

Received: 2/25/26 12:04pm Nicole Charest, TC

Town of Durham

Charter Revision Commission

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:00pm

Community Center Meeting Room 1, and Remote via Zoom

## Meeting Minutes

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Yp2EveFwzDV\\_OVprgF-fLgN7isJkUKm1ZG\\_mUlsQiXD4xpaUQVX-rtkgYD8cY9iO.icJ5xEF2\\_29S4vsZ](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Yp2EveFwzDV_OVprgF-fLgN7isJkUKm1ZG_mUlsQiXD4xpaUQVX-rtkgYD8cY9iO.icJ5xEF2_29S4vsZ)

**Passcode: sCV47l\$W**

1. Call to order

Co-chair Martin Anderson called the Special Charter Revision Commission meeting of Wednesday, February 18, 2026 to order at 7:00 p.m.

Also present: Al DiVincentis, Matt LaFayette, Christian Godbout, Eileen Buckheit, and Nicole Charest: Town Clerk and Recording Secretary.

Absent: Laura Francis, John Bugai

Members of the public present: Richard Parmelee, Roger Kleeman, and other members of the public

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Agenda

- a. **MOTION BY MARTIN ANDERSON SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED.**

4. Approval of Minutes

a. February 4, 2026

- i. **MOTION BY AL DIVINCENTIS SECONDED BY EILEEN BUCKHEIT TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 4, 2026 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. ALL AYE. MOTION PASSED**

5. Public Comment

- a. Richard Parmelee made a public comment reiterating his opinion that there should be no changes to the Town Meeting process, and that residents are the legislative body of the town. Suggested the commission add a method to remove personnel from their jobs in case of poor conduct. Expressed that if nonprofits are collecting funds from the town, they should be required to provide IRS forms to the Board of Finance

6. Presentation or Guests

- a. Mary T. Calorio, Regional Town Administrator, NECCOG was unable to be present

7. Correspondence

- a. Issue with application of existing Section 6.9.2
  - i. Discussed situation with Fire Trustees where a member was mistakenly not re-elected at town meeting and the charter does not have an alternate method to handle the vacancy. Reviewed election and appointment procedures for other boards and commissions. It was suggested that the Board of Selectmen have the power to appoint an interim member in the event of a vacancy in an elected position. Also suggested creating an alternate position, although volunteer positions are already difficult

8. Old Business

- a. Clarifying information from Town Counsel on CRC questions
  - i. Reviewed Town Counsel advice on Emergency Appropriations draft language. Counsel provided Granby, CT and Columbia, CT as examples
  - ii. Granby, CT requires declaration of emergency by Town Manager and resolution adopted by two-thirds vote of Board of Selectmen to make an appropriation of up to three percent of the current tax levy
  - iii. Columbia, CT limits total amount to one percent of current tax levy, requires recommendation of First Selectman and majority vote of Board of Selectmen
  - iv. Noted question from Beth Moncata, finance director, on what will be done if the amount in the reserve account that was allocated for emergency purposes is over the limit set by state law
  - v. Noted that current non-emergency transfer limit is \$20,000 once per fiscal year per department which causes departments to wait to accumulate projects before requesting funds, resulting in overall costs increasing in the end due to inflation, increased costs of materials/labor, or additional work caused by delaying repairs.
  - vi. Discussed potential emergencies that could occur in Durham. Noted Salem, CT allows selectmen to make decision. Discussed need for town to be able to react to emergency situations without the delay of the usual checks and balances. Commission indicated this topic would be reviewed at a future meeting
- b. Any other old business
  - i. none

9. New Business

- a. Approval of invoice for \$350 for 14 hours of work for CTC by Nicole Charest
  - i. **MOTION BY MATT LAFAYETTE SECONDED BY EILEEN BUCKHEIT TO APPROVE AN INVOICE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$350 FOR NICOLE CHAREST FOR 14 HOURS OF RECORDING SECRETARY WORK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$350.00. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**
- b. Any other new business
  - i. none

10. Commission Work Session

- a. **Section XX – Board of Finance - Alternate Members**
  - i. **Proposed Language:**  
The Board of Finance shall include two (2) alternate members, elected at the regular municipal election, each for a term of four (4) years, unless otherwise provided by this Charter.

