



**Town of Falmouth, Massachusetts  
Town Charter Review Committee  
59 Town Hall Square, Falmouth, MA 02540**

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**FALMOUTH HOME RULE CHARTER SUMMARY AND PUBLIC SURVEY**

This brief summary captures the major ideas of the Charter as adopted 1990 and as amended up to 2013. The complete Charter is available online ([www.falmouthmass.us/charter](http://www.falmouthmass.us/charter)), at all Falmouth libraries, and Town Hall. The Charter Review Committee is charged with examining its provisions and identifying areas in possible need of revision. The scope of our task is to amend those areas, not to change the structure of town government. We offer this survey as a means of soliciting the public's invaluable comment and opinion. The CRC greatly appreciates your input.

Please use the space provided after each section of the Charter to write your comments. The survey is also available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPGMHBJ>.

**Article I: Incorporation, Form of Government and Powers:** The form of government includes a Representative Town Meeting, Selectmen, and Town Manager. The powers of the Town of Falmouth under the Charter shall be construed liberally in its favor.

WORKS WELL     NEEDS IMPROVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

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**Article II: Representative Town Meeting: The Representative Town Meeting:** Town Meeting shall exercise all legislative powers of the town. Town Meeting members are elected by Town ballot for 3-year overlapping terms from equal contiguous precincts with the total number fixed by special legislation. Capped by charter at 252 members, the town currently has 243 Town Meeting members, 27 from each of 9 precincts. Two Town Meetings are held annually: in the spring to act on financial and other matters and in the fall. Attendance records of Town Meeting members are posted as a public record. Vacancies are managed by the Town Clerk, as are excused absences. The Moderator presides over Town Meeting and is elected by Town ballot. The Moderator shall appoint ad hoc or temporary committees of Town Meeting and also a standing Rules and Procedures Committee to make appropriate recommendations to Town Meeting, including on voting procedures. The Town Clerk's role at Town Meeting as well as the Watchman of the Warrant's role are defined.

WORKS WELL     NEEDS IMPROVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

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**Article III: Board of Selectmen:** Five elected Selectmen hold three-year overlapping terms and receive minimal compensation set by Town Meeting. Board serves as the chief executive goal-setting and policy-making board of the town; and appoints Town Manager and other town officers and town boards.

WORKS WELL     NEEDS IMPROVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

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**Article IV: Other Elected Town Boards and Officers:** Boards and officers elected at annual town election are: School Committee (9), Library Trustees (7), Planning Board (7), Housing Authority (four of five, with one appointed by State), Town Moderator, and Town Clerk.

WORKS WELL     NEEDS IMPROVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

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**Article V: Town Manager:** The Manager serves as chief administrative officer of the town, responsible for administering and coordinating all employees, activities, and departments under his control. The Manager shall implement the goals and carry out the policies of the Board of Selectmen.

WORKS WELL     NEEDS IMPROVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

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**Article VI: Citizen Participation:** Town elections are non-partisan, with dates established by by-law. Citizen initiatives are special Town Meetings, petitioners' warrant articles, referenda and recall.

WORKS WELL     NEEDS IMPROVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

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**Article VII: Appointed Town Boards:** Numerous Boards and committees appointed by the Board of Selectmen include: Assessors (3), Conservation Commission (7), Board of Health (5), Council on Aging (9), Historical Commission (7), Recreation Committee (7), Waterways (7), Beach Committee (5), Human Services Committee (9), Zoning Board of Appeals (5). Term limits apply.

WORKS WELL     NEEDS IMPROVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

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**Article VIII: Financial Provisions and Procedures:** A Finance Committee (15) established by by-law (currently nominated by Moderator and elected by Town Meeting) reviews the annual budget submitted by Town Manager and Board of Selectmen and recommendations to Town Meeting. Town Manager develops and annually revises a long-range general financial plan and prepares a five-year capital improvement plan.

WORKS WELL     NEEDS IMPROVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

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**Article IX: General and Transitional Provisions:** At least every seven (7) years, the Board of Selectmen shall appoint a Charter Review Committee for the purpose of recommending changes to the Charter, based on suggestions from the public and town officials. Complaint process about Charter violations is defined.

WORKS WELL     NEEDS IMPROVEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

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Please return this survey to the Charter Review Committee, Falmouth Town Hall, 59 Town Hall Square, Falmouth, MA 02540, or by email to [charterreview@falmouthmass.us](mailto:charterreview@falmouthmass.us) no later than December 13th. If you need more room for your comments, please consider using the online survey. Any and all other comments are welcome by email!