

A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

December 5, 2023, @ 5:30 p.m.
REMOTE ONLY – VIA ZOOM

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation at meetings of the Cambridge Charter Review Committee.

The zoom link is: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/83253118929>

Meeting ID: 832 5311 8929

One tap mobile +13092053325,,83253118929# US

Agenda Items – Tuesday, December 5, 2023

- I. Roll Call 5:30 PM
- II. Introduction by Chair, Kathy Born
- I. Adoption of Meeting Minutes from the meeting of November 14, 2023 and November 21, 2021
- III. Meeting Materials Submitted to the Committee to be placed on file
 - Communications from Committee Members
 - i.* A communication was received from Faria Afreen, regarding resident engagement.
 - ii.* A communication was received from Kevin Chen, regarding city manager form of government
 - iii.* A communication was received from Susan Shell, regarding strong mayor form of government and citizen assemblies
 - Communications from Council Members
 - i.* A communication was received from E. Denise Simmons, regarding opposition of moving to strong mayor form of government
 - Communications from the Public
 - i.* A communication was received from Bjorn Poonen, regarding support for city manager form of government
 - ii.* A communication was received from Kevin Hsu, regarding support for strong mayor and district city councilors
 - iii.* A communication was received from Katie Ng-Mak, regarding support for city manager form of government
 - iv.* A communication was received from Rachel Daricek, regarding support for city manager form of government
 - v.* A communication was received from Susan Fleischmann, regarding support for weak mayor form of government

- vi.* A communication was received from Rachel Liao, regarding support for city manager form of government
- vii.* A communication was received from Ginny Berkowitz, regarding support for city manager form of government
- viii.* A communication was received from Caleb Hurst-Hiller, regarding support for city manager form of government
- ix.* A communication was received from David Toniatti, regarding support for city manager form of government
- x.* A communication was received from Danny Park, regarding support for strong mayor form of government
- xi.* A communication was received from George Metzger, regarding charter review process and asks for public input
- xii.* A communication was received from Yi-An Huang | City Manager, regarding charter review process and strengths of current cambridge system
- xiii.* A communication was received from Allan Sadun, regarding opposition to strong mayor form of government and recall
- xiv.* A communication was received from Haden Smiley, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xv.* A communication was received from Benjamin Gammage, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xvi.* A communication was received from David Sullivan, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xvii.* A communication was received from Rachel Weinstein and Caroline Hunter (Cambridge School Committee Members), regarding support for council/manager form of government and 4 year staggered terms for school committee
- xviii.* A communication was received from Alex Gourevitch, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xix.* A communication was received from Kimberlee Gonsalves, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xx.* A communication was received from Eugenia Schraa, regarding support for city manager form of government
- xxi.* A communication was received from Emilio Sauri, regarding support for strong mayor form of government
- xxii.* A communication was received from Patrick McNeal, regarding support for a city manager form of government
- xxiii.* A communication was received from Caitlin Dube, regarding support for a city manager form of government
- xxiv.* A communication was received from Susana Domingo Amestoy, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xxv.* A communication was received from Shimon Rura, regarding support for a city manager form of government
- xxvi.* A communication was received from Nicole Davis, regarding support for a city manager form of government

- xxvii.* A communication was received from Ellen Mei, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xxviii.* A communication was received from Jose Jimenez, regarding support for a city manager form of government
- xxix.* A communication was received from Ruy Martinez, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xxx.* A communication was received from Robert Eckstut, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xxxi.* A communication was received from Amanda Beatty, regarding support for a city manager form of government
- xxxii.* A communication was received from Marilyn Frankenstein, regarding support for a strong mayor and resident assembly
- xxxiii.* A communication was received from Stephen Cellucci, regarding support for a strong mayor, resident assembly and elected police review board
- xxxiv.* A communication was received from Lynn Li, regarding support for a city manager form of government
- xxxv.* A communication was received from Hope Turner, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
- xxxvi.* A communication was received from Jin Wang, regarding support for a city manager form of government
- xxxvii.* A communication was received from Steve McAdoo, regarding support for a city manager form of government
- xxxviii.* A communication was received from Zhiqiang Fang, regarding support for a city manager form of government
- xxxix.* A communication was received from Sabrina Cannistraro, regarding support for a city manager form of government
 - xl.* A communication was received from Kimberly Ma, regarding support for a city manager form of government
 - xli.* A communication was received from Danielle Allen, regarding support for a city manager form of government
 - xl.ii.* A communication was received from Stephanie Beukema, regarding support for a city manager form of government
 - xl.iii.* A communication was received from Yi Jian, regarding support for a city manager form of government
 - xl.iv.* A communication was received from Dan Totten, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government and other charter provisions
 - xl.v.* A communication was received from Ling Zeng, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government
 - xl.vi.* A communication was received from Noah Spies, regarding support for a city manager form of government
 - xl.vii.* A communication was received from Edward Sung, regarding support for a city manager form of government
 - xl.viii.* A communication was received from Jaclyn Chai and Bob Hsiung, regarding support for a city manager form of government

- xlix.* A communication was received from Phoebe Kosman, regarding support for a city manager form of government
 - i.* A communication was received from Isabelle Woollacott, regarding support for a strong mayor form of government, elected police review board and resident assembly
 - ii.* A communication was received from Andrew Natenshon, regarding support for a city manager form of government

- Other Meeting Materials

IV. Public Comment

- Members of the public are invited to share their ideas or comments with the committee.

V. Final Report Draft

- **Facilitator:** Anna. **Goal:** Feedback and discussion of content
 - i.* Draft Sections Final report

VI. Decision Points: See attached document for committee decision points

- **Facilitator:** Anna, Pat, Mike. **Goal:** Review decision points, deliberation and votes
 - i.* 12/5 Decision Points + Deliberation Information

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 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 Makarious
Lisa Peterson
Ellen Shachter
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2023. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30p.m. by the Chair of the Committee, Kathleen Born. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, this meeting was remote via Zoom.

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

Kaleb Abebe – Present
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent
Nikolas Bowie – Absent
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent*
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarious – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 9, Absent – 6. Quorum established.

***Member Jennifer Gilbert was marked present at 6:09p.m.**

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kevin Chen who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from November 7, 2023.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Absent

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent – 6. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the communication from City Councillor Quinton Zondervan.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Absent

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent – 6. Motion passed.

Anna Corning shared that the meeting goal was to try and focus on foundational decision points around form of government. Committee members were recognized to share their thoughts and comments about the decision to move forward with a Strong Mayor form of government.

Anna Corning recognized Michael Ward from the Collins Center to review the Forms of Government with Example Options for Modifications Chart (Attached). Michael Ward noted that

the Chart was shared at previous meetings, but the focus would now be to discuss the examples provided of a Strong Mayor form of government. Anna Corning recognized Committee members for comments and questions relative to the chart and Michael Ward was available to provide feedback. Member Lisa Peterson noted the importance of using the next four meetings to work as effectively as possible by working together to create language for a Strong Mayor form of government that will best fit Cambridge.

Anna Corning shared with the Committee that she would like to move the discussion to focus on term lengths for Mayor. Anna Corning recognized Committee members who offered their suggestions on term limits and what language they would be in favor of using in the proposed draft language. Committee members who were recognized offered comments that were in support of term limits for Mayor.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion for the Mayor to have a four-year term length.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Absent

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion for the Mayor to serve a maximum of three, four- year term limits, which do not have to be consecutive.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – No

Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 1, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

Committee members offered additional comments on the Strong Mayor form of government relative to Department Heads and the School Committee. Committee members discussed and offered suggestions on the position of CAFO (Chief Administrative and Financial Officer) under a Strong Mayor. Anna Corning, Michael Ward, and Patricia Lloyd were available to provide answers to clarifying questions that were brought forward as well as feedback to suggestions made by members.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to require a CAFO, who is appointed by the Mayor, in the Charter.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

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

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

Anna Corning recognized members of the Committee to offer additional remarks relative to having a CAFO. Committee members shared possible challenges that may arise with City Council involvement with regards to the CAFO and provided suggestions on the City Council being able to veto the CAFO.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kevin Chen who made a motion that the City Council can veto the CAFO appointment by the Mayor with a super majority vote.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent
Kevin Chen – Yes
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

Anna Corning shared that she would like to focus the discussion on recall and noted that there are certain requirements and a process to issue a recall provision. Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd shared they would be able to provide example language at future meetings regarding thresholds to get recall on a ballot if it is something the Committee is interested in. Committee members were recognized for comments and questions on recall, Anna Corning, Michael Ward, and Patricia Lloyd were all available to respond.

Anna Corning asked Committee members to share what topics they would like to prioritize for the next meeting to work towards getting foundational votes done. Anna Corning noted that goal setting, budget priorities, and the Mayor’s role on the School Committee are already topics that planned to be discussed. Suggestions from members included resident assembly with a Strong Mayor, language in the Charter about future work of Charter Review Committees, elections concerning the Mayor, and if candidates would have the ability of running for both Council and Mayor.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 8:00p.m.

Attachments:

Forms of Government with Example Options for Modifications Chart

Clerk’s Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/615?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=1d98f5510b824daa65e2a58cc144271b

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 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, November 21, 2023. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30p.m. by the Chair of the Committee, Kathleen Born. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, this meeting was remote via Zoom.

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

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

Present – 12, Absent – 3. Quorum established.

*Member Nikolas Bowie and Jim Stockard were present at 5:35p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt communications from Committee members and the public.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 14, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Dan Totten shared that they were excited to learn that the Charter Review Committee had switched to a strong Mayor form of government and offered comments relative to their experience as a Council Aid.

Kevin Hsu offered comments on municipal government and concerns with City Manager/Council form of government.

Heather Hoffman offered comments on the form of government and City Council meetings.

The Chair, Kathleen Born turned the meeting over to Anna Corning, Project Manager. Anna Corning shared on her screen and reviewed the Cambridge Charter Review Committee proposed final report outline (Attachment A). Anna Corning opened discussion to Committee members to offer comments and suggestions. Member Shachter shared the importance of the Charter Review Committee and the City Council being able to have the opportunity discuss the proposed language together. Chair Born and Anna Corning reviewed what the process would look like after submitting the proposed language to the City Clerk's Office by the end of the year and what could potentially follow once it is submitted.

Anna Corning shared that the focus of the meeting was going to be around discussing recall, veto power of the Mayor, the Finance article, and the Mayor's role on the School Committee.

Anna Corning recognized Committee members to offer comments on veto power with the Mayor, noting in many cases the Mayor has the ability to veto things passed by the City Council and the City Council can override the veto with a 2/3 vote. Patricia Lloyd from the Collins Center was available to provide some insight on veto power with Mayor and how it is used in

other municipalities. Committee members offered suggestions on veto power of the Mayor as well as the possibility of having the City Council override votes other than using a 2/3 majority. In addition, Committee members shared concerns with having the City Council use a 2/3 majority vote to override a veto by the Mayor.

Anna Corning requested that the Committee take a straw poll to see who is interested in having override of veto to be a 2/3 vote or a majority vote. There were ten members who voted in support of a 2/3 vote, four members who voted in support of a majority vote, and one member was absent.

Anna Corning reviewed section 3.9 of the draft language with members and recognized them to offer their comments and suggestions relative to approval of Mayor, veto.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Patrick Magee who made a motion to approve Section 3.9, Approval of Mayor, veto.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

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 – 14, No – 0, Absent -1. Motion passed.

Anna Corning moved the conversation to discuss recall provisions in the proposed language. Anna Corning asked Committee members to consider what thresholds they would like to consider relative to recall language, if a recall should apply to the Mayor only, and if there should be a voter turnout minimum for recall, noting that a 20% turnout would be a reasonable threshold based on election turnout. Committee members were recognized for comments. After much discussion, Committees members requested additional data related to recall and asked to continue the discussion and take votes on recall at the next meeting. Some Members of the Committee offered comments of concern with having a recall provision in the Charter language, while many others offered comments of support and offered suggestions relative to what the recall language could look like in the Charter. Additionally, Patricia Lloyd offered a review of the process of a recall.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Jim Stockard who made a motion to add a recall provision in the Charter.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – No

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – No

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – No

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – No

Yes – 9, No – 4, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Anna Corning offered a review of the Financial Procedure proposed language and shared that she would like for the Committee to help revise the language to lean more towards a Strong Mayor form of government, noting that much of the language was previously approved with a Strong Manager form of government. While reviewing the language, Anna Corning noted where changes should be made. Committee members offered suggestions related to the Submission and the Action of the Operating Budget and the Capital Improvement Program. Member Jim Stockard had a clarifying question regarding if the Mayor is able to veto the budget. Patricia Lloyd offered comments and shared she would like to investigate it further. Anna Corning noted that the budget and finance discussion can be continued at the next meeting.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 8:00p.m.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Proposed final report outline.

Clerk’s Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/622?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=c22ea4c53cd228f0caa3135f96978e52

Dear Fellow Charter Review Committee Members,

During a meeting about the charter preamble, Jim Stockard asked me why I think people do not engage with city politics. From my experience being on this charter review committee and from calling this city home for the past 22 years, since I was 4 years old, I want to comment on this and how it is connected to sending a charter review report that favors the mayor-council form of government and allows for all forms of resident participation mechanisms.

When the charter governs not only how councilors engage with one another and how the executive directs other departments, but also how residents can engage with the city, the decision on who can be on this committee should be made by residents. While the committee has been reported to [“reflect the diversity of Cambridge.”](#) it does not give voice to the marginalized and underpowered in our community. I also worry that even had this committee been chosen by residents, the lack of understanding and readability of the charter along with the overall low engagement in city politics from residents would still make the committee primarily dominated by the political elite.

Indeed, some members of this committee are members who have already had the power to shape city politics and government, and I think this inevitably, even if subconsciously, influences which side they weigh in on in the manager vs mayor form of government debate, which we’ve spent most of our time on. Lisa Peterson, was previously the [deputy city manager](#) and [the acting city manager from October to November in 2016](#). Jim Stockard served on [the Cambridge Housing Authority and continues to serve as a Trustee of the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust](#), and I would like to share my experiences as someone who grew up in public housing about the restrictive policies and lack of mobility in the system. Our housing policy is NOT working and it should not be used as one of the main reasons for why our city should keep the strong-manager form of government. Kathy Born was on the [Cambridge City Council for 8 years](#). I recognize that when Kathy, Jim, and Lisa vote in favor of the manager-form of government, they are speaking in favor of a form that has worked for them. Additionally, other members of our committee are part of the academic elite and work in law or policy, which has already given them abilities to engage with the government in ways those who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds can not. This is in line with the findings from Carreri et al. (2022): manager-council form of governance has been in support of the social elite while “disenfranchising poor, working class, and immigrant voters.”

This is also why I’ve always been a champion of giving Resident Assemblies a chance. I believe it can correct some of these inequities and I urge my colleagues to put themselves in others' shoes as we discuss Resident Assemblies in our remaining time together. I urge the committee to please give the Resident

Assemblies some authority; otherwise, it will just be a glorified suggestion box, and we will turn away the people who had a glimmer of hope that this committee could improve their lives.

As our time with this committee comes to an end, I read through all the public comments again. Many of the comments in support of the strong-manager status quo appear to be coming from misunderstandings about the accessibility and decision-making power of the executive under the current Plan E form of government. Plan E is the extreme option, and Cambridge is only 1 of 2 remaining cities in Massachusetts with a Plan E charter. In fact, Carreri et al. (2022) calls the manager-council form “one of the most institutionally dramatic reforms of this era [and] one of the longest-lasting Progressive legacies” [emphasis mine].

While I do not expect the charter review committee to address all the problems of engagement we have in Cambridge, I do believe that **changing the form of government** and **increasing public participatory mechanisms** are two very powerful ways to improve them.

People’s socioeconomic and material conditions limit their time and ability to follow city politics. If I am worried about getting food on the table, having somewhere to shower, or internet access to do a job, I’m not going to city hall and I probably don’t have an understanding of how city councilors do not have the power in the city-manager form of government to assure I can have access to these things. And when they do engage with the local government they are disappointed. The fact that there has still been no accountability taken by the city after [the murder of Arif Sayed Faisal, a 20 year old, Bangladeshi UMass Boston student experiencing a mental health crisis](#) in my neighborhood and our city, should be damning of the current system.

A step toward justice for Faisal and the affected communities this charter review committee can take right now is the recommendation that the police review advisory board be democratically elected, instead of appointed by the city manager. Cambridge needs to have a police review advisory board of citizens with the task of investigating claims of police misconduct and ordering disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment of police department employees. Most recently, we have seen that the current city manager has [delayed meeting with Cambridge HEART](#) (Holistic Emergency Alternative Response Team), an alternative to police response and community-led proactive public safety program led by brown and Black residents [despite getting 7-1 votes in support from the council](#). My younger sister was part of the first summer cohort and other members of my community are in support of it, but have limited ability or confidence to speak to a manager about it.

The strong-manager effectively has pocket veto power. What else would we call it when the previous manager ignored the city council's many policy orders? Where's the accountability for the egregious use of pocket vetoes by a strong-manager? There is none! The city manager doesn't have to worry about running for the office or talking with residents, they can simply use pocket vetoes as many times as they want because they have *complete political insulation*. Whereas if a mayor wants to use the veto power, they best believe they will have to answer for it during campaigns and with the threat of a recall election always in the back of their mind. **Therefore, a strong-manager form of government is incompatible with a Resident Assembly.**

Since the mayor needs my vote, in a mayor-council form of government, I can vote on who makes the executive decisions, and I can be assured that if I do go to city hall more often, I can be a bit more hopeful about getting the resources I need from the city, instead of being met with "that's the purview of the city manager."

I would like to flip the question of why isn't the public engaged, and ask what can the City do to meet the people where they are at? People will not engage with city government if they are only listened to if they have a degree or are expected to use a certain language to communicate their needs. Currently, there is no way for members of the community to make public comments in a different language or translators at city council meetings. As someone who has lived abroad where English is not the main language, it was incredibly anxiety-inducing to do everyday things such as going to the grocery store and making a doctor's appointment. I can't imagine someone who knows English as a second language or is a new English learner feeling confident enough to give public comments or email the councilors or the manager in Cambridge.

In a strong mayor form of government, I can at least be assured that if a faithful friend or trusted family member with better English fluency and similar values as me encourages me to vote for someone for mayor, that the person I vote for will be able to make executive choices that make me feel like I'm not just a budget line item. If they don't serve in my best interest, at least I know that I can vote them out of office. With the strong-manager form of government, if English is not my first language, how can I honestly believe I'm nothing more than a budget line item for the manager who is completely politically insulated?

People will not engage if they do not know someone in the government. When our leadership is comprised of those who come from elite institutions, are homeowners, do not speak a second language, or can put 6 figures into their campaign, you do not have to wonder why only some members of the community engage with city politics or do not appear to be "asking" or interested in engaging in City Hall.

Now imagine if you put more members of the community together to make decisions on certain topics they care about in the form of a Resident Assembly, and give the members financial support to be part of such a group in an equitable gathering space. More people would engage. I want to emphasize the importance of giving the assembly decision-making power. **To me, this means that if a consensus is reached by the Resident Assembly, the decision to pass a resolution should go directly to voters.** Just as in this group we have had help in writing the legal language of the charter, the members of the Resident Assembly should receive the same support.

I strongly believe city government and policies should be shaped by more members of our community than those who are wealthy enough to have the education, time, and job experience to do so under our current system. I believe changing to a mayor-council form of government and truly empowering the Resident Assembly is a great way to make that happen.

Finally, I want to remind everyone again that at the beginning of the review, we hoped to address “the historical inequities built into the government foundation and power structures.” And to repeat, “many of our online biographies include statements reflecting our commitment to our communities. ‘I believe in the importance of ensuring that the charter represents the voices and needs of all members of our community, especially those who may not have a platform to speak for themselves,’ wrote Kaleb. Jessica wants to ‘ensure that more diversity and inclusivity are embedded in looking at our local issues.’ Kathy ‘re-imagine[s] a local government for the 21st century which can improve the quality of life for all the people who call Cambridge home,’ and Niko ‘imagine[s] a city in which all people feel equally capable of affecting decisions.’ Many more of you include the words ‘inclusive,’ ‘community’ and even ‘anti-racist’ in your biographies.”

So let’s deliver to Cantabrigians a choice of a democratically elected executive, where every veto they use, they will have to answer for or explain. A resident assembly where people feel empowered by the resources they’ll be given: staff support, financial resources, translation services and space for deliberation. Let’s ensure that participation is not a financial burden by giving the Resident Assembly members a stipend that is sufficient to compensate members for their time and for reasonable costs incurred: transportation to the meetings, dependent care, etc.

When I asked previously that the committee think more deeply about what these words mean, I hoped folks would understand that our current form of government can not be all those things under a strong-manager-council form of government with limited resident participation mechanisms. The strong-manager could easily use the pocket veto on the bill the Resident Assembly spent months drafting

and passed by the entire voter base. The mayor form may not be perfect, but we will have the opportunity to revise it again in 10 years. We can learn in the 10 years between the next charter review if the change to a mayor form actually changes engagement, makes the city more “clean, green and safe,” or accessible. With that in mind, I want to challenge the assumption that staying with our current system is the “safe” choice. Looking at our (many) neighboring cities with a strong mayor, I believe our city will be very happy knowing the executive has the threat of recall to keep them accountable to voters.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

Mosammat Faria Afreen

To address this letter, I ask that the committee take the additional following votes:

1. City council must fund and assemble the resident assembly within 30-60 days of being sworn into office
2. Allow motions that pass 2/3rd majority in the resident assembly to then go directly to voters

Form of government

Kevin Chen <kchen927@gmail.com>

Tue 12/5/2023 8:56 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Anna,

Could you please forward this email to the committee and add it to the public record as soon as is feasible? Thank you!

--

Dear fellow members of the Charter Review Committee:

I write to inform you that I plan to vote for the city manager-council form of government in the upcoming roll call vote. Given my previous straw poll votes, I thought I'd provide an explanation.

Like some of you, I've found this question incredibly difficult. I most recently supported proceeding in this process with considering a "strong" mayor-council form of government. Yet, in supporting proceeding in this way, I'd hoped to explore the possibility of striking a balance in which an elected mayor could still be appropriately checked by the council, who would maintain meaningful power as the city's proportionally representative legislative body. In short, I'd hoped to achieve something less than a true strong mayor. I've come to realize that that's not where our recommendations are headed: even with a chief administrative and financial officer position, it seems that, under a strong mayor system, the ultimate result will be more power concentrated with a single individual—far more than is held by the current manager, who is also overseen by the proportionally elected council. I understand why, in that system, it would make sense to provide the mayor with sufficient power to be able to assess their performance. But that's not the system I think Cambridge should adopt, as someone who believes in the power of our proportionally representative council to represent, collectively, the interests of all Cambridge residents.

I've also been reflecting on where we are in this process. We've received so many thoughtful letters from community members in recent days—in a volume far greater than we've seen during most of this process. I've realized that this should be merely the start of a dialogue around the form of government question. To no fault of this committee (which has volunteered significant time and effort and done its best with limited resources), I'm not convinced that the community has had sufficient time to engage with this process, consider the options, and debate the direction for the city. I'd like to recommend that the council initiate a wider outreach process on this topic before putting anything before voters. While maintaining the status quo isn't always the right approach, I hesitate to recommend a change as fundamental as one to the form of government where we've had such limited time to fully explore the alternative, and where I'm not convinced that the situation is so dire as to warrant support for an immediate overhaul. If we are to make this change, I think it should be appropriately deliberated.

I think we've put together a strong set of recommendations in many areas and that our debates on this topic can guide future and ongoing discussion. Our task was to make *recommendations* on the charter—I feel that we will have succeeded in that task if we report to the council that this is an issue worthy of serious consideration and for which the community ought to be more fully engaged. Even to the extent there are reasons that I think a "strong" mayor-council form is worth considering, I cannot in good conscience support switching to that form at this time and, accordingly, have decided to vote (at least nominally) to maintain the city manager-council system.

Sincerely,
Kevin

Re: 12/5 Cambridge Charter Review Committee Agenda + Meeting Materials

Susan Shell <susan.shell@bc.edu>

Tue 12/5/2023 9:58 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Anna (and all),

Unfortunately, I have had a flight delay and am unlikely to be able to attend the meeting until 6:30 or so. I should be able to attend from 6:30 or so on, in case my roll-call vote is needed. In case it is helpful, here is where I am inclined to vote on two key issues:

1. Strong mayor system as drafted: yes

2. Citizens' Assembly:

IF members are selected randomly (as in jury selection), I would support decision making power to call general elections on a limited range of issues.

IF selection is by some arbitrary algorithm for purposes of favoring "historically underrepresented groups," I would only support an advisory roll.

My reason is this: any such algorithm will arguably give those groups who are identified as such by the algorithm an unwarranted advantage over others that are not -- an inherently contestable issue. For example: should blind people have representation beyond what they would have in jury selection? Those otherwise disabled? those who lack literacy skills? those who are unemployed? etc etc. However well intentioned, privileging some "disadvantaged" groups but not others strikes me as inherently discriminatory and contrary to the spirit of democracy. The "jury selection" method is no doubt imperfect in a number of ways; but I'm not convinced that we can try to do better without inadvertently favoring some unfairly underrepresented groups over others.

Finally, I was never opposed to non-citizens voting and holding office -- . My only concern was with folks who had no legal status at all. If the phrase "non-citizen" means "non-citizen with legal status of some kind" I'm absolutely for it. If it means anyone who happens to be living in Cambridge, I'm opposed, for the reasons I earlier submitted.

With thanks and apologies to all,

Best, Susan

Susan Shell
Professor
Dept. of Political Science
Boston College



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

E. Denise Simmons
City Councillor

Mayor
2008-2009
2016-2017

December 4, 2023

Charter Review Committee
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: In Opposition To Transitioning To Directly-Elected Mayor Form of Government

Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee,

I am writing to you today as a current member of the Cambridge City Council and a former Mayor, to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed shift to a directly-elected mayoral system in our city.

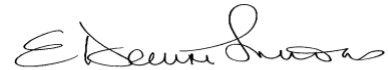
Over 80 years ago, Cambridge consciously chose the Plan E form of government, moving away from a directly-elected mayoral system. This decision was born out of necessity, as the city grappled with the challenges posed by previous mayors whose conduct and professionalism were questionable. Since then, our current Mayor-City Manager model has not only served us well but has also ensured a consistent and efficient administration of our city's affairs. The consideration to revert to a strong mayor system raises the following significant concerns:

1. **Equity and Representation:** Our current system allows for a more equitable representation of minorities, women, and less affluent community members. A strong mayor system may inadvertently weaken these voices, as it often centralizes power and influence in one individual. If that individual has societal blind spots, this could disenfranchise many women and minorities in Cambridge.
2. **Administrative Stability:** The role of the City Manager, acting under the guidance of the council, insulates our city's administration from the fluctuating political landscape. This stability allows for decisions that prioritize the city's long-term welfare over short-term political gains or concerns.
3. **Proven Effectiveness:** The adage "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is particularly apt here. For more than eight decades, our government model has effectively served our community's needs. The impetus for a radical change seems unfounded and risks unsettling a well-functioning system. We must question the desire behind this possible change in government: what problems does it seek to solve, and is this the best vehicle for doing so?
4. **Potential Unintended Consequences:** Transitioning to a directly-elected mayor will necessitate a complete overhaul of our current governance structure. This change will likely attract a different caliber of candidates for the mayoral position, necessitating higher compensation and potentially diminishing the roles, influence, and effectiveness of other council members. Such a shift could have unforeseen and far-reaching consequences on the city's governance and community dynamics.

In light of these points, I urge the committee to consider the long-standing benefits of our current system and the potential risks associated with a shift to a directly-elected mayoral system. Our city's governance model has been a testament to effective, equitable, and stable leadership. It is imperative that we approach any change to this system with caution, considering the broad implications it may have on our beloved city and its residents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your thoughtful consideration and am available for any further discussions or clarifications.

Sincerely,



City Councilor E. Denise Simmons

Public Comment

Charter Review

Bjorn Poonen <bjornpoonen@gmail.com>

Sun 11/19/2023 2:22 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee:

I understand the appeal of having a strong mayor elected directly, but I would worry that that process would produce city leaders without the experience running large organizations that the city managers usually have, and therefore I worry that Cambridge would suffer because of this. For this reason, I favor the current city manager model, or at least a model in which much of the organizational and financial management is handled by some experienced expert other than the elected mayor.

Best,

Bjorn Poonen (homeowner at 303 3rd St., Cambridge)

Need for Mayor & City Council accountability, and concern over civil rights

Kevin <kevin2882@gmail.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 11:40 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I am writing to provide feedback on multiple elements of the Cambridge charter and our government structure, with a particular lens of civil rights law. Given Cambridge's demographics and history, it is unconscionable that we have a system that does not have at its core a commitment to ensuring that voters have a voice in how the city is run. This is a historical legacy of segregation and intentional disempowerment of communities of color. You have a historic opportunity to make recommendations that will help change that, and I urge you to do so.

My comments are below. Please let me know if I can be of any additional help in your work.

Thank you for your service and consideration,

Kevin Hsu

11 Gardner Rd. #4, 02139

Comments:

1) Strong Mayor vs. City Manager: It is essential that the Committee consider the history of city managers. Prior to the 20th century (specifically prior to the end of Reconstruction and the two Great Migrations of African Americans to Midwestern and Northern cities, first after the advent of Jim Crow and second after WWII), U.S. cities primarily utilized a strong mayor system. The move to the "innovation" of the city manager system was a direct response by segregationist and anti-immigrant white politicians who feared that Black and other minority voters would be able to elect mayors friendly and responsive to their interests. That a move from an elected mayor to an appointed city manager often has the intent and frequently has the effect of diminishing the voting power of Black and other "minorities" is well-documented.[1] In fact, in 1923 in Portland, Maine, it was the Ku Klux Klan who supported and won a change from a strong mayor system to a city manager system.[2] Specifically, the KKK bragged that the change was to ensure that "Hereafter...no n****s, Catholics, nor Jews will ever hold office in Portland." [3] A similar movement happened across the country. For example, in 1910 and 1931, Oakland, CA experienced a similar KKK-supported charter amendment.[4]

2) Ward-Based vs. At-Large City Council Members: The discriminatory effect of at-large city council elections is even more well-documented and studied than that of the city manager system. Studies as far back as the late 1970s showed that at-large city councils significantly underrepresented Black city residents.[5] A 1990 study confirmed the earlier research.[6] City-wide, at-large elections increase campaign costs for candidates seeking to represent communities whose voting strength tends to be concentrated in specific neighborhoods,[7] often but not always due to the effects of both segregation and gentrification. As a practical matter, 20th century research shows that cities with ward-based city councils are more than twice as likely to fairly represent its Black residents as compared to at-large city councils.[5] This has been so clearly demonstrated that the U.S. Supreme Court has had several cases related how at-large city councils may violate the Voting Rights Act.[5]

3) Our Cambridge city government currently is NOT "accountable": One of the most frequent complaints about our city's government structure is that it is not accountable or responsive to city residents. This was observed just yesterday at the 11/20/23 City Council meeting: in a perhaps record-breaking public comment period, hundreds of primarily Black and Brown Cambridge

residents turned up to ask that the City Council pass a non-binding resolution on an issue of great personal significance to those residents. For some residents, this resolution related to life or death. The resolution failed, however, with only 2 "yes" votes and 7 "present" votes; of the five incumbent members who recently won reelection, only one voted "yes."

This shameful episode should be a clarion call to the Charter Review Committee that our current system is not responsive to Cambridge residents. If we instead had a ward-based city council, as our neighboring Somerville does, there would be much greater pressure on each city council member to be accountable to their voters on the back end, and on the front end there would be a much higher likelihood that elected officials would represent their constituents.

I urge the Charter Review Committee to consider the civil rights and equity implications of our city charter, and to strongly recommend that Cambridge move to a strong mayor and ward-based city council model.

