John Donohue - Chair
Tasha Buzzell - Vice Chair
Melinda Bernardo Cuerda - Secretary
Laura Wagner
David Sequeira

Town of North Attleborough
Charter Review Committee
43 South Washington Street
North Attleborough, MA 02760

02/20/2025 Minutes for the Charter Review Committee

Meeting called to order 6:30 PM

Members present: John Donohue, Tasha Buzzell, Laura Wagner, David Sequeira, Melinda Bernardo Cuerda

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**

2. **Approval of Minutes**
   a. Motion by Wagner to approve 1/23/2025 minutes. Seconded by Sequeira
      i. Approved (3-0-1)

3. **Community Announcements**
   a. none

4. **Resident and Community Comment**

5. **New Business (taken out of order)**

interview with Chris Coleman (CC), North Attleboro Fire Chief

Introduction

1. **CC**: notes experience in FD, including past 6 years as Chief. Describes responsibilities, including FD operations, personnel, training, and budget.

Charter & Government Structure

1. **JD:** ask about clarity of charter on relationship with the Town Manager and town employees
   a. **CC:** Notes that he thinks charter is clear on this -- his role reports to the TM
2. **JD:** asks about simplification of budget process under charter.
   a. **CC:** Notes he only observed prior process from the outside, as firefighter and captain. Believes the current process is efficient and notes he can “get a lot done quickly”.
3. **JD:** asks about Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process
   a. **CC:** notes he can’t comment on past processes because it wasn’t part of his role. As Chief, had to develop a five-year plan from scratch. Notes that the fire station feasibility study helped with forecasting.

4. **JD:** asks about emergency preparedness
    a. **CC:** notes that FD now has a dedicated emergency management budget, which didn't exist before. FD has also gotten additional resources (e.g. new software and equipment)
    b. **CC**: Indicates that FD is working on EMAP (Emergency Management Accreditation Program) certification, which cities like Providence and Boston have.
5. **JD:** asks about overall experience working w/ municipal government
    a. **CC:** notes belief that current system is more efficient than RTM. Indicates that RTM had its place, but now there's more to do, which charter allows for.

Public Engagement & Social Media

1. **JD:** notes social media presence of FD and asks if they receive community feedback through it.
    a. **CC:** indicates that they do get comments on social, as well as phone calls, and emails. Works with Taylor on social media comms

Fire & EMS Operations

1. **JD:** asks about ambulances
    a. **CC:** notes they have two full-time ambulances, running 24/7 from the downtown station, alternating between vehicles.
2. **JD:** asks about call volume
    a. **CC:** notes there's been a 37% increase in call volume since 2017.
3. **JD:** asks for opinion on anything charter should do differently.
    a. **CC**: indicates nothing for his role. Says budget process works well with TM Borg and feels FD can accomplish a lot with TC.
4. **TB:** asks about 'strong chief' statute and opinion on enacting it
    a. **CC:** notes he's only familiar with the current system. Explains that strong chiefs are usually under civil service system. Notes that moving away from that system has been positive for department re: hiring (e.g. one application then vs 25 now)
5. **LW:** asks about ratio of fire to medical calls and ability to handle demand
    a. **CC:** indicates that ~70% of calls are EMS-related. Notes that FD needs to be prepared to handle all types of emergencies. Highlights that department has three full- staffed fire stations, which allows handling multiple calls simultaneously.

Staffing and Future Needs

- **JD**: asks about any wishes for the FD
    - **CC:** acknowledges it's budget-dependent, but would like to increase staffing from 14 to 15 firefighters per group to capture more calls.
- **TB:** asks if staffing is 14 per group, w/ a minimum of 13.
    - **CC**: affirms
- **TB:** asks whether two ambulances is enough
    - **CC:** notes they tried third ambulance in the past, but it "wasn't doing much". Notes possibility of covering mutual aid calls.
- **JD:** asks about mutual aid calls
    - **CC:** notes that it's been consistent over the years, ~240 times. Attleboro and Plainville are primary, but recently more frequent to Cumberland. Both fire and ambulance mutual aid. Notes that working relationships w/ surrounding towns are "exceptional" re: cooperation

6. **Old Business**

Discussion of Charter Review Process Diagram

1. **JD**: notes that Attorney Goldberg provided updates that were incorporated into new draft of diagram
    a. **MBC**: Explains purpose of diagram is as CRC resource on charter revision process. Intended to be working document, not authoritative source. Suggests that CRC determine how best to capture document, so it persists
2. **DS**: suggests including the diagram in the meeting minutes.
    a. **JD**: confirms that any submitted materials become part of the minutes.
3. **LW**: supports idea of including the diagram in the final report to Town Council.

