

Town of Winchester Charter Revision Commission Report



Introduction and Summary of Proposed Changes

The Winchester Charter Revision Commission (“the Commission”) was impaneled by Resolution of the Winchester Board of Selectmen on February 17, 2026, and was charged with the responsibility of reviewing the Winchester Town Charter (“the Charter”) in accordance with Charter Section 1706. In addition, the Board of Selectmen requested that the Commission review the specific issues outlined in a memorandum dated February 17, 2026, attached hereto as Exhibit A, which contained the Board of Selectmen’s Charge to the Commission. As will be seen below, issues were raised beyond that charge and the Commission made recommendations and/or comments where they felt it was appropriate.

The Commission adopted the approach that any recommendations from the Commission to the Board of Selectmen would be made on the basis of a majority of Commissioners on a given issue. The Commission also feels strongly that each change suggested should be voted separately by the electors at Referendum. Based on comment and testimony received at Commission meetings, public hearings, and the deliberations of the Commission members, the Commission has drafted proposed revisions to the Town Charter.

The Commission recommends the following modifications to the Town Charter:

- **Town Clerk Transition:** Transition the Town Clerk role to a professionally appointed position.
- **Board & Commission Concurrent Service:** Establish limitations on serving concurrently on multiple major boards.
- **Registrars Election Cycle:** Extend the election cycle for Registrars to a **4-year term** (increased from the current 2-year term).
- **Budget Timeline Adjustments:** Implement structural changes to the town's budget timeline.
- **Eligibility for Boards & Commissions:** Consistent language for eligibility on Boards and Commissions regarding Elector & Property Owner

Public Hearings Held by the Commission

The Commission conducted public hearings on March 12, 2026, and June 2, 2026

Commission Meetings

The Commission held meetings on the following dates:

February 25, 2026; March 16, 2026; April 6 & 28, 2026; May 4, 12, 2026; June 2 & 8, 2026

BOS Next Steps: Phase 3: Reporting & BOS Review

- By June 15, 2026: Submission of Report
 - CRC submits the Draft Report to the Town Clerk, who transmits it to the BOS.
- July 6, 2026 (approx.): BOS Public Hearing
 - The BOS must hold its own public hearing on the draft within 45 days of submission.
- By July 21, 2026: BOS Recommendations
 - Within 15 days of their hearing, the BOS must either accept the report OR send it back to the CRC with recommended changes. All accepted changes will go to the Town Attorney for specific language and ballot questions.

Board of Selectmen (BOS) Proposed Charge

Section A: Town Clerk – Transition from Elected to Professionally Appointed Position

1. Proposed Charge & Legal Authority

To review and propose amendments, consistent with **Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) §§ 7-148(c)(2) and 7-193**, to convert the Town Clerk from an elected office to an appointed administrative position under the authority of the Town Manager.

2. Executive Summary

The current evidence of practice in the State of Connecticut strongly supports the transition of the Town Clerk from an elected position to a professionally appointed administrative role. This change ensures continuity, operational stability, and high professional standards.

3. Analysis of the Change

Statewide Trends

The transition from an elected to an appointed Town Clerk aligns with a growing statewide trend toward professional municipal management.

- **75 out of 169** Connecticut municipalities utilize an appointed model.
- **20 out of 27** Connecticut municipalities with a Town Manager form of government have already adopted this professional structure.
- **0% Reversion Rate:** Notably, no Connecticut town has ever reverted to an elected model after transitioning to an appointed one, with many maintaining this professional structure for over fifty years.

Core Functionality vs. Election Churn

Professional interviews with municipal leaders across the state consistently highlight that the Town Clerk's responsibilities are **95% technical and state-mandated**, encompassing land records, vital statistics, and complex election laws.

Because state certification is both a lengthy and costly investment, the risk of "churning" the position through biennial (two-year) election cycles is a significant concern for administrative stability. It typically takes a new clerk several years to master the requisite systems and legal nuances. Moving the position off the ballot ensures it is treated as a critical administrative office rather than a political prize.

4. Operational & Procedural Impact

Qualifications and Oversight

An appointive model empowers the Town Manager to mandate specific professional credentials, such as the **Certified Connecticut Municipal Clerk (CCMC)** designation. This ensures the office is led by a qualified professional based on merit rather than political affiliation.

Furthermore, by reporting directly to the Town Manager, the Town Clerk would be subject to the same personnel policies, performance evaluations, and accountability standards as other key department heads, such as the Finance Director and Tax Collector.

Continuity of Duties

Upon approval, the Town Clerk position would transition to a permanent member of the Town's professional staff.

- The fundamental duties and responsibilities of the office remain unchanged.
- The Clerk will continue to record minutes and attend select meetings—including evening sessions—as mandated by the Charter, Town Ordinances, or directives from the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen.

Expenditure Analysis: The appointed town clerk would be a professional position not subject to overtime pay. Salary and benefits would be the same as the currently elected clerk to start. The recommendation would be to include the position as a supervisor for future salary and benefits consistent with other supervisory and director-level personnel.

6. Implementation Strategy & Recommendations: Transition the current Town Clerk into the employment of the Town of Winchester on November 2, 2027. This position will report to the Town Manager from that date forward.

The "Incumbent" Clause

Often charter revisions include a "Grandfather Clause" stating that the change will not take effect until the current elected Town Clerk's term expires or the seat becomes vacant. This prevents the appearance of a political move against a specific individual and ensures a smooth, non-partisan transition.

This change in the Charter would officially become effective on **Election Day 2027**, provided this amendment is adopted by the electors at Referendum.

