

NOTE:

- THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CONTAIN THE ENTIRE CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF RIDGFIELD, CT IN ANY FORM.
- THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS ONLY THE SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF THE RIDGFIELD CHARTER MODIFIED BY THE PROPOSED REVISIONS THAT WERE APPROVED BY THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION ON FEBRUARY 3, 2010.
- THESE PROPOSED REVISIONS ARE SUBJECT TO FURTHER CORRECTIONS, CHANGES, ADDITIONS, AND DELETIONS PENDING APPROVAL BY THE CRC.
- THESE PROPOSED REVISIONS DO NOT REFLECT ANY OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION BY THE CRC.
- THESE PROPOSED REVISIONS DO NOT REFLECT ANY OFFICIAL CHANGE TO THE EXISITING CHARTER.

CHARLES PRIMERANO
RECORDING SECRETARY

ARTICLE I. THE CHARTER

Section 1-1. The Charter.

The Charter shall be the organic law of the Town of Ridgefield in the administration of its local affairs. Any Special Acts and ordinances or portions thereof inconsistent with the Charter 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, and not inconsistent with the provisions of this Charter, shall remain in force.

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 Connecticut General Statutes and Special Acts of the State of Connecticut applicable to the Town of Ridgefield.

The term "approval of the Town Meeting" as used in this Charter, shall mean the majority vote (unless a greater percentage is required in this Charter) of those qualified to vote, present and voting at the meeting or voting by machine or absentee ballot in a referendum held in accordance with this Charter.

The term "board" or "boards", as used in this Charter, shall include all boards, commissions, agencies, and committees except as otherwise specified. (14)

The terms "prescribed by law" and "provided by law", as used in this Charter, shall mean prescribed or provided by the General Statutes, by Charter and by ordinance.

The term "town agency", as used in this Charter, shall mean each board, commission, committee, department 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, department or agency for whom an appropriation was made in the annual budget; each separate function of the town for which the Board of Selectmen is responsible.

The term "elector" as used in this Charter shall mean any person possessing the qualifications prescribed by the Constitution of the State of Connecticut and duly admitted to, and entitled to exercise, the privileges of an elector in the Town of Ridgefield.

The term "resident" as used in this Charter shall describe a person who is registered to vote in the Town of Ridgefield and whose principal residence is in the Town of Ridgefield. No person who has filed with the registrar of voters an application for the retention of electoral privileges shall be considered a resident for so long as the application for retention of electoral privileges is in effect. (2)

ARTICLE III. THE TOWN MEETING

Section 3-3. The Annual Town and Budget Meeting.

The Board of Selectmen shall, in January of each year, appoint an annual Town and Budget Meeting Committee. The Committee shall consist of five (5) electors, appointed for a two year term. In the first year of implementation three members are appointed (only) for a one year term.

The Committee shall be responsible for planning the annual Town and Budget Meeting. Emphasis should be on promotion, community involvement and elector attendance.

The annual Town and Budget Meeting shall be held on the first Monday of May each year. It shall receive a "State of the Town" address by the First Selectman and long and short term planning reports from selected boards, as determined by the annual Town and Budget Meeting Committee.

The procedure to be followed in preparation and adoption of the budget shall be as prescribed by law and Article X of this Charter

Section 3-7. Organization and Procedure.

The First Selectman or a representative of the First Selectman shall call the meeting to order and the meeting shall choose a moderator. All business shall be conducted as provided by Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, as amended, and in accordance with "Robert's Rules of Order - of latest revision. Unless otherwise provided by this Charter, action of all Town Meetings shall be by a majority of the members of the Town Meeting present and voting or voting by machine or absentee ballot in a referendum held in accordance with this Charter.

The Town Clerk or Assistant Clerk shall serve as clerk of the meeting. In their absence, a clerk shall be chosen by the meeting. Meetings shall be tape recorded. Such tape recordings shall not eliminate the customary written minutes of the meeting, which shall be made available to the public at a readily accessible place in Town Hall not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the meeting. (2)

Section 3-10. Bonds and Notes.