An alternate member may sit and vote only when a regular member is absent or recused, and only after being formally seated by the Chair of the Board of Finance for that meeting or matter.

When seated, an alternate member shall have all the powers, rights, and duties of a regular member for the duration of that meeting or agenda item.

An alternate member shall not vote, shall not be counted toward a quorum, and shall not be counted for purposes of minority representation unless and until formally seated.

If more than one alternate is available, the Chair shall seat alternates in the order of votes received at the most recent election.

- ii. Eileen Buckheit (Board of Finance member) noted that the Board of Finance does not have any issue with attendance, and the meetings require heavy context that an alternate would need in order to participate

b. **Section 5.1.1 Organization, Qualifications, and Meetings of the Board of Finance**

i. **Current Language:**

The Board of Finance, within 10 days following qualification of newly elected members, shall meet and elect from its membership a chairman, who shall preside over its meetings, a vice-chairman, who shall preside in the chairman's absence, and shall appoint a clerk, who shall prepare the minutes and other records of each meeting.

The Board shall hold regular monthly meetings, and special meetings when needed, to perform its duties. Each member of the Board of Finance must meet the following qualifications:

- 1) Be an elector of the town;
- 2) Be a taxpayer of the town;
- 3) Be sworn to faithful performance of his or her duties;
- 4) Hold no salaried town office.

Board members shall receive no compensation for services, but necessary expenses of the Board are to be paid by the town within the limits of the Board's appropriation.

ii. **Proposed Language:**

Section 5.1.1 Organization, Qualifications, and Meetings of the Board of Finance

A. Organization

B. Within ten (10) days after newly elected members have qualified and taken office, the Board of Finance shall hold an organizational meeting and shall:

1. Elect a Chair, who shall preside over meetings;

2. Elect a Vice Chair, who shall act in the absence of the Chair; and
3. Appoint a Clerk, who shall be responsible for preparing and maintaining the minutes and records of the Board in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
4. The Board of Finance may, subject to the approval of the First Selectman and within available budgetary appropriations, retain a recording secretary or similar administrative support to assist with the preparation of minutes and other records.
5. All officers and appointees shall serve until their successors are elected or appointed.

B. Meetings

The Board of Finance shall hold regular monthly meetings and such special meetings as may be necessary to carry out its duties. All meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Connecticut General Statutes and the Freedom of Information Act.

C. Qualifications

Each member of the Board of Finance shall:

1. Be an elector of the Town;
2. Be a taxpayer of the Town;
3. Be sworn to the faithful performance of the duties of the office; and
4. Not hold any salaried Town office during service on the Board.

D. Compensation and Expenses

Members of the Board of Finance shall serve without compensation. The Town shall pay necessary and reasonable expenses incurred by the Board in the performance of its duties, including approved clerical or recording support, subject to the limits of the Board's approved appropriation.

iii. Noted that some boards elect a Secretary, some have a Clerk. Language reflects that a clerk is responsible for the taking of minutes. Added that the board should elect a secretary

iv. **MOTION BY CHRISTIAN GOUBOUT, SECONDED BY EILEEN BUCKHEIT TO APPROVE SECTION 5.1.1 AS AMENDED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

c. **Section 5.1.4 – Annual Audit**

i. **Current Language:**

ii. The Board of Finance shall annually designate an independent public accountant to audit the books of the town, in accordance with the General Statutes.

iii. **Proposed Language:**

The accounts and financial records of the Town shall be audited annually by an independent certified public accountant, in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes and the Town's procurement policy.

The Board of Finance shall review the scope of the audit and recommend an auditor. The Board of Selectmen shall appoint and contract with the auditor in accordance with the Town's procurement policy.

The completed audit report shall be filed with the Town Clerk, presented to the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen, and made available for public inspection as required by law.

