

**MINUTES OF THE CITIZENS OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON FEBRUARY 20, 2020**

A Citizens Outreach Committee meeting was held on Thursday, February 20, 2020 at 6:00PM in the City Council office, Room 204.

Committee Members: Committee Chairperson John Michitson, Vice President LePage, Councillors Sullivan and Jordan.  
President Barrett and Councillor Macek also attended.

Attendees: Mayor Fiorentini, State Representative Vargas, School Committee Member Wood and 30 citizens attended \*

The following Document Item #11-R was discussed:

1. Communication from Councillor John Michitson requesting to propose Citizens Outreach Committee meeting to enable citizens to address options and provide feedback on ways to study Haverhill's Charter, including but not limited to Ward Representation on City Council, in preparation for related Administration and Finance Committee meeting.

Three themes emerged from Citizens Outreach Committee meeting on possible Charter changes. Here are the three major themes:

- a. Ballot question this Fall - for change to Ward & At Large Councillors only (hybrid option); rationale: simplify process with single question, do full blown Charter Commission in future; many favored 11 Councillors (7 Ward, 4 At Large) but some did not want to change number of City Councillors (7 Ward, 2 At Large.) Many said that Ward representation would ensure that every neighborhood has a voice. Some noted that that current barriers to run for office would be lowered if new candidates could focus solely on one ward instead of a city-wide campaign. It was stated that the City of Lowell had a law suit that forced the City to change to Ward and At Large City Councilors and School Committee members (hybrid option);
- b. Ballot question this Fall - for both Ward & At Large Councillors and School Committee; rationale: schools can benefit as well;
- c. Ballot question for full blown Charter Review. Some citizens favored a longer but deeper process. Rationale: not enough time to properly inform citizens on pros and cons for options a. and b. above for this Fall. Many cited other related issues in City to consider, such as term limits, longer terms of office (e.g. 4 years for Mayor and City Council), and alternatives to the current strong Mayor form of government in Haverhill to better balance power between Mayor and City Council.

Mayor Fiorentini stated that he preferred only a single ballot question on Ward & At Large Councillors (hybrid option,) but he left open the possibility of an additional ballot question on the School Committee hybrid option. He also supported a full blown Charter Review following this November's election if that is what citizens preferred. Mayor Fiorentini stated that he would be submitting an order for a ballot question on an upcoming the City Council agenda. State Representative Vargas wanted to add a second ballot question this Fall on the School Committee hybrid option, to ensure that all neighborhoods have a voice. School Committee member Wood did not want to change the current School Committee structure.

A motion was subsequently made, seconded and voted in favor by all Committee members to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

*John Michitson*

John Michitson, Chairperson  
Citizens Outreach Committee  
Haverhill City Council

March 2, 2020

JAM/bsa

c: Mayor Fiorentini  
Councillors

\*Attendees: Milton Taylor, Dana Lovell, Susan Kane, Lee Kane, Penelope Davis, Jon Goldfield, Ken Quimby, Gary Huber, Dee O'Neil, Richard Katsiare, Christine Kwitchoff, Amy Maciel, Karen McNamara, Stephen Costa, Graciela Trilla, Porfirio Matias, Ismael Matias, Fermin De La Crus, Mike Anasi, John Bachmann, Demet Haksever, Jon & Alison Campell, Stephen Gordon, Bill Luz, Jeff Grassie, Joanna Dix, Jean Sanders, Kathy Rurak, John Grant