

Proposed Somerville Charter Text

PREAMBLE

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2 We, the people of Somerville, with our diversity in culture and thought, in order to reaffirm the liberties  
3 of the people with respect to the conduct of our local government, adopt this charter to continue and  
4 enhance the city's strong traditions of the pursuit of justice; empowerment of residents; ethical,  
5 transparent and responsive leadership; wise use of public resources; representation for all; and an engaged  
6 populace. We expect that our government will be approachable, accountable, equitable, inclusive, and  
7 respectful towards all people, and it will strive to provide all residents an equal opportunity to participate  
8 fully in the economic, cultural and intellectual life of the city.

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ARTICLE 1

INCORPORATION; SHORT TITLE; DEFINITIONS

SECTION 1-1: INCORPORATION

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

SECTION 1-2: SHORT TITLE

This instrument shall be known and may be cited as the City of Somerville Charter ("charter").

SECTION 1-3: SEPARATION OF POWERS

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

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 constitution or General Laws, it is the intention and the purpose of the municipal voters of the city, 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 the city 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 section 1-4. To the extent that any provision of this charter shall conflict with any special act or law adopted by the city to the contrary, the provisions of this charter shall prevail.

32 SECTION 1-6: INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

33 Subject only to express limitations in the constitution or General Laws, the city may exercise any of its  
34 powers or perform any of its functions and may participate in the financing thereof, jointly or in  
35 cooperation, by contract or otherwise, with the commonwealth or any of its agencies or political  
36 subdivisions, or with the United States government or any of its agencies.

37 SECTION 1-7: DEFINITIONS

38 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the following terms shall have the following meanings as  
39 used in this charter:

40 “Business day”, any day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday. For the purposes of this  
41 definition, legal holiday shall mean Massachusetts legal holidays as published by the secretary of the  
42 commonwealth.

43 “Charter”, this charter and any adopted amendments to it.

44 “The city”, the City of Somerville.

45 “City agency”, any multiple member body, department, division or office of the city.

46 “City officer” or “department head”, a person having charge of a city office or department.

47 “City website”, an online site established and maintained by the city as its repository of municipal  
48 information.

49 “Emergency”, a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate  
50 action or response.

51 “General Laws”, the Massachusetts General Laws.

52 “Majority vote”, a majority of the present and voting members of a body, unless otherwise provided for  
53 by law or by the body’s own rules. Provided, however, that General Laws related to any vote to meet in  
54 executive session shall always require a majority of the full multiple member body.

55 “Measure”, any ordinance, order, other vote or proceeding adopted, or proposed to be adopted, by the city  
56 council or the school committee.

57 “Multiple member body”, any council, commission, committee, subcommittee or other body consisting of  
58 2 or more persons, whether elected, appointed or otherwise constituted, but not including the city council  
59 or its committees, the school committee or its subcommittees or an advisory committee or task force  
60 established by the mayor or city council.

61 “Municipal voter”, anyone who is eligible to vote in a municipal election pursuant to this charter.

62 “Organization or reorganization plan”, a plan submitted by the mayor to the city council which proposes:

63 (i) a change in the organization or the administrative structure of the city administration or organization;  
64 or (ii) a change in the way in which municipal services are delivered.

65 “Post”, make available publicly on the city website, at city hall, in a local newspaper and as otherwise  
66 may be required by law. For the purposes of this definition, a local newspaper shall be a newspaper of  
67 general circulation within the city, with either weekly or daily circulation. The city council president may,  
68 from time to time, select a local newspaper for posting according to a procedure that shall be set forth in  
69 the rules of the city council.

70 “Quorum”, a majority of all voting members of a multiple member body unless some other number is  
71 established by law or by ordinance.

72 “Statewide voter”, anyone who is eligible to vote pursuant to state and federal law.

73 “Year”, a calendar year, unless otherwise specified.

74 ARTICLE 2

75 LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

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

77 (a) Composition - There shall be a city council consisting of 11 members which shall exercise the  
78 legislative powers of the city. Four of these members, to be known as councilors at-large, shall be  
79 nominated and elected by the municipal voters at large. Seven of these members, to be known as ward  
80 councilors, shall be nominated from and elected by the municipal voters in each ward, with 1 ward  
81 councilor to be elected from each of the 7 wards into which the city is divided under section 7-7.

82 (b) Term of Office - The term of office for councilors shall be 2 years each, beginning on the first  
83 business day in January following the municipal election.

84 (c) Eligibility - Any statewide voter in the city shall be eligible to hold the office of councilor at-large.  
85 Any statewide voter in the ward from which election is sought shall be eligible to hold the office of ward  
86 councilor. If the city council determines that a ward councilor or a councilor at-large has removed from  
87 the city during the councilor's term, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the  
88 manner provided in section 2-12. A ward councilor who removes from the ward in which the councilor  
89 was elected and who remains a municipal voter of the city may continue to serve the balance of the term  
90 to which elected.

91 SECTION 2-2: PROHIBITIONS

92 (a) Holding Other City Position – Except as otherwise provided by this charter, a member of the city  
93 council shall hold no other compensated city position. A former member of the city council shall not hold  
94 any compensated appointed city position for 1 year after termination of their service on the city council,  
95 unless approved by affirmative vote of 8 members of the city council. This section shall not prevent a city  
96 employee who vacated a position to serve as a member of the city council from returning to the same  
97 position upon the expiration of the term for which that person was elected.

98 (b) Interference with Administration - The city council or any member of the city council shall not give  
99 orders or directions to any employee of the city appointed by the mayor, either publicly or privately.

100 SECTION 2-3: COMPENSATION

101 The members of the city council shall receive compensation for their services as set by ordinance. An  
102 ordinance increasing or reducing the compensation of the members of the city council shall not be  
103 effective unless:

104 (1) it is adopted by affirmative vote of 8 members of the city council;

105 (2) it is adopted prior to the last 6 months of the council's term; and

106 (3) it provides that the compensation increase or reduction is to take effect upon the organization of the  
107 city government following the next regular city election.

108 SECTION 2-4: GENERAL POWERS

109 Except as otherwise provided by the General Laws or by this charter, all powers of the city shall be vested  
110 in the city council which shall provide for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed upon the  
111 city by law.

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

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

115 (b) Quorum - Once a quorum is present, majority vote shall be required to adopt any ordinance, except as  
116 otherwise provided by General Laws or by this charter.

117 (c) Rules of Procedure - The city council shall adopt rules regulating the procedures of the city council,  
118 which shall be subject to adoption, amendment or repeal by vote of the city council.

119 (d) Meetings - Regular meetings of the city council shall be held at a time and place fixed by ordinance.  
120 Special meetings of the city council shall be held at the call of the president or at the call of any 6 or more  
121 members, for any purpose. Except in an emergency as declared by the city council president, notice of the

122 meeting shall be delivered to each member at least 2 business days in advance of the time set and shall  
123 specify the date, time, location and purpose for which the meeting is to be held. A copy of each notice  
124 shall immediately be posted.

125 (1) All sessions of the city council and every city council committee or subcommittee shall, at all times,  
126 be open to the public, unless otherwise specified by law.

