

Letter to the Editor

May 19, 2024

Library is on the May 29 Ballot

In addition to the candidate elections, there is a “Yes/No” question on the Truro May 29 ballot concerning the library. It reads:

Shall the Town of Truro approve the charter amendment proposed by Town Meeting summarized below?

SUMMARY: The proposed Charter amendment, approved under Article 42 of the April 25, 2023 Annual Town Meeting, will amend Chapter 5, Section 4-2, to authorize the Town Manager to appoint the Library Director only after consultation with the Board of Library Directors.

Yes or No?

Many people are confused what it means to vote yes, or vote no. So here is an explanation.

Historically, language in the Town Charter specified that the Library Director was selected by the Board of Library Trustees, and the Town Manager then negotiated the final contract with the candidate. For some reason, that language was removed from the Town Charter some years ago, apparently without much if any public debate. At the April 25, 2023 Town Meeting, a petition put forward by the Library Trustees proposed the amended language above, which was passed resoundingly. So your vote on this ballot item is whether you concur formally with making the change to the Town Charter, restoring the original intent.

A “yes” vote, inserts the language above into the Town Charter, and would require the Town Manager to consult with the Board of Library Trustees before appointing a Library Director. Essentially, it clarifies that the process must include the Library Trustees.

A “no” vote leaves the Town Charter as is, and results in a somewhat undefined process, which could be construed to grant the Town Manager discretion to make the appointment with no consultation with the Library Trustees – although that is not entirely clear, since Library appointments are not included in the Town Charter listing of departments or positions that the Town Manager is currently empowered to make after consultation with the Select Board.

Net, a “Yes” vote ensures that Library Trustees have meaningful input into the selection of the Library Director.

~ Jon Winder