



**TOWN OF MORRISTOWN SELECTBOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE & AGENDA  
THE WING CENTER**

On Zoom and at 24 Upper Main Street, Morrisville, VT 05661  
**6:00 PM Thursday, October 3, 2024**

[Join Zoom Meeting](#) or by phone join via conference call (audio only): 1 (646) 558-8656 | Meeting ID: [810 342 4528](#) | Passcode 05661

The meeting will be live streamed on the Town of Morristown's website:

<https://www.morristownvt.gov/community/page/meetings-agendas-minutes> and on [Town GMATV YouTube Channel](#) when possible

**I. 6:00PM - CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER**

**II. 6:01PM - AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS**

**III. 6:02PM - NEW BUSINESS**

1. Discuss Special Town Meeting Nov 5, 2024 Article 1
2. Discuss Special Town Meeting Nov 5, 2024 Article 2
3. Discuss Special Town Meeting Nov 5, 2024 Article 3
4. Overview Special Town Meeting Nov 5, 2024 Article 2 and 3

**IV. 7:45PM - COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

**V. 8:00PM - ADJOURN**

Town of Morristown Local Election

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# Town Charter: The Foundation of Local Governance



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## Understanding Town Charters



What is a Town  
Charter



Local Control &  
Customization



Timeline for  
Morristown  
first Charter



Key Components  
of a Town  
Charter



Proposed Town  
Charter



Adaptability  
and  
Amendment



Frequently  
asked questions



Next Steps for  
Citizens

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## What is a Town Charter

A town charter is a foundational document that clarifies the organization, powers, functions, and essential procedures of a municipality.

It serves as the municipality's constitution, defining how local government operates.

A town charter shapes the governance and operational structure of a town, reflecting the preferences and needs of its residents.

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## 4 Local Control and Customization



**Allows tailoring of governance  
to community needs**



**Provides autonomy within  
state-prescribed limits**



**Enables creation of unique  
local offices or procedures**

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## Allows tailoring of governance to community needs

A charter is like a town's own rule book. It lets the town choose how it wants to run things, instead of having to follow a one-size-fits-all set of rules made by the state.

This means the town can pick a way of governing that works best for its size and what its residents want. This way, the town's government can be set up in a way that makes the most sense for the people who live there.

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## Provides autonomy within state-prescribed limits

Vermont is a Dillon's Rule state, meaning municipalities derive their legal authority from the state legislature. This means local governments have limited autonomy to make decisions or enact policies without state approval.

However, governance charters granted by the legislature allow towns to exercise some autonomy beyond standard state laws.

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## Enables creation of unique local offices or procedures

Charters provide towns more control over their day – to – day operations by defining specific powers and duties for local officials beyond what state law prescribes. Town charters can diverge from state law by allowing procedures to fill perceived gaps in state law and tailor governance to local preferences and concerns.

Think of it this way: State laws are like general guidelines for all towns. A charter is like a town's own personal guidebook, letting it make some of its own rules to better serve its residents.

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8 2023

- **November 6:** Selectboard (SB) confirms desire to move forward with the town charter, sets goal to vote in March 2024.
- **December 4:** SB discusses charter approval steps.
- **December 18:** SB approves the formation of the charter committee, charter schedule, and hiring an economist for revenue estimation.

2024

- **January 29:** First charter committee meeting to review the initial rough draft of the sample charter.
- **February 26:** Charter meeting to discuss content.
- **March 18:** Charter meeting to refine the charter and Local Option Tax (LOT) language.
- **April 22:** Charter meeting to finalize charter language; Economist Jeff Carr presents analysis and estimated revenue.

May-June 2024

- Vermont Legislature passes a state law allowing municipalities to authorize local option taxes via town-wide local vote without needing a charter.

