

Charter Revision Commission (CRC) Town of Weston, CT

Public Hearing – April 16th, 2026

Agenda

- Charter Revision Commission's Charge(s)
- Background & Timeline
- Review of Charges
- Public Hearing

Charter Revision Commission's Charge

- Board of Selectmen created Commission with request to consider following items (and any others we thought suitable) pursuant to CGS §7-187
 - a) Review and recommend enhancements to the Charter's existing provisions regarding **financial transparency, budgeting, expenditures, and accounting**.
 - b) Evaluate the **effectiveness, timeliness, and public engagement of the budget process** and to recommend improvements as needed.
 - c) Study **minority representation** per state statute (CGS § 9-167a) to determine any benefit of following the statutory process compared to the current allocation. Recommend language and approach to implementation if a change is beneficial.
 - d) Evaluate the **size and length of term for [certain] elected [appointed] boards** compared to surrounding municipalities to reflect population size, quorum standards and efficient decision making.
 - e) Align Charter language to **reflect positions that are now appointed instead of elected and account for appointed positions that are employees** represented by collective bargaining agreements or not in alignment with State Statute.
 - f) Identify and recommend language to **address inconsistent terminology**.
 - g) Consider adding a requirement to **review the Charter every 10 years**.
 - h) Amend the Charter to **remove unnecessary and redundant language and other inaccuracies**.
- CRC Added Reviews
 - Board of Ethics
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Removal from office of Elected and Appointed Town Officials

Background & Timeline

Members of CRC

- Cian O’Suilleabhain, Chair
- Kevin Thompson, Vice Chair
- Thomas Seigel, Vice Chair (former)¹
- Monica Goldstein
- David Muller
- Selectman Tony Pesco, Ex-Officio Liaison

Staff & Counsel

- Darcy Hawes, Secretary
- Karl Kilduff, Town Administrator
- Steven Mednick, Special Charter Counsel
 - Municipal specialty, with decades’ experience serving dozens of towns and cities across Connecticut, including over 30 Charter Revisions

Timeline

- Initial Meeting: November 6, 2025
- Initial Public Hearing: November 20, 2025
- Commission Meetings
 - Two meetings / month (typically)
 - Recordings & Minutes @ <https://www.westonct.gov/government/boards-commissions/appointed/charter-revision-commission>
- Second CRC Public Hearing: April 16, 2026
- CRC submits **recommendations** to Town Clerk/Board of Selectmen: April 24, 2026
- Next Steps: See document on website titled “Charter Revision Process” by Weston Board of Selectman, September 4, 2025

¹ Vacancy effective March 25, 2026

Charge (a)² - Financial Transparency

- **Background Materials & Discussion**

- Reviewed existing language regarding departmental transfers and appropriations which has caused confusion
- Met with members of Board of Finance, Finance Directors (Town & Board of Education)
- Reviewed Town Attorney & Auditor's opinions
- Public Input (1st CRC Public Hearing, Emails)

- **Options Considered**

- Retain language as-is
- Provide alternate language in attempt to eliminate confusion

