



City of Cambridge

POR 2026-99
FIRST IN COUNCIL
May 11, 2026

COUNCILLOR SOBRINHO-WHEELER
COUNCILLOR NOLAN
MAYOR SIDDIQUI
COUNCILLOR MCGOVERN

- WHEREAS: In November 2025, Cambridge voters approved a new charter for the City of Cambridge, completing its first charter review in more than 80 years, with updates including modernizing charter language, modernizing vote tabulation methods, standardizing budget meetings, allowing the School Committee to choose its own Chair, and requiring that City Council approve City Manager appointments to multi-member bodies, among other changes; and
- WHEREAS: This process began with the formation of a Charter Review Committee, which met from August 2022 through January 2024 and produced a series of [recommendations for updating the City's charter](#); and
- WHEREAS: The City Council began reviewing these recommendations in December 2024 through the Special Committee on Charter Review; and
- WHEREAS: Some changes were advanced after minimal discussion, while other recommendations and newly emerged topics—including the possibility of establishing a directly elected Mayor—were referred to the Government Operations Committee for further exploration; and
- WHEREAS: Because charter changes in Massachusetts require approval by the state legislature and governor through a home rule petition process before being put to voters, the City faced deadlines that did not allow sufficient time to fully develop and vet policy options for a directly elected mayor for inclusion on the November 2025 ballot; and
- WHEREAS: On April 14, 2025, the City Council unanimously passed [POR 2025 #57](#) petitioning the Massachusetts General Court to enact a new home rule charter; and
- WHEREAS: The City worked with the Collins Center at the University of Massachusetts Boston—an organization established by the state government to provide cities and towns with technical assistance on municipal government matters—during its previous charter update; now therefore be it

- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with the Mayor's Office, Law Department, Election Commission, Executive Assistant to the City Council, and other relevant City Departments to engage the Collins Center in preparing a neutral review of the unresolved governance questions that emerged from the recent Charter Review process, including but not limited to the method of selecting the Mayor, the role and authority of the Mayor, the relationship between the City Council and City Manager, and the public engagement process that would be necessary before any further charter amendment is advanced; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with the Executive Assistant to the City Council to identify appropriate funding for this work from within the City Council budget.
- ORDERED: That this review shall summarize the prior Charter Review Committee's consideration of these issues, identify where consensus was reached and where it was not, and outline the legal, electoral, administrative, financial, and community-engagement considerations that would need to be addressed before the City Council considers any additional charter changes; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council on this matter in a timely manner.

In City Council May 18, 2026.

Adopted as Amended by a yeas and nays vote:-

Yeas 7; Nays 1; Present 1; Absent 0.-

Attest:- Paula M. Crane, Interim City Clerk

A true copy;



ATTEST:-

Paula M. Crane
Interim City Clerk

A true copy;

ATTEST:-



Paula M. Crane,
Interim City Clerk