## Timeline for Morristown's first Town Charter

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## 9 2024 (continued)

- **June 24:** Charter meeting, consensus on moving forward with the charter vote in November minus the LOT section.
- **July 16:** Charter meeting voted to accept the proposed town charter and forward to the SB for adoption.
- **August 5:** Proposed Town Charter adopted by the SB.
- **September 23:** Public info meeting to explain the November Charter question.
- **September 30:** Public info meeting to explain the November Charter question.
- **October 28:** Informational meeting to answer questions and explain charter.
- **November 5:** Vote on initial Morristown Charter.

### February 2025

- Charter should be discussed with the selectboard. The preferred makeup of the charter amendment committee, goals, and mission of the committee should be documented.

This timeline helps ensure that all the important tasks and meetings are completed on schedule.

## Timeline for Morristown's first Town Charter

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Key Components of a Town Charter can include:

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Town of Morristown Local Election

## 11 Town of Morristown – Proposed Town Charter

### § 1. Corporate existence retained

The inhabitants of the Town of Morristown, within the corporate limits now established, shall continue to be a municipal corporation by the name of the Town of Morristown.

### § 2. General law; application

Except when changed or modified by this charter, or by any lawful regulation or ordinance of the Town of Morristown, all of the statutes of the State relating to municipalities shall apply to the Town of Morristown.

### § 3. Town Manager

- a) The Town Manager shall be the chief executive officer and the head of the administrative branch of the Town government and shall be responsible to the Selectboard for the efficient administration of the municipal affairs of the Town.
- b) The Town Manager shall have authority to hire, appoint, discipline, and remove all Town employees, subject to the provisions of personnel rules approved by the Selectboard. The Town Manager may authorize a department head to hire, appoint, discipline, or remove an employee, subject to the Manager's discretion and supervision.

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## 12 Provides framework for addressing future challenges

-  Can adapt governance to meet changing community needs
-  Charters empower municipalities to make decisions and address issues without needing to seek state approval for every action.
-  Customization helps fill perceived gaps in state law and allows for governance that aligns more closely with local priorities.
-  Citizen participation is usually sought through hearings, surveys, and other means.

## Adaptability and Amendment

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## 13 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