- **Recommendation:** Alternate language

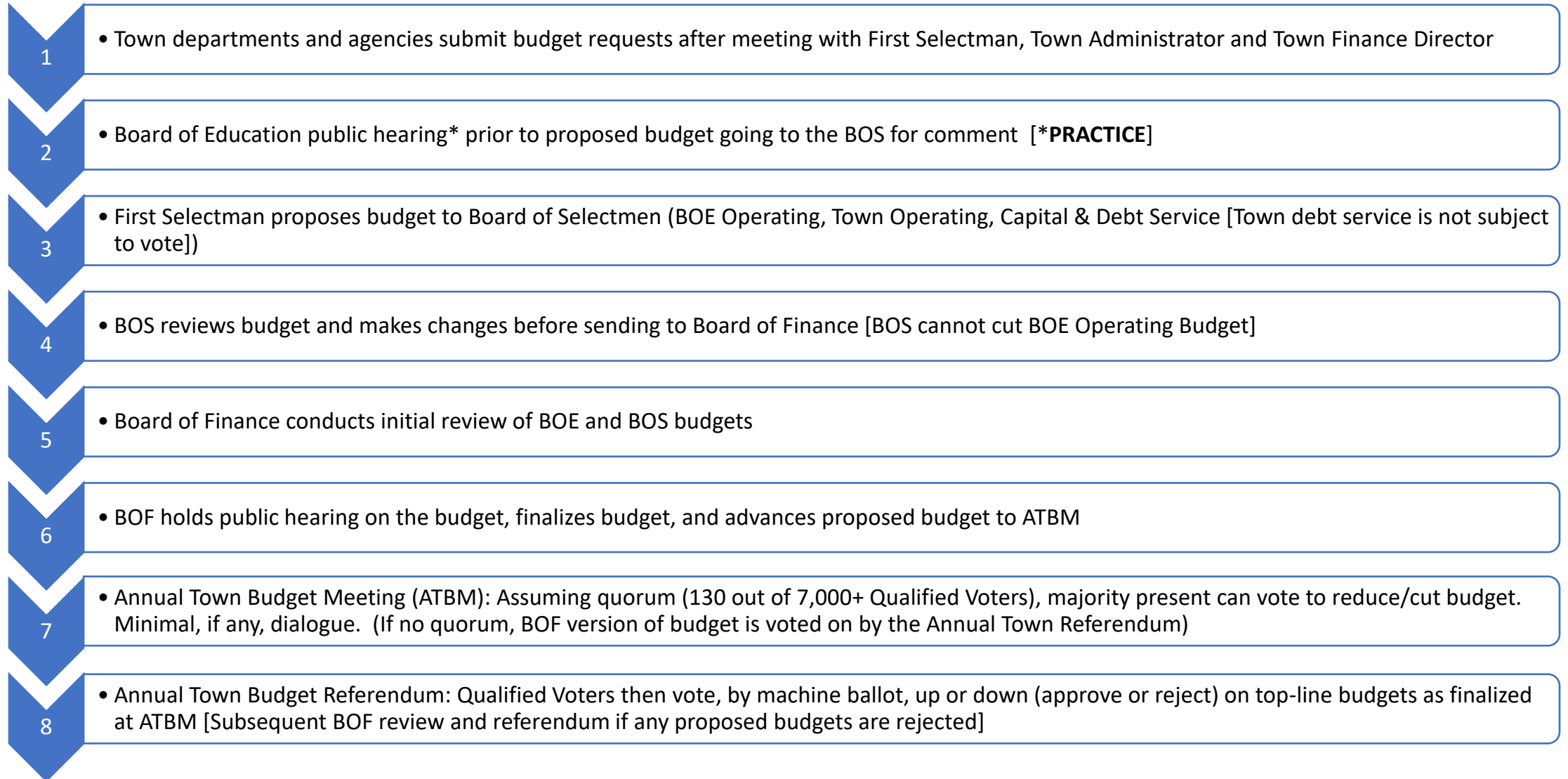
- Clarify processes for transfers and additional appropriations
- Transfers initiated by Board of Selectmen, with dollar, timing, approval and other limits (e.g. no hiring additional employees without BOF approval)
- Establish contingency fund provision (1/8 of 1%)
- Facilitate orderly closing of town's budgets

- **Key Rationale**

- Address ambiguities
- Support agile government
 - Allow Departments to manage their budget in line with approved budget
 - Ensure expenditures do not exceed overall budget
 - Allow Town Administration to move monies in support of overall town goals, , year-end reconciliations, and other standard municipal accounting practices
- ...while maintaining appropriate oversight
 - Limitation on amounts, time of year, uses, approvals
 - Ensuring approval language reflects clear intent

² Charge (a): Review and recommend enhancements to the Charter's existing provisions regarding **financial transparency, budgeting, expenditures, and accounting.**

Key Budget Steps (Current)



Charge (b)² - Public Engagement in the Budget Process

- **Background Materials & Discussion**

- Public Input (1st CRC Public Hearing, Emails)
- Studied other Connecticut towns' public engagement with respect to budget process
- Reviewed Weston's past charter revisions to budget process
- Interviewed finance directors (Board of Education & Town), and Chair & Vice-Chair of Board of Finance
- Met with member of Ridgefield's recent CRC. (Ridgefield removed vote @ ATBM in 2023)

