

**TOWN OF DEDHAM
450 WASHINGTON STREET
DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF THE DECENNIAL BYLAW REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 27, 2025, 6:30 P.M.**

MEMBERS:

Cecilia Emery Butler	Chair
Fred Wofford	Vice Chair
Micah Flynn	Member
Norman Vigil	Member

STAFF:

Leon Goodwin	Town Manager
Nancy Baker	Assistant Town Manager
Doreen LaBrecque	Assistant to Administration

ATTENDEE:

Dan Driscoll	Town Moderator
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ABSENT:

Michelle Labadini	Member
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Minutes prepared by Azra Ahmad of Minutes Solutions Inc. from a recording.

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and the Members and the public having been given adequate and proper notice of the meeting, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments.

3. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION – PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENTS TO DATE

ACTION – Ms. Baker and Mr. Goodwin will create a list of departments to attend future reviews with the Decennial Bylaw Review Committee.

There was discussion about bylaw language and grammar changes. Mr. Driscoll and Mr. Goodwin reviewed the bylaws pertaining to their position and noted the following highlights:

- The requirement for quorum is reasonable.
- The consent calendar helps keep meetings on schedule through omnibus votes.
- Section 85-22 pertains to town hall meeting attendees with permission to speak. The current provision refers to “voters” and “taxpayers.” However, the terminology should be expanded from “voters” to “residents.” At town meetings, there is an allowance for voters and taxpayers, who are not town representatives, to speak when there are no more town representative speakers. This is very difficult to administer. The provision language could be relaxed to allow the voters, taxpayers, and residents to join the general queue to speak.
- Section 85-29 should be amended to include an executive summary of the collective bargaining agreement, and Sections 85-22 and 85-6 should also be updated to include this summary. The provision currently states that collective bargaining agreements be provided 14 days prior to a town meeting. This requirement cannot always be met and

- There are still several references in the bylaws to the Board of Select Men, although this has been updated in other areas to the Select Board. This language should be updated.
- Chapter 5 should be reviewed in relation to the town charter provision regarding the Town Manager. There are currently some differences between both and consistency with the charter would be helpful.
- Chapter 24 only lists two departments, and it should be amended in accordance with the charter.
- Chapter 39 pertains to finance and should be reviewed by the finance director, the Finance and Warrant Committee, and the Capital Expenditure Committee. There appear to be provisions that do not conform to current practices.
- The language for signing warrants should also be updated. The Select Board does not sign warrants and has delegated this power to the Town Manager under the charter.
- Chapter 88, which pertains to town property, states that no town property should be leased without authorization through a town meeting. However, this conflicts with both Chapter 5 and the charter and should be examined.

The Committee discussed Section 85-22 further and stated that it would be helpful for the bylaw to be written as accurately as possible so the rules can be enforced at town meetings.

Discussion of Section 85-29 noted that collective bargaining agreements are negotiated prior to the vote at the town meeting. Mr. Driscoll reported that collective agreements can be discussed at town meetings, but they cannot be amended or negotiated there. In the rare case that the agreement is not funded, an unfair labor practice situation may result. Many agreements have retroactive wage and cost of living allowance adjustments. An executive summary of the proposed collective agreement could assist with decision-making at the town meeting. Another option is to waive the 14-day period. The Finance and Warrant Committee implemented a new policy stating it would not address contracts 14 days prior to a town meeting. It was noted that ratified collective agreements are publicly available.

Mr. Goodwin recommended that the Decennial Bylaw Review Committee meet with the various departments, such as Building, Code Enforcement, Finance, and others that use the bylaws regularly. He also noted the bylaws are in good shape, although many have not been updated since 2014 and stakeholder involvement is valuable.

The Committee referred to the Administrative Code of the Charter, which notes departmental reorganization can be undertaken with one public hearing. The charter also states that the organization plan will take effect at the start of the next fiscal year.

The Committee agreed to invite Mr. Goodwin and Town Clerk Paul Munchbach to its next meeting.

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was discussed.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion duly made by Mr. Vigil, seconded by Mr. Wofford, it was resolved to approve the minutes from the Decennial Bylaw Review Committee meeting held on January 13, 2025, as presented. Motion carried.

6. **NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Decennial Bylaw Review Committee meeting is February 10, 2025. Future meetings are scheduled for February 24, March 10, and March 24, 2025.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made and carried, it was voted to adjourn the Committee meeting at 7:36 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Cecilia Emery Butler
Cecilia Emery Butler, Chair

10-6-2025
Date