**Q:** What is the purpose of the charter vote?

**A:** It allows citizens to approve or reject proposed changes to the town's governing rules.



**Q:** Who can vote in the charter election?

**A:** All registered municipal voters are eligible to participate in the charter vote.



**Q:** How do I learn about the proposed charter?

**A:** Attend public meetings, review official documents, and visit our website for updated information.



**Q:** What happens if the charter is approved or rejected?

**A:** Approved charter will be sent to the Vermont General Assembly for consideration. If rejected, we can try again.

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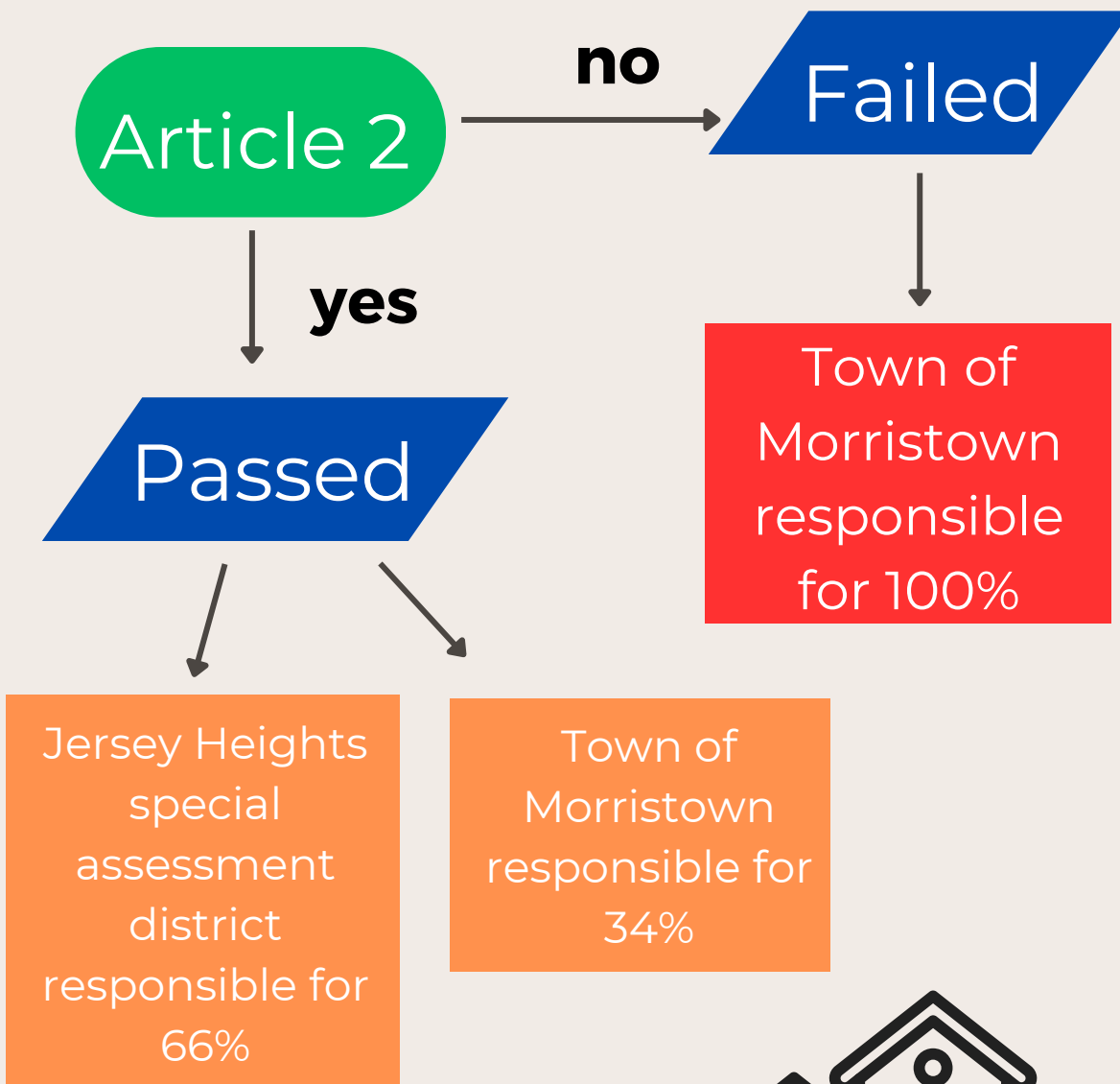
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## 14 Next Steps for Citizens

- Attend the upcoming town meetings to learn more about the proposed charter and ask questions. Informational meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2024.
- Visit the municipality's website at [www.morristownvt.gov](http://www.morristownvt.gov) for detailed information and resources regarding the charter vote.
- Engage with neighbors and discuss the implications of the charter changes to ensure everyone is informed before voting.
- Register to vote before the deadline on to ensure your voice is heard in the upcoming charter vote.

