



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE CAPE COD AREA

BALLOT QUESTION A

APPLIES TO BARNSTABLE COUNTY ONLY



BARNSTABLE COUNTY

CAPE COD REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Barnstable County was officially established on June 2, 1685, alongside Plymouth and Bristol counties.

At that time, Barnstable County included the following towns:

Sandwich (founded 1639)

Yarmouth (1639)

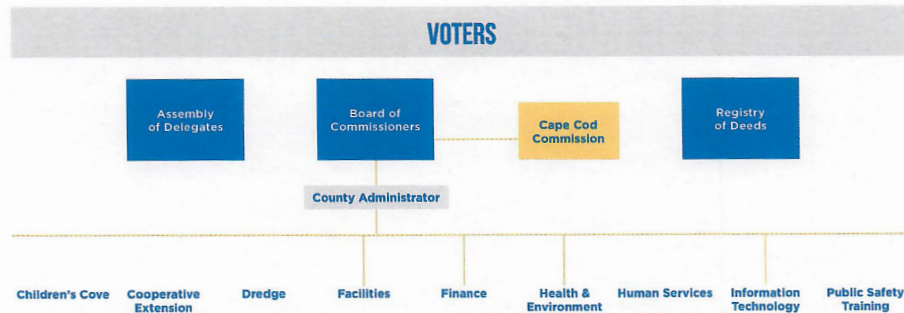
Eastham (1646)

Barnstable (1650)

After considerable debate, the Town of Barnstable was chosen as the "shire town" or county seat, due to its central location. Barnstable Village became the administrative hub, a designation it still holds today.

In 1988 Home rule charter was approved. This action transformed Barnstable County into a modern regional government with a legislative Assembly of Delegates

and an executive Board of Regional Commissioners – one of the few counties in Massachusetts to survive state reforms in the 1980s and '90s. In the 1990's, elected charter commissions were established in towns on Cape Cod to review and recommend changes to the local municipal governments. In the aftermath of these reviews, elected Charter Charter Commissions recommended the professionalization of local governments. In each town, voters approved recommendations to make Select Boards part-time bodies and created the positions of full-time Town Administrators to run the day to day operations. Most towns also approved provisions converting elected positions – such as the Town Clerk, Town Treasurer and Tax Collector to full-time professional positions, appointed by the Select Board or the Town Administrator.



BALLOT QUESTION

A

“Shall a charter study commission be created to study the present governmental structure of Barnstable County to consider and make findings concerning the form of government and make recommendations thereon?”

The language is derived directly from Chapter 801 of the Acts of 1985.

The proposed ballot question language was also reviewed by the Director & Legal Counsel of the Elections Division, and the County Legal Counsel, KP Law, prior to the submittal.

Vote **“YES”** on Question A: **It’s Time to Fix County Government**

Cape Cod deserves a county government that spends responsibly, delivers effective services, and answers to the people it serves. Voting YES on Question A gives Cape Codders an opportunity to examine how county government works and recommend meaningful improvements.

Our county charter was approved by the Legislator and adopted in 1988 and requires review every five years. The 2020 review was preoccupied with the recall of a County Commissioner, and the 2025 review was never completed. A comprehensive and transparent review of the Charter is long overdue. It is time to finish the job.

Question A would establish a charter study commission with an elected representative from every Cape Cod town. It would examine our governing structure, hear from residents, and recommend changes.

Are responsibilities clearly defined? Are financial

decisions transparent? Are departments organized efficiently? Does county government provide the regional leadership our fifteen towns need? A thorough review should identify what works, what needs improvement, and how the charter can strengthen accountability.

In 2024, nearly 72 percent of Massachusetts voters supported authorizing an audit of the Legislature. We should bring that same commitment to accountability here on Cape Cod.

We should welcome this scrutiny. Taxpayers deserve answers, employees deserve effective leadership, and residents deserve a voice in shaping their government.

Vote YES on Question A – it’s time to fix county government.

Mark R. Forest
Barnstable County Commissioner, Chair

Vote **“NO”** on Question A: **The Assembly of Delegates Can Do The Job**

The Board of Commissioners of the County Government asked the Commonwealth to grant them the right to put a question on this November’s ballot. The Commissioners did this as a power grab.

Years ago, the Assembly of Delegates cut the budget by \$800,000 and the Commissioners were livid. They called in lawyers and wasted taxpayer money trying to stop that action but failed.

This led to question 6, which the Assembly got on the ballot in order to clear up the language of the charter. The Commissioners lied their way around the county claiming that an Elected Charter Review was the only way to fix this, so the measure failed.

Instead of doing their jobs and discussing the review with the towns they tried very quietly to get their own people on the Charter Study Commission. Many delegates ran in order to counteract their measures. Unfortunately, they still have an advantage because of the weighted vote apportioned to the four appointees.

- Any Charter Study Commission changes will go straight to the state legislature for

approval and then to the voters, with no option for townspeople to weigh in first.

- The Charter Study Commission consists of 19 total members, comprising 15 elected town delegates alongside 4 designated by-right members – or their designees – appointed by the 3 Regional Commissioners and the Assembly Speaker.
- Because voting within the Charter Study Commission utilizes population-based weighted voting and these weights must allow for the four by-right members or their designees, this lessens the weighted vote percentages allocated to individual town delegates. The four representatives appointed will have approximately 6.7 percent, while each town’s percentage will be greatly reduced.
- The weighted voting gives the unelected members an advantage over the towns.

Elizabeth Harder
Assembly of Delegates – Harwich

CANDIDATES:

Barnstable	Patrick Princi	Former Speaker of the Assembly
Bourne	WRITE - IN CANDIDATE	
Brewster	Charlie Sumner	Former Town Administrator
Chatham	Thomas Clarke	
	Seth Taylor	Former Select Board
Dennis	John Ohman	Assembly of Delegates
Eastham	Terry Gallagher	Assembly of Delegates
Falmouth	Robert Mascali	Select Board
Harwich	Elizabeth Harder	Assembly of Delegates
Mashpee	Rodney Collins	Town Administrator
Orleans	Lynn Bruneau	Former Finance Committee
Provincetown	Brian O'Malley	Assembly of Delegates
Sandwich	James Killion	Assembly of Delegates
Truro	WRITE - IN CANDIDATE	
Wellfleet	Ryan Curley	Select Board
Yarmouth	Robert Lawton	Former Yarmouth Town Administrator



BARNSTABLE COUNTY
CAPE COD REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

VOTE

EARLY VOTING: 10/17/26 – 10/30/26
ELECTION DAY NOVEMBER 3