The authorization of bonds or notes (except notes in anticipation of taxes to be paid within the fiscal year in which issued) shall require approval of the Town Meeting either at a Town Meeting or by a majority vote in a referendum, provided, however, any borrowing of \$3,000,000 or more shall require approval by a majority vote in a referendum. The resolution authorizing the issuance of bonds or notes, shall establish the maximum principal amount.

The Board of Finance shall make a recommendation for or against the proposed bond authorization. Notice of the Town Meeting or referendum shall include the recommendation of the Board of Finance.

Section 3-11. Additional Appropriations.

Additional appropriations shall be acted on only in accordance with Section 10-2 of this Charter.

ARTICLE IV. ELECTIONS AND
ELECTIVE OFFICERS

Section 4-15. Board of Finance

(a) Composition.

The Board of Finance shall consist of five (5) members serving four (4) year terms each. Three (3) members and two (2) members shall be elected at alternating town elections. The members shall choose a chairman from its members annually at the first meeting in January.

(b) Procedure

The Board of Finance shall establish a schedule of regular meetings to be not less than ten (10) in any calendar year, and cause such schedule to be posted in the office of the Town Clerk.

Meetings of the board shall be open to the public. When meetings other than those regular meetings scheduled above are to be held, notice of such special meetings shall be posted in the Town Hall and notification shall be as required in the General Statutes. Notice shall also be given to those town agencies specifically affected by such meetings. Decisions of the board shall be made by a majority of those present. No less than three (3) members shall constitute a quorum.

The Board of Finance shall have its own budget which shall include a clerk of the Board of Finance who shall keep a record of all notes and minutes and shall be custodian of all appropriate documents of the board.

(c) Annual Town Report.

The Board of Finance shall prepare and publish the annual town report. The Board of Finance budget shall include an appropriation for the publication of the annual town report.

(d) Annual Financial Report.

The Board of Finance shall arrange for an annual audit of the town books as required by the General Statutes. The Board of Finance budget shall include an appropriation for the purpose of retaining a certified public accountant or a firm of certified public accountants to perform such audit.

After the annual audit by an independent public accountant as provided by the General Statutes, the certification of such public accountant as to the scope of the audit shall be included in the town's annual report. Copies of the auditor's comments and recommendations shall be made available to the public at Town Hall and the town library. (4) (7) (12)

(e) Powers and Duties.

The Board of Finance shall prepare a proposed budget for presentation at the annual Town and Budget Meeting, set the mill rate by resolution, review requests for additional appropriations, determine how the town financial records are kept, arrange for an annual town audit for town records, prepare and publish the annual town report and shall have the powers and duties in accordance with Article X of the Charter, the General Statutes and applicable ordinances. (7)

The Board of Finance shall have all powers and duties provided by this Charter and by the General Statutes. It shall be the chief financial and budget-making authority of the town with a primary responsibility of establishing and maintaining the town in a sound overall financial condition. It shall do this by considering financial aspects of municipal government as a whole rather than from the viewpoint of any particular town agency, and insure, as far as feasible, the payment of the municipality's current debts out of current income. (7)

The Board of Finance shall determine how the town financial records are kept and conduct a quarterly review for the purpose of determining that the budget is proceeding according to plan. The Board of Finance shall receive monthly financial statements from the controller and from the superintendent of schools. It shall conduct a quarterly review for the purpose of determining that the budget is proceeding according to plan.

ARTICLE VII. BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Section 7-2. Procedure and General Powers.

At its first meeting following each biennial town election, the Board of Selectmen in accordance with the General Statutes and this Charter shall fix the time and place of its regular meetings, provide a method for calling special meetings, consistent with Section 1-21 of the General Statutes, and designate which member shall preside in place of the First Selectman in the event of absence or disability.

A special meeting of the Board of Selectmen may be called at any time by the First Selectman or any two (2) members. The person or persons calling a special meeting shall give reasonable advance notice and reason for such meeting to the other members of the board. Notice may be waived, however, by written waiver, signed by all members of the Board of Selectmen and filed with the Town Clerk at any time before or after the meeting.