127 (2) A full, accurate, up-to-date account of the proceedings of the city council shall be maintained by the  
128 city clerk, which shall include a record of each vote taken and be made available with reasonable  
129 promptness following each meeting. Executive session minutes shall be made available as soon as  
130 publication of the minutes would not defeat the purpose of the executive session, unless otherwise  
131 provided by law.

132 SECTION 2-6: ELECTION, TERM, AND POWERS OF CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND VICE-  
133 PRESIDENT

134 (a) Election and Term - As soon as practicable after the councilors-elect have been qualified following  
135 each regular city election, as provided in section 7-4, the city council shall elect from among its members  
136 a president and vice-president who shall serve for 1-year terms. The member of the council with the most  
137 years of service shall preside at the election. If 2 or more members have the same term of service the  
138 councilor with the last name that is first in alphabetical order from among the councilors shall preside.

139 The conduct of all elections of the city council president and vice-president shall otherwise be prescribed  
140 within the rules of the city council.

141 (b) Powers and Duties - The president shall have the following powers and duties:

142 (1) determine the agenda for city council meetings;

143 (2) preside at all meetings of the city council, regulate its proceedings, and decide all questions of order,  
144 provided, however, that the vice-president shall preside in the absence of the president;

145 (3) appoint all members of committees of the city council, whether special or standing;



- 146 (4) have the same powers to vote upon measures coming before the city council as any other member of  
147 the city council; and
- 148 (5) perform any other duties consistent with the office that are established by this charter, ordinance or  
149 other vote of the city council.

150 SECTION 2-7: APPOINTMENTS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

151 (a) City Clerk – The city council shall appoint a city clerk to serve at the pleasure of the city council and  
152 until a successor is chosen and qualified. The city clerk shall have the powers and duties relating to the  
153 keeping of records and vital statistics, the issuance of licenses as are provided to city clerks by the  
154 General Laws and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by law or by other vote of the  
155 city council.

156 (b) Advisory Legal Counsel - Subject to appropriation, the city council may secure legal services, when  
157 needed, to seek a secondary legal opinion. The city council shall make a reasonable request for legal  
158 services, and that request shall not be unreasonably denied by the mayor. The city solicitor and any  
159 advisory legal counsel shall consult to the extent practicable prior to the release of any secondary opinion.  
160 The legal services provided to the council shall not include representation of the council or any councilor  
161 in any litigation, or the issuance of formal legal opinions on behalf of the city. The city solicitor shall  
162 remain the only authorized officer of the city in all legal matters involving the city’s government.

163 (c) Other Staff - Subject to appropriation, the city council may employ staff as it deems necessary.

164 (d) Removals and Suspensions of City Council Staff – City council appointments may be removed at the  
165 sole discretion of the city council subject to limitations and requirements imposed by federal and state  
166 laws, rules or regulations.

167 SECTION 2-8: CITY COUNCIL CONFIRMATION OF CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS

168 (a) Department Heads - The mayor shall refer to the city council for confirmation and simultaneously file  
169 with the city clerk the name of each person the mayor has appointed as a department head. These  
170 appointments shall become confirmed 30 days from the date of the first regularly scheduled city council

171 meeting after the date on which notice of the appointment was filed with the city clerk, unless the city  
172 council within said 30 days shall reject the appointment by the affirmative vote of 8 members. However,  
173 if no city council meeting is held within the subsequent 30 days of the first meeting, the city council shall  
174 instead have 30 days from the second regularly scheduled meeting after the appointment to reject the  
175 appointment. The city council shall not unreasonably reject an appointment and shall accompany a  
176 rejection with a written statement describing the reason, which shall be delivered to and placed on file  
177 with the city clerk within 30 days of filing. The question on rejection of any appointment made by the  
178 mayor shall not be subject to the procedure of charter objection provided in section 2-9(b) of this charter.

179 (b) Multiple Member Bodies - The mayor shall refer to the city council and simultaneously file with the  
180 city clerk the name of each person the mayor desires to appoint as a member of a multiple member body.  
181 The city council shall have 60 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed  
182 with the city clerk to vote to approve or reject the appointment, with approval not to be unreasonably  
183 withheld. If the city council does not take action on the appointment within 60 days the appointment shall  
184 be deemed approved. Multiple member body members may be removed at the discretion of their  
185 appointing authority subject to limitations and requirements imposed by federal and state laws, rules or  
186 regulations.

187 (1) In the event of a vacancy on a multiple member body where the seat has remained vacant in excess of  
188 1 year and the mayor has not referred to the city council any proposed appointees to fill the vacancy, the  
189 city council president may present to the mayor the names of no more than 3 individuals as  
190 recommendations for appointment. The procedure for selecting names for presentation to the mayor shall  
191 be established within the rules of the city council.

192 (2) The mayor shall twice annually, in February and August, post a complete list of the vacancies within  
193 all multiple member bodies, as well as the procedures for individuals to apply to become a member of  
194 those bodies. This posting shall be in addition to, and not a substitute for, regular posting for the purpose  
195 of filling vacancies as they arise.

196 (c) Constables - The mayor shall refer to the city council and simultaneously file with the city clerk the  
197 name of each person the mayor desires to appoint as a constable within the city. The city council shall not  
198 unreasonably withhold confirmation of appointments and shall accompany a rejection with a written  
199 statement describing the reason, which shall be delivered to and placed on file with the city clerk within  
200 30 days of that rejection. Constables shall serve for a term of 3 years, and submission for reappointment  
201 shall be made at least 60 days prior to the expiration of a constable's term. The question on confirmation  
202 of any appointment submitted by the mayor shall not be subject to the procedure of charter objection  
203 provided in section 2-9(b) of this charter.

204 (d) Civil Service Employees - The mayor shall refer to the city council and simultaneously file with the  
205 city clerk the name of each person the mayor desires to appoint as a member or officer of the police  
206 department or the fire department. The city council shall not unreasonably withhold confirmation of  
207 appointments, shall adhere to any merit principles identified in applicable law, including, but not limited  
208 to applicable civil service law, and shall accompany a rejection with a written statement describing the  
209 reason, which shall be delivered to and placed on file with the city clerk within 30 days of that rejection.  
210 The question on confirmation of any appointment submitted by the mayor shall not be subject to the  
211 procedure of charter objection provided in section 2-9(b) of this charter.

## 212 SECTION 2-9: ORDINANCES AND OTHER MEASURES

213 (a) Measures - Every adopted measure shall become effective at the expiration of 10 days after adoption  
214 or upon the signature of the mayor, whichever occurs first, unless the ordinance or this charter provides  
215 otherwise. An ordinance shall not be amended or repealed except by another ordinance adopted in  
216 accordance with this charter.

217 (b) Charter Objection - On the first occasion that the question on adoption of a measure is put to the city  
218 council, a single member may object to the taking of the vote and postpone the vote until the next meeting  
219 of the city council, whether regular or special. If 2 or more members object, the vote shall be postponed  
220 until the next regular meeting. This procedure shall not be used more than once for any specific matter

221 regardless of whether it has been amended. A charter objection shall have privilege over all motions  
222 provided, however, that it shall be raised prior to or at the call for a vote by the presiding officer and all  
223 debate shall cease.

