (RCV + Campaign Finance), Derrick Rice (RCV + Campaign Finance), and Mo Lotman (RCV).
4. Deliberation Topic 1: Cont. Alternative Voting Systems - RCV 5:25
 - a. Committee discussed potential versions of how to implement or recommend RCV. Libby provided context for the committee: consider whether the current elections process is working for Somerville, and if not, what are some of the concerns and how might changes solve those issues. Committee discussed the impact approving RCV might have on the ability of the charter passing at the state level. Several members mentioned the strong indicators the community has shared regarding the support for RCV. Committee members discussed several pros and cons of RCV.
 - i. **Committee voted to recommend RCV in some form**
 - b. Committee continued deliberations, discussing the option of a “light” version: study committee in transition provisions vs. a “total” version: change election process to RCV in charter and outline an implementation committee in transition provisions. Committee members supported an efficient process in order to move on to other topics. Several committee members brought up the long timeline that a study committee would lead to, and questioned if the committee supports RCV why delay the process. Sense of the committee ...
 - i. **Committee took a straw poll on the light vs total version of RCV**
 1. **4 - Light Version**
 2. **6 - Total Version**
5. Deliberation Topic 2: Ballot Position 6:10
 - a. Committee discussed the process for listing names on the ballot. The current method is drawing by lot, and the Collins Center recommends this. There was no deliberation to change this.
 - i. **Committee voted to keep the current drawing by lot practice for determining ballot position**
6. Deliberation Topic 3: Public Financing of Campaigns 6:15
 - a. Committee deliberated implementing public financing of campaigns. Committee members asked questions regarding how this could be implemented, via charter or ordinance? Committee discussed the importance of leveling the field and reducing barriers to campaigning.
 - i. **Committee voted to create a study committee to explore public financing of campaigns**

7. Topic 4: Balance of Power Introduction 6:35
 - a. Committee member Bev Schwartz provided a brief overview of Balance of Power and levers the committee can explore.

8. Writing Team: Drafted Language Feedback 6:50
 - a. Postponed to the next meeting, Hope emphasized the importance of sending feedback via email.

9. Community Engagement: Community Groups Outreach Plan & Survey Update 6:55
 - a. Committee member Meagan Benetti provided an update on the community survey and goals for next steps. Explained role for committee members to assist in outreach to Somerville community groups.

10. Closing:
 - a. Hope thanked everyone and reminded them the next meeting is January 27th.