Current Charter Section	Proposed Charter Section	Current Applicable State Statute
Section 202 ELECTIVE OFFICERS B. Town Clerk. A Town Clerk for a term of two (2) years or such period as may be specified by the General Statutes.	Remove B.	Connecticut State Statute 9-185
Section 801 SALARIES Salaries of all Directors and other employees of the classified service of the Town shall be determined by	Remove The Town Clerk shall receive a salary in lieu of all fees, and such salary shall be determined by the Board of Selectmen.	

the Board of Selectmen, in conformity with a systematic pay plan for the positions involved, upon recommendation of the Town Manager, providing nothing herein shall be construed to limit the power of the Board of Education to fix the compensation of employees of the school system. The Town Clerk shall receive a salary in lieu of all fees, and such salary shall be determined by the Board of Selectmen.		
Section 309 MEETINGS G. Clerk	No change	
Article VII	Article VII Sec Add 711 Town Clerk Jurisdiction The Town Manager shall appoint and may remove, subject to such rules and regulations as may be adopted pursuant to the merit system provisions of Article XII of this Charter, and the State Statutes, a Town Clerk who shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by the State Statutes, the Board of Selectmen, or the Town Manager. Director, Powers and Duties. Town Clerk who shall be responsible for the efficiency, discipline, and good conduct of the Department and fulfil all duties of the Town Clerk in the Town Charter.	

Research Resources	State Statutes	Other Areas in the Charter Affected
Connecticut Towns	CGS §§ 7-148(c)(2) and 7-193	

NEW HARTFORD CT ORDINANCE CONCERNING APPOINTMENT OF A TOWN CLERK BE IT ORDAINED by the legal voters of the Town of New Hartford in meeting assembled: 1. 2. 3. 4. The term of office for the New Hartford Town Clerk, which began on the first Monday of January 2018 following the 2017 regular municipal election shall end upon the expiration of the elected term on January 2, 2022. Upon adoption of this ordinance, the position of Town Clerk will no longer be an “elected” position and as such will not appear on the ballot for the regular municipal elections on November 2, 2021. As of January 3, 2022, the position of Town Clerk will become “appointed” as provided for in this ordinance and authorized by Connecticut State Statute 9-185.

Board of Selectmen (BOS) Proposed Charge

Section B: Boards & Commissions – Limitation of Concurrent Service on Major Boards

1. Proposed Charge & Legal Authority

To review and propose amendments, consistent with municipal authority under **Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) §§ 7-148 and 7-193**, prohibiting individuals from serving simultaneously as voting members on more than one permanent commission, authority, or regulatory body.

- **Proposed Core Change:** To limit an individual's membership to only **one** major board or commission where a structural conflict of interest or "incompatible offices" may occur.
- **Definition of "Major Boards":** For the purposes of this restriction, Major Boards are strictly defined as:
 1. Board of Selectmen (BOS)
 2. Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)
 3. Board of Education (BOE)
 4. Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC)
 5. Board of Assessment Appeals (Tax Review)
 6. Water and Sewer Commission (W&S)
 7. Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z)

2. Executive Summary

To secure transparent, objective, and unimpeachable decisions by Winchester's regulatory bodies, prudence dictates that voting membership be limited to one major board or commission per individual. This policy establishes clear boundaries between independent town bodies and mitigates the risk of structural conflicts.

3. Analysis of the Change & Inter-Board Conflicts

While restricting concurrent service could initially constrict the volunteer pool, the overarching value of diversifying community participation and eliminating institutional cross-contamination outweighs this friction. When a single individual votes on multiple regulatory boards, significant structural conflicts can emerge during the land-use and development application process:

Some examples of possible conflicts between P&Z and Inland Wetlands, and P&Z, as found on the internet, would be the following: **Competing Objectives:** P&Z boards typically focus on community growth, economic development, and housing. A Wetlands board may deny a permit for a project that P&Z supports because it threatens a water resource. **Sequencing Conflicts:** By law, in many areas, the Wetlands board must render a decision **before** P&Z can act on certain applications. If the Wetlands board denies a permit, it can effectively block a development that P&Z deems beneficial for the town's tax base.

Upland Review Areas: Conflicts often arise when Wetlands boards exercise jurisdiction over "upland review areas" -non-wetland land near water - to regulate activities like building septic systems or driveways that might impact nearby water. **Opposing Permits:** A developer might need a variance from the ZBA and a permit from the Wetlands board. The ZBA might grant a variance for a structure to be built closer to a property line, but the Wetlands Board might simultaneously deny it because that specific location risks polluting a nearby stream.

Development Conflict/Density vs. Capacity: A Planning & Zoning Commission might approve a large

housing complex to increase the tax base, but the Sewer Board could deny the connection if the existing pipes or treatment plant cannot handle the additional waste.

4. Expenditure & Risk Analysis

- **Loss of Institutional Knowledge:** The primary "cost" of this amendment is the immediate loss of accumulated knowledge held by experienced, existing voting members (and active alternates) currently serving across two major bodies who would be forced to resign from one.
- **Recruitment & Monetary Risks:** If vacancies prove difficult to fill under these stricter guidelines, the town could face future pressure to offer stipends or increased administrative support to recruit qualifying members.

5. Procedural & Statutory Impact

Transition Period and Enforcement

Upon approval of the Charter revision, affected individuals must step down from all but one major board within **30 days**.

Enforcement Clause: If an affected member takes no action within the 30-day window, the Board of Selectmen shall determine, at their next regularly scheduled meeting, which single board seat the member will retain.

Minority Party Representation Risk

A critical procedural complication involves **Section 205 of the Town Charter** and **CGS § 9-167a (Minority Party Representation)**.

If a forced resignation occurs, the sudden departure of a member may inadvertently throw that board out of compliance with state-mandated political party maximums. The Board of Selectmen must be prepared to immediately appoint qualified replacements matching the required political party affiliation to maintain statutory balance.

Current Charter Sections

- Section 315, paragraph after subsection K which currently reads as follows:
The Board of Selectmen shall fill any vacancy in any such office for the unexpired portion of their term, except that the Town Manager shall fill vacancies on the Economic Development Commission. ~~Members of either the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Zoning Board of Appeals must also be an elector of the Town of Winchester. Other than members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Town Attorney, all appointments to offices and Commissions under this section shall be residents of the Town.~~

The Board of Selectmen shall fill any vacancy in any such office for the unexpired portion of their term, except that the Town Manager shall fill vacancies on the Economic

Development Commission.

