

Recommendations for Charter Revision – 2019 & 2024

Registrars of Voters

C6-3 A.(1) Annual Town Budget Meeting

The Charter-defined time constraints of holding the Town Meeting and the subsequent Budget Referendum can make it difficult to schedule these important town governance events and avoid April holidays and school vacations.

We suggest that this paragraph be revised to permit the Board of Selectmen to hold the Annual Town Budget Meeting on one of the first 14 days of April, rather than 7 days of April.

C6-3 B. (1) Budget Referendum

The Charter mandates that the budget referendum to be held in as little as 7 days after the Town Budget Meeting. While this was feasible when we used lever machines, it only gives the Registrars of Voters six (6) days to prepare for the referendum vote. Attached is a listing of the tasks that the Registrars must complete to prepare for a vote. A crucial step is getting the ballots printed by one of the two state-approved vendors. In 2018, the Budget Referendum was held 7 business days after the Town Budget Meeting. The ballots were not delivered until 16 hours before opening the polls. We nearly faced opening the polls without official ballots. We would have had to use photocopied ballots and hand-count the results at the end of the night. The current time frame of seven (7) days is not safe and reasonable given our current voting system. We ask that the Charter Revision Commission consider amending this section to permit the machine vote to be held **no less than ten (10) business days after the Annual Town Budget Meeting.**

C6-5 E. Petition to Overrule

This section sets time frames for a Special Referendum that are more restrictive than those for the Annual Budget Referendum. We recommend the following wording (**in BOLD**) for this Section:

*“The Board of Selectmen shall then fix the time and place of such special referendum which shall be held not less than **ten (10)** nor more than **fifteen (15)** days, **excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays**, after the certification of said petition.....”*

Section C6-8 Action Requiring Referendum

This section needs to be expanded considerably to detail capital budget items considered as part of the annual town budget meeting, as well as the process for mid year capital expenditure consideration.

Section C10-9 Salaries

This section was added in the 2014 Charter Revision. It contains “proceeding” which is not a word. “Proceeding” is a word and “preceding” is a word. Clearly, the intent in this case was to use “preceding” in this paragraph. Please include this technical correction along with your other “housekeeping” modifications of the Charter. You can also delete the implementing clause that opens this section as follows:

~~Following the adoption of said Charter revision effectuating the same, I~~ the Board of Finance shall set the annual salaries of the municipal officials including the Registrar of Voters, Town Treasurer, Town Clerk, Selectmen and First Selectman during the budgetary process ~~proceeding~~ preceding the next election for said respective offices and annually thereafter during ~~annual budgetary processthe terms~~.