

PALMER CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

Overview of changes in the proposed Home Rule Charter recommended by the Elected Charter Commission 2-23-2010

The Commission voted to recommend approval of the proposed Home Rule Charter for the Town of Palmer. Among the changes recommended are:

1. The makeup of the Town Council will be changed from the current 9 members to 7 members, with 3 members elected at large and 4 from the existing districts.
2. The Agenda for the regular monthly Town Council meeting will be posted 7 days in advance of the meeting.
3. All vacancies in elected positions must be filled within 60 days.
4. Appointments to multi-member boards (for example the Board of Health) will be for three year staggered terms.
5. The term of office for all elected officials will change from 4 years to 2 years with At-Large and District Councilors elected in alternate years. Terms for members of the Planning Board and the School Committee will be staggered with 3 members elected in one year and the other two members elected in the alternate year.
6. The annual Town Election will be held on the second Tuesday in June. Officials elected will assume office on July 1st of the same year.
7. The Town Council will appoint the Town Manager and 2 members of the Town Council to the Library Board of Trustees.
8. The positions of Town Manager, Director of Public Works, Director of Municipal Finance and Director of Public Safety all have specific requirements for education and experience. A Bachelor's Degree and 5 years experience or a Master's Degree and 3 years experience. These requirements must be met within 2 years.
9. The addition of the staff position of Economic Development Director.
10. The Town Clerk be appointed by the Town Manager.
11. A new budget process outlined in Article 7.
12. The Town Council may waive the requirement to appoint a Charter Review Committee if such a commission has been elected within 2 years of the mandated review.

The Commission requests this Charter be submitted for voter approval at the November 2010 election. Should this Charter be approved the first election under this Charter would take place on June 14th 2011 and the Charter would take effect on July 1st 2011.