Discussion of School Invoices

Purpose of Discussion & CRC Scope

1. **JD**: indicates topic is allowed because of DS' professional expertise on procurement and contracts.
    a. **TB:** notes that prior remarks to CRC mentioned delays in invoices, so pdf provided to MBC as a data point
2. **JD**: acknowledges that topic has been raised in prior remarks. Suggests it's outside of CRC purview to address. Indicates belief that departments handle as internal matter w/ Town Manager
    a. **TB**: cites previous CRC report's point on budget monitoring and whether charter has facilitated improvements. Notes belief that consideration of these data are not outside CRC purview, since each department has been asked about the topic. Suggests importance of reviewing all data to establish themes.
3. **JD**: asks Town Manger Borg (MB) to address [note: TM and additional town staff members in attendance]
    a. **MB**: notes willingness to review spreadsheet
    b. **TB**: declines to discuss spreadsheet specifics in lieu of more general questions on consistency of process

Procurement Process

1. **TB**: asks about consistency between departments re: procurement and if related to process changes. Notes prior remarks from a department head that suggested differences in process
    a. **MB**: disagrees with characterization of differences between departments. Indicates that procurement process in Teams is clear. Notes recent transition to OpenGov. Indicates improvement in turn around time from legal office from weeks to days.
2. General discussion of benefits of using OpenGov SaaS platform
    a. **DS**: describes overall functionality for different pieces of procurement work and integrations it offers (e.g. with Munis)
    b. **MB**: notes town is finalizing contract now and intends to roll out later this year. Notes belief that software will improve process of procurement and that today's spreadsheet was pulled from it.
    c. **MBC**: asks about plans for benchmarking existing process against future state using OpenGov
        i. **MB**: indicates this is something to consider

- **LW**: notes glad to hear reduction of time for legal reviews. Notes that transparency is important and asks about any conflicts paying invoices (as listed on pdf)
    - **MB**: indicates there are different reasons that are contract-dependent. Notes that the spreadsheet includes both contract-and payroll-related issues. Suggests that concerns be raised directly.
- **MBC**: asks about specific cell on spreadsheet "town wants specific dates of service" and whether OpenGov might resolve those type of issues w/ payment
    - **DS**: notes that OpenGov doesn't handle invoicing out of the box, but does have a Munis integration.
    - **MB**: indicates town is evaluating Munis for accounting and payroll
    - **JD**: Asks whether school dept uses Munis
        - **TB**: indicates that schools require a full-time person for year to transition to Munis from existing system.
        - **MB**: indicates town will cover cost of conversion and that there would be a transition period before moving completely off legacy system

Update on Big Red 311 Data Progress

1. **MBC**: notes that town provided information, which she will review for themes. Suggests that CRC can follow up with town if there are specific areas of interest.
2. **JD**: asks TM Borg if they still receive phone calls
    a. **MB**: notes prior system of ANRs (Action Needed Reports) was replaced w/ current system (rebranded SeeClickFix). Believes system "enhances communication between departments"

Update on Community Engagement Plan

1. **LW**: reports on discussions with comms officer (Taylor O'Neill) re: public meetings for charter review engagement. Suggests CRC choose date for meeting.
    a. General discussion on dates for public meeting and need for Comms Officer to be involved.
    b. MB: suggests possibility of leveraging existing meeting for turnout (e.g. school building committee)
    c. <u>Decision</u>: March 27 for public hearing / comms plan can happen asynchronously
2. **JD**: asks follow up question on meetings re: when weekly meetings should start.
    a. General discussion on scheduling future meetings needed to meet report deadline.
    b. **LW**: volunteers to sketch out timeline/needs for future meetings
    c. <u>Action</u>: LW will create and send draft