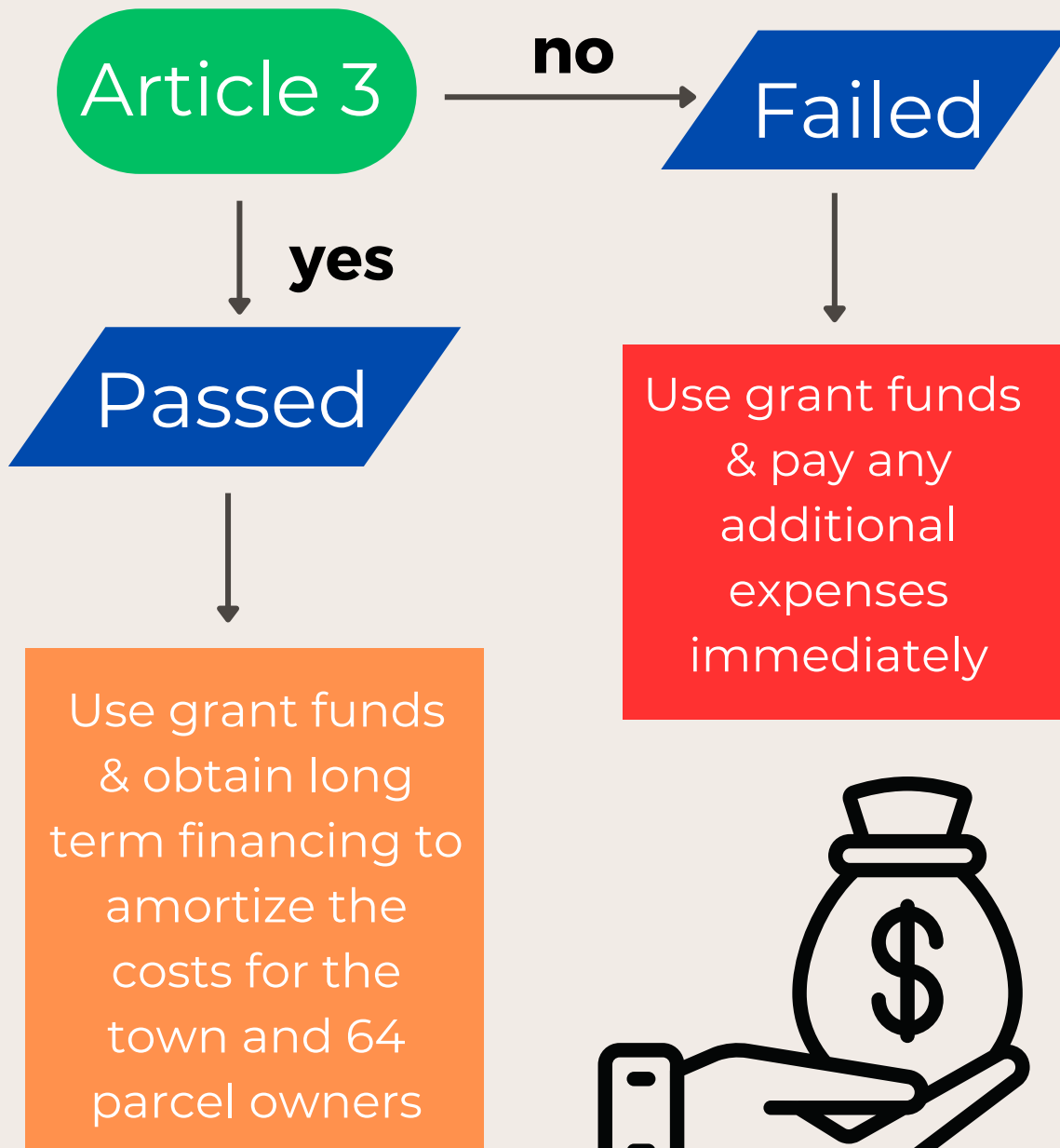
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## Article 2

Shall the voters, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 3254, levy a special assessment not to exceed \$200,000 for the purpose of constructing stormwater improvements to benefit 64 parcels. 63 parcels having frontages on Foss Street, Jersey Court, Jersey Way and Sterling Court, and one parcel with frontage on Cottage Street, said 64 parcels being designated as the "Jersey Heights Special Assessment District" with said special assessment being apportioned among these 64 parcels based on the impervious surface present on each parcel and the assessment being payable over a period not to exceed twenty (20) years in semiannual installments.



### Article 3

Shall the voters of the Town of Morristown authorize borrowing an amount not to exceed \$200,000, to be financed over a period not to exceed twenty (20) years, to pay for State-required stormwater infrastructure improvements in the Jersey Heights Special Assessment District?



|      | Article 2                                                                                                                                        | Article 3                                                                                      |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pass | Jersey Heights Special Assessment District formed among 64 parcels. Jersey Heights responsible for 66%<br>Town of Morristown responsible for 34% | Use grant funds and obtain long term financing to amortize costs for town and 64 parcel owners |
| Fail | Town of Morristown responsible for 100% of the cost                                                                                              | Use grant funds and town pays any additional expenses immediately                              |