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MUNICIPAL BOARDS OF FINANCE

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QUESTIONS

Which municipalities have a **board** of finance and what is their form of government?
How do municipalities with **boards** of finance **elect** members and fill vacancies?

SUMMARY

Of Connecticut's 169 municipalities, 120 (71%) have a **board** of finance. These municipalities vary according to their form of government, but generally follow the same distribution as Connecticut municipalities as a whole: 95 (80%) have a selectmen-town meeting, six (5%) have a representative town meeting, 11 (9%) have a mayor-council, and eight (7%) have a manager-council form of government.

The methods for selecting and filling vacancies on **boards** of finance depend on whether a town operates under the state statutes (i.e., statutory town) or under a charter (i.e., charter town). For statutory towns, state law establishes the selection and vacancy-filling methods. For charter towns, the charter establishes the methods. Regardless of whether a municipality operates under the statutes or a charter, it must comply with state law's minority representation requirements, which prohibit members from the same political party from comprising more than a specified percentage (generally two-thirds) of a **board's** membership.

MUNICIPALITIES WITH BOARDS OF FINANCE

Table 1 lists the municipalities with **boards** of finance according to their form of government and indicates whether each municipality operates under a charter or the statutes. Of the 120 municipalities, 73 are charter towns and 47 are statutory towns.

Table 1: Connecticut Municipalities with **Boards** of Finance by Form of Government

Municipality	Charter	
	Y	N
Selectmen-Town Meeting (95)		
Andover	✓	
Ashford		✓
Barkhamsted	✓	
Beacon Falls	✓	
Bethany		✓
Bethel	✓	
Bethlehem	✓	
Bolton	✓	
Bozrah		✓
Bridgewater	✓	
Brookfield	✓	
Brooklyn		✓
Burlington	✓	
Canaan		✓
Canterbury	✓	
Canton	✓	
Chaplin		✓
Chester		✓
Clinton	✓	
Colchester	✓	
Colebrook	✓	
Columbia	✓	
Cornwall		✓
Deep River		✓
Durham	✓	
East Granby		✓
East Haddam		✓
East Lyme	✓	
East Windsor	✓	
Easton		✓
Ellington	✓	
Essex		✓
Franklin		✓
Goshen		✓
Griswold	✓	
Guilford	✓	
Haddam	✓	
Hampton		✓
Hartland		✓
Harwinton		✓
Kent		✓
Killingworth	✓	
Lebanon		✓
Lisbon		✓
Litchfield		✓

Municipality	Charter	
	Y	N
Lyme		✓
Madison	✓	
Marlborough	✓	
Middlebury	✓	
Middlefield	✓	
Monroe ¹	✓	
Morris		✓
New Fairfield		✓
New Hartford		✓
Newtown ¹	✓	
Norfolk		✓
North Canaan		✓
North Haven	✓	
North Stonington		✓
Old Lyme		✓
Old Saybrook	✓	
Orange	✓	
Oxford	✓	
Plainfield	✓	
Pomfret		✓
Preston		✓
Putnam ²	✓	
Redding		✓
Ridgefield	✓	
Roxbury		✓
Salem	✓	
Salisbury		✓
Seymour	✓	
Sharon		✓
Simsbury	✓	
Somers	✓	
Southbury	✓	
Sprague		✓
Stafford		✓
Sterling		✓
Stonington	✓	
Suffield	✓	
Thomaston		✓
Thompson		✓
Union		✓
Warren		✓
Washington		✓
Westbrook		✓
Weston	✓	
Willington		✓
Wilton	✓	

Municipality	Charter	
	Y	N
Windsor Locks	✓	
Woodbridge	✓	
Woodbury	✓	
Woodstock		✓
Representative Town Meeting (6)		
Branford	✓	
Darien	✓	
Fairfield	✓	
Greenwich	✓	
Waterford	✓	
Westport	✓	
Mayor-Council (11)		
Bristol	✓	
East Haven	✓	
Milford	✓	
Naugatuck	✓	
New Britain	✓	
New Canaan ³	✓	
New Milford	✓	
Plymouth	✓	
Stamford ⁴	✓	
Torrington	✓	
Trumbull	✓	
Manager-Council (8)		
Avon	✓	
Cromwell	✓	
East Hampton	✓	
Glastonbury	✓	
Granby ⁵	✓	
Hebron ⁵	✓	
Southington	✓	
Windham	✓	

Notes:¹ Selectmen-Council-Town Meeting² Mayor-Selectmen-Town Meeting³ Selectmen-Town Council⁴ Mayor-**Board** of Representatives⁵ Town Manager-**Board** of Selectmen

Sources: 2013 State Register and Manual; municipal websites; and Frank Connolly, *Local Government in Connecticut*, 2013.

