

ARTICLE 1 - THE CHARTER

Section 1-1: General

(A) The Charter shall be the organic law of the Town in the administration of its local affairs: Special Acts and Ordinances or portions thereof, inconsistent with this Charter and superseded by it, shall have no further force or effect after the effective date of this Charter. Other Special Acts affecting the Town, and all other Ordinances and Resolutions duly adopted and in force before the effective date of this Charter shall remain in force.

(B) Matters concerning the election of officers, the making and registration of voters and the administration of local affairs not provided by this Charter, or by lawful ordinance, shall be governed by the General Statutes, and any Special Acts of the State of Connecticut applicable to the Town.

Section 1-2: Rules of Construction and Saving Clause

(A) This Charter is intended to avail, make use of and exercise the full Home Rule powers of the Town under the Home Rule Law (Title 7, Chapter 99 of the Connecticut General Statutes), and any other statute now in effect or hereafter enacted and any other home rule powers thereof under those provisions of Article 10 of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, under the common law, or otherwise.

(B) If any provision of this Charter shall be held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the remainder of this Charter nor the context in which such provision so held invalid may appear, except to the extent that an entire section may be inseparably connected in meaning and effect with the provisions to which such holding shall directly apply.

(C) Whenever the masculine gender is used in this Charter it shall be synonymous with the feminine gender.

Section 1-3: Amendment of this Charter

(A) The Board of Selectmen may review the provisions of this Charter from time to time as it deems such review to be in the best interests of the Town. Not more often than once every five (5) years, they may initiate an amendment process by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Selectmen in the manner prescribed in Chapter 99 of the Connecticut General Statutes. If Selectmen determine that a significant need exists to revise the Charter before the expiration of such five-year period, a unanimous vote of the entire Board of Selectmen shall be required to initiate the amendment process.

(B) In accordance with Chapter 99, Section 7-188(b), the amendment of this Charter may be initiated by a petition signed by not less than ten percent (10%) of the electors of the Town as determined by the last completed registry list. Except for those limitations imposed by said Chapter 99, the frequency of this provision shall not be restricted.

(C) In either instance, any such initiation shall result in the Board of Selectmen appointing a Charter Revision Commission which shall consider proposed amendments to the then existing Charter, present them at one or more public hearings, and submit its report for review to the Board of Selectmen, as prescribed in said Chapter 99 of the General Statutes. Such amendments shall not become effective until they have been approved by a majority of the Town electors voting thereon at a regular election; or by a majority equal to at least fifteen percent (15%) of the electors of the Town as determined by the last completed registry of the Town voting at a

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special election. To the extent that any amendments to the provisions of said Chapter 99 which are applicable to the manner of amending this Charter shall no longer authorize any portion of the above procedure, then the applicable provisions in this Charter shall prevail.

Section 1-4: Definitions as used within this Charter

(A) The terms 'agency of the Town' or 'Town agency' shall be deemed to mean each board, commission, committee and agency of the Town for which an appropriation was made in the annual budget; each Town official who is not a member of a board, commission, committee or agency for whom an appropriation was made in the annual budget; each administrative department specified in Article 9 of this Charter insofar as its activities are supported out of Town funds; or each separate function of the Town for which the Board of Selectmen is responsible.

(B) The term 'board' or 'boards' shall be deemed to include all boards, commissions and permanent committees, except as otherwise provided, established either by Town ordinance or by this Charter and having an administrative, advisory or executive function within the Town.

(C) The term 'elector' shall be deemed to mean a registered voter of the Town of Oxford. A registered voter must be a citizen of the United States and a bona fide resident of the Town who has attained the age of 18 and who has applied for admission as an elector and has been approved by the Registrars of Voters.

(D) An 'election' shall be deemed to mean any elector's meeting at which the electors choose public officials by the use of voting machines or paper ballots as provided by Sections 9-271 and 9-272 of the General Statutes. A 'regular election' is any regularly recurring state or municipal election: (1) 'regular state elections' are the elections held in the state on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in the even-numbered years, and (2) 'regular municipal elections' are the elections held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in the odd-numbered years at which the public officials of the Town are elected. A 'special election' is any election not a regular election.

(E) The term 'overlapping terms of office' shall be deemed to mean the staggering of terms of members elected and/or appointed to the boards and commissions specified within this Charter; or as specified by Ordinance if not specified in this Charter. Staggering is accomplished when the terms of all members of a board or commission do not expire at the same time.

(F) The terms 'prescribed by law' and 'provided by law' shall be deemed to mean prescribed or provided by the Constitution of the United States, the State Constitution and General Statutes, this Charter, and by lawful Town Ordinances. These various laws, as amended, are available for public inspection and are kept on file in the office of the Town Clerk.

(G) A 'referendum' shall be deemed to mean any of the following: (1) a question or proposal which is submitted to a vote of the electors of a municipality in conjunction with any regular or special state or municipal election as defined in paragraph (D); (2) a question or proposal which is submitted to a vote of the electors and members of the Town Meeting at an adjourned Town Meeting by Referendum pursuant to Section 3-9 of this Charter; or (3) a question or proposal which is submitted to a vote of the electors or members of the Town Meeting which is not in conjunction with an election. When specified by the provisions of this Charter, for those questions that are to be voted upon at a regular election or a special election called for that purpose, only those residents who are 'electors' of the Town shall be eligible to vote on those questions.

(H) The term 'shall' is used to indicate a command and the term 'may' is used to indicate discretion.

(I) The term 'Town Official' shall be deemed to mean anyone who is elected or appointed to a public office.