Additional: A person may not serve on more than one of these boards at the same time: Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Education, Inland Wetlands & Watercourses, Tax Review (Board of Assessment Appeals), Water and Sewer Commission, Board of Selectmen.

Section 607 PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION (Major Board)

There shall be established a Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Winchester. The Commission shall consist of five (5) regular members and three (3) alternate members, who shall be electors of the Town of Winchester and who shall hold no salaried municipal office and who shall not be a member of the Town of Winchester Zoning Board of Appeals. Any member already serving on a major board or commission cannot serve concurrently.

Section 604

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (Major Board)

There shall be a Zoning Board of Appeals of the Town of Winchester, which shall consist of five (5) regular members and three (3) alternate members, also referred to as "the panel of alternates". All members of this board shall be electors of the Town of Winchester and shall not be members of the Planning and Zoning Commission and shall hold no salaried municipal office. Such Board shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen; terms of members shall be for five (5) years. Terms of office shall be staggered so that no more than one (1) regular term and one (1) alternate term shall expire in any one year. Members serving as of the effective date of this Charter shall continue to serve the remainder of their existing term. Any member already serving on a major board or commission cannot serve concurrently.

Section 601

BOARD OF TAX REVIEW (Major Board)

There shall be a Board of Tax Review which shall consist of three (3) members. The Board of Selectmen shall, each October, appoint one (1) member to the Board of Tax Review for a term of three (3) years. Said Board of Tax Review shall have the same powers and duties and shall, in equalizing and adjusting valuations assessment lists, proceed in all respects as though elected by ballot for and on behalf of the Town of Winchester. Any member of the Board of Tax Review may be removed from office by the Board of Selectmen for cause after hearing but, in case of such removal, the Selectmen shall cause to be recorded in the records of said Board a statement of the reasons therefore. Any member already serving on a major board or commission cannot serve concurrently.

Section 605. WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION (Major Board)

Membership. The commission shall consist of five (5) electors of the Town of Winchester who shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen and serve without compensation. The Term of each member shall be five (5) years. Members shall be appointed so that one (1) term expires at the end of each year. Whenever a vacancy occurs, the Selectmen shall appoint a successor to hold office for the unexpired portion of the term. Any member already serving on a major board or commission cannot serve concurrently. A Commissioner shall continue in office until his successor is appointed.

Section 609. INLAND WETLANDS AND WATER COURSES AGENCY (Major Board)

There shall be an Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Agency composed of nine (9) members who shall be drawn from electors at large, and who shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Any member already serving on a major board or commission cannot serve concurrently. Terms of office shall be of three (3) years and members shall expire at the end of each year.

Section 202

ELECTIVE OFFICERS (Major Board)

Board of Education. There shall be a Board of Education consisting of nine (9) members to be elected as follows:

- i. At the biennial election to be held in 1987, there shall be elected four (4) members for a term of four (4) years.
- ii. At the biennial election to be held in 1989, there shall be elected five (5) members, each for a term of four (4) years.
- iii. Thereafter, there shall be elected for terms of four (4) years at each biennial election that number of members necessary to replace the members whose terms expire, each for the term of four (4) years from the date of election.

Any elected Board of Education member cannot serve concurrently on an additional major board or commission.

Current Charter Section	Proposed Charter Section	Current Applicable State Statute
		Connecticut General Statutes (CGS § 9-210) and common

		law declare certain offices "incompatible" because they cannot be held by the same person at the same time: [1 , 2]
Section 315 APPOINTMENTS BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN		
605	605B	7-188 through 7-191 9-167A of the General Statutes
609	609B	22A-42 9-167A of the General Statutes

Research Resources	
The current Town Charter	
Google AI on the internet used to identify examples of possible conflicts when dealing with specific major boards.	
Online source was Law.com +1	

Proposed Change Requested by Registrars

Section C: Registrars of Voters – Election Cycle Expansion to 4 Years

1. Proposed Change

To amend the Town Charter to transition the election cycle and term of office for the Registrars of Voters from a **2-year term** to a **4-year term**. Proposed by the Current Registrars at Public Comment May 4, 2026

2. Executive Summary

This amendment seeks to extend the term of office for Winchester's Registrars of Voters to four years. This change directly addresses the significant time, rigor, and financial investment required to achieve and maintain state-mandated professional certifications. Extending the term ensures administrative stability, protects the town's financial investment in training, and aligns Winchester with prevailing regional standards.

3. Analysis of the Change & Comparative Data

Statewide Context

Across Connecticut's 169 municipalities, municipal charters are nearly evenly split on this administrative structure:

- **88 towns** utilize a 4-year term.
- **81 towns** maintain a 2-year term.

Litchfield County Benchmarks

While the state is evenly divided, local regional practice in Litchfield County leans overwhelmingly toward longer tenures to ensure election security and continuity.

- **19 out of 26** Litchfield County towns have already adopted 4-year terms.
- **1 of only 7:** Winchester remains one of only seven municipalities in the county—alongside neighboring Colebrook and Torrington—that still operates on an outdated 2-year cycle.
- *Note on Torrington:* While Torrington remains on a 2-year cycle, its operational model is unique; their office is managed by a full-time, non-elected staff member rather than a standard Registrar or Deputy, making Winchester's 2-year elected model an outlier in regional administrative structure.

4. Operational & Financial Rationale

The Impact of State-Mandated Certification

Under Connecticut law, Registrars must complete a complex, multi-course professional certification program. This process requires a substantial investment of both municipal funds (for tuition and travel) and the Registrar's personal time.

Registrar Certification and Training Requirements

- **Legislative Mandate:** Following the 2014 elections, Connecticut passed a 2015 law requiring all Registrars to become state-certified.
- **Certification Process:** Registrars have two years to complete coursework and pass an exam administered by the UConn School of Business.
- **Core Curriculum:** Training ensures statewide consistency in election law, voter registry management, and audit procedures.
- **Town Investment:** Winchester funds the \$1,600-per-Registrar certification fee, plus mileage and associated time.
- **Continuing Education:** Post-certification, Registrars must complete eight hours of annual training. This is supplemented by monthly state Zoom meetings, five county-level meetings, and two multi-day conferences annually, for which the Town provides budgetary support.