Citations:

[1] <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/ngos/lccr2.pdf>

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/1923/09/11/archives/klan-wins-victory-at-portland-polls-organization-puts-through-new.html>

[3] <https://downeast.com/issues-politics/who-wields-power-in-portland/>

[4] <https://oaklandside.org/2020/09/29/district-elections-the-surprising-history-explaining-how-we-vote-in-oakland/>

[5] <https://ir.law.fsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1978&context=lr>

[6] <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2131682>

[7] <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/JU/JU10/20210727/113962/HHRG-117-JU10-Wstate-FragaL-20210727-SD001.pdf>

More Time and New Direction Needed

Katie <katie.ng@gmail.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 3:27 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Hello,

My name is Katie Ng-Mak, and I am a Cambridge resident and the parent of two children in Cambridge Public Schools.

I am writing because I saw the recent Cambridge Day article that said that the Review Committee is leaning toward moving away from the current City Manager form of government to a Strong Mayor system.

I was surprised by this news – it's the first I've heard about it – and am very concerned about the process that is being used to arrive at this decision.

I would want to testify at tonight's meeting, but the fact that the meeting is scheduled on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving is preventing me from being able to speak in person. This timing is not conducive to hearing from members of the public on this important topic.

As the Cambridge Day article shared, it appears that the Review Committee is trying to draft an entirely new form of government – a Strong Mayor system – in a matter of weeks and during the holiday season.

I am concerned that this is neither transparent nor accessible to Cambridge Residents and that the rushed process will not give sufficient time for thoughtful consideration of such a significant change.

I am also concerned about the recommendation itself.

I am worried that moving to a Strong Mayor form of government would concentrate power in one person and would actually reduce democracy. In the current system, the City Manager meets every week with nine city councilors and the Council is empowered to direct the executive branch. In the proposed Strong Mayor system, the City Manager would report to a Mayor and deliberate in private without any Council input. This will result in less voices being heard in city government!

Ultimately, I ask that the Charter Review Committee ask the City Council for more time and that you reconsider the direction of moving to a Strong Mayor system.

Thank you,
Katie

Feedback on Tonight's Meeting

Rachel Daricek <rachel.daricek@gmail.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 3:55 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

My name is Rachel Daricek. I have lived in Cambridge for 13 years and am the mother of two children in Cambridge Public Schools. I'm actively involved in our school, and our family is actively involved in the community.

I am writing to express my deep concern that this Committee wants to go away from our current system of government to a strong mayor system.

Cambridge has been a leader in Massachusetts and across the country on a number of topics, whether it was our COVID response or in becoming the first city to pilot a universal basic income program for families, through the Rise Up program. For these reasons and many more, Fortune Magazine recently [named Cambridge the #1 city in the United States for families to live](#).

My family and many others experience these benefits every day and are deeply grateful for how Cambridge's city government functions well. That's why I am confused why the Committee would want to make such a major change to our system of government.

I understand that a strong mayor system would concentrate power in the hands of one individual and, under the current proposal, that individual would only be accountable to voters once every four years. You could imagine an individual winning a mayoral election with 50 or 60% of the vote.

In the current city manager system, the city manager is accountable to 9 city councilors who meet weekly. Collectively, these 9 city councilors receive 90%+ of the overall vote – a much higher share than any mayor would receive. This makes the current system more democratic – and ensures that the city manager is responsive to the broadest cross section of voters possible.

I am also concerned that the strong mayor system would reduce opportunities for public input and for public deliberation of policy changes by taking policy decisions that are currently made in public meetings and instead having them be made in private deliberations with the mayor.

Finally, I am concerned about process and timing. I am currently traveling to visit family for Thanksgiving and am concerned that you are having discussions of such an important topic on one of the peak travel days of the year. This makes it harder for many, including myself, to participate in tonight's meeting.

I ask this Committee to request more time from the City Council. If we have a rushed process, it will lead to low public confidence in your final report. I also ask this Committee to move away from the proposed direction of a strong mayor system. What we have is working and is a model for other communities. We shouldn't be trying to radically change it.

Thank you for your work on the Committee and for your consideration.

Best,
Rachel

Re: letter #3 to the Charter Review Committee

Susan Fleischmann <susan.fleischmann@gmail.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 4:19 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: Kathleen Born <kathyborn@gmail.com>; Peterson, Lisa <Lisacp829@gmail.com>

Hi, Marc, I hope you're well. Thanks so much for the amazing work you are doing.

I feel VERY strongly that we should be maintaining the weak mayor system in Plan E. Below are the three letters I've written to the Charter Review Committee. If you have any way to use them, please do, or if you want me to put them in some other form, I will. I do feel like we are suddenly at the 11th hour and the fact that tonight, during the week of Thanksgiving, is a critical moment, is seriously upsetting.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Susan Fleischmann** <susan.fleischmann@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Nov 21, 2023 at 3:58 PM

Subject: letter #3 to the Charter Review Committee

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@cambridgema.gov>

Cc: Kathleen Born <kathyborn@gmail.com>, Peterson, Lisa <Lisacp829@gmail.com>

11-21-2023

Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee,

I am writing again to implore you to **not** recommend radical change to the current Plan E government, but to address its weaknesses in a more targeted way.

The job of elected officials is to govern.

The job of an administrator is to manage.

The City Council, under the current system, has the power to hire AND fire the City Manager. The Council should be directing the work of the City Manager and rigorously and frequently evaluating them to ensure that the directives of the Council, and, indirectly, the voters, are being successfully addressed. In the absence of a constructive relationship with the Council, past City Managers have acted in what they have considered the best interests of the city at large. Whether those actions have been most representative of what the voters want is debatable. But it is the elected Council that must be more engaged in determining the City's direction, and then ensuring that the City Manager acts accordingly.

The Charter Review Committee has made a great deal of progress identifying the weaknesses in Plan E. Instead of making a wholesale change to the system and hoping that the outcome changes as well, why not take the time, in this committee or another, with more community input, to strengthen our form of government and ensure more accountability and transparency throughout? Why not codify a rigorous methodology for evaluating the City Manager and holding them accountable? Sound management is not the problem; oversight and accountability is. Let's put our energies into addressing where the system is broken.

Regarding the Direction for Tonight's Meeting

Rachel Liao <rachel.g.liao@gmail.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 4:28 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

My name is Rachel Liao. I have lived and worked in Cambridge for the past 14+ years, and am the mom of two children who attend the MLK Jr elementary school in the Cambridge Public School system, and who were also born in Cambridge at Mt Auburn Hospital.

I have loved living, working, and raising my family in Cambridge, and hope to continue doing so for years to come. I am deeply dedicated to my community's well-being, and for this reason, I am writing:

(i) to express my surprise and concern to see the recent news that the Charter Review Commission is recommending a move to a strong mayor system for Cambridge, and (ii) to request you consider deferring this decision until a more thorough and community-inclusive process can be pursued to assess impact on and benefit for our community.

Briefly, I see this change as hindering our vibrant and participatory local government processes, which have benefited many important community discussions, including related to the quality of the schools, basic city services, the diversity of the city, and the use of parks and open space.

Under the current model, our city manager meets with the entire City Council in open, public meetings, where public policies are discussed and debated, with regular input from residents who would be directly impacted by policies under discussion. Ultimately, in public meetings, the council provides direction to the city manager that shapes the work the city does on behalf of its residents.

I am concerned that under a strong mayor system, our city will lose this participatory and democratic ethos, because the decision-making process will move behind closed doors and could therefore be increasingly politicized. Decision-making power would be concentrated in one person, and would not require public comment on policy issues in open meetings. The mayor could simply meet with other administrators in private and make decisions individually, without needing to consider the diverse viewpoints and needs of members of our community.

Given the rushed nature of this decision-making process, and its placement during Thanksgiving week, I am especially concerned that the public has not sufficiently been given the opportunity to participate in the conversation about this significant change.

I therefore ask:

(i) that the Commission ask the City Council to give this important and complex topic enough time to engage the residents it will impact, and (ii) that you retain the current city manager form of government, which I believe to be more open, inclusive, and democratic, and the best system to serve the needs and interests of our diverse and engaged community.

I greatly appreciate your public service in this process, and for your consideration of my comments.

With thanks and best wishes for the Thanksgiving holiday,
Rachel Liao
332 Franklin Street

Changes in the Plan E form of government

Ginny B. <ginny.berkowitz@gmail.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 4:52 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

To the Charter Review Committee - I am writing as I understand you plan to vote tonight on the portion of our city charter regarding a strong mayor versus a City Manager hired by the City Council.

I urge you to keep our form of governance as is with a City Manager that we can choose based on their managerial skills and experience. In direct contrast, an elected official will naturally need to respond to the loudest and most persistent voters, in order to ensure re-election. As a 45 year resident of the City of Cambridge and former CPSD employee, I feel very strongly that this is in the best interest of the City that I have seen grow and flourish as a result of the consistent and measured responsiveness of a team led by an independent, skilled manager.

Thank you,
Ginny Berkowitz
5 Saint Mary Road

Concerns about Current Plan

Caleb Hurst-Hiller <hursthiller@gmail.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 5:24 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

My name is Caleb Hurst-Hiller. I am a Cambridge resident and have been part of the fabric of the Cambridge community for years.

I was very surprised to see the latest [Cambridge Day article](#) saying that this group is looking to move toward a strong mayor form of government.

As a Cambridge resident for many years, I believe the current form of government is working quite well. It has enabled Cambridge to be a leader on affordable housing, climate change, municipal finances, and more. It has made Cambridge a diverse and inclusive place, in short, a place where I am happy to live, work, and raise my family.

If it's not broken, I don't understand why the Committee is proposing such a dramatic change.

The process for making this change feels rushed and not inclusive – trying to create and refine a proposal on a massive change in government over a short period of time. Having these meetings over the holiday season makes it much harder for people to participate.

I'm also concerned that the proposed plan would actually make Cambridge government less democratic.

In the current system, the city manager meets weekly with nine city councilors and the Council is empowered to enact policies that direct the executive branch. In the proposed strong mayor plan, the city manager would report to a mayor. They would meet and discuss policies in private, without required public or Council input. This will result in less voice being heard in city government!

Ultimately, I ask that the Charter Review Committee ask the City Council for more time and that you reconsider the direction of moving to a strong mayor system. The current form of government has worked well, and we should be reluctant to make such a major change absent a very compelling reason to do so.

Regards,

Caleb

Pearl St

Feedback on Committee's Current Direction

David Toniatti <toniatti@gmail.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 5:24 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

My name is Dave Toniatti. My wife and I live in Cambridge, and our two children go to Cambridge Public Schools. We are grateful to live in such a vibrant community.

I am writing to share my surprise and concern about the direction that the Charter Review Committee is taking – moving to a strong mayor governance system and away from our current city manager system.

I support Cambridge's model as a leader on affordable housing, multiple modes of transportation, climate change, and creating a livable, diverse, and inclusive city.

I am worried that the Committee's proposal takes for granted how high functioning Cambridge's city government currently is and assumes that it will continue to deliver services at such high quality – even with a radical move to a strong mayor system.

I believe the current success the City has had is not accidental or incidental to the current form of government but is actually a hallmark of the city manager system. Having a high quality, professional city manager who is trained in leadership and management enables the City to deliver high quality services to its residents through effective administration and management.

There is no guarantee that this would continue under a strong mayor system. Instead, it appears that the proposal would create less opportunities for the public and for the city council to provide input into key policies and decision making. I am concerned that this would make our city government less democratic.

I am also concerned about the process. I consider myself civically engaged and informed and feel like the Charter Review Commission's communication with the general public about this new potential direction has not been very good. I had no idea of this new potential direction until very recently. In addition, having a meeting of such significance two days before Thanksgiving makes it hard for Cambridge residents to participate.

Please lengthen your process so residents can weigh in on key decisions at times that are not major holidays and please keep the current form of government.

Thank you,
Dave Toniatti

public comment for tonight's charter review meeting

Danny Park <dpark01@gmail.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 5:47 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Good evening,

My name is Danny Park, and I live, work, and go to church in Cambridge. I am the father of two kids in CPS. Our family loves and is grateful to live here, including the quality services the city government provides.

In full disclosure, I am a friend of the current city manager, Yi-An Huang. That said, I offer these comments thinking through the generalized case of anyone working in that role (former and future) and hope to be as impartial as I can.

As an infectious disease scientist who advises governments in the U.S. and around the world on response to viral epidemics, I was deeply impressed by Cambridge's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed Cambridge students to return to in person schooling before many other communities across the Commonwealth. The City government's leadership, thoughtfulness, openness to partnership and collaboration, and responsiveness were critical factors that enabled this to be possible.

I am concerned that moving away from the city manager form of government and to a strong mayor system would make major decision-making more politically motivated and less deliberate. It would remove the weekly opportunities for public input through public comment at city council meetings and open public deliberation on policy decisions at those same meetings that are a hallmark of the current form of government.

I am even more concerned by the examples we see from cities with strong mayor systems (Boston being the most notable and proximal, but DC and NY as well) which demonstrate the extreme advantage to incumbent mayors who rarely face electoral accountability for their performance over decades-long tenures. By contrast, the city manager form of government – with the recent updates Cambridge has enacted such as the annual public review that the council conducts of the manager – can create a higher degree of professionalism and accountability. In its most recent form, the Cambridge city council can simply replace poorly performing managers. Many of the historical issues around the city manager role in Cambridge predated current accountability rules.

In short, I ask the Charter Review Committee to retain and/or iteratively improve the current city manager form of government in Cambridge, rather than considering drastically different forms of governance to replace it.

Thanks for your consideration,

Danny Park

Public Comment

Charter review process

GEORGE METZGER <gmetzger90@aol.com>

Tue 11/21/2023 5:50 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee:

I respectfully ask you to pause you process to actively solicit public input before issuing draft recommendations. In particular, we need to know what weaknesses exist in our current system and how alternative forms will address and improve governance.

Respectfully,
George Metzger
90 Antrim St
Cambridge MA
617.448.5831
Gmetzger@hmfh.com

City Manager's Perspective on Charter Review

Huang, Yi-An <yhuang@cambridgema.gov>

Tue 11/28/2023 10:16 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>; kathyborn@gmail.com <kathyborn@gmail.com>

Cc: Corning, Anna <acorning@cambridgema.gov>; Erwin, Nicole <nerwin@cambridgema.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>; Gianetti, Lee <lgianetti@cambridgema.gov>; Warnick, Jeremy <jwarnick@cambridgema.gov>

The Charter Review Committee has been meeting since August last year to discuss potential changes to municipal government in Cambridge. Recently, the committee has [shifted](#) toward eliminating the City Manager in favor of an elected Mayor as the chief executive. A final vote is likely on Tuesday, December 5 at the second to last meeting of the committee prior to sending a final report to the City Council by December 31.

I started in the role of City Manager at the same time the Charter Review Committee began meeting. I am the first City Manager in forty years to be hired from outside the city and the first person of color to serve in this role. Trust in institutions is at an all-time low across the country, and one of the reasons I was excited about this job was the opportunity to strengthen our democracy, create a more inclusive local government, and find a path toward more transparency and accountability. While I recognize that as the City Manager, I'm not an impartial third-party, I wanted to share my perspective from the last year as the committee is preparing to make major decisions.

First, a lot is going well in the current form of government! Cambridge has done more than any neighboring community on affordable housing including tripling funding for the Affordable Housing Trust over the last decade, raising the inclusionary requirement to 20%, eliminating parking minimums, and passing two affordable housing overlays. We have established the most aggressive climate goals for building emissions in the state. We host more adult emergency shelter beds for the unhoused relative to population than any community. And we have the strongest municipal financials in the Commonwealth.

Further, our community is really engaged. Voters recently elected one of the most diverse and representative City Councils in our history in a competitive election with 24 candidates knocking on tens of thousands of doors. In our [2023 representative resident survey](#), 90% of residents rated Cambridge as an Excellent/Good place to live, 89% would recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks, and 45% of residents had watched a City Council meeting. Additionally, 40% of people said they had contacted a City Councilor in the last year, which put us #2 out of 300 cities and towns across the country! There are challenges that we need to solve, but voices are being heard in public discussions, people are involved in local politics, and things are getting done.

While an elected mayor as the chief executive is the most well-known practice of local democracy, I have come to appreciate how our current form puts a nine-person City Council at the center of our city government. This is less direct – there isn't just one person who makes executive decisions – but it is more inclusive. I'm excited about shared goal setting in January with the new Council, a process that makes less sense with a directly elected Mayor. Instead, on each major decision, nine Councilors have a voice and a vote, and so do all their constituents. In 2023, I prepared for and attended almost 40 City Council meetings with public comment on every issue confronting Cambridge. Meanwhile, strong mayors rarely attend Council meetings. While I recognize the emotional resonance and simplicity of winner-take-all, concentrating political power isn't necessarily more inclusive, representative, or transparent.

Finally, one of my goals has been to build greater accountability into this form of government. I have worked hard to develop a strong and collaborative relationship with the Council and to follow their direction. We have established a rigorous and transparent City Manager [performance review process](#) and I recently submitted a [2023 review of goals and performance](#) to the Council. If the executive branch is where power concentrates, there is a reasonable case for professional appointment and close oversight. With no poison pills in my contract, an empowered City Council can act quicker if there is mismanagement or misconduct. Regular elections are seldom as responsive – while a City Manager would have been placed on leave immediately then fired, elected officials like George Santos and Robert Menendez have continued to serve for months or years in positions of power and privilege.

Public Comment

It will be up to the Charter Review Committee, the incoming City Council, and ultimately the voters of Cambridge to make these important decisions. But perhaps my view is that this is not a debate between more or less democracy, but rather what kind of democracy we want as a community. [Proportional Ranked Choice Voting](#) is more complex and harder to understand but offers unique benefits over more traditional Choose One voting. Similarly, there are benefits to the Council-Manager form of government and I believe it can live up to our best democratic ideals: representation, inclusivity, transparency, and accountability.

I will always love this amazing community and I will be committed to making our path forward the best that it can be, whichever journey we ultimately choose.

Yi-An Huang

Yi-An Huang | City Manager
City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-349-4300

Re: I oppose a recall mechanism (I support impeachment instead)

Allan Sadun <aesadun@alum.mit.edu>

Tue 11/28/2023 2:32 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

A follow-up thought: I'm spitballing here, but perhaps a compromise mechanism could be a "vote of no confidence" to remove the mayor with a two-thirds Council majority. By not calling it "impeachment", you would make it clear that they can be removed for political reasons and not just for malfeasance. But by making it a two-thirds majority and by the fact that the Council can't pick the replacement, you still give the mayor strength.

On Tue, Nov 28, 2023 at 2:17 PM Allan Sadun <aesadun@alum.mit.edu> wrote:

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I want to see Cambridge's electoral system result in leadership on the priorities of Cambridge residents. I have come to decide that I do not support a strong mayor system, because I believe that a multi-member City Council elected by PR is more representative of the priorities of Cambridge residents than a single person, and a manager accountable at all times to the Council is therefore more accountable to resident priorities than a mayor elected only once every four years. (Also because in the short term, I like our current city manager.)

But if you're going to have a strong mayor system, you should not have the mayor be recallable. Recall elections are inherently low-turnout and have a different electorate than the election for mayor in the first place. **Recall elections are not a way to hold the mayor accountable to the people, they are a way to hold mayoral leadership hostage to a highly engaged minority.**

If the goal is to remove the mayor in the event of severe malfeasance, an impeachment vote by the independently-elected City Council would be a more effective way and less disruptive way to accomplish that.

If the goal is to make sure the mayoral priorities reflect the priorities of the people, ... then maybe you should allow the Council to hire and fire the mayor, and therefore perhaps we shouldn't have a strong mayor system after all.

But in no event should we have a recall system, in my opinion.

Best,
Allan Sadun
237 Elm St. #1

P.S. I am concerned that given your reversal on the strong-mayor system vote, that whatever conclusion you come to will seem hasty and ill-considered. If we're going to have a strong mayor system, I hope it will be strongly motivated, rather than justified with "a majority of us briefly thought it might be better".

Strong support for maintaining the current city manager role

Jacquelyn Fahey Sandell <jfaheysandell@gmail.com>

Tue 11/28/2023 8:49 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

To the Charter Review Committee members,

We have owned our home at 8 Clinton Street for the past 17 years, and am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposal to strengthen the role of the mayor and weaken the role of the City Manager. The City Manager has an essential role in securing continuity in the running of the city rather than being prone to political changes every two years. A strong City Manager is essential to ensure that the city runs well. The charter committee describes that the strengths of the city should be maintained. I agree with the committee that we should feel very proud of our city and how well this city is run. It is clean, green and safe. The new City Manager Yi-An Huang is doing an excellent job so far, and his predecessor did as well. I feel like the City Manager's newsletter provides a lot of information to residents and updates on the city priorities; this is welcome transparency and availability of information.

I feel strongly that the political winds should not govern the running of a city of the size of Cambridge. Being a lawyer myself, I do not agree with the assertion during November 21 public comment that the Cambridge system purportedly produces at large city disenfranchisement as alleged by a lawyer during public comment. As for the goal of promotion of community involvement and engagement, I agree with the committee that there could be improvements in the drafting of the council and committee agendas. I find them very tough to follow, but feel that is a task for the city council's office to tackle. Perhaps an aide to a councilor could dedicate some of their time to assist with this goal. Anyone interested in attendance at or participation in Cambridge city politics has ample opportunity to do so via zoom or attendance at City Hall.

That a proposed change to the role of the City Manager/Mayor would come through the charter review committee process as a recommendation frankly astonished me. I had seen the charter review committee advertised and had not understood that this committee would be reviewing this role. This is a fundamental shift that is not well publicized and is occurring in a surprising forum not available on the open meeting portal website. Also the mayor is chosen by the council, not the voters. As such a change to our city government, this matter of mayor election if a strong mayor and the role of the city manager should go to the voters to decide.

Furthermore, I do not support the 4 year term within the strong mayor model if that were to pass. I do agree with the charter committee that the 2 year term for the council keeps the council close to the voters, and I do not see a reason to change the term from 2 years. I also strongly believe that in the strong mayor model that the mayor should have a veto power. Again, this proposal is a fundamental shift that is not well publicized and the discussion is occurring in a surprising forum. Again, I think it should go to the voters to decide.

I respectfully ask that you do not support a recommendation in favor of moving to a strong mayor vs. city manager. I thank you for the time you have dedicated to this committee.

Public Comment

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn Fahey Sandell, Esq.

Mason Sandell

Mayor-Council Form

Haden Smiley <hfsmiley@pm.me>

Sun 12/3/2023 10:19 AM

To:Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I'm writing to urge you to recommend a mayor-council form of government in your final report.

As someone who worked for the City's Office of Equity and Inclusion, I know first hand the obstacle the City Manager plays in the administration of democracy, and many of these points illustrate what I mean.

- The chief executive of our city should be elected by the people. Cambridge is one of only two remaining MA cities with a Plan E Charter (the other is Lowell). Cambridge has had this charter since it was adopted in 1940. It's been long overdue to dispense with Plan E. Here are some examples of cities that already have: Medford operated under Plan E until 1988, Gloucester operated under Plan E until adoption of a home rule charter in 1974, and Revere adopted Plan B in 1965 after operating under Plan E.
- Please consider the anti-civil rights history behind the City Manager form of government presented by Kevin Hsu in his public comment. I was surprised to learn that multiple cities' transitions from mayor to city manager forms of government were supported by the KKK. But it makes sense that racist groups would want a system that takes voting power away from Black and other marginalized citizens.
- I've noticed many commenters who favor a manager-council system saying that the committee should take more time to study the issue and that we shouldn't make such a big change without having a more inclusive process. But they must be simply unaware that this committee was created exactly for that purpose through a long and painstaking process. You've all spent countless volunteer hours already and created numerous opportunities for public feedback - if people are frustrated they're only hearing about it now, I don't think that's a reason to scrap all your work and start from scratch!
- I'm frustrated that the city manager hasn't acted on funding HEART despite a clear order from the council, which is supposed to be the people's representative body. The other day, he skipped a hearing on the issue. I'm sure he had a good reason, but it's been two years now and he hasn't acted. The same thing happened with municipal broadband under our last manager. And there's nothing I can do to hold him accountable. I don't think an elected mayor would be able to hide from people's disapproval in the same way.
- None of the pro-mayor supporters have criticized this particular city manager. They have all had thoughtful systematic critiques of the city manager position itself. If the people of Cambridge like this city manager then I'm happy to tell you the Chief Administrator and Financial officer (CA/FO) positions will be hiring in 2026. And our current city manager could apply.
- Legally, the City Council is not allowed to tell any city employees what to do. All requests have to go through the City Manager. Because the City Manager controls the staff and resources, the City Council can't do much at all in terms of the operations of the city. Even for simple requests like fixing potholes. The City Council has to contact the City Manager to beg to get the problem fixed.

[Violations of s. 107 of MGL, c. 43](#): The Council may not interfere with manager's duties and responsibilities in matters of appointments and removals and may not give orders to any subordinate of the city manager... **punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. Also subject to removal from office and loss of eligibility to "ever again" seek any elective city office.**

- Legally, the city manager can say no to the policy orders. They can just ignore them (aka the "pocket veto"). Sure, sometimes, a policy order can evolve into an ordinance, which is law. (After the city manager failed to adequately respond to policy orders around bike lanes, the city council eventually passed an ordinance). However, City Councilors are often squeamish about actually passing an ordinance, so they'll pass a policy order instead. Passing an ordinance is a multi-month process taking multiple city council meetings. If for every ask the city has to make it an ordinance, does it really sound like the city manager works for the city council?
- What's stopping the City Manager (supposedly an apolitical position) after leaving office to work to lobby for the special interests that they were tasked to reign in as the executive with control of nearly a BILLION dollar budget? The city manager seems like the radical option to me! The compromise position is the creation of the Chief Administrator & Financial officer positions under the mayor so that the city benefits from professional skills of these two positions while the mayor directs the vision for the city.
- The pro-Manager side seems to hold on to this notion that collaborative goal setting is not possible without a city manager. Why not add into the charter that the mayor and/or their staff is required to attend every city council meeting? If the mayor understands what the council's decision making process is, tensions are less likely to flare up. The council should provide the mayor a quarterly performance review, and the end-of-year performance review of the mayor should be made public to the voters. I am looking forward to a mayor who takes this city into the next phase of growth by 2026.

All my very best,
Haden

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

Public Comment

Support for mayor-council government in Cambridge

Benjamin Gammage <gammage@math.harvard.edu>

Sun 12/3/2023 11:14 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I am a resident of Cambridge, living at 9 Florence Street, and I am writing you in support of a mayor-council form of government. I want to live in a democratically run city, where the actually elected officials have the final say on city decisions. There is a space for managerial expertise in our city, but administrative decisions in our city should be subordinate to democratic processes, and not the other way around. I hope that in your final report, you will recommend a mayor-council form of government, as part of our shared, continuing effort to build a democratic Cambridge.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Benjamin Gammage

Support for Strong Mayor

David Sullivan <davidesullivan77@gmail.com>

Sun 12/3/2023 2:01 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Committee members,

As you approach your final recommendations, I want to reiterate my support for a strong mayor form of government (with a CAFO, elected by RCV to a four-year term, removable only for misconduct). Please consider these points:

- Democracy requires that the most powerful official in the City be directly elected by voters. Indirect accountability is simply inadequate. In my experience as a former Councillor, it is very difficult for Councillors to disagree publicly with the City Manager, at the risk of losing clout on numerous issues and projects under his control. In practice, the City Manager cannot be fired (despite the Charter) because of the "buyout clause" in his contract -- which I always voted against as a Councillor.
- The City needs political leadership that the apolitical City Manager model cannot provide. As a senior lawyer in his administration for eight years, I helped Governor Deval Patrick use his significant clout to assemble legislative support for key priorities -- like successfully closing corporate tax loopholes and defending same-sex marriage. No one has the political tools to do this under our present charter, since individual councillors and citizen groups lack the necessary bargaining power. For this reason among many others, we thankfully do not have a "state manager" or "national manager" form of government.
- Similarly, it is critical that a strong mayor harness city departments to carry out the voters' policy priorities. The current "apolitical" model makes it very hard to do that -- in fact, some city managers have forbidden departments from engaging in policy planning entirely, and from discussing such issues with Councillors. This is no way to accomplish progressive change in our city.
- The City Manager form is mostly defended for "stable" fiscal and managerial competence. Yet many municipalities with strong mayors also display these virtues, and an expert CAFO would certainly help here. For those of us who want to change city policy for the better rather than simply preserve the status quo, competence is necessary but not sufficient. Yes, it is possible to have a "bad" mayor, but also a "bad" city manager -- Cambridge history has seen both. Better to use the tools of democracy to improve those failings. (None of this argument should reflect on our present Manager -- or other recent Managers whom I served with -- who all did a fine job within the limits of their defined duties.)

Thank you all for your service to our City as volunteers, and for considering these important issues. I'd be happy to discuss them further with any of you.

David Sullivan
Former City Councillor
16 Notre Dame Ave.
617-710-5547

Reconsider Recommendations to City Council

Rachel Weinstein <rachel@rachelforcambridge.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 9:59 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>
Cc: jazzze3@aol.com <jazzze3@aol.com>

December 4, 2023

Dear Charter Review Committee Members,

Thank you for your commitment and service to our city. We appreciate that you have dedicated your time and energy to the important matter of our form of government.

We write today urging you to reconsider two topics we have strong opinions about, namely continuing with the strong city manager form of government and extending the length of elected officials' terms.

Our review of recent meeting summaries suggests that you are heading toward recommending a strong mayor model. We add our voices to the many who have expressed concerns about this direction. **Just as we would not suggest a School Committee Member run the Cambridge Public Schools, we think it is unwise to have a Mayor run the City.** It is no accident that Cambridge is a better-run, better-resourced city than many of our neighbors – the stability and professional management a manager brings allows the people running the city to rise above whichever way the political winds are blowing and move critical work forward. We worry that a strong mayor would insert themselves into the daily functioning of the city in a way that would not serve our collective interests in the long run. We also have been pleased to see additional accountability measures implemented with our current City Manager.

Regarding elected terms, as individuals who have both run multiple campaigns and served on the School Committee, we know that the amount of time and energy that goes into campaigning every other year would be better spent focused on the matters at hand in the Cambridge Public Schools. With our current terms, Members have a year, or 18 months tops, to establish the norms of the Committee, assess needs, articulate priorities, and begin the process of making policy changes before they have to pivot to campaigning. We believe that there are (at least) two options that would provide Cambridge voters with the ability to continue frequent accountability at the polls: Terms could be extended to four

years, but staggered so that half of the seats would be up for election every two years. This would ensure some institutional memory and continuity of efforts on the Committee. Alternatively, making terms three years for all Members would allow the Committee to be more productive each term.

We appreciate your consideration and welcome any questions or conversation that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

Rachel Weinstein and Caroline Hunter
Cambridge School Committee Members

please recommend mayor-council

Alex Gourevitch <alexgourevitch@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 10:40 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I am writing to support switching to a mayor-council form of government. I have nothing against this particular City Manager, but it is wrong not to have a properly democratic form of city government. We are one of the last remaining cities in MA that has not moved away from the Plan E form of government. A democratic form of government doesn't just make sure that key decisions are in the hands of the people's elected representatives. It also ensures that those representatives have to take responsibility for their decisions. Things are different when there is a City Manager. City Manager's allow councillors and mayors to pass the buck. They can explain away their failure to learn about an issue by saying it's the City Manager's purview. They can explain away their decision not to do what they were elected to do, by saying the City Manager was opposed. Again, I am not supporting the mayor-council form of government because I am unhappy about a specific policy choice the current Manager has made. I disagree with some, agree with others. I just think we should have a more democratic form of city government and join the rest of the cities who have made that pivot.

sincerely,

Alex Gourevitch

324A Harvard St.

Cambridge, MA, 02139

Support for the Current City Manager Form of Government

Kimberlee Gonsalves <kim_gon@mac.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 12:07 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear members of the Charter Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining the current City Manager form of government. Shifting to a strong mayor system would jeopardize the selection of the City's main executive based on managerial talent, as opposed to the current democratic process facilitated by our elected Council.

