

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

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| Bill #: | H.4753 |
| Title: | An Act relative to the charter of the town of Westwood |
| Sponsor: | Rep. Paul McMurtry and Sen. Michael Rush |
| Committee: | Municipalities and Regional Government |
| Hearing Date: | November 26 – December 5, 2025 written testimony only |
| Current Law: | <p>The current charter for the town of Westwood was adopted in 1970. It has been amended over a dozen times. Chapter 56 of 2012 and Chapter 87 of 2020 were significant and comprehensive revisions to the charter.</p> <p>The most recent change occurred with the enactment of Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2024, which established the appointed positions of town treasurer and town tax collector. Regular charter reviews take place every 10 years.</p> |
| Summary: | <p>According to the local approval submitted by the town, this special legislation amends the charter of the town of Westwood by making (1) ministerial and clerical revisions throughout, (2) certain technical and housekeeping revisions to make the charter clearer or facilitate the function of government, and (3) a limited number of substantive revisions (outlined below):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The quorum for Town Meeting to conduct business remains 175, however once the meeting commences the quorum would no longer be in effect.- More technical or housekeeping in nature, Regarding duties of Town Administrator, clause (i) removes the \$100,000 contract value threshold that requires Select Board approval, replaced with “an amount established by the Select Board prior to the start of the fiscal year;” clause (o) adjusts the language that the Select Board and Finance and Warrant Commission be “regularly informed” rather than “fully informed;” clause (t) allows a temporary town administrator may be authorized to take certain action.- The proposed language provides Moderator with flexibility in number of appointments (up to 15) to the Finance & Warrant Commission to reflect fluctuations due to resignations and challenges with making appointment, and clarifies that a member shall not hold any other elected or appointed town position, but may serve on boards or commissions in an ex officio capacity. |

- The proposed language shifts the role of the Personnel Board to a Personnel Advisory Board, and the Board would advise the Town Administrator rather than administer revisions to the town classification and compensation plan.
- The proposed language adds flexibility to the make-up of the PBC, requires a school committee member to be included on any school project, and allows PBC to decline jurisdiction for smaller projects if size, scope, or cost of project does not warrant PBC involvement.

Notes:

This home-rule petition was approved as Article 18 at the Annual Town Meeting held on May 19, 2025 by a two-thirds majority voice vote.