



Town of Winchester
MaryEllen Marshall, CMC
Winchester Town Clerk

Winchester Clerk's Office
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Spring Town Meeting
April 30, 2026

ARTICLE 4: **VOTED**, to amend the Code of Bylaws by adding a new Chapter 28 and Sections 28-1 through 28-8, establishing a Human Rights Commission ("the Commission"):

**Winchester Code of Bylaws
Chapter 28**

Section 28-1:	Human Rights Commission	Section 28-5	Appointment of Members
Section 28-2:	Establishment	Section 28-6	Time of Appointments
Section 28-3:	Duties	Section 28-7	Filling of Vacancies
Section 28-4	Composition	Section 28-8	Duration

28-1 Human Rights Commission

28-2 Establishment: There shall be a Human Rights Commission as permitted by Article 2, Section 2-11 of the Home Rule Charter.

28-3 Duties: The Human Rights Commission would advocate for policies and programs to support the Winchester Town Human Rights Statement: "Winchester is a community that is grounded in respect for every individual, and therefore protects all residents, employees, business owners, students and visitors in the enjoyment and exercise of human and civil rights. It is Town policy to ensure equal treatment and opportunity to all individuals regardless of race, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, ideology, socio-economic status, health, sexual orientation, age, military status, disability, country of origin or immigration status." The duties of the Human Rights Commission may include, but not be limited to:

To serve as a point of contact, collaboration, support, and advocacy for those who feel they have faced bias, harassment, exclusion, and/or discrimination in the Winchester community, and to make recommendations and/or referrals to local and/or state resources.

To hold educational programs and events, in collaboration with individuals and groups across Winchester, to raise awareness of human rights issues and promote inclusion.

To review the Town's relevant existing and proposed bylaws and policies to promote equity in areas such as housing, employment, and education. The review process may include public hearings, forums, and surveys.

To serve as a resource to the Select Board and other Town departments with respect to issues related to human rights.

To consult with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) or any other relevant state body on any matter within its purview.

From time to time, to create subcommittees charged with work around a particular issue or topic by a majority vote of the Commission. The Chair of any subcommittee must be a Commission member. Subcommittee members can include Commissioners and residents who are not Commissioners. The Commission may expend, by approval of Town Meeting, such funds as are appropriated in support of the purposes outlined above. Should any funds be appropriated by vote of Town Meeting, the Commission shall annually prepare a budget and track expenditures as required by Town officials.

The Commission shall also monitor the implementation and administration of such policies and programs

and evaluate their effectiveness. The Commission shall at least biannually make a written report to the Select Board and School Committee, and at least annually make a written report to Town Meeting, which report shall be included in the annual Town reports. Town officers and agencies shall assist the Commission in performing these responsibilities. In particular, Town Counsel, with notification to the Town Manager, shall be a resource available to the Commission to assist it in its work.

28-4 Composition; Term of Office: The Human Rights Commission membership should be reflective of the diversity of the Winchester community. There will be nine members, as follows:

Four residents, who may hold other Town offices, including one member who will be designated a liaison to the Council on Aging and one member who will be a liaison to the Disability Access Commission. Two student members who are secondary students in public, private, or home schools and who are residents in the Town of Winchester. One member who is a senior member of the School Department administration. The Town Manager or a designee from the Office of the Town Manager. The Chief of Police or a designee from the senior ranks of the Winchester Police Department

The student members shall be appointed for terms of one year each, so arranged that the terms of office of one member shall expire each year, in June. All other members shall be appointed for terms of three years each, so arranged that the terms of office of one or two members shall expire each year. There shall be a Chair and Vice Chair elected by majority vote of the Commission, and neither will be an employee of the Town. The Chair (or the Vice Chair, in their absence or incapacity) shall preside over meetings and hold all powers typically reserved for members of other Town committees.

The Town Manager or their designee shall ensure that minutes and records are kept for the Commission; they will also ensure that meeting notices are posted in compliance with Open Meeting Law and any applicable Town Bylaws.

28-5 Appointment of Members: The Select Board shall appoint three resident members and one student member, and will review and approve the members designated by the Town Manager and the Chief of Police. The School Committee shall appoint one resident member and one student member. The School Committee shall also appoint the representative of the School Department, who shall serve at its pleasure.

28-6 Time for Appointments: Appointments to the Human Rights Commission shall be made as soon as possible after the establishment of the Commission and, in subsequent years, shall be made by June 30th. In the first year of the Commission's establishment, appointments of the at-large members will be made to staggered terms, with two serving a three-year term, one serving a two-year term, and one serving a one-year term; and thereafter all terms shall be three years. Other members shall serve three-year terms.

28-7 Filling of Vacancies: Whenever a vacancy occurs on the Commission, it shall be filled by the appointing board or officer who originally appointed the member whose seat has become vacant.

28-8 Duration: The Commission shall remain in existence in perpetuity unless a vote of Town Meeting amends this section.

I certify that the foregoing is a true account of the action taken under Article 4 of the Spring Town Meeting on April 30, 2026.

**Motion Carried Voice Vote
Majority Vote Required**

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