7. Items Unforeseen by the Chair

None

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting by Buzzell and seconded by Sequeira
Unanimous approval. The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 PM

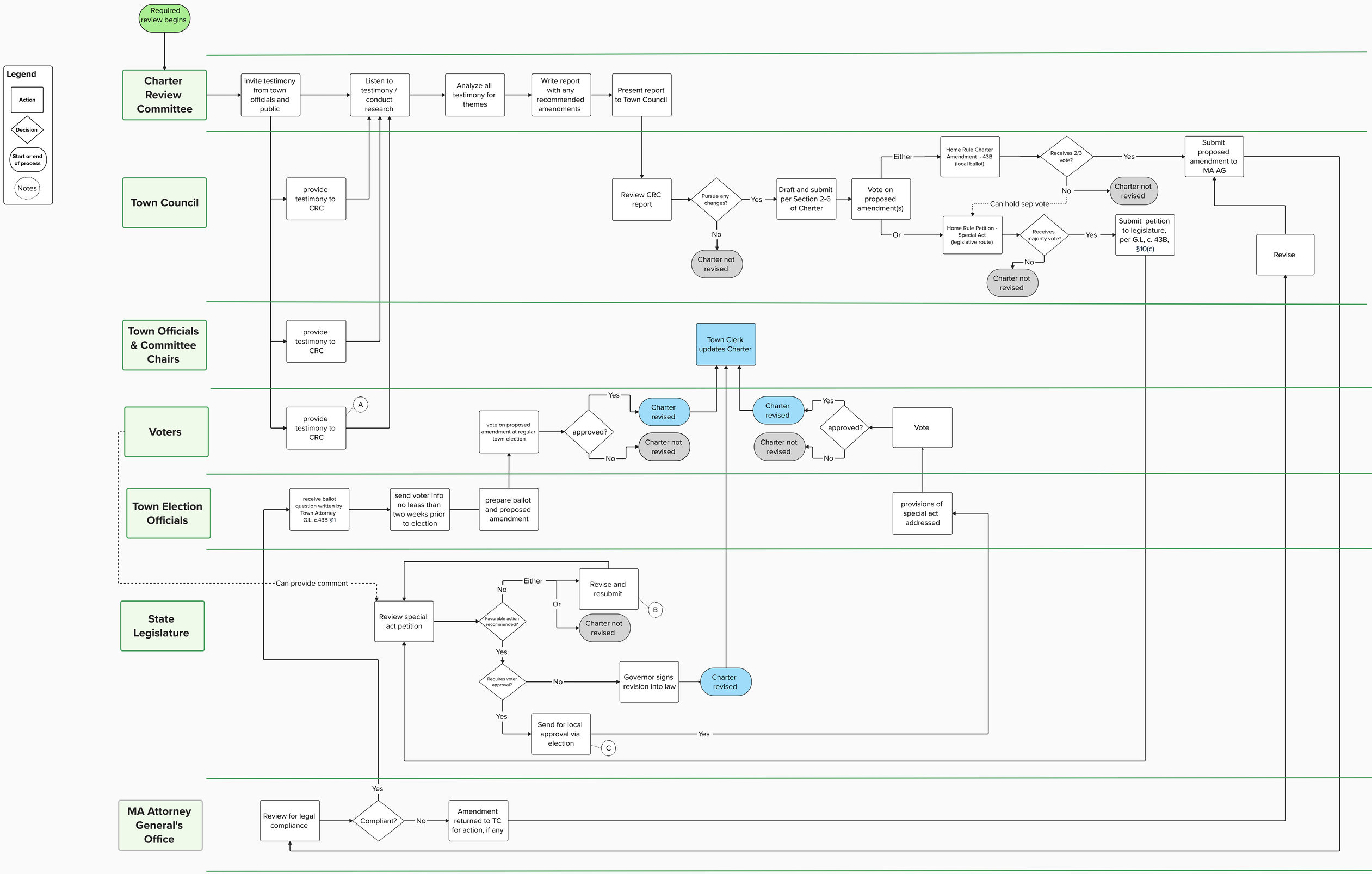
Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Bernardo Cuerda, Secretary

Charter Amendment Process

Objective: provide a general overview of charter revision process for informational purposes, related to 2025 CRC responsibilities

Note: This flowchart is a reference, not an authoritative source. It's a working document that should be revised based on new information. Any questions should be directed to counsel.



