



CITY OF SHELTON  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN & CHARTER  
REVISION COMMISSION SPECIAL VIRTUAL  
JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020

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**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Alderman Anglace called the Special Virtual Joint Meeting of the Board of Aldermen and Charter Revision Commission to order at 11:45 a.m. All those present or by phone stood and pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

*Roll Call*

**Board of Aldermen**

Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr., President- Present  
Alderman Eric McPherson, Vice President- Present  
Alderman Cris Balamaci- Not Present  
Alderman David Gidwani- Present via phone  
Alderman Stanley Kudej- Present  
Alderman Noreen McGorty- Present via Phone  
Alderman Anthony Simonetti- Present  
Alderman Bernie Simons- Present

**Charter Revision Commission**

Dan Debicella – Chairman, present via phone  
Gary DeFilippo -Vice Chairman, present  
Ruth Ann Dunford – not present  
David Presutto - present  
Darlissa Ritter - present  
Donald Sheehy – present via phone

**1. REVISIONS TO THE CITY CHARTER**

Alderman Anglace asked the Charter Revision Commission to present their charter revisions and their reasoning behind each amendment. This discussion was followed by questions from the aldermen. Items that were presented and discussed can be seen in the attached report. Additional questions and remarks and proposed changes were made by the Board of Aldermen. At that time, the aldermen agreed to gather their proposed changes and send them to the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen whom will then put them in an outline and send them back to the Charter Revision Commission to be considered.

Full video of the meeting can be seen at [www.cityofshelton.org](http://www.cityofshelton.org).

**ADJOURNMENT**

Alderman McPherson MOVED to adjourn the Special Virtual Board of Aldermen meeting.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

*Theresa Adcox*

Theresa Adcox  
Board of Aldermen Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_ BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved Mayor Mark A. Lauretti

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# Shelton Charter Revision 2020

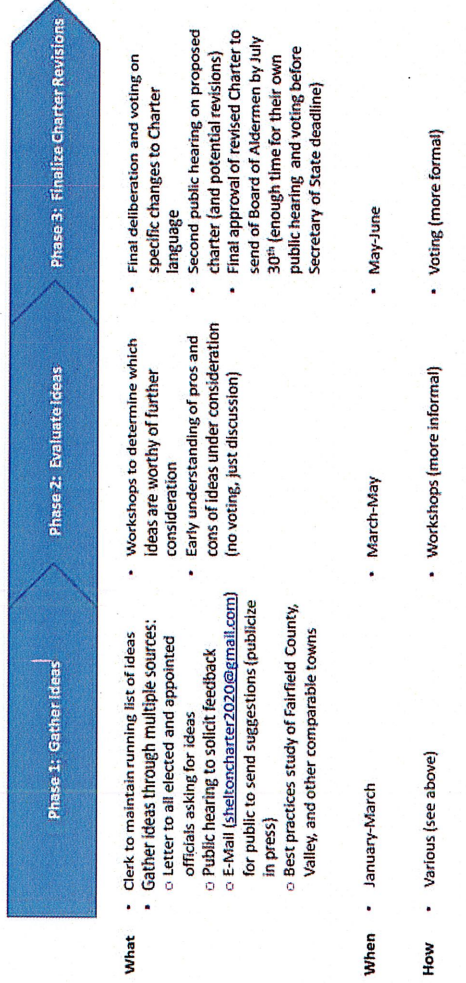
## Report to Board of Aldermen

### Summary of Process

- 1) Idea Collection – We collected over 50 ideas from a number of sources:
  - Analysis of other towns (attached)
  - Public Hearing
  - Dedicated E-Mail
  - Ideas from Commissioners
  
- 2) Idea Debate – We debated each idea we received, and agreed upon 20 changes to the Charter
  
- 3) Language Writing – We changed the specific language in the Charter to reflect our changes, proofread several times, and had Corporation Counsel review.

### **Proposed Approach**

*Draft for Discussion*



1) Structural Changes

We made a number of structural changes, all based in several principles:

- **Voter Control.** Many of our changes “give more power to the voters”. We want to limit the power the Republican and Democratic Town Committees to say who gets to make decisions, and increase voter choice for the elected boards and commissions.
- **Checks and Balances.** We want to make sure that every decision has a check and balance. We changed the appointment process for appointed boards and commissions to ensure the Mayor and Board of Aldermen are checks on each other (similar to state or federal government).
- **Standardize.** We also sought to standardize wherever possible—whether term lengths or process.

