

## **May Masonic Minutes – Meeting Two**

*“...and a Charter from a Grand Lodge authorizing them to meet and work.”*

This phrase is a part of every Masonic opening. What does it mean to have a Charter from a Grand Lodge? Why is it important?

A Charter, or as it was originally called, a Warrant of Constitution must be present in all Masonic Lodges. This document gives Masons the right to legally assemble, work, and hold elections for a Master and Wardens of a Lodge. It provides formal recognition of a gathering of Masons under a given name, with full authority to conduct Masonic business that is assigned to Lodges under Grand Lodge jurisdiction.

The first known Charter for Masonry is recorded in York, England where Prince Edwin received a Free Charter from King Athelstan in 926 AD. This Charter allowed a congregation of Masons to assemble under the auspices of the King of England.

*“That Prince Edwin, the King's Brother, being taught Geometry and Masonry, for the love he had to the said Craft, and to the honorable principles whereon it is grounded, purchased a Free Charter of King Athelstan his Brother, for the Free Masons having among themselves a Connection or a power and freedom to regulate themselves to amend what might happen amiss and to hold an yearly Communication in a General Assembly.*

*That accordingly Prince Edwin summoned all the Free and Accepted Masons in the Realm, to meet him in the Congregation at York, who came and formed the Grand Lodge under him as their Grand Master, AD. 926”<sup>1</sup>*

The words Warrant and Charter today are Masonically considered interchangeable. Warrant is largely used in Great Britain and Charter is more commonly used in America, Scotland and Ireland. They both refer to the document issued by a Grand Lodge empowering and legalizing a Lodge to meet and work.

Today, modern Charters are given to a group of Masons to form and hold a Lodge in a particular locality making the Lodge stationary. A Lodge cannot move to another location to conduct Lodge business without the permission of the Grand Master or the Grand Lodge. There is one exception; a traveling Charter or Warrant has been issued to military Lodges and empowers them to travel with military forces to which they are attached. A Lodge may give up its Charter voluntarily to the Grand Lodge who issued it. This is done when circumstances have occurred that a Lodge can no longer properly function within the constitutional requirements of the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Master can arrest or “pull” a Charter, but the Grand Lodge is the only entity that can forfeit a Charter. No greater disgrace can fall upon a Lodge than to have its Charter forfeited. A Lodge with an arrested or forfeited Charter may regain said Charter only through the Grand Master or the Grand Lodge. This process does take substantial time and effort to complete and only occurs after the Grand Master or Grand Lodge is satisfied that adequate corrections have been made to address the circumstances surrounding the need to reclaim the Charter.

Brethren, the freedom to meet and practice the teachings of the Craft is a privilege not to be taken lightly, therefore guard well the document that authorizes and empowers your Masonic life. So mote it be.

Our email is [moed4u@momason.org](mailto:moed4u@momason.org); we look forward to receiving your feedback.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.masonicdictionary.com/york1.html>