- iv. **MOTION BY EILEEN BUCKHEIT SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS TO APPROVE SECTION 5.1.4 AS PROPOSED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

d. **Section 5.1.6 – Public Hearing on Proposed Budget**

- i. **MOTION BY MARTIN ANDERSON SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS TO APPROVE SECTION 5.1.6 WITH NO CHANGES. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

e. **Section 5.1.8 – Laying Taxes**

i. **Current Language:**

After the Board of Assessment Appeals has finished its duties, and a Grand List has been completed, and after considering other estimated yearly income of the town, the Board of Finance shall meet to lay a tax on the Grand List sufficient to pay the expenses and appropriations of the town for the ensuing fiscal year, and to absorb any revenue deficit of the town at the end of the current fiscal year.

ii. **Proposed Language:**

After the Board of Assessment Appeals has completed its work and the Grand List has been finalized, the Board of Finance shall meet to set the Town's tax rate.

In setting the tax rate, the Board of Finance shall consider:

the approved Town budget and appropriations for the upcoming fiscal year; anticipated revenues and other sources of income; and any revenue shortfall or surplus from the current fiscal year.

The tax rate shall be set at a level sufficient to fund all lawful expenditures and obligations of the Town for the ensuing fiscal year, in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes.

The Board of Finance shall certify the tax rate to the Tax Collector in a manner within the time required by state law.

- iii. **MOTION BY CHRISTIAN GOUBOUT SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS TO APPROVE PROPOSED ALTERNATE LANGUAGE. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

f. **Section 5.2 –Tax Assessor**

i. **Current Language:**

There shall be an Assessor with the powers and duties prescribed for assessors by the General Statutes. The Assessor shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen on the basis of competitive state examinations.

ii. **Proposed Language:**

There shall be an Assessor who shall have the powers and duties prescribed by the Connecticut General Statutes.

A. **Appointment and Qualifications**

The Assessor shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen and shall meet all certification, qualification, and continuing education requirements established by the State of Connecticut.

The Assessor shall serve for a term as provided by ordinance or state law and may be reappointed.

The Board of Selectmen may appoint assistant, interim, or temporary assessors as permitted by law.

Nothing in this section shall limit the Town's authority to contract for professional assessment services when authorized by law.

B. **Performance Review**

The Board of Selectmen shall be responsible for the performance evaluation of the Assessor, including review of statutory compliance, quality and timeliness of work, and responsiveness to taxpayers and Town officials.

C. **Removal for Cause**

The Assessor may be removed for cause by the Board of Selectmen.

Cause may include, but is not limited to, neglect of duty, misconduct, incompetence, failure to maintain required certification, or violation of law or Town policy.

Before removal, the Assessor shall be provided:

- a. Written notice stating the reasons for the proposed removal, and
- b. A reasonable opportunity to be heard before the Board of Selectmen.

D. **Shared or Regional Assessment Services**

The Town may provide assessment services through shared, regional, or intermunicipal arrangements, including contracting with another municipality, a Council of Governments, or other governmental entity, as permitted by the Connecticut General Statutes.

Any such arrangement shall be approved by the Board of Selectmen and shall ensure continued compliance with all statutory assessment requirements.

- iii. Discussed removing certification requirements that are already implied by reference to the statutes. Discussed appointment process and whether it is necessary to include Performance Review and Removal for Cause sections. Al DiVincentis suggested approving the proposed language with changes that remove Performance Review and Removal for Cause sections, keeping in mind that the section can be revisited
- iv. **MOTION BY AL DIVINCENTIS SECONDED BY SEVERAL TO APPROVE SECTION 5.2 ASSESSOR AS AMENDED BY DISCUSSION. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

g. **Miscellaneous**

- i. Discussed role of Fire Trustees to Fire Department and roles of Trustees for other departments

11. **Commissioner Reports**

- a. none

12. **Next Steps and Assignments**

- a. Review Sections 5.1.5, 5.1.7, and 5.1.9 for next meeting

13. **Next Meeting- March 4, 2026**

14. **Adjourn**

**MOTION BY EILEEN BUCKHEIT SECONDED BY SEVERAL TO ADJOURN. ALL AYE**

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.,  
Respectfully submitted,  
Nicole Charest