

# CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 2020

## Summary of the FINAL REPORT TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

At its meeting on March 2, 2020, the Trumbull Town Council passed Resolution TC28-59, creating the Charter Revision Commission 2020 (“the Commission”). The members of the Commission appointed by the Town Council are J.C. Cinelli, Kate Donahue, Nancy Gardiner, Susan Gilson, Martin McCann, and Tom Tesoro.

The Commission held meetings on March 11, April 15 (public hearing), April 22, April 29, May 6, May 13, May 20, May 27, June 3, June 10, and June 17, 2020, The Commission solicited input from members of the public, town employees, former and current Board and Commission chairs, a former Registrar of Voters, the League of Women Voters of the Bridgeport Area, the First Selectman, the Trumbull Democratic Town Committee, and the Trumbull Republican Town Committee. Input was received from many of those stakeholders and was taken into account.

The Draft Report was posted, and a second public hearing was held on June 24, 2020 to receive input from the public. Nine individuals spoke at the public hearing, and emailed comments were received from eight other individuals. The Commission held a meeting immediately after the public hearing to make revisions to the Draft Report.

The Commission subsequently attended the Town Council Legislation & Administration Committee (L&A) on July 6, 2020 and the Town Council meeting on July 9, 2020, to review and discuss the draft report. At its meeting the Town Council made eight (8) recommendations for the Commission to consider. The Commission met on July 15, 2020 and July 20, 2020 to consider those recommendations, and met with the L&A Committee on July 22, 2020 to confer with the Council regarding the recommendations. A final meeting of the Commission was held immediately following the July 22, 2020 meeting with the L&A Committee to approve this final report. The final disposition of these proposed changes will be determined by the Town Council at its August 3, 2020 meeting.

All minutes of the Commission’s meetings are available on the Town website. Residents may also view the meetings recorded by Trumbull Community Television by going to their website <https://www.trumbullps.tv> and clicking “Watch now” for video-on-demand viewing.

It is important to note that the Commission discussed and seriously considered the issue of changing the terms for the First Selectman, Treasurer, and Town Clerk to four years. That recommendation was included in the Draft Report posted prior to the public hearing on June 24, 2020. However, based on feedback provided during the public hearing, the Commission decided to remove that change from its recommendations.

After considering all suggestions and information provided, the Commission recommended more than forty (40) changes to the Charter falling into two main categories. First, changes that fix administrative issues, modernize terms, clarify definitions or bring the Charter into alignment with state statutes and second, substantive changes. The changes are listed below on the subsequent 4 pages.

For more information please see the full [Charter Commission Report](#) and the red-line [Charter](#).

The substantive changes recommended are:

Chapter/Section #	Intent and Purpose of Proposed Revision	Charter Page	Report Page
Chapter II, Section 2	The proposed revision will require a vote of not less than 2/3 of the Town Council in order to change the number of voting districts. In most cases, this would require bipartisan support and represent the vast majority of voters as opposed to the current charter which allows such change to be made by a bare majority of Council members.	3	5
Chapter III, Section 3	The proposed change provides a clear and unambiguous process for both the temporary and permanent succession of the First Selectman.	7-9	7-9
Chapter III, Section 6G	The proposed revision deletes items that are in the town Purchasing Policy and Procedures and ensures that future editions of document will include, at a minimum, multiple bids and competitive sealed bidding at such thresholds as may be adopted by the Town Council. In addition, the revision clarifies that purchasing contracts may not be signed between the election and installation of new town officers unless authorized by two-thirds of the Town Council present and voting.	12-14	9-10
Chapter VII, Section 3	The intent and purpose of these changes are several fold: first, to increase the size of the Board of Education due to the heavy workload taken on by board members; second, to return the board to an even number of members from each party to create a less political environment; and finally, to return to four-year terms (staggered) to provide greater continuity and institutional memory which will benefit our educational system.	26-27	12-13
Chapter VII, Section 21	The proposed revision creates the Commission on Aging to address the needs of the senior population of Trumbull.	38-39	15-16
Chapter VII, Section 22	The proposed revision reinstates a Youth Commission to the Charter to address the needs of Trumbull's youth.	39	16-17
Chapter VIII, Section 9B	This section was added in the 2011 Charter revision, and requires a referendum vote on all debt taken out exceeding \$15 million. However, the \$15 million threshold amount was not indexed for inflation and has already become outdated. A provision for adjusting for inflation to respond to changes in economic conditions over time was added.	52	22
Chapter VIII, Section 9C-E	The proposed revision provides a procedural framework to guide the town in holding a referendum on bonding projects over \$15 million.	52-53	22-23

Administrative/modernization/clarifying or state statute alignment changes are:

