

TOWN OF SUFFIELD
CHARTER REVISION EXPLANATORY TEXT
PURSUANT TO C.G.S. §9-369(b)

- 1. Shall the Suffield Charter Section 204, “Vacancies in Elective Offices”, be amended to create a detailed process for filling a vacancy in the office of First Selectman?**

Explanatory Text: This revision changes the succession language for the office of the First Selectman in the event of a vacancy. The revision provides for a limited time for the Board of Selectmen to fill the position from members of the board of the same party as the vacating First Selectman. If that cannot be accomplished, it allows the Board of Selectmen to fill the position with another member of the Board of Selectmen, regardless of party affiliation. In the event that does not occur, the Board of Selectmen can fill the position with someone from the same party as the vacating First Selectman who is not a member of the Board of Selectmen. If thirty days elapses and the Board of Selectmen have not filled the position, the appointment is to be made by a majority vote of the Town’s elected officials of the party that nominated the vacating First Selectman.

- 2. Shall the Suffield Charter Section 302A be amended to provide that the length of the terms of the Board of Selectmen, including the First Selectman, be increased to four years?**

Explanatory Text: The Board of Selectmen is the only elected board in the Town with two year terms. This amendment increases the terms to four years, consistent with other elected boards in Town. Should this pass, the terms would be increased beginning in November 2023.

- 3. Shall the Suffield Charter Section 302H be amended to increase the number of members on the Board of Police Commissioners to seven beginning with the election in Nov. 2023, and shall the Special Act creating the Police Commission be adopted as an ordinance and updated to correspond with the increase in membership?**

Explanatory Text: Connecticut General Statutes 7-237 requires a Police Commission to have 3, 5 or 7 members. This revision increases the number of members to comply with the statute.

- 4. Shall the Suffield Charter Section 302H be amended to clarify that the Police Commission maintains its statutory authority over the Department and that the Chief of Police manages day to day operations of the Police Department and reports, as a Department Head, to the First Selectman?**

Explanatory Text: This revision follows a 2019 Management Operational Study of the police department recommendation to clarify the reporting structure for the Chief of Police. It assigns statutory duties to the Police Commission, day to day management of

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the Department to the Chief of Police and provides for the Chief of Police to report to the First Selectman as a Department Head.

5. **Shall the Suffield Charter Section 302I be amended to decrease the number of members on the Fire Commission to five beginning with the election in Nov. 2023?**

Explanatory Text: This revision decreases the number of members of the Fire Commission from 6 to 5.

6. **Shall the Suffield Charter Section 302I be amended to clarify that the Fire Commission maintains its statutory authority over the Department, and that the Fire Chief manages day to day operations of the Fire Department and reports, as a Department Head, to the First Selectman?**

Explanatory Text: This revision mirrors the changes to the Police Commission. It assigns statutory duties to the Fire Commission, day to day management of the Department to the Fire Chief and provides for the Fire Chief to report to the First Selectman as a Department Head.

7. **Shall the Suffield Charter Section 302K be amended to clarify that the WPCA shall have all of its statutory powers for the effective management of waste water in the Town, that the WPCA Superintendent is a Department Head of the Town and that all employees working at the WPCA facilities are employees of the Town and subject to Town human resources and employment policies?**

Explanatory Text: This revision clarifies that, while unique, the Suffield Water Pollution Control Authority is a Department of the Town.

8. **Shall the Suffield Charter Section 502, “Powers and Duties” of the First Selectman, be amended to clarify that the First Selectman is responsible for “enforcing” the administrative and personnel policies of the Town, for the management of Department Heads (Section B), and to incorporate the WPCA into the First Selectman’s consistency and coordination duties (Section F)?**

Explanatory Text: This revision clarifies that the First Selectman is responsible for “enforcing” the administrative and personnel policies of the Town and manages Department Heads. Additionally, it inserts the WPCA into the consistency and coordination duties of the First Selectman, where that agency was previously exempted.