<u>Change</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
1) Eliminate the Board of A&T (and transfer line-item transfer power to the Finance Committee of the Board of Aldermen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of A&amp;T is “false election” with Town Committees naming members in non-competitive election.</li> <li>• Powerful Boards of Finance tend to be in small towns, with mid-size and larger cities (e.g., Danbury, Norwalk, Stratford) not having a Board of Finance.</li> <li>• Board of Aldermen as the fiscal authority is the proper check-and-balance in the budget process—where voters can change Aldermen if they do not like what they are doing.</li> </ul>
2) Expand the P&Z from 6 to 7 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current requires a 2/3 vote to pass anything—higher standard than US Senate</li> <li>• Odd number prevents ties</li> </ul>
3) Revise minority representation to align with State Statute maximums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects the will of the voters more directly as candidates with more votes will be elected</li> <li>• Does not eliminate minority representation (an option considered and rejected)</li> <li>• Approximately half of other towns in Fairfield County and Valley align with State Statute maximums</li> </ul>

<p>4) Terms for Library Board reduced from 6 to 4 years, and membership increased from 6 to 7 members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardizing terms at 4 years</li> <li>• Increasing membership to prevent ties</li> </ul>
<p>5) For all appointed Boards and Commissions, the Mayor shall nominate and the Board of Aldermen shall confirm all members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper check-and-balance on appointed boards</li> <li>• Standardizes nomination and approval process</li> <li>• Eliminates “Mayor-only” and “BOA Only” appointments</li> </ul>
<p>6) Parties can only nominate the number of people who can be seated on a Board or Commission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ends the practice of members of the same party having to compete for seats they cannot win</li> </ul>
<p>7) Create a new city-wide Technology Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New committee to create citywide technology strategy, and implement recommendations should they be given budget by BOA or referendum (similar to building committee)</li> <li>• Membership includes recommendations from the Board of Education, to create citywide decisions</li> </ul>
<p>8) Boards have the power to nominate for vacancies in the event the Mayor does not within 90 days of vacancy. Still needs approval by Board of Aldermen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates secondary way to fill vacancies, while maintaining check and balance.</li> </ul>
<p>9) P&amp;Z, Inland Wetlands, Parks and Recs, and Conservation department heads will be appointed directly by Mayor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardizing full-time employee selection under the Executive, rather than under boards.</li> </ul>
<p>10) Fire Commissioners must be electors in the City of Shelton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parallel with all other Boards</li> <li>• Leadership should be Shelton-based</li> </ul>

**2) Budget and Finances**

In changing several aspects of the budgeting, bonding, and procurement process, we had several principles in mind:

- **Checks and Balances.** Maintain or strengthen checks and balances to ensure city finances are handled transparently by officials directly accountable to the voters.
- **Operational Flexibility.** Create flexibility for processes to change over the next ten years as circumstances and technology changes.

<b><u>Change</u></b>	<b><u>Rationale</u></b>
11) Increasing trigger for bonding referendum from 2% to 3% of budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow for more flexibility for recurring capital projects (e.g., road maintenance)</li> <li>• Maintain high check-and-balance of referendum for larger capital projects (e.g., school construction)</li> </ul>
12) The Board of Aldermen may establish standards for budget submissions that all departments (including Board of Education) must adhere to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable “apples-to-apples” comparisons across departments</li> </ul>
13) Purchases must be put out to bid above \$25,000. Below that, the Board of Aldermen may set procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow for flexibility over the course of the next ten years.</li> <li>• BOA will need to set a level for “three quotes”</li> <li>• BOA will need to set standard for selection (eliminated the “lowest responsible bidder” language from charter, although BOA may reinstate that)</li> </ul>
14) Eliminated a month from the budget process, and allow the Mayor to give departments more time to submit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elimination of Board of A&amp;T saves a month in budgeting process</li> <li>• Flexibility for more information if the Mayor is comfortable with delay in submissions</li> </ul>

### 3) City Operations and Miscellaneous

<u>Change</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
15) Board of Aldermen can now create rules for non-present voting and participation on all Boards and Commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for flexibility as technology progresses over the course of the next decade</li> </ul>
16) Board of Aldermen now has “strict majority” of 5 votes for budget and ordinances. All other items can be done by “majority present and voting”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reserve stricter-than-Robert’s-Rules standard only for the most important topics</li> </ul>
17) Notice requirements for all city business is now to put on website, plus whatever else is required by State Statute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove requirement for newspaper publishing as outdated requirement for public notification</li> </ul>
18) The Aldermen shall call another Charter revision no later than April 1, 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set 10-year deadline for next Charter Revision (although one could happen sooner)</li> </ul>
19) Change “Administrative Assistant” to “Chief of Staff”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title more accurately describing the role</li> </ul>
20) Add a Preamble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement outlining the values of Shelton residents as the guiding principles for the formation of our government</li> <li>• Dan wants to pretend his is Thomas Jefferson. 😊</li> </ul>