

At a meeting of the Town Council in and for the Town of Gloucester on July 27, 2026

I. Call to Order

Councilor W. Steere called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Jonathan E. Burlingame; Stephanie C. Westgate; Cheryl A. Greathouse; Walter M. O. Steere, III, Vice- President

Members Absent: William A. Worthy, Jr., President

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; David Igliozi, Town Solicitor; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor W. Steere asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Open Forum - For Agenda Items

Councilor W. Steere stated that if anyone wishes to speak on any issues to please step to the microphone and state your name when called on.

None

D. Igliozi, Town Solicitor, stated a recommendation for Council to address all questions before addressing the question of town manager.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to take the agenda items out of order; seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Discussion: J. Fecteau, Town Clerk, stated that the format is the ballot questions are presented first for Council's consideration and vote and then followed with an explanation for Council consideration and vote.

D. Iglioizzi stated that a brief explanation may be included on the ballot or not but that the explanation must be published, advertised and include a redline copy.

IV. Proposed Home Rule Charter Amendments for the November 3, 2026 Ballot
— Review, Discussion and/or Action

Item A. MOVED TO AFTER ITEM IV.E.

A. Form of Town Government — Charter §§ C1-2, C1-8, C4-9, Article VII, Article VIII, Articles X and XI, Article XIII, § C14-9, and proposed new Article XVI, § C16-1 — Review, Discussion and/or Action
Selection among three alternative models for a chief administrative officer, and action on the corresponding Charter amendments.

1. Model 1 — Strong (Council-Manager): Town Manager appointed by the Council; appointment and removal authority for department heads vested in the Manager.
2. Model 2 — Hybrid (Manager Recommends, Council Confirms): Town Manager appointed by the Council; department head appointments vested in the Manager, with appointment of the Director of Finance and the Chief of Police subject to Council confirmation.
3. Model 3 — Weak (Town Administrator): Town Administrator appointed by the Council; all existing appointment and removal powers retained by the Council.

ITEMS WERE ADDRESSED IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER ON THE AGENDA:

B. School Financial Accounting - Charter § C6-9 -Review, Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Steere stated that the proposed amendment transferring responsibility for financial and managerial accounting of the School Department from the Town Department of Finance to the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee, with school funds remaining in the custody of the Town Treasurer, continued review of disbursements by the Director of Finance, monthly reconciliation, certified quarterly financial reporting, and implementing procedures prescribed by ordinance.

Discussion: D. Igliazzi, Town Solicitor, stated that Council wanted a proposal that separated the responsibility between the Town and the school but kept the funds on deposit with the Town and kept the Treasurer in control of the funds with discretion to approve or reject requests. D. Igliazzi stated that if this proposal is passed then the school department would be responsible for their financial and managerial accounting and that this would not affect the budget process.

Councilors W. Steere and J. Burlingame stated their opinion that this could involve the school department hiring an individual to perform these responsibilities. D. Igliazzi stated that the school will hire whoever they think they should hire and that Council is not telling them who they have to hire but rather only telling them they have to do this job.

W. Steere, resident, stated his opinion that this proposal seems complicated. W. Steere stated his opinion that if the school hires someone for this job then the money will come from the town and he is concerned about the 4 % maximum increase.

D. Igliazzi stated that this proposal is just saying that the proposal, including the budget would be the school's responsibility and not how they are to do it.

D. Igliazzi stated that this is changing the current charter provision and he included oversight in the question because Councilors asked for it. Councilor C. Greathouse agrees there should be oversight. D. Igliazzi directed the Council to focus on just the question. Councilor W. Steere stated his opinion that the oversight is good.

J. DiPietro, resident, asked the details of the proposed plan in this proposal and also stated her opinions as to the reasons the Finance Dept. should retain control of all aspects of the financial accounting of the School Dept. Councilor W. Steere stated his opinion that this is a way to separate the school and the finance department as it is too much for one finance director to do both. Councilor S. Westgate stated the purpose is to decide if this question should be on the ballot and this is a good step in the right direction to get on track. Councilor W. Steere stated that this proposal came from the Charter commission.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to APPROVE BALLOT
QUESTION #2 - SCHOOL FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING

Shall Section C6-9 (Financial Accounting) of the Home Rule Charter be amended to transfer responsibility for the financial and managerial accounting of the School Department from the Town Department of Finance to the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee, with school funds remaining in the custody of the Town Treasurer and disbursements remaining subject to review by the Director of Finance, as further provided by ordinance?

Seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Discussion: D. Iglioizzi stated that an explanation needs to be approved and posted in various places, publicized and a redline copy showing the current version and the new proposed version generated between the solicitor and the clerk that is then made available for voters.

Councilor J. Burlingame stated that the BALLOT QUESTION #2 - SCHOOL FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING EXPLANATION is included which he read as follows:

The Charter presently provides that the financial accounting responsibilities of the School Department shall be performed by the Town Department of Finance. This amendment would move that responsibility to the Superintendent and the School Committee, reversing the arrangement adopted in 2004.

The Superintendent would prepare the school budget under the School Committee's guidance and submit it to the Budget Board by January 2, on the same schedule as other Town departments. School Department staff would perform payroll, payment of expenditures, and required town, state, and federal reporting.

Financial controls would remain with the Town. School funds would continue to be held by the Town Treasurer. The Director of Finance would continue to examine school disbursement requests for available appropriation, proper documentation, and compliance with law — but not for educational or programmatic judgment, which remains with the School Committee. The School Department would reconcile with the Director of Finance monthly and file a certified financial report quarterly. The Town Council would prescribe the procedures by ordinance.

The existing prohibition on overspending School Department appropriations and the annual independent audit of the School Department would be unchanged. (end)

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to APPROVE the explanation of Ballot Question #2, SCHOOL FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING, as stated; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

C. Board of Assessment Review - Charter § C7-9 -Review, Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Steere stated that the proposed amendment increasing the membership of the Board of Assessment Review from three (3) members to five (5) members and changing the term of office from six (6) years to three (3) years, with terms staggered.

Discussion: None

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to APPROVE
BALLOT QUESTION #3 - BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW
MEMBERSHIP

Shall Section C7-9 (Board of Assessment Review) of the Home Rule Charter be amended to increase the membership of the Board of Assessment Review from three members to five members, each a qualified elector of the Town appointed by the Town Council, and to change the term of office from six years to three years, with the terms so arranged that they expire on a staggered basis?

Seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor J. Burlingame read BALLOT QUESTION #3 - BOARD OF
ASSESSMENT REVIEW MEMBERSHIP EXPLANATION as follows:

This amendment would expand the Board of Assessment Review from three members to five and shorten each member's term from six years to three. Members currently serving would complete their existing terms. The Town Council would set the initial terms of the new seats so that member terms expire in different years rather than all at once.

The Board's duties would be unchanged. It would continue to hear appeals of

property owners concerning the assessed valuation determined by the Tax Assessor and to order corrections where a property has been erroneously or incorrectly assessed. Appointment of members would remain with the Town Council, and a taxpayer's right to appeal to a court of competent jurisdiction would be unaffected.
(end)

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to APPROVE the explanation of BALLOT QUESTION #3 - BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW MEMBERSHIP as stated; seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Discussion: D. Iglioizzi stated that the ballot question numbers stated tonight may be different on the actual ballot.

D. Capital Reserve Fund — Charter § C8-8 — Review, Discussion and/or Action

Councilor J. Burlingame stated that the proposed amendment increasing the annual capital reserve fund contribution from two percent (2%) to four percent (4%) of the amount appropriated as the operating budget. Councilor J. Burlingame that the Council will select the phase-in schedule from among the alternatives before it, including one-quarter of one percent (0.25%) per year over eight (8) years and one-half of one percent (0.5%) per year over four (4) years.

Discussion: Councilor J. Burlingame and Councilor W. Steere stated they were in favor of the 1/4 % increase over the 8 years.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to APPROVE
BALLOT QUESTION #4 - CAPITAL RESERVE FUND INCREASE

Shall Section C8-8 (Capital Reserve Fund) of the Home Rule Charter be amended to increase the annual capital reserve fund contribution from 2% to 4% of the operating budget, phased in by one-quarter of one percent (0.25%) per year over an eight-year period beginning July 1, 2027?

Seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor J. Burlingame read BALLOT QUESTION #4 - CAPITAL RESERVE FUND INCREASE EXPLANATION as follows:

The Charter presently requires an annual addition equal to 2% of the operating budget, held as a capital reserve fund. This amendment would double that contribution to 4%, increasing in quarter-percent steps over eight years, beginning with the fiscal year that starts July 1, 2027 and reaching the full 4% in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2034.

As under the current Charter, each year's contribution would be made automatically without any vote of the Town Council or the Financial Town Referendum. The eight-year schedule would continue across future Councils. Before each budget is prepared, the Director of Finance would certify the percentage applicable for the coming year.

Funds in the capital reserve would continue to be held and invested separately by the Town Treasurer and could be spent only upon authorization by an annual or Special Financial Town Referendum, for improvements set forth in the Capital Program.

(end)

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to APPROVE the explanation of BALLOT QUESTION #4 - CAPITAL RESERVE FUND INCREASE - as stated; seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

E. Director of Emergency Management- Qualification- Charter § C11-4 - Review, Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Steere stated that the proposed amendment deleting Subsection 5 of § C11-4, which requires that the Director of Emergency Management be a qualified elector of the Town. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Council will also address coordination and sequencing with any amendment to § C11-4 adopted under Item IV(A).

Discussion: Councilor J. Burlingame stated that he was not in favor of this proposal. Councilor W. Steere stated his opinion that the position needs the best qualified candidate and it may not always be a resident.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to APPROVE
BALLOT QUESTION #5 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR
QUALIFICATION

Shall Section C11-4 (Emergency Management) of the Home Rule Charter be amended by deleting Subsection 5, which requires that the Director of Emergency Management be a qualified elector of the Town?

Seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: Councilor C. Greathouse stated her opinion that she is in favor of the best qualified person and such person may not necessarily be from town.

VOTE: AYES- Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-Burlingame

MOTION PASSED

Councilor J. Burlingame read BALLOT QUESTION #5 EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR QUALIFICATION EXPLANATION as follows:

This amendment would eliminate the requirement that the appointed Director of Emergency Management be a qualified elector (registered voter) of Gloucester, allowing the Town to appoint any qualified person to the position.

The Director's duties would be unchanged. The Director would continue to prepare a comprehensive plan for the use of Town facilities, equipment, and personnel during an emergency; assist the Town Council in any declared emergency; serve as liaison with the State Office of Emergency Management and the State Health Department; and perform such other duties as the Council may direct by ordinance or as the Council President may direct during an emergency. (end)

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to APPROVE the explanation of
BALLOT QUESTION #5 – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR
QUALIFICATION- as stated; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0
MOTION PASSED

RETURN TO ITEM IV. A.

A. Form of Town Government — Charter §§ C1-2, C1-8, C4-9, Article VII, Article VIII, Articles X and XI, Article XIII, § C14-9, and proposed new Article XVI, § C16-1 — Review, Discussion and/or Action
Councilor W. Steere stated that Council will select among three alternative models for a chief administrative officer.

1. Model 1 — Strong (Council-Manager): Town Manager appointed by the Council; appointment and removal authority for department heads vested in the Manager.

No Action Taken

2. Model 2 — Hybrid (Manager Recommends, Council Confirms): Town Manager appointed by the Council; department head appointments vested in the Manager, with appointment of the Director of Finance and the Chief of Police subject to Council confirmation.

No Action Taken

3. Model 3 — Weak (Town Administrator): Town Administrator appointed by the Council; all existing appointment and removal powers retained by the Council.

Discussion: Councilor J. Burlingame stated that before Council discusses Question # 1 Town Manager that he has a suggestion to appoint an administrator to handle the day to day responsibilities without changing the form of government. Councilor C. Greathouse stated that is sounds like model # 3. D. Iglioizzi stated that the position would have no executive authority. D. Iglioizzi stated that this person would not appoint, discipline or terminate anyone but would make recommendations to council.

J. DiPietro, resident, asked how the Council could appoint an administrator if the position is not in the Charter. D. Iglioizzi stated it could be done by ordinance.

Councilor W. Steere stated his opinion that a manager would run the day to day operations, manage department heads, have some type of administrative control, and recommend the hiring and firing to Council who would have the final say. Councilor W. Steere stated his opinion that this position is long overdue and needed.

D. Iglioizzi stated that council needs to focus on the three types and that he was not asked to propose the creation of an administrator by ordinance.