Chapter/Section #	Intent and Purpose of Proposed Revision	Charter Page	Report Page
<b>Chapter I. Incorporation and General Powers</b>			
Chapter I, Section 4B	The current Charter defines all references to "day(s)", unless otherwise specified, to mean business days. The proposed revision defines "business days" as any date that the Town Clerk's Office is open Monday through Friday and provides that all references to "day(s)" in Chapter II of this Charter are calendar days.	2	2
<b>Chapter II. Legislative Branch</b>			
Chapter II, Section 1	The proposed revision clarifies the definition to include committees that are created <u>by</u> the Town Council but are not committees <u>of</u> the Town Council.	3	4-5
Chapter II, Section 5A	The proposed change adds the requirement of posting Town Council meeting notices, including the agenda, on the Town website.	4	6
Chapter II, Section 5B	The proposed change brings the Charter in line with the Freedom of Information Act and adds "non-privileged" language to clarify that privileged documents, such as those to be discussed in executive session, need not be posted. It also clarifies that minutes of all meetings must be posted on the town's website by the end of the 7th calendar day following the date of the meeting.	4-5	6
Chapter II, Section 6	The proposed change eliminates the waiting period for appointments to become effective in order to fill boards, commissions and committees more quickly. The appointments will become effective upon posting of notice on the town website.	5	6-7
Chapter II, Section 7	The proposed change revises the name of the section since it only deals with Legislation, not appointments.	5	7
Chapter II, Section 8	The proposed change provides for posting of adopted legislation on the town website in addition to publication in the newspaper.	5-6	7
<b>Chapter III. Executive Branch</b>			
Chapter III, Section 2	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	7	2
Chapter III, Section 6B	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	10	2
Chapter III, Section 12B	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	16	2-3
Chapter III, Section 15	The proposed revision brings the charter into conformity with actual practice in Trumbull, other area communities and state statute concerning bonding of Town employees.	18-19	11
<b>Chapter IV. Adopting the Annual Budget</b>			
Chapter IV, Section 2B	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	21	3

Chapter IV, Section 3A	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	22	3
<b>Chapter V. Appropriations from the General Fund...</b>			
Chapter V, Section 2C	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	24-25	3
Chapter V, Section 2D	The proposed revision updates the threshold for Town Council review of Board of Finance actions since the dollar amounts have not been changed since 1981.	24-25	11-12
Chapter V, Section 2E	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	24-25	3
<b>Chapter VI. Bond Issues</b>			
Chapter VI	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	26	3
<b>Chapter VII. Boards and Commissions</b>			
Chapter VII, Section 4	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	29	3
Chapter VII, Section 8A	The proposed revision brings the charter into compliance with state statute regarding the number of members on the Police Commission.	30	13
Chapter VII, Section 11E	The proposed revision clarifies that gifts to the Parks & Recreation Department may be accepted for recreation purposes in addition to park purposes.	33	13-14
Chapter VII, Section 17C-D	The proposed changes clarify who the Ethics Code applies to, adds reference to applicable state statute, and brings into conformance with FOI which does not allow for private hearings.	36-37	14-15
Chapter VII, Section 25	The proposed change provides a mechanism for removal of an appointed, but not elected, member of a board, commission, or committee when that member does not meet a minimum attendance standard. Removal is discretionary and not mandatory to account for potential issues such as illness or other hardship of a member. The section is also renumbered.	40	17
Chapter VII, Section 26	The proposed revision clarifies that all boards, commissions and committees must follow posting requirements for meetings as specified in Chapter II, Section 5B.	41	17
<b>Chapter VIII. Electoral Process</b>			
Chapter VIII, Section 4	The proposed revision changes the title of this section from "Majority Limitation" to "Minority Representation" to conform to the statute it references, Section 9-167 of the General Statutes. In addition, the revision clarifies that the numbers of nominees and candidates voters can vote for under the requirements of this section are not intended to be in conflict with the General Statutes or other sections of the charter which deal with nominating and voting processes.	42	17-18
Chapter VIII, Section 5	The proposed revision provides for posting of board or commission vacancies on the town website, thereby providing a fairer process for the public. The section is also reorganized for clarity.	43-44	18-19
Chapter VIII, Section 6C	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	45	3-4
Chapter VIII, Section 7B	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	47	4
Chapter VIII, Section 7D	The proposed revisions are designed to remove confusion caused by use of the terms "voting machine" and "ballot labels".	48-49	19-20

Chapter VIII, Section 7F	The proposed revision clarifies the timing of post-referendum actions so that days are counted from the date the vote is certified.	49	20-21
Chapter VIII Section 7H	The proposed revision adds posting of referendum questions on the town website in addition to publication in the newspaper.	50	21
Chapter VIII, Section 7I	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	50	4
Chapter VIII, Section 8B	The proposed revision specifies that "days" are calendar days.	50-51	4
Chapter VIII, Section 8D	The proposed revisions are designed to remove confusion caused by use of the terms "voting machine" and "ballot labels".	51-52	21-22
Chapter VIII, Section 10	The proposed revision removes the last sentence of the section because state statute covers the issue of deputy registrars.	54	23
<b>Chapter IX. Adoption and Amendment Procedures</b>			
Chapter IX Section 7	The proposed revision refers to the date the revisions are being submitted to voters (November 3, 2020) and the effective date if the revisions are approved (December 1, 2020).	56	23-24

The Commission recommends three separate ballot questions:

- Expanding the Board of Education to eight members with no more than four from one party with staggered four-year terms
- Using the CPI to annually adjust the threshold for projects requiring bonding authorization.
- All other changes.