

For Immediate Release

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Ridgefield, CT; April 3, 2023--Would the town be better served if certain positions were appointed rather than elected? The Board of Selectmen has suggested to the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) that the roles of town clerk, tax collector, and treasurer become appointed rather than elected positions. After research, discussion, and interviews with the people who currently hold those roles, the CRC has decided to advance the selectmen's proposal. That means the charter could be changed to authorize the First Selectman, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, to hire and appoint to those three roles individuals who have the proper qualifications and experience to successfully administer those jobs. If the CRC's recommendation makes it through the review and public hearing process, the decision to accept or reject it will go to voters in November.

Because this would be a significant change in town government, some background might be helpful. The word 'appointed' is widely used throughout the charter, although it is often misconstrued. It applies to people who are hired into paid positions, and to people who are assigned to unpaid roles. Appointees for paid positions go through rigorous hiring and approval processes.

Advocates for the change distinguish between roles that make policy, which they say should be elected positions, and roles that administer policies, which they say should be hired positions. Designating the administrative roles of town clerk, tax collector, and treasurer as appointed would allow the Board of Selectman to require credentials in training, education, and /or experience when hiring. The Board would have a wider geographic area to draw from as residency would not be required as it is for elected positions. Not having to endure the time, energy, and expense to run in an election might also increase the applicant pool. Hiring, rather than electing, would also result in more accountability, as the Board would have the option to fire hired people if they were not performing their duties.

Advocates for preserving the positions as elected want to keep those choices directly in the hands of voters, rather than giving that power to the Board of Selectmen. Some suggest that because elected officials must be residents, they will care more about the town and see their positions as more than "just a job".

Municipalities across the state vary in how they select their town clerks, tax collectors, treasurers. There are no right-or-wrongs, just what is right for Ridgefield. The best way to discern that is to become an informed voter. For more information on the town charter, or the quadrennial charter revision process, go to the town's website <http://www.ridgefieldct.org/charter-revision-commission> . There, you will find agendas, minutes, and recordings of meetings. The next meeting is on Thursday, April 6, in the Town Hall Annex. The meeting opens with public comment at 6:30 PM. To watch a livestream of CRC meetings, or to see recordings of past meetings, go to the 'government' tab on the homepage, click on 'Board of Selectmen', and drop down to the 'Meeting Video' tab.

Public hearings on all the CRC's recommendations for charter changes will be held later in May. For notification of those hearings, sign up for 'general government notifications' on [Ridgefield Alerts](#).

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