#### 224 SECTION 2-10: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

225 (a) In General - The city council may make investigations into the affairs of the city and into the conduct  
226 and performance of any city agency. Absent compelling circumstances or an emergency which shall be  
227 declared on record and noted in the city council minutes, the city council shall give a minimum of 14  
228 days' notice to a person it may require to appear before it under this section. In circumstances involving  
229 compelling circumstances or emergency, 7 days' notice shall be allowed. The notice shall include specific  
230 questions on which the city council seeks information and any person called to appear before the city  
231 council under this section shall not be required to respond to any question not relevant or related to those  
232 questions presented in advance and in writing. The mayor shall receive a copy of any notice issued under  
233 this section at the same time as the person who is requested to appear before the council. Majority vote of  
234 the city council shall be required to issue notice under this section.

235 (b) Department Head - The city council may require, by majority vote, specific information from a  
236 department head or their designee on any matter related to the municipal services, functions and powers  
237 or duties which are within the scope of responsibility of that person. The department head or their  
238 designee shall not be required to answer questions relating to any other matter outside the scope of the  
239 matter noticed.

240 (c) Mayor - The city council may request, by majority vote, specific information from the mayor on any  
241 municipal matter. The mayor or their designee shall appear before the city council and respond to the  
242 questions. The mayor or their designee shall not be required to answer questions relating to any other  
243 matter. The mayor may bring to this meeting any assistant, department head or other city officer or  
244 employee that the mayor may consider necessary to assist in responding to the questions posed by the city  
245 council.

246 SECTION 2-11: GROUP PETITIONS

247 The city council shall hold a public hearing and act with respect to every petition which is addressed to it  
248 and which is signed by at least 50 municipal voters as certified by the board of election commissioners.  
249 The hearing shall be held by the city council or by a committee or subcommittee thereof, and the city  
250 council shall act on the petition within 3 months of filing with the city clerk. Hearings on 2 or more  
251 petitions filed under this section may be held at the same time and place. At least 14 days before the  
252 hearing, the city clerk shall notify the 10 petitioners whose names first appear on each petition, publish a  
253 general summary of the subject matter of the petition, and post notice of the date and time of the public  
254 hearing. A hearing shall not be held upon any subject more than once in a 12-month period, as determined  
255 by the city council president.

256 SECTION 2-12: FILLING OF VACANCIES

257 (a) Councilor At-Large – Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of councilor at-large the process for  
258 filling of the vacancy shall be determined by the number of days remaining until the next municipal  
259 election. In all occurrences of a vacancy, the city clerk shall notify the city council and the chairperson of  
260 the board of election commissioners of the vacancy within 7 days. Within 7 days after notification, the  
261 chairperson of the board of election commissioners or a designee shall certify, in writing, to the city clerk  
262 that the defeated candidate for the office of councilor at-large with the next highest number of votes at the  
263 municipal election at which councilors at-large were elected for the term in which the vacancy occurs  
264 shall serve as councilor at-large. If the person is eligible and willing to serve, the city clerk shall  
265 administer the oath of office to the person within 15 days after certification and the person shall serve. If  
266 the person who is eligible declines the office, is not eligible and willing to serve, or fails to take the oath  
267 of office within the time period set forth in this section, then the person with the next highest number of  
268 votes at the election who is eligible and willing to serve shall serve.

269 If a vacancy occurs:

270 (1) More than 180 days until the next municipal election, the next highest candidate serves the remainder  
271 of the unexpired term. If there is no defeated candidate eligible and willing to serve who has taken the  
272 oath of office, there shall be a special election.

273 (2) Less than or equal to 180 days prior to any regular municipal election in the office of councilor at-  
274 large, the next highest candidate serves until the next municipal election. If there is no eligible and willing  
275 candidate from the most recent municipal election, then the seat remains vacant until the next regular  
276 municipal election. The person elected shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term and  
277 the term to which elected. The city clerk shall administer the oath of office to them at the next meeting of  
278 the city council.

279 (b) Ward Councilor - If a vacancy occurs in the office of ward councilor more than 180 days prior to any  
280 regular municipal election, the city council shall immediately order a special election to fill the vacancy  
281 for the remainder of the unexpired term. If a vacancy occurs 180 days or less prior to any regular  
282 municipal election, the seat shall remain vacant until the next regular municipal election for the office and  
283 the person elected shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term and the term to which  
284 elected. The city clerk shall administer the oath of office to the person at the next meeting of the city  
285 council.

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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 municipal voters of the city at large. The role of mayor shall be a full-time position.

(b) Term of Office – The term of office for mayor shall be two years, beginning on the first business day in January following the municipal election.

(c) Eligibility – Any statewide voter in Somerville 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 the mayor. Any former mayor shall not receive compensation for contracted work authorized during their tenure as the mayor, provided, however, that 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 their services as set by the city council by ordinance. An ordinance increasing or reducing the compensation of the mayor shall not be effective unless:

- (1) it is adopted by affirmative vote of 8 members of the city council;
- (2) it is adopted prior to the last 6 months of the mayor’s term; and
- (3) it provides that the compensation increase or reduction is to take effect upon the organization of the city government following the next regular city election.

310 SECTION 3-4: EXECUTIVE POWERS

311 (a) Executive Powers - The executive powers of the city shall be vested solely in the mayor and may be  
312 exercised by the mayor either personally or through the city agencies under the general supervision and  
313 control of the office of the mayor. The mayor shall cause this charter, laws, ordinances and other orders of  
314 the city government to be enforced and shall cause a record of all official acts of the executive branch of  
315 the city government to be kept. The mayor shall supervise, direct, and be responsible for the efficient  
316 administration of all city activities and functions placed under the control of the mayor by law or by this  
317 charter.

318 (b) Supervision of City Agencies - The mayor shall exercise general supervision and direction over all  
319 city agencies, unless otherwise provided by law or by this charter. Each city agency shall furnish to the  
320 mayor any information or materials the mayor may request and as the needs of the office of mayor and  
321 the interest of the city may require. The mayor shall be responsible for the efficient and effective  
322 coordination of the activities of all city agencies and may call together for consultation, conference and  
323 discussion, at reasonable times, all persons serving the city.

324 (c) Multiple Member Bodies - The mayor shall be, by virtue of the office, an ex officio member of every  
325 appointed multiple member body of the city. The mayor may, as an ex officio member, attend any  
326 meeting of an appointed multiple member body of the city, including executive sessions, to participate in  
327 the discussions of that body, provided, however, that they shall not have the right to vote.

328 SECTION 3-5: APPOINTMENTS BY THE MAYOR

329 (a) Department Heads - The mayor shall appoint, subject to review by the city council under section 2-  
330 8(a), all department heads for whom no other method of appointment or selection is provided by this  
331 charter. Department heads serve at the discretion of the mayor subject to the limitations and requirements  
332 imposed by federal and state laws, rules, or regulations.

333 (b) City Attorney - The city attorney shall be appointed by the mayor, subject to review by the city  
334 council under section 2-8(a). Within 30 days of the beginning of a new mayoral term, the mayor shall



335 submit a city attorney for confirmation or reconfirmation in the same manner as a new appointment under  
336 section 2-8(a).

337 (c) Multiple Member Bodies - The mayor shall appoint, subject to confirmation by the city council under  
338 section 2-8(b), all members of multiple member bodies for whom no other method of appointment or  
339 selection is provided by administrative order or General Laws. All members shall serve terms as defined  
340 by administrative order or General Laws.

