

**Proposed Revision of
The Charter of the City of Hartford**

**To be voted on in the City of Hartford
in the Election to be held on
Tuesday, November 8, 2022**



Luke Bronin
Mayor

Maly Rosado
President, Court of Common Council

**PROPOSED REVISION OF THE
CHARTER OF THE CITY OF HARTFORD**

**TO BE VOTED ON IN THE CITY OF HARTFORD
IN THE ELECTION TO BE HELD
ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022**

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 City of Hartford, in accordance with C.G.S. §7-188. Said proposals were prepared by the Hartford Charter Revision Commission and approved for submission to the electorate by the Court of Common Council. The proposed revision of the Charter was published, in its entirety, in the **Hartford News** on September 9, 2022.

There is one Question on the Ballot. If a majority of the electors voting on this amendment to the Charter approve same, it shall become a part of the City's Charter.

Attest: _____
Noel McGregor
City & Town Clerk

QUESTION

Shall the electors of the City of Hartford approve and adopt the Charter changes as recommended by the Charter Revision Commission and as approved by the Court of Common Council?"

Explanation. The question deals broadly with restructuring of the Charter including the elimination of the Special Act provisions addressing pensions and retirement which will be compiled in a separate volume entitled "Code of Special Act Authority". Among the key features are (1) strengthening the legislative function of the Council; (2) recognizing the unique role of the City Treasurer; (3) increasing public accountability standards and interactions with Boards and Commissions and during the extended budget process; and (4) aligning the election of Board of Education members with the Mayor, Council and Treasurer.

The following addresses some of the key provisions in each Chapter:

Chapter I – Incorporation and Boundaries: Assembles definitions used throughout the Charter and places them in one location. The intent is to provide uniformity in some key provisions such as "Meeting (or Hearing) Notice" and "Public Notice." These defined terms are capitalized throughout the Charter

Chapter II – Powers of the City: The provisions pertaining to “Benefit Assessments” and “Powers to Adopt Regulatory Ordinances” will be repealed, since there is statutory authority for both items.

Chapter III - Officers and Elections: The election of the Board of Education will align with the election of the Mayor, Council, Treasurer and other elective officials in November of 2027. Board members will be elected to a two-year transitional term in November 2025.

Chapter IV – The Court of Common Council. Clarifies legislative authority to (1) approve multi-year contracts, agreements, settlements and transactions in accordance with Law; (2) engage in legislative oversight and review of the operations of government, including financial matters; and (3) adopt an Ordinance governing the procedures pertaining to the application for grants and other third party revenues from public or private sources, which shall take into account reporting provisions and other accountability standards. The Town and City Clerk would also be placed within the Council office for “administrative and budgetary purposes”. Finally, the Charter clarifies authority for the Council to appoint “full time professional staff,” retain the assistance of the Corporation Counsel or outside counsel and other consultants “to assist the Council in its legislative functions.”

Chapter V - The Mayor. Clarifies the procedures for the adjustment of Mayoral compensation; moves the date of the Mayor’s State of the City address to the second Council meeting in March as opposed to the first; and, creates a process for the Council to determine whether the Mayor is unable to “attend to the duties of office” due to temporary absence or disability.

Chapter VI – The City Treasurer. The Registrars of Voters provision was moved to Chapter III and this chapter deals exclusively with the City Treasurer. First, it establishes a compensation standard in an “amount equal to six thousand (\$6,000.00) dollars less than the salary of the Mayor.” Second, the Treasurer would be permitted to place City funds in a state or federally chartered credit union. Third, the Charter memorializes the long-term role of the Treasurer as the administrator of the Pension Commission and “fiduciary” of City pension funds. Fourth, the Treasurer will have the ability to “cause proposals pertaining to the functions” of the Treasurer’s Office on the agenda of the Council and to hire, under the “review and authority” of the Pension Commission, such employees as are “necessary and appropriate to perform the work” of the office.