BOARD OF FINANCE SELECTION AND VACANCY FILLING METHODS

Statutory v. Charter Towns

The methods for selecting **board** of finance members and filling vacancies depend on whether a town operates under the statutes or a charter. For statutory towns, state law **requires** the **board** to consist of six electors who serve six-year, staggered terms; two members are **elected** at each regular municipal **election** ([CGS § 9-202](#)). Statutory towns may, by ordinance, opt to **elect** or appoint up to three alternate members, subject to minority representation requirements ([CGS § 7-340a](#)). In the case of a vacancy, the remaining **board** members appoint a temporary replacement at a special meeting called for that purpose. The appointee serves until the next municipal **election**, at which point a successor is **elected** to fill the remaining portion of the term ([CGS § 7-343](#)).

For charter towns, the methods for selecting **board** members and filling vacancies are determined by the charter. We selected and reviewed a sample of 35 (out of 73) Connecticut municipalities that have a **board** of finance and operate under a charter (see Table 3). Two of the 35 municipalities (Branford and Bristol) have an appointed **board** of finance. The rest **elect** their **board** members at regular municipal **elections**, typically for staggered terms.

The **boards** in our sample have between six and nine voting members, and four years is the most common term length. The **boards** fill vacancies by appointment initially, typically by either the **board** itself or by the **board** of selectmen or town council. In many municipalities, the appointee serves only until a special **election** or the next regular municipal **election**, at which time a successor is **elected** to fill the remaining portion of the term.

Minority Representation

Regardless of whether a municipality operates under the statutes or a charter, it must comply with state law's minority representation requirements.

The law **requires** minority political party representation on certain governmental bodies of the state, its towns, and other political subdivisions. No more than a specified number of members (generally two-thirds of the total) enrolled in the same political party can serve on a particular body, as shown in Table 2. Municipalities may enact a greater degree of minority representation than **required** by the state through the adoption of a charter provision that sets a lower maximum number from the same party ([CGS § 9-167a](#)).

Most of the 35 municipal charters we reviewed establish minority representation requirements that conform to those established in state law. Only three municipalities in our sample (Branford, Burlington, and Columbia) impose minority representation requirements for the **board** of finance that are stricter than those imposed by state law.

Table 2: Minority Representation Law

Total Membership	Maximum From One Party
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	4
7	5
8	5
9	6
More than 9	Two-thirds of total membership

Source: [CGS § 9-167a](#)

Selected Charter Provisions

Table 3 shows charter provisions for selecting and filling vacancies on **boards** of finance in a sample of 35 municipalities.

Table 3: Charter Provisions for Selecting and Filling Vacancies on **Boards** of Finance

Town and Charter Citations	Number of Members	Selection Method	Term Length	Vacancies
Andover Ch. II, §§ 203, 208	7 (Additionally, Capital Improvement Plan Committee designates a non-voting member)	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board for unexpired portion of term; board chair must notify major political parties and general public of the vacancy; recommendations for appointment must be made within 35 days of notification Board of selectmen fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days of the notice
Avon Ch. 2, § 2.5 Ch. 3, § 3.5	7	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by town council for unexpired portion of term or until January 1 following the next regular municipal election , whichever is sooner Appointee must belong to same political party as former member Board of finance fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days; board appointee serves until January 1 following the next regular municipal election If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term
Bolton Ch. 2, § 2.5 Ch. 3, § 3.5	7	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days (selectmen have 30 days to do so) Appointee serves until successor elected at special or next regular municipal election

Table 3 (continued)

