

**Proposed Revision of
The Charter of the Town of Hamden**

**To be voted on in the Town of Hamden
In the Election to be held on
Tuesday, November 8, 2011**



Scott D. Jackson
Mayor

Vera Morrison
Town Clerk

**PROPOSED REVISION OF THE
CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF HAMDEN**

**TO BE VOTED ON IN THE TOWN OF HAMDEN
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ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2011**

Pursuant to §9-369b(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), as amended, the following is a designation of the proposed amendments to the Charter of the Town of Hamden, in accordance with C.G.S. §7-188. Said proposals were prepared by the 2010-2011 Charter Revision Commission and approved for submission to the electorate by the Legislative Council of said Town. The proposed revision of the Charter was published, in its entirety in the New Haven Register on August 26, 2011.

The Hamden Question will be designated as Question No. 1. If a majority of the electors voting on this amendment to the Charter approve same, it shall become a part of the Town's Charter.

Attest: _____

Vera Morrison
Town Clerk

QUESTION #1

Shall the Town of Hamden approve and adopt the Charter changes as recommended by the Charter Revision Commission and as approved by the Legislative Council?

Explanation. The question deals broadly with restructuring the governance, policy development and regulatory powers of the Town of Hamden, in the first instance, by organizing the Charter by governmental function. The following addresses some of the key provisions in each Chapter:

Chapter 1 – Construction of the Charter: Assembles common definitions used throughout the Charter in one location.

Chapter II – Incorporation and General Powers: Sets forth the incorporation and general grant of powers of the Town.

Chapter III – Elections, Electors, Elected Officials and Terms of Office. Establishes the two year term of office for Mayor, Town Clerk and Legislative Council and a four year term for the Board of Education and Registrars of Voters, including appropriate transition provisions. Additionally addresses vacancies in public office, temporary disability or absence of the Mayor, reapportionment of voting districts, the

transfer of public records to successors, conflict of interest and ethics and removal from office procedures for elected and appointed officials.

Chapter IV - The Legislative Council. Clarifies the powers and duties of the Legislative Council: (1) The position of President Pro Tempore is incorporated as successor to the President; (2) Rules of procedure should be adopted in a timely manner; (3) Open meeting and public comment standards are established for meetings, including special committee and plenary sessions; (4) Provision is made for the appropriation of funds during public emergencies; (5) Legislative terminology is simplified and clarified; (6) "Petition for Overrule" reduced from 20% to 15% of electors; and (7) Interlocal agreements and regional cooperation are recognized.

Chapter V - The Mayor. Consolidates the executive powers. Among the changes: (1) Legislative approval is required for (a) certain contracts in excess of \$100,000 (increased from \$50,000) or in an amount set by the Council and (b) contracts with terms in multiple fiscal years or longer than 12 months in duration (in lieu of 24 months); and (2) Emergency powers are delineated.

Chapter VI - Other Elected Officials. Addresses the powers of the Town Clerk and Registrars of Voters.

Chapter VII - Boards and Commissions. Sets forth the general requirements for all appointed boards and commissions including method of creation, appointment, vacancy, residency, dual appointment ban, minority party representations, and removal. Establishes boards and commissions as: (1) created and delineated in the Charter; (2) required by the Charter; or, (3) authorized by law. Moreover, former public officials or political party officers are restricted from serving on the Civil Service Commission and Board of Ethics for a period of three years following their service.

Chapter VIII - Departments and Department Heads. Confirms the Town's authority to establish, by ordinance, such departments as are necessary to carry out its municipal functions. Delineates the following Departments: (1) Legal (Town Attorney); (2) Government Administration: Department of Finance (Director of Finance), Tax Collector, Assessor, Purchasing Agent, and Personnel and Human Resources (Director of Personnel); (3) Public Safety, Health and Community Services: Police Department (Chief of Police), Fire Department (Fire Chief) and the Health District; (4) Government Operations and Infrastructure: Department of Public Works and Parks (Director) and Engineering Department (Town Engineer); and, (5) Town Planning, Zoning Enforcement Environment and Economic Development: Building Department (Building Official), Planning and Zoning Department (Town Planner and Zoning Enforcement Officer) and other departments as may be established.

Establishes procedures permitting: (1) departmental reorganizations so long as the Charter mandated functions are met by the Town based upon a finding by the Town Attorney; and (2) internal departmental reorganizations. Moreover, this chapter establishes the process for appointment and removal of department heads, rules pertaining to employment contracts, authority and qualifications, residency requirements and liability.

Chapter IX – Education. There are no significant changes.

Chapter X - Budget. A recodification of the current provisions with some refinements in terminology and process: (1) the budget overrule petition is reduced from 20% to 15% of electors; (2) adjustment in the general and special fund transfers limitations; (3) inclusion of provisions pertaining to public funds and finance; and (4) established a debt service limitation (4% of the fiscal year budget) on non-capital projects.

Chapters XI, XII and XIII – Transition, Sunset and Historical Provisions. In the event the proposed Charter is approved, the amended Charter shall take effect "upon adoption by the voters...unless otherwise set forth in the Charter". Transition provisions address principally the transition to the four year term for Registrars of Voters as well as the based periods for the appointment of members of boards and commissions. The sunset provisions address certain issues pertaining to the Ethics Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission pending the adoption of ordinance addressing the functions of those entities. The historical chapter addresses provisions of the current Charter pertaining to employees of the town prior to January 1, 1966.