

**Minutes of the  
2022 SALEM NH CHARTER COMMISSION**

**Knightly Room at Salem Town Hall  
33 Geremonty Drive  
Salem NH 03079**

**Meeting #1: Organizational Meeting  
Tuesday, May 17, 2022**

The Charter Commission convened for their organizational meeting following notification by Town Clerk, Susan Wall, in compliance with [RSA 49-B:4, II](#).

Present: DJ Bettencourt, Kevin Breen, Bernard W. Campbell, Joseph Feole, John Janigian, Donna Loranger, Kelly Moss, Joe Sweeney, and Bonnie Wright.

The meeting was called to order by Town Clerk, Susan Wall, at 7:00. She asked Joe Sweeney, the original petitioner for the Warrant Article that established the Commission, to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. After that, Ms. Wall had the Commission members take their oath of office. She then stated that the first order of business was to elect a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.

**MOTION BY Bonnie Wright to nominate Bernie Campbell as Chair.** Reasons: Experience working together on Zoning Board, he is a teacher so is used to bringing order, and his teaching field is history and government. Seconded by Joe Feole. No other motions.

**Vote:** Unanimous. Mr. Campbell was elected as chair, and Ms. Wall turned the meeting turned over to Mr. Campbell.

**MOTION BY DJ Bettencourt to nominate Joe Sweeney as Vice-Chair.** Seconded by John Janigian.

**MOTION BY Donna Loranger to nominate Kelly Moss as Vice-Chair.** Seconded by Bonnie Wright.

**Vote** for Joe Sweeney: DJ Bettencourt, Joe Feole, Joe Sweeney, John Janigian.

**Vote** for Kelly Moss: Kevin Breen, Donna Loranger, Kelly Moss, and Bonnie Wright. Joe Sweeney elected 5:4, with Bernie Campbell casting the tie-breaking vote.

**MOTION BY Donna Loranger to nominate Bonnie Wright as Secretary.** Seconded by Kelly Moss.

**MOTION BY Joe Feole to nominate Kelly Moss as Secretary.** Seconded by DJ Bettencourt.

**Vote** for Bonnie Wright: DJ Bettencourt, John Janigian, Donna Loranger, Kelly Moss, Joe Sweeney, and Bonnie Wright.

**Vote** for Kelly Moss: Joe Feole and Kevin Breen.

Bonnie Wright was elected as Secretary 6:2:1, with Chairman Campbell abstaining.

1 Bonnie Wright: Distributed sheets with a summary of minutes from the 2009  
2 Commission, the agenda of the Merrimack County 2005 Charter Commission, the  
3 proposed agenda that Mr. Sweeney provided to all candidates, and a worksheet for  
4 planning the 2022 agenda. We have 22 weeks. Goal: Efficient, but make sure we have  
5 enough time to do everything.

6  
7 Joe Sweeney: We need public input. We need 60% to approve in March 2023. July &  
8 August are tough months for the public to be involved. Recommends we frontload public  
9 input. 6% turned out to vote, but collectively, with the different groups we represent, the  
10 Charter members represent over 60% of the town. We need a lot of public input.

11  
12 Bernie Campbell: Would like to do an online survey with a unique ID to all registered  
13 voters of the town. Are funds available? Would like to ask Selectmen for funds.

14  
15 Kevin Breen: Ballot allowed \$9,075 for Charter Commission. Are funds left from that?  
16 He was on the 2009 Commission. Fewer than 10 [Edit: 7] came to give input. Those  
17 who came to speak were actual candidates (Edit: Intended to say elected officials?). Do  
18 what we can to get citizens engaged. It's up to us to invite people.

19  
20 Bonnie Wright: Before we get too far into inviting people to come, we need to hear from  
21 NH Municipal Association and from other towns, so we have an informed public when  
22 they come in.

23  
24 Donna Loranger: Cost of mass mailing to 18,000 registered voters. Possibly \$25,000.

25  
26 Bernie Campbell: Start thinking about what you want on the survey. Why don't people  
27 vote? (i.e., Too much on the ballot? Wrong time of year?) One of our goals should be to  
28 get them involved.

29  
30 Joe Sweeney: State House has a way of submitting public input online. We should have  
31 a way on the town website for people to submit comments. RSAs allow Charter  
32 Commission to raise funds. If we can't get funds from Select Board, there are other  
33 options.

34  
35 Kelly Moss: Likes Mr. Sweeney's website idea, but website isn't used very frequently;  
36 we won't reach as many people as we would with a mailer or even Facebook. She likes  
37 mailer idea. How much would it cost?

38  
39 Bernie Campbell: We could look at Survey Monkey.

40  
41 John Janigian: People won't go to website for Charter Commission, but they do go. Can  
42 we get a big button at the top? Something prominent to direct them to the Charter  
43 Commission area of the website?

44  
45 Bernie Campbell: We have 22 weeks. In 2009 there were 13 meetings. They ran out of

1 time. He believes the 1982 Charter Commission did not meet more than 20 times. Need  
2 to hear from other experts.