- **Options Considered**

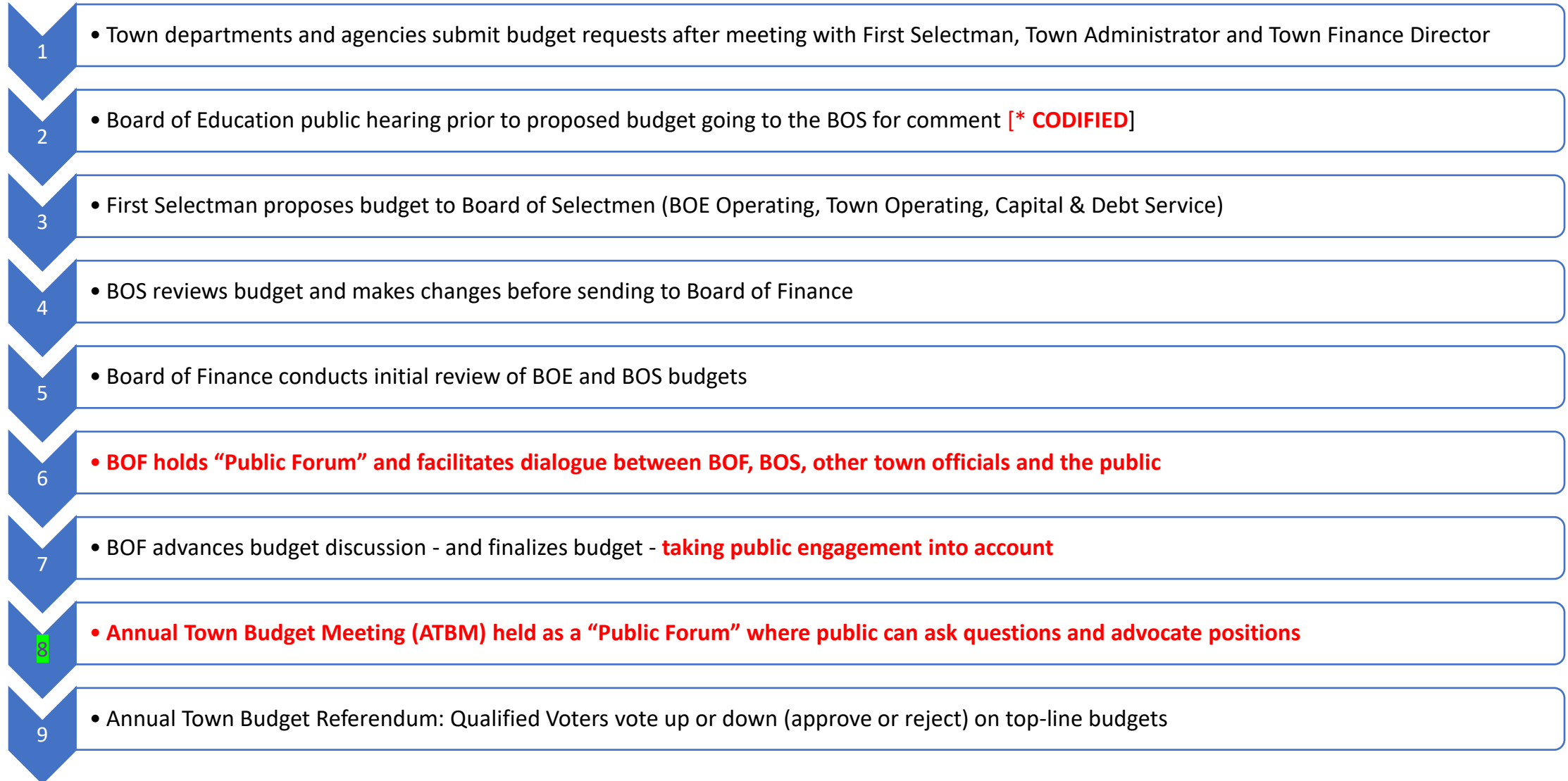
- Retain current process
- Retain ability to reduce budget, but with higher quorum, and super-majority vote
- Increase public dialogue
- ATBM discusses budget only; Straight to machine ballot

- **Recommendation:** Increase public dialogue; ATBM discusses budget only; Straight to machine ballot

- Introducing concept of 'Public Forum'; expectation of 2-way conversation between public and town officials
- Codifying one such current practice (Board of Education)
- Additional Public Forum when BOF initially get recommendations from BOS
- Retain ATBM as Forum (no vote) followed by machine ballot on budget approved by BOF

² Charge (b): Evaluate the **effectiveness, timeliness, and public engagement of the budget process** and to recommend improvements as needed.

