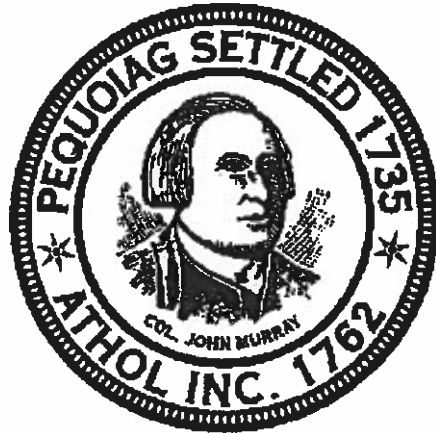


**RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE  
CHARTER REVIEW  
COMMITTEE  
APRIL 2023**



**TOWN OF ATHOL**

*To the Honorable Board of Selectmen:*

### **Introduction**

The Charter Review Committee is a 7 member board appointed by the Board of Selectmen to review and recommend changes to the Town Charter which went into effect on July 1, 2000 and amended on April 4, 2005, April 3, 2006, April 2, 2007, and April 6, 2015.

### **Summary of Review**

In May 2022, the Charter Review Committee began the task of reviewing the entire Charter to identify necessary changes. The Committee met seven times and completed the review in March 2023. Below is a summary of the review:

General: Change Board of Selectmen to “Select Board”, make references gender neutral, and delete all amendment references throughout Town Charter.

### **Chapter 1 – Powers of the Town**

No changes recommended

### **Chapter 2 – Town Meeting**

2-1-5 Delete the words “to new voters at time of registration, and to those in attendance at all sessions of Town Meeting” and add the words “and on the town website.”

2-3-2 Delete section in its entirety and renumber remaining sections accordingly.

2-3-6 Delete the word “spring” and delete “published in a newspaper of general circulation within the Town” and replace with “posted on the town website”.

2-4 Referendum – delete entire section and renumber remaining sections accordingly.

### **Chapter 3 – Board of Selectmen**

Change all “Board of Selectmen” references to “Select Board”

### **Chapter 4 – Elected Officer and Town Boards**

4-1-1 Delete “Beginning with the first Town election after the adoption of this Charter.

4-3-2 Delete and replace to read as follows: “The Athol-Royalston School Committee shall submit to the Town Manager the budget as adopted by the School Committee in sufficient time to enable the Town Manager to consider the effects of the School Department’s requested assessment upon the total Town budget.

4-6-1 Delete residency requirement for Town Clerk within 6 months and replace with “shall reside within 25 miles of the Town and able to fulfill duties in a timely manner within one year”.

## **Chapter 5 – The Town Manager**

- 5-2-3 Delete residency requirement for Town Manager within 1 year and replace it with “shall reside within 25 miles of the Town and be able to fulfill duties in a timely manner within 1 year”.
- 5-3-5 Add the words “with final review and approval by the Select Board” at the end of the sentence.
- 5-3-7 Delete the words “school, respectively and the School Committee”.
- 5-3-9 Delete (l) five member of a Personnel Board and renumber remaining sections accordingly. Add the words “or employees” after “Town Officers in (n m).
- 5-4-4 Delete “in a newspaper of local circulation” and add “on the town website, social media”.
- 5-4-7 Delete the word “affected” and replace with “effective (twice). In the second sentence, delete the words (he has not requested a hearing” and replace with “a hearing was not requested”.

## **Chapter 6 – Town Administrative Organization**

- 6-3-1 Delete the words “Civil Defense” and replace with “Emergency Management”
- 6-5-1 Add “public facilities” after “public grounds”
- 6-6-2 Delete in its entirety and replace with the following:

“The Town Manager, except as otherwise provided by general law, shall be responsible to propose Personnel Policies and Procedures to include (a) the classification of all positions, based on the duties, responsibilities and authority of each position, with adequate provisions for reclassification of any position whenever warranted by changed circumstances; (b) a salary and pay plan for all positions; (c) methods of determining the merit and fitness of candidates for appointment and promotion; (d) policies and procedures regulating reduction in force and removal of employees; (e) hours of work attendance regulations, and provisions for sick, vacation, military, family medical and other leave; (f) policies and procedures governing persons holding provisional appointments; (g) policies regarding in service training programs; (h) grievance procedures including procedures for the hearing of such grievances; and (i) such other practices and procedures as may be necessary for the administration of the Personnel system. The proposed rules shall be presented for discussion, comment, revision and/or final adoption by a majority vote of the Select Board convened in a public session. Upon vote of the Select Board, the policies shall become immediately effective. A copy of such policies shall be filed for record purposes with the Town Clerk and shall be made available to all Town employees. Said policies may, from time to time, be amended or revised following the same procedure of adoption stated above.”