3  
4 Joe Sweeney: Would like to meet next week with NH Municipal Action and other towns.  
5 Take full advantage of June.

6  
7 Bonnie Wright: Next Tuesday is Planning Board. Would affect Joe Feole.

8  
9 Bernie Campbell: Wednesday, May 25.

10  
11 Discussion about availability of different days/dates.

12  
13 Joe Sweeney: Recommends "Sign Up Genius" for Charter Members to record days  
14 available for meetings.

15  
16 DJ Bettencourt: We need to recognize SGTV's schedule

17  
18 Bernie Campbell: In addition to NH Municipal Association, who shall we talk with?

19  
20 Donna Loranger: Bev Donovan, Salem resident, works for the Town of Derry

21  
22 Bonnie Wright: Do we want to municipal and towns on the same night? If we combine  
23 all together, it will short-change people, or make for a long meeting.

24  
25 Bernie Campbell: Thoughts on one or two nights?

26  
27 Joe Feole: Do it in one night.

28  
29 John Janigian: Need more than one person. Has connections to a current or former  
30 town councilor from Derry. Will connect with them.

31  
32 Bernie Campbell: Next week: Review tasks.

33  
34 Kevin Breen: Handbook from Local Government Center (now NH Municipal Association)  
35 for all NH elected officials. Helps with "roles, goals and procedures to get there." They  
36 sent an attorney to do that. (Town requested.) Would like to be part of next week's  
37 agenda. Same person may be able to do a presentation on different forms of  
38 government.

39  
40 DJ Bettencourt: Keep eye on the prize. Do due diligence, and information gathering, but  
41 don't overwhelm ourselves with meetings. Don't run out the clock. More info gathering  
42 meetings, less time to take action.

43  
44 Bernie Campbell: The goal is to discuss drafts by the beginning of July. Finalize by  
45 September.

**MOTION BY Bonnie Wright to have two meetings with the first for the NH Municipal Association, and the second to hear from representatives from various towns.** Seconded by Donna Loranger.

Discussion: Date for 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Thursday, June 2.

**Vote:** Motion carried, 9:0.

Bernie Campbell: Consider a weekend meeting for public input.

Joe Sweeney: Before we plan additional meetings, we need to compare schedules. Is willing to reach out to lobbyist at NH Municipal Association about speaking to us.

Bernie Campbell: No objections to Joe reaching out, but he will also reach out to the Town Manager for assistance.

Discussion about reaching out to other towns. [See Action Items, below.]

Bonnie Wright: Recommended reviewing Merrimack's Charter info:  
<https://charter.merrimacknh.org/> Only place she could find Salem's Charter.

Kevin Breen: Asked for clarification regarding town representatives.

Bernie Campbell: Looking to town representatives to share experiences with form of government. What are issues with the system? What solutions might help avoid friction points? Broad variety. Windham re: Town Administrator. Someone from a city government.

Hope to finalize schedule for summer by June 2.

Kevin Breen: Pass list for emails, contact info.

Bonnie Wright: 5 commissioners have town emails. Others should have town email addresses as well.

Kevin Breen and Bernie Campbell: Town emails will protect Right to Know laws. We need to communicate anything of substance via email.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**All:** Fill in "Sign Up Genius" form. Surf and read charters across the State.

**DJ Bettencourt:** Research cost of surveys, and questions that should be asked.

**Kevin Breen:**

1 **Bernard W. Campbell:** Will email Town Manager & Assistant Town Manager re: NH  
2 Municipal Association and suggestions for other towns; town website. Email to Town  
3 Manager and Select Board re: Funds available. Send out "Sign Up Genius."

4  
5 **Joseph Feole:**

6  
7 **John Janigian:** Invite Derry Town Councilor for June 2.

8  
9 **Donna Loranger:** Invite Bev Donovan for June 2.

10  
11 **Kelly Moss:**

12  
13 **Joe Sweeney:** Will invite Merrimack Rep who worked on the Merrimack 2005 Charter  
14 Commission for June 2. He will research the cost of town-wide mailing.

15  
16 **Bonnie Wright:** Prepare minutes. Prepare and send our phone list. Work with Asst.  
17 Town Manager for website implementations, including something at the top pointing to  
18 our part of the website. [No one is researching Survey Monkey. She will if no one else  
19 volunteers.]

20  
21  
22  
23 **MOTION BY DJ Bettencourt to adjourn.** Seconded by Kevin Breen. Meeting  
24 adjourned at 7:55.

25 **Vote:** 9-0-0

26  
27 Minutes taken by: Bonnie Wright

28  
29 Minutes Approved: Salem 2022 Charter Commission

30  
31 Date: May 25, 2022

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37 **Video of meetings may be viewed at:**

38 <https://www.facebook.com/sctv17/videos/420490959909773>

39 <http://sctv-17.com/CablecastPublicSite/show/14796?channel=1>