341 (d) Civil Service Employees - The mayor may appoint, subject to confirmation, members and officers of  
342 the police department and fire department.

343 (e) City Employees - The method of appointment for all other city employees shall be prescribed by  
344 administrative order.

#### 345 SECTION 3-6: APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

346 The mayor shall appoint a chief administrative officer to coordinate and direct the operations and  
347 functions of municipal government. The chief administrative officer shall be appointed by the mayor,  
348 subject to review by the city council under section 2-8(a). The appointee shall be chosen on the basis of  
349 appropriate administrative and executive qualifications and shall have a combination of experience,  
350 training, or education to perform the duties of the office. Within 30 days of the beginning of a new  
351 mayoral term, the mayor shall submit a chief administrative officer for confirmation or reconfirmation in  
352 the same manner as a new appointment under section 2-8(a).

#### 353 SECTION 3-7: TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS TO CITY OFFICES

354 Whenever a temporary or permanent vacancy occurs in a city office that is appointed under section 3-  
355 5(a), the mayor may designate a person to perform the duties of the office on a temporary basis for up to  
356 150 days until the position can be filled as provided by law or by this charter. Persons serving as  
357 temporary officers under this section shall have only those powers that are indispensable and essential to  
358 the performance of the duties of the office during the period of temporary appointment and no others.

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

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

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

#### 369 SECTION 3-8: TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS TO MULTIPLE MEMBER BODIES

370 Whenever a temporary or permanent vacancy occurs on a multiple member body that is appointed under  
371 section 3-5(b), the mayor may designate a person to perform the duties of the office on a temporary basis  
372 for up to 150 days until the position can be filled as provided by law or by this charter. If an extension of  
373 a temporary appointment is necessary, the mayor may seek extensions in 60-day increments, which shall  
374 be authorized by a majority vote of the city council. If an extension is not approved, the position shall be  
375 deemed vacant, except on multiple member bodies where the vacancy would prevent a quorum. In that  
376 instance, a temporary appointment shall be permitted to remain until a successor is qualified, provided,  
377 however, that the authority of the temporary appointment shall be limited to matters where failure to act  
378 by the multiple member body may have adverse consequences to the City.

#### 379 SECTION 3-9: APPROVAL OF MAYOR, VETO

380 Every ordinance or other measure as required by law adopted or passed by the city council, except any  
381 matters relating to the internal affairs of the city council, shall be presented to the mayor for approval. If  
382 the mayor approves the measure, the mayor shall sign it. If the mayor disapproves the measure, the mayor  
383 shall return it to the city council with the specific reason for disapproval attached in writing. The city

384 council shall enter the objections of the mayor on its records and reconsider the measure at the subsequent  
385 regular meeting. If the city council, regardless of the disapproval by the mayor, shall again pass the  
386 identical measure by affirmative vote of 8 members of the city council, it shall then be deemed in force. If  
387 the mayor has neither signed a measure nor returned it to the city council within 10 days following the  
388 date it was presented to the mayor, the measure shall be deemed approved and in force.

### 389 SECTION 3-10: COMMUNICATIONS; SPECIAL MEETINGS

390 (a) Communications to the City Council - The mayor shall, by written communication: (1) recommend to  
391 the city council for its consideration measures as the needs of the city require; and (2) keep the city  
392 council fully informed of the financial and administrative condition of the city and shall specifically  
393 indicate any fiscal, financial, or administrative issues facing the city.

394 (b) Special Meetings of the City Council - The mayor may call a special meeting of the city council for  
395 any purpose. Unless the mayor designates an emergency, notice of the meeting shall be delivered at least  
396 2 business days in advance of the time set and shall specify the date, time and location of the meeting and  
397 the purpose for which the meeting is to be held. A copy of the notice shall be posted immediately.

### 398 SECTION 3-11: TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF THE MAYOR

399 (a) Acting Mayor – Whenever the mayor is unable to perform the duties of the office, the president of the  
400 city council shall be the acting mayor. In the event that the city council president is unable to serve as  
401 acting mayor under this section, the city council shall elect a councilor to serve as acting mayor from  
402 among its membership. The city council, by the affirmative vote of 8 members, shall determine whether  
403 the mayor is unable to perform the duties of the office. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the  
404 contrary, the vote shall be taken in public session by a roll call vote.

405 (b) Powers of Acting Mayor – The acting mayor shall have only those powers of the mayor that are  
406 indispensable and essential to conduct the business of the city and on which action may not be delayed.  
407 The acting mayor shall have no authority to make a permanent appointment or removal from city service  
408 unless the absence of the mayor shall extend beyond 60 days, nor shall the acting mayor approve or

409 disapprove of any measure adopted by the city council unless the time within which the mayor must act  
410 would expire before the return of the mayor. The city council president or another councilor serving as  
411 acting mayor shall not vote as a member of the city council.

#### 412 SECTION 3-12: DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY BY MAYOR

413 The mayor may authorize and subsequently remove authorization from a subordinate officer or employee  
414 of the city to exercise or perform a power, function, or duty of the office of the mayor, provided, however,  
415 that all acts performed under any delegation of authority during the period of authorization shall be and  
416 remain the acts of the mayor. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the mayor to delegate  
417 the powers and duties of a school committee member, the power of appointment to city office or  
418 employment, or to sign or return measures approved by the city council unless the provisions of section 3-  
419 11 apply.

#### 420 SECTION 3-13: FILLING OF PERMANENT VACANCY

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

425 (a) If a vacancy occurs within the 6 months preceding a regular city election the position shall be filled by  
426 vote at that election. Otherwise, the city council shall call a special election to be held within 90 days  
427 following the date of the vacancy.

428 (b) The city council president shall serve as the acting mayor in all cases until the vacancy is filled. In the  
429 event that the city council president is unable to serve as the acting mayor under this section, the city  
430 council shall elect a councilor to serve as the acting mayor from among its membership. If the councilor  
431 serving as the acting mayor under this section chooses to run for mayor, they shall not be entitled to have  
432 the words “candidate for reelection” printed with that person’s name on the subsequent election ballot.

433 Any person serving as the mayor under this section shall receive the compensation then in effect for the  
434 position of mayor and shall not vote as a member of the city council.

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ARTICLE 4

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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

(a) Composition – There shall be a school committee consisting of 9 members. Seven members shall be nominated and elected by the municipal voters of the city, 1 member elected from each ward. The mayor and the president of the city council shall serve, ex officio, with the same powers and duties as other school committee members, provided, however, that neither shall serve as chair.

(b) Term of Office – The term for the school committee shall be 2 years, beginning on the first business day in January following the municipal election.

(c) Eligibility – Any statewide voter in the ward from which election is sought shall be eligible to hold the office of school committee member. If a school committee member removes from the city during the committee member’s term, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section 4-6. If a school committee member removes to another ward in the city, the member may continue to serve for the balance of the term to which elected.

SECTION 4-2: PROHIBITIONS

A member of the school committee elected by ward shall not hold any other compensated city position. A former member of the school committee elected by ward shall not hold any compensated appointed city office or city employment for 1 year after termination of their service on the school committee. 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 elected by ward from returning to the same office or other position of city employment held at the time the position was vacated.