Our current City Manager, Mr. Huang, serves as a testament to the success of the existing system. His dedicated efforts have resulted in significant progress on vital resident-centric issues, such as the expansion of afterschool programs. It is my belief that he is the most qualified individual to sustain this positive momentum.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Kimberlee Gonsalves
129 Franklin Street #116

Charter review: In favor of current system

Eugenia Schraa <schraa@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 12:15 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: Ming-Tai Huh <mingtai@gmail.com>; Amanda Beatty <amanda.beatty@gmail.com>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>; City Manager <CityManager@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. Some reasons include:

1. ***It's more democratic*** — a mayor would be elected with a *small proportion* of the vote — then, given the power of incumbency, would likely stay in power for a long time. By contrast, choosing the City Manager requires a 5/9 vote from City Council. City Council is currently diverse and representative of the City, so that's a good thing.
2. ***It's more professional*** — the City Manager can be an experienced and technically proficient manager (as ours is today), leaving "politics" to the politicians.
3. ***It's working*** — for example: Yi-An Huang has made afterschool reform a priority + he is committed to a 3-yr plan to get it solved. (Other accomplishments.) I worry the momentum won't survive under a strong mayor.

Note on accountability — Because of incumbency preference, it's hard for voters to get rid of an incumbent mayor who's subpar. By contrast, it's not that hard for City Council to buy out/decline to renew the contract of a subpar City Manager.

Thank you,

Eugenia Schraa

--

Eugenia Schraa
259 Washington St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Public Comment

Support for a Mayor-Council Form of Government

Emilio Sauri <emiliosauri@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 12:18 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I am writing to support switching to a mayor-council form of government. We are one of the last remaining cities in MA that has not moved away from the Plan E form of government. A democratic form of government doesn't just make sure that key decisions are in the hands of the people's elected representatives. It also ensures that those representatives have to take responsibility for their decisions. Things are different when there is a City Manager: it allows councillors and mayors to pass the buck. They can explain away their failure to learn about an issue by saying it's the City Manager's purview. They can explain away their decision not to do what they were elected to do by saying the City Manager was opposed. Again, I am not supporting the mayor-council form of government because I am unhappy about a specific policy choice the current Manager has made. I just think we should have a more democratic form of city government and join the rest of the cities who have made that pivot.

All best,
Emilio Sauri
7 Henry Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

Please support our current form of government

patrick@mcneal.cc <patrick@mcneal.cc>

Mon 12/4/2023 12:48 PM

To:Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of Cambridge to express my strong support for maintaining our current form of government, which has been very effective and beneficial for our city. I firmly believe that the current system, with a City Manager and City Council, works well and aligns with the principles of democracy and professionalism that our community values.

First and foremost, the existing structure is more democratic. Under this system, our City Manager is appointed by a 5/9 vote from the City Council, ensuring a collective decision representing our city's diverse perspectives. This arrangement ensures that the choice of our City Manager is made through a well-considered and representative process. In contrast, electing a mayor with a smaller proportion of the vote could lead to the consolidation of power in the hands of one individual for an extended period, given the power of incumbency. This may not truly reflect the people's will and can undermine the inclusivity and diversity that our City Council currently embodies.

Secondly, the existing system promotes professionalism and effective governance. Our City Manager can be highly experienced and technically proficient, as demonstrated by the current officeholder who previously ran Boston Medical Center. By having a professional manager responsible for the city's day-to-day operations, we can ensure that decisions are made based on expertise and efficiency rather than being subject to the fluctuations of political dynamics. This allows our elected officials to focus on policymaking and representing the interests of our constituents, leaving administrative matters to the capable hands of the City Manager.

Maintaining our current form of government, with a City Manager and City Council, is a testament to the thoughtful governance Cambridge residents have come to appreciate. It upholds the principles of democracy, diversity, and professionalism that we hold dear. I encourage the Charter Review Committee to recognize this system's value and success and consider preserving it for the benefit of our community.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to shaping the future of our city. Your careful consideration of this matter will ultimately lead to a decision that serves the best interests of the people of Cambridge.

Sincerely,

Patrick McNeal
112 Spring Street, #2, Cambridge, MA 02141

Public Comment

(No subject)

Caitlin D <caitlindube@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 1:16 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

Thank you,

Caitlin Dube

395 Huron Avenue

--

Caitlin Dube, Ed.M. (she/her)

[Set up a meeting with me](#)

[Caitlin Dube Consulting](#)

[Consent Counts and YOU can learn more...](#)

[The Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women \(CCSW\)](#)

Message to Charter Review Committee

Susana Domingo Amestoy <sdnadian@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 1:27 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I am writing to support switching to a mayor-council form of government. I have nothing against this particular City Manager, but it is wrong not to have a properly democratic form of city government. We are one of the last remaining cities in MA that has not moved away from the Plan E form of government. A democratic form of government doesn't just make sure that key decisions are in the hands of the people's elected representatives. It also ensures that those representatives have to take responsibility for their decisions. Things are different when there is a City Manager. City Manager's allow councillors and mayors to pass the buck. They can explain away their failure to learn about an issue by saying it's the City Manager's purview. They can explain away their decision not to do what they were elected to do, by saying the City Manager was opposed. Again, I am not supporting the mayor-council form of government because I am unhappy about a specific policy choice the current Manager has made. I disagree with some, agree with others. I just think we should have a more democratic form of city government and join the rest of the cities who have made that pivot.

sincerely,

Susana Domingo Amestoy
7 Henry St.
Cambridge, MA, 02139

Public Comment

support for keeping the current City Manager system

Shimon Rura <shimon@rura.org>

Mon 12/4/2023 1:57 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee and City Council,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council. It would also create a level of leadership churn that I think would negatively impact the city's departments.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

Thank you,
Shimon Rura
10 Westley Ave
Cambridge, MA 02140

Public Comment

support for keeping the current City Manager system

Nicole <davis.nr@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 2:09 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

I worry about a lack of continuity in programs that work well in the city if we lose the professional management and are primarily run by politicians. I also feel that the city manager can be more accountable because city council hires them and oversees their work, whereas it can be hard to get rid of a bad mayor due to incumbency bias and skills that make someone very electable do not necessarily translate to good at managing a city.

Thank you,

Nicole Davis (179 Rindge Ave Cambridge)

Support for Strong Mayor

Ellen Mei <ellenwmei@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 2:44 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Greetings Charter Review Committee,

I am writing in support of a strong mayor form of city council. Something that the committee has talked about often with the city manager system is that the manager can be recalled by the city council and that the city council can provide oversight/recall the manager if needed. I believe that any mechanism created to oversee the manager, however well crafted, will not be used. The manager process is a time consuming - the search for current manager Huang took several months of the mayors time, taking time away from legislating and working together with the other councilors and city staff's time working on other administrative activities. The time, and the money, needed to conduct the search process is time and money that could be spent on direct city-resident services instead. The mayoral system, is chosen, would have elections take place at the same time as regular city council elections would respect and protect resident and city staff time.

The latest search for the city manager also only received input from 750 city residents. This is much lower than the 2,000+ vote threshold needed for each city councilor to be elected and for the mayor to be chosen from amongst them. In a city that leads the way in the area for Participatory Budgeting, we should be further encouraging resident engagement in city matters.

I also do not agree that a Mayor is undemocratic or leads to city being poorly run/draining resources. The City maintains a City Auditor office, which would not be abolished upon switching to a manager system.

Please move vote for the council-mayor form of government to respect the time of city staff and residents and to show residents that Cambridge does prioritize citizen voice.

Thank you,
Ellen Mei
383 Prospect St

Public Comment

City Manager form Of Government

Jose Jimenez <jjimenezjr@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 3:38 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>; schraa@gmail.com <schraa@gmail.com>; Amanda Beatty <amanda.beatty@gmail.com>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

My hope is that the City Manager form of government helps keep Cambridge Unique, Progressive, results-focused, and Less "Politicized" (vs some surrounding cities that have strong mayor systems)

Thank you,

Jose Jimenez (38 Prince St, Cambridge, MA 02139)

Please support a Mayor-Council form of government

Ruy Martinez <ruym20@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 4:47 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

My name is Ruy Martinez, I live on 56 Linnaean Street, and I'm a member of Boston DSA. I've lived in Austin, Texas, where we have a mayor and city council, along with a very powerful city manager. I'm writing to urge you all to consider a mayor-council form of government in your final report.

From my experience in Cambridge and Austin, there are real issues with the City Manager position. It's clear to me that the manager is *de facto* a political appointment. As we saw dramatically in 2021, the City Manager can refuse to implement policies, say policies are impossible to do, or ignore them. Only in Cambridge have I ever seen a law like S.107, C.43 that threatens *jail time* for 'interfer[ing] with manager's duties and responsibilities'. It's incredibly disempowering as a citizen to know that an appointed manager can (and has in the past) subtly threaten jail time to the people I elect - I remember hearing this the last time the City Manager question came up.

You all have worked really hard on this - the time for waiting seems to me to be closing at some point soon. I really view this from the principle that I elect the people to represent me. Obviously, some amount of administrative positions are necessary to handle the day to day operation of the city, but why can't we have a General Administrator or Financial Officer that is accountable to the mayor or council?

There are real criticisms I have of 'strong mayor' systems, but I do think that the current situation with a *super strong City Manager* is even worse. A mayor can be constrained by making sure that they have to attend meetings, that a Council majority can overrule them, and so on. But as of now, there's basically no way to 'overturn' the bad administrative decisions of a City Manager - even if we like this one! That seems to me like an executive position with no checks or balances.

So, with that being said, I'd really urge you all to recommend a mayor-council system. Thanks for reading my email.

Best,
Ruy Martinez

--

Contact info:

(512) 809-3488

ruym20@gmail.com

ruymartinez@college.harvard.edu

Public Comment

Strong Mayor Please

Robert Eckstut <reckstut@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 6:13 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Hello committee,

I'm writing to you all today with the hopes I'll convince or push some of you towards adopting a strong mayor governance. I'm someone who has been a Cambridge Resident for nearly 17 years; during that time, I've followed and been involved in local politics to a much larger degree than the average resident. I firmly believe the issues that I - and others in my community - care about, such as police reform, municipal broadband, and safer streets are not advancing forward due to the city manager. I've been told - as well as countless other residents - that progress is coming, but I've cared about the same issues for a decade and we're not anywhere close to achieving the stated goals. All roads lead back to the city manager blocking reform, so to that I say - let's reform that position. Let people vote on the mayor, and give the mayor the power to make Cambridge progressive once more. Appreciate the time,

Robert Eckstut

Sent from my iPhone

Public Comment

Please do what is best for Cambridge residents and keep the current form of government

Amanda Beatty <amanda.beatty@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 6:31 PM

To:Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc:Eugenia Schraa <schraa@gmail.com>;City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>;City Manager <CityManager@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Hi Charter Review Committee Members,

Please vote to KEEP the current structure of government which involves a city manager.

We have a unique form of government in which the City Council -- members who are not technocrats, but community activists and politicians -- do not manage directly but can hire/fire a competent person with technical skills to run the city. The City Manager is insulated from political pressures and from running for reelection every two years, and can focus on the important business of running our city departments with minimal political pressure. We need a competent, technocratic leader who is focused on being a good manager and steward of taxpayer funds. This is not possible when the city manager becomes a politician. I hope you will strongly consider keeping our form of government.

Amanda Beatty

604 Franklin St

One additional comment

Marilyn Frankenstein <Marilyn.Frankenstein@umb.edu>

Mon 12/4/2023 8:55 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

One provision of the recall, perhaps, or some other action, should involve making the Policy Orders passed by City Council actionable—it seems too many just go in the circular file (the waste paper basket id that phrase is too dated to use now!), again, a very anti-democratic process.

From: Marilyn Frankenstein <Marilyn.Frankenstein@umb.edu>

Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 at 6:51 PM

To: "CharterReviewCommittee@cambridgema.gov"

<CharterReviewCommittee@cambridgema.gov>

Subject: comment on a number of proposals in front of the committee

To the Charter Review Committee:

I have been very concerned by the undemocratic governance structures in Cambridge. In this commentary, I will speak to the measures the committee is considering tomorrow:

- (1) I have never understood why there is not a democratically elected mayor. Hopefully that position could be defined in a way that would take some power away from the completely undemocratically appointed City Manager, and give the elected representatives -- the mayor and the City Councillors -- more say in crucial decisions. Further, there should be mechanisms for recall of elected officials when they are not representing their constituents. And I have already commented on what I view as a very unfair system of voting, which could be fractionally improved by at least using a fractional transfer of ballots from those candidates who have more votes than needed.
- (2) I think the Resident Assembly is another promising step toward more democracy. I particularly like that people on this Assembly will be compensated, as that can eliminate having only people wealthy enough to give time to civic engagement. But, it would be important to choose the assembly people by having some kind of proportional stratified random sample to insure representation across various demographic

groups in the city. Also, it would be very important to have mechanisms in place to have 2/3 majority decisions of the Assembly go directly to voters, AND to have those city-wide votes, given some kind of large majority approval, binding. There should be budgetary and legal support from city employees to help realistically develop those measures requiring funding.

- (3) Further, I am hoping the Resident Assembly is only a first step. We could learn an enormous amount from Cuba (population about 11 million) about democratic participation, where, for example, the new Families code involved 133,000 public meetings nationwide, and where the people of Cuba submitted 783,000 proposals for changes, which resulted in modifying about 60% of the proposed legislation. See <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2023/03/23/how-the-cuban-government-and-its-people-collaborated-on-the-family-code/#:~:text=The%20referendum%20was%20preceded%20by%20a%20popular%20consultation,people%20of%20Cuba%20submitted%20783%2C000%20proposals%20for%20changes> for more details. Instead of one resident Assembly we could have elected committees of a few neighborhood blocks each where people could have a REAL say in the government of our city. Maybe the first Resident Assembly could work out some proposals that would ensure anyone could run for those committees and that those committees would send representatives to larger neighborhood groupings and so on until getting to City Councillors—which might also involved having district Councillors...
- (4) Finally, to continue bringing a bit more democracy to Cambridge, we should have an elected Police Review Board, also with real power in their recommendations. And we should have an electoral process that does not involved 30 candidates running for 6 positions, whether we need candidates elected from districts or another mathematically determined fair system of voting.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Frankenstein
Cambridge, MA 02138

A more democratic Cambridge

Stephen C <sjcellucci@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 9:09 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Committee members,

I've been following your work for the past year, and I am grateful for the volunteer hours you've all put in to make Cambridge better, including the myriad ways you've engaged the public to solicit our feedback. In that light I am slightly offended on your behalf when I read comments from folks who are alarmed you may be recommending a new form of government soon, saying things like "This committee has been working in the background with no input from the public" and suggesting we need a complete do-over of your work.

As you wrap up, I am writing to show my support for three things geared toward making Cambridge more democratic:

- 1) a change to a mayor-council system in Cambridge
- 2) an elected PRAB (Police Review & Advisory Board)
- 3) a Resident Assembly with the power to create a ballot referendum directly with a supermajority vote. (I am very excited you've taken up the idea of the Resident Assembly and I hope you give them actual power.)

I am going to let my support for #2 and 3 stand on its own because I want to elaborate at length about #1.

Around the last vote on Mayor vs Manager, I recall committee member Jim Stockard saying something to the effect of "the current system works pretty well. We have wonderfully low property taxes and a good bond rating" (apologies for the rough paraphrase).

With all due respect to Mr. Stockard, and acknowledging that his perspective reflects the thinking of many, I *strongly* disagree that this is a good way to evaluate our current system. Low property taxes are not a value for the two-thirds of Cantabridgians who rent. They're certainly not for the friends of mine who can barely afford to live here. In fact, I'd argue they are a net negative for all renters: By prioritizing such low residential property taxes over the years, and because Proposition 2 1/2 prevents us from raising commercial real estate taxes independently of residential, we've created a vicious cycle where, to make up the revenue gap, we allow more and more commercial development, which directly competes for housing construction and drives up all market real estate prices and thus, rents.

I bring all this up because I think it's completely logical that Mr. Stockard mentioned low property taxes in a pro-Manager argument. For one, a City Manager much more closely resembles a business executive than a politician, so it is natural that they would prioritize maximizing revenue growth and attracting commercial development through low taxes. (It's no coincidence that supporters tout these things as a strength of the position.) But also, a City Manager, because of their political insulation, has a much easier time carrying out policy that's unpopular with two-thirds of the population - like policy that keeps property taxes low and rents high. You can have all the feedback channels and "accountability" mechanisms you want (and every single one of them could be utilized equally with a strong Mayor), but at the end of the day, there's no way you can tell me that a hired City Manager is equally accountable as an elected Mayor would be to my friend who's on an endless waiting list for public housing, struggling to make rent, wanting those with power to do whatever they can to prevent their displacement but with little more than their vote as leverage.

Public Comment

As for the bond rating, Somerville has the same rating and a strong mayor. But my point is, property taxes and municipal bond ratings are not what the majority of Cantabridgians care about. Things are not "working pretty well" for most people here! I'm sure you're hearing this argument a lot from those who want no change. I know you're hearing it from City Manager Huang himself (I think it was improper for him to comment). I'm sure the system is working well for these people. But most people in Cambridge are struggling.

I'm not saying switching to a mayor-council system will fix all our problems, but it can only be an improvement on what we have. I cannot stress enough that any accountability measures you like about a manager-council system can be utilized equally well in a mayor-council system. But we must elect the executive for a more democratic Cambridge. And I'm not trying to argue that we should strive for unlimited democracy. Of course there is a role for some level of expertise in our government. (With a CA/FO, I believe we can have the best of both worlds.) But when it comes to democracy, I wonder if you'll agree with a simple principle which I find useful: those who govern should be held to a binary choice on every issue - either enact the will of the majority, OR when you choose not to, explain why. Between a City Manager and an elected Mayor, only one actually has to do the explaining.

You are a committee that's meant to be representative of the entire city. I hope you will keep all our people in mind - including the low-income renters who are disproportionately people of color and, for obvious reasons, underrepresented among those commenting on this issue - as you make your final decisions.

Finally, please do not fall into the trap of thinking that a change to mayor-council is the radical choice. If anything, it's the other way around, with only one other city (Lowell) still using a Plan E charter.

Sincerely,
Stephen Cellucci
32 Vineyard St

Public Comment

Keep the existing city manager

Lynn Li <lei.lynn.li@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 9:38 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I would like to email to voice my support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents.

Since he became the City Manager, we have seen tremendous transparency. Mr. Huang has been incredibly helpful for both after school and Cambridge preschool. In my interactions with Mr. Huang, I have found him to be incredibly thoughtful. Moreover, he tackles tough issues and works relentless to address the many challenges in our community.

Yi-An Huang is an exceptional City Manager. I believe the current system of government is what best serves our community.

Sincerely,

Lynn Li (8 Chestnut St)

Public comment

hoperturner@gmail.com <hoperturner@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 9:41 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I want to express my strong support for a change to a mayor-council form of government for Cambridge. Quite simply, I believe the chief executive of our city should be elected by the people. So many people are disenchanted with local politics, and I don't blame them. Electing a mayor would be a big step toward motivating more civic participation.

I find it frustrating that the City Manager doesn't have to answer to voters. Take, for example, HEART. As a social worker who understands the need for an alternative to a police response to many situations, I'm deeply disappointed that the city manager hasn't acted on funding HEART. Just like our last city manager did with municipal broadband, even though the public and the city council have signaled clear support, the Manager in both cases has stalled, dodged, and effectively vetoed the orders by sheer inaction. This isn't about the individual, it's about the position. It doesn't make sense that there's nothing I or other Cambridge residents can do to hold him accountable. I don't think an elected mayor would be able to hide from people's disapproval in the same way.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Hope Turner
32 Vineyard St
Cambridge, MA 02138

Public Comment

I am against the strong mayor proposal

Jim Wang <jim_wang@yahoo.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 10:03 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding after school), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

Thank you,

Jin Wang

165 Pleasant St. #302
Cambridge MA 02139

Public Comment

I support keeping the current City Manager system

Steve McAdoo <johosephat3@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 10:26 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

Thank you,

Steve McAdoo, Thorndike St

Public Comment

to support keeping the current City Manager system

Zhiqiang Fang <zhiqiang.fang@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 10:32 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

Thank you,
Zhiqiang Fang
253 1/2 Broadway, unit 1, Cambridge, MA 02139

Public Comment

To support keeping the current City Manager system

Sabrina Cannistraro <sabrinacan@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 10:49 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

Thank you,

Sabrina Cannistraro, 147 Magazine St

Public Comment

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government

Kimberly Ma <kcannata6@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 10:53 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government because of its transparency and proficiency. It runs our city very well. Our current City Manager has made so much progress on issues that matter to residents. Please continue that momentum.

Thank you,

Kim [Cambridgeport Resident, Home owner]

Public Comment

City manager

Danielle Allen <dsallen5418@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 11:16 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Hello Members of the Charter Review Commission,

I am writing to share my support for maintaining our weak mayor + city manager structure. During the course of my campaign for governor, I had the chance to observe many municipal governing structures around the Commonwealth. I left the race with clarity that Cambridge has one of the best arrangements in the state. I strongly urge that we maintain our current structure.

With thanks for your consideration and all best wishes,

Danielle Allen

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S10, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Public Comment

upon learning about current trends in thinking

stephanie beukema <stephaniejbeukema@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 11:23 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

 1 attachments (9 KB)

Letter to the Charter Review Committee and Community Meeting.docx;

To the Charter Review Committee:

I wrote a short letter tonight, having recently learned that you are voting tomorrow night. I am unable to attend the meeting and couldn't find another way to communicate this. I do hope that things slow down.

Thank you for listening,

Stephanie Beukema

I am a long-time resident of Cambridge, having gone to school and lived and worked here for 40 years. I have walked, biked, driven, and continue to be a fan of public transportation. I have rented in many neighborhoods as well as owned property. The lifting of Rent Control and the ensuing gentrification and all of the money that has flowed in more recently through technology and science ventures have altered the landscape even more than the academic institutions that were so long the hallmark of Cambridge. This is a city with housing and traffic flow problems, several hospitals and a reservoir that provides us with drinking water, theaters and restaurants, fine public schools, and small and large parks throughout. Slowly, new small businesses are filling in some of the holes left by Covid. We keep changing.

I cannot see how the fundamental form of city governance that puts Cambridge in the lead of neighboring communities for affordable housing and strong financial management and prioritizes the Public Library and its Branches and its parks and public gardens is responsible for the financial disparities and equity issues that exist. I am shocked to discover that several current members of the City Council and the Charter Review Committee are focused on changing the governance itself. I am grateful for the new City Manager, who has increased the accountability of the office and improved some of the systems for information-sharing. I am grateful for the many people who work in city government and effect the work that keeps the city running. I am grateful for the many ages and professions involved in running our institutions and services, whose plurality and diversity of point of view help us all feel we belong. I am grateful for the academic institutions of MIT and Harvard whose contributions to the community are multiple and on many levels. We are bursting with experiences and enthusiasm for the new while also occupying bureaucracies and aging infrastructure, and the ensuing tension can be difficult to contain and manage.

As an old-school feminist with liberal values, I have a lot of trust and confidence in the Office of the City Manager, as well as the person currently occupying the role, Yi-An Huang. He points out in his recent letter to the Committee and the community at large how progressive in its decision-making and actions on many fronts this city is now. A “strong Mayor” system in this context sounds like a “strong man” leadership style that I, for one, do not want. We have a system with checks and balances that are still working. I hate to think of what it might mean for Cambridge to follow Florida’s lead in lurching to the right and losing its footing.

Stephanie Beukema

Public Comment

My support for keeping the current City Manager system

Yi Jian <mr.jianyi@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 11:26 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I am writing to express my support for keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents, and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

Thank you,

Yi Jian
11 Peabody Terrace, Unit 703
Cambridge, MA 02138

Public Comment
in support of strong mayor

Dan Totten <dantottencambridge@gmail.com>

Mon 12/4/2023 11:50 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>; kathyborn@gmail.com <kathyborn@gmail.com>; Corning, Anna <acorning@cambridgema.gov>

To the members of the Charter Committee:

You have a major decision in front of you, one that could potentially shape the balance of power in Cambridge for generations to come. I'm sure you're getting a bunch of correspondence as the reality of the moment has become more widely known!

I believe this form of government is fundamentally undemocratic and flawed. The council's "power" to fire the manager is too all-or-nothing to serve as a meaningful check on power. On the other hand, the strong mayor proposal offers a much more intricate set of checks and balances, and most importantly it enfranchises the people. I hope that you will vote to send a strong recommendation in favor of strong mayor to the council.

It is a daunting proposition to fire the manager given the time, expense, and disruption involved. It takes a year to conduct an executive search, with no guarantee that better options would emerge. This is a nuclear option and an empty threat even when there are no poison pills in the contract.

I have to say, I respectfully disagree with the utopian characterization of "Plan E" offered by City Manager Huang in his recent editorial. Plan E doesn't center councillors, it sidelines them. It means that on any given night there can be hours of public testimony on a motion and amendments that bring the council to clear consensus, only for there to be total silence for months or years as the motion collects dust on the city manager's desk without any response. This isn't just about one or two pet issues that failed to pan out; it happens all the time. The idea that multiple people are making executive decisions at Cambridge City Hall is a fallacy. His letter doesn't even hint at the deep flaws in the balance of power that had to have been obvious coming in as a total outsider.

It is a bit of an aside, but since so many people are leaning on the city's strong financial position to argue in favor of Plan E, it must be pointed out that our position is in many ways a house of cards that has demolished the city's working class and driven up the cost of housing for everybody beyond belief. Because of state law, we can't raise commercial property taxes any higher unless we also raise residential property taxes. To get around this, the city's policy is to build an endless amount of commercial development. By substantially increasing the taxable commercial square footage each year, the city can raise an ever-increasing sum of money from commercial taxes without violating Proposition 2.5 and without raising residential taxes. In fact, the city generates a huge excess of revenue each year, \$20 million of which is used to **further pay down** the residential taxes.

Problem is, commercial development drives up the cost of land, leading to displacement and impeding housing production of all kinds. This has severely impacted low income people, people of color, queer people, and more. The abolition of rent control was forced upon us, but we made the choice to massively overbuild biotech and underbuild housing in the decades that followed. Or rather, I should say that the city manager made that choice. Renters had no direct vote or ability to initiate a referendum under Plan E and the council has always been a rubber stamp in our budget process. And so the city's working class was tragically hollowed out.

So please, have the courage of your convictions and make a strong recommendation to the council in favor of strong mayor. Posing this question to the voters won't solve everything, but it is an important step for us to take.

I also support:

- Residential assemblies selected by sortition that pay residents for their time and have actual power
- Youth voting, non-citizen voting, even year elections
- More democratically elected bodies including the Police Review and Advisory Board
- High threshold to initiate a recall process
- Making city council a full time position so that those in student loan forgiveness programs aren't required to take a second job in order to serve while staying in school

All the best,

Dan Totten
54 Bishop Allen Drive #2

Public Comment

to support keeping the current City Manager system

Ling Zeng <lingzeng@post.harvard.edu>

Tue 12/5/2023 12:28 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

As a Cambridge resident for over 15 years, went to the Graduate School of Design at Harvard and a career based in this vibrant city, I feel I am deeply connected with Cambridge. Moreover, I am currently raising a first-grader attending a Cambridge public school. All these made us proudly call Cambridge home.

I am writing to express my unwavering support for maintaining the current City Manager form of government.

Under the leadership of our present City Manager, Mr. Huang, significant strides have been made toward enhancing the livability of our city. Notably, there has been a marked increase in bike lanes annually, alongside the expansion of parks and sidewalks. All these have made Cambridge so livable without a car. As a mother of a young boy, I am particularly grateful for the city's efforts in upgrading playgrounds and parks. These improvements have provided engaging and enjoyable spaces for children to spend time after school.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Warm regards,

Ling Zeng

1522 Cambridge Street., Cambridge, MA 02139

Keep the City Manager!

Noah Spies <noah@spies.bio>

Tue 12/5/2023 7:14 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I appreciate the work the charter review committee is undertaking to update Cambridge's institutions. I am writing to urge the committee keep a City Manager form of government.

While I've had my doubts about how representative past City Managers have been of the city's interests, I think the solution is to improve the hiring and oversight processes, rather than injecting more politics into the city's top managerial position.

The current City Manager exemplifies how such a process can bring in a professional, thoughtful and responsive leader who listens and incorporates feedback from all of Cambridge and not just the narrow slice which elected him. His regular report-outs and annual review process show a manager working for all of us, willing to receive feedback and eager to work with the Council in a way that an elected Mayor likely wouldn't - these reports and reviews should be formalized and the current system largely kept intact.

Thank you,

Noah Spies
317 Cardinal Medeiros Ave, Cambridge

Public Comment

support keeping the current City Manager system

Edward Sung <edksung@gmail.com>

Tue 12/5/2023 7:44 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

Thank you,

Edward Sung

10 Chestnut St Cambridge

Public Comment

Support Keeping the Current City Manager System

Jaclyn Chai <jaclynchai@gmail.com>

Tue 12/5/2023 9:16 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>; Bob Hsiung <tallbob@gmail.com>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

We write to show our support for keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.

Thank you,

Jaclyn Chai, 8 St. Mary Road, Cambridge, MA 02139

Bob Hsiung, 8 St. Mary Road, Cambridge, MA 02139

Public Comment

Writing in support of retaining City Manager form of government

Phoebe Kosman <phoebe.kosman@gmail.com>

Tue 12/5/2023 10:36 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

Hello, and thank you for your work on this important issue. Ahead of tonight's meeting, I'm writing to voice my support for keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.

The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has done a terrific job responding to the needs of residents and to creating a more responsive city government, and is best placed to continue that momentum.

With thanks and best wishes,

Phoebe Kosman

70 Cushing St #2, Cambridge, MA 02138

Public Comment - Charter Review Committee 12/5

Isabelle Woollacott <isabelleshw@gmail.com>

Tue 12/5/2023 10:56 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee Members,

As a Cambridge resident, recent college graduate, and healthcare worker, I'd like to share my support for the necessary shift to a Mayor-Council system, made up entirely of resident-elected officials. The City Manager position has proven to be designed in a way that buffers the City from resident concerns and can operate without accountability to residents. Boston, with nearly 7x as many residents, can function on an elected Mayor-Council system, so why can't Cambridge? Anyone with as much municipal power as the City Manager should be directly elected by the people, not hired internally.

I'd also like to share my support of a Police Review Advisory Board made up of community members. Not only is there a lack of accountability to the people from the City Manager, but also from the police, and that accountability is essential to a safe City. This was especially apparent in the months following the murder of Arif Sayed Faisal by Cambridge Police, where the outcries and constant organizing of community members were ignored by the City Manager. We must allow citizens to decide what is just in our community, and to support initiatives such as genuine funding for HEART and decreased police interaction with residents, especially young people and marginalized community members.

This directly relates to the need for a Resident Assembly as well, to increase community engagement in municipal processes and to return more power to the people. This assembly should be made up of 50-60 residents, where if a 2/3 consensus is reached by the Resident Assembly a decision should go directly to a vote by the community.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope we can see a future with increased democratic capabilities and community engagement in the City of Cambridge.

Sincerely,
Isabelle Woollacott

Public Comment

Support for current City Manager System and Yi-An

AT Natenshon <atn123@gmail.com>

Tue 12/5/2023 11:45 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>

Dear Charter Review Committee and City Council,

I wanted to write in support of the current City Manager form of government. Cambridge is in a privileged position with significant resources and a well run infrastructure. The current system allows the City Council to focus on political issues while optimizing for a City Manager focused on operational excellence.

Yi-An has exemplified this, making important progress on afterschool programs and keeping Cambridge running smoothly.