Councilor J. Burlingame stated his opinion that he would consider option # 3 which is the town administrator as hiring and firing should remain with Council. Councilor W. Steere stated his opinion that the administrator would provide Council with recommendations. D. Iglioizzi stated that the administrator option would maintain all council power but someone would be administering Council policy on a day to day basis.

D. Iglioizzi stated that Council has policy power and executive power. D. Iglioizzi stated that the administrator proposal is the way to not give away Council's executive power.

W. Steere, resident, stated his opinion that a strong individual is needed with Council oversight to handle such matters as budget, negotiations and human resources. Councilor W. Steere stated that Mr. Steere brought up a good point as to having the proposed individual handle negotiations. D. Iglioizzi stated that all legislative bodies have to ratify contracts but if Council were to give executive authority to the proposed individual then Council would lose all powers of negotiation are not within Council power except to approve or reject the contract.

D. Iglioizzi stated that the difference between model 1 and model 3 is that the council would be giving away executive power in model 1. D. Iglioizzi state that model 2 treats a few positions like the chief and the finance director to be handled differently by being confirmed.

Councilor S. Westgate stated her opinion and reasons as to her support for an administrator. Councilor J. Burlingame stated that the administrator could also perform human resources.

D. Iglioizzi stated a recommendation that Council could add a line giving council the ability to assign such other duties as they feel are required for the administrator.

Councilor W. Steere stated his support that a professional to handle day to day activities in the town is needed. Councilor C. Greathouse stated her opinion in the town hall as an administrator would be good. Councilor J. Burlingame stated his support for an administrator. D. Iglioizzi stated again that council can add the ability to assign such other duties and not be specific as a charter provision is not intended

to be specific. D. Iglioizzi stated that the administrator position is the simplest and retains power in the council as he is hearing that council does not seem to want to give up their executive authority.

D. Iglioizzi asked that final review as to content and grammar be done by the solicitor.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to APPROVE
BALLOT QUESTION #1 as amended: ALTERNATIVE 3 — TOWN
ADMINISTRATOR

Shall the Home Rule Charter of the Town of Gloucester be amended, effective January 1, 2027, with the first Town Administrator to be appointed not later than December 31, 2027, to establish the position of Town Administrator, appointed by the Town Council to coordinate the daily administration of Town government under the direction and control of the Council, and to perform such other duties as may be required by ordinance or resolution of the town council, provided that all powers of appointment, discipline, including suspension, and removal are retained by the Town Council except as otherwise provided in the Charter?

Seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor J. Burlingame read BALLOT QUESTION # 1 ALTERNATIVE 3 —
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR EXPLANATION as follows:

This amendment would not change Gloucester's form of government. The Council would remain both the policy-determining body and the administrative body of the Town under § C1-2, which is not amended, and would continue to appoint and remove every department head. The amendment would add a new Article XVI, §§ C16-1, C16-2 and C16-3, and would amend §§ C7-3, C7-4, C14-2, C14-9, and C15-10.

The Administrator would serve as liaison between the Council and Town departments, carry out Council policy, assist in preparing and administering the budget, coordinate departmental work programs, attend Council meetings without a vote, keep the Council informed of Town operations and finances, and recommend

candidates for appointment and removal — with the decision in every case remaining with the Council.

The Administrator would assign and schedule the work of Town employees and establish procedures for coordinating departments, but would have no authority to hire, fire, suspend, or discipline anyone. The existing exceptions to Council appointment authority would be unaffected: the Deputy Town Clerk would continue to be appointed by the Town Clerk with the approval of the Council under § C9-2; the School Committee would continue to appoint and remove school employees under § C6-5; and police officers below the rank of Chief would continue to be appointed by the Council upon the recommendation of the Chief of Police under § C11-1.

****Budget.**** Departments would continue to submit their estimates and capital plans to the Budget Board by January 2 under §§ C8-3 and C8-7, and the Budget Board would continue to report to the Council by the third Thursday in March. The Administrator would assist departments in preparing those submissions and would assist the Council and the Director of Finance in administering the budget once adopted, including the work programs and quarterly allotments under §§ C7-3 and C7-4. The powers of the Director of Finance would not be diminished.

