

Bedford NH Charter Commission 2023
Brief Considerations on being a Bedford Charter Commissioner
- Jay Nash

In consideration of running for election as a charter commissioner;

You will need to file for election at the Bedford Town Clerk's office between February 15-24, 2023

If the "put the budget on the ballot" ballot question passes, and you are also elected, you will join a 9-person commission to do the work of the changing the town charter.

The actions and requirements of a charter commission, and charter commissioners, is defined in New Hampshire law Chapter 49-B HOME RULE-MUNICIPAL CHARTERS and more specifically *49-B:4 Charter Commission; Membership; Procedure; Preliminary Report*.

The ultimate product of the charter commission is a written report to the people of Bedford, and various other state authorities (*49-B:4-a and b*) regarding the changes to the charter required to implement Official Town Ballot (SB2-style) voting on the town budget.

As a charter commissioner you are expected to support the minimum operational requirements of the charter commission, which are:

1. The commission must hold a public organizational meeting to elect a chairperson, a vice chairperson and a secretary;
2. The commission must hold no less than 2 additional public hearings;
 - one must allow for public input on this topic
 - one must be for the purpose of explaining your report
3. The commission must publish a report describing the changes required to the charter
4. The charter commission stays in existence for 60 days after the final report is issued or until the chapter changes are voted upon.

Given the very narrow charge of this commission, "**to draft a revision to the municipal charter for the sole purpose of establishing official ballot voting under the current form of government**", at the first organizational meeting the commissioners can also ask the Bedford Town attorneys to begin a review of the existing town charter and suggest the minimum language changes required to affect putting the budget on the ballot.

Practically speaking, you should plan for 4 to 6 commission meetings between April 2023 and October 2023, to reach a final report containing the changes to the charter to put before the voters in March 2024.