456 SECTION 4-3: COMPENSATION

457 Members of the school committee shall receive compensation for their services as set by ordinance by the  
458 city council. An ordinance increasing or reducing the compensation of the members of the school  
459 committee shall not be effective unless:

- 460 (1) it is adopted by affirmative vote of 8 members of the city council;
- 461 (2) it is adopted prior to the last 6 months of the school committee's term; and
- 462 (3) it provides that the compensation increase or reduction is to take effect upon the organization of the  
463 city government following the next regular city election.

464 SECTION 4-4: SCHOOL COMMITTEE RULES AND PROCEDURES

465 School committee officers and procedures shall be determined by the school committee.

466 SECTION 4-5: SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

467 The school committee shall have all powers which are conferred on school committees by the General  
468 Laws and the additional powers and duties provided by this charter, including but not limited to:

- 469 (1) selecting and removing a superintendent of the schools who shall be charged with the administration  
470 of the school system, and all other personnel as provided by the General Laws;
- 471 (2) making all policies for the management of the public school system and for conducting the business of  
472 the school committee as deemed necessary or desirable;
- 473 (3) adopting and overseeing the administration of an annual operating budget for the school department,  
474 subject to appropriation;
- 475 (4) providing ordinary maintenance of all school buildings and grounds, unless a central municipal  
476 maintenance department, which may include maintenance of school buildings and grounds, is established;  
477 and
- 478 (5) at least 1 member of the school committee, or a designee of the school committee, shall serve on the  
479 agency, board, or committee for the planning or construction of a new, remodeled, or renovated school  
480 building.

481 SECTION 4-6: FILLING OF VACANCIES

482 If a vacancy on the school committee occurs with 1 year or more remaining in the term, the city council  
483 shall order a special election to fill the vacancy. If a vacancy on the school committee occurs with less  
484 than 1 year before the end of the term but more than 120 days before any regular municipal election, the  
485 school committee shall appoint a replacement to serve for the remainder of the term from the qualified  
486 statewide voters of the ward. The school committee shall post notice of the vacancy and solicitation of  
487 nominations and appoint the replacement in accordance with school committee policy. If a vacancy  
488 occurs within 120 days of a regular municipal election, the vacancy shall be filled by the regular election  
489 and the newly elected school committee member's term shall begin following the certification of election  
490 results. The person elected shall be sworn to office to fill the vacancy for the balance of the unexpired  
491 term as well as the term to which elected. The city clerk shall administer the oath of office to them on or  
492 before the next meeting of the school committee.



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ARTICLE 5

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

SECTION 5-1: ORGANIZATION OF CITY AGENCIES

The organization of the city into agencies to provide services and administer the government may be accomplished only through an administrative order submitted to the city council by the mayor. An administrative order may not originate with the city council. The mayor may, subject only to express prohibitions of General Laws or this charter, propose administrative orders to establish a new agency, reorganize, consolidate or abolish any agency, in whole or in part, as is deemed necessary to conduct the business of the city in an orderly, efficient or convenient manner. The mayor may also propose administrative orders to establish terms of office and prescribe the functions and administrative procedures to be followed by all agencies.

These proposed 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 and post notice.

An organization or reorganization plan shall become effective at the expiration of 60 days from filing, unless the city council has disapproved the plan by majority vote prior to that date. Provided, however, that if no regular city council meeting is held within the subsequent 60 days of the first regular meeting after the filing of an organization or reorganization plan, the city council shall instead have 60 days from the second regular meeting. 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: QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

All appointments and promotions of city officers and other city employees shall be made on the basis of fitness demonstrated by examination, past performance, or by other evidence of competence and

517 suitability. Each person appointed to fill an office or position shall be a person who has the experience,  
518 training, or education to perform the duties of the office or position.

#### 519 SECTION 5-3: COMPENSATION OF CITY EMPLOYEES

520 The mayor and city council shall provide for a review to be made of all municipal employee  
521 compensation at 5-year intervals to examine whether compensation reflects principles of equity and to the  
522 greatest extent possible is sufficient for municipal employees to live in the city. This review shall be made  
523 by a special committee to be established by ordinance, and the initial review shall be implemented as  
524 provided in section 9-7(b). The special committee shall receive a budget sufficient to hire qualified  
525 consultants and any other resources necessary to undertake a thorough review. The special committee  
526 shall file its report with the city clerk on a date specified by ordinance. This report shall include an  
527 analysis of the current pay and compensation structure with recommendations for adjustments to that  
528 structure, taking into consideration the city's current and expected financial situation and the impact of  
529 the recommendations on the budget. The review of compensation shall be under the supervision of the  
530 chief administrative officer.

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ARTICLE 6

FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

SECTION 6-1: FISCAL YEAR

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

SECTION 6-2: COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL BUDGET INPUT

The city council shall hold a community budget hearing on or before February 15 of each year in order to solicit public input regarding budget priorities. The city council shall post notice of the community budget hearing 14 days in advance of the hearing. The mayor shall, at the first regular meeting of the city council of each year, solicit budget priorities from all city councilors.

SECTION 6-3: ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

On or before November 1 of each 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.

SECTION 6-4: SUBMISSION OF OPERATING BUDGET; BUDGET MESSAGE

On or about May 15, the mayor shall submit to the city council a proposed operating budget for all city agencies for the next fiscal year. The proposed operating budget shall include the school budget, as adopted by the school committee, which shall be submitted to the mayor on or about May 1. The proposed operating budget shall be accompanied by a budget message and supporting documents. The budget message 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 next 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

555 proposed operating budget shall provide a complete fiscal plan of all city funds and activities and shall be  
556 in the form the mayor deems desirable, provided, however, that the budget proposals relative to elected  
557 officials shall identify the cost of compensation and the cost of benefits for those officials. The mayor and  
558 the superintendent of schools shall coordinate the dates and times of the school committee's budget  
559 process under the General Laws.

#### 560 SECTION 6-5: ACTION ON THE OPERATING BUDGET

561 (a) Public Hearing - The city council shall post a notice of the proposed operating budget as submitted by  
562 the mayor. The notice shall state: (1) the times and places where copies of the entire proposed operating  
563 budget are available for inspection by the public; and (2) the date, time and place when a public hearing  
564 on the proposed operating budget shall be held by the city council, at least 7 days after posting of the  
565 notice. The city council shall not act on the budget until after the public hearing has occurred.

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

574 (c) Availability of the Operating Budget – In addition to any other posting requirements, immediately  
575 after the submission of the proposed budget to the city council, the mayor or their designee shall post the  
576 entire budget document on the city website, where it shall remain posted during the city council review  
577 process contained in this article. After the enactment of the budget the mayor or their designee shall post  
578 the final budget on the city website where it shall remain throughout the fiscal year for which it is in

579 effect. The final budget shall reflect any amendments made by the city council and approved by the  
580 mayor and shall indicate that it is the final budget.

#### 581 SECTION 6-6: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

582 (a) Submission - The mayor shall submit a capital improvement program to the city council on or about  
583 October 15 of each year. The mayor shall annually revise the information regarding the capital  
584 improvements still pending or in the process of being acquired, improved, or constructed.

585 The capital improvement program shall include:

586 (1) a general summary of its contents;

587 (2) a list of all capital improvements proposed to be undertaken during the next 5 years, with supporting  
588 information as to the need for each capital improvement;

589 (3) cost estimates, methods of financing, and recommended time schedules for each improvement; and

590 (4) the estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining each facility and piece of major equipment  
591 involved.

