

Why A Cumberland County Charter Now?

Cumberland County Charter Commissioners

DISTRICT 1

Elected:

John Eder
Portland

207-871-0317

Kathleen Babeu
Cumberland
207-615-3030

Appointed:

*Representative Meredith
Strang Burgess*
207-829-6264

DISTRICT 2

Elected:

Neil Jamieson
Scarborough
207-885-5461

Claude Morgan
South Portland
207-450-2583

Appointed:

*County Commissioner
Richard "Dick" Feeny*
South Portland
207-871-8380

DISTRICT 3

Elected:

David Lunt
New Gloucester
207-926-3877

Steve Gorden
North Yarmouth
207-829-3821

Appointed:

Selectperson Lisa Villa
Harrison
207-776-3118

On November 2, 2010 all voters in Cumberland County will have the opportunity to accept the newly created Cumberland County Charter. Currently the County operates without any Charter. The Charter Commission members were elected in 2008 and have been working since that time to draft the proposed Charter. Extensive public outreach is under way to solicit public input. To help spread the word, we have compiled a list of frequently asked questions for your review and consideration. Please feel free to contact any of us with questions. Thank you!

Cumberland County Charter Commissioners

1. What is a Charter?

A charter is a document that defines how we organize local government. It spells out the specific duties and the limits of authority that we grant our local officials. It's an organizational chart of responsibilities: who administers what and when, who will answer to whom, and how we guarantee that accountability.

2. Who makes up the Cumberland County Charter Commission?

The Commission is comprised of six elected members – two from each of the three districts in Cumberland County – elected in November 2008 and three appointed public officials, one from each district. The members study how county government currently functions, seeks more efficient methods of providing important services, and delivers a charter that residents will vote to adopt – or reject – on November 2, 2010. Charter Commissions are routinely established to reform and streamline local governments.

3. What does the Charter Commission hope to accomplish?

The Charter will help Cumberland County Government provide more efficiency and effective services and help reduce the cost of these services. County government fills an important role that bridges the gap between municipal and state governments. The Commission's ultimate goal is to reduce redundancy in local government and deliver more services for less money.



CUMBERLAND COUNTY CHARTER COMMISSION

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www.cumberlandcountychartercommission.org

4. What areas of county government will be impacted?

The Charter Commission has proposed eliminating the elected positions of treasurer and registrar of deeds. The county now employs a full-time, professional finance director to manage its complex business and investments. The county manager would hire the registrar of deeds based on skills and relevant experience. The elected positions of sheriff, district attorney, judge of probate and register of probate would remain, because those positions are required by state law to be elected. The Charter allows county government to widen the scope of the services it provides, tap into federal funding, and enables it to help municipalities with the cost and delivery of important local services. The proposed Charter also offers greater representation to the residents of Cumberland County.

5. Is this an amendment of a previous charter or the formation of a fresh, brand new charter?

Cumberland County, the state's largest and most economically diverse region, operates without a charter. The State Legislature currently determines how services are rendered in Cumberland County. Two counties—Aroostook and Knox—recently adopted “home rule” charters, which allow them to administer government and deliver services specific to the needs of their regions and constituencies and a number of Maine counties are currently working on creating their own charter as well.

6. How will a charter help county government run differently?

If voters in Cumberland County approve the Charter in November 2, 2010, they will liberate local officials and allow them to deliver more services to more people at a fraction of the cost municipalities currently pay for those same services. Voters will enjoy greater transparency and accountability in government. The Charter Commissioners believe residents will directly benefit from new and innovative programs and services, such as the successful Community Development Block Grants (which utilize previously unavailable federal funds accessible to smaller communities) and the new countywide 9-1-1 service (which brings affordable, top-notch emergency response to participating communities) for examples.

7. How can I read a copy of the proposed Cumberland County Charter?

The Cumberland County Charter Commission has an excellent web site to view the Charter and all the various meetings and county outreach that is going on. www.CumberlandCountyCharterCommission.org

8. Is it still possible to have input in the Charter development?

Yes, there are a number of scheduled public input sessions being held all over the county. In addition, any citizen in Cumberland County should feel free to contact any Commission member in their district with questions and comments. The public input will wrap up on July 30, 2010 and the draft Charter will be finalized for the November 2, 2010 vote. But the latest version of the Charter can always be seen on line at the web site: www.CumberlandCountyCharterCommission.org

