MINUTES
CHARTER COMMISSION FOR THE TOWN OF HARWICH
HARWICH TOWN HALL, SMALL MEETING ROOM
732 MAIN STREET, HARWICH, MA 02645
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2025 - 6:30PM

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Linda Cebula, Chair, Sandra Hall, Vice Chair, Lou Urbano, Clerk, Jon Chorey, Treasurer, Paul Doane, Richard Waystack and Brendan Lowney

MEMBER PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Judith Underwood

ALSO PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Anthony Wilson of the Collins Group

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Cebula called the meeting of the Harwich Charter Commission to order on Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 6:30PM and noted that Judith Underwood and Anthony Wilson were participating remotely. The Chair declared a quorum.

2. Approval of regular minutes for November 13, 2025

Ms. Hall moved to approve the Minutes of November 13, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Waystack.

Vote: 9:0 in favor. Motion carried.

3. Discussion with Harwich Water/Wastewater Commissioners

Ms. Donahue called the meeting of the Board of Water/Wastewater Commissions to order for November 20, 2025 at 6:30PM. She noted that Commissioner Young, Commissioner Underwood (remote) and Noreen Donahue, Chair were participating. She introduced Jason Trepanier, Water Superintendent noting that he was attending to answer questions.

Ms. Donahue referred to the packet of recommendations the Commissioners had voted to send to the Charter Commission. She read the lists of comments and recommendations for the record. The first list:
6:6:1 Pertains to the make up of the Board and the Commissioners had no issues.
6:6:2 She explained, regarding the Wastewater side, where the Commissioners' authority comes from. The language in 6:6:2 reduces and constrains the authority of Chapter 83 and that in 6:6:2 the authority has been split between the Select Board and the Board of Water and Wastewater Commissioners. She noted that under the existing Town Charter, Wastewater duties are as follows: The Select Board is in charge of design and construction, the Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners is in charge of operation and maintenance. She noted that the Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners had requested a legal opinion from KP Law on the topic. They have not yet received a response.

Ms. Hall noted that language in the Charter has been approved by the Attorney General.

6:6:3 Referring to the appointment of the Superintendent but does not include the removal of the Superintendent. The board unanimously recommends that it be documented that the Water/Wastewater Commission would removed the Superintendent. The other part of 6:6:3 is the "works cooperatively" language and she noted that the language was in the Charter when it was solely a Water Department. The Commission would like to have the hiring, the removal and the direct supervision of the Superintendent in the language.
6:6:4 Reaffirms the split of authority and states that the Select Board is responsible for design and construction.

Members of both Commissions discussed the term "work cooperatively", the positives and negatives of the language as well as whether or not it should remain in the Charter.

Ms. Donahue noted that the last items are those that came up during discussions.
Should the name remain the same or be changed? Ms. Donahue and Ms. Underwood expressed their different opinions and reasons.
The authority to determine when new staff is needed. She read the language agreed on by the Commission. Ms. Donahue and Mr. Young explained why the Commission should have the authority.
Referring to the current Chapter 5 Town Administrator Organizations, the Water/Wastewater Commission is not listed and it was suggested that they become section 7 Chapter 5.
Ms. Donahue mentioned getting updated orgs to be attached to the Charter
Charter regarding communication between the Finance Director, the Town Administrator to work cooperatively with the Water/Wastewater Commission. She explained why the communication regarding financial decisions that affect the Enterprise Account Funds is imperative to the Commission.
Ms. Donahue noted that there were no comments on the Chapter 10 transition language from 2019.

Ms. Cebula asked Mr. Trepanier for feedback on things he feels may need clarification or strengthening on the operational side of interaction with town government.

Mr. Trepanier responded and noted issues with communication regarding financial issues.

Charter Commission members asked questions regarding the transfer of information, the number of meetings Mr. Trepanier is involved in and the Town Administrator's role which Mr. Trepanier answered in detail.

Ms. Donahue commented on the people responsible for making the decisions regarding the $500 million sewering project and the need for a different divisions such as for design.

Mr. Young moved to adjourned. Seconded by Ms. Donahue.

Vote: 3:0 in favor. The meeting of the Water/Wastewater Commission adjourned.

4. Continuing Business Discussion
Review of open issues list
Chapter 6 Elected Town Officers and Town Agencies

Ms. Cebula noted that Mr. Wilson put together framework for considering elected and appointed offices. She noted the differences between the criteria for appointed and elected.

Members discussed which boards, including regulatory, should be elected or appointed. The discussed the challenges of getting people to serve and/or run and what could be done to encourage people to get involved. Also discussed was the number of people on committees and possibly adding language to the Charter regarding those numbers.

Members agreed on further discussion at the next meeting to come to a consensus on elected versus appointed and listing the regulatory committees.

Ms. Cebula asked members to come to the next meeting prepared with their thoughts and opinions for the discussion.

5. Any other topic that may come before the Commission

Ms. Cebula confirmed which members had their town issued email addresses. She noted that all future correspondence shall be using town email addresses.

Ms. Cebula noted that Mr. Urbano put together the possibility of having a letter to the editor and asked for opinions.

Members offered feedback regarding the letter. Ms. Hall offered to write another draft.

6. Public Comments

7. Adjourn

Mr. Waystack moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Urbano.

Vote: 9:0 in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:23PM.

Respectfully submitted, Judi Moldstad Board Secretary

Approved 12 04 2025