Thank you,

Andrew Natenshon (father of two students in CPS)

Andrew Natenshon
Mobile: +1-617-335-6240
ATN123@GMAIL.COM



Charter Review Committee - Final Report

City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

December 2023

DRAFT 11.30

Open Letter to Cambridge City Council

To: Cambridge City Council
From: The Cambridge Charter Review Committee
Date: December 30, 2023

[

Overview

- *Year and a half ago Council formed the charter review committee*
- *80 year old charter*

Process

- *17 months, 36 Committee Meetings*
- *Outlined key themes and priorities*
 - *Equity*
 - *Accountability*
 - *Public Engagement*
 - *Balance of Power*
 - *City Vision*
- *Values Statement*

Community Engagement

Discussion Highlights

- *New Charter Text*
- *Form of Government*
- *Maintain strengths*
- *Increase engagement*

]

Charter Review Committee Members

Kaleb Abebe

Dad to Kamen and Felicia, husband to Charlene, working in academic technology at MIT, and passionate about playing trumpet and photography.

Jessica Dejesus Acevedo

Jessica De Jesus Acevedo, M.Ed., is the owner of Little Star of Ours family childcare in Cambridge, Massachusetts, established in 2016. She is a third-year doctoral student in the Early Childhood Education and Care Ph.D. program at the University of Massachusetts - Boston. Presently serving on the board of Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (MAAEYC), committee member in Cambridge-Somerville Black Business Network (CSBBN), FuelEd Fellow, and City of Cambridge First Charter Review committee member.

Mosammat Faria Afreen

Mosammat Faria Afreen emigrated from Bangladesh when she was four to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she attended elementary and middle school. After attending high school in Boston, Afreen went to Brandeis University where she graduated with a dual BS/MS in Biology and a BS in Neuroscience in 2020. Outside of her work in science, Afreen is particularly interested in housing policy due to the exorbitant rental/housing costs making Cambridge an unsustainable place for its long-term residents to continue living in the city, her experience growing up in public housing, and volunteering with Project Right to Housing, a community organization focused on the needs of the unhoused community and creating social housing in Cambridge.

Kathleen Born (chair)

I am a retired architect with a parallel career in public service. I came to Cambridge in 1970 and I thought I had arrived in heaven. Friendly people from all over the world, history everywhere, a palpable civic commitment to equity and justice. My four children reaped the benefits of Cambridge Public Schools and athletic programs. I had the honor of being elected to four terms (1993-2001) on the City Council. Since 2012, I have served as Chair of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority.

Nikolas Bowie

My name is Niko Bowie, and I'm a professor at Harvard Law School. I'm a historian who teaches and writes about local government law, constitutional law, and democracy. I graduated from CRLS in 2005 and served on the Planning Board from 2018-21.

Kevin Chen

Kevin Chen grew up in Central Massachusetts and has lived in Cambridge since 2017. Kevin now works as an energy and environmental attorney at Foley Hoag LLP. He enjoys listening to and playing music, exploring cities by foot, and learning by eating.

Max Clermont

My name is Max Clermont and I live in the Cambridgeport neighborhood. I am a Senior Project Lead with Partners In Health - United States. I am an engagement strategist who uses community organizing skills and policy expertise to provide management to health programs, political campaigns and agencies in the public and private sectors. I have deep expertise in the social determinants of health, health inequities, public/private partnerships and the use of measurement and evidence based practices to drive KPIs in numerous sectors.

Jennifer Gilbert

Jennifer Gilbert is the Founder and Executive Director of Housing Navigator Massachusetts, Inc. Creating housing opportunities and easing housing access are the connecting threads in Jennifer's career--from her first job at a Philadelphia homeless shelter to 20 years developing affordable housing and community spaces. She lives in North Cambridge with her husband and senior dog Emmylou.

Kai Long

Originally from Baltimore, MD by way of Santa Barbara CA it's hard to believe that I have lived in Cambridge for 25 years. I have raised my daughter and have a Speech-language pathology private practice in Cambridge. Favorite things about Cambridge: Being able to live car free with biking, walking and public transportation option. I'm excited to be on the Cambridge Charter Review Committee to see how we can make the Charter more inclusive and community centered.

Patrick Magee

I am a Massachusetts native who commuted to Northeastern University to study Political Science and I have called Cambridge home since 2006. I am a co-owner of Atwood's Tavern and am a founding member and President of the East Cambridge Business Association.

Mina Makarious

I live outside of Porter Square with my wife and two kids. I am a local government and environmental lawyer by day. My kids and I love spending time in Cambridge's many parks and playgrounds.

Lisa Peterson

I have lived in Cambridge since the 1980's, currently in north Cambridge. I have two adult sons who were born and raised in Cambridge. I have recently retired, having worked for over 30 years for the City of Cambridge, most recently as Deputy City Manager and prior to that as Public Works Commissioner. Currently I am volunteering for a few Cambridge non profits: Food for Free, CEOC Food Pantry, and The Loop Lab.

Ellen Shachter

My name is Ellen Shachter. I have lived in Cambridge since 1985 and my husband is a public school teacher in Somerville and my two children attended Cambridge public schools. I am the founding Director of the Somerville Office of Housing Stability which was opened in 2018. Prior to taking this position I was an attorney at Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services for twenty-eight years representing low income families in housing and public benefits matters.

Susan Shell

I am a thirty year plus resident of Cambridge who has lived many other places in the US and Canada as well. I am currently a professor of political science at Boston College. My husband and I have two grown children and one granddaughter.

Jim Stockard

Jim Stockard has lived near Porter Square in a cooperative, known as Common Place, which he and his wife Susan helped to found in 1973. He served for a number of years on the Board of the Cambridge Housing Authority and continues to serve as a Trustee of the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust Fund. He coached Little League Baseball in North Cambridge for 17 years. Trained as an urban planner, Jim is retired from directing the Loeb Fellowship at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he continues to teach courses about housing.

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Proposed Modern Charter Overview

ARTICLE 1: INCORPORATION; SHORT TITLE; DEFINITIONS

Defines the powers, definitions and framework for the city.

ARTICLE 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Defines roles and responsibilities of the city council including powers, requirements, appointments.

ARTICLE 3: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Defines the powers and duties role of the executive branch.

ARTICLE 4: SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Defines the powers and duties of the school committee.

ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Defines the organizational structure of city departments and administration.

ARTICLE 6: FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

Defines the budget process and other financial elements for the city.

ARTICLE 7: ELECTIONS

Defines method of elections for the city including voting and tabulation methods.

ARTICLE 8: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION & COMMUNICATION

Defines public engagement __ and methods of resident petition, initiative and recall

ARTICLE 9: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Defines standard elements including computation of time, period reviews, and charter regulation

ARTICLE 10: TRANSITION PROVISIONS

Defines transition procedures, continuation of laws and personnel as well as new study committees.

Key Recommendations for New Charter

The following proposed changes to the Cambridge City Charter result from the committee's early difficult but fundamental decision that the existing Cambridge charter was outdated and necessitated holistic change - leading the committee to recommend drafting a new charter text. Cambridge adopted the existing Plan E form in 1940; the only path to charter change was adopting a plan form of government created by the Massachusetts state legislature in the early 1900s. The committee recognizes the urgency and significance of addressing the outdated aspects of the existing Cambridge charter, leading to the conclusion that a holistic transformation is necessary. This acknowledgment is a foundation for the committee's commitment to drafting a new charter text, reflecting a forward-looking approach to governance.

The committee's recommendations and discussions result from extensive deliberation, comparative research, community engagement, insights from current and previous Cambridge elected officials, background from city employees, best practices across Massachusetts and innovative structures in the U.S. and internationally, as well as experiences of individual committee members. In addition, the committee discussed and outlined a set of priorities and community values to frame discussions and develop innovative concepts to promote:

Equity and Enfranchisement: Prioritizing fairness and inclusion to ensure that governance benefits are distributed equitably among all community members.

Participation in and Accessibility of Government: Focusing on enhancing citizen engagement and making government processes more accessible to the diverse population of Cambridge.

Government Effectiveness: Striving for efficiency and efficacy in the functioning of government institutions to better serve the community's needs.

Responsiveness and Accountability: Cultivating a culture of responsiveness and accountability, ensuring that the government remains attentive and answerable to the needs and concerns of the residents.

The following recommendations have garnered at least two-thirds agreement, demonstrating a solid consensus among committee members and meeting the requirements outlined in the ordinance. These changes are recommended separately from the form of government. These recommendations are not arbitrary but culminate in an extensive and rigorous process. Ultimately, the committee's work is a testament to a well-informed, collaborative, and forward-thinking effort to reshape the governance framework in Cambridge.

Expand Enfranchisement and Equity.

The committee has diligently examined city elections and representation and sought paths to foster more inclusive and equitable city elections. The committee's recommendations, rooted in representation and enfranchisement, aim to empower marginalized voices, increase election participation, and preserve the unique strengths of Cambridge's election method and composition of elected bodies. These recommendations reflect the commitment to building a city that acknowledges all its residents and promotes equity for the betterment of all its inhabitants.

- 1. Maintain At-Large City Council elected by proportional representation.** The committee discussed the composition and the current method of election for the city council. The committee heard numerous comments from residents regarding their preference for and against the at-large model. The committee deliberated the strengths of Cambridge's unique, at-large, proportionally representative model and noted that it has served Cambridge residents well. The most recent election resulted in a representative and diverse body, the most so in Cambridge history. The committee discussed the benefits of district representation, particularly residents' desire for clear paths for accountability, but ultimately decided that other government structures could solve that need.

Votes

A motion for the Committee to recommend Cambridge maintain a Proportional Representation system in Cambridge elections.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

A motion for the Committee to recommend Cambridge maintain an at-large city council of nine members.

Need roll call vote

- 2. Enfranchise non-citizens to vote in municipal elections.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion to enshrine non-citizen eligibility to vote in municipal elections.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

A motion to allow non-citizens to run for municipal elections.

Yes – 11, No – 2, Absent – 2

- 3. Enfranchise 16 and 17 year olds to vote in municipal elections.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion to enshrine 16- and 17-year-olds eligibility to vote in municipal elections.

Yes – 12, No – 1, Absent – 2

A motion to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to run for municipal elections.

Yes – 9, No – 4, Absent – 2

- 4. Move municipal elections to even years.** The committee expressed concern over the low voter turnout in local elections, although higher than most other Massachusetts municipalities, typically only 30% of Cambridge's registered voters turnout in municipal elections. The committee aims to leverage the increased civic engagement and awareness that naturally occurs during these higher-profile election years by aligning local elections with even-year cycles, such as those for state and federal offices. Turnout often doubles for even-year elections, jumping to 75% in 2020. Moreover, the committee recognizes the importance of representation in local governance. Municipalities thrive when a diverse and representative population actively participates in the electoral process. By aligning local elections with even years, the committee aims to create a more inclusive and diverse voter base, ensuring that the city's leadership reflects its broader community.

Votes

A motion to move municipal elections to even numbered years.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

- 5. Create more flexibility and modernize election voting and tabulation methods in charter language.** The committee acknowledged the necessity to modernize and refine the election language in the city charter, recognizing that Cambridge's current reliance on an antiquated state statute with specific and outdated limitations hinders the city's electoral processes. The existing statute permits proportional representation but imposes constraints that no longer align with the dynamic and evolving needs of the community. In light of this, the committee recommends a comprehensive overhaul to address the intricacies of local elections. A Cambridge-specific approach will allow for a more flexible and adaptable framework, granting designated officials the leeway needed to administer elections.

Votes

A motion to recommend election procedure language be changed to authorize the City to use any tabulation methods.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

A motion that the Committee recommend that the election procedure language be changed to authorize the City to use any voting method of Proportional Representation.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

A motion that the Committee recommend the remaining election procedures and relevant laws be compiled, updated, and drafted by the City, Election Commission, and Law Department consistent with all Charter Review Committee recommendations.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

Participation in and Accessibility of Government for all Residents.

The committee prioritized enhancing participation and accessibility of the city government for all residents. Hearing from the Cambridge community, the residents were eager for more accessible methods of accessing and engaging with their elected officials and city employees and creating city priorities. Seeking opportunities to cultivate a more inclusive and equitable civic engagement experience, the committee prioritized adding opportunities for thoughtful public feedback in multiple areas of the charter, expanding requirements around tracking and publishing council actions, and developing a framework for a resident assembly (representative lottery selected panel) to tackle critical city topics. The committee designed its recommendations to empower marginalized voices, amplify civic involvement, and improve the public's ability to engage with their government.

1. **Draft New City Charter text.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend drafting new Charter text.

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5

2. **Require a Resident Assembly in the Charter.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend to establish a Resident Assembly in the Charter

Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent – 3

3. **Expand posting and notice requirements.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend adding “website” to definition of “publish”

Need roll call vote

4. **Establish Public Engagement + Communication Article of city charter.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend the addition of the Public Engagement + Communications Article in the city charter

Need roll call vote

5. **Add more opportunities for public engagement.** [insert deliberation description] Budget, goal setting

6. **Public Tracking Mechanisms of Council Policy Orders.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

Recommend Public Tracking Mechanism of Council Policy Orders and other measures

Yes - 14, No - 0, Absent - 1

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Effectiveness of Government.

The committee's recommendations aim to build on Cambridge's current strengths as a regional leader while introducing measures for a more effective government. To address community concerns, the recommendations focus on establishing a clear process for strategic vision planning that anticipates future challenges. The committee proposes a balanced distribution of power between the executive and legislative branches, fostering collaboration and accountability within the government.

In response to residents' desire for a city council close to the voters, the committee recommends maintaining 2-year terms for city council, as well as previously mentioned recommendations to increase transparency, accessibility, and community engagement. These measures aim to create a more approachable and accountable city council that actively involves residents in decision-making processes. Overall, the committee's approach ensures Cambridge remains a successful and proactive community while adapting to evolving needs through a more efficient and responsive government.

1. **Maintain current strengths of the city.** [insert deliberation description]
2. **Measurable goal setting.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion recommending the proposed language for City Council Goal Setting.

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent - 5

3. **Maintains City Council confirmation for Multi-Member Body appointments.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend the addition of the Public Engagement + Communications Article in the city charter

Need roll call vote

4. **Maintain 2-year terms for city councillors.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend maintaining 2-year terms for city council.

Need roll call vote

Responsiveness and Accountability.

1. **Defined budget process.** [insert deliberation description]
2. **City Council Budget Priorities.** [insert deliberation description]
3. **Enshrine Citizen Initiative Provision.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend including a citizen initiative process

Need roll call vote

4. **Enshrine Group Petition Provision.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend including a group petition process

Need roll call vote

5. **Campaign Finance Study Committee.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion to recommend enshrining that the City Council or an appropriate body of the City have the ability to allow to make Campaign Finance reforms.

Yes – 10, No – 3, Absent – 2

A motion for the Committee to establish a Campaign Finance Study Committee in the Transition Provisions.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

Strong Mayor / CAFO / Council Statement with Related Votes

[insert statement]

Related Votes

1. **Four Year Term for Mayor.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion to recommend a four-year term for Mayor.

2. **Three total terms for Mayor.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion to recommend a candidate for Mayor is eligible for only three total terms.

3. **Add a Recall Provision for Mayor.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion to recommend adding a recall provision for the mayor.

4. **Require a Chief Administrative and Finance Officer in the Charter.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion to recommend requiring a Chief Administrative and Finance Officer position for the city.

A motion to recommend city council veto power of a Chief Administrative and Finance Officer candidate, requiring $\frac{2}{3}$ vote.

Council / Manager Statement with Related Votes

[insert statement]

Related Votes

5. **City Council Goal Setting.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion recommending the proposed language for City Council Goal Setting.

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent - 5

6. **City Manager Annual Review.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion recommending the proposed language for the City Manager Annual Review

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent - 5

7. **Recommend a change to the title of Mayor.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion to recommend changing the title of Mayor to Chair of the City Council, Head of the City Council, or President of the City Council.

Need roll call vote

Straw poll - Changing Title - 11, No Opinion - 1, Absent - 3

8. **City Council Budget Priorities.** [insert deliberation description]

Votes

A motion recommending the proposed language for City Council Budget Priorities

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent - 5

Community Engagement Summary

Engaging the public was critical to the Cambridge Charter Review Committee's process. The Committee sought to engage with the people of Cambridge to understand their expectations of city government relating to equity, participation, accountability, transparency, justice, and democracy. The Committee heard from - residents, business owners, community organizations, youth, neighborhood associations, municipal stakeholders, service providers, and educational institutions. The Committee used diverse outreach strategies to engage people where they are, in the spaces they are comfortable in, and through the most accessible methods.

The Committee sought to inform the public about the inaugural charter review process, the Committee's goals, and how the charter is relevant to each person's everyday life. Not only was education central to the outreach efforts of the Committee, but the Committee prioritized gathering feedback, opinions, and new ideas, ensuring the incorporation of community input into all committee discussions and deliberations. The Committee leveraged their existing networks and community leaders to involve all residents and community groups.

Inform + General Education

➤ Fact sheets / Flyers.

In Fall 2022, informational flyers were distributed across the city in high-traffic areas to raise awareness of the charter review committee's formation and point residents to additional information. In addition to physical flyers, the Committee leveraged their networks and connections across Cambridge to distribute materials electronically - encouraging community and organization leaders to circulate.

➤ Information Sessions and Initial Public Meetings.

The Committee held two initial public meetings in early 2023, one in person at the Cambridge Main Library on January 24th and one the following weekend on Zoom, February 4th. These meetings aimed to inform residents about the review process of what a city charter controls and hear initial feedback and suggestions for the Committee.

➤ City Wide Mailer.

In June 2023, the Committee sent an informational postcard to all 69,100 Cambridge residential addresses to provide information on the Charter Review Committee, high-level details on what a charter is, and how residents can get involved.

➤ Newsletter.

A bi-weekly newsletter was sent to over 200 residents throughout the Committee's work to update them on committee topics, share meeting dates, and encourage public comment at committee meetings.

➤ Committee Members' Networks.

Throughout the 17 month review process, committee members distributed materials and engaged with their personal and professional Cambridge connections to inform and spread awareness of the charter review, as well as set up times for the committee present on charter topics and hear from the public in organizational meetings in an effort to engage the public in familiar spaces.

Involve and Consult

➤ Public Comment.

At each bi-weekly charter review meeting, the Committee designated time for verbal public comment. The Committee heard 65 verbal public comments from a wide range of Cambridge residents during the review process. In addition, the Committee received 127 written comments to cambridgecharterreview@cambridgema.gov, which were distributed to the entire Committee before each meeting as part of the meeting materials.

➤ Public Community Meetings.

The Committee held two additional public gatherings on May 16th at The Foundry and July 25th at Tasty Burger Central. These informal community gatherings allowed community members to dialogue with each other and committee members on charter-related topics, share their top priorities for Cambridge City Government and answer community questions. Over 40 community members attended, as well as candidates for public office.

➤ Community Groups and Cambridge Events.

The Committee attended 31 community organization meetings, such as A Better Cambridge, CEOC, and multiple Neighborhood Associations, to engage the community in their familiar groups, present on the committee process, inform on charter topics, document public feedback and answer community questions. The committee also tabled at Cambridge community events, like Mayfair, to increase general awareness and engage community members where they work and play.

➤ Interviews with Previous Cambridge Elected Officials and City Employees.

The Committee conducted 11 interviews with former city councilors, city managers, an assistant city solicitor, and a school superintendent during March and April 2023. These discussions, led by various committee members, sought insights from the individuals working within the government and city charter. They shared the strengths and challenges of their roles and ideas for enhancing the city's foundational structures.

➤ coUrbanize.

In Spring 2023, the Committee launched an online community engagement platform to provide an additional avenue for Cambridge residents to learn about the charter review, find resources, respond to committee questions and dialogue with other members of the Cambridge community. Active through the end of Summer 2023, the site received 1392 unique visitors, 108 comments and 208 poll responses.

DRAFT 11.30

WORKING DRAFT MAYORAL FORM CHARTER FOR THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Last Revised: 12.03.2023

*The purpose of this working draft mayoral form charter is to put in one place the tentative directions that the Cambridge Charter Review Committee is considering and the items on which the Committee has voted. In order to create a complete picture of what a full charter might look like with these decisions, the Collins Center has incorporated standard/best practices filler text in places where the Committee has not voted. These parts of text should **not** be considered Committee recommendations. Additionally, none of the text in here should be considered a final recommendation in any way. This is a working draft only.*

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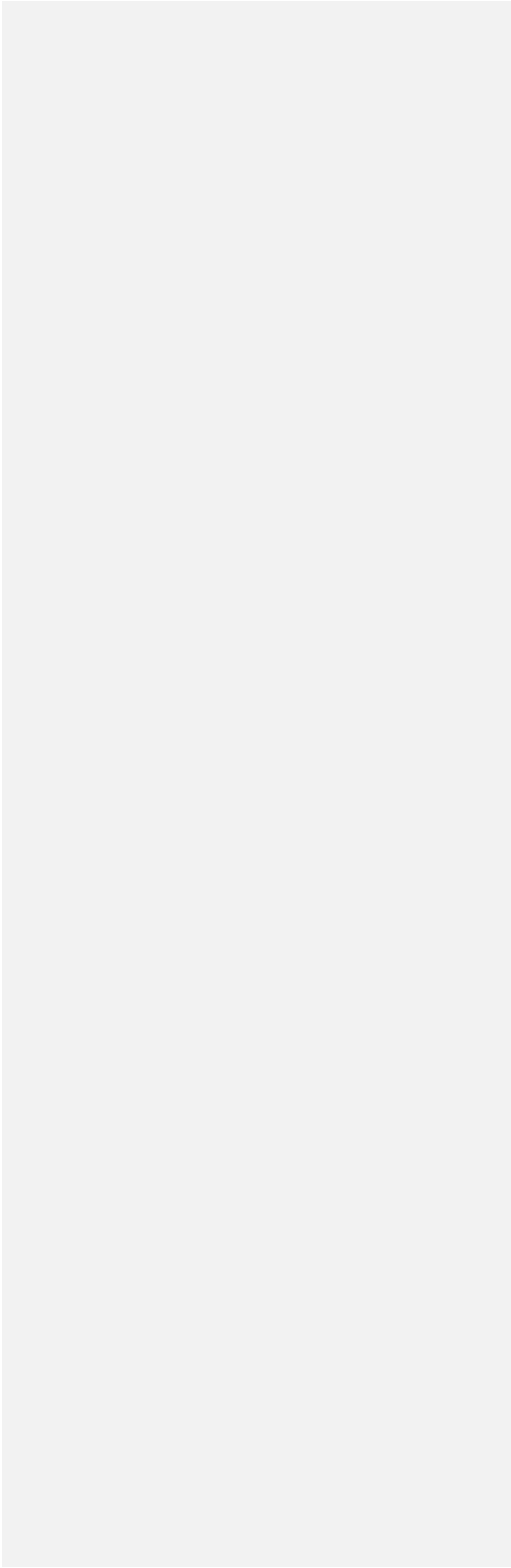
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PREAMBLE

[Still under development]

DRAFT



ARTICLE 1: INCORPORATION; SHORT TITLE; ETC.

SECTION 1-1: INCORPORATION

The inhabitants of Cambridge, within the territorial limits established by law, shall continue to be a municipal corporation, a body corporate and politic, under the name "City of Cambridge".

SECTION 1-2: SHORT TITLE

This document shall be known and may be cited as the "Cambridge Charter."

SECTION 1-3: DIVISION OF POWERS

The administration of the fiscal, prudential, and municipal affairs of Cambridge, with the government thereof, shall be vested in an executive branch headed by a mayor and a legislative branch consisting of a council. The legislative branch shall never exercise any executive power, and the executive branch shall never exercise any legislative power.

Commented [MW1]: New text that reflects mayoral instead manager form that was previously voted on by the committee.

SECTION 1-4: POWERS OF THE CITY

Subject only to express limitations on the exercise of any power or function by a municipal government in the Massachusetts constitution or General Laws, it is the intention and the purpose of the voters of Cambridge, through the adoption of this charter, to secure for themselves and their government all of the powers it is possible to secure as fully and as completely as though each power were specifically and individually enumerated in this charter.

SECTION 1-5: CONSTRUCTION

The powers of Cambridge under this charter are to be construed liberally in favor of the city, and the specific mention of any particular power is not intended to limit the general powers of the city as stated in the Cambridge Charter. To the extent that any provision of this charter shall conflict with any special act or general law adopted by the city, the provision of this charter shall prevail.

SECTION 1-6: INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Subject only to express limitations in the constitution or general laws of the Commonwealth, Cambridge may exercise any of its powers or perform any of its functions, and may participate in their financing, jointly or in cooperation, by contract or otherwise, with the Commonwealth or any agency or political subdivision of the Commonwealth, or with the United States government or any of its agencies. The City Council and Mayor shall in the performance of their duties consider intergovernmental and regional relations.

Commented [MW2]: New text adds the mayor

SECTION 1-7: DEFINITIONS

[Not started]

ARTICLE 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

SECTION 2-1: COMPOSITION; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY, POWERS

(a) Composition - There shall be a city council of nine members nominated and elected by and from the voters at-large by proportional representation. The city council shall exercise the legislative powers of the city.

(b) Term of Office - City councillors shall be elected for terms of two years each beginning on the first Monday of January in the year following their election, and until successors have been qualified.

(c) Eligibility - Any registered municipal voter shall be eligible to hold the office of councillor. If a councillor moves from the city during the councillor's term, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section [placeholder]. The city council shall determine whether a councillor has moved from the city.

(d) Legislative Powers - The city council shall have and shall exercise all the legislative powers of the city, except as such powers are reserved by this charter to the school committee or to the qualified voters of the city.

SECTION 2-2: CITY COUNCIL OFFICERS

a) Election and Term - As soon as practical after the councillors-elect have been qualified following each regular city election, as provided in section [placeholder], the members of the city council shall elect from among its members a president and vice president, who shall serve for a 2-year term. The method of election of the president and vice-president shall be determined by City Council rules. The member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president until members elect a president.

(c) Powers and Duties of Council President –

(i) General Administration - The council president shall preside at all meetings of the council, shall regulate its proceedings, and shall decide all questions of order. The council president shall perform any other duties consistent with the office that may be provided by charter, by ordinance, by council rules, or by other vote of the council.

(ii) No Veto Power – The city council president shall have no power to veto but shall have the same powers as any other member of either such body to vote on measures before it.

(iv) Appointments of Committees - The council president shall appoint all members of all committees established by the rules of the council, whether special or standing.

(v) Chair/member of the school committee - The council president/chair shall also be chair of/serve as a member of the school committee and shall update the council regularly on school committee matters.

(d) Temporary Absence - During a temporary absence of the council president, the duties of president shall be performed by the vice-president. If there shall be neither a president nor a vice-president, the member of the council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president until there is no longer an absence.

(e) Vacancy - If there is a permanent vacancy in the office of president or vice-president, the city council shall elect by majority vote one of its members to fill such office for the unexpired term. Until such vacancy is filled, the member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president until there is no longer an absence.

SECTION 2-3: PROHIBITIONS

(a) Holding Other City Position – Except as otherwise provided by the charter and as permitted by the Massachusetts General Laws, no member of the city council shall hold any other compensated city

Commented [MW3]: Includes decision point the committee has not addressed about mayor's role on school committee

position. No former member of the city council shall hold any compensated appointed city position until 1 year following the date on which the former member's service on the city council has terminated unless such appointment is affirmed by 6 members of the city council. This section shall not prevent a city employee who vacated a position to serve as a member of the city council from returning to the same position upon the expiration of the term for which that person was elected.

SECTION 2-4: COMPENSATION

(a) Salary - The president and the members of the city council shall receive for their services such salary as the city council shall by ordinance determine, and they shall receive no other compensation from the city. No increase or reduction in the salaries of city councillors shall take effect during the year in which such increase or reduction is voted, and no change in such salaries shall be made between the election of a new council and the qualification of the new council.

(b) Expenses - Subject to appropriation, the council members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

SECTION 2-5: EXERCISE OF POWERS; QUORUM; RULES

(a) Exercise of Powers - Except as otherwise provided by General Laws or by this charter, the legislative powers of the city council may be exercised in a manner determined by the city council.

(b) Quorum – A majority of all the members elected to the city council shall constitute a quorum. Except as otherwise provided by General Laws or by this charter, the affirmative vote, taken by a roll call vote, of a majority of members of the city council shall be required to adopt any ordinance, order, resolution, or vote, except that the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present shall be sufficient to adjourn any meeting of the city council.

(c) Rules of Procedure - The city council shall adopt rules regulating the procedures of the city council, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following rules:

(i) The city council shall fix suitable times for its regular meetings. Except in the cases of executive sessions authorized by Massachusetts General Laws, all meetings of the city council shall be open to the press and to the public, and the rules of the city council shall provide that residents and employees of the city shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any such meeting in regard to any matter considered;

(ii) special meetings of the city council shall be held at the call of the president, or the vice-president of the city council, or any three members, for any purpose; provided, however, that notice of the meeting shall state the time of holding such meeting and be signed by the person or persons calling the same. Except in an emergency as declared by the mayor, the notice shall be delivered at least 2 business days in advance of the time set and shall specify the date, time and location of the meeting and the purpose for which the meeting is to be held. A copy of each notice shall be immediately posted.

(iii) all sessions of the city council and of every committee or subcommittee of the council shall be open to the public, unless otherwise specified by law; and

(iv) a full, accurate, up-to-date account of the proceedings of the city council shall be maintained by the city clerk. [PLACEHOLDER FOR TRACKING LANGUAGE]

SECTION 2-6: CITY COUNCIL CONFIRMATION OF CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS

(a) Department Heads –

(i) Prior to posting and beginning the search for a department head position, the mayor shall meet with the city council to discuss priorities for the department and desirable qualifications and qualities of candidates for the position.

(ii) The mayor shall refer to the city council and simultaneously file with the city clerk the name of each person the mayor desires to appoint as a department head. The city council shall have 30 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed with the city clerk to vote to approve the appointment with approval not to be unreasonably withheld. An approved appointment shall be effective immediately. The city council shall accompany a rejection of the appointment with a written statement describing the reason, which shall be delivered to and placed on file with the city clerk within 30 days of filing. If the city council does not take up the appointment within 30 days, the appointment shall be deemed approved.

(b) Multiple-Member Bodies - The mayor shall refer to the city council and simultaneously file with the clerk the name of each person the mayor desires to appoint or reappoint as a member of a multiple-member body. Appointment of a member of a multiple-member body made by the mayor will be effective upon a majority vote of the city council, which vote shall occur within 45 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed with the city clerk. The appointment may be approved or rejected by a majority of the full city council before 45 days. An appointment or reappointment shall take effect if the city council fails to act within those 45 days.

SECTION 2-7: CITY COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

(a) City Auditor - The city council, by the affirmative vote of at least six members, shall appoint a city auditor for an indefinite term of office. The city auditor shall be appointed solely based on the candidate's professional qualifications and experience. The city auditor shall keep and have charge of the accounts of the city and shall from time to time audit the books and accounts of all city agencies. The city auditor shall have such other powers and duties as provided for auditors and accountants by general laws and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by the charter, by ordinance, or by any other vote of the city council.

(b) City Clerk - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a city clerk. The city clerk shall be appointed solely based on qualifications and experience. The city clerk shall have such powers and duties as provided for clerks by general laws and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by the charter, by ordinance, or by any other vote of the city council.

(c) Clerk of the Council - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a clerk of the council, who may be the city clerk. The clerk of the council shall give notice of its meetings to its members and to the public, keep the journal of its proceedings, and perform such other duties as may be provided by ordinance or by other vote of the city council.

(d) Additional Staff - The council may establish additional council support positions and consultants by ordinance as the council deems necessary and may, by the affirmative vote of at least six members, appoint staff to serve in those positions. All officials of the city shall cooperate with employees and consultants of the city council in the performance of their oversight functions.

(d) Salaries - The officers appointed under Section 2-7 shall receive such salaries as set by ordinance.

(e) Supervision - The council president shall be responsible for day-to-day supervision of the city auditor, city clerk, and clerk of the council, including but not limited to the discipline of same up to and including an unpaid suspension of not more than five days; provided, however, that the council president may, at the council president's sole discretion, bring to the city council any personnel matter involving the city auditor or clerk of the council for appropriate action, and provided further that the affirmative vote of at least six members of the city council shall be required to remove the city auditor or clerk of the council.