Town and Charter Citations	Number of Members	Selection Method	Term Length	Vacancies
Branford § 11	6 (Additionally, first selectman is ex-officio member, but cannot vote except to break a tie)	Selectmen appoint 2 members each year No more than 3 members may be from same political party	3 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term
Bristol § 25	9	Mayor serves as ex-officio member; other 8 members are appointed by mayor and confirmed by city council	4 years or until a successor is appointed	Appointed by mayor and confirmed by city council for unexpired portion of term
Brookfield Art. II, § C2-6 Art. III, § C3-2	6 (Additionally, first selectman is ex-officio member, but cannot vote except to break a tie)	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days Appointee serves until successor elected at special or regular municipal election ; successor serves for unexpired portion of term
Burlington Ch. 2, § 2-5 Ch. 3, § 3-4	7	Biennial election for each expiring term No more than 4 members may be from same political party	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen within 60 days Appointee must belong to same political party as former member If former member was unaffiliated, appointee must be unaffiliated or from a political party on whose slate the former member ran Appointee serves until next regular municipal election , at which a successor is elected for unexpired portion of term

Table 3 (continued)

Town and Charter Citations	Number of Members	Selection Method	Term Length	Vacancies
Canton Art. VI, § 6.05(H) Art. IX, § 9.03	6	3 members elected biennially	4 years	Filled by board of finance until next municipal election ; board of selectmen may fill vacancies that exist for more than 45 days Appointee must belong to same political party as former member or be unaffiliated Town may also opt to fill vacancy by special election
Colchester Art. II, § C-202 Art. III, § C-302 Art. VI, § C-601	6 (Additionally, first selectman is ex-officio, nonvoting member)	2 members elected biennially	6 years	Filled by board of finance within 60 days Appointee must belong to same political party as former member, or be unaffiliated if former member was unaffiliated If former member changed affiliation after being elected , then appointee's affiliation must match former member's original affiliation Appointee serves until next municipal election , at which a successor is elected for remainder of unexpired term
Columbia (known as Financial Planning and Allocation Commission) Art. 6, § 6.5 Art. 7, § 7.3(g)	7	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term; commission fills vacancies that are not filled within 90 days Appointee must belong to same political party as former member

Table 3 (continued)

Town and Charter Citations	Number of Members	Selection Method	Term Length	Vacancies
Cromwell Art. 5, § 5.02 Art. 6, § 6.04	6	2 members elected biennially	6 years	Filled by town council within 45 days for the unexpired portion of the term or until the next municipal election , whichever is sooner Appointee must belong to same political party as former member If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term
Darien Ch. II, § 4 Ch. II, § 8 Ch. V, § 20	7	Biennial election for each expiring term If two board positions are to be filled, each elector can cast one vote; if three, two votes; if four, three votes	4 years	Filled by board of finance until the next municipal election , at which a successor is elected to serve any unexpired portion of term Appointee must belong to same political party as former member
Durham § 2.1 § 2.6 § 5.1	6	2 members elected biennially	6 years	Filled by board of selectmen for the unexpired portion of the term or until the next biennial election , whichever is sooner Appointee must belong to same political party as former member
East Hampton § 5.1 § 6.4	7	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by town council for the unexpired portion of the term
East Haven Ch. II, § 1 Ch. II, § 13	6 (Additionally, mayor is ex-officio member, but cannot vote except to break a tie)	6 members elected biennially Each party nominates 4 candidates; each elector votes for four candidates	2 years	Filled by mayor until next municipal election Appointee must belong to same political party as former member

Table 3 (continued)

Town and Charter Citations	Number of Members	Selection Method	Term Length	Vacancies
Fairfield § 1.4 § 2.3 § 2.5 § 8.3	9 (Additionally, board of selectmen and fiscal officer are ex officio, non-voting members)	3 members elected biennially When an uneven number of members are to be elected , political parties cannot nominate, and electors cannot vote for, more than a bare majority of the number of people to be elected	6 years	Filled by board of selectmen until next municipal election , unless the period for making nominations is over when the vacancy is created, in which case the appointee serves until the position is filled at a general or special election Appointee must belong to same political party as former member
Granby § 2-6 § 3-6	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for the unexpired portion of the term or until the next biennial election , whichever is sooner Appointee must belong to same political party as former member If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term
Hebron § 203 § 208	6	Quadrennial election for each expiring term Parties may nominate, and electors may vote for, as many candidates as there are available seats	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term
Killingworth § 4-4 § 4-17 § 4-10	6	Up to 3 members elected biennially	4 years	Filled by board of finance for unexpired portion of term; board of selectmen fills vacancies that exist for more than 45 days Appointee must belong to same political party as former member

Table 3 (continued)