Chapter VII - Boards and Commissions. Sets forth the general requirements for all appointed boards and commissions including the differing roles and functions of Boards and Commissions; for example, regulatory and department-based policy or administrative functions. The chapter also establishes the priority of appointees to serve the “public interest.” Other requirements addressed include: (1) method of creating Boards and Commissions; (2) appointment; (3) meeting frequency; (4) sunset provisions for dormant Boards and Commissions; (5) record keeping responsibilities; (6) public access, comment and interaction; and, (6) reimbursement for transportation, child care and other services that will facilitate the diverse participation of Hartford electors and diversity requirements. The provision also defines the roles of the Mayor and the City Clerk in conducting public outreach to fully populate diverse Boards and Commissions. The MetroHartford Alliance replaces the ten largest owners of taxable property as the appointing authority for an appointment on the Internal Audit Committee; the structure of the Planning and Zoning Commission is moved from the ordinances to the charter; and, three alternate members will serve on the Zoning Board of Appeals. In addition, the Board of Assessment Appeals is expanded to add two alternate members. The Charter mandates three entities: Police Accountability Review Board; Civilian Police Review Board; Ethics Commission; and, requires “funding of the Inspector General.” Special Act provisions pertaining to the Pension Commission and Greater Hartford Flood Commission are now consolidated and codified in Chapter VII. The membership of the Flood Commission reflects the authority set forth in P.A. No. 13-299.

Chapter VIII - Departments of the City. There is no longer a charter-based elector requirement for the Corporation Counsel; although the Council may establish such requirement by Ordinance. The Council may also establish a level of authority for monetary settlements that do not require Council approval. The monthly reporting requirements were moved to Chapter X.

Chapter IX – Board of Education and Department of Education. The election cycle for the four elected members of the Board of Education will align with other city elected officials in November 2027. The Charter will also require Board of Education members to engage in outreach efforts, including, but not limited to the following in order to increase participation by the public in the activities of the Board of Education: political, religious, community-based, social, mutual benefit organizations, civic and business organizations.

Chapter X – Budget. Provides the Council with additional time to consider the budget. Under the current framework, the Mayor submits his budget to the Council on the 3rd Monday in April. Under this proposed charter, the budget will be submitted at the second meeting of the council in March, adding an additional 4-5 weeks of legislative review and examination.

This chapter also restructures in linear fashion the budget process, including the alignment of the general fund and capital budgets to increase public interactions to take into account (1) performance measures; (2) service levels; (3) differentiation of services to the residents of the City both in terms of policy and service design; and, (4) priorities in the planning, budgeting and management of public services taking into account the plan of conservation and development required by the General Statutes. The Charter requires the development of a Budget Calendar that sets forth key dates in the budget process and requires the Mayor, the Board of Education and Council to work together, in good faith, throughout the year in order to develop and approve a municipal budget which shall include all expected revenues and expenditures and, for the purposes of short- and long-term financial planning, include detailed estimates of revenues, capital expenses and operating expenses utilizing best practices.

- **Annual budget estimates.** The proposed Charter requires the addition of new details and requirements for the budget estimates as well as the annual program of public improvements as well as one for the ensuing five (5) years.
- **Budget submission.** Concurrent with the Mayor’s report on the state and condition of the City, the Mayor will be required to submit to the Council both the General Fund and Capital Budgets.
- **Budget message.** The Mayor’s budget message will contain the following (new contents are italicized): (1) The fiscal policy of the City for the ensuing fiscal year; (2) A description of the important features of the budget plan, *including major fiscal and programmatic proposed changes from the current fiscal year*; (3) An explanation of all major increases or decreases in proposed expenditures and revenues as compared to the current fiscal year (together with the reasons for such changes); (4) A summary of the proposed budget showing comparisons similar to those required in the budget proper, itemized by principal sources of revenue and the main heads of expenditure; (5) *The debt position of the City, including a statement of the bonds to mature and the interest payable on bonds outstanding*; (6) *An account of the proposed goals, objectives and policy priorities set forth in the proposed budget as well as a statement of how the proposal complies with and advances the objectives of the plan of conservation and development required by the General Statutes*; and, (7) *Such other material as the Mayor deems desirable.*
- **Budget Message of the Board of Education.** The Charter will require the Chair of the Board of Education to set forth the reasons for their budget recommendations directly to the Council with respect to the programmatic information and estimates for the operation of the Department of Education in the same manner as required in the Budget Message of the Mayor.

