

Town of Durham
Charter Revision Commission
Wednesday, April 8, 2026 7:00pm
Community Center Meeting Room 1, and Remote via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/64O5CFPv_5anSyGsg-ETTVn3n-ziDgjFzSOzbzjumL5RWzLanFmgIf97zWB0W9C8.kTID15bajkm66CjN

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Call to order

Co-chair Martin Anderson called the Special Charter Revision Commission meeting of Wednesday, April 8, 2026 to order at 7:00 p.m.

Also present: Matt LaFayette, Christian Godbout, Eileen Buckheit, Martin Anderson (via Zoom), Christian Godbout, Al DiVincentis, and Nicole Charest: Town Clerk and Recording Secretary.

Absent:

Members of the public present: Maya Perry Liss, Bob Booz, Roger Kleeman, and other members of the public

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. **MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH INCLUSION OF PUBLIC COMMENT. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED.**
3. Approval of Minutes
 - a. March 18, 2026
 - i. **MOTION BY AL DIVINCENTIS SECONDED BY MATT LAFAYETTE TO APPROVE THE MARCH 18, 2026 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. ALL AYE. MOTION PASSED**
4. Public Comment
 - a. Maya Perry Liss, president of the Board of Library Trustees, noted that a letter was sent to the members of the Charter Revision Commission. Expressed that the library board requests the Charter Revision Commission not make changes to the library section of the charter without input from the library board. Announced that the library trustees will have a meeting April 14th that the Charter Revision members are welcome to attend
 - b. Bob Booz made a public comment noting the discrepancy between what state statute, charter, and bylaws call the Library Board of Directors/Trustees
5. Presentation or Guests

a. none

6. Correspondence

- a. Letter from the Library Board of Trustees expressing that the Charter Revision Commission should consult with the trustees before making any changes to the library section of the charter

7. Commission Work Session

a. **Section 2.1 General Town Elections**

- i. Noted that elected vs. appointed positions issue needs to be discussed further

b. **Section 2.2 State Elections**

- i. Noted Justice of the Peace Discussion was previously tabled

c. **Section 4.1 Board of Selectmen**

i. **Current Language**

There shall be a Board of Selectmen consisting of a First Selectman and two additional Selectmen, hereinafter referred to as the Selectmen, who shall be compensated in such manner and amount as set by vote of the Annual Budget Meeting, upon recommendation of the Board of Finance.

The candidate receiving the largest number of votes for First Selectman at the General Town Election shall be declared elected to the office of First Selectman. The two candidates receiving the next highest number of votes at the General Town Election shall be declared elected to the Board of Selectmen.

ii. **Proposed Language**

There shall be a Board of Selectmen consisting of a First Selectman and two Selectmen. The First Selectman and Selectmen shall receive such compensation as may be established by vote of the Annual Budget Meeting upon recommendation of the Board of Finance.

At the General Town Election, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes for the office of First Selectman shall be elected First Selectman. The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes for the office of Selectman shall be elected Selectmen.

- iii. Laura Francis noted that there have been previous discussions on whether to change from 3 to 5 selectmen as other towns have done. Towns that have transitioned to town manager forms of government have increased the number of Selectmen to act as a policy board and reduce the frequency of deadlock votes and improve checks and balances. Commission members discussed how it is already difficult to find candidates to run for office

- iv. Noted charter provides for minority representation regardless of number of members. Discussed electing First Selectman based on whichever candidate for selectman received the most votes, it was argued that this may discourage people from running for office if they do not want the responsibility of First Selectman. Laura Francis suggested two charter options, one with town manager. The option with the town administrator/manager would also include language that increases the number of selectmen from 2 to 4
- v. **MOTION BY MARTIN ANDERSON SECONDED BY MATT LAFAYETTE TO ACCEPT THE ALTERNATE LANGUAGE FOR SECTION 4.1 BOARD OF SELECTMEN AS PROPOSED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

d. **Section 4.2**

i. **Proposed Language**

The Board of Selectmen shall hold an organizational meeting within ten days after the commencement of each new term of office. At such meeting, the Board shall establish the time and place of its regular meetings, provide for the calling of special meetings, and designate a Selectman to act in the absence or disability of the First Selectman.