(f) Removal: Any person appointed or elected by the council may be removed by the council.

SECTION 2-8: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

(a) In General - The city council may make investigations into the affairs of the city and into the conduct and performance of any city agency.

(b) Information Requests

(i) Mayor - The city council may, at any time, request from the mayor, specific information on any municipal matter within its jurisdiction and may request the mayor to be present to answer written questions relating thereto at a meeting to be held not earlier than 7-days from the date of receipt by the mayor of said questions. The mayor shall personally, or through the head of a department or a member of a multiple-member body, attend such meeting and publicly answer all such questions. The person so attending shall not be obliged to answer questions relating to any other matter. The mayor may attend and address the city council in person or through the head of a department or a member of a multiple-member body, upon any subject and at any time.

(ii) Department Heads, Chair of Multiple-Member Bodies- The city council may require the chair of a city multiple-member body or a city department head to appear before the city council to give any information that the city council may require in relation to the municipal services, functions and powers or duties which are within the scope of responsibility of that person and not within the jurisdiction of the school committee.

(d) Notice: The council shall give not less than fourteen (14) days advance notice to any person it may require to appear before it under this section. The notice shall include specific questions on which the council seeks information, and no person called to appear before the council under this section shall be required to respond to any question not relevant or related to those presented in advance and in writing. Notice shall be by [REDACTED]. The mayor shall receive a copy of all such notices.

SECTION 2-9: ORDINANCES AND OTHER MEASURES

(a) Emergency Ordinances - No ordinance shall be passed finally on the date it is introduced, except in cases of special emergency involving the health or safety of the people or their property. No ordinance shall be regarded as an emergency ordinance unless the emergency is defined and declared in a preamble to such ordinance, separately voted upon, and receiving the affirmative vote of the council president and 5 members of the city council. No ordinance making a grant, renewal, or extension, whatever its kind or nature, of any franchise or special privilege of any kind or nature, shall be passed as an emergency measure, and except as provided in General Laws Chapter 166, Sections 70 and 71, no such grant, renewal, or extension shall be made otherwise than by ordinance. An emergency measure shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify.

(b) General Measures - Every adopted measure shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify. An ordinance shall not be amended or repealed except by another ordinance adopted in accordance with this charter.

(c) Charter Objection - On the first occasion that the question on adoption of a measure is put to the city council, a single member present may object to the taking of the vote, and postpone the vote until the next regular or special meeting of the city council. If two or more present members object, the vote shall be postponed until the next regular meeting. This procedure shall not be used more than once for any specific matter regardless of whether it has been amended. A charter objection shall have privilege over all motions but shall be raised prior to or at the call for a vote by the presiding officer and all debate shall cease. The charter objection process shall not apply to emergency measures as defined in this section.

(d) Publication - Every proposed ordinance or loan order, except emergency ordinances and revenue loan orders, shall be published once in full in at least one local newspaper, on the city website, and in any additional manner as may be provided by ordinance, at least ten days before its final passage. After final passage, the ordinance as amended and completed, shall again be published once in the aforesaid

manner; provided that if any ordinance or proposed ordinance, or codification thereof, shall exceed in length eight pages of ordinary book print, then there shall be no requirement to advertise as aforesaid if the same is published by the city council in a municipal bulletin or printed pamphlet, but otherwise in conformity with said provisions, except for zoning ordinances or amendments thereto, a summary of which shall be published at least two times in a local newspaper. The publication of such zoning summaries shall include a statement indicating where copies of the ordinance may be examined and obtained and a statement that claims of invalidity by reason of any defect in the procedure of adoption may only be made within ninety days after the posting or the second publication. Emergency ordinances shall take effect on the date of their passage and shall be published at the earliest practicable moment.

SECTION 2-10 GOAL SETTING

- (a) At the beginning of each council term, within the first six months, the council shall develop council goals for the upcoming term, in consideration of previous council goals.
- (b) The council shall seek input from the mayor, department heads, multi-member bodies and the public in the development of council goals.
- (c) The council may develop both short- and long-term goals. To the extent practicable, goals shall be measurable, include timelines for implementation, and relevant budget requirements.
- (d) The council shall establish a broad public engagement process to incorporate public input into the development of council goals. This shall include at least two public hearings at which public comment is accepted and such additional outreach efforts as the council deems appropriate. The goal-setting and public engagement process under this section shall be publicized via multiple media avenues available to the city, including on its website, social media pages, and through direct electronic communications. The council shall also review the results of any city-wide surveys or other public engagement tools undertaken in the prior term.
- (e) The council shall publish its goals for the term in multiple media avenues available to the city, including on its website, social media pages, council newsletters and through direct electronic communications.
- (f) The council shall establish a public method of tracking progress in meeting the established goals

Commented [MW4]: Mayor added to the process that was voted on by the committee previously under the manager form

SECTION 2-11: FILLING OF VACANCIES

Except as provided in this section, a vacancy in any elective body shall be filled in the manner provided in section thirteen of chapter fifty-four A. If, under said section, no regularly nominated candidate of the city council or school committee remains, the vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the remaining members, except that if the remaining members fail to fill such vacancy within thirty days after they shall have been notified by the city clerk that such vacancy exists, such vacancy shall be filled by the appointment of any qualified voter of the city by the mayor, or, if there is no mayor, by the vice-chairman, or if there is no mayor or vice-chairman, by the member of the council or of the school committee, as the case may be, senior in length of service, or, if more than one have so served, then the member senior both in age and length of service.

ARTICLE 3: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

SECTION 3-1: MAYOR: ROLE; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY

- (a) Role – The chief executive officer of the city shall be a mayor, elected by the registered voters at-large by proportional representation.
- (b) Term of Office – The term of office for mayor shall be four years, beginning on the first business day in January following the municipal election.
- (c) Term Limit - No person shall hold the office of Mayor for more than three terms in total.
- (b) Eligibility – Any registered voter shall be eligible to hold the office of mayor.

SECTION 3-2: PROHIBITIONS

The mayor shall not hold another compensated city position or other elected public office. A former mayor shall not hold a compensated appointed city office or city employment for 1 year after termination of their service as mayor. Any former mayor shall not receive compensation for contracted work authorized during their tenure as the mayor, however, they may be compensated for limited hours advising the incoming mayor. This subsection shall not prevent a city officer or other city employee who has vacated a position to serve as the mayor from returning to the same office or other position of city employment held when the position was vacated. This prohibition shall not apply to persons covered by a leave of absence under section 37 of chapter 31 of the General Laws.

SECTION 3-3: COMPENSATION

The mayor shall receive compensation for the mayor's services as set by the city council by ordinance. An ordinance increasing or reducing the compensation of the mayor shall not be enacted unless:

- (i) it is adopted by a 2/3 vote of the full city council;
- (ii) it has been adopted on or before the 42nd month of the mayor's term; and
- (iii) it provides that any compensation increase or reduction is to take effect upon the organization of the city government following the next regular city election.

SECTION 3-4: EXECUTIVE POWERS

- (a) Executive Powers - The executive powers of the city shall be vested solely in the mayor and may be exercised by the mayor either personally or through the city agencies under the general supervision and control of the office of the mayor. The mayor shall cause this charter, laws, ordinances, and other orders of the city government to be enforced and shall cause a record of all official acts of the executive branch of the city government to be kept. The mayor shall supervise, direct, and be responsible for the efficient administration of all city activities and functions placed under the control of the mayor by law or by this charter.
- (b) Supervision of City Agencies - The mayor shall exercise general supervision and direction over all city agencies, unless otherwise provided by law or by this charter. Each city agency shall furnish to the mayor, upon request, any information or materials the mayor may request and as the needs of the office of mayor and the interest of the city may require. The mayor shall be responsible for the efficient and effective coordination of the activities of all city agencies and may call together for consultation, conference, and discussion, at reasonable times, all persons serving the city.
- (c) Multiple-Member Bodies - The mayor shall be, by virtue of the office, an *ex officio* member of every appointed multiple-member body of the city. The mayor may, as an *ex officio* member, attend any meeting of an appointed multiple-member body of the city, including executive sessions, to participate in the discussions of that body, but shall not have the right to vote.

SECTION 3-5: APPOINTMENTS BY THE MAYOR

(a) Chief Administrative and Financial Officer (CAFO): The mayor shall appoint a chief administrative and financial officer to coordinate and direct the operations and functions of the city government. The mayor shall notify the city council in writing of the appointment of the CAFO. The mayor's appointment shall be considered final unless, with 30 days of the notice of appointment, the city council rejects the appointee by a two-thirds vote. The appointee shall be appointed on the basis of strong administrative and executive qualifications and a combination of education, training and/or municipal experience to perform the duties of the office. The CAFO shall devote full time to the duties of this position and shall not engage in any other business or occupation during their term.

(b) Department Heads - The mayor shall appoint, subject to confirmation by the city council pursuant to Section 2.6, all department heads for whom no other method of appointment or selection is provided by this charter. Department heads serve at the discretion of the mayor subject to the limitations and requirements imposed by federal and state laws, rules, and/or regulations.

(c) City Solicitor: The mayor shall appoint the city solicitor to be the chief legal adviser of, and attorney for, the city and all divisions and offices thereof in matters relating to their official powers and duties. It shall be the city solicitor's duty, either personally or by such assistants as may be designated, to perform all services incident to the legal department, to give advice in writing when so requested to the mayor, to prosecute or defend, as the case may be, all suits or cases to which the municipality may be a party, and to provide other legal support as requested by the mayor or required by ordinance. The city solicitor shall be appointed on the basis of having strong legal qualifications and shall be especially fitted by education, training, and experience to perform the duties of the office.

(d) Multiple-Member Bodies - The mayor shall appoint, subject to the provisions of Section 2.6, all members of multiple-member bodies for whom no other method of appointment or selection is provided by ordinance, this charter, or General Laws. All members shall serve terms as defined by ordinance, this charter, or General Laws.

(f) The mayor may also appoint such ad hoc committees or working groups as the mayor deems appropriate to advise the mayor on matters affecting the city.

SECTION 3-6: TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS TO CITY OFFICES

Whenever a temporary or permanent vacancy occurs in a city office that is appointed under Section 3-5, the mayor may designate a person to perform the duties of the office on a temporary basis for up to 150 days until the position can be filled as provided by law or by this charter. Persons serving as temporary officers under this section shall have only those powers indispensable and essential to the performance of the duties of the office during the period of temporary appointment and no others.

(a) Filing of a Temporary Appointment - When the mayor designates a person under this section, the mayor shall file a certificate with the city clerk in substantially the following form:

"I designate (name of person) to perform the duties of the office of (office in which vacancy exists) on a temporary basis until the office can be filled by (the regular procedure for filling the vacancy or when the incumbent shall return). I certify that this person is qualified to perform the duties which will be required and that I make this designation solely in the interests of the City of Cambridge."

(b) Extension of Temporary Appointments - If an extension of a temporary appointment is necessary, the mayor may seek additional extensions in 60-day increments, which shall be authorized by a majority vote of the city council. If an extension is not approved, the position shall be deemed vacant.

SECTION 3-7: TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS TO MULTIPLE-MEMBER BODIES

Whenever a temporary or permanent vacancy occurs on a multiple-member body that is appointed under Section 3.5, the mayor may designate a person to perform the duties of the office on a temporary basis for up to 150 days until the position can be filled as provided by law or by this charter. If an extension of a temporary appointment is necessary, the mayor may seek additional extensions in 60-day increments, which shall be authorized by a majority vote of the city council. If an extension is not approved, the position shall be deemed vacant, except on multiple-member bodies where such vacancy would prevent a quorum. In such instances, a temporary appointment shall be permitted to remain until a successor is qualified, however, the authority of the temporary appointment shall be limited to matters where failure to act by the multiple-member body may have adverse consequences to the city.

SECTION 3-8: APPROVAL OF MAYOR, VETO

Every order, ordinance, resolution, or vote adopted or passed by the city council, except any matters relating to the internal affairs of the city council, shall be presented to the mayor for approval within 3 days of such adoption or passage. If the mayor approves the measure, the mayor shall sign it; if the mayor disapproves the measure, the mayor shall return the measure with the specific reason for such disapproval attached to the measure in writing to the city council. The city council shall enter the objections of the mayor on its records and reconsider the same measure after 14 days but before 30 days from the date of its return to the city council. If the city council, regardless of the disapproval by the mayor, shall again pass the identical measure by a 2/3 vote of the full council, it shall then be deemed in force. If the mayor has neither signed a measure nor returned it to the city council within 10 days following the date it was presented to the mayor, the measure shall be deemed approved and in force.

The mayor shall be responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a public tracking tool to provide city residents with information about 1) proposed policy orders, 2) voting status of proposed policy orders, and 3) the status of actions taken by the executive branch to implement policy orders that have been approved by city council.

SECTION 3-9: COMMUNICATIONS; SPECIAL MEETINGS

- (a) Communications to the City Council - The mayor shall, by written communication:
- (i) recommend to the city council for its consideration measures as the needs of the city require; and
 - (ii) keep the city council fully informed of the financial and administrative condition of the city and shall specifically indicate any fiscal, financial, or administrative issues facing the city.
- (b) Special Meetings of the City Council - The mayor may call a special meeting of the city council for any purpose. Unless the mayor designates an emergency, notice of the meeting shall be delivered at least 2 business days in advance of the time set and shall specify the date, time and location of the meeting and the purpose for which the meeting is to be held. A copy of the notice shall be posted immediately.

SECTION 3-10: TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF THE MAYOR

- (a) Acting Mayor – Whenever the mayor is unable to perform the duties of the office, the city council president shall be the acting mayor. In the event that the city council president is unable to serve as acting mayor under this section, the city council shall elect a councillor to serve as acting mayor from among its membership. The city council, by the affirmative vote of six members, shall determine whether the mayor is unable to perform the duties of the office. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the vote shall be taken in public session by a roll call vote.
- (b) Powers of Acting Mayor – The acting mayor shall have only those powers of the mayor as are indispensable and essential to conduct the business of the city and on which action may not be delayed.

The acting mayor shall have no authority to make a permanent appointment or removal from city service unless the absence of the mayor shall extend beyond 60 days, nor shall the acting mayor approve or disapprove of any measure adopted by the city council unless the time within which the mayor must act would expire before the return of the mayor. The city council president or another councillor serving as acting mayor shall not vote as a member of the city council.

SECTION 3-11: DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY BY MAYOR

The mayor may authorize and subsequently remove authorization from a subordinate officer or employee of the city to exercise or perform a power, function, or duty of the office of the mayor, provided, however, that all acts performed under any such delegation of authority during the period of authorization shall be and remain the acts of the mayor. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the mayor to delegate the powers and duties of a school committee member, the power of appointment to city office or employment, or to sign or return measures approved by the city council unless the provisions of Section 3-11 (b) apply.

SECTION 3-12: FILLING OF VACANCY

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of mayor by death, removal, resignation, or any other reason, the process for filling of the vacancy shall be determined by the month of the mayoral term in which the vacancy occurs. Following an election to fill a mayoral vacancy, the winning candidate shall begin immediately and serve the remaining unexpired term.

(a) Whenever a vacancy occurs during:

(i) Months 1 through 39: The city council shall call a special election to be held within 90 days following the date of the vacancy.

(ii) Months 39 through 48: A special election need not be held, and the position shall be filled by vote at the upcoming regular city election.

(b) The city council president shall serve as the acting mayor in all cases until the vacancy is filled. In the event that the city council president is unable to serve as the acting mayor under this section, the city council shall elect a councillor to serve as the acting mayor from among its membership. If the councillor serving as the acting mayor under this section chooses to run for mayor, they shall not be entitled to have the words "candidate for reelection" printed with that person's name on the subsequent election ballot. Any person serving as the mayor under this section shall receive the compensation then in effect for the position of mayor and shall not vote as a member of the city council.

ARTICLE 4: SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SECTION 4-1: COMPOSITION; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY

(a) Composition - There shall be a school committee which shall consist of seven (7) members. Six (6) of these members shall be nominated and elected by the voters of the city at large. The mayor shall serve, by virtue of the office, as the chair of the school committee, with all of the same powers and duties as the members elected by the voters as school committee members.

Commented [MW5]: Decision the committee has not yet made

(b) Term of Office - The term of office for the elected school committee members shall be 2 years, beginning on the first Monday in January after the election, except when that first Monday falls on a legal holiday, then the term shall begin on the following day and until the successors have been qualified.

(c) Eligibility - A school committee member shall at the time of election be a voter. If a school committee member removes from the city during the term for which that person was elected, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section 4-6.

SECTION 4-2: SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR. VICE CHAIR. CLERK (if applicable)

(a) Chair - The mayor, as school committee chair, shall preside at all meetings of the school committee, regulate its proceedings and shall decide all questions of order. The school committee chair shall appoint all members of all subcommittees of the school committee, whether special or standing. The school committee chair shall have the same powers to vote upon all measures coming before the school committee as any other member of the school committee. The school committee chair shall perform the duties consistent with the office and as provided by this charter or by vote of the school committee.

(b) Vice-Chair - As soon as practical after the school committee members-elect have been qualified following the regular city election, the school committee shall organize by electing 1 of the persons elected as a member of the school committee to serve as school committee vice-chair. The school committee vice-chair shall preside in the absence of the mayor.

Commented [MW6]: Depends on decision above

SECTION 4-3: PROHIBITIONS

No member of the school committee shall hold any other compensated city position. No former member of the school committee shall hold any compensated appointed city office or city employment until 1 year following the date on which that member's service on the school committee terminated. This section shall not prevent a city officer or other city employee who has vacated a position in order to serve as a member of the school committee from returning to the same office or other position of city employment held at the time the position was vacated; provided, however, no such person shall be eligible for any other municipal position until at least 1 year following the termination of service as a member of the school committee.

SECTION 4-4: COMPENSATION; EXPENSES

(a) Compensation - The city council may, by ordinance, establish an annual salary for the elected members of the school committee. No ordinance increasing or reducing the salary of elected members of the school committee shall be effective unless it has been adopted by a two-thirds vote of the full city council. No ordinance increasing the salary of the elected members of the school committee shall be effective unless it has been adopted during the first 18 months of the term for which elected school committee members are elected and unless it provides that the salary increase is to take effect upon the organization of the city government following the next regular city election.

(b) Expenses - Subject to appropriation, the school committee members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses in the performance of their duties. The actual and necessary expenses shall be defined in the rules and regulations of the school committee

SECTION 4-5: SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The school committee shall have all powers which are conferred on school committees by the General Laws and the additional powers and duties provided by charter, ordinance, or otherwise and not inconsistent with the General Laws. The powers and duties of the school committee shall include:

- (a) selecting and removing a superintendent of the schools who shall be charged with the administration of the school system, subject only to policy guidelines and directives adopted by the school committee and, upon the recommendation of the superintendent, to establish and appoint assistant or associate superintendents as authorized by the General Laws;
- (b) making all reasonable policies, rules and regulations for the management of the public school system and for conducting the business of the school committee as deemed necessary or desirable; and
- (c) adopting and overseeing the administration of an annual operating budget for the school department, subject to appropriation by the city council; provided, however, that the school committee shall have general charge and superintendence of all school buildings and grounds and shall furnish all school buildings with proper fixtures, furniture and equipment; provided further, that the school committee shall provide ordinary maintenance of all school buildings and grounds, unless a central municipal maintenance department, which may include maintenance of school buildings and grounds, is established; provided further, that whenever the school committee shall determine that additional classrooms are necessary to meet the educational needs of the community, at least 1 member of the school committee, or a designee of the school committee, shall serve on the agency, board or committee for the planning or construction of the new, remodeled or renovated school building.

SECTION 4-6: FILLING OF VACANCIES

In all occurrences of a vacancy, the city clerk shall notify the school committee and the chairperson of the board of election commissioners of the vacancy within 7 days. Within 7 days after notification, the chairperson of the board of election commissioners or a designee shall certify, in writing, to the city clerk the name of the defeated candidate for the office of school committee with the next highest number of votes at the municipal election at which school committee were elected for the term in which the vacancy occurs. If the person is eligible and willing to serve, the city clerk shall administer the oath of office to the person within 15 days after certification and the person shall serve. If the person who is eligible declines the office, is not eligible and willing to serve, or fails to take the oath of office within the time period set forth in this section, then the person with the next highest number of votes at the election who is eligible and willing to serve shall serve.

Where no defeated candidate is eligible and/or willing to serve, the process for filling the vacancy shall be determined by the number of days remaining until the next municipal election.

If a vacancy occurs:

- (i) more than 180 days until the next municipal election, there shall be a special election.
- (ii) 180 days or less prior to any regular municipal election, then the seat remains vacant until the next regular municipal election.

ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

SECTION 5-1: ORGANIZATION OF CITY AGENCIES

The organization of the city into operating agencies to provide services and administer the government may be accomplished only through an administrative order submitted to the city council by the mayor. No administrative order may originate with the city council.

The mayor may, subject only to express prohibitions in a general law or this charter, submit proposals to reorganize, consolidate or abolish a city agency, in whole or in part, or to establish a new city agency as is deemed necessary, but no function assigned by this charter to a particular city agency may be discontinued or assigned to any other city agency unless specified by this charter. The mayor may prepare and submit to the city council, administrative orders that establish operating divisions for the orderly, efficient or convenient conduct of the business of the city. These administrative orders shall be accompanied by a message from the mayor which explains the expected benefits and advises the city council if an administrative order shall require amendments, insertions, revisions, repeal or otherwise of existing ordinances.

Whenever the mayor proposes an administrative order, the city council shall hold 1 or more public hearings on the proposal giving notice by publication in a local newspaper, which notice shall describe the scope of the proposal and the time and place at which the public hearing will be held, not less than 7 nor more than 14 days following the publication. An organization or reorganization plan shall become effective at the expiration of 60 days following the date the proposal is submitted to the city council unless the city council shall, by a majority vote, within that 60-day period vote to disapprove the plan. The city council may vote only to approve or to disapprove the plan and may not vote to amend or to alter it.

SECTION 5-2: MERIT PRINCIPLES

All appointments and promotions of city officers and employees shall be made on the basis of merit and fitness demonstrated by examination, past performance, or by other evidence of competence and suitability. Each person appointed to fill an office or position shall be a person especially fitted by education, training, and previous work experience to perform the duties of the office or position.

ARTICLE 6: FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

SECTION 6-1: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the city shall begin on July 1 and shall end on June 30, unless another period is required by the General Laws.

SECTION 6-2: ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

At least 60 days before the end of the or calendar year, the mayor shall call a joint meeting of the city council and school committee, including the superintendent of schools, to review the financial condition of the city, revenue and expenditure forecasts for at least 3 years and other relevant information prepared by the mayor in order to develop a coordinated budget.

Commented [7]: by Nov 1

SECTION __: BUDGETARY PRIORITIES

~~The president/chair/mayor of the council shall call a meeting of the council prior to the commencement of the budget process, but not later than October 30, to review the financial condition of the city, revenue and expenditure forecasts, and other information relevant to the budget process. The president/chair/mayor also shall invite the city's state legislative delegation, representatives of the school committee and other relevant stakeholders to attend this meeting.~~

Commented [8]: will be handled by above section, lead by the mayor

Prior to the end of the calendar year, the city council shall develop and submit to the Mayor budgetary priorities that take into consideration the council goals created pursuant to Section __, with input from the city manager and the community. There shall be broad public engagement in diverse formats with opportunities for the public to provide input, including at least one public hearing. The budget developed by the Mayor shall outline how the proposed budget reflects the council's budgetary priorities.

Commented [9]: timing?

SECTION 6-3: SUBMISSION OF OPERATING BUDGET; BUDGET MESSAGE

At least 60 days before the beginning of the fiscal year (or on or about May 1st), the mayor shall submit to the city council a proposed operating budget for all city agencies, which shall include the school department, for the ensuing fiscal year with an accompanying budget message and supporting documents. The budget message submitted by the mayor shall explain the operating budget in fiscal terms and in terms of work programs for all city agencies. It shall outline the proposed fiscal policies of the city for the ensuing fiscal year, describe important features of the proposed operating budget and include any major variations from the current operating budget, fiscal policies, revenues and expenditures together with reasons for these changes. The proposed operating budget shall provide a complete fiscal plan of all city funds and activities and shall be in the form the mayor deems desirable; provided, however, that the budget for elected officials shall identify the cost of compensation and the cost of benefits for those officials. The school budget, as adopted by the school committee shall be submitted to the mayor at least 30 days before the submission of the proposed operating budget to the city council. The mayor shall notify the school committee of the date by which the proposed budget of the school committee shall be submitted to the mayor. The mayor and the superintendent of schools shall coordinate the dates and times of the school committee's budget process under the General Laws.

Commented [10]: State Law dictates 170 days after organization of the city, which is roughly June 20th or 10 days before the beginning of the fiscal year

Commented [11]: 60 days - early may, aligned with current process
90 days - early april

SECTION 6-4: ACTION ON THE OPERATING BUDGET

(a) Public Hearing - The city council shall publish a notice of the proposed operating budget as submitted by the mayor. The notice shall state: (i) the times and places where copies of the entire proposed operating budget are available for inspection by the public; and (ii) the date, time and place when a public

Commented [12]: Confirm with current practice?

hearing on the proposed operating budget will be held by the city council, not less than 14 days after publication of the notice.

(b) Adoption of the Budget - The city council shall adopt the proposed operating budget, which may have amendments, before the end of the fiscal year. In amending the proposed operating budget, the city council may delete or decrease amounts except expenditures required by law; provided, however, that except on the recommendation of the mayor, the city council shall not increase any item in or the total of the proposed operating budget, unless otherwise authorized by the General Laws. If the city council fails to act on an item in the proposed operating budget prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, that amount shall, without any action by the city council, become a part of the appropriations for the year and be available for the purposes specified.

(c) Availability of the Operating Budget – In addition to any other posting requirements under law, immediately after the submission of the proposed budget to the city council, the mayor shall post the entire budget document on the city's website. Said proposed budget document shall remain posted during the city council review process contained in this article. After the enactment of the budget, the final adopted budget shall be posted on the city's website and shall remain there throughout the fiscal year for which it is in effect. The final budget document shall reflect any amendments made by the city council and approved by the mayor and shall indicate that it is the final budget of the city.

SECTION 6-5: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

(a) Submission - The mayor shall submit a capital improvement program to the city council at least 60 days before the start of each fiscal year. The capital improvement program shall include:

- (1) a general summary of its contents;
- (2) a list of all capital improvements proposed to be undertaken during the next 5 years, with supporting information as to the need for each capital improvement;
- (3) cost estimates, methods of financing and recommended time schedules for each improvement; and
- (4) the estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining each facility and piece of major equipment involved.

This information shall be annually revised by the mayor with regard to the capital improvements still pending or in the process of being acquired, improved or constructed.

(b) Public Hearing - The city council shall publish a notice stating: (i) the times and places where entire copies of the capital improvements program are available for inspection by the public; and, (ii) the date, time and place of a public hearing on the plan to be held by the city council not less than 14 days after publication of the notice.

(c) Adoption - At any time after the public hearing but before the end of the current fiscal year, the city council shall by resolution adopt the capital improvements program, which may be amended, provided that each amendment shall be voted on separately and that an increase in the capital improvements program as submitted shall clearly identify the method of financing to accomplish the proposed increase.

SECTION 6-6: INDEPENDENT AUDIT

The city council shall annually provide for an outside audit of the books and accounts of the city to be conducted by a certified public accountant or a firm of certified public accountants, which has no personal interest, direct or indirect, in the fiscal affairs of the city or any of its officers. The mayor shall annually provide to the city council a sum of money sufficient to satisfy the estimated cost of conducting the audit as presented to the mayor, in writing, by the city council. The award of a contract to audit shall be made by the city council on or before September 15 of each year. The report of the audit shall be filed in final form with the city council not later than March 1 in the year following its award. At least every 5 years, the city council shall conduct a competitive procurement process to retain these auditing services.

Commented [13]: current practice?

Commented [14]: just keep this the same day at the regular budget?

Commented [15]: report on surplus

ARTICLE 7: ELECTIONS

SECTION 7-1: CITY ELECTION

The regular municipal election shall take place on the next Tuesday following the first Monday of November in every even-numbered year.

SECTION 7-2: ELIGIBILITY OF VOTERS **(Based upon current House Bills 3576 and 671)**

Every citizen and noncitizen who (i) is at least 16 years old, (ii) is not temporarily or permanently disqualified by law because of corrupt practices in respect to elections, (iii) is a resident of Cambridge at the time at the time they register, and (iv) has otherwise complied with the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 51 may have their name entered on the list of voters in Cambridge and may vote therein in any municipal election.

SECTION 7-3: PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

The mayor and all members of the city council and the school committee shall be elected at large by proportional representation.

SECTIONS 7-4 AND FOLLOWING

[The remaining procedural sections of the charter that have been adopted by Cambridge require updating by the Elections Commission and the Law Department in line with current best practices, modern language, the use of modern voting equipment, and current legal requirements.]

ARTICLE 8: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION, AND COMMUNICATION

SECTION 8.1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The city shall treat public engagement as an integral part of effective and trusted governance, not just as an occasional process or activity. The city shall treat engagement as a “multi-channel” endeavor that includes face-to-face meetings, virtual interactions, and other online communications. The departments of city government shall encourage collaboration in public engagement efforts with other government jurisdictions and authorities, anchor institutions, community-based organizations, civic groups, and individual residents.

Commented [MW16]: This section is adapted from the National Civic League’s 9th Edition Model City Charter. ([Model-City-Charter—9th-Edition.pdf](#) ([nationalcivicleague.org](#)); page 55)

SECTION 8.2 INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT AND COORDINATE ENGAGEMENT

The city shall establish new institutional structures or adapt existing structures to oversee, support, coordinate, track, and measure engagement on an ongoing basis. These structures may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Council committees that include residents and other stakeholders
- (b) Departments or administrative positions
- (c) Public engagement commissions
- (d) Community advisory boards, including boards designated to address the concerns of specific populations
- (e) Youth commissions
- (f) Participatory budgeting processes and commissions

Commented [MW17]: This section is adapted from the National Civic League’s 9th Edition Model City Charter. ([Model-City-Charter—9th-Edition.pdf](#) ([nationalcivicleague.org](#)); page 56)

SECTION 8.3 PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

To ensure public engagement centers on the needs and goals of community members, the city shall uphold the following principles, using them as the basis of public engagement protocols and in the establishment of public engagement structures:

(a) Equity in engagement. Principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion should guide the design and execution of public engagement activities. When engaging community members, city officials should identify and proactively reach out to the community in its full diversity. To ensure that public engagement activities are not attended only by people already active in local government and politics, city officials should regularly recruit residents through face-to-face or personal written invitations, social media requests, and randomized selection methods. Materials should be written in plain, comprehensible English, and should also be translated into the other predominant languages that residents speak and read.

Traditionally excluded and marginalized individuals and communities should be included in ways they themselves identify as authentic and meaningful. City officials should co-design engagement processes with community members to meet the needs of the communities served. Processes should respect a range of values, interests, perspectives, experiences, cultures, and knowledge of those involved.

The city should expect local the organizations and networks it works with to engage their members in equitable and deliberative ways, so that the input received is representative of their constituents.

The city should use an equity lens to evaluate data on impacts of engagement, including costs, benefits, and responsibilities.

(b) Accountability in engagement. There should be meaningful opportunities for community members to bring issues, concerns, and priorities to city officials to influence city policy,

Commented [MW18]: This section is adapted from the National Civic League’s 9th Edition Model City Charter. ([Model-City-Charter—9th-Edition.pdf](#) ([nationalcivicleague.org](#)); page 57)

ordinances, and actions. Public engagement activities should be designed to appropriately fit the legal authority, scope, character, and potential impact of a policy, program, or project. There should be clarity about process sponsorship, purpose, design, and how the results will be used. The purpose and potential influence of each public engagement process should be known by all participants in advance but should be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions during implementation.

