

Town Charter Proposal



Presented by the Selectboard
October 20, 2011

What is a charter?



- ❑ A charter allows a municipality to govern differently than what is covered by general state law.
- ❑ State law prevails if not specified in a charter.
- ❑ A charter must be approved by the voters and ratified by the legislature.
- ❑ Approximately 65 Vermont towns/cities/villages have adopted a charter including several neighboring communities.

Why is a charter being proposed?

Under general law:

- Elected officials must be a resident of the town
- The selectboard has no authority over elected officials and how responsibilities are carried out
- There is no provision for removing elected officials from office
- There are no experience, qualifications or continuing education requirements for elected officials

Additional reasons



- ❑ Proactive approach to improve financial controls and reduce the risk of fraud/embezzlement
- ❑ Ability to appoint a town assessor and town administrator
- ❑ Addresses conflicts of interest for all elected and appointed officials

Elected v. Appointed



The charter proposes changing the following positions from elected to appointment by the selectboard:


- Treasurer
- Listers
- Auditors
- Delinquent Tax Collector
- Cemetery Commissioners

Why change to appointed positions?



- Provides greater accountability
- Implement agreed upon management controls, policies and procedures
- Ability to appoint an out-of-town applicant if qualification requirements are met and/or there is no interest by town residents to fill a position

Positions that will remain elected



- Selectboard
- Town Clerk
- Moderator
- Library Trustees
- Justices of the Peace
- Town Agent*
- Town Grand Juror*

Removal of elected officials

- ❑ Under general state law there is no provision to remove any Vermont elected official from office for non-criminal activities.
- ❑ The charter provides for the ability for voters to remove an elected official from office providing the conditions and procedures in the charter are followed.

Process for adopting a charter



- Requires 2 public hearings
- Voted on by Australian ballot
- If approved, Town Clerk sends required documentation to Secretary of State
- Presented as a bill to the legislature for ratification
- The same process applies to amendments

Timeline



- ❑ Informational meeting - October 20, 2011
- ❑ Informational meeting - November 2011 (exact date TBD)
- ❑ 1st public hearing - January 2012 (exact date TBD)
- ❑ 2nd public hearing - March 5, 2012
- ❑ Australian ballot vote - March 6, 2012
- ❑ Present to legislature
- ❑ Effective July 1, 2012 (if ratified)

Questions & Comments



The Selectboard thanks you for attending tonight's meeting. We encourage you to participate in upcoming selectboard and informational meetings, as well as the public hearings scheduled for January and March 2012. Your feedback is very important to us concerning this important proposal for our community.