The Board of Selectmen shall adopt rules of procedure consistent with the Connecticut General Statutes and this Charter. Each member shall have the right to make motions and participate fully in the proceedings of the Board. The Board of Selectmen may provide for remote or hybrid meetings to the extent permitted by the Connecticut General Statutes.

All meetings of the Board of Selectmen shall be conducted in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes, including the Freedom of Information Act.

The vote of each member on any question shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the meeting.

A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum. No action shall be taken without the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present and voting.

- ii. Laura Francis explained that new language adds remote or hybrid meetings
- iii. **MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS, SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS TO APPROVE SECTION 4.2 ALTERNATE LANGUAGE AS PRESENTED. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED.**

e. **Section 4.3 General Powers and Duties**

- i. Commission discussed whether to propose alternate language which clarifies wording or to change to town administrator. Discussed purchasing policy and the need for flexibility. Al DiVincentis will review section

f. **Section 4.4**

i. **Current Language**

Unless otherwise specified in this Charter or in the General Statutes as amended, the Board of Selectmen shall make all appointments to the following town offices: 911 Coordinator, Animal Control Officer, Building Code Board of Appeals, Building Official, Burning Officials, Conservation Commission, Constables, Director of Emergency Management, Director of Health, Economic Development Commission, Fire Marshal and Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Wardens, Historic District Commission, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, Municipal Agent for Elderly, Ordinances Committee, Public Safety Committee, Recreation Committee, Regional Planning Agency, Senior Citizen Board, Special Constables, Street Naming Committee, Tax Assessor, Town Counsel, Town Engineer, Town Sanitarian, Tree Warden, Water Commission.

ii. **Proposed Language**

Except as otherwise provided by the Connecticut General Statutes or this Charter, the Board of Selectmen shall appoint the following Town officers, boards, commissions, and agencies:

Animal Control Officer, Building Code Board of Appeals, Building Official, Burning Officials, Conservation Commission, Director of Emergency Management, Director of Health, Economic Development Commission, Fire Marshal and Deputy Fire Marshal, Historic District Commission, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, Municipal Agent for Elderly, Ordinances Committee, Public Safety Committee, Recreation Committee, Regional Planning Agency, Senior Citizen Board, Tax Assessor, Town Counsel, Town Engineer, Town Sanitarian, Tree Warden, Water Commission.

The Board of Selectmen may, by resolution, establish, consolidate, reorganize, or discontinue any board, commission, committee, or position that is not required by the Connecticut General Statutes, this Charter, or ordinance.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the Board of Selectmen to abolish or alter any office, board, commission, or agency required by the Connecticut General Statutes or this Charter.

iii. Discussed appointing authority and elected boards. Martin Anderson suggested language that allows the Board of Selectmen to make all appointments unless otherwise is established by charter or ordinance.

iv. **MOTION BY AL DIVINCENTIS, SECONDED BY MATT LAFAYETTE TO APPROVE LANGUAGE WHICH STATES THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN SHALL MAKE ALL APPOINTMENTS TO ALL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED BY THIS CHARTER, BY CONTROLLING GENERAL STATUTES, BY ORDINANCE, OR BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

g. **Section Fire Trustees**

- i. **MOTION BY MARTIN ANDERSON, SECONDED BY MATT LAFAYETTE TO AMEND LANGUAGE TO STATE “IN THE EVENT OF A VACANCY IN THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN SHALL CALL A SPECIAL TOWN MEETING TO ELECT A FIRE TRUSTEE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM.” ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

h. **Library Board of Directors/Trustees**

- i. **Agreed to change the Board of Library Directors to Board of Library Trustees**
- ii. **MOTION BY MARTIN ANDERSON, SECONDED BY AL DIVINCENTIS TO CHANGE TITLE TO “BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES” AMEND LANGUAGE TO STATE “IN THE EVENT OF A VACANCY IN THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN SHALL CALL A SPECIAL TOWN MEETING TO ELECT A LIBRARY TRUSTEE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM.” ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED**

i. **Timeline for Completion**

- i. Discussed public hearing timeline and special meeting dates

8. **Set Special Meeting Dates**

- a. Agreed to have a Saturday morning meeting at 8am on April 11th.

9. **Next Meeting- April 11, 2026**

10. **Adjourn**

MOTION BY AL DIVINCENTIS SECONDED BY SEVERAL TO ADJOURN. ALL AYE

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.,
Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Charest