592 (b) Public Hearing - The city council shall post a notice stating: (1) the times and places where entire  
593 copies of the capital improvements program are available for the public; and, (2) the date, time, and place  
594 of a public hearing on the plan to be held by the city council at least 14 days after posting of the notice.

595 (c) Adoption – Following the public hearing, but not later than December 1, the city council shall by  
596 resolution adopt or reject the capital improvements program. The adopted program may be amended,  
597 provided that each amendment shall be voted on separately, and that an increase in the capital  
598 improvements program as submitted shall clearly identify the method of financing to accomplish the  
599 proposed increase.

600 SECTION 6-7: INDEPENDENT AUDIT

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

609 SECTION 6-8: EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF APPROPRIATIONS

610 Except as otherwise provided by law, an official of the city shall not knowingly or intentionally expend in  
611 a fiscal year sums in excess of the appropriations, awards, grants or gifts duly made in accordance with  
612 law or involve the city in any contract for the future payment of money in excess of these appropriations,  
613 awards, grants or gifts. It is the intention of this section that section 31 of chapter 44 of the General Laws  
614 shall be strictly enforced. Any official who violates this section shall be personally liable to the city for  
615 any amounts so expended to the extent that the city does not recover these amounts from the person to  
616 whom the sums were paid.

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ARTICLE 7  
ELECTIONS

SECTION 7-1: ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

In addition to individuals eligible to vote pursuant to the General Laws the following individuals may, upon application, have their names entered on a list of municipal voters established by the board of election commissioners for the city and may thereafter vote in any election for municipal offices and municipal ballot questions in accordance with this charter:

- (1) Any non-citizen residing in the city, who is ineligible to vote due to citizenship status under federal or state law, rule, or regulation, but who is otherwise eligible to vote; and
- (2) Any 16- and 17-year old residing in the city, who is ineligible to vote due to age under federal or state law, rule, or regulation, but who is otherwise eligible to vote.

These municipal voters shall remain eligible to vote in any election for municipal offices and municipal ballot questions in the city for so long as they remain domiciled therein.

SECTION 7-2: PRELIMINARY ELECTIONS

A preliminary election to nominate candidates for mayor, councilors at-large, ward councilors, and school committee members shall be held on the third Tuesday in September in each odd-numbered year in which the candidates are to be elected. The city clerk may, with the approval of the city council, reschedule the preliminary election to the fourth Tuesday in September to avoid a conflict with any civil or religious holiday. Whenever a special election to fill a vacancy is to be held, a preliminary election shall be conducted, if necessary, 28 days before the date established for the special election. A preliminary election to fill a vacancy in the office of ward councilor or school committee member shall be held only in the ward where there is a vacancy.

639 SECTION 7-3: PRELIMINARY ELECTION PROCEDURES

640 (a) Signature Requirements - The number of signatures of municipal voters required to place the name of  
641 a candidate on the official ballot to be used at a preliminary election shall be as follows:

642 (1) Mayor - at least 250 certified signatures;

643 (2) At-Large City Councilor - at least 100 certified signatures;

644 (3) Ward City Councilor - at least 50 certified signatures, all of which shall be certified as being from the  
645 ward from which election is sought; and

646 (4) School Committee Member – at least 50 certified signatures, all of which shall be certified as being  
647 from the ward from which election is sought.

648 (b) Forms - Signatures of municipal voters shall be made on a form prescribed by the board of election  
649 commissioners and shall be made available not earlier than April 2 in each city election year. The forms  
650 shall be submitted to the board of election commissioners for certification of the names on or before the  
651 fourteenth day preceding the date fixed for submission to the city clerk. The forms shall be submitted to  
652 the city clerk on or before 5:00 p.m. on the forty-fifth day prior to the declared date of the preliminary  
653 election. An individual may appear on the ballot for only 1 office at any preliminary, regular or special  
654 city election.

655 (c) Ballot Position - The order in which names of candidates for each office appear on the ballot shall be  
656 determined by a drawing conducted by the city clerk at least 40 days before the preliminary election. The  
657 drawing shall be open to the public.

658 (d) Determination of Candidates - (1) Offices of Mayor, Ward Councilor, and School Committee - the  
659 two candidates who receive the highest number of votes for nomination to each office at the preliminary  
660 election shall, except as provided by paragraph 7-3(d)(3), be the candidates for that office. The  
661 candidates' names shall be printed on the official ballot to be used at the regular or special city election at  
662 which the office is to be voted upon and an acceptance of a nomination shall not be necessary to its  
663 validity.



664 (2) Offices of City Councilor At-Large - the 8 people who receive the highest number of votes for  
665 nomination to the office shall, except as provided by section 7-3(e), be the candidates for the office. The  
666 candidates' names shall be printed on the official ballot to be used at the regular or special city election at  
667 which the office is to be voted upon and an acceptance of a nomination shall not be necessary to its  
668 validity.

669 (3) Tied Preliminary - If there is a tie among candidates for the last available ballot position for any given  
670 elected office, then all candidates receiving the same number of votes for the office shall be printed on the  
671 general election ballot, notwithstanding any other provisions in this charter specifying the number of  
672 candidates to be printed on the election ballot.

673 (e) Condition Making Preliminary Unnecessary - If the time for filing statements of candidates to be on  
674 the ballot for any preliminary election has expired, and the number of statements filed with the city clerk  
675 for an office is not more than 2 for the office of mayor, any ward councilor or school committee member,  
676 or 8 for any city councilor at-large, the candidates whose statements have been filed shall be deemed  
677 nominated to that office. Those candidates shall be voted on for the office at the regular or special city  
678 election. The city clerk shall not print those names on the ballot to be used at the preliminary election and  
679 another nomination to the office shall not be made, and a preliminary election shall not be held for the  
680 office or offices.

#### 681 SECTION 7-4: REGULAR CITY ELECTION

682 The regular city election shall be held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November in each  
683 odd-numbered year.

#### 684 SECTION 7-5: BALLOT POSITION, REGULAR CITY ELECTION

685 The order in which names of candidates for each office appear on the ballot shall be determined by a  
686 drawing conducted by the city clerk not later than 7 days after the certification of the preliminary election  
687 results. If there is no preliminary election in advance of the regular city election or a special election, the

688 drawing shall be conducted on the Tuesday 6 weeks prior to the election. The drawing shall be open to the  
689 public.

#### 690 SECTION 7-6: NON-PARTISAN ELECTIONS

691 All elections for city offices shall be non-partisan and election ballots shall be printed without any party  
692 mark, emblem or other political designation.

#### 693 SECTION 7-7: WARDS

694 The territory of the city shall be divided into 7 wards by the city clerk to consist of as nearly an equal  
695 number of inhabitants as it is possible to achieve, based on compact and contiguous territory, bounded as  
696 far as possible by the center line of known streets or ways or by other well-defined limits. Each ward shall  
697 be composed of voting precincts established under the General Laws. The city council shall review these  
698 wards to ensure uniformity in the number of inhabitants at least once every 10 years.