A Voter input is not required by law, but Counsel recommends doing doing this early in process and again prior to submitting report to Town Council.

B Revisions are often handled by State Rep or Senator with their respective Counsel. It may or may not go back to Town Council, depending on type of revision.

C There's complexity in this process and requirments may vary. If approved by voters. charter changes. If not approved by voters, there's no change to charter

UNPAID INVOICES

VENDOR	INVOICE	AMOUNT	REASON	RESULT	
UPS	3645	$ 14.85	TOWN WILL NOT PAY WITHOUT A SHIPMENT RECEIPT		The town has stated they need to know what is in the package for it to be paid.
WB MASON	251421958	$ 383.71	NUMEROUS REQUESTS FOR PRICE LIST FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES		Web Account has our pricing built into the account. These prices change and will not always be on a previous price list. Web price is our current state contracted price.
WB MASON	251447024	$ 18.99	NUMEROUS REQUESTS FOR PRICE LIST FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES		Web Account has our pricing built into the account. These prices change and will not always be on a previous price list. Web price is our current state contracted price.
WB MASON	251220842	$ 72.54	NUMEROUS REQUESTS FOR PRICE LIST FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES		Web Account has our pricing built into the account. These prices change and will not always be on a previous price list. Web price is our current state contracted price.
CAM OFFICE SUPPLY	47968A	$ 963.11	NUMEROUS REQUESTS FOR PRICE LIST FOR PRINTER CARTRIDGE ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED WITH CONTRACT ON FILE	TOWN WAS PROVIDED THE ITC80 PRICE FILE HOWEVER IT DOES NOT LOOK AS THOUGH THE ITEMS ON THE INVOICE ARE LISTED ON THE PRICE LIST-OSD ALLOWS FOR NEW ITEMS TO BE UPDATED ON THE CONTRACT EVERY SIX MONTHS	
NESCA	64846	$ 750.00	ENCUMBERED ITEM FROM CONTINGENCY TOWN STATED WE HAD INSUFFICIENT FUNDS TO COVER INVOICES	TOWN DUPLICATED A DIFFERENT ENTRY RESULTING IN A NEGATIVE BALANCE WILL BE RESUBMITTING INVOICES	A/P went line by line through payments made from the prior year and found this iscrepancy from Town Accounting
MCMANAMY, ELIZABETH	6	$ 261.25	ENCUMBERED ITEM FROM CONTINGENCY TOWN STATED WE HAD INSUFFICIENT FUNDS TO COVER INVOICES	TOWN DUPLICATED AN ENTRY RESULTING IN A NEGATIVE BALANCE WILL BE RESUBMITTING INVOICES	S/A NESCA
MCMANAMY, ELIZABETH	7	$ 165.00	ENCUMBERED ITEM FROM CONTINGENCY TOWN STATED WE HAD INSUFFICIENT FUNDS TO COVER INVOICES	TOWN DUPLICATED AN ENTRY RESULTING IN A NEGATIVE BALANCE WILL BE RESUBMITTING INVOICES	S/A NESCA
MCMANAMY, ELIZABETH	8	$ 302.50	ENCUMBERED ITEM FROM CONTINGENCY TOWN STATED WE HAD INSUFFICIENT FUNDS TO COVER INVOICES	TOWN DUPLICATED AN ENTRY RESULTING IN A NEGATIVE BALANCE WILL BE RESUBMITTING INVOICES	S/A NESCA
MCMANAMY, ELIZABETH	9	$ 275.00	ENCUMBERED ITEM FROM CONTINGENCY TOWN STATED WE HAD INSUFFICIENT FUNDS TO COVER INVOICES	TOWN DUPLICATED AN ENTRY RESULTING IN A NEGATIVE BALANCE WILL BE RESUBMITTING INVOICES	S/A NESCA
GEORGE T WILKINSON	W27323	$ 2,996.00	PROVIDE DATE OF SERVICE & HOW MANY BOILERS WERE SERVICED	STARTING DATE AND ENDING DATE WERE PROVIDED ON THE INVOICE- ALSO SENT THE TOWN THE DETAILED QUOTE SIGNED BY THE FACILITIES DIRECTOR	Town wanted specific dates of service not a range and description of how many boilers on the invoice even though detailed quote of description was provided.
GIBSON ROOFING	8940	$ 3,181.00	CONTRACT PROVIDES AN HOURLY RATE TOWN REQUIRES THE HOURS AND RATE BROKEN DOWN	THE INVOICE PROVIDED LABOR HOURS TOTAL AND MATERIALS COST TOTAL	Town does not want a Labor toal. They want hourly rate and amount fo hours to be broken down
GIBSON ROOFING	8941	$ 3,197.00	CONTRACT PROVIDES AN HOURLY RATE TOWN REQUIRES THE HOURS AND RATE BROKEN DOWN	THE INVOICE PROVIDED LABOR HOURS TOTAL AND MATERIALS COST TOTAL	Town does not want a Labor toal. They want hourly rate and amount fo hours to be broken down