Operating on a brief 2-year cycle introduces a significant risk of administrative "churn." If a newly elected Registrar completes their costly certification only to exit office at the next biennial election, the town loses its financial investment and institutional knowledge, forcing the cycle to repeat.

Moving to a **4-year term** guarantees that the town benefits from trained, certified professionals over multiple presidential and gubernatorial election cycles, vastly improving local election administration and fiscal efficiency.

Procedural Impact:

The four-year term would start with the Registrar's election cycle in 2028, with the start of the position in January of 2029. All other procedures would remain the same.

Current Charter Section	Proposed Charter Section	Current Applicable State Statute
Article II Elections (on Page 5) Section 202 Elective Officers	“At each state election, there shall be elected two (2) four (4) Registrars of Voters.	
Section 203 Terms of Elected Officers (on Page 6)	“The terms of elected office shall be from the date elected until the successor shall be elected and qualified, except that the Town Clerk shall hold office for two (2) four (4) years from the first Monday of January succeeding the election until his successor shall be elected and qualified, and the Registrars of Voters shall hold office for the term of two (2) four (4) from the Wednesday following the first Monday of the January next succeeding their election until the Wednesday following the first Monday of the third January succeeding their election.”	

Board of Selectmen (BOS) Proposed Charge

Section D: Budget Modernization – Streamlining the Annual Budget Timeline and Process

1. Proposed Charge & Legal Authority

To review and propose amendments modernizing and streamlining the Town’s annual budget process pursuant to **Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) §§ 7-148 and 7-344**. Specifically, this amendment seeks to:

- Consolidate the public feedback phase into **one comprehensive public hearing** prior to the Annual Town Budget Meeting.
- Advance and accelerate the overall calendar timeline for budget meetings and the subsequent public referendum.

2. Executive Summary

The primary purpose of altering the budget calendar is to accelerate and streamline municipal decision-making. By compressing the timeline, the town secures a critical operational buffer. This drastically reduces the likelihood of entering a new fiscal year on July 1st without an approved budget—an occurrence that imposes significant administrative gridlock and financial instability on municipal operations.

3. Analysis of the Change & Procedural Impacts

Accelerating the budget process adjusts the operational windows for multiple stakeholders, trading a tighter municipal review window for greater overall town protection:

- **Board of Education (BOE) Benefit:** This shift structurally provides the BOE with an additional week to review, adjust, and finalize their education budget request before presenting it to the town.
- **Taxpayer Engagement:** Consolidating into a single, high-profile public hearing simplifies the process for citizens, creating a clear, well-publicized forum that encourages robust taxpayer commentary.
- **Board of Selectmen (BOS) Window:** This compression creates a shorter, more intensive decision-making window for the BOS to review and pass the final budget configuration down to town meeting.
- **Referendum Failure Mitigation:** Moving the entire schedule forward creates a vital "turnaround buffer." If voters reject the first budget at referendum, town leaders have ample time to recalibrate, hold required hearings, and stage a secondary vote *before* the July 1st statutory deadline.

4. Expenditure & Fiscal Protection Analysis

While standard administrative and legal publishing costs remain stable, the true value of this amendment lies in smooth functioning of the town's fiscal abilities. Entering a fiscal year without an approved budget causes immense financial disruption. It stalls capital projects, creates short-term borrowing needs, and forces inefficient interim spending plans. This timeline actively prevents that fiscal exposure.

Effective Date Clause

To ensure a smooth structural transition and allow municipal staff to adjust reporting calendars, these updated budget timeline procedures will officially commence with the **first full budget preparation cycle following the final passage** of this Charter amendment.

SUMMARY

Current	Proposed
Due to BOS March 15	March 22
2 Public hearings with one for the BOE	1 joint Public Hearing Public Comment at all BOS meetings discussing the budget
BOS approved budget posted 15 calendar days	BOS approved budget posted 7 calendar days
Annual Town Meeting 2nd Monday in May	Annual Town Meeting 1st Monday in May
Machine ballot for the referendum	Machine ballot or paper ballot if approved by the BOS
referendum to be held on a date not less than fourteen (14) days and not more than twenty-one (21) days following the Annual Town Budget Meeting.	referendum to be held on a date not less than 7 days and not more than 14 days following the first Annual Town Budget Meeting.
If the budget is not adopted at the referendum, the Annual Town Budget Meeting shall be rescheduled no less than fourteen (14) days nor more than twenty-one (21) days from the date of the referendum.	If the budget is not adopted at the referendum, the next referendum shall occur within 14 days of the failed referendum. The Board of Selectmen should meet within 3-5 days to present a new budget. The Board of Selectmen will schedule the Annual Town Budget Meeting on the second Monday* after the failed referendum with the referendum on the Saturday 14 days after the first referendum *or Tuesday if Monday is Memorial Day

Section 1101 POWER TO ADOPT BUDGET

Electors of the Town, acting at the Annual Town Budget Meeting and referendum, shall have the sole power to amend and adopt the annual budget of the Town of Winchester as set forth in this Article.

Section 1102 ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

A. The Annual Town Budget Meeting shall be held on the ~~second~~ **first** Monday in May at 7 p.m., which shall be adjourned from time to time until the annual budget is adopted.

B. Prior to adjournment to budget referendum, the electors at the Annual Town Budget Meeting shall review the budget as presented by the Board of Selectmen and the electors shall have the power to amend, but not increase, any line item of the budget. Voting on line items shall be by machine or confidential ballot.

C. The Annual Town Budget Meeting shall be adjourned to an 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. referendum **on the second Saturday after the Annual Town Meeting** ~~to be held on a date not less than fourteen (14) days and not more than twenty-one (21) days following the Annual Town Budget Meeting.~~

Section 1103 GENERAL FORM OF BUDGET PRESENTATION

The Manager shall require each department, office or agency of the Town supported wholly or in part by Town funds, or for which a specific Town appropriation is made, to set forth, in narrative or such other form as the Manager may prescribe, a program or programs showing services, activities and work accomplished during the current fiscal year. Said program shall also show the number of positions for each job classification authorized and positions actually filled during the current fiscal year and to be authorized and filled during the new fiscal year.

