

At a Special meeting of the Charter Commission in and for the Town of Gloucester on April 13, 2026:

I. Call to Order

Chair P. Henry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Anderton, R; Baris, C. (arrived at 6:15 pm); Henry, P.; Kettelle, R; Kitson, J (arrived at 6:05 pm); Lamontagne, Mathieu, C; K.; Wagner, T

Member absent: G. Kain III;

Pledge and consent were heard out of order

IV. Consent Items- Discussion and/or Action

- A. Approval of Charter Review Commission minutes: Regular meeting of March 24, 2026

MOTION was made by C. Mathieu to approve the Charter Commission minutes of March 24, 2026; seconded by T. Wagner

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Anderton; Baris; Henry; Kettelle; Kitson; Lamontagne; Mathieu,
Wagner,
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Chair P. Henry asked for a motion to move item V to follow item VI in order to accommodate the audience.

MOTION was made by K. Lamontagne to move item V Unfinished business to follow item VI New business; seconded by C. Mathieu

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Anderton; Henry; Kettelle; Kitson; Lamontagne; Mathieu, Wagner,
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair P. Henry asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

MOVED to this location

VI. New Business- Discussion and/or Action

- A. General Review and discussion of Charter – Discussion and/or Action
1. Article VI- School Department

Discussion: Chair P. Henry stated that each item will be read and then discussed. Chair P. Henry invited members of the audience to raise your hand if you wish to speak.

Chair P. Henry stated a description of the process the Charter commission is to follow to present recommendations to Council. Chair P. Henry stated that Council then approves recommendations to present to the voters.

Chair P. Henry read section C6-1. K. Lamontagne stated a proposal to have a hybrid school committee made up of elected and appointed members instead of all elected in order to be transparent and to be able to have more oversight over the school committee.

Chair P. Henry stated her opinion that the school committee is to be non partisan so having appointed members may make the school committee political. R. Kettelle stated her opinion that both school committees should support the town as a whole. Chair P. Henry stated that she has a suggestion as to that topic to be addressed later in the meeting.

MOTION was made by K. Lamontagne to recommend to Council for consideration that there should be a hybrid school committee; seconded by J. Kitson

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Kettelle; Kitson; Lamontagne
NAYS- Anderton; Henry; Mathieu; Wagner

MOTION FAILED

Section C6-2 Qualifications

Discussion: Chair P. Henry stated a suggestion that the commission consider a recommendation to Council to consider that language be added to prohibit a school committee member from serving if a spouse, child or sibling is employed by the school.

After discussion by the commission members and input from several unidentified audience members, this matter was added to the list to be considered for review to move forward to Council.

Section C6-3 Vacancies

Chair P. Henry stated a suggestion that a specific recall provision for the Gloucester School Committee be added. K. Lamontagne stated her opinion that the solicitor should be consulted for review. W. Steere, resident, stated his opinion there be language included as to process for both sides to be able to state their case to determine if a violation of the charter occurred.

Chair P. Henry stated her reason as the school committee is its own entity and reports to the Board of Regents. J. Kitson suggested to wait till we get to C14-16 to decide if want to add.

T. Wagner stated a suggestion that every appointed and/or elected person have to sign off as to having received and read he charter to foster responsibility.

After discussion, this matter of recall was added to the list for future consideration.

During the discussion regarding the filling of vacancies a question for future was raised. Chair P. Henry would like an answer to the question of: “what happens if there are not enough candidates to fill an election? “.

C. Baris asked if there were any application requirements for Council to consider if they are the appointing body. R. Kettelle stated it comes down to the definition of qualified. K. Lamontagne stated that C6-2 already states that the qualifications are elector and resident for 6 months.

C. Baris stated a concern that council could appoint friends. R. Kettelle stated a suggestion to define “qualified” when revisit sections being considered for Council.

C6-4 Compensation- K. Lamontagne stated this is a line item in the budget. No change recommended

C6-5 Powers and Duties

Chair P. Henry stated a recommendation to check state law as to the authority of the appointment and removal of school employees after a discussion by commission members and comments by unidentified members in the audience and if necessary to consider a recommendation to Council.

Chair P. Henry asked if the end of the fiscal year report has been done. K. Lamontagne stated that it is part of the annual audit. Unidentified audience member stated that he feels this is a separate report. No action

Chair P. Henry proposed adding language to require the School Committee to conduct an annual performance evaluation of the superintendent. K. Lamontagne questioned if this is a policy or a charter amendment. J. Kitson questioned that this may be state law.

