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*Elizabeth M. Sullivan*



**FINAL REPORT OF THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

On October 9, 2018, the Town Council created a Charter Revision Commission and appointed the seven Commissioners named below. Since the Commission's organizational meeting on November 1, 2018, Commissioners have met nine times through May 1, 2019. The Commission conducted an initial public hearing as required by Connecticut General Statutes on October 23, 2018. Citizen comments were allowed during all Commission meetings. Charter Revision Commissions are required by state law to adopt a Draft Report to transmit proposed Town Charter changes which are being recommended by the Commission to the Town Council in accordance with the time requirements set in the statutes. Following an initial Commission vote to adopt a Draft Report, the Commission must hold a public hearing on its proposed Charter changes. After the public hearing, the Commission may revise the Report prior to a final adoption by the Commission. The Draft Report is then filed with the Town Clerk for transmittal to the Town Council. The Town Council received the Draft Report of the Charter Revision Commission on June 11, 2019 and held a public hearing on the same. The Town Council then referred several revisions back to the Charter Revision Commission for consideration. The Charter Revision Commission met on June 26, 2019 to review the recommendations of the Town Council and approve the Final Report.

A Town Charter is attached to this Final Report containing all proposed amendments and revisions adopted by the Commission. Any text in the Charter proposed for deletion is signified by ~~strikeout~~ type while new text is signified by **bold and underlined** type.

The Charter Revision Commission considered many Charter changes including amendments suggested by the public, by Town Councilors, by individual Commissioners and by a detailed review of the Town Charter. Proposed changes were ranked by each Commissioner according to their perceptions of importance to the Town of Killingly. These were then combined into a mutually agreed upon and prioritized list of potential amendments to the Charter. Commissioners discussed proposed changes relative to their effect on efficiency and democracy, budgetary considerations, the potential for voter approval and the effect of the change on the community. The Commission members also agreed referendum questions must be straight forward, easily understood and limited in number. In the final analysis, the Commission voted to adopt one substantive Charter change affecting the form of government and five less significant changes regarding Town operations. The substantive change would retain the current nine member Town Council but would provide for one (1) Council Chairman to be elected at-large, three (3) members to be elected at-large and one (1) member to be elected from each of five (5) districts. This revision would allow the electors to select the Town Council Chairperson and would maintain neighborhood representation while allowing electors to vote for a majority of the members on the Town Council by casting votes for the four Town-wide representatives and one district representative. This will also prohibit any person from running for two or more council seats in any municipal election. The Commission recognizes the Town Council's concern. However, the Charter Revision Commission still supports this recommendation. The Commission has also included an alternate consideration to this recommendation. The alternative language would designate the at-large candidate receiving the most votes in the election to be Chairperson. The Commission also voted to adopt five less substantive changes: (1) redefining the

residency requirement of the Town Manager position; (2) changing the threshold of signatures on a petition to 250 electors of the Town; (3) to allow electors to serve on more than one board or commission except under certain circumstances and to allow electors to serve on only one regulatory agency; (4) to retain the listing of required boards and commissions and appointed officials but removing the individual details which are contained in ordinances, job descriptions and State Statutes; and (5) to remove obsolete provisions. The Commission asked Town Attorney Kari Olson to prepare proposed questions for these amendments with the understanding the Town Council has final jurisdiction over the questions to be submitted to voters. The proposed questions were intended to improve clarity during review of the proposed changes. Each change adopted by the Commission is further described below with a proposed corresponding question for submitting the changes to voters.

The Commission adopted six (6) proposed Charter amendments as follows:

- **Election of Town Councilors** – At municipal elections in November, there shall be one (1) Town Council Chairperson and three (3) Town Councilors elected at-large and one (1) Town Councilor from each of five (5) districts. It also prohibits any person from running for two or more council seats in any municipal election.

Proposed Ballot Question 1- Shall Sections 302 of the Town Charter be amended to provide for 1 Town Council Chairperson and 3 Town Council members to be elected at-large and for 1 Town Council member from each from 5 voting districts and prohibits any person from running for two or more council seats in any municipal election?

The Charter Revision Commission recommends the above language. However, the Commission understands the Council's concern and, therefore, the Commission also submits the following as an alternative to the language above which designates the at-large candidate receiving the highest number of votes in the election be designated as the Town Council Chairperson. If the person declines the Chairperson seat, the person would remain on the Council and the Town Council would elect their Chairperson by a 2/3 majority vote:

Alternate Proposed Ballot Question 1 – Shall Section 302 of the Town Charter be amended to provide for the at-large candidate receiving the highest number of votes in the election be designated as the Town Council Chairperson?

- **Town Manager Residency** – The residency requirement for the Town Manager position would be changed to allow for residency within 25 miles of the Town.

Proposed Ballot Question 2 – Shall Section 601 of the Town Charter be amended to recommend residency of the Town Manager position and require residency within 25 miles of Town?

- **Eligibility to Serve on Boards and Commissions** – Many boards and commissions struggle to find members to serve. This would allow electors to serve on more than one board or commission that are not incompatible and restricts electors from participating on more than one regulatory board or commission at any given time.

Proposed Ballot Question 3 – Shall Section 802 of the Charter be amended to allow for electors to serve on more than one board or commission provided the electors serve on no more than one regulatory board or commission at any given time?

- **Consolidation of Language and Elimination of Obsolete Language** – The duties and powers of the Town’s boards and commissions are contained in Town Ordinances. This consolidates the language under Boards and Commissions (Sections 804 thru 810) to list the required boards and commissions and refers to the local, state or federal regulations which dictate the duties and powers of each entity. Each appoint official’s duties and powers are contained in the Town’s job description or State Statute. This consolidates the language under Departments and Officials (Sections 903 thru 910) to include a list of appointed officials and refers to the job description or state regulations which dictates the duties and powers of each position. The elected constables (Section 302) were removed during the last charter revision. This deletes the obsolete language.

Proposed Ballot Question 4 - Shall Sections 302, 804 thru 810 and 903 thru 910 of the Charter be amended to eliminate obsolete language regarding boards, commission and officers?

- **Required Frequency of Charter Revision** – The section outlines the required frequency of Charter Revision. This states the maximum length of time between required reviews of the Charter by the Town Council. The revision would extend the time from five to ten years.

Proposed Ballot Question 5 – Shall Section 1208 be amended to require review of the Charter not less than once every ten (10) years?

- **Threshold of Required Signatures on a Petition** – In Section 701 the threshold of required signatures on a petition would be changed from 15% of the electors on the last election to 250 electors of the Town.

Proposed Ballot Question 6 – Shall Section 701 of the Town Charter be amended to require the signatures of at least 250 electors on a petition to call a Special Town Meeting?

The Commission herein expresses its thanks to everyone who provided input, and who gave of their time to attend Commission meetings and aid the Commission by expressing opinions on the various Charter Revisions being discussed.

I highly commend my fellow Commissioners, named below, for their diligence in reviewing the current Town Charter, for consistent high attendance at all Commission meetings, for doing necessary research, for using problem solving skills, and for developing sound recommendations for consideration by the Town Council and voters. At all times, discussion was open, frank and directed at ensuring the best for the Town of Killingly and its electors.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hayden  
Chairman,  
Charter Revision Commission

On behalf of the Charter Revision Commission members:

Teresa Barton, Vice-Chairman

Donald Aubrey, Member

Jonathan Blake, Member

Benjamin Chase, Member

Dan Rovero, Member

Keith Thurlow, Member