



TOWN OF WINCHESTER, CONNECTICUT

2026 CHARTER REVISION

Resident Voter Education Handout

Purpose of this handout

This handout explains the proposed Charter revisions in plain language so residents can understand the changes before voting. It is intended for voter education and does not advocate for a YES or NO vote.

How to read this handout: For each proposal, “Current” describes the existing Charter and “Proposed” describes what would change if the amendment is approved.

1. Town Clerk: Elected to Appointed

CURRENT	PROPOSED
The Town Clerk is an elected position.	The Town Clerk would be appointed by the Town Manager under the merit system.

When would this take effect? Effective January 3, 2027, when the current Town Clerk’s elected term expires.

2. Registrar of Voters: Term Length

CURRENT	PROPOSED
Registrars of Voters serve two-year terms.	Registrar terms would be extended to four years.

When would this take effect? Effective January 3, 2029, when the current two-year terms expire.

3. Service on Major Town Boards

CURRENT	PROPOSED
The Charter does not contain this proposed limitation on simultaneous service across the listed boards.	An elector could serve at the same time on only one of these boards: Board of Selectmen; Board of Education; Zoning Board of Appeals; Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission; Board of Assessment Appeals; Water and Sewer Commission; or Planning and Zoning Commission.

4. Budget Adoption & Referendum Timeline

The proposal changes several deadlines and procedures in the annual budget process. The comparison below summarizes the current Charter and the proposed revisions.

STEP	CURRENT CHARTER	PROPOSED REVISION
Budget delivered to Board of Selectmen	March 15	March 22
Public hearings	Two public hearings, including one for the Board of Education	One joint public hearing; public comment at all Board of Selectmen meetings discussing the budget
Approved budget posted before Annual Town Budget Meeting	15 calendar days before the meeting	7 calendar days before the meeting
Annual Town Budget Meeting	Second Monday in May	First Monday in May
Referendum ballot method	Machine ballot	Machine ballot, or paper ballot if approved by the Board of Selectmen
Timing of first referendum	14 to 21 days after the Annual Town Budget Meeting	7 to 14 days after the first Annual Town Budget Meeting
If the budget fails at referendum	Annual Town Budget Meeting rescheduled 14 to 21 days after the referendum	Next referendum occurs on the second Saturday following the failed referendum. The Board of Selectmen schedules the Annual Town Budget Meeting for the second Monday after the failed referendum, when a revised budget is presented. If that Monday is Memorial Day, the meeting is Tuesday.

5. Uniform Definitions for Eligibility

The current Charter uses different definitions in different sections for people eligible to serve on Town boards. The amendment would use uniform definitions for “elector” and “property owner.”

Elector: A person eligible to vote in Winchester in Presidential elections.

Property Owner: This term would replace “taxpayer” in the affected Charter provisions.

Budget voting eligibility: The proposal states that people who are currently eligible to vote on Town budget and budget-related issues would remain eligible; there is no change in that regard.

Affected Charter sections: 206, 305, 306, 309, 315, 609, 912, 1101, 1102, 1107 and 1708.

BEFORE YOU VOTE

Residents are encouraged to review the official ballot language and the full Charter materials. This handout is a plain-language summary; the official ballot and Charter documents control if there is any difference in wording.

Town of Winchester | 338 Main Street, Winsted, CT 06098 | townofwinchester.org