(c) Transparency in engagement. Communications about public issues and public engagement opportunities should ensure community members can engage effectively. Communications should be made in the predominant languages that residents understand. Participants should have the opportunity to bring and share their own experiences as well as information they have gathered about the issues at hand. Full and complete results should be shared in a manner accessible to the public, and explanations of how the results will be used or how they will influence decisions should be provided to process participants and the broader public.

(d) Accessibility in engagement. Public engagement activities should be broadly accessible in terms of schedule, location, facilities, and information and communication technologies. Schedules should accommodate a variety of participants. Locations should be nearby and reachable via affordable transit, and some engagement activities should be conducted in places where community members already gather regularly. Facilities should be welcoming public spaces and not present physical or cultural barriers to participation. Online engagement opportunities should use technologies that are freely available to residents and attend to barriers people may face, such as: no access to broadband, limited proficiency with technology, and challenges related to deaf-blind accessibility.

(e) Collaboration in engagement. Public engagement efforts should build on and help develop long-term, collaborative working relationships and mutual learning opportunities with residents of all ages, civic groups, organizational partners, and other governments. This may include project-specific or ongoing community engagement initiatives.

(f) Evaluation of engagement activities. Each public engagement activity and the state of engagement overall should be evaluated through participant feedback, analysis, and learning that is shared publicly and broadly. The ideas, preferences, and/or recommendations contributed by participants should be fully documented and be made available to participants and the broader public. Lessons learned should be applied to future public engagement activities and contribute to the city's overall engagement plan.

SECTION 8.4: RESIDENT ASSEMBLY

(a) Purpose: In order to expand access to city government generally and include voices not typically heard in decision making, the city council has the authority to establish and maintain one or more Resident Assemblies.

(b) Powers: Notwithstanding any other section of this charter, the city council may, by ordinance, delegate to the Resident Assembly:

- i. The power to issue recommendations on questions posed by the city council and to specify deadlines by which the city council or mayor must publicly respond to the recommendations by hearing or other means.
- ii. The power to determine whether a resident initiative petition commenced under Section 8 should be submitted to the city council or voters as provided in Section 8 notwithstanding the petition's failure to meet that Section's procedural requirements.
- iii. The power to issue endorsements or counter-endorsements referencing majority and/or minority opinions of the assembly, for initiatives submitted to the city council or voters, including initiatives that satisfy Section 8's procedural requirements.

- iv. The power, on its own initiative, to make recommendations or propose draft legislation for review by the city council or voters.

(c) Mandatory Specifications:

- i. The city council shall convene at least one Resident Assembly each council term.
- ii. Any Resident Assembly created pursuant to this section must have the following characteristics:
 - a) The assembly shall be created via a sortition process to be provided by ordinance and shall be open to all citizen and non-citizen residents over the age of 16.
 - b) The procedures for selecting membership must include a random lottery such that the Resident Assembly is representative of the city's population.
 - c) Membership on the Resident Assembly must be voluntary, and members must be permitted to resign for any reason.
 - d) No fewer than 30 people may serve on the Resident Assembly at any given time.
 - e) The Resident Assembly must receive sufficient resources to exercise its powers effectively, including financial resources, staff support, translation services and space for deliberation.
 - f) The city shall take steps to remove barriers to participation. To ensure that participation is not a financial burden, assembly members must be offered a stipend that is sufficient to compensate members for their time and for reasonable costs incurred by participation, including transportation to the meeting, dependent care, or similar expenses. The city shall provide interpretation and translation support and accessibility technology.
 - g) Subject to appropriation, the city shall provide resources for staff support to the resident assembly.

(d) Discretionary Specifications: Subject to the other provisions of this section, the city council has discretion to define, by ordinance, other powers and specifications of a Resident Assembly, including:

- i. The time and place of the Resident Assembly's deliberation.
- ii. Issues or questions upon which the Resident Assembly must deliberate.
- iii. The procedures by which the Resident Assembly deliberates.
- iv. The length of term for members of the Resident Assembly.
- v. The method by which members of the Resident Assembly may be replaced.

SECTION 8.5 FREE PETITION TO COUNCIL

The city council shall hold a public hearing and act with respect to every citizen petition which is addressed to it, which petition shall not be required to take any particular form, and is signed by **one-hundred-fifty (150)** voters, or more, and which seeks the passage of a measure concerning matters other than action under section 8-7. The hearing shall be held by the city council, and the action by the city council shall be taken not later than three months after the petition is filed with the clerk of the council or the secretary of the school committee, as may be appropriate. Hearings on two or more petitions filed under this section may be held at the same time and place. The clerk of the council shall provide notice of the hearing by mail and, if practicable, by phone or email, to the ten persons whose names appear first on the petition at least forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing. Notice, by publication, of all such hearings shall be at public expense.

SECTION 8.6 RESIDENT INITIATIVE MEASURES

- (a) Commencement: Initiative procedures shall be started by the filing with the clerk of the council of a proposed initiative petition on a form prepared by the city. The petition shall be addressed to the city council, shall contain a request for the passage of a particular measure which shall be set forth in full

in the petition, and shall be physically signed by at least 500 voters as certified by the Board of Registrars. The petition shall be accompanied by an affidavit signed by 10 voters and containing their residential addresses stating they will constitute the petitioners committee and be responsible for circulating the petition and filing it in proper form. Signatures to an initiative petition need not all be on 1 paper but all papers pertaining to any 1 measure shall be fastened together and shall be filed as a single instrument, containing on the petition the number and street of the residence of each signer accompanied by the endorsement of the name and residence address of the person designated as filing the petition. The board of registrars shall attach to the petition a certificate showing the results of the board of registrars' examination and shall return the petition to the clerk of the council. A copy of the board of registrars' certificate shall also be mailed to the petitioners committee.

- (b) Referral to solicitor: Immediately following certification of 250 signatures, the clerk of the council shall deliver a copy of the petition to the city solicitor. Within 21 days after receipt of a copy of the petition, the city solicitor shall advise the council in writing whether the measure as proposed may lawfully utilize the initiative process and whether, in its present form, it may be lawfully adopted by the council. If the opinion of the city solicitor is that the measure is not in proper form, the reply shall state the reasons for this opinion in full, and a copy of the opinion of the city solicitor shall be mailed to the petitioners committee.
- (c) Action on Petitions: If the opinion of the city solicitor is that the petition is in a proper form, within 60 days, the city solicitor shall act with respect to each initiative petition by passing it without change, by passing a measure which is stated to be in lieu of the initiative measure, or by rejecting it. The passage of a measure which is in lieu of an initiative measure shall be considered to be a rejection of the initiative measure. If the council fails to act with respect to any initiative measure that is presented to it within 60 days after the date it has been notified by the city solicitor that it is in proper form, the initiative measure shall be considered to have been approved on the 61st day. If an initiative measure is rejected, the clerk of the council shall promptly give notice to the petitioners committee, by certified mail.
- (d) Supplementary Petitions: Thirty days (30) after the date an initiative petition has been rejected by the council, a supplemental initiative petition may be filed with the clerk of the council, but only by persons constituting the original petitioners committee. The supplemental initiative petition shall be physically signed by a number of additional voters which is equal to 5% percent of the total number of registered voters as of the date of the most recent city election. If the number of signatures to the supplemental petition is found to be sufficient by the board of registrars, the council shall call a special election to be held on a date fixed by it, not less than 35 nor more than 90 days after the date the council votes to call for the special election, and shall submit the proposed measure, without alteration, to the voters for determination. But if any other city election is to be held within 120 days after the date of the certification, the council may omit the calling of the special election and cause the question to appear on the election ballot at the next city election for determination by the voters.
- (e) Publication: The full text of any initiative measure which is submitted to the voters shall be published not less than 7 nor more than 21 days preceding the date of the election at which the question is to be voted upon. Additional copies of the full text shall be available for distribution to the public in the office of the city clerk and shall be published on the city bulletin board.
- (f) Form of Question: The ballots used when voting on a measure proposed by the voters under this Section shall contain a question in substantially the following form:
Shall the following measure, which was proposed by an initiative petition as described in the city charter, take effect? (Here, insert a fair, concise summary prepared by the City Solicitor.) YES _____
NO _____

- (g) Required Voter Participation: For any measure to be effective under initiative petition, at least 20 percent of the registered voters as of the date of the most recent city election shall vote at the election upon which an initiative is submitted to the voters.
- (h) Time of Taking Effect: If a majority of the votes cast on the question, or other affirmative percent as required by general laws or this Charter, is in the affirmative and if the 20 percent voter participation requirement is met, the measure shall be deemed to be effective immediately, unless a later date is specified in the measure.

SECTION 8.7 INELIGIBLE MEASURES

None of the following shall be subject to the free petition or initiative procedures outlined in Section 8.6 and Section 8.7:

- (a) Proceedings relating to the internal organization or operation of any elected body
- (b) An emergency measure adopted in conformity with the Charter
- (c) The City budget as a whole
- (d) Votes for the temporary borrowing of money in anticipation of revenue
- (e) An appropriation of any sum of money, for any purpose, amounting to less than 1 percent of the total annual budget of the City
- (f) Any appropriation for the payment of the City's debt or debt service
- (g) An appropriation of funds to implement a contract or collective bargaining agreement
- (h) Proceedings relating to election, appointment, removal, discharge, employment, promotion, transfer, or demotion of employees or appointed or elected officials or members of multiple-member bodies or any other personnel action
- (i) Any proceedings providing for the submission or referral of a matter to the voters at an election
- (k) Memorial resolutions
- (l) Any zoning petition that is subject to the city's zoning petition process

SECTION 8.8 SUBMISSION OF OTHER MATTERS TO VOTERS

The council may of its own motion, submit to the voters for adoption or rejection at any regular municipal election any measure with the same force and effect as is hereby provided for submission by petitions of voters. Such measures must originate within the council and pertain to affairs under said bodies' jurisdiction. Pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 53, Section 18A, non-binding public opinion advisory questions may be placed on the ballot at a regular municipal election.

SECTION 8.7: CONFLICTING PROVISIONS

If 2 or more measures passed at the same election contain conflicting provisions, only the 1 receiving the greatest number of affirmative votes shall take effect.

SECTION 8.9 MAYOR RECALL PROVISIONS

- (a) Application. The mayor may be recalled from by the voters of the city in the manner provided in this section. No recall petition shall be filed against the mayor within 6 months after taking office or within the last six months of the mayor's term.
- (b) Recall Petition - A recall petition may be initiated by the filing of an affidavit containing the name of the mayor sought to be recalled and a statement of the grounds for recall; provided, however, that the affidavit shall be signed by not less than 500 registered voters. Each such affidavit shall be accompanied by a letter identifying the 10 lead petitioners who will be the petitioner's committee responsible for circulating and filing the petition. The city clerk shall forthwith, and not later than 5 business days following submittal, provide for the certification by the board of registrars of the signatures of such persons who are registered voters of the city and provide notice to the city council

of the number of signatures so certified. The city clerk shall, not later than 5 business days following certification by the registrars of voters, issue to those voters constituting the petitioner's committee, copies of petition blanks demanding such recall, copies of which printed forms the city clerk shall keep available. The blanks shall be issued by the city clerk, with signature and official seal attached thereto. The blanks shall be dated, shall be addressed to the city council and shall contain the names of the petitioner's committee, the number of blanks so issued, the name of the person whose recall is sought, the office from which removal is sought and the grounds of recall as stated in the affidavit. A copy of the petition shall be entered in a record book to be kept in the office of the city clerk. Said recall petition shall be returned and filed with the city clerk not later than 28 days after the filing of the affidavit and shall be signed by not less than 20 percent of the registered voters of the city on the date of the last mayoral election. The city clerk shall submit the petition to the registrars of voters and the registrars shall, within 5 days, certify thereon the number of signatures which are names of voters.

- (c) Recall Election - If the petition shall be found and certified by the registrars of voters to be sufficient, the city clerk shall submit such certificate to the city council within 5 days and the city council shall give written notice of the receipt of the certificate to the officer sought to be recalled. If that officer does not resign within 5 days thereafter, the city council shall order an election to be held on a date fixed by it not less than 35 days from the date the council votes to place the question on the ballot and provides written notice thereof to the city clerk, nor more than 90 days after the date of the city clerk's certificate that a sufficient petition has been filed; provided, however, that if any other city election is to occur not later than 120 days after the date of the certificate, the city council shall postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of such other election. If a vacancy occurs in said office after a recall election has been ordered, the election shall not proceed as provided in this section, however, that if any other city election is to occur within 120 days after the date of the certificate, the City Council shall postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of such other election. If a vacancy occurs in said office after a recall election has been ordered, the election shall not proceed as provided in this section.
- (d) Office Holder - The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of the office until the recall election. If said incumbent is not recalled, the incumbent shall continue in office for the remainder of the unexpired term subject to recall as before. If recalled, the officer shall be deemed removed and the office vacant. The vacancy created thereby shall be filled under Section 3-13 of this charter. A person chosen to fill the vacancy caused by a recall shall hold office until the next regular city election. Should the person chosen to fill the vacancy be a candidate in the subsequent election, that person will not be allowed to have "candidate for re-election" appear on the ballot at such election.
- (e) Form of Question – The form of the question to be voted upon shall be substantially as follows:
"Shall [here insert the name and title of the mayor whose recall is sought] be recalled?"
___Yes ___No If a majority of the votes cast upon the question of recall is in the affirmative, such elected officer shall be recalled.
- (f) Time of Taking Effect - If a majority of the votes cast upon the question of recall is in the affirmative, such elected official shall be immediately recalled. No recall election shall be effective unless not less than 30 percent of the total number of voters of the city at the last regular city election shall have voted in such election.
- (g) Repeat of Recall - In the case of an elected official subjected to a recall election and not recalled thereby, no recall petition shall be filed against such official until at least 270 days after the election at which the official's recall was submitted to the voters of the city.
- (h) Mayor Recalled - No mayor who has been recalled from office or who has resigned from office while recall proceedings were pending against such person, shall be appointed to any elective city office within 2 years after such recall or such resignation.

ARTICLE 9: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Commented [MW19]: These are mostly standard MA charter provisions, except where noted

SECTION 9-1. CHARTER CHANGES

This charter may be replaced, revised or amended in accordance with any procedure made available under the state constitution or by statutes enacted in accordance with the state constitution.

SECTION 9-2. SEVERABILITY

This charter is severable. If any provision of this charter is held invalid, the other provisions shall not be affected by this holding. If the application of this charter to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the application of the charter to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected.

SECTION 9-3. SPECIFIC PROVISION TO PREVAIL

To the extent that a specific provision of this charter conflicts with any provision expressed in general terms, the specific provision of the charter shall prevail.

SECTION 9-4. RULES AND REGULATIONS

A copy of all rules and regulations adopted by a city agency shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk not later than the effective date of the rule or regulation and shall be available for review by any person who requests such information at any reasonable time. Unless an emergency exists as determined by the mayor, no rule or regulation adopted by a city agency shall become effective until at least 5 days following the date it is filed.

SECTION 9-5. PERIODIC REVIEW OF CHARTER

Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 2, the City Council shall provide for a review to be made of the city charter by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the special committee shall be voters of the city not holding elective office. The special committee shall file a report with the City Council within 1 year of its appointment recommending any changes to the city charter which it deems necessary or desirable, unless an extension is authorized by vote of the City Council. Action on any proposed charter changes shall be as authorized by the Massachusetts constitution or general laws.

Commented [MW20]: Existing Cambridge charter text

SECTION 9-6. PERIODIC REVIEW OF ORDINANCES

Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 5 or in a zero, the mayor and city council shall provide for a review to be made of some or all of the ordinances of the city to prepare a proposed revision or recodification of them. This review shall be made by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the committee shall be voters of the city. The special committee shall file its report with the city clerk at a date specified by ordinance. The review of city ordinances shall be under the supervision of the city solicitor. Copies of any recommendations shall be made available to the public at a cost not to exceed the actual cost of the reproduction.

Commented [MW21]: Flagged, as this would be new. It is relatively standard, but it is more of a policy decision than 9-1 through 9-4.

SECTION 9-7. UNIFORM PROCEDURES GOVERNING MULTIPLE-MEMBER BODIES

(a) Meetings - All appointed multiple-member bodies of the city shall meet regularly at the times and places that the multiple-member body, by the body's own rules, prescribe. Special meetings of any multiple-member body shall be held on the call of the chairman or by a majority of the members of the body. Notice of the meeting shall be posted as required by law. Except as may otherwise be authorized by law, all meetings of all multiple-member bodies shall at all times be open to the public.

(b) Meeting Documents and Submissions - Each appointed multiple-member body shall determine its own rules and order of business within the bounds of any applicable ordinance that created it. Each multiple-member body shall provide for the keeping of agendas, minutes and related submissions of its proceedings. All such documents shall be a public record and certified copies shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk within 15 days of approval.

(c) Voting - If requested by a member, a vote of an appointed multiple-member body shall be taken by a roll call vote and the vote of each member shall be recorded in the minutes, but if the vote is unanimous, only that fact need be recorded.

(d) Quorum - A majority of the members of an appointed multiple-member body shall constitute a quorum. Unless some other provision is made by the multiple-member body's own rules while a quorum is present, except on procedural matters, a majority of the full membership of the body shall be required to vote on a matter representing an exercise of the powers of the multiple-member body. General Laws related to a vote to meet in "executive session" shall always require a majority of members of the body.

(e) Residency - Unless otherwise allowed by law, regulation, ordinance or by this charter, all members of multiple-member bodies shall be residents of the city at all times during that members term of office. If a member of a multiple-member body removes from the city during the term for which appointed, such seat shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled under section 3-3.

SECTION 9-8. NUMBER

Words importing the singular number may extend and be applied to several persons or things; words importing the plural number may include the singular.

SECTION 9-9. REFERENCES TO GENERAL LAWS

All references to General Laws contained in the charter refer to the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and are intended to refer to and to include any amendments or revisions to such chapters or sections or to the corresponding chapters and sections of any rearrangement, revision or recodification of such statutes enacted or adopted subsequent to the adoption of this charter.

SECTION 9-10. COMPUTATION OF TIME

In computing time under this charter the day of the act or event after which the designated period of time begins to run shall not be included. The last day of the period shall be included, unless it is Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, in which event the period shall be extended to the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. When the period of time designated is fewer than 7 days, intermediate Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays shall not be included, when the period is 7 days or more, Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays shall be included.

SECTION 9-11. OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A mayor-elect, the city council members-elect, and the school committee members-elect shall, on the first Monday in the January of each even-numbered year, meet and take an oath or affirmation to the faithful discharge of the duties of their office by the city clerk. If the first Monday in January of any even-numbered year falls on a legal holiday, the oaths or affirmations shall be taken on the following day.

Upon receiving the oath or affirmation, each official shall document the same by signing an oath or affirmation that shall be kept in a bound book maintained by the city clerk. In the case of the absence of the mayor-elect or any member-elect of the city council or school committee on the day the oath is

administered, the oath or affirmation may at any time thereafter be administered to that person by the city clerk, the assistant city clerk, a judge of a court of record, or a justice of the peace.

SECTION 9-12. CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT

Every person who is elected or appointed to an office or as a member of a multiple-member body shall receive a certificate of that election or appointment from the city clerk. Except as otherwise provided by law, every person who is elected or appointed to an office or as a member of a multiple-member body, before performing any act under this election or appointment, shall take and subscribe to an oath or affirmation to qualify to enter upon the duties. A record of this oath shall be kept by the city clerk.

SECTION 9-13. LIMITATION ON OFFICE HOLDING

Unless otherwise allowed by law or this charter, no person shall simultaneously hold more than 1 city office or position of employment. This section may be waived by the mayor upon the appointment of a person to an additional office or position of employment by filing a notice of the waiver with an explanation and justification with the city clerk. Any hours worked in any part-time position shall not be the same or otherwise conflict with the hours worked in a full-time position

SECTION 9-14. FELONY CONVICTION

An elected official who has been convicted of a state or federal felony while holding office shall be deemed to have vacated the office.

Commented [MW22]: Flagged. Committee is still deciding on this.

SECTION 9-15. ENFORCEMENT OF CHARTER PROVISIONS

It shall be the duty of the mayor to see that the charter is faithfully followed and complied with by all city agencies and city employees. Whenever it appears to the mayor that a city agency or city employee is failing to follow this charter, the mayor shall, in writing, cause notice to be given to that agency or employee directing compliance with the charter. If it shall appear to the city council that the mayor personally is not following the charter, it shall, by resolution, direct the attention of the mayor to those areas in which it believes there is a failure to comply with the charter. The procedures made available in chapter 231A of the General Laws may be used to determine the rights, duties, status or other legal relations arising under this charter, including any question of construction or validity which may be involved in such determination.

ARTICLE 10: TRANSITION PROVISIONS

SECTION 10-1 CONTINUATION OF EXISTING LAWS

All ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and votes of the city council, which are in force at the time this charter is adopted and are not inconsistent with the provisions of this charter, shall continue in full force until amended or repealed. Where provisions of this charter, as amended, conflict with city ordinances, rules, regulations, orders, special acts and acceptances of laws of the commonwealth, the provisions of this charter shall govern. All provisions of city ordinances, rules, regulations, orders and administrative actions not superseded by this charter shall remain in force.

SECTION 10-2 EXISTING OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

Any person holding a city office or employment under the city shall retain such office or employment and shall continue to perform the duties of the office until provision shall have been made in accordance with this charter for the performance of the said duties by another person or agency. No person in the permanent full-time service or employment of the city shall forfeit pay grade or time in service. Each such person shall be retained in a capacity as similar to the person's former capacity as is practical.

SECTION 10-3 CONTINUATION OF GOVERNMENT

All city officers, boards, commissions or agencies shall continue to perform their duties until reappointed or until successors to their respective positions are fully appointed or elected or until their duties have been transferred and assumed by another city office, board, commission or agency.

SECTION 10-4 CONTINUATION OF OBLIGATIONS

All official bonds, obligations, contracts, and other instruments entered into or executed by or to the city before the adoption of this charter and all taxes, special assessments, fines, penalties, and forfeitures incurred or imposed, due or owing to the city, shall be enforced and collected, and all writs, prosecutions, actions and causes of action, except as herein otherwise provided, shall continue and remain unaffected by this charter. No legal act done by or in favor of the city shall be rendered invalid by the adoption of this charter.

SECTION 10-5 TRANSFER OF RECORDS AND PROPERTY

All records, property and equipment whatsoever of any office, board, commission, committee or agency or part thereof, the powers and duties of which are assigned in whole or in part to another city office, board, commission or agency, shall be transferred forthwith to such office, board, commission or agency.

SECTION 10-6 POLICY ORDER TRACKING

Within 18 months of the effective date of this charter, the Mayor will complete a study of the use of technology to categorize and track policy orders for the purpose of providing information to the public about the status of policy order votes and implementation of these policy orders by the executive branch pursuant to Section 3-9. The information shall be made available on the town website as soon as practicable.

SECTION 10-7 CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Within 6 months of the adoption of this charter, the city council shall create a Campaign Finance Committee to study public financing mechanisms and prepare recommendations with the goal of making running for office in Cambridge more accessible. The study committee shall consider a full range of options, including but not limited to voucher programs, campaign spending, and contribution limits. The

Commented [MW23]: The section is reserved for outlining the city's transition to the new charter. The following provisions include boilerplate transition language and reflect some of the specific issues that Charter Committee discussed having included in the transition article.

committee shall provide an analysis of the potential benefits and barriers of each option. No action is necessary if the city council has already taken action consistent with this provision.

The committee shall issue recommendations to the city council and the next charter review committee within 12 months of creation. The city council shall take action on the recommendations and/or refer recommendations to next charter review committee within 90 days of receipt.

SECTION 10-8 RESIDENT ASSEMBLY

The establishment of a resident assembly is intended to create an inclusive and representative group of voices that are not traditionally heard in city government. The resident assembly shall be selected by sortition from the general population, with effort made to reach residents of all backgrounds and experiences. Within 12 months of the effective date of this charter, the city council, in consultation with the city manager, city clerk, and relevant experts in the field, will complete a study on the best method for implementing the resident assembly as provided in Section 8. Within 18 months of the effective date of this charter, the city council shall enact ordinances establishing the resident assembly and commence the process of selecting members.

SECTION 10-9 AND BEYOND: RESERVED FOR TECHNICAL TRANSITION SECTIONS

[reserved for technical sections]

DRAFT 11.30

WORKING DRAFT MANAGER FORM CHARTER CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Last Revised: 12.03.2023

*The purpose of this working draft manager form charter is to put in one place the tentative directions that the Cambridge Charter Review Committee is considering and the items on which the Committee has voted. In order to create the full picture of what a full charter might look like with these decisions, the Collins Center has incorporated standard/best practices text in places where the Committee has not voted. These parts of text should ***not*** be considered Committee recommendations. Additionally, none of the text in here should be considered a final recommendation in any way. This is a working draft only.*

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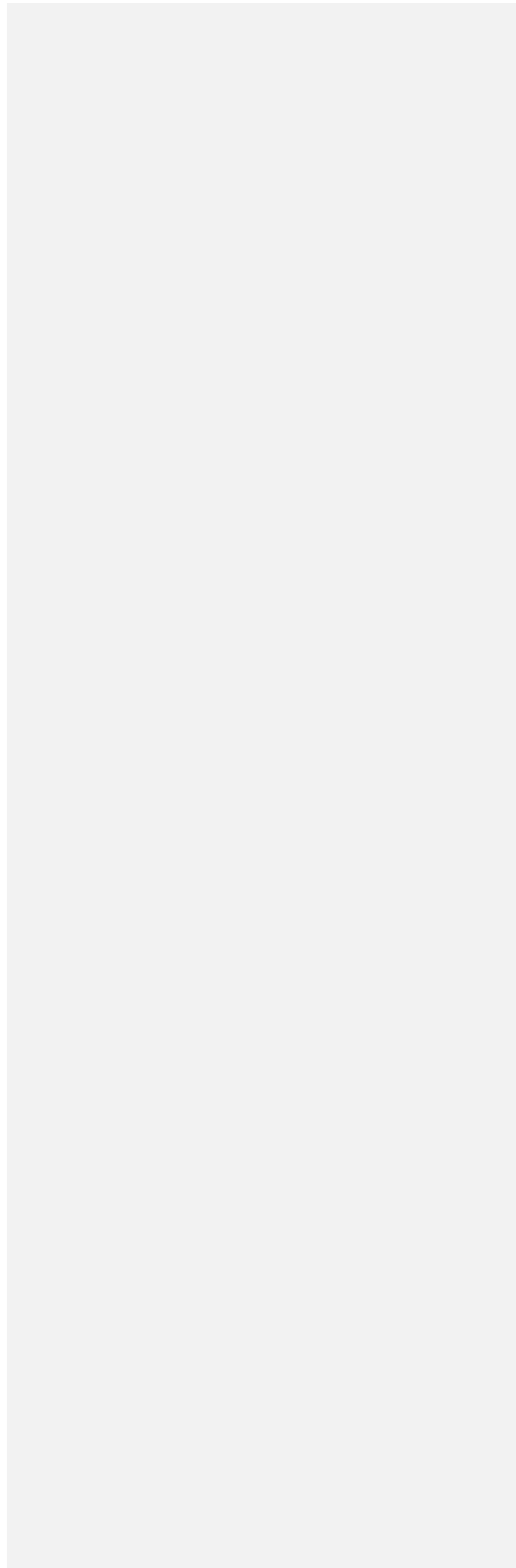
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PREAMBLE

[Still under development]

DRAFT



ARTICLE 1: INCORPORATION; SHORT TITLE; ETC.

SECTION 1-1: INCORPORATION

The inhabitants of Cambridge, within the territorial limits established by law, shall continue to be a municipal corporation, a body corporate and politic, under the name "City of Cambridge".

SECTION 1-2: SHORT TITLE

This document shall be known and may be cited as the "Cambridge Charter."

SECTION 1-3: DIVISION OF POWERS

All legislative powers of the city shall be vested in a city council. The administration of all city fiscal, prudential, and municipal affairs shall be vested in an executive branch headed by a city manager appointed by the city council.

SECTION 1-4: POWERS OF THE CITY

Subject only to express limitations on the exercise of any power or function by a municipal government in the Massachusetts constitution or General Laws, it is the intention and the purpose of the voters of Cambridge, through the adoption of this charter, to secure for themselves and their government all of the powers it is possible to secure as fully and as completely as though each power were specifically and individually enumerated in this charter.

SECTION 1-5: CONSTRUCTION

The powers of Cambridge under this charter are to be construed liberally in favor of the city, and the specific mention of any particular power is not intended to limit the general powers of the city as stated in the Cambridge Charter. To the extent that any provision of this charter shall conflict with any special act or general law adopted by the city, the provision of this charter shall prevail.

SECTION 1-6: INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Subject only to express limitations in the constitution or general laws of the Commonwealth, Cambridge may exercise any of its powers or perform any of its functions, and may participate in their financing, jointly or in cooperation, by contract or otherwise, with the Commonwealth or any agency or political subdivision of the Commonwealth, or with the United States government or any of its agencies. The City Council shall in the performance of their duties consider intergovernmental and regional relations.

SECTION 1-7: DEFINITIONS

[Not started]

ARTICLE 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

SECTION 2-1: COMPOSITION; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY

(a) Composition - There shall be a city council of nine members nominated and elected by and from the voters at large by proportional representation as provided by in section [placeholder]. The city council shall exercise the legislative powers of the city.

(b) Term of Office - City councillors shall be elected for terms of two years each beginning on the first business day of January in the year following their election, and until successors have been qualified.

(c) Eligibility - Any registered voter shall be eligible to hold the office of councillor. If a councillor moves from the city during the councillor's term, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section [placeholder]. The city council shall determine whether a councillor has moved from the city.

SECTION 2-2: GENERAL POWERS

Except as otherwise provided by law or by this charter, all powers of the city shall be vested in the city council that shall provide for their exercise and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed on the city by law.

SECTION 2-3: PRESIDENT/CHAIR/MAYOR AND VICE PRESIDENT/VICE CHAIR/MAYOR, ELECTION; TERM; POWERS

(a) Election and Term - As soon as practical after the councillors-elect have been qualified following each regular city election, as provided in section [placeholder], the members of the city council shall elect from among its members a president/chair/mayor and vice president/vice chair/vice mayor, who shall serve for a [placeholder] term. The method of election of the president/chair and vice-president/vice-chair shall be determined by City Council rules. The member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president/chair until members elect a president/chair/mayor.

- (b) Powers and Duties - The following shall be the powers and duties of the council president/chair:
- i. Head of the city - The council president/chair shall be recognized as the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes and shall be recognized by the courts for the purposes of serving civil process.
 - ii. Presiding officer of the council - The council president/chair shall be the presiding officer of the city council. The council president shall have no power of veto but shall have the same powers as any other member of the city council to vote upon all measures before it.
 - iii. Appointment of committees - The council president/chair shall appoint members of, and oversee, all committees of the council, whether standing or ad hoc.
 - iv. Goal-Setting - The council president/chair/mayor shall coordinate, with the council, the development and prioritization of both short- and long-term council goals to support a strategic vision for the city, as provided for in section 2-11 at the beginning of each council term.
 - v. State of the city - The council president/chair shall annually, together with the city manager, address the city council, school committee, officers of the city, and the public on the state of affairs of the city.
 - vi. Other duties - The council president/chair shall perform such other duties consistent with the office as may be provided by charter, by ordinance, or by vote of the city council.

vii. Chair/member of the school committee - The council president/chair shall also be chair of/serve as a member of the school committee and shall update the council regularly on school committee matters.

- (c) Temporary absence - During a temporary absence of the president/chair, the duties of president/chair shall be performed by the vice president/vice chair. If there shall be neither a president/chair nor a vice president/vice chair, the member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president/chair until there is no longer an absence.
- (d) Permanent Vacancy - If there is a permanent vacancy in the office of president/chair or vice president/vice chair, the city council shall elect by majority vote one of its members to fill such office for the unexpired term. The member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president/chair until members elect a president/chair.