## **Chapter 7 – Elections**

- 7-3-1 Add the words “excluding the Athol-Royalston Regional School Committee” at the end after the word “Town”.

## **Chapter 8 – Financial Provisions and Procedures**

- 8-3-1 Delete the words “spring session of the” and add the word “proposed” in front of the word budget.
- 8-4-1 Delete the words “spring session of the”.
- 8-6-1 Delete the words “established within one year of the appointment of the Town Manager” in the first sentence.
- 8-6-3 Delete the second sentence “They will report to the Town Meeting the capital program for the following five years.” and replace with “They shall submit a report to Town Meeting.”
- 8-7-1 Delete the words “publish in one or more newspapers of general circulation in the Town” and replace with “post on the town website and social media.
- 8-7-2 Delete the words “the spring session”
- 8-11-1 Delete the words “spring session of the” and add the word “Annual” in front of Town Meeting.

## **Chapter 9 – Planning and the Environment**

- 9-1-1 Add the following “The Town manager may appoint an associate member as provided for under M.G.L. c.40A §9”.
- 9-1-3 Add the words “serve as the Planning Board for the Town and may” after the word shall.
- 9-2-2 Delete sentence “The Board shall report annual to the Town Meeting the status of the plan”.
- 9-3-1 Delete the words “from a list of two or more candidates prepared by the Planning Board” and replace with the words “and support staff”

## **Chapter 10 – General Provision**

- 10-1-1 (h) Delete the word “Representative”

Add the following sections under Section 10-8-1

- 10-8-2 Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the membership of an appointed multiple member body, the remaining members shall forthwith give written notice of such vacancy to the appointing authority. If, at the expiration of thirty (30) days following delivery of such

written notice to the appointing authority, said appointing authority has not appointed some person to fill the vacancy, the remaining members of the multiple member body may recommend a replacement to fill such vacancy to the appointing authority for the remainder of the unexpired term.

- 10-8-3 If any person appointed to serve as a member of a multiple member body shall fail to attend four (4) consecutive meetings, or more than one-quarter of all meetings held during one (1) calendar year, the appointing authority may declare the office of such person vacant; provided, however, that prior to the vote on such question written notice of an intention so to do shall be given by the appointing authority in hand, or mailed to the last known address of such person by regular first class mail and by certified mail.

## **Chapter 11 – Transitional Provisions**

No changes recommended

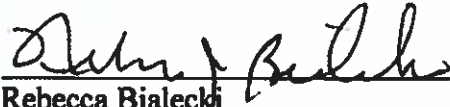
We the undersigned, members of the Athol Charter Review Committee, duly appointed by the Athol Board of Selectmen, after careful review and consideration by a majority vote propose the following amendments to the Athol Charter.



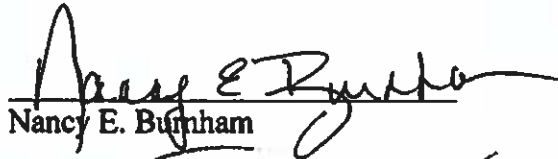
Michael Butler, Vice-Chair



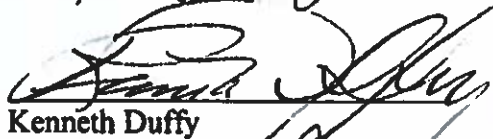
Bridget Armentrout



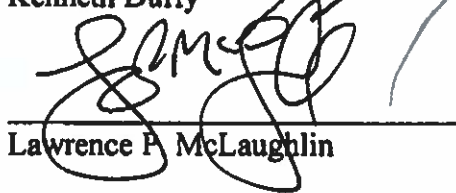
Rebecca Bialecki



Nancy E. Burnham



Kenneth Duffy



Lawrence P. McLaughlin

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**

