

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kathleen Born, Chair
Kaleb Abebe
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo
Mosammat Faria Afreen
Nikolas Bowie
Kevin Chen
Max Clermont
Jennifer Gilbert
Kai Long
Patrick Magee
Mina Makarios
Lisa Peterson
Ellen Shachter
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, January 17, 2023. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30p.m. by the Chair of the Committee, Kathleen Born. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this meeting was remote via zoom.

At the request of the Chair, the Clerk of Committees called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Absent *
Mina Makarios – Absent *
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Ellen Schachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

*Patrick Magee was marked present at 5:35p.m

*Mina Makarios was marked present at 5:34p.m.

Chair Born opened with the Adoption of the Minutes from the January 3, 2023 Charter Review Committee meeting as amended to add Kaleb Abebe's name on the first page under Committee Members. Member Ellen Shachter made a motion to adopt the amended minutes, the motion was seconded by member Jim Stockard.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Chair Born noted that there was one written communication received from the public (Attachment A). Chair Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the communication and place it on file, the motion was seconded by member Kevin Chen.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Anna Corning began the meeting by sharing with members that there have been four interviews completed so far with past City Employees, which included former Deputy City Solicitor Arthur

Goldberg, and the two most recent City Managers, Richard Rossi and Louis DePasquale, and former Mayor and City Council Member Henrietta Davis.

Member Jim Stockard summarized the interviews he had with Arthur Goldberg, Richard Rossi, and Louie DePasquale, who all shared they believed the City functions well with the current government system. Some concerns that came up was having the budget process start sooner and possibly having the City Council set a goal setting type meeting to help prepare for the budget. Some commented that the City Manager should be appointing Department heads, while the City Council appoints members to Boards and Commissions. One thing they were all in favor of was having as much public engagement as possible.

Anna Corning reminded members of the upcoming public engagement forums on and that she was trying to plan meetings with the School Committee and City Council in the future. After updates, Anna Corning introduced David Kale, Assistant City Manager for Finance, who was joined by his team, Michelle Kincaid, Assistant Finance Director, Taha Jennings, Budget Director, and Angela Pierre, Deputy Budget Director.

David Kale began the Finance team's presentation titled, "City of Cambridge Budget Presentation" (Attachment B), pointing out that the City of Cambridge's budget is a direct reflection of its priorities and values as a community and is shaped by many sources of input. Other members from the Finance team also spoke, sharing that the majority of Cambridge's revenue comes from real estate taxes, Massachusetts law dictate the annual budget's high-level timeline as well as the City Manager and the city Council's role in the process, and the budget process is a year-long, structured and collaborative effort by the City Council, department heads, and the budget team.

After the Finance presentation, many members from the Charter Review Committee offered questions and concerns about the City's budget. Some topics that were brought up were Harvard and MIT's contribution to the City as nonprofit, how decisions get made about where and how much funding goes towards a certain area, funding for schools, increasing funding towards other City departments, statutory laws on budget, the Council's power when it comes to denying an item on the budget, and the City's free cash. David Kale and his team were available to respond, noting that the budget is a tool to implement city programs and policies, it's not always the first step on the process of addressing an issue, other planning and steps must happen first and then the budget makes sure the resources are available to make it happen.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Patrick Magee who made a motion to extend the meeting fifteen minutes, the motion was seconded by member Kai Long. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

John Hawkinson highlighted comments that were made during the January 3, 2023, meeting regarding free cash and read a paragraph from the tax rate letter regarding the FY23 budget.

Anna Corning read a Q&A that was submitted through the Zoom during the meeting from a member of the public:

I'm still a little confused about how exactly the public is participating in the free cash conversation. Maybe I missed it, but exactly at what meeting is public comment available to weigh on this in particular? Is it just on the one Council meeting where the Council approves how free cash is used in the budget to balance the budget, but not the specifics on how it's used? If I'm understanding correctly, there are no public meetings specifically about free cash usage, it's more like one small part in the budget that the council is voting on.

Members from the Finance team responded, noting that whenever the Finance team goes up to Council for approval to use free cash that would be an opportunity for the public to weigh in. Whenever free cash is looked to being used it must go before the Council and would be on the Council Agenda.

Elliot Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor for the Law Department, commented on a question member Ellen Shachter raised regarding the power of the City Council denying an item in the budget and whether they can raise one. Due to it being a legal question that the Finance team was unable to answer, Elliot noted that the Law Department can research this issue and bring it back to the Committee after their review analysis.

The Chair, Kathleen born thanked Committee members and the Finance team for participating in the meeting.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:45p.m.

Attachment A – Written Communication from John Hanratty
Attachment B – “City of Cambridge Budget Presentation”

Clerk's Note: The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/400?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=8220c78dba0a14ff69347230a003e9d5