Commented [MW1]: Decision the committee hasn't made yet

SECTION 2-4: PROHIBITIONS

Except as otherwise provided by the charter and permitted by the Massachusetts General Laws, no member of the city council shall hold any other compensated city position. No former member of the city council shall hold any compensated appointed city position until 1 year following the date on which the former member's service on the city council has terminated unless such appointment is affirmed by six (6) members of the city council. This section shall not prevent a city employee who vacated a position to serve as a member of the city council from returning to the same position upon the expiration of the term for which that person was elected.

SECTION 2-5: COUNCIL SALARY; EXPENSES

- (a) Salary - The president/chair and the members of the city council shall receive for their services such salary as the city council shall determine by ordinance, and they shall receive no other compensation from the city. No increase or reduction in the salaries of city councillors shall take effect during the year in which such increase or reduction is voted, and no change in such salaries shall be made between the election of a new council and the qualification of the new council.
- (b) Expenses - Subject to appropriation, the council members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

SECTION 2-6: EXERCISE OF POWERS; QUORUM; RULES

- (a) Exercise of Powers - Except as otherwise provided by General Laws or by this charter, the legislative powers of the city council may be exercised in a manner determined by the city council.
- (b) Quorum - A majority of all the members elected to the city council shall constitute a quorum. Except as otherwise provided by General Laws or by this charter, the affirmative vote, taken by a roll call vote, of a majority of members of the city council shall be required to adopt any ordinance, order, resolution, or vote, except that the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present shall be sufficient to adjourn any meeting of the city council.
- (c) Rules - Rules for operation of City Council shall be established by City Council at the beginning of each term.

SECTION 2-7: APPOINTMENTS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

- (a) City Manager - The city council shall appoint a city manager as provided for in Section 3-1.
- (b) City Auditor - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a city auditor for an indefinite term of office. The city auditor shall be appointed solely based on professional qualifications and experience. The city auditor shall keep and have charge of the accounts of the city and shall from time to time audit the books and accounts of all city agencies. The city auditor shall

have such other powers and duties as provided for auditors and accountants by general laws and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by the charter, by ordinance, or by any other vote of the city council.

- (c) City Clerk - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a city clerk. The city clerk shall be appointed solely based on qualifications and experience. The city clerk shall have such powers and duties as provided for clerks by general laws and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by the charter, by ordinance, or by any other vote of the city council.
- (d) Clerk of the Council - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a clerk of the council, who may be the city clerk. The clerk of the council shall give notice of its meetings to its members and to the public, keep the journal of its proceedings, and perform such other duties as may be provided by ordinance or by other vote of the city council.
- (e) Salaries - The officers appointed under Section 2-7 shall receive such salaries as set by ordinance.
- (f) Supervision, discipline, and removal of city council employees - The council president / chair shall be responsible for supervision of any employee appointed by city council, including the city auditor and clerk of the council. The council president / chair shall be able to impose discipline up to and including an unpaid suspension of not more than five days. However, removing an employee appointed by city council shall require an affirmative vote of at least six council members.

SECTION 2-8: CITY COUNCIL ROLE IN CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS

- (a) Department heads – Prior to posting and beginning the search for a department head position, the city manager shall meet with the city council to discuss priorities for the department and desirable qualifications and qualities of candidates for the position.
- (b) Multiple-member bodies - The city manager shall refer to the city council and simultaneously file with the clerk the name of each person the city manager desires to appoint or reappoint as a member of a multiple-member body. Appointment of a member of a multiple-member body made by the city manager will be effective upon a majority vote of the city council, which vote shall occur within 45 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed with the city clerk. The appointment may be approved or rejected by a majority of the full city council before 45 days. An appointment or reappointment shall take effect if the city council fails to act within those 45 days.

SECTION 2-9: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- (a) In general - The city council may make inquiry into the affairs of the city and into the conduct and performance of any city agency.
- (b) Information requests:
 - i. City manager - The city council may, at any time, request from the city manager specific information on any municipal matter within its jurisdiction and may request the manager to be present to answer written questions relating thereto at a meeting to be held not earlier than seven (7) days from the date of receipt by the city manager of said questions. The city manager shall personally, or through the head of a department or a member of a board, attend such meeting and publicly answer all such questions. The person so attending shall not be obliged to answer questions relating to any other matter. The city manager may attend and address the city council in person or through the head of a department or a member of a board, on any subject and at any time.
 - ii. Department Heads, Chair of Multiple-Member Bodies - The city council may require the chair of a multiple-member body or a city department head, through the city manager, to appear before the city council to give any information that the city council may require in relation to the municipal services, functions and powers, or duties which are within the scope of

responsibility of that person and not within the jurisdiction of the school committee. The city council shall give a minimum of seven (7) days' notice to a person it may require to appear before it under this section. Notice shall be in writing. The notice shall include specific questions on which the city council seeks information, and no person called to appear before the city council under this section shall be required to respond to any question not relevant or related to those questions presented in advance and in writing. The city manager shall receive a copy of any notice issued under this section at the same time as the person who is requested to appear before the council.

SECTION 2-10: ORDINANCES AND OTHER MEASURES

- (a) Emergency Ordinances - No ordinance shall be passed finally on the date it is introduced, except in cases of special emergency involving the health or safety of the people or their property. No ordinance shall be regarded as an emergency ordinance unless the emergency is defined and declared in a preamble to such ordinance, separately voted upon, and receiving the affirmative vote of a majority of members present. No ordinance making a grant, renewal, or extension, whatever its kind or nature, of any franchise or special privilege of any kind or nature, shall be passed as an emergency measure, and except as provided in General Laws Chapter 166, Sections 70 and 71, no such grant, renewal or extension shall be made otherwise than by ordinance. An emergency measure shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify.
- (b) General Measures - Every adopted measure shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify. An ordinance shall not be amended or repealed except by the same process by which it was adopted.
- (c) Charter Objection - On the first occasion that the question on adoption of a measure is put to the city council, a single member present may object to the taking of the vote, and postpone the vote until the next regular or special meeting of the city council. If two or more present members object, the vote shall be postponed until the next regular meeting. This procedure shall not be used more than once for any specific matter regardless of whether it has been amended. A charter objection shall have privilege over all motions but shall be raised prior to or at the call for a vote by the presiding officer and all debate shall cease. The charter objection process shall not apply to emergency measures as defined in this section.
- (d) Publication - Every proposed ordinance, or loan order, except emergency ordinances and revenue loan orders, shall be published once in full in at least one local newspaper, on the city website, and in any additional manner as may be provided by ordinance, at least ten days before its final passage. After final passage, the ordinance as amended and completed, shall again be published once in the manner provided above, except as follows. If any ordinance or proposed ordinance, or codification thereof, shall exceed in length eight pages of ordinary book print, then there shall be no requirement to advertise as provided above if the same is published by the city council in a municipal bulletin or printed pamphlet or on the city website, but otherwise in conformity with said provisions, except for zoning ordinances or amendments thereto, a summary of which shall be published at least two times in a local newspaper and on the city website. The publication of such zoning summaries shall include a statement indicating where copies of the ordinance may be examined and obtained and a statement that claims of invalidity by reason of any defect in the procedure of adoption may only be made within ninety days after the posting or the second publication. Emergency ordinances shall be published at the earliest practicable moment.

SECTION 2-11: GOAL SETTING

- (a) At the beginning of each council term, within the first six months, the council shall develop council goals for the upcoming term, in consideration of previous council goals and the strategic needs and vision of the city.
- (b) The council shall seek input from the city manager, department heads, multi-member bodies, and the public in the development of council goals.
- (c) The council shall consider intercity and regional issues in the development and prioritization of council goals and strategic vision.
- (d) The council may develop both short- and long-term goals. To the extent practicable, goals shall be measurable, include timelines for implementation, and relevant budget requirements.
- (e) The council shall establish a broad public engagement process to incorporate public input into development of council goals. This shall include at least two public hearings at which public comment is accepted and such additional outreach efforts as the councils deems appropriate. The goal-setting and public engagement process under this section shall be publicized via multiple media avenues available to the city, including on its website, social media pages, and through direct electronic communications. The council shall also review the results of any city-wide surveys or other public engagement tools undertaken in the prior term.
- (f) The council shall publish its goals for the term in multiple media avenues available to the city, including on its website, social media pages, council newsletters and through direct electronic communications.
- (g) The council shall establish a public method of tracking progress in meeting the established goals.

SECTION 2-13: CITY MANAGER EVALUATION

The city council shall conduct an annual review of the city manager as provided in section 3-1(e).

ARTICLE 3: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

SECTION 3-1: CITY MANAGER APPOINTMENT; QUALIFICATIONS AND ELIGIBILITY; TERM OF OFFICE; COMPENSATION; EVALUATION; GOAL-SETTING

- (a) Appointment - The city council shall appoint a city manager who shall be sworn to the faithful performance of the duties and who shall be the chief executive officer of the city and shall be responsible for the administration of all departments, multiple member bodies, commissions, boards, and officers of the city, except those employees appointed by city council, the school committee, and any official appointed by the governor or elected official.
- (b) Qualifications and Eligibility - The city manager shall be appointed on the basis of administrative and executive qualifications only and need not be a resident of the city or commonwealth when appointed. No member of the city council shall, during their term of office, be chosen as city manager, and no person who has within two years been elected to or served in any elective office in the city shall be chosen as city manager.
- (c) Term of Office - The city manager shall hold office at the pleasure of the city council. The city council shall enter into an employment agreement with the city manager for a term not to exceed five (5) years; the city manager may, however, serve consecutive successive terms upon a vote by city council to renew or extend the employment agreement. The terms of the employment agreement shall be consistent with the provisions of this charter.
- (d) Compensation - The city manager shall receive such compensation as the city council shall fix by contract. The city manager shall not receive any other compensation from the city other than that fixed by city council.
- (e) Evaluation – Annually the city council shall prepare and deliver to the city manager a written review of the city manager’s performance in a manner provided by ordinance. This review shall include specific metrics related to council goals outlined in Section [2-12]. The council shall provide opportunities for public participation throughout the review process.
- (f) Goal-setting – The city council and city manager shall collaboratively develop and prioritize goals for the city manager that shall be used to measure the city manager’s performance during the evaluation process and to provide guidance to the city manager. These city manager goals shall take into account the council’s goal set pursuant to Section 2-12.

SECTION 3-2: POWERS AND DUTIES.

The city manager shall be the chief executive officer of the city and shall be responsible to the city council for the proper administration of all city affairs placed under the city manager’s charge by or under the charter. The city manager shall be responsible for implementation of policies established by the city council, as reflected in the city council’s votes and resolutions and in ordinances, appropriation orders, and loan authorizations.

The powers and duties of the city manager shall include, but are not intended to be limited to, the following:

General:

- a) Supervise, direct, and be responsible for the efficient administration of all city activities placed under the manager’s control by the charter, by ordinance, or otherwise, including all officers appointed by the manager and their respective agencies.

- b) Be responsible for the coordination of the activities of all agencies under their control with the activities of all other city agencies, including those elected by the voters of Cambridge and those appointed by other elected officials.
- c) Ensure that all the provisions of the General Laws, the city charter, city ordinances, and other votes of the city council that require enforcement by the manager or by officers or employees subject to the manager's supervision are faithfully carried out and enforced.
- d) Be responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a public tracking tool to provide city residents with information about: 1) proposed policy orders, 2) voting status of proposed policy orders, and 3) the status of actions taken by the executive branch to implement policy orders that have been approved by city council.
- e) Make such recommendations, from time to time, to the city council that, in the manager's judgment, are deemed necessary or desirable.
- f) Determine the existence of a public emergency or danger and shall assume responsibility for the maintenance of public safety, public order, and enforcement of laws. The manager shall notify the council president as soon as practical, but within 24 hours, of such a public emergency or danger and of the actions taken. Should the public emergency continue more than 24 hours, the city council may meet to review, ratify, or terminate said public emergency.
- g) Authorize any subordinate officer or employee to exercise any power or perform any function that the city manager is authorized to exercise or perform, provided, however, all acts performed under any such delegation shall be deemed to be the acts of the city manager.
- h) Pursuant to section 3-3, appoint all members of multi-member bodies for whom no other method of appointment is provided by General Law, the charter, ordinance, or city council resolution. Appointments made by the city manager to multi-member bodies shall be subject to confirmation by the city council, as provided by ordinance.

Appointment, personnel, hiring, and bargaining

- i) Pursuant to section 3-3, appoint, and may remove, subject to the civil service law and any collective bargaining agreements as may be applicable, all department heads, city officers, and employees of city agencies under the direction and supervision of the city manager. Prior to posting and beginning the search for a department head position, the city manager shall meet with the city council to discuss priorities for the department and desirable qualifications and qualities of candidates for the position.
- j) Administer personnel related matters, including bargaining with municipal employees, and fix the compensation of all municipal employees appointed by the manager within the limits established by appropriation and any ordinance or collective bargaining agreement.
- k) Inquire at any time into the conduct of office of any officer, employee, or department under the City Manager's supervision.

Financial:

- l) Prepare and submit an annual operating budget under the policy guidance of, and taking into account the goals set by, the council.
- m) Assure that a full and complete record of the financial and administrative activities of the city is kept and shall render a complete written report to the city council at the end of each fiscal year and at such times as the city council may reasonably require.
- n) Execute contracts, subject to such prior city council approval as may be prescribed by ordinance.

Property, facilities, and procurement:

o) Have full jurisdiction over the rental and use of all city facilities, except school buildings and grounds. The City Manager shall be responsible for the maintenance and repair of all city-owned property, including, if authorized by an ordinance establishing a central city maintenance department, school buildings and grounds.

p) Ensure that a full and complete inventory of all property owned by the city, both real and personal, is kept.

q) Execute all deeds conveying city real property, but that any such conveyance shall have been previously authorized by the vote of the city council pursuant to the applicable provisions of the General Laws.

Communication:

r) Publish an annual report comprising the complete statistical record of the operations of every city department, commission, and committee for the preceding year. Said report shall be published annually and made available for distribution to the public not later than four months after the end of the period on which the report is based.

s) Be responsible for city government communications, including, but not limited to, developing a timely and comprehensive communication strategy, coordinating the announcements and messages from department heads, communicating regularly, via all available media avenues, with residents, ensuring that all aspects of the city's website are kept up to date, and soliciting recommendations for greater communication from residents.

t) Maintain a public-facing data and performance management initiative that periodically monitors, reports, and benchmarks on 1) progress on the implementation of the council's strategic priorities and key performance measures 2) the activities of the city as a whole and city departments, commissions, and committees, and 3) any other subject matter that, in the discretion of the manager, focuses on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of city services.

Additional duties:

u) Perform such other functions as necessary or as may be assigned to the office of city manager by the General Laws, by this charter, by ordinance or other vote of the city council, or otherwise.

SECTION 3-3: APPOINTMENTS AND REMOVALS

The city manager shall make all appointments and removals in the departments, multi-member bodies and offices of the city for whose administration the city manager is responsible, except as otherwise provided in this charter.

(a) Department Heads – the city manager shall appoint, and may remove, subject to the civil service law and any collective bargaining agreements as may be applicable, all department heads, city officers, and employees of city agencies under the direction and supervision of the city manager. Prior to posting and beginning the search for a department head position, the city manager shall meet with the city council to discuss priorities for the department and the desirable qualifications and qualities of candidates for the position.

(b) Multiple Member Bodies – the city manager shall appoint all members of multi-member bodies for whom no other method of appointment is provided by general law, the charter, ordinance, or city council resolution. Appointments made by the city manager to multi-member bodies shall be subject to confirmation by the city council, as provided by ordinance.

(c) Notification to city council - The city manager shall report every appointment and vacancy of department heads made to the city council at the next meeting thereof following such appointment or vacancy. The city manager may authorize the head of a city agency, for whose administration the city

manager is responsible, to appoint and remove subordinates in such city agency, subject to the provisions of this charter.

(d) Interference by City Council Prohibited – Except as provided in Section 2-7 and by this charter, neither the city council nor any of its committees or members shall direct or request the appointment of any person to, or their removal from, office by the city manager or any of their subordinates, or in any manner take part in the appointment or removal of officers and employees in that portion of the service of said city for whose administration the city manager is responsible. Except as otherwise provided by this charter, the city council and its members shall not give orders to any subordinate of the city manager either publicly or privately and shall direct all requests for service through the city manager.

SECTION 3-4. ACTING CITY MANAGER.

- (a) Temporary absence - The city manager shall, by letter filed with the city council and a copy filed with the city clerk, designate a qualified city officer, department head or administrative employee to exercise the powers and perform the duties of the office during temporary absence. During the first ten working days of a temporary absence of the city manager, the city council may revoke such designation by a two-thirds vote and, after the expiration of ten working days, by a majority vote, whereupon it may appoint another qualified city officer, department head or employee to serve as acting city manager until the city manager shall return and resume the manager's duties.
- (b) Vacancy - Any vacancy in the office of city manager shall be filled as soon as possible by the city council, but pending such appointment the city council shall designate a qualified city officer, department head, administrative employee, or former city manager to exercise the powers and perform the duties of the city manager on an acting basis. The appointment of an acting city manager shall be for a term not to exceed four (4) months; provided, however, one renewal, not to exceed a second four (4) months, may be permitted.
- (c) Powers and Duties -The powers of a temporary or acting city manager shall be limited to matters not admitting of delay; provided, however, no temporary city manager under (a) above shall have authority to make permanent appointments or removals to department head positions.

SECTION 3-5: REMOVAL

Before the city manager may be removed prior to the end of the contract term, the city manager shall have the right to be heard publicly at a meeting of the city council prior to the final vote on the question of removal, but before and during such hearing the city council may suspend the city manager from office. The action of the city council in suspending or removing the city manager shall be final, it being the intention of this provision to vest all authority and fix all responsibility for such suspension or removal in the city council.

ARTICLE 4: SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SECTION 4-1: COMPOSITION; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY

(a) Composition - There shall be a school committee which shall consist of seven (7) members. Six (6) of these members shall be nominated and elected by the voters of the city at large. The council president/chair shall serve, by virtue of the office, as the chair of the school committee, with all of the same powers and duties as the members elected by the voters as school committee members.

Commented [MW2]: Major decision point

(b) Term of Office - The term of office for the elected school committee members shall be 2 years, beginning on the first Monday in January after the election, except when that first Monday falls on a legal holiday, then the term shall begin on the following day and until the successors have been qualified.

(c) Eligibility - A school committee member shall at the time of election be a voter. If a school committee member removes from the city during the term for which that person was elected, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section 4-6.

SECTION 4-2: SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR. VICE CHAIR. CLERK (if applicable)

(a) Chair - The council president/chair, as school committee chair, shall preside at all meetings of the school committee, regulate its proceedings and shall decide all questions of order. The school committee chair shall appoint all members of all subcommittees of the school committee, whether special or standing. The school committee chair shall have the same powers to vote upon all measures coming before the school committee as any other member of the school committee. The school committee chair shall perform the duties consistent with the office and as provided by this charter or by vote of the school committee.

(b) Vice-Chair - As soon as practical after the school committee members-elect have been qualified following the regular city election, the school committee shall organize by electing 1 of the persons elected as a member of the school committee to serve as school committee vice-chair. The school committee vice-chair shall preside in the absence of the council president/chair.

Commented [MW3]: Depends on decision above

SECTION 4-3: PROHIBITIONS

No member of the school committee shall hold any other compensated city position. No former member of the school committee shall hold any compensated appointed city office or city employment until 1 year following the date on which that member's service on the school committee terminated. This section shall not prevent a city officer or other city employee who has vacated a position in order to serve as a member of the school committee from returning to the same office or other position of city employment held at the time the position was vacated; provided, however, no such person shall be eligible for any other municipal position until at least 1 year following the termination of service as a member of the school committee.

SECTION 4-4: COMPENSATION; EXPENSES

(a) Compensation - The city council may, by ordinance, establish an annual salary for the elected members of the school committee. No ordinance increasing or reducing the salary of elected members of the school committee shall be effective unless it has been adopted by a two-thirds vote of the full city council. No ordinance increasing the salary of the elected members of the school committee shall be effective unless it has been adopted during the first 18 months of the term for which elected school committee members are elected and unless it provides that the salary increase is to take effect upon the organization of the city government following the next regular city election.

(b) Expenses - Subject to appropriation, the school committee members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses in the performance of their duties. The actual and necessary expenses shall be defined in the rules and regulations of the school committee

SECTION 4-5: SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The school committee shall have all powers which are conferred on school committees by the General Laws and the additional powers and duties provided by charter, ordinance, or otherwise and not inconsistent with the General Laws. The powers and duties of the school committee shall include:

- (a) selecting and removing a superintendent of the schools who shall be charged with the administration of the school system, subject only to policy guidelines and directives adopted by the school committee and, upon the recommendation of the superintendent, to establish and appoint assistant or associate superintendents as authorized by the General Laws;
- (b) making all reasonable policies, rules and regulations for the management of the public school system and for conducting the business of the school committee as deemed necessary or desirable; and
- (c) adopting and overseeing the administration of an annual operating budget for the school department, subject to appropriation by the city council; provided, however, that the school committee shall have general charge and superintendence of all school buildings and grounds and shall furnish all school buildings with proper fixtures, furniture and equipment; provided further, that the school committee shall provide ordinary maintenance of all school buildings and grounds, unless a central municipal maintenance department, which may include maintenance of school buildings and grounds, is established; provided further, that whenever the school committee shall determine that additional classrooms are necessary to meet the educational needs of the community, at least 1 member of the school committee, or a designee of the school committee, shall serve on the agency, board or committee for the planning or construction of the new, remodeled or renovated school building.

SECTION 4-6: FILLING OF VACANCIES

In all occurrences of a vacancy, the city clerk shall notify the school committee and the chairperson of the board of election commissioners of the vacancy within 7 days. Within 7 days after notification, the chairperson of the board of election commissioners or a designee shall certify, in writing, to the city clerk the name of the defeated candidate for the office of school committee with the next highest number of votes at the municipal election at which school committee were elected for the term in which the vacancy occurs. If the person is eligible and willing to serve, the city clerk shall administer the oath of office to the person within 15 days after certification and the person shall serve. If the person who is eligible declines the office, is not eligible and willing to serve, or fails to take the oath of office within the time period set forth in this section, then the person with the next highest number of votes at the election who is eligible and willing to serve shall serve.

Where no defeated candidate is eligible and/or willing to serve, the process for filling the vacancy shall be determined by the number of days remaining until the next municipal election.

If a vacancy occurs:

- (i) more than 180 days until the next municipal election, there shall be a special election.
- (ii) 180 days or less prior to any regular municipal election, then the seat remains vacant until the next regular municipal election.

ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

SECTION 5-1: ORGANIZATION OF CITY AGENCIES

The organization of the city into operating agencies to provide services and administer the government may be accomplished only through an administrative order submitted to the city council by the city manager. No administrative order may originate with the city council.

The city manager may, subject only to express prohibitions in a general law or this charter, submit proposals to reorganize, consolidate or abolish a city agency, in whole or in part, or to establish a new city agency as is deemed necessary, but no function assigned by this charter to a particular city agency may be discontinued or assigned to any other city agency unless specified by this charter. The city manager may prepare and submit to the city council, administrative orders that establish operating divisions for the orderly, efficient or convenient conduct of the business of the city. These administrative orders shall be accompanied by a message from the city manager which explains the expected benefits and advises the city council if an administrative order shall require amendments, insertions, revisions, repeal or otherwise of existing ordinances.

Whenever the city manager proposes an administrative order, the city council shall hold 1 or more public hearings on the proposal giving notice by publication in a local newspaper, which notice shall describe the scope of the proposal and the time and place at which the public hearing will be held, not less than 7 nor more than 14 days following the publication. An organization or reorganization plan shall become effective at the expiration of 60 days following the date the proposal is submitted to the city council unless the city council shall, by a majority vote, within that 60-day period vote to disapprove the plan. The city council may vote only to approve or to disapprove the plan and may not vote to amend or to alter it.

SECTION 5-2: MERIT PRINCIPLES

All appointments and promotions of city officers and employees shall be made on the basis of merit and fitness demonstrated by examination, past performance, or by other evidence of competence and suitability. Each person appointed to fill an office or position shall be a person especially fitted by education, training, and previous work experience to perform the duties of the office or position.

ARTICLE 6 FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

SECTION 6-1: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the city shall begin on July 1 and shall end on June 30, unless another period is required by the General Laws.

SECTION 6-2: ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

At least 60 days before the end of the or calendar year, the president/chair/mayor of the council shall call a meeting of the council prior to the commencement of the budget process, to review the financial condition of the city, revenue and expenditure forecasts, and other information relevant to the budget process. The president/chair/mayor also shall invite the city's state legislative delegation, representatives of the school committee and other relevant stakeholders to attend this meeting.

Commented [4]: by Nov 1

SECTION __: BUDGETARY PRIORITIES

Prior to the end of the calendar year, the city council shall develop and publish budgetary priorities that take into consideration the council goals created pursuant to Section 2-12, with input from the city manager and the community. There shall be broad public engagement in diverse formats with opportunities for the public to provide input, including at least one public hearing. The budget developed by the city manager will outline how the proposed budget is consistent with the council's budgetary priorities

SECTION 6-3: SUBMISSION OF OPERATING BUDGET; BUDGET MESSAGE

At least 60 days before the beginning of the fiscal year (or on or about May 1st), the city manager shall submit to the city council a proposed operating budget for all city agencies, which shall include the school department, for the ensuing fiscal year with an accompanying budget message and supporting documents. The budget message submitted by the city manager shall explain the operating budget in fiscal terms and in terms of work programs for all city agencies. It shall outline the proposed fiscal policies of the city for the ensuing fiscal year, describe important features of the proposed operating budget and include any major variations from the current operating budget, fiscal policies, revenues and expenditures together with reasons for these changes. The proposed operating budget shall provide a complete fiscal plan of all city funds and activities and shall be in the form the city manager deems desirable; provided, however, that the budget for elected officials shall identify the cost of compensation and the cost of benefits for those officials. The school budget, as adopted by the school committee shall be submitted to the city manager at least 30 days before the submission of the proposed operating budget to the city council. The city manager shall notify the school committee of the date by which the proposed budget of the school committee shall be submitted to the city manager. The city manager and the superintendent of schools shall coordinate the dates and times of the school committee's budget process under the General Laws.

Commented [5]: State Law dictates 170 days after organization of the city, which is roughly June 20th or 10 days before the beginning of the fiscal year

Commented [6]: 60 days - early may, aligned with current process
90 days - early april

SECTION 6-4: ACTION ON THE OPERATING BUDGET

(a) Public Hearing - The city council shall publish a notice of the proposed operating budget as submitted by the mayor. The notice shall state: (i) the times and places where copies of the entire proposed operating budget are available for inspection by the public; and (ii) the date, time and place when a public hearing on the proposed operating budget will be held by the city council, not less than 14 days after publication of the notice.

Commented [7]: Confirm with current practice?

(b) Adoption of the Budget - The city council shall adopt the proposed operating budget, which may have amendments, before the end of the fiscal year. In amending the proposed operating budget, the city council may delete or decrease amounts except expenditures required by law; provided, however, that except on the recommendation of the city manager, the city council shall not increase any item in or the total of the proposed operating budget, unless otherwise authorized by the General Laws. If the city council fails to act on an item in the proposed operating budget prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, that amount shall, without any action by the city council, become a part of the appropriations for the year and be available for the purposes specified.

(c) Availability of the Operating Budget – In addition to any other posting requirements under law, immediately after the submission of the proposed budget to the city council, the city manager shall post the entire budget document on the city's website. Said proposed budget document shall remain posted during the city council review process contained in this article. After the enactment of the budget, the final adopted budget shall be posted on the city's website and shall remain there throughout the fiscal year for which it is in effect. The final budget document shall reflect any amendments made by the city council and approved by the city manager and shall indicate that it is the final budget of the city.

SECTION 6-5: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

(a) Submission - The city manager shall submit a capital improvement program to the city council at least 60 days before the start of each fiscal year. The capital improvement program shall include:

- (1) a general summary of its contents;
- (2) a list of all capital improvements proposed to be undertaken during the next 5 years, with supporting information as to the need for each capital improvement;
- (3) cost estimates, methods of financing and recommended time schedules for each improvement; and
- (4) the estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining each facility and piece of major equipment involved.

This information shall be annually revised by the city manager with regard to the capital improvements still pending or in the process of being acquired, improved or constructed.

(b) Public Hearing - The city council shall publish a notice stating: (i) the times and places where entire copies of the capital improvements program are available for inspection by the public; and, (ii) the date, time and place of a public hearing on the plan to be held by the city council not less than 14 days after publication of the notice.

(c) Adoption - At any time after the public hearing but before the end of the current fiscal year, the city council shall by resolution adopt the capital improvements program, which may be amended, provided that each amendment shall be voted on separately and that an increase in the capital improvements program as submitted shall clearly identify the method of financing to accomplish the proposed increase.

SECTION 6-6: INDEPENDENT AUDIT

The city council shall annually provide for an outside audit of the books and accounts of the city to be conducted by a certified public accountant or a firm of certified public accountants, which has no personal interest, direct or indirect, in the fiscal affairs of the city or any of its officers. The city manager shall annually provide to the city council a sum of money sufficient to satisfy the estimated cost of conducting the audit as presented to the city manager, in writing, by the city council. The award of a contract to audit shall be made by the city council on or before September 15 of each year. The report of the audit shall be filed in final form with the city council not later than March 1 in the year following its award. At least every 5 years, the city council shall conduct a competitive procurement process to retain these auditing services.

Commented [8]: current practice?

Commented [9]: just keep this the same day at the regular budget?

Commented [10]: report on surplus

ARTICLE 7: ELECTIONS

SECTION 7-1: CITY ELECTION

The regular municipal election shall take place on the Tuesday next following the first Monday of November in every even-numbered year.

SECTION 7-2: ELIGIBILITY OF VOTERS (Based upon current House Bills 3576 and 671)

Every citizen and noncitizen who (i) is at least 16 years old, (ii) is not temporarily or permanently disqualified by law because of corrupt practices in respect to elections, (iii) is a resident of Cambridge at the time at the time they register and (iv) has otherwise complied with the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 51 may have their name entered on the list of voters in Cambridge and may vote therein in any municipal election.

SECTION 7-3: PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

All members of the city council and the school committee shall be elected at large by proportional representation.

SECTIONS 7-4 and following

[The remaining procedural sections of the charter that have been adopted by Cambridge require updating by the Elections Commission and the Law Department in line with current best practices, modern language, the use of modern voting equipment, and current legal requirements.]

ARTICLE 8: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION, AND COMMUNICATION

SECTION 8.1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The city shall treat public engagement as an integral part of effective and trusted governance, not just as an occasional process or activity. The city shall treat engagement as a “multi-channel” endeavor that includes face-to-face meetings, virtual interactions, and other online communications. The departments of city government shall encourage collaboration in public engagement efforts with other government jurisdictions and authorities, anchor institutions, community-based organizations, civic groups, and individual residents.

Commented [MW11]: This section is adapted from the National Civic League’s 9th Edition Model City Charter. ([Model-City-Charter—9th-Edition.pdf](#) ([nationalcivicleague.org](#)); page 55)

SECTION 8.2 INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT AND COORDINATE ENGAGEMENT

The city shall establish new institutional structures or adapt existing structures to oversee, support, coordinate, track, and measure engagement on an ongoing basis. These structures may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Council committees that include residents and other stakeholders
- (b) Departments or administrative positions
- (c) Public engagement commissions
- (d) Community advisory boards, including boards designated to address the concerns of specific populations
- (e) Youth commissions
- (f) Participatory budgeting processes and commissions

Commented [MW12]: This section is adapted from the National Civic League’s 9th Edition Model City Charter. ([Model-City-Charter—9th-Edition.pdf](#) ([nationalcivicleague.org](#)); page 56)

SECTION 8.3 PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

To ensure public engagement centers on the needs and goals of community members, the city shall uphold the following principles, using them as the basis of public engagement protocols and in the establishment of public engagement structures:

(a) Equity in engagement. Principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion should guide the design and execution of public engagement activities. When engaging community members, city officials should identify and proactively reach out to the community in its full diversity. To ensure that public engagement activities are not attended only by people already active in local government and politics, city officials should regularly recruit residents through face-to-face or personal written invitations, social media requests, and randomized selection methods. Materials should be written in plain, comprehensible English, and should also be translated into the other predominant languages that residents speak and read.

