

The Watertown Charter Review Committee Is Asking: Do You Want A Mayor or A Town Manager?

Background:

Watertown's **Home Rule Charter (The Charter)** is our "constitution." The Charter establishes the framework for how our government operates: the form of government, its structure, functions, and processes, how public officials are elected, how the budget is developed, and the role citizens play in local government. These are some of the important choices articulated in a charter.

Our Charter is reviewed every ten years by a Charter Review Committee. It is an opportunity for a government "checkup" – to discuss what is going well, what can be improved, and what might need to be changed. In January of 2020, Mark Sideris, President of the Town Council, announced that the CRC would be formed and asked residents to apply for the six positions that together with the nine members of the Town Council, make up the CRC.

Due to COVID-19 delays and restrictions, the CRC began reviewing the provisions of the Charter on October 6, 2020. Meetings are held every two weeks on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 6 pm via Zoom. These meetings are public, and participation is encouraged.

A critical meeting of the CRC is scheduled for Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 6 PM to discuss and decide the form of government that is preferred as we move forward. Currently (since 1980), we have a "City" form of government – Town Council/Town Manager. An alternate city form of government is Mayor/Council. "Town" form of government options include Open Town Meeting/Selectman or Representative Town Meeting/Selectmen.

The Important Task Before Us:

This is a very important decision as potential changes to the Town Charter will be dictated, in part, by what form of government will be in place. Depending on what change recommendations the CRC makes, the Town Council, residents, and possibly the state legislature will need to approve the changes.

Here is your opportunity to ask questions and have your voice heard. The meeting will be open to all for questions and comments regarding this issue.

Again, due to Covid-19 restrictions this meeting will be held remotely. The information on participation by computer, by phone, and by email will be posted on the town website shortly.

Please join the meeting, share this information with family, friends, and neighbors so that the CRC can make the best decision for Watertown's future.



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