



Framingham Public Schools
Robert A. Tremblay, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Jessica Barnhill, Chair • Jennifer Moshe, Vice Chair • Rich Robles, Clerk
Adam Freudberg • David Gordon • William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell • Valerie Ottaviani • Judy Styer
Charlie Sisitsky, Mayor

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TO: Framingham City Council

FROM: Jessica Barnhill, Chair of the School Committee
Adam Freudberg, School Committee Member & Committee
Liaison to the Charter Review Committee

CC: Mayor Charlie Sisitsky
Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Marion Kelly, Secretary of the City Council
Charter Review Committee

DATE: July 8, 2024

RE: Framingham School Committee Recommendations on the City
Charter Revisions

On June 26, 2024, the School Committee discussed providing information to the City Council on the education-related edits recommended by the Charter Review Committee, which the Committee voted to support.

This memo outlines those recommended priority changes for your awareness and knowledge of the Committee's advocacy to move these specific recommended edits to the next phase for the voters to determine the result. The Charter Review Committee made additional education-related recommendations beyond the School Committee's specific vote. The Committee did not raise any additional suggested changes or concerns, so silence on any edit does not mean a lack of support.

The specific topics the School Committee vote covered are listed below. Each topic has a corresponding reference to the Charter Article, [Charter Review Committee's Report's Letter Label](#), and the Page Number in the [Charter Review Committee's Revised Charter](#).

ARTICLE IV

Inauguration Date/First Meeting Flexibility

ARTICLE IV, CHARTER REPORT A, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 27

Mid-term vacancies process should mirror the City Council's process requiring a Special Election

ARTICLE IV, CHARTER REPORT B & E, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 29

Add the words "and capital" under School Committee Powers and Duties

ARTICLE IV, CHARTER REPORT D, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 29

Formatting Edits Recommended by the City Consultant:

- Delete dash from "ex officio" - Agrees with C-019 from Charter/Ordinance Review Doc - Article IV, Section 1(a) - ARTICLE IV, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 27
- Bulleted formatting fix in Powers and Duties Section - Agrees with C-021 from Charter/Ordinance Review Doc - Article IV Section 1 (h) - ARTICLE IV, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 28 & 29

ARTICLE V

Addition of a Public Hearing requirement for proposed mergers in municipal departments, mirroring the City Council's public hearing requirement

ARTICLE V, CHARTER REPORT A, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 33 & 34

ARTICLE VI

Change the operating budget timeline to 120 days from 60 days

ARTICLE VI, CHARTER REPORT E, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 39

- School Committee vote would occur in mid February versus the current end of March schedule
- Allows for two to three weeks after the Governor submits the baseline budget, so there is a firm proposal on Commonwealth Chapter 70 and other line items before the vote
- Executive Director of Finance & Operations Feedback: Recommend this be changed to speed up the operating budget approval process. Per collective bargaining agreements, school staff have a limited number of

time after school ends in June to place orders for the start of the following school year with the following year funding.

- Human Resources Director Feedback: It would really help the District's hiring efforts if the budget is approved earlier in the school year. We lose a lot of talent because we cannot offer contracts until so late in the hiring season.

Change the Capital Budget Timeline

ARTICLE IV, CHARTER REPORT L & M, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 43 & 44:

- Due date still in November
- Review and final vote by February
- Would allow time for construction schedule when schools are closed for the summer
- Executive Director of Finance & Operations Feedback: Propose the capital budget approval process occur in February. The way it is structured now, we find out we have the funding in June and by the time we bid the project out, the summer is halfway or completely over. The two months over the summer is the only long term period of time we have to start and complete projects as students and staff are not in the buildings. If we can get approval in February, we have five months to plan and bid the project out for an end of June/start of July start. Without a change to the timing of the capital budget, we will always be at least one year in arrears for a lot of projects.
- This timeline will allow all departments to more efficiently plan, and accurately budget projects. The current model has departments creating estimates over the summer, mayor submits in November, approval/disapproval in June, and projects cannot start until months following in many cases, and an entire year after in some cases. This has a disproportionate impact on any site which needs construction to be done during the summer, such as school building projects.

Procurement/Contracting Process for the School District: Additional language to clarify on what “unless otherwise provided? By law” means

ARTICLE IV, CHARTER REPORT N, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 45

- The clear delegation of procurement duties to the school committee’s procurement representative (Executive Director of Finance & Operations) on the decision authority to award contracts from the school department is recommended to support the unique timelines and needs of schools, the School Committee’s budgetary authority, and continuous improvements to deliver better services to the school community.

- Supporting is the fact that, “Chapter 30B allows a Chief Procurement Official (CPO) wide latitude to delegate procurement powers and duties to other employees within the same governmental body — it can be very specific, limited or broad. A CPO may issue more than one delegation at a time, and multiple positions may have delegated authority.”
- New legislation since Charter enactment, along with the original understood intent to not supercede school purchasing authority in the original Charter of 2017 both cause the need for this to be addressed. The MA Association of School Committee’s recently offered that, “Chapter 198 of the Acts of 2022 lifted the thresholds for both written quotations and for bids for school districts ONLY from \$50,000 to \$100,000. The School Committee of a municipal district conducting all of its own purchasing may choose to lift the caps above at its discretion. In order for districts in which purchasing is conducted by the municipal purchasing department to do so, the municipality may, per the Office of the Inspector General, 1) change the procurement policy to decentralize the procurement function so the school department can conduct its own procurement process; OR 2) make a limited policy change by using the Chief Purchasing Officer’s delegation to revert some school-related procurements back to the school department); OR 3) keep a centralized process but the CPO can make separate purchases for the school department using the higher school-related thresholds. If none of these occur, the Committee must keep the thresholds as they stand.”

ARTICLE IX

Increased Transparency Measures. Ensure all meeting minutes and videos of all public bodies are required and posted on the City website for consistency

ARTICLE IX, CHARTER REPORT C, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 59 & 60

Inauguration Date/First Meeting Flexibility

ARTICLE IX, CHARTER REPORT D, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 64

Naming school facilities consistent with MGL and longstanding policy

ARTICLE IX, CHARTER REPORT G, REVISED CHARTER PAGE 65

CONCLUSION

We thank you for considering the views of the School Committee and School District, and the recommendation to move these specific edits to the next phase for the voters to determine the result. If additional information is needed, this [linked memo](#) and these [meeting minutes \(page 6\)](#) from the School Committee’s vote recommending these changes are available.