Minutes not yet approved.
Approval and any edits to be made in succeeding minutes.

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TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
BLOOMFIELD, CT

BLOOMFIELD CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

There was a special meeting of the Bloomfield Charter Revision Commission held on Tuesday September 29, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in a hybrid meeting style. The in-person meeting location was Bloomfield Town Hall Council Chambers, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT, and the virtual location was via Zoom.

Committee Members present: ***In-Person:*** Joseph Suggs, Chair, Bradley Klein, Elvin Turner, Dwight Bolton ***via Zoom:*** None

Committee Members absent: Erica Coleman

Also present were: ***In-Person***—Latonia Tabb, Clerk of Council; Mayor Anthony Harrington; Councilor DeBeaham-Brown; Warren Plummer, Director of IT; ***via Zoom:*** Town Attorney Andrew Crumbie, Crumbie Law

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. due to technical difficulties the meeting resumed at 7:04pm

Chair Joseph Suggs opened the meeting by requesting an agenda amendment to include the election of a chairperson. The amendment was unanimously approved.

It was then moved by Commissioner Bolton, seconded by Commissioner Klein, and voted unanimously to elect Joseph Suggs as Chair of the Bloomfield Charter Revision Commission.

Overview of the Charter Revision Process

Chair Suggs invited Attorney Crumbie to provide an overview of the Charter Revision Commission's process and upcoming steps. Attorney Crumbie explained that the initial public hearing would gather community input on proposed Charter changes, along with feedback from Town employees and officials. Commissioners would consider the input as they review the Charter, with an initial draft targeted for completion by the end of January. Following the draft and Council input, a second public hearing would be scheduled to obtain additional public feedback. Attorney Crumbie noted that the Council may extend the drafting deadline if necessary and that the full timeline is available through the Town.

Public Hearing

The purpose of this public hearing is to solicit public input regarding proposed revisions to the Town Charter by the Bloomfield Charter Revision Commission.

Chair Suggs opened the public hearing by reading the official notice for the September 29, 2026, Bloomfield Charter Revision Commission meeting. He invited public comment and oral

testimony, advising attendees that each speaker would have three minutes to speak and must state their name and address before providing testimony.

1. Donna Hubbs, 16 Brooke Rd., recommended retaining the two-year terms for elected officials, noting that staggered elections could help maintain continuity and experience. She opposed stipends for volunteer officials and a separate mayoral election, expressing concern that the latter could create a popularity contest and conflict with the Town Manager form of government. She suggested that the mayor be the Council member receiving the highest number of votes and noted that her full testimony was available on the Town's website.

2. Essie LaBrot, 12 Chateau Margaux, expressed support for retaining two-year terms for elected officials, keeping Council compensation volunteer-based, maintaining the current mayoral selection process, and preserving the Town Manager residency requirement under Section 502. She supported reducing the petition signature requirement for ordinances and referendums to 4%, retaining a 15% voter participation threshold for budget referendums with a simple majority determining the outcome, and considering an automatic referendum trigger for budget increases above a specified threshold. She also recommended separating Town and Board of Education budgets into two ballot questions to help the Council better understand voter perspectives when making budget decisions.

3. Suzette DeBeatham-Brown, 25 Fairfield Lane, expressed support for Essie LaBrot's recommendations, including retaining the current mayoral selection process while establishing that the highest vote-getter becomes Council leader, maintaining the Town Manager residency requirement, and implementing an automatic budget referendum triggered by a specified percentage threshold, with separate ballot questions for the Town and Board of Education budgets. She also recommended giving the Council input on the selection of certain department directors who may serve as Acting Town Manager and aligning the Charter, Robert's Rules of Order, and parliamentary procedures to clarify voting requirements, including majority and supermajority votes. She indicated that she would submit additional comments in writing.

4. Roy Duncan, 8 Barn Hill Rd., a 51-year Bloomfield resident, recommended retaining the Town Manager residency requirement, simplifying the budget referendum process, and considering an automatic referendum for budget increases exceeding a specified threshold, such as 2.5%. He also proposed adding a recall provision to the Charter to allow citizens and Council members to remove officials for inadequate performance or misconduct. Duncan noted that he had submitted his recommendations in writing and expressed concern that information about the Commission, including meeting dates and minutes, was not readily available on the Town's website.

5. Erin Barringer, 28 Kenmore Rd., recommended standardizing the use of "days," "calendar days," and "business days" throughout the Charter. She requested further review of Section 502(E) regarding the qualifications of an acting or interim Town Manager, Section 604(D) concerning check-signing and counter-signature requirements in light of current financial

practices, and Section 703 to clarify procedures for the removal of elected officials in cases involving ethics violations or investigations, consistent with Connecticut law. She also supported separating Town and Board of Education budgets into two questions on budget referendum ballots.

6. Rickford Kirton, 7 Hickory Ln., expressed support for an automatic budget referendum, recommending that a budget increase of 2–3% over the prior year trigger a referendum. He advocated separating Town and Board of Education budgets on the ballot and allowing residents to vote on substantial budget decisions. Mr. Kirton also supported retaining the Town Manager residency requirement, emphasizing community involvement and shared taxpayer responsibility, and maintaining the current government structure in which the Council selects its leader rather than holding a separate mayoral election. He noted that he would submit additional comments in writing.