Section 1104 DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Chairman of the Board of Education shall have the same duties and follow the same form and procedure with respect to the budget of the Board of Education as provided in this Charter for departmental estimates. The Chairman of the Board of Education shall also set forth the pupil enrollment at each school during the current fiscal year and the projected pupil enrollment during the new fiscal year, and he shall itemize his revised estimates of expenditures for the current fiscal year and his proposed expenditures for the new fiscal year for each individual school. Those expenditures which cannot be so allocated shall be set forth separately by category.

Section 1105 DEPARTMENTAL ESTIMATES

The Manager shall compile preliminary estimates for the annual budget. The head of each department, office or agency of the Town, except for the Chairman of the Board of Education shall, on or before the first day of March each year, file with the Manager on forms prescribed and provided by him a detailed estimate of the expenditures to be made by his Department or Agency and the revenue, other than tax revenues, to be collected thereby in the current fiscal year, and such other

information as may be required by the Board or the Manager. The Chairman of the Board of Education shall, on or before the ~~fifteenth~~ **twenty-second** day of March each year, submit its departmental estimate in the manner set forth in this section.

Section 1106 DUTIES OF THE MANAGER ON THE BUDGET

Not later than the ~~fifteenth~~ **twenty-second** day of March each year, the Manager shall present to the Board of Selectmen a budget consisting of:

A. A budget message outlining the financial policy of the town and describing in connection therewith, the important features of the budget plan;

B. Estimates of revenue, presenting in parallel columns, the itemized receipts collected in the last completed fiscal year, as revealed by the annual audit, and budget estimates of receipts for the current year as budgeted, and proposed estimates of receipts;

C. Itemized estimates of expenditures, presenting in parallel columns, the actual expenditures for each department, office, agency, or activity, including the Board of Education, for the last completed fiscal year, as shown by the annual report, the adopted budget figures for the current fiscal year, the Manager's revised estimates for the current fiscal year, and the Manager's recommendations of the amount to be appropriated for the new fiscal year, for all items, and such other information as may be required by the Board of Selectmen. The estimates, as presented to the Board of Selectmen, shall be supported by such information relative to programs as described in Sections 1104 and 1105 of this Article. The Manager shall present reasons for all his recommendations, and in particular shall explain all significant changes from the revised estimate for the current year to his new year recommendations.

D. As part of the annual budget, or as a separate report attached thereto, the manager shall present a program, previously considered and acted upon by the Town Planning Commission, in accordance with Section 8-24 of the General Statutes, as amended, concerning municipal improvements, of proposed capital projects for the current fiscal year and for the four (4) fiscal years thereafter. Estimates of the cost of such projects shall be submitted by each department, office, or agency annually, in the form and manner prescribed by the Manager. The Manager shall recommend to the Board of Selectmen those projects to be undertaken during the current fiscal year, and the method of financing the same.

Section 1107 DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Board of Selectmen shall hold ~~two (2)~~ **one (1) or more public hearings, jointly with the Board of Education**. **All Special meetings of the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen that include review of the budget shall have at least one Public Comment session.** ~~including at least one (1) such hearing devoted exclusively to the budget of the Board of Education, which may, at the option of the Board of Education, be held jointly with the Board of Education within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the~~

~~Manager's proposed budget~~ at which any elector or taxpayer may have an opportunity to be heard regarding appropriations. Following the holding of such public hearings, the Board of Selectmen shall recommend a budget to the Annual Town Budget Meeting of the Town. Sufficient copies of said annual budget shall be made available for general distribution in the office of the Town Clerk and the Manager at least **7 (seven)** ~~fifteen (15)~~ days prior to said **first** Annual Town Budget Meeting, and the Board of Selectmen shall cause to be published on the Town's website, a summary of the budget showing revenues by major sources and proposed expenditures by function or department, in the same columnar form as prescribed for budget estimates in Section 1106 of this Article, at least seven (7) days prior to said Annual Town Budget Meeting; and shall also show the amount to be raised by taxation. The Town Clerk will also have the Summary available for public inspection.

Section 1108 ADOPTION OF BUDGET

A. The budget shall become effective when approved at the referendum by machine vote, **unless the Board of Selectmen vote to approve a paper ballot**, following the Annual Town Budget Meeting as provided in Section 1102, and an official copy shall be filed with the Town Clerk.

~~If the budget is not adopted at the referendum, the Annual Town Budget Meeting shall be rescheduled no less than fourteen (14) days nor more than twenty-one (21) days from the date of the referendum. At the resumption of the meeting, the Board of Selectmen shall submit an annual budget as set forth in this Article. This process shall be repeated until a budget is adopted.~~

If the budget is not adopted at the referendum, the next referendum shall be held the second Saturday after the failed referendum. The BOS shall meet within 3 days of the failed referendum to determine a new proposed budget. At that meeting the BOS shall schedule a Town Meeting on the Monday after the failed referendum.(if the Town Meeting falls on Memorial Day the annual town meeting automatically moves to Tuesday after Memorial Day) A summary of the revised budget shall be published electronically on the town's website and sufficient physical copies of the revised annual budget made available for general distribution at the offices of the Town Clerk and Town Manager within 24 hours of approval by the BOS. This process shall be repeated until a budget is adopted.

