

Received 7/23/26
4:10 PM Jodi Moore, ATC

Board of Selectmen
Public Hearing
Monday, July 13, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.
Durham Community Center, 144 Pickett Lane, and Remote via Zoom
Public Hearing Minutes

[Public Hearing Recording](#)
Passcode: gZy@68n1

First Selectman Rea opened the Public Hearing of Monday, July 13, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. Also present: Selectman Chadd and Selectmen Hennick.

First Selectman Rea explained that pursuant to [Connecticut General Statutes § 7-191\(b\)](#), the purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive comments and recommendations regarding the Draft Report of Proposed Amendments to the Town Charter from the Durham Charter Revision Commission. View documentation on the town website here [Draft Report of the Proposed Amended Charter](#).

First Selectman Rea explained that in 2025 the Board of Selectmen agreed to form a Charter Revision Commission; the Town Charter had not been updated since 2006. The board received approximately thirty applicants and unanimously appointed seven members. The Charter Revision Commission met bi-weekly and held public hearings over the last year. Both hearings were very well attended. First Selectman Rea stated for the record that the Commission was given a charge approved publicly at Board of Selectmen and contrary to some comments made, there were no behind the scenes directives.

Per Statute, the Board of Selectmen has not met to discuss the recommendations in the draft amendment presented tonight. After this Public Hearing, the Board of Selectmen has (15) days to recommend changes to the Charter Revision Commission. If no changes are recommended, the draft report becomes final after the 15th day. First Selectman Rea noted that he heard some concern from the Fire Company with proposed language and asked that the volunteers share their concerns tonight but asked that they understand the board will take these concerns seriously. He asked the public to keep their comments to 3 minutes to allow everyone a chance to speak.

Public Comments:

Jerry Bruckner: Charter Revision Commission met with some departments and committees but never met with the Fire Department. The Commission had the opportunity to explain the logic behind the revised Fire Department language but did not. Noted the Town Administrator section had no definitions/responsibilities.

Andrew Meigs: felt it would be beneficial to have a preamble that described where the town is now and where the commission intended to bring it, not defined how the First Selectman is decided (appointed/elected?), hard to understand some sections with all the markups particularly Board of Assessment Appeals, Ethics Commission membership is not defined, and why is Conservation Commission appointed by the First Selectman.

Terry Wall, Chief of the Durham Volunteer Fire Company: stated the Fire Company has historically been included in the town charter and has always served the town well. He was not happy with the proposed language changes – the Fire Department is not political and should remain that way. Please reconsider this language.

Dave Mastrioanni: asked how the increase in Selectmen/Town Administrator would affect the towns operating the cost. Why does the town need to expand staff, is there a need for this?

Paul Keurajian: felt the Town Administrator was adding another level of government, would the pay stay the same for the First Selectman with this added position, felt a Town Administrator would yield a high salary and benefits, why does the town need this, wondered if the First Selectman and Board of Selectmen is overwhelmed, felt the residents will lose control by adding another layer of government, does not agree with this.

MaryAnn Boord: wondered about the 10% threshold for actions requiring a referendum. As a former First Selectwoman, she spoke against a Town Administrator, felt the First Selectman role cannot be part time and the town expects more. Understands that the role of Town Treasurer has changed over the last 30 years, but would like this to remain elected. Did not agree with appointed Town Clerk or Tax Collector, adding that the state provides training to newly elected officials.

Bill LaFlamme: spoke on behalf of the Conservation Commission, requested that the struck language is reversed. Questioned why the Commission would be appointed by the First Selectman rather than the Board of Selectmen.

Kristen Kleeman: stated the Charter Revision Commission did not meet with the Fire Company Trustees. Asked the board to review all the statutes that are referenced in the draft. Noted the Fire Marshal and Animal Control Officer now reference state statute and wondered why.

Elizbeth Shoudy: felt the Conservation Commission needs more supervisions noting the current issues at Whites Farm. She thanked the members of the Charter Revision Commission for the work they put into bringing this document forward.

Norm Hicks: felt the Board of Education elections should not take place at General Election and should go back to election at Town Meeting. He noted the current charter has the election at General Election, as does this proposed language. He felt the change takes away the personal aspects of meeting the candidates running for Board of Education. He asked this to be reversed.

Lynn Allen: thanked the commission members and board. Felt the town needs to find ways to keep the residents informed.

Brian Oliveri: felt the proposed draft was written by King George and congregates power to the First Selectman or Board of Selectmen, felt the Tax Collector/Town Clerk should remain elected positions noting it keeps these positions accountable. Felt this document expands the government and makes the board less accountable. Hopes that the board takes a good look at items that do not need to be changed.

Frank DeFelice: did not get interviewed for Planning and Zoning or Inland Wetlands. Recommended removing the removing the 10% value and using a fixed value of \$500,000, felt

Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Treasurer should stay elected, concern definitions within the charter regarding "Agencies", revisions to language regarding RiverCOG, noted that Planning and Zoning has the authority to hire the Zoning Enforcement Officer and does not need to consult the First Selectman, concern with language in Town Council section and that the Land Use boards need access to their own council, strongly disagreed with the Town Administrator position.

Roger Kleeman: felt the Compensation Review Personnel Policy Commission is not advisory and has authority, was included in both 1977 and 2006 town charters.

Marie Wilde: felt there was a serious lack of justification for the proposed changes and would like an explanation from the committee, echoed comments by R. Kleeman.

Rick Parmelee: does not support Tax Collector/Town Clerk/Treasurer becoming appointed positions, strongly supports the Fire Company and Fire Trustees, disagreed with the \$40,000 limits, what is the cost for the Town Administrator and additional Selectmen.

Corey Pedersen: felt the proposed amendments waters down authority, not in favor of the appointed positions, felt there was a conflict of interest if any commission member who is creating these new positions and then apply for the positions. Needs to be looked at.

Kelsey Bertrand: concern with lack of information being shared with the public, how do residents stay informed, does not agree with the elected officials moving to appointed and does not agree with a Town Administrator. Felt Durham is too small for that type of position.

Laura D'Errico: what is the justification for the Town Administrator, felt someone had an agenda proposing this and strongly disagreed with this.

Marilyn Keurajian: disagreed with a Town Administrator, felt it will take away residents' power and noted it is already disheartening when only a few people show up to town meetings or hearings.

Leah Pedersen: asked if more public hearings or meetings will take place, especially with stakeholders in the charter.

Jackie Carr: asked how the residents will stay updated. First Selectman Rea stated everything has been posted on the town website and will continue.

First Selectman Rea thanked everyone for attending and speaking. The Board of Selectmen has a lot to consider. Selectman Hennick noted that whatever the board and commission put forward, it will go to referendum for the full town to vote on. Selectman Chadd explained that the commission did a lot of work to bring the language up to today's standards, he was glad to hear the feedback tonight and will work with the commission to make sure all concerns are heard.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jaclyn Lehet