

**Massachusetts House of Representatives
Bill Summary**

Bill #: H.5711

Title: An Act providing for an appointed town clerk in the town of Southborough

Sponsor: Rep. Kate Donaghue and Sen. James Eldridge

Committee: Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government

Hearing Date: November 9 to November 16, 2026 written testimony only

Current Law: MGL Chapter 41, Section 1 provides that each town elect a town clerk for a term of one or more years. Section 1B allows a town to change certain offices from elected to appointed, if accepted by the voters at a town election.

Summary: Section 1 of the bill exempts the town from contrary state law and general laws in order to establish an appointed town clerk, who would be appointed and could be removed by the select board. The town clerk would be appointed to serve a term of not more than 3 years, and would have all of the same powers and duties, and be subject to same liabilities and penalties that are imposed upon town clerks by law.

Section 2 provides for the incumbent elected town clerk to continue serving as town clerk until the select board appoints a new town clerk, unless the incumbent vacates the office sooner. Future town clerks would then be appointed as provided for in section 1 of this legislation.

Section 3 provides for this act to take effect upon its passage.

Notes: Approved as Article 1 at the October 17, 2026 Special Town Meeting; passed by majority vote (show of hands).