



EDWARD J. COLLINS, JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
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CITY OF NEWTON
CHARTER COMMISSION
CHARTER DRAFTING ASSISTANCE
SCOPE OF SERVICES

1. Background

As the “constitution” of local governments, a municipal charter is the single most important document in its governance. Undertaking a revision of a city’s charter is therefore an opportunity to have a significant impact on the municipality for many decades. However, it is also an extraordinarily challenging endeavor – statutorily, logistically, and politically. For that reason, most municipalities embarking on the charter development process seek outside expertise.

The Collins Center (hereafter “the Center”) is pleased to submit this scope of services to the City of Newton’s elected Charter Commission (hereafter “Commission”) to provide technical assistance related to the drafting a Home Rule Charter.

2. Scope of Services:

A charter is defined by the National League of Cities as:

“The basic law that defines the organization, powers, functions and essential procedures for the municipal government. It is comparable to the state constitution and to the constitution of the United States. The charter is, therefore, the most important single law of any local government. Through change on the charter, almost any desired change can be achieved in governmental organization, powers, functions and procedures”

The Collins Center utilizes a unique approach to the charter development process. The Center views these exercises as consensus-based deliberations that lead to governance structures that best serve the needs of the particular municipality, *as determined by the Commission; not by the Center*. Further, although the Center has access to legal advice, it views these processes as governance and policy discussions rather than a legal exercise. Our experience has demonstrated that facilitation and organizational skills and knowledge of municipal government forms, structures and organization are of the greatest value to Charter Commissions. This experience has been gained through many years of “on the ground” work as either municipal or state officials or advisors. The Center has the ability to bring fresh, innovative ideas to the Commission that may not always be conventional to Massachusetts local governance.

Staff and associates at the Center have extensive experience in facilitating charter development processes and drafting charters for local governments. Specifically we have worked with both elected and appointed charter commissions and government study committees in Amesbury, Barnstable Central Falls, RI, Chelsea, Dracut, Easton, Everett, Gardner, Holyoke, Hubbardston, Melrose, Newburyport, Northampton, Pittsfield, Somerville and Southborough. Staff and associates have crafted various governance related Special Acts and have provided advice to many municipalities on governance and organizational issues.

In general, Center staff will assist with:

- Conducting interviews with city officials and other interested parties identified by the Commission to gather input and explore issues about which they will possess unique insights;
- Arranging for guest speakers as appropriate; and
- Providing technical assistance and preparing materials for Commission meetings and any public forums the Commission schedules.

Subject to modification and depending on the level and content of the deliberations in each subject area, the Center proposes the following work plan.

Meeting 1: Engagement Startup

- Establish meeting ground rules, frequency, start and end times;
- Confirm the overall scope and schedule;
- Confirm the objectives and approach;
- Agree to a method for contacting City officials and employees;
- Identify and establish a method of contacting other stakeholders;
- Establish a public communications protocol; and
- Discuss a public participation process.

Meetings 2 &3: The Legislative Body

- Deliberate and decide upon the composition, term of office, method of election and powers and duties of the legislative body.

Meeting 4: School Governance

- Deliberate and decide upon composition, term of office and method of election of the school Committee.

Meeting 5 & 6: The Executive Branch

- Deliberate and decide upon the executive branch of government and its powers and duties.

Meeting 7: Administrative Organization and Financial Procedures

- Deliberate and decide upon the method of establishing and modifying the administrative organization including boards and commissions.
- Deliberate and decide upon budgeting, financial forecasting, capital planning and other financial procedures.

Meeting 8 & 9: Elections and Citizen Relief Mechanisms

- Deliberate and decide upon nomination and election procedures.
- Deliberate and decide upon free petition, initiative petition, referendum and recall provisions.

Meeting 10: Transition Provisions and Wrap-Up

- Deliberate and decide on when certain provisions of the new charter will take effect.

DRAFT

Timeline

A proposed timeline appears below. This timeline ensures that the charter will be voted on at the municipal election in November 2017.

Event	Nov 15	Dec 15	Jan 16	Feb 16	Mar 16	Apr 16	May 16	Jun 16	Jul 16	Aug 16	Sep 16	Oct 16	Nov 16	Dec 16	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Apr 17
Commission Sworn	X																	
Meeting 1		X																
Meeting 2		X																
Public Hearing		X																
Meeting 3			X															
Meeting 4				X														
Meeting 5					X													
Meeting 6						X												
Meeting 7							X											
Meeting 8								X										
Meeting 9									X									
Meeting 10										X								
Review Preliminary Report											X	X						
Issue Preliminary Report																X		
Reserve													X					
Reserve														X				
Public Hearing																X		
Review Final Report																	X	X
Issue Final Report																		X

3. Fee

The Center will charge an all-inclusive fee of \$40,000 to be paid in 3 installments. The first payment of \$10,000 will be billed after meeting 2. The second installment of \$20,000 will be billed after meeting 10. The final instalment of \$10,000 will be billed upon the completion of the final report.

About the Collins Center

The Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management is dedicated to improving efficiency, effectiveness, governance, and accountability at all levels of government, with a particular focus on state and local government. The Center’s aim is to enable public entities to provide high quality services to the people they serve on a sustainable basis.

Staff

Stephen McGoldrick has over 25 years of local and regional government experience. McGoldrick played a lead role in the reform of Chelsea's government as chief of staff the Receiver in the early-mid 1990's. He served as deputy director for the Metropolitan Area Planning Council for 11 years. During his career, he has provided charter related assistance to Amesbury, Barnstable, Central Falls, RI, Easton, Everett, Gardner, Holyoke, Hubbardston, Melrose, Newburyport, Northampton, Pittsfield and Somerville. He is currently overseeing the assistance of an elected Charter Commission in East Longmeadow. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a Master of Management from Lesley University.

Marilyn Contreas is an associate at the Collins Center. She served as a senior program and policy analyst for the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for over 35 years. She worked with charter commissions, municipal government study committees, and other local officials on questions of structure and organization of local government. She also served as the state's representative to the working group to prepare a new charter for the city of Chelsea as it emerged from receivership. She has served as a resource on charter-related questions to the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and local Leagues of Women Voters. She has also designed and administered grant programs for municipal governments, and regional planning agencies. She received a bachelor's degree from Webster College in St. Louis, Missouri and a Master of Public Administration from the State University of New York at Albany.