



Chester Charter Commission

FINAL PROPOSED CHARTER **Overview of Charter Articles**

May 1, 2024

ARTICLE 1: Incorporation & General Powers

- **Section 1.1: Incorporation**
- **Section 1.2: Rights & Obligations**
- **Section 1.3: General Grant of Powers – *provides for powers granted to towns by Constitution & General Statutes – and those specifically granted by Charter***
- **Section 1.4: Legislative Bodies – *specifies Chester's legislative bodies shall be the Town Meeting and the Board of Selectmen – with legislative powers as expressly conferred by the Charter***
- **Section 1.5: Definitions**



ARTICLE 2: Town Meeting

- **Specifies legislative powers vested in Town Meeting holding the Annual Town Meeting, Annual Budget Meeting and Special Town Meetings per terms of Charter and General Statutes**
- **Town Meeting required for approval of the Annual Town Budget, appropriation/authorization for issuance of bonds, notes, borrowing, purchase or sale of real estate interests and contracts for use of Town property**
- **Provides for Referendums for certain appropriations or other actions requiring a Referendum**
- **Provides for citizen petition and process for calling Special Town Meetings for overruling certain actions of the Board of Selectmen**
- **Provides for citizen petition and process for Special Town Meetings for Enactment of Ordinances or Other Action**



ARTICLE 3: Board of Selectmen (1)

- Five member Board of Selectmen with four-year terms
- All elected at same time
- Provides competition for member election
- Maximum of 3 from majority political party (based on *minority party representation for agencies per Article 6*)
- First Selectman election separate from Selectmen election – but counts in calculating minority representation
- Transition to five-member board would be after the November 2025 election



ARTICLE 3: Board of Selectmen (2)

- **Powers and duties include those provided by the Charter, Constitution and General Statutes**
- **Legislative Authority shared with Town Meeting. Selectmen authorized to adopt/repeal ordinances, create/modify/abolish Town agencies**
- **Establishes administrative and personnel policies**
- **Appoints Town Administrator**
- **Duties include those specified in Article 9 – Finance & Taxation – upon five-member BOS taking office – November 2025**
- **Appoints members of Town agencies and officials with delegation to Town Administrator for some Town official appointments**
- **Responsible for filling Town agency vacancies**



ARTICLE 4: First Selectman

- **Serves as Town's Chief Executive Officer**
- **Responsible for implementation of BOS actions**
- **Delegates some duties to the Town Administrator**
- **Provides guidance to Town Administrator for administration of town affairs and day-to-day operations**
- **Coordinates and guides BOS in discharge of Board's responsibilities**
- **Develops annual priorities as a policy guide for budget development**
- **Maintains complete records of activities of the office**



ARTICLE 5: Town Administrator

- **Appointed by the Board of Selectmen**
- **Serves as the Town's Chief Administrative Officer**
- **Selected exclusively based on technical & administrative qualifications, character, educational background, training/certification and professionally related experience**
- **Works under general direction of First Selectman & BOS**
- **Responsible for administration of Town departments & agencies – except Board of Education**
- **Conducts continuous review of the Town's current/future needs**
- **Identifies grant opportunities and assists in applying and implementing same**
- **Serves on Fiscal Policy Committee**
- **Responsibilities assume participation in budget development and management**



ARTICLE 6: Elections

- **Provides for regular and special Town elections.**
- **Establishes Minority Representation requirements for agencies. Decreases maximum from one Party, as compared to General Statutes, for agencies with five and seven members.**
- **Provides for BOS to fill vacancies for elected agencies**
- **Recognizes specific process for filling Region 4 Board of Education and Registrars of Voters vacancies.**
- **Provides opportunity for Special Elections to fill elective vacancies per General Statutes.**



ARTICLE 7: Elective Officers & Agencies

- **Provides for elective agencies to consist of no more than 7 members**
- **Provides for four-year terms for elective members**
- **Establishes agencies and officers to be elected**
 - **First Selectman and 4 members of the BOS**
 - **Financial Accountability Board – 5 members**
 - **Chester Board of Education – 7 members**
 - **Region 4 Board of Education – 3 members**
 - **Registrars of Voters – 2 members**
 - **Nomination of Justices of the Peace - 11**



ARTICLE 8: Appointive Agencies, Departments, & Other Entities (1)

