

**WOODBURY CHARTER REVISION
COMMISSION**

PRESENTATION & PUBLIC HEARING

SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

OVERVIEW

- Purpose & format of tonight's hearing
- The four questions
- Some advantages and disadvantages
- Public comment

PURPOSE & FORMAT

- Inform residents of a few of the more important issues that the CRC is discussing
- Provide an opportunity for residents to express their preferences, concerns, and questions
- Not a typical CRC meeting: CRC members will be listening, not expressing their personal opinions

FOUR QUESTIONS

1. Should Woodbury change the number of Selectmen (including the First Selectman) from 3 to 5?
2. Should Woodbury change the length of the terms of the Board of Selectmen from the current 2 years to 4 years (regardless of how many selectmen there are)?
3. Should the terms of the Board of Selectmen be staggered such that not all Selectmen are elected at the same time?
4. Should the town add the position of Town Administrator (an employee who reports to the Board of Selectmen)?

1. INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SELECTMEN

Arguments *for* increasing the number of selectmen :

- Gives Woodbury residents more representation
- Allows for the re-distribution of the BoS workload
- Allows for more diversity of thought on the BoS
- Allows for Selectmen to attend more meetings of Boards, Commissions, Agencies, and Committees

1. INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SELECTMEN

Arguments *against* increasing the number of selectmen:

- Board of Selectmen seem to be functioning well as is
- There is a financial cost, approx. \$10k per year (\$5k per selectman)
- Potentially longer BoS meetings as there'd be more discussion

2. LENGTHENING THE TERMS

Arguments *for* lengthening the terms:

- Learning these positions takes time and the potential for frequent turnover could hinder effective governance
- Would allow the BoS to focus relatively more of their energies on doing the job well and relatively less on preparing for and running for re-election
- Consistency over time allows for better supervision of town employees, policy development, etc.

2. LENGTHENING THE TERMS

Argument *against* lengthening the terms:

- Longer terms means that residents must wait longer to vote out Selectmen who are not adequately doing their job
- Requires a greater commitment from each Selectman

3. STAGGERING THE TERMS

Assume 4-year terms. For a 5-person board, 3 would be elected in one cycle and 2 in the other cycle, such that they have overlapping terms. For a 3-person board, 2 would be elected in one cycle and 1 in the other cycle.

Argument **for** staggering the terms:

- Greater continuity

Argument **against** staggering the terms:

- Could break up cohesiveness of a working unit
- Unintended hierarchy

4. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

There are many versions of town administrators in existence. The applicant would be a hired town employee who reports to the Board of Selectmen. This could impact the structure of the BoS.

4. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Partial job description (this sample is from the Town of Ellington):

- *Directs and coordinates the Town government in accordance with Town Charter, Town Ordinances, administers Connecticut State Statues with the policy advice and authority of the Board of Selectmen.*
- *Coordinates short-term and long-range policy planning and development to address the needs of the Town and its residents.*
- *Develops and initiates policy proposals and actions for consideration by the Board of Selectmen and Town boards and commissions.*
- *Coordinates, reviews, and submits annual budget recommendations to the Board of Finance in conjunction with the First Selectman and the Finance Officer/Treasurer.*

4. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Arguments *for* hiring a town administrator:

- Could help manage growing complexity of the town government
- Could be a person with management experience and expertise
- Hired, not elected
- Not a political position
- Could provide consistency across election cycles for better supervision of town employees, policy development, etc.
- Handles day to day operations, such that Selectmen can address broader scope projects

4. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Arguments ***against*** hiring a town administrator:

- Will cost the town a five- to six-figure salary plus benefits
- Pool of potential candidates may be small
- Vacuum created by potential turnover
- Difficult to remove
- Hired, not elected

ONE MORE QUESTION

Should the town clerk and/or the tax collector be appointed or elected?

Argument **for** appointment of the positions:

- Has specific job qualifications
- Wider pool of applicants since no residency requirements

Argument **for** election of the positions :

- Accountable to the town residents
- Avoids cronyism or “politics”

PUBLIC COMMENT