Key Budget Steps (CRC Recommended)



Charge (b)² - Public Engagement in the Budget Process

• Key Rationale

- Increase opportunities for real dialogue
 - Mandated public forums to provide education and transparency so voters can be better informed at polls (both budget referendum and general election)
 - Initial Forums allow for public's voices to be heard
 - ATBM Forum allows – among other things – ability for people to encourage their neighbors to approve or reject at referendum
- Eliminate line-item reduction ability by small minority
 - Currently <1% can enact reductions
- Removes forced 'in-public' vote, reducing neighbor-on-neighbor tension
- Address inability of residents to attend ATBM
 - Current standard for voting at ATBM is much higher than standard for voting in any other election (municipal, state, federal).
 - Those with small children, night jobs, travel for work, physical limitations / mobility challenges
 - Does cost of babysitter effectively amount to poll tax?
 - Must be available on that specific night(s) for the whole time VS polls being open all day whereby voting takes only minutes.
- Checks on government remain (Referendum and subsequent elections)

² Charge (b): Evaluate the **effectiveness, timeliness, and public engagement of the budget process** and to recommend improvements as needed.

Charge (c)⁴ - Minority Representation

- **Background Materials & Discussion**

- Reviewed language & background
- Considered other towns' approaches
- Looked at Weston's voter rolls
- Public Input (1st CRC Public Hearing, Emails)

- **Options Considered**

- Retain language as-is
- Embrace Connecticut General Statutes requirements
- Hybrid (e.g. Bare Majority for 5-member Boards)

- **Recommendation:** C.G.S. 9-167a

- State statute

- **Key Rationale**

- State has deliberated to come up with thoughtful approach and language that is widely used
- Weston has large population of Unaffiliated voters (approx. 40%)
- Would more accurately reflect the will of the voting public

⁴ Charge (c): Study **minority representation** per state statute (CGS § 9-167a) to determine any benefit of following the statutory process compared to the current allocation. Recommend language and approach to implementation if a change is beneficial.

Charge (d)⁵ - Boards & Commissions: Terms & Sizes

- **Background Materials & Discussion**

- Reviewed existing compositions, including vacancies
- Solicited feedback from all Boards & Commissions
- Reference materials (other towns, etc.)
- Public Input (1st CRC Public Hearing, Emails)

- **Options Considered**

- Retain as-is
- Targeted adjustments

- **Recommendation: Targeted Adjustments**

- Police Commission: Reduce from 7 to 5 members
- Commission for the Arts: Add alternates

- **Key Rationale**

- Police Commission: 7-member Board for Department of 17 officers considered excessive
- Commission for the Arts:
 - More members to accomplish work
 - Use alternates to avoid quorum issues

⁵Charge (a): Evaluate the size and length of term for [certain] elected [appointed] boards compared to surrounding municipalities to reflect population size, quorum standards and efficient decision

CRC Addition: Board of Ethics & Related Provisions

- **Background Materials & Discussion**

- Existing language (Charter & Ordinance)
- State statutes provisions for Board of Ethics
- Other towns' approach

- **Options Considered**

- Retain as-is
- Enhance and augment

- **Recommendation:** Enhance and augment

- 5-member board, with no more than 2 members from any party
- Mandatory annual training
- Subpoena provisions include 'pauses', seeking to avoid targeted political use
- Complaints cannot be anonymous
- Investigations require confidentiality

- **Key Rationale**

- Charter language seeks to build structure and maturity
 - Too important to just leave up to ordinances

Additional CRC Recommendations

- Charge e: Align Charter language to reflect positions that are now appointed instead of elected and account for appointed positions that are employees represented by collective bargaining agreements or not in alignment with State Statute
 - Town Clerk from an elected office to an appointed office – charter changed to reflect practice.
 - Repeal the petition process to return the Town Clerk to status as an elected official
 - Animal Control, Assessor, Building Inspector, Tax Collector are appointed officials who are employees of the Town and represented by a Union; therefore, does not make sense to have a term in the Charter for them. Tree Warden's term is by state statute, so revision is to make the term 2 years instead of 1 year.
- Charge f: Identify and recommend language to address inconsistent terminology.
 - Went from 15 Charter Definitions to 31 and moved them from Article 11 to Article 1
 - Updated definitions to address inconsistent terminology, i.e., Public Official or Official, Family Member, Employee or Town Employee
 - Ensured Charter uses the definitions consistently throughout the document
- Charge g: Consider adding a requirement to review the Charter every 10 years.
 - Adds a requirement for a periodic review of the Charter not later than ten years from the prior revision
- Charge h: Amend the Charter to remove unnecessary and redundant language and other inaccuracies.
 - Reviewed document and took out unnecessary language, such as the old BOF Term