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9. **Shall the Suffield Charter Section 807, “Expenditures and Accounting”, be amended to provide a defined process for the Board of Selectmen to set and waive the Bid and Purchase process (Section E), for the Town Treasurer to consult with the Finance Department on payroll (Section G) and to provide for end of year transfers by the Board of Finance to the WPCA and to the Board of Education (Section H)?**

Explanatory Text: This revision creates a defined process for the Board of Selectmen to set and waive the Bid and Purchase process. It also requires the Town Treasurer to consult with the Finance Department on payroll, per current practices. Finally, it specifically allows for end of year transfers by the Board of Finance to the WPCA and to the Board of Education.

10. **Shall the Suffield Charter Section 1006, “Actions Requiring a Town Meeting”, Subsection F be amended to provide that the acceptance of land donated to the Town does require approval at Town meeting but utility easements and land purchased, donated or sold with a value of \$10,000 or less does not require approval at a Town Meeting?**

Explanatory Text: This revision increases the value of land required for Town meeting from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and allows the Board of Selectmen to accept donated land or utility easements.

11. **Shall the Suffield Charter Section 1007, “Town Meeting by Petition”, Subsection A(1) be amended to prohibit Town Meetings to be petitioned for the purpose of specifying compensation of officials or fixing the tax rate, and be further amended to change “appointing or removing officials” to “censuring officials”?**

Explanatory Text: This revision prevents a Town meeting by petition for the purpose of appointing or removing officials, from setting the compensation of Town Officials and for fixing the tax rate. The Connecticut General Statutes has specific requirements for the fixing of the tax rate, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance recommend the salaries for non-union employees and union employees’ salaries are set contractually. Finally, state law prohibits the recall of municipal elected officials, except where that power was created by Special Act of the legislature.

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12. **Shall the Suffield Charter Section 1101, “Conflict of Interest”, be amended to reference the definition in the Town ethics code and require disclosure of conflicts of interest to follow the manner prescribed by the Connecticut General Statutes, except for the First Selectman, who is required to disclose conflicts of interest in writing to the Board of Selectmen?**

Explanatory Text: This revision creates the same definition for conflict of interest in the Charter as the definition in the Town’s Code of Ethics. It requires disclosures of conflicts of Town employees and elected officials to occur as required by the Connecticut General Statutes. However, it requires a higher standard for the First Selectman who is required to notify the Board of Selectmen in writing about any conflicts of interest.

13. **Shall the Suffield Charter Section 1203 “Status of Employees”, be amended to require the Town Human Resources Department to arrange for the hiring of all employees, except those hired by the Board of Education, and exempt the Board of Education and WPCA from engaging consultants or employing people outside of the Annual Town Budget?**

Explanatory Text: This revision standardizes the hiring process of Town Employees to involve the Town’s Human Resources Department, in line with current practices. Additionally, the Amendment requires Town Departments other than the Board of Education and WPCA from engaging consultants or employing individuals outside of what was approved in the Annual Town budget.

14. **Shall the Suffield Charter be revised by adopting the technical corrections and (non-substantive) changes recommended by the 2020-2021 Charter Revision Commission?**

Explanatory Text: Technical Revisions include updating statutory references so that they are appropriate and consistent, removing references to dates where certain Sections of the Charter were previously adopted, adding references to other Sections of the Charter and removing references to election requirements for Commissions established by previous Charter Revisions. These include updates to Section 201, Section 204, Section 301C, Section 302A, Section 302K, Section 302L, Section 303, Section 401, Section 405, Section 409, Section 601, Section 608, Section 611C, Section 701A, Section 701C, Section 706A, Section 706B, Section 706L, Section 706M, Section 706N, Section 803, Section 804B, Section 1002, Section 1004, Section 1005A, Section 1005B, 1006C, Section 1006H, Section 1006I, Section 1006J, Section 1007, Section 1008, 1009C, Section 1010, Section 1202, Section 1206, Section 1210, Section 1211.