All meetings of the Board of Selectmen for the transaction of business shall be open to the public. The votes of each member shall be recorded at the session at which they occur and reported in the minutes of such meeting. Minutes shall be taken and filed and votes shall be recorded and published in accordance with section 6-3 of this Charter. Three (3) members shall constitute a quorum, and all resolutions or actions shall be adopted by majority vote.

The Board of Selectmen shall generally supervise the administration of the affairs of the town, except those matters which according to General Statutes or this Charter are delegated to other town agencies.

The Board of Selectmen shall be responsible for coordinating the activities of all town agencies, and for keeping under review the present and future needs of the town. (5)

Section 7-3. Special Powers and Duties.

(a) To incur indebtedness in the name of the town, and to provide for the due execution of contracts and evidences of indebtedness authorized by the town;

(g) To issue notes in anticipation of tax collections payable within the fiscal year, and to issue bonds or bond anticipation notes up to the amount authorized by a Town Meeting, in each instance upon such terms and conditions as the Board of Selectmen, after consulting with the Board of Finance, may approve, including without limitation the manner and form of issue and sale thereof, the date and rate of interest thereof, the designation of a bank or trust company to act as certifying or paying agent thereof, and the designation of the persons to sign such notices in the name of or on behalf of the town;

ARTICLE VIII. THE FIRST SELECTMAN

Section 8-2. Chief Executive and Administrative Officer.

The First Selectman shall be the full-time chief executive and administrative officer of the town, and shall be required to carry out the duties charged by the General Statutes and specifically described in section 8-3 of this Charter.

The First Selectman shall have all the powers, duties and responsibilities conferred upon that office by law and which are not inconsistent with this Charter; in addition shall have such powers as are necessary or incidental to the discharge of the duties and responsibilities as set forth in this Charter.

The First Selectman shall be a full voting and participating member of the Board of Selectmen and shall preside at meetings of the board when present.

The First Selectman shall be an ex officio member of all other town agencies, but without the power to vote.

The First Selectman may, in writing, appoint a member of the Board of Selectmen to be his or her representative on any town agency, but without the power to vote. (7)

The First Selectman, during his or her term of office, shall not hold any civil office which provides compensation, under the government of the United States, the State of Connecticut, or any subdivision thereof, except that of notary public, nor shall the First Selectman hold any of those offices which are considered incompatible, in accordance with Section 9-210 of the General Statutes. (4)

Section 8-3. Duties of the First Selectman.

(b) Be responsible for coordinating the administration of the town agencies, except for those functions expressly reserved or delegated to those town agencies by law;

(l) Purchase or cause to be purchased, subject to such rules and regulations as shall be prescribed by the Board of Selectmen in accordance with section 10-3 of this Charter, all supplies, materials, equipment and other commodities required by any town agency, except those town agencies which, under the provisions of this Charter, ordinance, Special Act, or General Statutes of Connecticut, purchase such items in the performance of their own particular duties. Rules and regulations established by the Board of Selectmen regarding the method of purchasing by budgeted town agencies shall apply uniformly to town agencies, to the extent that they are dependent on the budget of the town for monies being expended. The First Selectman shall be responsible for informing such town agencies of said regulations;

ARTICLE IX. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES,
AGENCIES AND EMPLOYEES

Section 9-15. Town Attorney.

The First Selectman, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, shall appoint a town attorney or firm of attorneys to represent the town for a term of one year, expiring January 1. Said town attorney shall be an experienced attorney-at-law admitted to practice law in this state.

The town attorney shall furnish such legal services to the town, its officers and town agencies as the Board of Selectmen may authorize, and shall be the legal advisor to such town officers or town agencies in all matters affecting the town, and shall, upon written request, provide a written opinion on any question of law within a reasonable period of time. The Board of Selectmen may provide for the temporary employment of counsel other than or in addition to the town attorney.

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen to insure that town boards and commissions have access to such legal services as are required for the proper interpretation and enforcement of the laws they administer. For such purposes, boards and commissions, within the limits of their appropriations, and with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, may employ specialized legal counsel.

ARTICLE X. FINANCE AND TAXATION

Section 10-1. Budget

(a) Preparation of the Budget for the Coming Fiscal Year.