Example:

Monday May 3, 2027 - First Town Meeting

Saturday May 15, 2027 – First Referendum

If referendum vote fails:

Wednesday May 19th, 2027 – BOS meeting to revise budget (3 days from failed referendum)

Thursday May 20, 2027 – revised budget published (24 hours from BOS approval)

Monday, May 24, 2027 – Continued Town Meeting

Saturday May 29, 2027 – Second Referendum

Memorial Day - if the Town Meeting falls on Memorial Day the annual town meeting automatically moves to Tuesday after Memorial Day

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION - Proposed Referendum Timelines

Year	Monday Memorial Day	Monday Town Meeting	Saturday Referendum	If First Budget Vote Fails	
				Monday Town Meeting	Saturday Referendum
2027	May 31	May 3	May 15	May 24	May 29
2028	May 29	May 1	May 13	May 22	May 26
2029	May 28	May 7	May 19	May 28	
2030	May 27	May 6	May 18	May 27	
2031	May 26	May 5	May 17	May 26	
2032	May 31	May 3	May 15	May 24	May 29
2033	May 30	May 2	May 14	May 23	May 28
2034	May 29	May 1	May 13	May 22	May 27
2035	May 28	May 7	May 19	May 28	
2036	May 26	May 5	May 17	May 26	
2037	May 25	May 4	May 16	May 25	
2038	May 31	May 3	May 15	May 24	May 29

Highlights a conflict in the event of a 2nd Referendum. Monday the 9th day after 2nd falls on a Memorial Day

REFERENDUM TIMELINES

Year	Monday Memorial Day	Monday Town Meeting	Saturday Referendum	Monday Town Meeting	Saturday Referendum
2027	May 31	May 3	May 15	May 24	May 29
2028	May 29	May 1	May 13	May 22	May 26
2029	May 28	May 7	May 19	May 28 (Memorial Day)	
2030	May 27	May 6	May 18	May 27 (Memorial Day)	
2031	May 26	May 5	May 17	May 26 (Memorial Day)	
2032	May 31	May 3	May 15	May 24	May 29
2033	May 30	May 2	May 14	May 23	May 28
2034	May 29	May 1	May 13	May 22	May 27
2035	May 28	May 7	May 19	May 28 (Memorial Day)	
2036	May 26	May 5	May 17	May 26 (Memorial Day)	
2037	May 25	May 4	May 16	May 25 (Memorial Day)	
2038	May 31	May 3	May 15	May 24	May 29

B. At any Annual Town Budget Meeting, the Board of Selectmen shall present an estimate of the tax rate in mills that shall be levied on the taxable property in the town for the new fiscal year.

C. In the event that the Annual Town Budget Meeting fails to adopt a budget, the town shall operate on a budget equal to that of the preceding fiscal year, until such time as the Annual Town Meeting at referendum shall approve a budget.

Notes

Research Resources:

- CGS
 - Meeting with Town Manager, Town Clerk, and Registrars
 - Looked at other towns – Granby, Simsbury, South Windsor
-

Proposed Change Requested by Charter Revision Commission

Section E: Eligibility for Boards & Commissions

1. Proposed Change

Improving and clarifying language on the eligibility for boards and commissions.
and the word elector & property owner

2. Executive Summary

The eligibility language for members of boards and commissions has caused confusion for many years. The charter itself has eligibility requirements in different sections and can be different for different commissions. Some commissions are clear and others not. Over time CRCs have looked at this issue. The most recent was in 2022 resulting in no changes. The BOS has approved new eligibility for some newly formed commissions such as the historic commission. The town attorney had recommended in 2022 substitute language.

3. Analysis of the Change & Comparative Data

Attorney Nelligan Recommendation 2022

Dear members: I would recommend the following changes to the charter :

1. A new section added to Article 17

Unless otherwise provided herein, only electors, as that term is defined in section 1708, shall be eligible to hold elective office or to serve on any board, commission, agency or committee of the Town.

2. Section 1708 should be changed to reflect the new section

DEFINITION OF ELECTOR AND PROPERTY OWNER:

The term "Elector" means any person who meets the qualifications to be admitted as an elector pursuant to C.G.S. 9-12 , as it may be amended. The term "Property Owner" means any person of the age of 18 or older who, jointly or severally, is liable to the Town for taxes assessed against him on an assessment of not less than one thousand dollars on the last completed grand List, or who would be so liable if not entitled to a statutory exemption.

3. We would then eliminate all references to membership eligibility in all the various sections.. We would also need to insert "Property Owner in those sections where they are eligible- such as the budget voting sections.

These changes would effect the following unless specified.

Current Commissions

Ad Hoc Water Level Committee
Ambulance Board
Board of Assessment Appeals *
Board of Education *
Board of Selectmen *
Charter Revision Commission *
Conservation Commission
Economic Development Commission *
Ethics Commission *
Friends of Main Street Winsted-Winchester Inc.
Historic Commission
Housing Authority *
Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission *
Northwest Regional Mental Health Board
Northwest Transit District
Older Adult Commission
Planning and Zoning Commission *
Recreation Board *
Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Committee
Soldiers' Monument Commission
Sue Grossman Still River Greenway Ad Hoc Committee
Torrington Area Health District
Water Sewer Commission *
Zoning Board of Appeals *
Cultural Commission

- **Required by Charter**

4. Operational & Financial Rationale

There would be no financial impact.

The BOS and Town Manager would have clear language when appointing Board and Commission members

Procedural Impact: Reviewed with Attorney Nelligan June 8, 2026

Section 1708 of the Charter Definitions of Voters and Electors: The term “Elector” means any person who meets the qualifications to be admitted as an elector pursuant to C.G.S. 9-12 , as it may be amended. The term “Property Owner” means any US Citizen person of the age of 18 or older who, jointly or severally, is liable to the Town for taxes assessed against him on an assessment of not less than one thousand dollars on the last completed grand List, or who would be so liable if not entitled to a statutory exemption.
Article VI of the Charter to begin with the following language: Unless otherwise provided herein, only electors, as that term is defined in section 1708, shall be eligible to hold elective office or to serve on any board, commission, agency or committee of the Town.
Alter the wording of Section 1101 to read as follows: Electors of the Town and property owners as defined in Section 1708 of this charter, acting at the Annual Town Budget Meeting and referendum, shall have the sole power to amend and adopt the annual budget of the Town of Winchester as set forth in this Article.
Alter the wording of Section 1102 (B) to read as follows: Prior to adjournment to budget referendum, the electors and property owners as defined in Section 1708 of this charter at the Annual Town Budget Meeting shall review the budget as presented by the Board of Selectmen and the electors shall have the power to amend, but not increase, any line item of the budget. Voting on line items shall be by machine or confidential ballot
Section 315, paragraph after subsection K which currently reads as follows: The Board of Selectmen shall fill any vacancy in any such office for the unexpired portion of their term, except that the Town Manager shall fill vacancies on the Economic Development Commission. Members of either the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Zoning Board of Appeals must also be an elector of the Town of Winchester. Other than members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Town Attorney, all appointments to offices and Commissions under this section shall be residents of the Town. The Board of Selectmen shall fill any vacancy in any such office for the unexpired portion of their term, except that the Town Manager shall fill vacancies on the Economic Development Commission.
add the following language to Section 302(D) to read as follows: Regulation of Boards. The Board of Selectmen may regulate the membership, composition and internal operation of boards, commissions

and officers which it fills by appointment **if not inconsistent with specific requirements in this Charter**, the Registrars of Voters, the Town Clerk, and the offices and employees appointed by it.