APPENDIX

Charter Revision Commission Town of Weston, CT

Public Hearing – April 16, 2026

CRC Resources

Charge ID	Charge	Resources Used by CRC
a)	Review and recommend enhancements to the Charter’s existing provisions regarding financial transparency, budgeting, expenditures, and accounting.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Charter Revisions to Budget Adoption Process” (dated 1/20/26) Weston 1967 – 2014 2. “Guide to the Annual Town Budget Process Weston CT” by the League of Women Voters of Weston 3. “CRC Board Commission Other Town Charters Budget” (dated 12/16/2025): Examined budget process in charters of surrounding towns: Bethel (Chapter C. Charter, Article VI. Town Meeting- Sec. C6-3. Annual Town Budget Meeting & Article X. Finance and Taxation, Section 10-2, Preparation of Budget), Ridgefield (Charter, Article X, “Finance and Taxation”), Wilton, (Charter, Chapter C, Article VII, “Appropriations, Budget and Finance, Section C-30), Easton (Chapter 60- Finance, Board of) 4. “Budget Adoption Process Comparison” (dated 12/16/2025: Weston, Bethel, Ridgefield, Wilton, Easton, Redding) 5. FY2026-2027 Budget Calendar 6. Berchem and Moses Legal Memorandum to the Weston Board of Finance regarding Appropriations/Transfer Questions dated February 4, 2025. 7. Interviewed the following Weston Public Officials regarding the budget process: (1/20/26) Phil Cross, BOE Chief Finance & Operations Officer, Mike Imber, Chairman of Board of Finance, Rick Darling, Finance Director and (on 2/24/26) Alex Staehely, Vice Chair of BOF 8. Interviewed Mike Rettger, Chairman of the Ridgefield Board of Finance (2/3/26). Mike was a member of Ridgefield’s CRC in 2023
b)	Evaluate the effectiveness, timeliness, and public engagement of the budget process and to recommend improvements as needed.	
c)	Study minority representation per state statute (CGS § 9-167a) to determine any benefit of following the statutory process compared to the current allocation. Recommend language and approach to implementation if a change is beneficial.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Background Document 2-Minority Representation Comparison” (dated 12/16/2025): MPR Memorandum by Attorney Mednick that was designed to familiarize the reader with the state statute and to assess the practices of other CT communities, namely: Wilton, Westport, Bethel, Ridgefield, New Canaan, Darein, Monroe, Fairfield, Trumbull, Newtown, Canton, Old Saybrook, Griswold, Windsor Locks, Clinton, Orange, Colchester, Hebron, East Windsor, Oxford, New Fairfield, Plainfield, Suffield, Ellington, Brookfield, Stonington, East Lyme, South bury, Guilford, Seymour, Madison, North Haven, Simsbury, New Milford, Shelton, Greenwich, Norwalk, Stamford, Danbury 2. “Minority Representation Comparison” (dated 12/16/2025): Town Administrator provided information on a before and after look at Weston’s current Boards and Commissions under the current, more stringent MPR standard and the state standard.

CRC Resources (continued)