The Board of Finance shall receive from the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education their respective proposed budgets in sufficient time for publication at least ten (10) days prior to a public hearing on the last Monday in March. The Board of Education shall also submit to the Board of Selectmen its budget in sufficient time for review and non-binding recommendation by the Board of Selectmen to the Board of Finance. The Board of Selectmen's recommendation shall only be as to the total amount of the proposed Board of Education budget. The budgets shall be prepared in such manner as the Board of Finance shall prescribe. The individual budget requests of each department, board or commission shall be signed by the chair or department head and submitted to the Board of Selectmen and/or Board of Education for submission to the Board of Finance.

(b) Powers and Duties of the Board of Finance in Connection with the Preparation of the Budget for the Coming Fiscal Year.

The Board of Finance shall hold a public hearing on the proposed budget on the last Monday in March. Printed copies of the proposed budget shall be available at the office of the Town Clerk and at such other locations as the Board may prescribe, forty-eight (48) hours in advance of said hearing, and shall be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the town at least seven (7) days prior to the hearing. Those wishing changes to the budget as proposed by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education shall communicate their views at the public hearing.

After the public hearing, the Board of Finance shall meet to consider budget requests against projected revenues and the overall financial condition of the town and revise the budget as it deems advisable. The Board's objective in these considerations is prudent management of the overall fiscal situation and not how or where specific amounts are budgeted. Therefore, any changes made to the operating budget requests of the town by the Board of Finance shall be limited to the budget as a whole rather than from the limited viewpoint of any one department and shall not address specific items.

The Board of Finance shall prepare a proposed budget to be presented for discussion at the annual Town and Budget Meeting.

(c) Budget Presentation at Annual Town and Budget Meeting.

The budget as proposed by the Board of Finance shall be presented for discussion purposes only at the annual Town and Budget Meeting held on the first Monday of May. Approval of the budget shall be by machine voting at a referendum as set forth in Section 10-1(d). Copies of the proposed budget shall be available ten (10) days before such meeting at the office of the Town Clerk and elsewhere as the Board of Finance may prescribe, and shall be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the town at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

The Board of Selectmen may decide to present certain or all capital items of under \$100,000 per item to the Town Meeting for a vote. The meeting shall have the power to decrease or delete any such capital item, but it may not increase or add to any line item or establish any additional line item. Said vote shall be binding with reference to those items. All other items on the capital budget shall go to referendum as set forth in Section 10-1(d).

If the budget is rejected, the Board of Finance shall meet and upon due deliberation revise the budget and publish a recommended budget to be considered at a subsequent referendum to be held within three (3) weeks after the Budget Referendum. Subsequent referenda shall be held until a budget is passed, and should a budget not be passed by July 1, the town shall operate under the budget authorization of the previous fiscal year until a new budget is passed.

If capital items are rejected at the referendum, the Board of Finance may meet and upon due deliberation request an additional appropriation for some or all of the capital items so rejected which will be considered at a Town Meeting called for that purpose within three (3) weeks of the referendum.

(e) When the budget is approved, the Board of Finance shall make it available to town agencies and the public through the office of the Town Clerk. The Board of Finance shall, by resolution, fix the tax rate in mills, within ten (10) days after approval of the budget.

Section 10-2. Additional Appropriations.

(a) In the event that a town agency, other than the Board of Education, determines that it requires an additional appropriation, the town agency shall seek the endorsement of the Board of Selectmen in writing of the sum needed. Within fifteen (15) days thereafter, any endorsed request shall be forwarded by the Board of Selectmen to the Board of Finance for final action. (11)

In the event that the Board of Education determines that it requires an additional appropriation, it shall request of the Board of Finance in writing the sum needed and the reasons therefor.

The Board of Finance shall consider and act upon such requests not more than fifteen (15) days after it is in receipt thereof, and shall inform the requesting town agency and the Board of Selectmen in writing of its decision and the reason therefor.

(b) The Board of Finance may, in any fiscal year, without approval of the Town Meeting, provide any single requesting town agency with additional appropriations from general fund unreserved-undesignated fund balance a sum not to exceed fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) cumulative. The Board of Finance may not, without approval of the Town Meeting, provide any additional appropriations from general fund unreserved-undesignated fund balance that will cause the total of additional appropriations to exceed the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) in aggregate to all requesting town agencies in any fiscal year.