Report on Items Suggested but Not Moved Forward

Four-Year Terms for the Board of Selectmen To review and propose amendments extending the term of office for members of the Board of Selectmen from two (2) years to four (4) years, as authorized under CGS § 7-193(a)(2),	CRC did not move forward
--	--------------------------

The Commission reviewed various suggestions submitted by the Board of Selectmen, town departments, and the general public. After thorough deliberation, these proposals were not advanced—either due to a lack of consensus within the Commission or because they were deemed non-viable following a legal review by the Town Attorney.

- IWWC membership from 9 to 7 - this was sent back to the commission for discussion
- Removal of Stipends for BOS - time
- Moving Gilbert line item to the Town side of the budget: This was ruled not consistent with law
- Fire Department Consolidation - requested the Fire Department create a proposal among all departments complete with leadership tiers, equipment study, financial impacts, etc.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATION

The Charter Revision Commission recognizes the inherent challenges of incremental updates. We strongly recommend that the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager engage a professional firm, such as General Code, to restructure the Charter into a more logical and accessible document. Following this reorganization, the substance of individual sections can be updated more effectively. After the reorganization of the Charter, another Charter Revision Commission should be established to review necessary updates from the Town Attorney and others.

F. Proposed Revised Town Charter

Based on the testimony received at its public hearings and meetings, the comments of its invited guests, the documents it reviewed and its deliberations, the Winchester Charter Revision Commission recommends the attached proposed revisions to the Winchester Town Charter.

G. Acknowledgements

The Commission would like to thank the members of the public who attended and testified at Commission meetings, the invited guests that appeared before the Commission, and Town Staff who participated in the Commission's deliberations and in the generation of the Final Report and the proposed revisions to the Winchester Town Charter.

Respectfully submitted by the Winchester Charter Revision Commission this 15th day of June, 2026.

**MEMBERS OF THE 2026
WINCHESTER CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

A. Candy Perez, Chair
Holly Cassaday Secretary
Sondra Strubhar
William Hudock
Mark Lampognana
Luiza Martinez
Paul Marino BOS
Cheryl Heffernan McGlynn BOS

Submitted by,

A.Candy Perez - Chairman

and

Holly Cassaday - Secretary

Received by the Winchester Town Clerk on June ____, 2026.

Glenn Albanesius, Town Clerk

Transmitted to the Board of Selectmen on June 15, 2026.

Timeline

Winchester Charter Revision 2026

Phase 1: Initiation & Appointment

- February 25, 2026: CRC First Meeting
 - Call to Order
 - 2. Overview of Commission Charge and Responsibilities-Presented by Mayor Arcelaschi
 - Topics Town Clerk
 - Four Year BOS Term
 - Annual Budget Timeline
 - Boards & Commissions Serving on Multiple “Major” Boards
 - 3. Election of Chair and Other Officers-As deemed appropriate by the Commission
 - 4. Set Meeting Calendar: Look at Timeline
 - 5. Open Discussion: Which charge interested in for research; tasks such as getting meeting room, delivering minutes to clerk, coordinating website updates; public hearings review, Town Manager, Boards, Dept Head input if needed;
 - 6. Public Comment
 - 7. Adjournment

Phase 2: The Working Window (14 Weeks)

- February 25 – June 15, 2026: Discovery & Drafting
 - CRC reviews BOS charges, considers public input, and researches best practices. Checks state statutes for overlap restrictions, etc
 - CRC consults with the Town Attorney for statutory consistency.
- Public Hearing #1 (Statutory): Recommended March 12, 2026
 - Must be held *before* substantive work begins to gather early public sentiment.
- Public Hearing #2 (Statutory): Recommended May 20, 2026
 - Held after the CRC has a draft but *before* submitting it to the Town Clerk.

Phase 3: Reporting & BOS Review

- By June 15, 2026: Submission of Report
 - CRC submits the Draft Report to the Town Clerk, who transmits it to the BOS.
- July 6, 2026 (approx.): BOS Public Hearing
 - The BOS must hold its own public hearing on the draft within 45 days of submission.
- By July 21, 2026: BOS Recommendations
 - Within 15 days of their hearing, the BOS must either accept the report OR send it back to the CRC with recommended changes.

Phase 4: Finalization & Ballot Prep

- July 21 – August 10, 2026: Final CRC Adjustments
 - If the BOS requested changes, the CRC has 30 days to confer, make final edits, and resubmit a Final Report.
- August 17, 2026: Final BOS Approval
 - BOS must vote to approve or reject the final report within 15 days of receipt.
 - BOS determines the final ballot questions.
- Late August 2026: Legal Publication
 - Approved changes must be published in full (or as a summary with notice) in the local newspaper (e.g., *Republican-American*) within 30 days of approval.
 - BOS makes sure document is posted on the town website
- September 2026: Ballot Certification
 - Final questions submitted to the Town Clerk for inclusion on the November ballot.

Phase 5: The Vote

- November 3, 2026: General Election
 - Voters approve or reject the proposed Charter changes.

Appendix

Board of Selectmen - Resolution & Charges: Regular Meeting
Tuesday February 17, 2026
Winchester Town Hall - Hicks Room
Noticed in Town Clerks Office and on Town's Website

Board of Selectmen Formation and Charge to CRC

Item 10 Unfinished Business -

A) Form Charter Revision Commission

The following Motion Statement was read.

