

Campaign Strategy Summary for Charter Commission Candidates

The [Natick Charter Campaign Signature Committee](#) offers this summary for Natick residents considering a campaign for Charter Commission. The Committee is not endorsing candidates for office. Please email info@natickcharter.org with any questions or suggestions.

1. Timing

- Candidates must file nomination forms with the Town Clerk to be on the annual Town election ballot in March. Forms are typically available in early December, and are due the second Tuesday in January.

2. Campaign finance

- Familiarize yourself with the regulations including filing and reporting requirements available at the Office of Campaign and Political Finance: <http://mass.gov/ocpf>
- File your committee with the Town Clerk before you accept financial donations.
- Your committee will need a bank account with the treasurer as a signatory.

2. Organization

- A campaign requires a treasurer and a manager; other roles are not defined by law, but you may want to have people handling these responsibilities (one person can take on more than one job):
 - volunteer coordinator
 - writing and editing
 - visibility for standouts and sign locations
 - scheduling and events
 - web design and social media
 - database of voters, volunteers, endorsers, and donors
 - liaisons for key constituencies

3. Budget and fundraising

- A campaign can cost as little as \$50 for a handful of signs, or up to \$10,000 for signs, advertising, and mailings. Be aware of campaign finance law about accepting donations.
- Set a budget based on your strategy. Effective campaigns can be run on a low budget; a crowded campaign field may require a higher budget.

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4. Outreach and events

- Meeting voters and establishing visibility in person is important to local elections. Check in with event organizers before planning to attend events if you are expecting to display or distribute campaign materials.
- Public visibility (e.g. such as “stand outs” with campaign signs near the Town Common or other heavily trafficked locations) is a way to generate awareness.
- Participate in candidate forums to get out your message and help voters differentiate candidates. Be prepared, and practice!

5. Voter identification

- The Town Clerk maintains a database of residents and voters. Only a fraction of voters participate in local elections, so this database will help you target likely voters.

6. Communications

- Hone a straightforward, memorable message that summarizes your pitch. It is good to have a succinct answer to “what is the job” and “why are you running?”
- A website is a convenient way to share your message, recruit volunteers, and accept donations. Keep it current!
- Social media is an essential tool to reach voters, and paid digital advertising can be targeted (for example, by geography).
- Messaging with “palm cards” or other small-format printed material can be costly, but also an effective way to deliver a concise message.
- “Dear Friend” cards are postcards that are ready to mail, but that your supporters can personalize and send to their networks.
- Lawn signs are ubiquitous. Be sure to get permission for anyplace you want to install signs, and don’t place them on public property.
- Endorsements are valuable in local elections where personal networks and recommendations are trusted.
- A Charter Commission is not well understood, so be prepared to explain the role as well as your qualifications.

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7. Getting along

- A campaign can be stressful and time-consuming. It can also bring together people with different views, priorities and styles. Encourage volunteers to bring their best selves to this effort.