GIBSON ROOFING	8942	$ 785.00	CONTRACT PROVIDES AN HOURLY RATE TOWN REQUIRES THE HOURS AND RATE BROKEN DOWN	THE INVOICE PROVIDED LABOR HOURS TOTAL AND MATERIALS COST TOTAL	Town does not want a Labor toal. They want hourly rate and amount fo hours to be broken down
HOCKOMOCK YMCA	09.11.24	$ 4,953.00	TOWN REQUIRES DATES OF SUMMER CAMP	LFT MSG W/YMCA	Town requests this to ensure we are not paying for June of last FY. It is difficult to get all the answers for them in under the 24 hours they give us to respond prior to pulling the invoices.
LAURIE ALLARD -THISTLE	01.21.25	$ 840.00	TOWN WANTS THE PRIVATE TUTORER (WHO HAPPENS TO BE A NA TEACHER) TO BE PAID THROUGH PAYROLL, THE SCHOOL DEPT IS REIMBURSING THE PARENT NOT THE TEACHER		This is a private tutor. Town Acct went searching into the venmo history of the parent to see who they were actually paying. When they saw it was a NA teacher, they refused to pay and submitted this refusal to the Town Treasurer per MGL which would indicate this was excessive, unlawful, or fraudulent but did not indicate which.
LAURIE ALLARD -THISTLE	01.22.25	$ 600.00	TOWN WANTS THE PRIVATE TUTORER (WHO HAPPENS TO BE A NA TEACHER) TO BE PAID THROUGH PAYROLL, THE SCHOOL DEPT IS REIMBURSING THE PARENT NOT THE TEACHER		This is a private tutor. Town Acct went searching into the venmo history of the parent to see who they were actually paying. When they saw it was a NA teacher, they refused to pay and submitted this refusal to the Twon Treasurer per MGL which would indicate this was excessive, unlawful, or fraudulent but did not indicate which.
GORDON FOODS	MULTIPLE INVOICES	200K+	THE TOWN TOLD THE SCHOOL DEPT THAT THE CONTRACT WAS WORDED INCORRECTLY TOWN CUT CHECKS FOR INVOICES BUT HELD THEM FROM SEPT -JAN AND NEVER INFORMED THE SCHOOL DEPT THAT THEY WERE BEING HELD	SCHOOL DEPT WAS TOLD THAT THIS WAS A CONTRACT ISSUE WHEN THE SCHOOL DEPARMENT TRIED TO RECTIFY THIS SITUATION THEY RECEIVED NO RESPONSE - TOWN FINALLY RELEASED OVER 200K WORTH OF PAYMENTS IN JAN AND INFORMED THE SCHOOL DEPT THAT WE WERE ALL SET WITH THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT AND WORDING	Checks were being processed since October of 2024 but the Town Acct office did not notify the school department they were being held. Because of this, we have received $1,142.44 in finances charges because the checks were not being sent.