"I move that, pursuant to Section 7-188 of the Connecticut General Statutes and the Winchester Town Charter, the Board of Selectmen hereby establishes a Charter Revision Commission for the purpose of reviewing and proposing amendments to the Winchester Town Charter.

1. Charge to the Commission

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §§ 7-188 through 7-191, the Charter Revision Commission is charged with examining, studying, and making recommendations regarding the following proposed areas of revision.

A. Town Clerk – Transition from Elected to Appointed Position

To review and propose amendments, consistent with CGS §§ 7-148(c)(2) and 7-193, to convert the Town Clerk from an elected office to an appointed administrative position under the authority of the Town Manager, subject to confirmation by the Board of Selectmen, including:

- *Repeal of election language
- *Establishment of appointment and qualification standards
- *Definition of reporting structure and employment conditions
- *Appropriate transitional provisions

B. Four-Year Terms for the Board of Selectmen

To review and propose amendments extending the term of office for members of the Board of Selectmen from two (2) years to four (4) years, as authorized under CGS § 7-193(a)(2), including:

- *Implementation timing
- *Possible staggered terms to ensure continuity of governance
- *Transitional language necessary for orderly implementation

C. Limitation on Concurrent Service on Multiple Boards

To review and propose amendments, consistent with municipal authority under CGS §§ 7-148 and 7-193, prohibiting individuals from serving simultaneously as voting members on more than one permanent commission, authority, or regulatory body, including:

- *Appropriate exemptions
- *Definitions of permanent versus advisory bodies
- *Transitional provisions for current members

D. Budget Adoption Process Reform

To review and propose amendments modernizing and streamlining the Town's budget process pursuant to CGS §§ 7-148 and 7-344, including:

- *Earlier submission deadlines for the proposed annual budget
- *Earlier scheduling of public hearings and referenda
- *Authorization of expedited subsequent referenda if a budget fails
- *Optional interim funding provisions in the absence of an approved budget, consistent with applicable law. The Commission may also recommend technical, conforming, or clarifying

amendments necessary to ensure statutory compliance, internal consistency, and effective implementation of the above revisions, as permitted under CGS § 7-188(b).2. Composition
The Charter Revision Commission shall consist of seven (7) members appointed in accordance with CGS § 7-188(a) as follows:

Five (5) electors/residents of the Town of Winchester:

- 1) Holly Cassaday
- 2) Mark Lampognana
- 3) Luiza Martinez
- 4) Candy Perez
- 5) Sondra Strubher

Two (2) members of the Board of Selectmen to serve as facilitators:

- 1) Sel. Kevin Bishop (replaced by Cheryl Heffernan McGlynn) (Unanimous Board vote)
- 2) Sel. Paul Marino

The Board of Selectmen facilitators shall participate in discussions and serve as communication conduits between the Commission and the Board but shall not vote unless otherwise required by law.

3. Timeline and Deadlines

The Charter Revision Commission shall proceed in accordance with the procedural requirements and statutory timelines set forth in CGS §§ 7-188 through 7-191, including:

1) The Mayor shall call the first meeting of the Commission, at which time the formal charge shall be delivered.

2) The Commission shall hold its first meeting on or about February 25, 2026, for the purpose of electing a Chair and establishing a regular meeting schedule.

3) The Commission shall conduct two (2) public hearings as required by CGS § 7-191(a):

* One public hearing prior to substantive drafting work; and

* One public hearing following preparation of a draft report but prior to submission to the Town Clerk.

4) The Commission shall submit its Final Report to the Town Clerk no later than June 15, 2026, for transmittal to the Board of Selectmen pursuant to CGS § 7-191(b).

Upon receipt of the Final Report, the Board of Selectmen shall:

* Hold a public hearing as required by CGS § 7-191(b);

* Act within the timeframes prescribed by CGS § 7-191(c); and

* Submit any approved charter revisions to the electors in accordance with CGS § 7-191(d).

4. Election Intent

It is the intent of the Board of Selectmen that any proposed Charter revisions be submitted to the electors at the November 3, 2026 General Election, pursuant to CGS § 7-191(d)(1), in order to avoid the voter participation threshold applicable to special elections under CGS § 7-191(d)(2)."

Motion - Sel. Marino / Second - Sel. Pozzo

During ensuing discussion Sel. Heffernan McGlynn requested 3 amendments to the initial motion offered by Sel. Marino

First Motion to Amend - Correcting the initial reading of "Committee" to "Commission" and

formal recognition of the State Statute "Section symbols" Motion - Sel. Heffernan McGlynn / Second Mayor Arcelaschi

Vote to approve - Unanimous (6 - 0)

Second Motion to Amend - Replacing Sel. Bishop with Sel. Heffernan McGlynn as Commission Facilitator

Motion - Sel. Heffernan McGlynn / Second Mayor Arcelaschi

Vote to approve - Unanimous (6 - 0)

Third Motion to Amend - Replacing Holly Cassaday with William Hudock as a seated member on

the Commission

Motion - Sel. Heffernan McGlynn with NO SECOND VOICED

Mayor Arcelaschi requested a 5-minute caucus at 8:03 pm

Motion - Sel. Marino / Second - Sel. Marino

Vote to approve - Yes (5) / No (1) Sel. Heffernan McGlynn

Caucusing Selectmen returned at 8:08 pm

Vote to approve initial motion with 2 approved amendments - Yes (5) / No (1) Sel. Heffernan McGlynn

Town of Winchester

Board of Selectmen - Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 2, 2026

Winchester Town Hall - Hicks Room

Noticed in Town Clerk's Office and on Town's Website

D) Charter Revision Commission Membership Addition

A motion offered to add William Hudock as the 6th voting Member of the 2026 Charter Revision Commission.

Motion - Sel. Marino / Second - Sel. Hester

Vote to approve - Yes (5) / No (1) Sel. Lamere / Abstain (1) Sel. Pozzo