7. (online) Kate Keefe, 16 Breezy Knoll Dr., raised concerns about the meeting's audio and online visibility and requested greater transparency regarding proposed Charter changes identified by Town staff. Drawing on her experience collecting budget referendum signatures, she recommended an automatic budget referendum triggered by a set percentage threshold, such as 2%, to reduce conflict and encourage broader voter participation. She opposed compensation for volunteer officials, supported retaining the Town Manager residency requirement and current Council-mayor structure, and recommended allowing unaffiliated candidates to fill vacancies on boards when permitted by law, rather than restricting eligibility to members of a particular political party.

8. (online) Peter C. Frank, building 2, Mallory Rd., editor of the Bloomfield Community Dispatch, expressed concern about involving Town employees in the Charter Revision process, citing potential conflicts of interest and emphasizing the distinction between providing feedback and having authority over the regulations. He strongly supported retaining the Town Manager residency requirement and stated that he would submit additional written comments regarding the Charter and budget referendum. Frank also noted difficulty locating instructions for submitting comments online and was advised to email the Town's Communications Department.

9. (online) James Biffer, 17 Terry Plains Rd., recommended building on the previous Charter revision, which he said had addressed most drafting and formatting issues and identified several sections for further review. He proposed revising Section 201 to align election cycles with the Board of Education, limiting Council candidates to five per party under Section 202 to preserve minority representation, filling vacancies through special elections under Section 203, and selecting the mayor as the highest vote-getter under Section 302. He also recommended removing the 15% voter participation requirement for ordinance and expenditure referendums under Sections 308 and 310, retaining the Town Manager residency requirement under Section 502, and establishing an automatic or threshold-based budget referendum under Section 906.

Mr. Biffer emphasized that the Charter should reflect the authority and interests of Bloomfield residents rather than those of Town staff, the Council, or the Town Manager.

Consider and Take Action regarding the Charter Revision Commission 2026 Meeting Schedule

Chair Suggs reviewed and discussed the dates for the proposed dates for the upcoming monthly meetings at 7:00 P.M.

It was moved by Commissioner Bolton, seconded by Commissioner Turner and voted unanimously to approve the meeting schedule through January 26, 2027.

Discussion regarding organizing the Charter Review

Chair Suggs proposed organizing the Charter review around seven to eight priority areas expected to generate the most public interest and require significant Commission deliberation, while allowing sufficient time for public input and completion of the initial draft by January 27. Priority topics included election terms, Council compensation, mayoral selection, ordinance and referendum petitions, bond issue referendums, the Town Manager residency requirement, the Treasurer position, and the budget referendum. Commissioners expressed support for addressing approximately two topics per meeting and agreed to begin with the petition requirements for ordinances and referendums (Chapter 3, Section 308) and referendums on bond issues (Chapter 3, Section 310) at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Commissioner Turner expressed support for the proposed review schedule and requested advance information on previous budget referendums, including the statutory petition signature requirements, actual signatures obtained, and voter participation thresholds. Commissioner Turner suggested presenting the information in a comparative chart to evaluate how alternative requirements, such as a 4% threshold, would affect the process. Chair Suggs agreed that staff could provide the requested information before the next meeting.

Commissioner Klein asked Attorney Crumbie whether Town employees providing recommendations on Charter revisions presented a conflict of interest or violated the Charter. Attorney Crumbie explained that employee input is lawful, not prohibited by the Charter, and advisory only, with the Commission retaining full authority over proposed revisions. Chair Suggs recommended that all communications and recommendations submitted to the Commission, regardless of source, be made available to the public to ensure transparency and equal access to information.

Commissioner Turner noted that input from individuals with direct experience, including Town employees, can provide valuable insight, and emphasized that the Commission must weigh all perspectives while prioritizing the public interest. Chair Suggs explained that employee recommendations typically come through the Town Manager, although individual employees may also present suggestions directly to the Commission. He emphasized that all testimony and

correspondence would be considered as individual opinions, with the Commission retaining responsibility for determining which Charter revisions best serve the community.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Klein, seconded by Commissioner Bolton and voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from Tuesday, August 25, 2026.

Brief Comments

Commissioner Klein echoed Commissioner Turner's comments, commending the thoughtful deliberations among Commission members and the informed participation of the public. He expressed pride in serving on the Commission and participating in the Charter revision process.

Commissioner Bolton noted that the Town's website provides a platform for residents to submit recommendations, opinions, and concerns. He emphasized the importance of receiving public input in a timely manner, so Commissioners have sufficient time to review and consider submissions before the following month's meeting, particularly as discussions become more extensive.

Chair Suggs emphasized the importance of receiving all public submissions and acknowledging receipt of correspondence or emails, with any additional follow-up considered on a case-by-case basis. Commissioner Klein noted that Commissioners are not required to engage in individual, one-on-one discussions with residents and cautioned against back-and-forth communication outside Commission meetings. He suggested establishing a process to acknowledge submissions, so residents know their input has been received.

Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Bolton and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 P.M.

TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD

Bloomfield Charter Revision Commission

2026 Meeting Schedule

4th Tuesday of the Month, 7:00PM

Hybrid Meeting Style

In-Person: Bloomfield Town Hall, Council Chambers, 800 Bloomfield Ave., Bloomfield, CT 06002

Online: Via Zoom Meeting Platform

Commission Chair: Joseph Suggs

Committee Members: Bradley Klein, Elvin Turner, Dwight Bolton, Erica Coleman

September 22
***(September 29)**

October 27
****(Special Meeting)**

November 24

December 22

January 26, 2027

***Special Meeting**

****Schedule approved less than 30 days before meeting**

9/30/26