Commission members and unidentified audience members discussed.

R. Kettelle suggested a recommendation to add “Glocester “ before the school committee language throughout this charter for clarification or add a line that for purposes of school committee, it refers to Glocester School committee. Chair P. Henry added this to the list to be considered for review to move forward to Council.

C6-6 Building Committee

R. Kettelle stated her opinion that in order to have qualified electors on the committee that clarity as to the word “qualified” should be added. J. Kitson stated his agreement. Commission members and unidentified audience members discussed the process for building repairs.

P. Henry stated that clarity as to the composition of this committee be considered as part of the list for review for Council.

C6-7 Regionalization

No Action

C6-8 Maintenance of school buildings and grounds

Chair P. Henry stated her opinion that the town is responsible for all town building which includes the schools. K. Lamontagne described how the schools are currently handled. C, Mathieu stated that the schools are excepted from the responsibilities of the Dept. of Public Works in the current charter. Chair P. Henry stated that could be changed. C. Mathieu stated that state law places the control for maintenance with the school committee. Commission members and unidentified audience members discussed various possible scenarios as to this responsibility.

No Action

C6-9 Financial Accounting

R. Anderton stated his opinion that this section is redundant with other sections of the charter and could be deleted. C. Mathieu stated the term financial accounting is vague and asked E. Beltram what her department does under this term. E. Beltram, Finance Director, stated the various tasks

that the department performs for the school. C. Mathieu asked if these are different from the tasks the finance department performs for other town departments and E. Beltram stated they were. C. Mathieu stated a description of how each department functions in a relation with the finance department. C. Mathieu asked E. Beltram if the tasks her department performs for the school would be better handled by a school business manager. E. Beltram stated that if the school had a business manager then then the entire financial function of the school would be handled by the school and she would oversee the department just like any other town department.

P. Henry stated that she feels strongly about this as she has spoken with the Finance Director. K. Lamontagne stated that the superintendent gets a monthly report just like every other town department to use to monitor expenses in response to R. Kettelle's question.

Chair P. Henry stated her opinion that having a school business manager would promote more control over spending and it has become the burden of the town finance director. Unidentified audience member stated that the school would prefer to have their own business manager but it comes down to cost. Unidentified audience member questioned how the position would be paid. R. Kettelle stated that this responsibility belongs with the school as it is a school function and operation and that the funding is a separate issue. P. Henry stated that the charter can add that this financial accounting be the responsibility of the school. E. Beltram stated it is a conflict for the finance department to be handling the school.

Chair P. Henry stated that the Gloucester schools needs its own business manger with oversight by the Finance Department as consideration for recommendation to the Council.

C6-10 Overspending of School Department appropriations prohibited

W. Steere, resident, stated his opinion that this has been the most abused section of the charter. W. Steere stated that over the past few years the school has overspent their budget by millions of dollars and nothing happens. W. Steere C3-1 last sentence – requiring no additional expenses can made once the voters have voted on a budget. Chair P. Henry stated that when the recall section is discussed that this issue may be addressed.

No Action

Chair P. Henry thanked the members of the School Committee (who did not identify themselves) in attendance and for their input.

2. Article VII-Department of Finance

MOTION was made by Chair P. Henry to TABLE Article VII Department of Finance to the next meeting; seconded by R. Anderton

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Anderton; Henry; Kettelle; Kitson; Lamontagne; Mathieu, Wagner,
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Chair P. Henry to TABLE Article XIII Other Officers and Commissions and Article XIV General Provisions to the next meeting; seconded by R. Anderton

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Anderton; Henry; Kettelle; Kitson; Lamontagne; Mathieu, Wagner,
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Set forth the review of the specific parts of the Charter for the next meeting- Discussion and/or Action

Chair P. Henry stated that the next meeting agenda will be to review Article VII Department of Finance; Article VIII Financial Procedures; Article XIII Other Offices and Commissions and Article XIV General Provisions

C. Next Meeting Date -Confirmation- Discussion and/or Action

Chair P. Henry stated that the next meeting is April 28, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

VII. Open Forum

None

VIII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by K. Lamontagne to ADJOURN at 8:15 PM; seconded by J. Kitson

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Anderton; Henry; Kettelle; Kitson; Lamontagne; Mathieu, Wagner,
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED