

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to update you on the Charter Review process that has been going on for more than a year. I appointed myself the Council's representative to the Charter Review Committee after the departure of our highly qualified colleague Bill White stepped down from the council.

There are many details to the charter review that are too complicated to lay out in one communication, but I want to update you and provide you a chance to have input prior to the final document being presented to the full council. There is still plenty of time for input and the recommendations will ultimately be reviewed, amended and approved by the city council and mayor before it goes to the state for approval. If you have any questions, thoughts or suggestions please respond via our city clerks to respect open meeting law.

Below is a list of all decisions voted on by the Charter Review Committee. All committee decisions are tentative (because they interact with one another), and there won't be a final up or down vote on the recommendations until the end of the process.

**All committee decisions on the charter draft so far:**

Committee approved including city website in posting requirements and to affirm OML requirements in definitions of posting requirements.

Committee approved keeping the City Council President and Mayor as members of the School Committee.

Committee approved keeping the current School Committee composition of 7 ward school committee members.

Committee approved enshrining compensation for the School Committee in the charter.

Committee approved the writing team to start drafting Article 1 of the Charter (Incorporation, Title, Definitions), noting comments about flexibility of definitions and simplifying the language as much as possible.

Committee approved expanding municipal voting rights to include all non-citizen residents of Somerville who are otherwise eligible to vote.

Committee approved expanding municipal voting rights to include 16/17 year olds who are otherwise eligible to vote.

Committee approved for the writing team to draft language that defines eligible voters in Somerville municipal elections (term to be determined at a later date).

Committee voted to keep the existing process if a tie occurs in a primary election, and to simplify language as much as possible.

Committee approved drafting the mayoral signature requirement at 250 signatures, the same requirement as the current charter.

Committee approved drafting the at-large city councilor signature requirements at 100 signatures, lowering the requirement from the current charter.

Committee approved drafting the ward city councilor and school committee member signature requirements at 50 signatures, lowering the requirement from the current charter.

Committee voted to keep the current drawing by lot practice for determining ballot position.

Committee approved including the creation of a Public Financing of Campaigns study committee to explore public financing of campaigns in the transition provisions.

Committee approved including the creation of a Ranked Choice Voting Commission to explore ranked-choice voting in the transition provisions.

Committee approved keeping the Mayor-Council system of governance.

Committee approved keeping the current practice of Mayor *not* sitting on City Council.

**Matt McLaughlin**  
**City Councilor, Ward 1**