Charge ID	Charge	Resources Used in Review
d)	Evaluate the size and length of term for [certain] elected [appointed] boards compared to surrounding municipalities to reflect population size, quorum standards and efficient decision making.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. “Board Survey Tabulation” (dated 12/16/2025): Surveyed members of Weston Boards and Commissions except for BOS (see #2) and considered the opinion of other members if provided through other means, i.e., email, meeting minutes. Received responses from: BOE, BOF, Police Commission, Planning & Zoning, ZBA, Board of Ethics, Building Bd of Appeals, Children & Youth, Arts Comm, Commission on Aging, Conservation Comm, Historic District Comm, Library Board, Parks & Rec2. BOS: A) Third Selectman provided a detailed email, the CRC Ex-Officio Liaison provided his opinion in a meeting, and the First Selectman provided her opinion through the CRC Ex-Officio Liaison, which he provided to the CRC in a CRC meeting. B) Term of Selectman – reviewed 98 CT municipalities with a form of government like Weston’s (selectman-town meeting). Also looked at CT towns with other forms of government: 8 with a Sel,-RTM or Council; 30 with a mayor & council; and 31 with a Council and Manager3. Reviewed board and commission sizes and the length of terms of their members from the following towns: Bethel, Darien, Easton, Fairfield, New Canaan, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Westport and Wilton for the following Boards/Commissions: Board of Assessment Appeals, Board of Education, Board of Finance, Board of Police Commissioners, Board of Selectmen, Planning & Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals. – Refer to document titled “Board Commission Member Other Towns Summary,” (dated 12/16/2025)4. The Public: Reviewed Minutes from CRC Hearing on November 20, 2025, and emails sent to CRC5. The Town Administrator shared with the CRC an email from the former Police Commission Chair, Dawn Egan, that she sent to the BOS and Town Administrator on February 24, 2025, which reviewed other towns’ ratios between officers and commissioners compared to Weston. The towns surveyed included: Easton, Wilton, Newtown, Monroe, Ridgefield, New Canaan, Darien, Trumbull, Norwalk, and Fairfield6. Considered origins of requirement, such as Charter, Ordinance, and state statute, , including the review of the document titled “Offices. Members, Terms” (dated 12/2/2025.)
g)	Consider adding a requirement to review the Charter every 10 years.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reviewed document titled “Charter Review Frequency by Towns” (dated 11/25/25) that provided the number of years that the following municipality charters require that they be reviewed by a CRC: Fairfield, Norwalk, Ridgefield, Stamford, Middlebury, Southbury, Granby, Wethersfield, Plainfield2. Reviewed CT General Statutes (C.G.S.) sections on Charter Revisions Commissions

CRC Resources (continued)

Charge ID	Charge	Resources Used in Review
Added by CRC	Board of Ethics, Conflict of Interests and Removal of Elected and Appointed Town Officials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. “Background Doc 1-Ethics Provisions” (dated 12/16/25): Reviewed a 50-page document prepared by the CRC’s Special Charter Counsel that laid out different formats and approaches to address ethics and conflicts of interest standards and protocols in Charters throughout CT, specifically: Hamden Charter-Conflict of Interest and Ethics, Removal of Elected and Appointed officials; Proposed Fairfield Charter – Standards of Conduct, Rules of order and Civility, Open Meetings and Public Records, Diversity on Boards and Commissions; Middletown Charter – Conflict of Interest and Ethics, Removal of Department Heads and Appointed Officials, and Removal Elected Officials; New Haven Charter – Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics, Removal of Elected and Appointed Officials; Norwalk Charter – Standards of Conduct, Rules of Order and Civility, Open Meetings and Public records, Diversity on Boards and Commissions, Required Cooperation; Salem- Standards of Conduct, Rules of Order and Civility, Open Meeting and Public Records<li>2. “Conflict of Interest Disclosure Provisions” document (dated 2/24/26): Reviewed Conflict of Interest (COI) Disclosure provisions of other CT municipalities with similar forms of government (BOS/Town Meeting), which included: Wilton, Bethel, Canton, Old Saybrook, Griswold, Windsor Locks, Clinton, Orange, Colchester, Ellington, East Lyme, Southbury, Guilford, Somers, Hebron, East Windsor, New Fairfield, Plainfield, Suffield, Seymour, Madison, North Haven, Monroe, Windham and Simsbury. Other municipalities in Fairfield County area with different forms of government: Westport, Stamford, Danbury, Fairfield, Trumbull, Newtown, Ridgefield, Norwalk, Greenwich, Shelton, New Milford, New Canaan Weston Code of Ethics Ordinance (Chapter 64)<li>3. CT General Statutes (C.G.S.), such as, 1-82(a), 7-148(h)<li>4. Weston Charter, Article 10<li>5. “Removal of Elected Officials” document (dated 1/20/26): Reviewed Removal of Elected Officials prepared by the CRC’s Special Charter Counsel