- **BOS to establish departments appropriate and necessary for Town administration per Charter and General Statutes**
- **Town Administrator appoints department heads in consultation with the BOS; all other employees appointed by Town Administrator**
- **Several officials appointed by BOS in consultation with the Town Administrator – each reporting to the Town Administrator:**
 - **Finance Director/Treasurer**
 - **Tax Collector**
 - **Town Clerk/Registrar of Vital Statistics**



ARTICLE 8: Appointive Agencies, Departments, & Other Entities (2)

- **Appointive Agencies include:**
 - **Agencies previously elected: Board of Assessment Appeals, Board of Library Trustees, Planning and Zoning, Zoning Board of Appeals**
 - **Agencies currently appointed: Board of Fire Commissioners, Cedar Lake Watershed Commission, Citation Hearing Officers, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Harbor Management Commission, Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission, Park & Recreation Commission, Retirement Board, & Water Pollution Control Authority**
- **Provides for appointive agencies to consist of no more than seven members without alternates (*except for ZBA per statute requirement*)**

Provides for four-year terms for appointive members



ARTICLE 8: Appointive Agencies, Departments, & Other Entities (3)

- **BOS may also appoint committees by resolution as necessary**
- **BOS to fill all vacancies in appointive agencies – for balance of term**
- **Provides for member of an agencies to be removed from office for cause by two-thirds vote of BOS**



ARTICLE 9: Finance and Taxation (1)

- **Establishes framework for financial management and budget process**
- **BOS assumes responsibility for budget development and performance**
- **Financial Accountability Board reviews BOS recommended budget and recommends a proposed budget to Public Hearing and Town Meeting. Also, sets mil rate in consultation with BOS. Appoints Auditor. Involved in considering BOS requests for use of contingency fund and additional appropriations as specified in Charter.**
- **Aligns the Town's fiscal authorities with the responsibility to support and achieve Town policy and initiatives**



ARTICLE 9: Finance and Taxation (2)

- **Creates Fiscal Advisory Committee to advise and be advised by the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator on all financial issues and policies**
 - **Recommends long range capital improvement plan, including 5-year capital budget and capital expenditures for ensuing year to BOS for consideration**
 - **Recommended capital plan/budget submitted to BOS by January 15, - updated annually**
 - **Committee to be kept informed of issues and policies**
 - **Chaired by First Selectman; members include: Town Administrator, Finance Director, Chairs or designees of Chester Board of Education, Economic Development Commission, Financial Accountability Board, Planning and Zoning, and the Superintendent of Schools or designee**



ARTICLE 9: Finance and Taxation (3)

- **Finance Director also serves as Treasurer**
- **Treasurer designates Deputy Treasurer with BOS approval**
- **Provides for budget process: budget message, preliminary budget estimates, budget preparation, budget review, public hearings, the Annual Budget Meeting, process for budget Referendum, laying of taxes (setting the mil rate) and issuance of tax bills**
- **Budget operations are described for appropriations, purchasing, expenditures and accounting, transfer of funds, Annual Town Report, audit, budget monitoring, final budget reconciliation, public emergency expenditures, and expenditures before adoption of the budget**



ARTICLE 10: Intergovernmental Relations

- **The Town may enter into agreements with the United States or any federal agency, the State of Connecticut and any political subdivision to provide municipal services and/or use of facilities**
- **The Board of Selectmen may contract for providing and/or sharing of services which the Town provides through an appointed Town official, commission, or agency**
- **The Board of Selectmen may recommend to the Town Meeting that the Town enter into agreements or contracts for the sharing of services provided by any elected official of the Town with the United States or any federal agency or the State of Connecticut and any political subdivision. Approval of such contracts and/or compacts shall be by the Town Meeting**
- **Provides for BOS to make appointments to boards and committees of political subdivisions and organizations providing services to the Town**



ARTICLE 11: Transition & Miscellaneous Provisions

- **Provides for the transition to operating in accordance with the Charter**
- **Establishes all existing laws and ordinances shall continue in effect, except as they are inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter**
- **Any amendment to the Charter shall be in the manner prescribed by the General Statutes**
- **Prescribes for transfer of powers from an agency abolished by the Charter to the agency assuming such powers and duties**
- **Establishes transition process for formerly elective agencies to become appointive agencies**
- **Provides Charter effective date – 12 noon, January 1, 2025**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Chester Charter Commission Webpage

www.chesterct.org/charter-commission

A Charter for Chester

www.chestercharter.org

Contact Information

Email: info@chestercharter.org

Phone: 860-526-0013, ext. 202

