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8:41 AM Jodi Moore, ATC

**Final Report Back to the Durham Board of Selectmen on their July 28, 2026
Proposed Amendments of the Draft Town Charter from the 2025/2026
Charter Revision Commission**

August 11, 2026

The Durham Charter Revision Commission convened the evening of August 5th, 2026, with all members present to review and act upon your recommendations dated July 28th, 2026, regarding proposed amendments to the Draft Town Charter. As requested, we have submitted this final response in less than the full 30 days. Our responses to your five recommendations are as follows:

1. Remove the Town Administrator position.

CRC response: The CRC voted unanimously to recommend retention of the proposed Town Administrator position and wished the electors of Durham the opportunity to vote on this.

The concept of having a Town Administrator in Durham predates the 2006 Charter. The use of town administrators is increasing in Connecticut. Two towns recently posted positions for the first time including Brooklyn, CT, that has about 8,400 residents. All this is to say that this is not a new idea here and elsewhere. It is becoming an old idea but one that remains in favor and practice. Regrettably, Durham has not really had the opportunity to have a community conversation about this idea. These are not the reasons for our continuing to stand by the proposal, however.

The Commissioners believe that the use of a Town Administrator would be of great service and benefit to the Board of Selectmen in carrying out their mission, policies, and initiatives for the Town and to let the Board focus on their important executive role with a strong resource to care for details and work more closely with and be accountable for solving problems that appear. The Town Administrator is not its own power center of any sort. The Town Administrator acts at the behest, direction, and control of the Durham First Selectman and Board of Selectmen. The Town Administrator would assume responsibilities that have been long-needed such as the administration of human resources as but one example. They would also be ideally positioned to assist incoming administrations in rapidly coming up to speed when new officials are elected and to strengthen and maintain the continuity of operations. Their efforts would be key in securing grants and other funding and looking for opportunities to save money and leverage partnerships. In summary, there could be measurable benefits in continuity between administrations, professional

management, grant acquisition, HR administration, project oversight, freeing elected officials to focus on policy, and accountability.

2. Remove the two additional Selectmen positions.

CRC response: The CRC voted unanimously to retain the proposal to add two Selectmen to the Board of Selectmen and wished the electors of Durham the opportunity to vote on this. The proposal to add two Selectmen is not in any way tied to the Town Administrator proposal and could be acted on separately.

In our deliberations, the main advantages were seen in preventing future long-term deadlocks, broadening citizen representation, providing additional officials to develop policy proposals, expanding the diversity of viewpoints and experience, increasing opportunities to form workgroups and subcommittees, and increasing the Board's capacity to assist Town agencies, boards, commissions and committees.

3. Review language in Section 8.2 Fire Protection Services. Work with Town Council and the Durham Volunteer Fire Company Inc., on an agreement that works for both parties.

CRC response: The CRC voted unanimously to approve new language to Section 8.2 of the draft Charter with the responsibilities and expectations of both parties taken into consideration:

The Town shall provide fire protection and emergency response services in accordance with the General Statutes. The Durham Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. is hereby designated as the Town's volunteer fire department and shall provide such services on behalf of the Town.

The Board of Selectmen is authorized to enter into agreements with the Durham Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. governing the provision of fire protection and emergency response services, including the custody, maintenance, and use of Town-owned real property, fire apparatus, equipment, and other assets.

Nothing herein shall be construed to diminish the Town's responsibility under the General Statutes to ensure that adequate fire protection services are available to its residents, nor to interfere with the Durham Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.'s operational authority and management of fire protection services, except as otherwise provided by law or by agreement between the Town and the Durham Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.

4. Review language to add a Definition Section

CRC response: We voted unanimously to approve a new section that is now located after the draft Charter Preamble that gives definition to key terms used in the Charter. We adjusted Charter language that may have been unclear without the definitions. That Definition Section is as follows:

When used in this Charter, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them, except when context clearly indicates otherwise:

- **Agency, Board, Commission, or Committee:** Any permanent, standing, or special board, commission, authority, committee, or agency of the Town enumerated in this Charter or created pursuant to ordinance or resolution enacted under the authority of this Charter or General Statutes.
- **Biennially:** Occurring every second year.
- **Charter:** The organic and foundational legal document governing the administration of local affairs for the Town, enacted and revised in accordance with Chapter 99 of the General Statutes.
- **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** The First Selectmen, who serves as the chief executive and administrative officer of the Town.
- **Days:** Calendar days, unless business days or working days are explicitly designated.
- **Department:** An administrative or operational division of the Town government.
- **Elector:** Any person possessing the qualifications prescribed by the Constitution of the State of Connecticut who is registered and entitled to exercise the privileges of an elector in the Town.
- **Fiscal Year:** The 12-month period commencing July 1 and ending June 30.
- **General Statutes:** The official General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, as revised and amended from time to time.
- **Holiday:** A Federal, State or local holiday.
- **Legislative Body:** The Town Meeting.
- **Minority Representation:** The statutory rule requiring that the maximum number of members of any municipal board, commission or committee from any single political party be limited as mandated by C.G.S. 9-167a.
- **Officer:** (i) an officer of the Town elected or appointed pursuant to the terms of the Charter, respectively, (ii) any Selectman and (iii) the Town Administrator, if applicable.
- **Official:** All Officers and all members of Boards, Commissions and Committees of the Town.
- **Ordinance:** A permanent local law, regulation, or municipal rule of general applicability enacted by the Legislative Body in accordance with this Charter and state law.
- **Person:** Any natural individual, corporation, partnership, limited liability company, firm, association, trust or other legally recognized entity.
- **Petition:** A formal written document requesting official municipal action or referendum, signed by a required number of Electors on forms prescribed by the Town in compliance with state law.

- **Political Party:** *An organized political group active within the Town that is properly registered with the Town Clerk or Secretary of the State.*
- **Public Hearing:** *A formal proceeding conducted by a Town board, council, committee, or commission after due public notice, during which residents, electors, and interested members of the public are provided an opportunity to offer comments and testimony.*
- **Qualified Taxpayer:** *A citizen of the United States of the age of eighteen years or more who is liable to the Town for taxes on property appearing on the Town's last-completed grand list, in an amount of not less than one thousand dollars.*
- **Referendum:** *The submission of a question or proposition to the qualified electors of the Town for approval or rejection, as required or authorized by this Charter or the General Statutes.*
- **Special Act:** *The legislation enacted by the State's General Assembly which applies to a specific situation or designated set of circumstances, rather than law having general application.*
- **State:** *The State of Connecticut.*
- **Town:** *The Town of Durham, Connecticut.*
- **Voter:** *A bona fide resident of the Town who is entitled to vote at Town Meetings.*

5. Review and revise Treasurer and Finance Director language for consistency

CRC Response: We voted unanimously to approve revised language in Section 5.5 for the Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall be the custodian of Town funds, shall disburse funds only upon lawful authorization, shall invest funds as authorized by law and by policies adopted by the Board of Finance, shall maintain custody of securities and investments, and shall perform such additional duties as prescribed by this Charter, ordinance, or the General Statutes. The Treasurer's term of office shall be as set forth in Section 2.1 of this Charter.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Francis, Co-Chair

Martin W. Anderson, Co-Chair

Al DiVincentis, Secretary

John Bugai, Commissioner

Christian Godbout, Commissioner

Matt Lafayette, Commissioner

Eileen Buckheit, Commissioner