Town and Charter Citations	Number of Members	Selection Method	Term Length	Vacancies
Madison § 3.1 § 6.4 § 6.6	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term Appointee must belong to same political party as former member
Marlborough § 2.2.6 § 2.3 § 2.6	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member
Middlebury § 202 § 209 § 212 § 506	6 (plus 3 alternates)	Biennial election for each expiring term	6 years (members) 2 years (alternates)	Filled by board of selectmen within 90 days for the unexpired portion of the term or until the next municipal election , whichever is sooner Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member
Monroe Ch. VI § 8 Ch. VII §§ 2, 5	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by town council for the unexpired portion of the term or until next municipal election , whichever is sooner Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member
New Milford § 202 § 205 § 302 § 803	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Town council fills vacancy within 60 days Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member Appointee serves the unexpired portion of the term or until a successor is elected at the next regular municipal election , whichever is sooner

Table 3 (continued)

Town and Charter Citations	Number of Members	Selection Method	Term Length	Vacancies
Newtown § 2-30 § 2-40 § 2-50 § 2-130	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	2 years	Filled by first selectman within 60 days, with the board of selectmen's approval, until next municipal election Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member
Salem Ch. 2, § 2.02 Ch. 3, §§ 3.04, 3.09	6 (plus 3 alternates)	2 members and 1 alternate elected biennially	6 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fills vacancies that exist for more than 30 days Appointee serves the unexpired portion of term, or until the next regular election , whichever is sooner If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term
Seymour Ch. 2, § 2.1 Ch. 3, § 3.4 Ch. 12, § 12.1	7 (plus 3 alternates)	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of finance; first selectman fills vacancies that exist for more than 30 days Appointee must belong to same political party as former member Appointee serves until next regular municipal election , at which a successor is elected for remainder of unexpired term
Simsbury Ch. 2, § 205 Ch. 3, §§ 301-302	6	2 members elected biennially	6 years	Filled by board of selectmen within 45 days for unexpired portion of term, or until the next regular municipal election , whichever is sooner Appointee must belong to same political party as former member If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term

Table 3 (continued)

Town and Charter Citations	Number of Members	Selection Method	Term Length	Vacancies
Somers Ch. 2, §§ 2-1, 2-5 Ch. 3, § 3-2	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	6 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days (selectmen have 30 days to do so) Appointee must belong to same political party as former member; vacancies that exist for more than 30 days may be filled by any eligible person, as long as board 's membership conforms to statutory minority representation requirement Appointee serves until successor elected at special or next regular municipal election ; successor serves for unexpired portion of term
Southbury Ch. 2, §§ 202, 210	6 (plus 3 alternates)	3 members and 1 or 2 alternates elected biennially	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen within 45 days for unexpired portion of the term Appointee must belong to same political party as former member or be an unaffiliated elector
Stamford § C1-80-2 § C1-80-6 § C6-20-1	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of representatives within 60 days Appointee serves until December 1 following the next municipal election , at which a successor is elected for unexpired portion of term
Stonington Ch. 2, § 2-4 Ch. 6, § 6-5	6	2 members elected biennially Each of the two political parties that polled the most votes for state treasurer at the prior state election nominate one candidate; each elector votes for one candidate	6 years	Filled by board of finance for unexpired portion of the term; board of selectmen fills vacancies that exist for more than 60 days Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member

Table 3 (continued)

Town and Charter Citations	Number of Members	Selection Method	Term Length	Vacancies
Trumbull Ch. 7, § 1 Ch. 8, § 5	6 (plus 3 alternates)	3 members elected biennially 1 alternate appointed by town council each year	4 years (members) 3 years (alternates)	Filled by first selectman for unexpired portion of the term Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member Voters may petition to fill vacancy by special election
Wilton Art. VIII, §§ C-48, C-51, C-53	6	3 members elected biennially	4 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fill vacancies that exist for more than 30 days Appointee serves until November 30 following the next regular municipal election , at which a successor is elected for the unexpired portion of term
Windsor Locks Ch. 2, § 205 Ch. 7, § 709	6 (plus 2 alternates)	2 members elected biennially Alternates, who must belong to different political parties, appointed by board of finance	6 years	Filled by board of finance within 60 days Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member Appointee serves until the next municipal election , at which a successor is elected for the unexpired portion of term

Sources: Municipal websites and charters

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