****Appointment and term.**** The Administrator would be appointed by vote of three of the five Council members, under such contract and at such compensation as the Council determines, serving at the Council's pleasure unless the contract provides otherwise. Notwithstanding § C14-2, the term would not be concurrent with the Council's two-year term. Rhode Island residency would be required; Gloucester residency would not.

****Limits.**** The Administrator would have no authority over the School Department, would not diminish the powers of the Director of Finance, and would not limit the powers of the Financial Town Referendum. No sitting officer or employee would be affected, and collective bargaining rights would be preserved.

****Effective date.**** The amendment would take effect January 1, 2027, the date the Council elected at this election takes office. The Council could begin recruitment upon certification of the election results and would be required to appoint the first Town Administrator not later than December 31, 2027. Because the Council retains all appointment, discipline, and removal authority, no transfer of powers would occur.

Town Administrator would perform such other duties as may be required by ordinance or resolution of the Town Council. (end)

Discussion: Councilors discussed that eliminating the residency requirement would open up the qualified candidates.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to AMEND the appointment and term section that residency in Rhode Island and Gloucester to not be required; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to APPROVE the explanation of BALLOT QUESTION #1, as amended, TOWN Administrator, as stated,

Seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

RETURN TO REGULAR ORDER ON AGENDA

V. Final Ballot Language and Numbering for Each Approved Question —
Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Steere stated that approval of the final wording, explanatory statement, and ballot numbering for each Charter amendment question approved under Item IV, and authorization for the Town Clerk and Town Solicitor to take such steps as are necessary to certify the approved questions for the November 3, 2026 ballot.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to AUTHORIZE the Town Council to forward the adopted local ballot questions to the Gloucester Board of Canvassers for certification; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: D. Igliazzi stated that the solicitor and town clerk will need to finalize the wording and grammar as to the final versions so he asked that be added to the motion.

Councilor S. Westgate withdrew her motion and Councilor J. Burlingame withdrew his second.

AMENDED MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to AUTHORIZE the Town Council to forward the adopted local ballot questions to the Gloucester Board of Canvassers for certification; to have the solicitor and town clerk finalize the wording and grammar for each question; before sending to the RI Secretary of state for inclusion on the November 3rd 2026 General election Ballot;

seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VI. Additional Matters for Discussion by Council, Vote or Other Action

A. Appointment of Legal Counsel — *John Holt Tillinghast, owner, Tillinghast Holding Co. LLC v. Town of Gloucester, R.I., and alias Catalis*, United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island, Case No. 1:26-cv-00398-MRD-AEM — Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Steere stated that this is for a discussion and possible vote on the appointment, engagement, and compensation of legal counsel to represent the Town in the above-captioned matter.

Discussion: D. Igliazzi stated that this matter is an appeal in federal court regarding a tax matter. D. Igliazzi stated that he is recommending attorney L. Fries be appointed to handle this matter at a rate not to exceed \$250.00 per hour.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to APPOINT L. Fries as Legal Counsel to represent the Town of Gloucester for the following court case: *John Holt Tillinghast, owner, Tillinghast Holding Co. LLC v. Town of Gloucester, R.I., and alias Catalis*, United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island, Case No. 1:26-cv-00398-MRD-AEM; said appointment at the hourly rate not to exceed \$250.00 per hour; seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Appointment of Legal Counsel — *West Glocester LLC and Factory Mutual Insurance Company, Petitioners v. Jessica Parker, in her capacity as Tax Assessor for the Town of Glocester, Respondent*, Providence County Superior Court, C.A. No. PC-2025-05414 — Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Steere stated that this matter is for discussion and possibly vote on the appointment, engagement, and compensation of legal counsel to represent the Town and the Tax Assessor in the above-captioned matter.

Discussion: D. Iglioizzi stated that this is the third tax appeal filed by FM Global. D. Iglioizzi stated his recommendation for L. Fries to be appointed as she is currently handling the other two tax appeals regarding FM Global.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to APPOINT L. Fries as Legal Counsel to represent the Town of Glocester for the following court case: *West Glocester LLC and Factory Mutual Insurance Company, Petitioners v. Jessica Parker, in her capacity as Tax Assessor for the Town of Glocester, Respondent*, Providence County Superior Court, C.A. No. PC-2025-05414; said appointment at the hourly rate not to exceed \$250.00 per hour; seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to ADJOURN at 8:42 PM; seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Burlingame, Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0
MOTION PASSED