#### 699 SECTION 7-8: APPLICATION OF STATE GENERAL LAWS

700 Except as otherwise expressly provided in this charter and authorized by law, all city elections shall be  
701 governed by the General Laws relating to the right to vote, the registration of voters, the nomination of  
702 candidates, voting places, the conduct of preliminary, regular and special city elections, the submission of  
703 charters, charter amendments and other propositions to the voters, the counting of votes, the recounting of  
704 votes, and the determination of results.

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ARTICLE 8

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 8-1: CHARTER CHANGES

This charter may be replaced, revised or amended in accordance with the state constitution or the General Laws.

SECTION 8-2: 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 this charter shall prevail.

SECTION 8-3: RULES AND REGULATIONS

A copy of all rules and regulations adopted by a city agency shall be posted to the city website. Unless an emergency exists, as determined by the mayor, a rule or regulation adopted by a city agency shall not become effective until at least 5 days following the date it is posted. This section shall not apply to internal operating protocols and policies enacted by city departments.

SECTION 8-4: PERIODIC REVIEW OF CHARTER

The mayor and city council shall provide for a review to be made of the city charter at least once every 10 years to determine the need, if any, for changes and prepare recommendations addressing such changes. The manner of the review shall be established by ordinance and incorporate opportunities for community input. The report of the committee and accompanying recommendations, if any, shall be filed with the city clerk on a date specified by ordinance.

SECTION 8-5: PERIODIC REVIEW OF ORDINANCES

The mayor and city council shall provide for a review to be made of some or all of the city ordinances at least once every 10 years determine the need for amendments, if any. The manner of the review shall be established by ordinance. The review of city ordinances shall be under the supervision of the city solicitor

728 and incorporate opportunities for community input. The recommendations shall be filed with the city  
729 clerk on a date specified by ordinance.

#### 730 SECTION 8-6: PERIODIC REVIEW OF MULTIPLE MEMBER BODIES

731 The mayor and the city council shall provide for a review to be made of all multiple member bodies at  
732 least once every 10 years. This review shall be made by a special committee whose membership and term  
733 shall be determined by ordinance, and the initial review shall be implemented as provided in section 9-  
734 7(d). The special committee shall file its report with the city clerk on a date specified by ordinance. The  
735 committee's report should include an assessment of the function and relevance of all multiple member  
736 bodies, and may include recommendations to combine, dissolve or create multiple member bodies to  
737 address redundancies or new concerns of the city. Recommendations shall not conflict with multiple  
738 member bodies required by the General Laws.

#### 739 SECTION 8-7: UNIFORM PROCEDURES GOVERNING MULTIPLE MEMBER BODIES

740 Open meeting law and procedures in the General Laws shall apply to the proceedings of multiple member  
741 bodies, including the following:

742 (1) Officers – All appointed multiple member bodies shall elect a chair, a vice-chair and any other officer  
743 it deems necessary.

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

749 (3) Meeting Documents and Submissions - Each appointed multiple member body shall determine its own  
750 rules and order of business. Each multiple member body shall provide for the keeping of agendas, minutes  
751 and related submissions of its proceedings. All documents shall be a public record and certified copies  
752 shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk within a reasonable period from the date of approval.

753 (4) Voting - If requested by a member, a vote of an appointed multiple member body shall be taken by a  
754 roll call vote and the vote of each member shall be recorded in the minutes, provided, however, that if the  
755 vote is unanimous only that fact need be recorded. Unless some other provision is made by the multiple  
756 member body's own rules while a quorum is present, except on procedural matters, any action on a matter  
757 representing an exercise of the powers of the multiple member body shall require a majority vote. General  
758 Laws related to a vote to meet in executive session shall always require a majority of members of the  
759 body.

#### 760 SECTION 8-8: REFERENCES TO GENERAL LAWS

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

#### 765 SECTION 8-9: COMPUTATION OF TIME

766 In computing time under this charter, the day of the act or event after which the designated time period  
767 begins to run shall not be included. The last day of the period shall be included, unless it is a Saturday,  
768 Sunday or legal holiday, in which event the period shall be extended to the next business day.

#### 769 SECTION 8-10: OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS

770 (a) Officials Elected in Regular Elections - On the first business day in January of each even-numbered  
771 year, the city council members-elect, the school committee members-elect and the mayor-elect, shall meet  
772 and take an oath or affirmation to faithfully discharge the duties of their office. The oath or affirmation  
773 shall be administered by the city clerk, the assistant city clerk, a judge of a court of record or by a justice  
774 of the peace. Each official taking the oath or affirmation shall also sign a written version, which shall be  
775 kept in a bound book maintained by the city clerk. If the mayor-elect or any member-elect of the city  
776 council or school committee is absent on the day the oath is administered, the oath or affirmation may be  
777 administered at any time after to that person.

778 (b) Other Elected Officials and Appointed Positions - Except as otherwise provided by law, every person  
779 who is elected or appointed to an office or as a member of a multiple member body shall take an oath or  
780 affirmation before performing any act under this election or appointment. A record of this oath or  
781 affirmation shall be kept by the city clerk.

#### 782 SECTION 8-11: LIMITATION ON OFFICE HOLDING

783 Unless otherwise allowed by law or this charter, a person shall not simultaneously hold more than 1 office  
784 or position of employment with the city. This section may be waived by the mayor by filing a notice of  
785 the waiver with an explanation and justification with the city clerk.

#### 786 SECTION 8-12: FELONY CONVICTION

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

#### 789 SECTION 8-13: ENFORCEMENT OF CHARTER PROVISIONS

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

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ARTICLE 9

TRANSITION PROVISIONS

SECTION 9-1: CONTINUATION OF EXISTING LAWS

All General Laws, special laws, city ordinances, city council votes, rules and regulations of or pertaining to the city that are in force when this charter takes effect, and not specifically or by implication repealed by this charter, shall continue in full force and effect until amended or repealed, or rescinded by due course of law, or until they expire by their own limitation. In any case in which the provisions of this charter are found to be inconsistent with the provisions of any general or special law that would otherwise be applicable, the provisions of this charter shall prevail.

SECTION 9-2: CONTINUATION OF GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

All city agencies and city officials shall continue to perform their duties until reappointed, until successors to their respective positions are appointed or until their duties have been transferred and assumed by another city agency.

SECTION 9-3: TRANSFER OF RECORDS AND PROPERTY

All records and property of any city agency, or part thereof, the powers and duties of which are assigned in whole or in part to another city agency, shall be transferred forthwith to that agency.

SECTION 9-4: CONTINUATION OF PERSONNEL

All city office holders and employees shall retain the office, position or employment they hold, and shall continue to perform the duties of the office, position or employment until their employment or position is otherwise terminated or other provisions are made. A person in full-time service of the city shall not forfeit accrued time in service of the city as a result of adoption of this charter.

SECTION 9-5: EFFECT ON OBLIGATIONS, TAXES, ETC.

All official bonds, recognizances, obligations, contracts and other instruments entered into or executed by, with, or on the behalf of the city before the adoption of this charter, shall continue to be obligations of

823 the city; and all taxes, assessments, fines, penalties and forfeitures, incurred or imposed, due or owing to  
824 the city, shall be enforced and collected; and all writs, prosecutions, actions and causes of action, except  
825 as herein otherwise provided, shall continue without abatement and remain unaffected by this charter; and  
826 any legal act done by or in favor of the city shall not be rendered invalid by reason of the adoption of this  
827 charter.

