

East Montpelier Charter Discussion October 9 at U-32 Cafeteria

Vermont state law allows municipalities to change aspects of how they govern themselves by creating a charter which must be approved first by a vote of residents and then by the state legislature. In other words, a municipal (town) charter for East Montpelier would change state law only with respect to how things operate in this town.

Since the selectboard (SB) created the East Montpelier Charter Committee this spring, the group has been researching and analyzing the issues suggested by the SB for potential inclusion in a charter for East Montpelier as well as following up with other ideas. Now the group is preparing to share its preliminary work seeking both feedback and suggestions at 7 pm on Wednesday, October 9 at the U-32 cafeteria. The committee is planning to complete its work in time for a charter proposal to be included on the Town Meeting ballot in March.

The focus of issues under consideration is to make the governing structures of the town more effective. We will recommend that some positions, such as treasurer, which have become more complex over the years and require specific skills, become employees of the town hired by the selectboard. Other positions are being examined also with an eye to whether they should be elected or hired or, in a few cases, abolished because they no longer have any independent function. We are examining how to bring consistency to the ways in which various groups operate - for instance by making sure all persons working on behalf of the town are subject to an enforceable conflict of interest policy. In some cases, the committee will recommend that items be included in a charter if that is the only or the best way to accomplish what needs to be done. For other things, the recommendation may be for the town to create an ordinance that doesn't require the legislature's approval.

Agendas, minutes, and (coming soon) other documents that describe the committee's work are available at <https://app.box.com/EM-Charter-Comm>. This link is also available from the Signpost website – www.emsignpost.com.

Members of the Charter Committee are Edie Miller, chair; Richard Brock, vice-chair; Carl Etnier, recording secretary; Ed Deegan, Michael Duane, Karen Gramer, Norman Hill, Rick Mastelli, Jack Pauly, Julie Potter and Kim Watson. Please contact the chair at emillervt@comcast.net or any other member with your ideas or questions.

Please come to the U-32 cafeteria on Wednesday, October 9 at 7 pm and be part of this important process.