- **Budget Contents (Revenues).** The proposed budget will contain the following (new contents are italicized): (1) An itemization of all anticipated revenue, *including sources other than the tax levy of the ensuing fiscal year.* (2) *Actual revenues collected in the last completed fiscal year;* (3) *Revenues collected during the current fiscal year prior to the time of preparing the estimates;* (4) *Approved revenue for the current fiscal year;* (5) *Estimated revenue to be collected during the current fiscal year;* (6) Estimated revenue to be collected during the ensuing fiscal year; and, (7) *The annual income from each source for the past five years setting forth recurring and non-recurring revenues.* The Mayor is required to “include a statement of the assumptions on which the estimates are based”.
- **Budget Contents (Expenditures).** The proposed budget will contain the following (new contents are italicized): (1) Proposed expenditures for debt service requirements for the ensuing fiscal year; *including, a schedule of maturities of bond issues;* (2) *The amount required for interest on the City debt, and for maturing serial bonds and other maturing obligations, and other fixed charges, and the amount required to fund pensions currently which amount shall be determined by the Pension Commission and shall not be subject to reduction or rejection by the Council;* (3) An estimate of the sum required to be raised by the tax levy for the ensuing fiscal year, assuming a rate of collection not greater than the average rate of collection in the year of levy for the last three (3) completed fiscal years *as well as estimates for the current fiscal year;*
- **Contents of the Proposed Budget: The Capital Projects Budget and Program.** The program of proposed capital projects for the ensuing fiscal year and for the four (4) fiscal years thereafter shall include (new contents are italicized): (1) Detailed Estimates of Project Costs. *Estimates of the cost of those projects to be undertaken during the ensuing fiscal year and Continuing Projects;* (2) the Annual Levy, as currently limited by Charter; (3) Statement re - Off-Setting Reimbursements. *A statement as to any off-setting reimbursements, such as State or federal grants anticipated in connection with the project;* (4) the method of financing the same; (5) Comparison with prior FY capital appropriation. *Such comparison with any prior year's appropriation for capital projects as deemed advisable by the Mayor requested by the Council or required by Ordinance;* and (6) Status Report on Previously Approved Capital Projects, including completion dates and remaining balance. *A report summarizing the status of Capital Expenditures for each previously approved capital project stating those which have been completed, and the balance of any unexpended bond funds available with recommendations for either redemption of bonds or other capital projects use.*

In addition, the Charter will also contain requirements for public hearings, including a final hearing; clear dates for approval of the budget by the Council, transmittal to the Mayor and final action by the first business day of June. The Charter also eliminates the requirement for allotments and requires monthly reports pertaining to transfers, revenues and projected budget surplus or deficit for the fiscal year. Finally, the Chief of Police is required to file an annual report accounting for the revenues and expenditures associated with shared forfeiture funds from the state and federal governments. The Council may establish criteria for the information to be included in said report.

Chapter XI - Borrowing. The changes address conformity to defined terms.

Chapter XII - Miscellaneous and Transition Provisions. Establishes the effective date of January 1, 2023, unless otherwise stated in the Charter. Requires periodic review of the Code of Ordinances by the Court of Common Council.

Appendix to Charter - Legislative Acts pertaining to the City of Hartford other than specific charter amendments §§1- 15 Remain intact; §16 - 32 are transferred to the Code of Special Act Authority and §§33 - 53 are transferred to §5(b) of Chapter VII.