#### 828 SECTION 9-6: DISPOSITION OF CERTAIN SPECIAL ACTS

829 (a) Certain Special Acts Recognized and Retained - The following special acts are hereby especially  
830 recognized and retained: *[TO BE ADDED BY THE CITY COUNCIL]*

#### 831 SECTION 9-7: TIME OF TAKING EFFECT

832 *[TO BE ADDED BY THE CITY COUNCIL]*

#### 833 (a) CREATION OF PUBLIC FINANCING OF CAMPAIGNS COMMITTEE

834 Within 6 months of the adoption of this charter, the city council shall create a public financing of  
835 campaigns committee to study public financing mechanisms and prepare recommendations with the goal  
836 of making running for office in the city more accessible to potential candidates. The directive of this study  
837 committee is to consider a full range of options as practicable, provide analysis on the potential benefits  
838 and barriers of each option, and consider which are the best fit for the city. If the city council has already  
839 taken action consistent with this provision, no action is necessary.

840 The committee shall consist of 9 members: 1 shall be the chair of the board of elections commissioners or  
841 their designee, 1 shall be the city council president or their designee, 1 shall be the chair of the school  
842 committee or their designee, 2 shall be community members appointed by the city council, 2 shall be  
843 community members appointed by the school committee, 2 shall be community members appointed by  
844 the mayor. The committee shall elect a chair and establish the schedule of its meetings.

845 The committee shall issue recommendations to the city council within 12 months of creation. The city  
846 council shall take action on the recommendations within 90 days of receipt.



847 (b) CREATION OF THE INITIAL FIRST EQUITABLE COMPENSATION DISTRIBUTION  
848 COMMITTEE

849 The mayor and the city council shall convene the initial equitable compensation distribution committee,  
850 pursuant to section 5-3, within sufficient time that the committee's report can be delivered by the date of  
851 the Annual Budget Meeting in the following calendar year. If the city council has already taken action  
852 consistent with this provision, no action is necessary.

853 In addition to the subject matter required in section 5-3, the committee's initial report shall include: (1)  
854 proposed solutions to address existing compensation disparities or related issues, including but not limited  
855 to tying mechanisms (a set ratio to determine pay of elected officials, tying the highest possible pay of an  
856 elected official to the lowest paid municipal employee); (2) a proposed implementation plan to establish  
857 compensation distribution standards; (3) an analysis of the proposed cost and timeline to implement those  
858 standards; (4) a comparative analysis of other approaches to this issue in similar municipalities; and (5) an  
859 analysis of the impacts on the community of the city.

860 The committee shall consist of at least 8 members: 1 shall be the mayor or their designee, 1 shall be the  
861 city council president or their designee, 1 shall be the chair of the school committee or their designee, 1  
862 shall be a member of the municipal compensation advisory board, 1 shall be a member of the charter  
863 review committee, 1 shall be a community member appointed by the mayor, 1 shall be a community  
864 member appointed by the city council, and one shall be the city auditor or their designee. In addition, any  
865 other representation deemed necessary by the mayor and city council may be jointly appointed. The  
866 committee shall elect a chair and establish the schedule of its meetings.

867 The committee shall be provided with an initial budget of at least \$50,000 for its expenses, including  
868 hiring of consultants as required to assist with the examination and analysis.

869 The committee shall submit a report to the city council and the city council shall respond to and vote on  
870 the recommendations within 90 days of receipt.

871 (c) CREATION OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

872 Within 6 months of the passing of this charter, the city council shall create a ranked choice voting  
873 committee to propose a measure to adopt ranked-choice voting and submit a report on ranked-choice  
874 voting in the city. A voting method shall be considered ranked choice voting if the municipal voter ranks  
875 candidates in order of preference. The committee's report shall include: (1) the elected offices to be  
876 selected by this voting method; (2) a timeframe and strategy for implementation; (3) infrastructure and  
877 equipment requirements; (4) a cost analysis; (5) a comparative analysis of other voting methods; (6) an  
878 analysis of potential equity concerns; and (7) a community education plan. If the city council has already  
879 taken action consistent with this provision, no action is necessary.

880 The goal of this committee is to implement ranked choice voting in order to more accurately reflect the  
881 will of the voters, increase the number and diversity of candidates, lower barriers to candidate  
882 participation and increase transparency of elections.

883 The committee shall consist of 9 members: 1 shall be the chair of the board of elections commissioners or  
884 their designee, 1 shall be the city council president or their designee, 1 shall be the chair of the school  
885 committee or their designee, 2 shall be community members appointed by the city council, 2 shall be  
886 community members appointed by the school committee, 2 shall be community members appointed by  
887 the mayor. The committee shall elect a Chair and establish the schedule of its meetings.

888 The committee shall propose a measure to the city council within 18 months. The city council shall take  
889 action on the measure within 90 days of receipt.

890 (d) INITIAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF MULTIPLE MEMBER BODIES

891 The mayor and the city council shall convene the first periodic review of multiple member bodies  
892 committee, pursuant to section 8-6, within 6 months of the passing of this charter. The committee's report  
893 should include: (1) an assessment of the functions and relevancies of the city's current multiple member  
894 bodies; (2) a review of activities of multiple member bodies from recent years; (3) the ability of the city to  
895 fill appointments to the body; and (4) recommendations for combining, removing or adding new multiple

896 member bodies. If the city council has already taken action consistent with this provision, no action is  
897 necessary.

898 The committee shall consist of at least 8 members: 1 shall be the mayor or their designee, 1 shall be the  
899 city council president or their designee, 1 shall be the chair of the school committee or their designee, 1  
900 shall be a member of the municipal compensation advisory board, 1 shall be a member of the charter  
901 review committee, 1 shall be a community member appointed by the mayor, 1 shall be a community  
902 member appointed by the city council, and 1 shall be the city auditor. In addition, any other representation  
903 deemed necessary by the mayor and the city council may be jointly appointed.

904 The committee shall elect a chair and establish the schedule of its meetings. The committee shall be  
905 provided with an initial budget of at least \$25,000 for its expenses, including hiring of consultants as  
906 required to assist with the examination and analysis.

907 The committee shall submit a report to the city council and they shall respond to and vote on the  
908 recommendations within 90 days of receipt.

#### 909 (e) PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING STUDY COMMITTEE

910 Within 6 months of the adoption of this charter, the city council shall create a participatory budgeting  
911 committee to study participatory budgeting and related participatory mechanisms and prepare  
912 recommendations with the goal of increasing resident participation in city government. The directive of  
913 this study committee is to consider a full range of options as practicable, provide analysis on the potential  
914 benefits and barriers of each option, review the results of previous participatory budgeting programs, and  
915 consider which are the best fit for the city. If the city council has already taken action consistent with this  
916 provision, no action is necessary.

917 The committee shall consist of 9 members: 1 shall be the director of finance or their designee, 1 shall be  
918 the city council president or their designee, 1 shall be the chair of the school committee or their designee,  
919 2 shall be community members appointed by the city council, 2 shall be community members appointed  
920 by the school committee, and 2 shall be community members appointed by the mayor. The committee

- 921 shall elect a chair and establish the schedule of its meetings.
- 922 The committee shall issue recommendations to the city council within 12 months of creation. The city
- 923 council shall take action on the recommendations within 90 days of receipt.