



Town of Somers CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

June 6, 2018

Draft Summary of Recommendations

Items the Board of Selectmen charged us to examine, by Resolution of March 6, 2018

1. *Shall the role of Town Clerk become an appointive rather than elective position?*

Yes. The Charter Revision Commission (CRC) will recommend the town clerk be appointed by and report to a town administrative officer, subject to the approval of the First Selectman and the Board of Selectmen.

2. *Shall the town remained guided by an elected Board of Selectmen, or should we move to a Town Manager form of government?*

Neither. The CRC will recommend the Board of Selectmen be increased from 3 members to 5 members, and that a new position, town administrative officer, be established. The town administrative officer would report directly to the First Selectman, who would remain the Chief Executive Officer of the town. The town administrative officer would supervise the town's Directors and oversee the operations of their respective departments, manage and maintain the town's general day-to-day operations, perform high-level administrative and supervisory duties as required, and to fall under the primary directive authority of the First Selectmen and the Board of Selectmen. The CRC contemplates a significant reduction in the day-to-day role of the First Selectman, with a commensurate reduction of salary. The First Selectman would remain the town's Chief Executive Officer as defined in the statutes of the State of Connecticut.

3. *Shall the Zoning and Planning boards be combined into one appointed/elective body?*

No. While doing so may introduce certain efficiencies, the CRC remains unconvinced this would improve the long-term outlook for thoughtful, planned development of the town.

4. *Shall the number of members on the Zoning Commission be revised?*

No. While there is a certain demand upon the time of the volunteer members of the Zoning Commission, the CRC was cognizant of the current difficulty in identifying volunteers to serve

on this and other town commissions, and respected the time it takes to develop sufficient familiarity with zoning laws, regulations and practices.

Recommendations in addition to the charge of the Board of Selectmen

5. Minor changes throughout the Charter to reflect gender neutrality.
6. Add a section requiring election of two Registrars of voters for 4-year terms, reflecting the time necessary to fully learn duties and responsibilities of that position and to align with other 4-year terms.
7. Changed the positions of Director of Finance, Collector of Taxes and Assessor to be appointed by and report to the town administrative officer, subject to the approval of the First Selectman and the Board of Selectmen. Changed the title Treasurer to Director of Finance, to make it consistent with the position as identified in the current Charter.
8. Minor change to the Town Meeting procedure to clarify what parts of the meeting have to be sent to Referendum. The CRC recommends retaining the ability of the voters at a Town Meeting to decrease any appropriation or item in an appropriation, as set forth in the Connecticut General Statutes.