(c) All other additional appropriations requested by town agencies that are less than three million dollars (\$3,000,000), in accordance with this charter, shall require approval of the Town Meeting. In the event of a negative referral by the Board of Finance, said matter shall go back to the Board of Selectmen who shall vote whether to send it to the Town Meeting or remove it from the Town Meeting and submit it to a referendum. All additional appropriations requested by town agencies that are of three million dollars (\$3,000,000) or more shall, after public hearing, be submitted to referendum without call to Town Meeting.

(e) Capital Reserve Fund.

The town maintains a capital reserve fund for capital projects and nonrecurring expenditures in accordance with the General Statutes, any payment into or appropriation from the capital reserve fund shall be made only upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and approval of the Town Meeting.

An appropriation or transfer of unexpended capital project balances and payment into or appropriation from the capital reserve fund for capital and non recurring expenditures, requiring Town Meeting approval in accordance with this Charter, may be decreased by a Town Meeting, but may not be increased. A Town Meeting may make no such appropriation or transfer of funds not recommended by the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance shall make a recommendation within five (5) days of receipt of a request from the Board of Selectmen for a recommendation.

(f) The provisions of this section shall not be a limitation on the power of the Town Meeting to make appropriations to be met from the authorization of bonds, notes or other obligations for appropriations in accordance with the General Statutes and this Charter. (6)

(g) Transfers of funds between town agencies (except the Board of Education) require approval of the Board of Finance upon the request of the Board of Selectmen. Transfers within a town agency's budget (except the Board of Education) require approval from the Board of Selectmen only. (11)(13)

Section 10-3. Expenditures and Accounting.

The fiscal year of the town shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30 of the following calendar year.

The system of accounts used by town agencies shall be that prescribed by the General Statutes, as supplemented by regulations of the Board of Finance.

The regulations of the Board of Finance shall also approve the form and procedures for orders to be drawn on the treasurer by the Board of Selectmen.

All town agencies shall comply with the regulations of the Board of Finance required by this section. Such regulations shall be adopted and may be amended by vote of the Board of Finance and shall not be inconsistent with this Charter and the General Statutes.

All town agencies shall submit within ninety (90) days after the end of the fiscal year a summary report of their activities and accomplishments. The Board of Finance shall incorporate this information in the published annual town report. Said report shall be made available prior to the annual Town and Budget Meeting.

No purchase shall be made by any town agency, other than the Board of Education, except through the First Selectman, and such purchases shall be made under such rules and regulations as may be established by the Board of Selectmen with the approval of the Board of Finance. The Board of Education shall establish appropriate rules and regulations for such purchases.

The several town agencies shall not involve the town in obligations to spend money for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated therefor.

The Board of Finance may have access at all reasonable times to the records and books of account of the town agencies.

Every appropriation, except an appropriation for a capital expenditure, shall lapse at the close of the fiscal year to the extent that it has not been expended or encumbered. An appropriation for a capital expenditure shall continue in force until the purpose for which it was made has been accomplished or abandoned; the purpose of any such appropriation shall be deemed abandoned if, at the end of the third succeeding fiscal year, there has been no disbursement from or encumbrance of the appropriation. (7)

Section 10-4. Bonds and Notes.

The authorization of bonds and notes (except notes in anticipation of taxes to be paid within the fiscal year in which issued) shall be governed by Section 3-10 of this Charter.

Section 10-5. Powers and Duties of the Board of Finance in Connection with the Development of Long-Range Financial Planning.

The Board of Finance may initiate joint meetings with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education for the purpose of discussions on long-range financial planning.

The Board of Finance may require all town agencies dependent on the town budget for any portion of their income to submit estimates for future spending. Such estimates shall be for the fiscal years three (3) years ahead of the current fiscal year and shall be the best estimates of the present town agency. Said estimates shall be submitted as the Board of Finance shall dictate as a part of the preliminary budget. Any requests for budgetary information shall be made through the Office of the First Selectman or the Superintendent of Schools.