Traditionally excluded and marginalized individuals and communities should be included in ways they themselves identify as authentic and meaningful. City officials should co-design engagement processes with community members to meet the needs of the communities served. Processes should respect a range of values, interests, perspectives, experiences, cultures, and knowledge of those involved.

The city should expect local the organizations and networks it works with to engage their members in equitable and deliberative ways, so that the input received is representative of their constituents.

The city should use an equity lens to evaluate data on impacts of engagement, including costs, benefits, and responsibilities.

(b) Accountability in engagement. There should be meaningful opportunities for community members to bring issues, concerns, and priorities to city officials to influence city policy,

Commented [MW13]: This section is adapted from the National Civic League’s 9th Edition Model City Charter. ([Model-City-Charter—9th-Edition.pdf](#) ([nationalcivicleague.org](#)); page 57)

ordinances, and actions. Public engagement activities should be designed to appropriately fit the legal authority, scope, character, and potential impact of a policy, program, or project. There should be clarity about process sponsorship, purpose, design, and how the results will be used. The purpose and potential influence of each public engagement process should be known by all participants in advance but should be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions during implementation.

(c) Transparency in engagement. Communications about public issues and public engagement opportunities should ensure community members can engage effectively. Communications should be made in the predominant languages that residents understand. Participants should have the opportunity to bring and share their own experiences as well as information they have gathered about the issues at hand. Full and complete results should be shared in a manner accessible to the public, and explanations of how the results will be used or how they will influence decisions should be provided to process participants and the broader public.

(d) Accessibility in engagement. Public engagement activities should be broadly accessible in terms of schedule, location, facilities, and information and communication technologies. Schedules should accommodate a variety of participants. Locations should be nearby and reachable via affordable transit, and some engagement activities should be conducted in places where community members already gather regularly. Facilities should be welcoming public spaces and not present physical or cultural barriers to participation. Online engagement opportunities should use technologies that are freely available to residents and attend to barriers people may face, such as: no access to broadband, limited proficiency with technology, and challenges related to deaf-blind accessibility.

(e) Collaboration in engagement. Public engagement efforts should build on and help develop long-term, collaborative working relationships and mutual learning opportunities with residents of all ages, civic groups, organizational partners, and other governments. This may include project-specific or ongoing community engagement initiatives.

(f) Evaluation of engagement activities. Each public engagement activity and the state of engagement overall should be evaluated through participant feedback, analysis, and learning that is shared publicly and broadly. The ideas, preferences, and/or recommendations contributed by participants should be fully documented and be made available to participants and the broader public. Lessons learned should be applied to future public engagement activities and contribute to the city's overall engagement plan.

SECTION 8.4: RESIDENT ASSEMBLY

(a) Purpose: In order to expand access to city government generally and include voices not typically heard in decision making, the city council has the authority to establish and maintain one or more Resident Assemblies.

(b) Powers: Notwithstanding any other section of this charter, the city council may, by ordinance, delegate to the Resident Assembly:

- (i) The power to issue recommendations on questions posed by the city council and to specify deadlines by which the city council or city manager must publicly respond to the recommendations by hearing or other means.
- (ii) The power to determine whether a resident initiative petition commenced under Section 8 should be submitted to the city council or voters as provided in Section 8 notwithstanding the petition's failure to meet that Section's procedural requirements.
- (iii) The power to issue endorsements or counter-endorsements referencing majority and/or minority opinions of the assembly, for initiatives submitted to the city council or voters, including initiatives that satisfy Section 8's procedural requirements.

- (iv) The power, on its own initiative, to make recommendations or propose draft legislation for review by the city council or voters.

(c) Mandatory Specifications:

- (i) The city council shall convene at least one Resident Assembly each council term.
- (ii) Any Resident Assembly created pursuant to this section must have the following characteristics:
 - a) The assembly shall be created via a sortition process to be provided by ordinance and shall be open to all citizen and non-citizen residents over the age of 16.
 - b) The procedures for selecting membership must include a random lottery such that the Resident Assembly is representative of the city's population.
 - c) Membership on the Resident Assembly must be voluntary, and members must be permitted to resign for any reason.
 - d) No fewer than 30 people may serve on the Resident Assembly at any given time.
 - e) The Resident Assembly must receive sufficient resources to exercise its powers effectively, including financial resources, staff support, translation services and space for deliberation.
 - f) The city shall take steps to remove barriers to participation. To ensure that participation is not a financial burden, assembly members must be offered a stipend that is sufficient to compensate members for their time and for reasonable costs incurred by participation, including transportation to the meeting, dependent care, or similar expenses. The city shall provide interpretation and translation support and accessibility technology.
 - g) The city shall provide resources for staff support to the resident assembly.

(d) Discretionary Specifications: Subject to the other provisions of this section, the city council has discretion to define, by ordinance, other powers and specifications of a Resident Assembly, including:

- (i) The time and place of the Resident Assembly's deliberation.
- (ii) Issues or questions upon which the Resident Assembly must deliberate.
- (iii) The procedures by which the Resident Assembly deliberates.
- (iv) The length of term for members of the Resident Assembly.
- (v) The method by which members of the Resident Assembly may be replaced.

SECTION 8.5 FREE PETITION TO COUNCIL

The city council shall hold a public hearing and act with respect to every citizen petition which is addressed to it, which petition shall not be required to take any particular form, and is signed by **one-hundred-fifty (150)** voters, or more, and which seeks the passage of a measure concerning matters other than action under section 8-7. The hearing shall be held by the city council, and the action by the city council shall be taken not later than three months after the petition is filed with the clerk of the council or the secretary of the school committee, as may be appropriate. Hearings on two or more petitions filed under this section may be held at the same time and place. The clerk of the council shall provide notice of the hearing by mail and, if practicable, by phone or email, to the ten persons whose names appear first on the petition at least forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing. Notice, by publication, of all such hearings shall be at public expense.

SECTION 8.6 RESIDENT INITIATIVE MEASURES

- (a) Commencement: Initiative procedures shall be started by the filing with the clerk of the council of a proposed initiative petition on a form prepared by the city. The petition shall be addressed to the city council, shall contain a request for the passage of a particular measure which shall be set forth in full in the petition, and shall be physically signed by at least **500**

voters as certified by the Board of Registrars. The petition shall be accompanied by an affidavit signed by 10 voters and containing their residential addresses stating they will constitute the petitioners committee and be responsible for circulating the petition and filing it in proper form. Signatures to an initiative petition need not all be on 1 paper but all papers pertaining to any 1 measure shall be fastened together and shall be filed as a single instrument, containing on the petition the number and street of the residence of each signer accompanied by the endorsement of the name and residence address of the person designated as filing the petition. The board of registrars shall attach to the petition a certificate showing the results of the board of registrars' examination and shall return the petition to the clerk of the council. A copy of the board of registrars' certificate shall also be mailed to the petitioners committee.

- (b) Referral to solicitor: Immediately following certification of 250 signatures, the clerk of the council shall deliver a copy of the petition to the city solicitor. Within 21 days after receipt of a copy of the petition, the city solicitor shall advise the council in writing whether the measure as proposed may lawfully utilize the initiative process and whether, in its present form, it may be lawfully adopted by the council. If the opinion of the city solicitor is that the measure is not in proper form, the reply shall state the reasons for this opinion in full, and a copy of the opinion of the city solicitor shall be mailed to the petitioners committee.
- (c) Action on Petitions: If the opinion of the city solicitor is that the petition is in a proper form, within 60 days, the city solicitor shall act with respect to each initiative petition by passing it without change, by passing a measure which is stated to be in lieu of the initiative measure, or by rejecting it. The passage of a measure which is in lieu of an initiative measure shall be considered to be a rejection of the initiative measure. If the council fails to act with respect to any initiative measure that is presented to it within 60 days after the date it has been notified by the city solicitor that it is in proper form, the initiative measure shall be considered to have been approved on the 61st day. If an initiative measure is rejected, the clerk of the council shall promptly give notice to the petitioners committee, by certified mail.
- (d) Supplementary Petitions: Thirty days (30) after the date an initiative petition has been rejected by the council, a supplemental initiative petition may be filed with the clerk of the council, but only by persons constituting the original petitioners committee. The supplemental initiative petition shall be physically signed by a number of additional voters which is equal to % percent of the total number of registered voters as of the date of the most recent city election. If the number of signatures to the supplemental petition is found to be sufficient by the board of registrars, the council shall call a special election to be held on a date fixed by it, not less than 35 nor more than 90 days after the date the council votes to call for the special election, and shall submit the proposed measure, without alteration, to the voters for determination. But if any other city election is to be held within 120 days after the date of the certification, the council may omit the calling of the special election and cause the question to appear on the election ballot at the next city election for determination by the voters.
- (e) Publication: The full text of any initiative measure which is submitted to the voters shall be published not less than 7 nor more than 21 days preceding the date of the election at which the question is to be voted upon. Additional copies of the full text shall be available for distribution to the public in the office of the city clerk and shall be published on the city bulletin board.
- (f) Form of Question: The ballots used when voting on a measure proposed by the voters under this Section shall contain a question in substantially the following form:

Shall the following measure, which was proposed by an initiative petition as described in the city charter, take effect? (Here, insert a fair, concise summary prepared by the City Solicitor.)
YES _____ NO _____

- (g) Required Voter Participation: For any measure to be effective under initiative petition, at least 20 percent of the registered voters as of the date of the most recent city election shall vote at the election upon which an initiative is submitted to the voters.
- (h) Time of Taking Effect: If a majority of the votes cast on the question, or other affirmative percent as required by general laws or this Charter, is in the affirmative and if the 20 percent voter participation requirement is met, the measure shall be deemed to be effective immediately, unless a later date is specified in the measure.

SECTION 8.7 INELIGIBLE MEASURES

None of the following shall be subject to the free petition or initiative procedures outlined in Section 8.6 and Section 8.7:

- (a) Proceedings relating to the internal organization or operation of any elected body
- (b) An emergency measure adopted in conformity with the Charter
- (c) The City budget as a whole
- (d) Votes for the temporary borrowing of money in anticipation of revenue
- (e) An appropriation of any sum of money, for any purpose, amounting to less than 1 percent of the total annual budget of the City
- (f) Any appropriation for the payment of the City's debt or debt service
- (g) An appropriation of funds to implement a contract or collective bargaining agreement
- (h) Proceedings relating to election, appointment, removal, discharge, employment, promotion, transfer, or demotion of employees or appointed or elected officials or members of multiple-member bodies or any other personnel action
- (i) Any proceedings providing for the submission or referral of a matter to the voters at an election
- (k) Memorial resolutions
- (l) Any zoning petition that is subject to the city's zoning petition process

SECTION 8.8 SUBMISSION OF OTHER MATTERS TO VOTERS

The council may of its own motion, submit to the voters for adoption or rejection at any regular municipal election any measure with the same force and effect as is hereby provided for submission by petitions of voters. Such measures must originate within the council and pertain to affairs under said bodies' jurisdiction. Pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 53, Section 18A, non-binding public opinion advisory questions may be placed on the ballot at a regular municipal election.

SECTION 8.9: CONFLICTING PROVISIONS

If 2 or more measures passed at the same election contain conflicting provisions, only the 1 receiving the greatest number of affirmative votes shall take effect.

ARTICLE 9: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Commented [MW14]: These are mostly standard MA charter provisions, except where noted

SECTION 9-1. CHARTER CHANGES

This charter may be replaced, revised or amended in accordance with any procedure made available under the state constitution or by statutes enacted in accordance with the state constitution.

SECTION 9-2. SEVERABILITY

This charter is severable. If any provision of this charter is held invalid, the other provisions shall not be affected by this holding. If the application of this charter to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the application of the charter to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected.

SECTION 9-3. SPECIFIC PROVISION TO PREVAIL

To the extent that a specific provision of this charter conflicts with any provision expressed in general terms, the specific provision of the charter shall prevail.

SECTION 9-4. RULES AND REGULATIONS

A copy of all rules and regulations adopted by a city agency shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk not later than the effective date of the rule or regulation and shall be available for review by any person who requests such information at any reasonable time. Unless an emergency exists as determined by the **city manager**, no rule or regulation adopted by a city agency shall become effective until at least 5 days following the date it is filed.

SECTION 9-5. PERIODIC REVIEW OF CHARTER

Not later than July 1, **in each year ending in a 2**, the City Council shall provide for a review to be made of the city charter by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the special committee shall be voters of the city not holding elective office. The special committee shall file a report with the City Council within 1 year of its appointment recommending any changes to the city charter which it deems necessary or desirable, unless an extension is authorized by vote of the City Council. Action on any proposed charter changes shall be as authorized by the Massachusetts constitution or general laws.

Commented [MW15]: Existing Cambridge charter text

SECTION 9-6. PERIODIC REVIEW OF ORDINANCES

Not later than July 1, **in each year ending in a 5 or in a zero**, the city council shall provide for a review to be made of some or all of the ordinances of the city to prepare a proposed revision or recodification of them. This review shall be made by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the committee shall be voters of the city. The special committee shall file its report with the city clerk at a date specified by ordinance. The review of city ordinances shall be under the supervision of the city solicitor. Copies of any recommendations shall be made available to the public at a cost not to exceed the actual cost of the reproduction.

Commented [MW16]: Flagged, as this would be new. It is relatively standard, but it is more of a policy decision than 9-1 through 9-4.

SECTION 9-7. UNIFORM PROCEDURES GOVERNING MULTIPLE-MEMBER BODIES

(a) Meetings - All appointed multiple-member bodies of the city shall meet regularly at the times and places that the multiple-member body, by the body's own rules, prescribe. Special meetings of any multiple-member body shall be held on the call of the chairman or by a majority of the members of the body. Notice of the meeting shall be posted as required by law. Except as may otherwise be authorized by law, all meetings of all multiple-member bodies shall at all times be open to the public.

(b) Meeting Documents and Submissions - Each appointed multiple-member body shall determine its own rules and order of business within the bounds of any applicable ordinance that created it. Each multiple-member body shall provide for the keeping of agendas, minutes and related submissions of its proceedings. All such documents shall be a public record and certified copies shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk within 15 days of approval.

(c) Voting - If requested by a member, a vote of an appointed multiple-member body shall be taken by a roll call vote and the vote of each member shall be recorded in the minutes, but if the vote is unanimous, only that fact need be recorded.

(d) Quorum - A majority of the members of an appointed multiple-member body shall constitute a quorum. Unless some other provision is made by the multiple-member body's own rules while a quorum is present, except on procedural matters, a majority of the full membership of the body shall be required to vote on a matter representing an exercise of the powers of the multiple-member body. General Laws related to a vote to meet in "executive session" shall always require a majority of members of the body.

(e) Residency - Unless otherwise allowed by law, regulation, ordinance or by this charter, all members of multiple-member bodies shall be residents of the city at all times during that members term of office. If a member of a multiple-member body removes from the city during the term for which appointed, such seat shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled under section 3-3.

SECTION 9-8. NUMBER

Words importing the singular number may extend and be applied to several persons or things; words importing the plural number may include the singular.

SECTION 9-9. REFERENCES TO GENERAL LAWS

All references to General Laws contained in the charter refer to the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and are intended to refer to and to include any amendments or revisions to such chapters or sections or to the corresponding chapters and sections of any rearrangement, revision or recodification of such statutes enacted or adopted subsequent to the adoption of this charter.

SECTION 9-10. COMPUTATION OF TIME

In computing time under this charter the day of the act or event after which the designated period of time begins to run shall not be included. The last day of the period shall be included, unless it is Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, in which event the period shall be extended to the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. When the period of time designated is fewer than 7 days, intermediate Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays shall not be included, when the period is 7 days or more, Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays shall be included.

SECTION 9-11. OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A the city council members-elect and the school committee members-elect shall, on the first Monday in the January of each even-numbered year, meet and take an oath or affirmation to the faithful discharge of the duties of their office by the city clerk. If the first Monday in January of any even-numbered year falls on a legal holiday, the oaths or affirmations shall be taken on the following day.

Upon receiving the oath or affirmation, each official shall document the same by signing an oath or affirmation that shall be kept in a bound book maintained by the city clerk. In the case of the absence of any member-elect of the city council or school committee on the day the oath is administered, the oath or affirmation may at any time thereafter be administered to that person by the city clerk, the assistant city clerk, a judge of a court of record, or a justice of the peace.

SECTION 9-12. CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT

Every person who is elected or appointed to an office or as a member of a multiple-member body shall receive a certificate of that election or appointment from the city clerk. Except as otherwise provided by law, every person who is elected or appointed to an office or as a member of a multiple-member body, before performing any act under this election or appointment, shall take and subscribe to an oath or affirmation to qualify to enter upon the duties. A record of this oath shall be kept by the city clerk.

SECTION 9-13. LIMITATION ON OFFICE HOLDING

Unless otherwise allowed by law or this charter, no person shall simultaneously hold more than 1 city office or position of employment. This section may be waived by the city manager upon the appointment of a person to an additional office or position of employment by filing a notice of the waiver with an explanation and justification with the city clerk and city council. Any hours worked in any part-time position shall not be the same or otherwise conflict with the hours worked in a full-time position

SECTION 9-14. FELONY CONVICTION

An elected official who has been convicted of a state or federal felony while holding office shall be deemed to have vacated the office.

Commented [MW17]: Flagged. Committee is still deciding on this.

SECTION 9-15. ENFORCEMENT OF CHARTER PROVISIONS

It shall be the duty of the city manager to see that the charter is faithfully followed and complied with by all city agencies and city employees. Whenever it appears to the city manager that a city agency or city employee is failing to follow this charter, the city manager shall, in writing, cause notice to be given to that agency or employee directing compliance with the charter. If it shall appear to the city council that the city manager personally is not following the charter, it shall, by resolution, direct the attention of the city manager to those areas in which it believes there is a failure to comply with the charter. The procedures made available in chapter 231A of the General Laws may be used to determine the rights, duties, status or other legal relations arising under this charter, including any question of construction or validity which may be involved in such determination.

ARTICLE 10: TRANSITION PROVISIONS

SECTION 10-1 CONTINUATION OF EXISTING LAWS

All ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations and votes of the city council, which are in force at the time this charter is adopted and are not inconsistent with the provisions of this charter, shall continue in full force until amended or repealed. Where provisions of this charter, as amended, conflict with city ordinances, rules, regulations, orders, special acts and acceptances of laws of the commonwealth, the provisions of this charter shall govern. All provisions of city ordinances, rules, regulations, orders and administrative actions not superseded by this charter shall remain in force.

SECTION 10-2 EXISTING OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

Any person holding a city office or employment under the city shall retain such office or employment and shall continue to perform the duties of the office until provision shall have been made in accordance with this charter for the performance of the said duties by another person or agency. No person in the permanent full-time service or employment of the city shall forfeit pay grade or time in service. Each such person shall be retained in a capacity as similar to the person's former capacity as is practical.

SECTION 10-3 CONTINUATION OF GOVERNMENT

All city officers, boards, commissions or agencies shall continue to perform their duties until reappointed or until successors to their respective positions are fully appointed or elected or until their duties have been transferred and assumed by another city office, board, commission or agency.

SECTION 10-4 CONTINUATION OF OBLIGATIONS

All official bonds, obligations, contracts, and other instruments entered into or executed by or to the city before the adoption of this charter and all taxes, special assessments, fines, penalties, and forfeitures incurred or imposed, due or owing to the city, shall be enforced and collected, and all writs, prosecutions, actions and causes of action, except as herein otherwise provided, shall continue and remain unaffected by this charter. No legal act done by or in favor of the city shall be rendered invalid by the adoption of this charter.

SECTION 10-5 TRANSFER OF RECORDS AND PROPERTY

All records, property and equipment whatsoever of any office, board, commission, committee or agency or part thereof, the powers and duties of which are assigned in whole or in part to another city office, board, commission or agency, shall be transferred forthwith to such office, board, commission or agency.

SECTION 10-6 POLICY ORDER TRACKING

Within 18 months of the effective date of this charter, the City Manager will complete a study of the use of technology to categorize and track policy orders for the purpose of providing information to the public about the status of policy order votes and implementation of these policy orders by the executive branch pursuant to Section 3-9. The information shall be made available on the town website as soon as practicable.

SECTION 10-7 CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Within 6 months of the adoption of this charter, the city council shall create a Campaign Finance Committee to study public financing mechanisms and prepare recommendations with the goal of making running for office in Cambridge more accessible. The study committee shall consider a full range of options, including but not limited to voucher programs, campaign spending, and contribution limits. The

Commented [MW18]: The section is reserved for outlining the city's transition to the new charter. The following provisions include boilerplate transition language and reflect some of the specific issues that Charter Committee discussed having included in the transition article.

committee shall provide an analysis of the potential benefits and barriers of each option. No action is necessary if the city council has already taken action consistent with this provision.

The committee shall issue recommendations to the city council and the next charter review committee within 12 months of creation. The city council shall take action on the recommendations and/or refer recommendations to next charter review committee within 90 days of receipt.

SECTION 10-8 RESIDENT ASSEMBLY

The establishment of a resident assembly is intended to create an inclusive and representative group of voices that are not traditionally heard in city government. The resident assembly shall be selected by sortition from the general population, with effort made to reach residents of all backgrounds and experiences. Within 12 months of the effective date of this charter, the city council, in consultation with the city manager, city clerk, and relevant experts in the field, will complete a study on the best method for implementing the resident assembly as provided in Section 8. Within 18 months of the effective date of this charter, the city council shall enact ordinances establishing the resident assembly and commence the process of selecting members.

SECTION 10-9 AND BEYOND: RESERVED FOR TECHNICAL TRANSITION SECTIONS

[reserved for technical sections]

Appendix (if necessary)

- Committee Documents
 - Meeting Minutes
- Community Engagement Materials
 - Interview Summaries
 - Public Comments
- Other Charter Documents
 - Charter Review Committee Ordinance

DRAFT 11.30

12/5 Decision Points + Deliberation Information

1. [Finance Article](#)

- a. Does the committee approve recommending the draft finance article text and reflected timeline for Mayor-CAFO-Council Form of Government?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
- b. Does the committee approve recommending the draft finance article text and reflected timeline for Council-Manager Form of Government?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
- c. Does the committee want to recommend that the city council be allowed to amend the city budget (adding funds or line items but not increasing the overall budget) prior to approval and be allowed to override the mayor's budgetary amendments or veto?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

2. [Mayor and Council President's Role on School Committee](#)

- a. Does the committee recommend the Mayor serve on the school committee?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
- b. Does the committee recommend the Mayor is automatically the chair of the school committee?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
- c. Does the committee recommend the city council president serve on the school committee?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

3. [Felony Conviction](#)

- a. Does the committee recommend adding the provision:
"An elected official who has been convicted of a state or federal felony while holding office shall be deemed to have vacated the office."
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

4. [Resident Assembly](#)

- a. Council/Manager Form of Government

Revote:

A motion to adopt Section 2.ii.2.a.iii of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: Powers that would otherwise be exercised under state or municipal law by a city board or commission, including the Planning Board.

Yes – 3, No – 9, Present - 1, Absent – 2

- i. Does the committee recommend the above provision?
 1. Yes
 2. No

- b. Strong Mayor Form of Government
 - i. Does the committee wish to make a recommendation for who under the strong/mayor form of government would convene a resident assembly?
 - 1. Yes
 - 2. No
 - ii. If Yes, should the resident assembly be convened by the City Council or Mayor?

5. Recall

- a. What should the number of signatures be to initiate a recall?
 - i. 1000?
- b. What should the number of signatures be to trigger a recall election?
 - i. ___% of registered voters from the previous municipal election? (20% ~ 13,536)
 - ii. ___% of persons who voters in the previous municipal election? (20% ~ 4,668)
- c. Should there be a turnout threshold for the recall election to be valid?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. If yes, what should the turnout threshold be for the recall election

6. Group Petition

- a. Does the committee want to recommend adding a group petition provision to the charter?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
- b. What should the signature threshold be?

7. Citizen Initiative Petition

- a. Does the committee recommend adding a citizen initiative process to the charter?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
- b. Does the committee recommend a high or low signature threshold to get an initiative petition to get to the city solicitor review step of the initiative process?
 - i. High
 - ii. Low
 - 1. If low, then a higher threshold is required to get to the next step of going in front of city council, after city solicitor reviews.
- c. What should the initial signature threshold be?

8. Public Engagement and Participation Provision

- a. Does the committee recommend adding the below provision to Public Engagement Article:
“The City shall provide for a system that maintains and records public comment that is publicly available.”
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

9. City Council Compositions

- a. *A motion that the Committee recommend maintaining 2-year terms for city council.*
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

- b. *A motion for the Committee to recommend Cambridge maintain an at-large city council of nine members*
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

- 10. Does the committee recommend a Mayor/CAFI/Council form of government?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Decision Point Notes and Information

Finance Article

Timeline / Responsibilities - Mayor/CAFO/Council

- Fiscal Year: begin on July 1 and end on June 30
- Annual Budget Meeting: At least by Nov 1
 - ◆ Organized by *Mayor*
- City Council Budget Priorities: by end of Calendar year (following annual budget meeting)
- Submission of Budget: At least by May 1, by *Mayor*
 - ◆ Including the Capital Improvement Plan (same timeline)
- City Council approve by end of fiscal year

Timeline / Responsibilities - Council / Manager

- Fiscal Year: begin on July 1 and end on June 30
- Annual Budget Meeting: At least by Nov 1
 - ◆ Organized by *City Council President*
- City Council Budget Priorities: by end of Calendar year (following annual budget meeting)
- Submission of Budget: At least by May 1, by *City Manager*
 - ◆ Including the Capital Improvement Plan (same timeline)
- City Council approve by end of fiscal year

Boston Changes to Budget Process

Summary:

- Would allow the city council to increase or add line items, as long as the overall budget does not increase. Requires the mayor approve or return, if the mayor amends or rejects the budget, the city council can override with $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote.

Boston Process:

Measure Overview ([from ballotpedia](#))

“This measure made changes to the budget approval process in Boston by amending section 48 of the city charter. The measure amended the charter to allow the city council to make changes to the mayor's proposed budget before accepting it. At the time of the election, the city council could accept or reject the budget in full, or reduce certain line items. Under the charter amendment, the city council is able to increase or add line items as well (so long as the overall budget does not increase).[1][2]

The measure also required that the mayor approve or return the city council's budget within seven days. If the mayor takes no action on the budget in seven days, it becomes effective as if the mayor had signed it under the measure. If the mayor returns the council's budget with amendments or rejects it entirely, the measure gave the city council the ability to override the mayor with a two-thirds majority vote.[1][2]”

[Link to Full Measure](#)

School Committee - Mayor and City Council President Role

In 39 out of 44 mayor-council municipalities in Massachusetts the mayor serves as a member on the school committee. In only 18 of those 39 is the mayor not automatically designated as the chair.

~ In Winthrop, Watertown and Somerville the city council president also serves on the school committee.

The Mayor could be designated in the charter to be a member of the school committee but not default the chair, but the school committee could opt to elect them as the chair.

Examples of Mayor and Council President Role Text:

- Somerville: *“shall consist of the mayor and the president of the city council, ex officials [ex officio], neither of whom shall serve as chair,”*
- Framingham: *“The mayor shall serve, by virtue of office, as an ex-officio member of the school committee and shall only vote to break a tie vote and shall be ineligible to serve as chair, vice-chair or clerk.”*
- Newton: *“The mayor shall serve, ex officio, as a member of the school committee with full power to vote.”*
- Springfield: *“The school committee shall consist of the mayor, who shall be the chairman”*

See more details and examples on the comparables chart - [linked here](#).

Felony Conviction

Massachusetts State Law Chapter 279, Section 30 - [Link](#)

“If a convict sentenced by a court of the commonwealth or of the United States to imprisonment in the state prison or by a court of the United States to a federal penitentiary for a felony holds an office under the constitution or laws of the commonwealth at the time of sentence, it shall be vacated from the time of sentence.”

- If someone is not sentenced to jail time they would still be able to keep their seat.

Sample Language:

Amherst: *SECTION 9.11: FELONY CONVICTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS An elected official convicted of a state or federal felony while holding office shall be deemed to have vacated the office.*

Resident Assembly

One case study from Healthy Democracy - Eugene, Oregon had a Mayor-Council form of government.

- Task was “advised the City of Eugene on questions related to its Middle Housing Code Changes Project”

Another example from Santa Monica also a mayor-council, initiated by Public Works staff - [news article link](#).

Recall

See below table for comparables - [table linked here](#).

- Ballotpedia List of Recall Campaigns in MA- https://ballotpedia.org/Recall_campaigns_in_Massachusetts#By_year

City	Pop.	# Reg. Voters at Prev Muni. Election	# Voted at Prev. Muni. Election	Turnout at Prev Muni. Election	# Signatures to Initiate	# Signatures to Trigger Election	~ # of Signs. to Trigger Election	Turnout threshold	Notes
Bedford	14,161	10,295	1,354	13%	10	10% of registered voters	1,030	n/a	allows recalled candidate to be on ballot
Chelsea	38,889	17,709	1,548	9%	300	20% of total persons who voted at the most recent muni. election	310	40% of eligible voters	
Easthampton	16,211	12,861	2,871	22%	400	20% of total number of voters at the most recent city election	574	n/a	
Everett	48,557	22,602	4,382	19%	500	20% of voters in the city	876	20% of the voters at most recent reg. city election	
Fall River	93,884	54,383	10,953	20%	10	5% of registered voters	2,719	n/a	
Framingham	71,265	42,496	4,252	10%	400	15% of registered voters at most recent reg. muni. election	6,374	n/a	
Pittsfield	43,641	30,804	9,595	31%	500	20% of the voters of the city	1,919	20% of the voters at the most recent reg. city election	
Cambridge	117,090	67,681	23,339	34%		20% of registered voters	13,536		
						20% of voters from prev muni. election	4,668		

Group Petition

“The city council or the school committee shall hold a public hearing and act with respect to every petition which is addressed to it, which is signed by __ voters or more, and which seeks the passage of a measure.”

Newton - 50

Everett - 100

Watertown - 150

Chelsea - 150

Amherst - 150

Easthampton - 100

Sample Language:

Framingham:

Group Petitions Action Required: The council or the school committee shall hold a public hearing on every petition which is addressed to it, which is signed by one hundred (100) voters, or more, and which seeks the passage of a measure. The hearing shall be held by the council or the school committee, or, in either case, by a committee or subcommittee thereof, and after the hearing shall be held, the council or school committee shall respond to the petitioners not later than thirty (30) days after the hearing is completed. Hearings on two or more petitions filed under this section may be held on the same date and at the same time and place. The secretary of the council or the secretary of the school committee shall mail notice of the hearing to the ten persons whose names appear first on the petition at least seven (7) days before the hearing. Notice by publication in a local newspaper not less than seven (7) nor more than fourteen (14) days prior to the date set for the public hearing shall be at public expense. Notice shall also be posted on the municipal bulletin board.

Citizen Initiative Process

Typical process is there is an initial signature requirement that triggers the petition process and the next stage where the city solicitor reviews the petition for legality.

- A few communities keep this number very low and then require a higher bar for the initiative to reach city council review
 - Examples
 - Newton: initially requires 50 voters to sign petition and then requires an additional 10% of total registered votes to get petition to city council for action, assuming city solicitor gives sign off
 - Everett: initially requires 250 voters to sign and then an additional 10% of total voters
- Others keep the bar high for the initial process to trigger petition process and reach city solicitor review stage
 - Examples
 - Watertown and Easthampton initially require 10% of registered voters to sign
 - Chelsea initially requires 20% of registered voters to sign
- Following the initial collection of signatures the city solicitor reviews an initiative petition for legality, and then presents the response for city council.
- City Council actions also differ by community but typically either they can pass the petition or reject
- If they reject, voters have the opportunity, by collecting additional signatures typically about 5% more, to move the initiative petition to a ballot question.