

**Ballot Question #5: Create, by Charter, a Board of Ethics and mandate a City Code of Ethics.**

**Background:** The current Board of Ethics and Code of Ethics were both enacted by the Board of Representatives. However, neither an Ethics Board nor Code is provided for or defined in the City Charter.

**Result of a Charter Change:** The Board of Representatives will be mandated to adopt and maintain a Code of Ethics (which could be the one that exists). The Charter defines the number of members on the Board of Ethics, their terms of office, and the Board's powers to investigate and adjudicate violations of the Code of Ethics brought to its attention. The Charter also provides the Ethics Board with the power to establish its own rules of procedure and process.

In addition, the City's Office of Legal Affairs will serve as legal counsel to the Board unless a conflict of interest arises, in which case Legal Affairs will retain outside counsel for the Board.

**Charter Section That Will be Amended:** C6-210-1 through C6-210-4 (new)

**Ballot Question #6: Revise the Charter to clarify that the Board of Finance's authority is limited to fiscal matters only.**

**Background:** Under the current Charter, the Board of Finance has any and all incidental powers to investigate and to determine fiscal policy of the City. It also can incur any expenses it deems necessary in connection with any hearings before it or to investigate requests for appropriations.

**Note:** The language in the ballot question and the proposed Charter change are inconsistent. The proposed change would limit the Board's investigatory powers to "matters of fiscal policy as are within [the Board's] direct jurisdiction and responsibilities", whereas the ballot question states it will be limited to "fiscal matters only".

**Charter Sections That Will be Amended:** C6-20-7(a) and C6-20-9

**Ballot Question #7: Revise the Charter to limit the service of any one individual to a single elected position, excluding Constables.**

**Background:** The current Charter does not prohibit

elected officials from holding multiple elected positions.

**Result of a Charter Change:** New language would disallow the Mayor, members of the Board of Representatives, Board of Finance and Board of Education, the Town and City Clerks, and Registrars of Voters from holding dual elective offices. Constables would still be able to hold more than one elected position.

**Charter Section That Will be Amended:** C1-80-1

**Ballot Question #8: Revise the Charter to add a Preamble to the Charter concerning Citizens' Rights.**

**Background:** Today, the Charter does not formally address Citizens' Rights.

**Result of a Charter Change:** Creation of a preamble that includes the following:

The Citizens of the City of Stamford shall have all the rights, privileges and protections provided by the City Charter and all Federal and State laws, to include:

1. The right to an open and accessible government including reasonable access to City records and information and reasonable access to City officials and employees to conduct business with the City.
2. Subject to State law, the right to observe meetings and hearings of all City Boards, Commissions and Committees and to make reasonable public comment at public hearings.
3. The right to have elected and governmental employees conduct business in accordance with the City Code of Ethics.

**Charter Section That Will be Amended:** Addition of a Preamble

**Ballot Question #9: Revise the Charter to change the term of office for Constables from two years to four years.**

**Result of a Charter Change:** Commencing with the biennial election of 2013, the term of office for City Constables shall be four years. This change would give all elected officials terms of four years, except for members of the Board of Education, who would continue to serve three-year terms.

**Charter Section That Will be Amended:** C1-70-3

November 2012

**Charter Revision  
Ballot Questions**

**A Voters Guide  
To Proposed Changes  
To the City of Stamford  
Charter**

*A mandatory review of Stamford's Charter takes place every 10 years, with a special Charter Revision Commission identifying and submitting proposed changes to the Board of Representatives for approval. The approved changes are then placed on the ballot for final approval or rejection by the voters.*

*The nine ballot questions that summarize the proposed changes are included in this guide with additional background information.*

**To review the proposed revisions within the context of the Charter:**

- Visit the League of Women Voters website below
- Visit the City's website at [www.boardofreps.org](http://www.boardofreps.org)
- Call the Board of Representatives at (203) 977-4024 to request a copy of the Charter Revisions
- Attend the League of Women Voters Public Forum on October 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Harry Bennett Library at 115 Vine Road.

**For additional information, visit  
[www.lwvstamford.org](http://www.lwvstamford.org)**



**Ballot Question #1: Revise the Charter to make certain technical, grammatical, administrative and procedural changes and revisions.**

**Background:** The Charter Commission identified a number of instances where the Charter was inconsistent with State statutes and recommended changes to bring the Charter in line with them.

The other types of changes include changing dates to extend parts of the budget and audit processes by one month and to provide more flexibility to the Board of Representatives in changing meeting dates when there is a conflict with Sundays or holidays. Some reporting relationships that are now being followed in practice also are recognized in the proposed changes.

**Result of Charter Change:** In addition to the types of changes noted above, a number of more significant changes are proposed. They include:

1. Establishing that appointees to Boards and Commissions shall not serve in office more than 6 months after expiration of their term. Currently, members serve until replaced even if their terms have expired
2. Eliminating the Personnel Board of Appeals and transferring its duties to the Personnel Commission
3. Requiring the Mayor to give written notice of intent to be out of the City more than 48 hours
4. Requiring a request for proposal (RFP) for external auditors to be issued at least every 5 years
5. Mandating an internal audit and risk management function. Currently it is discretionary and was eliminated by a previous mayor
6. Eliminating an unused provision that abandoned, unclaimed, or stolen money in police or fire departments goes into Police or Fire Pension Trust
7. Requiring that all Public Notices will be posted on the City website *and* by print, electronic *or* broadcast media, rather than just print newspapers.

**Ballot Question #2: Revise the Charter to create a single combined Fire Department including the following:**

1. **Creating a single Fire Department composed of career and volunteer firefighters with a single Chief and a single Fire Marshal.**
2. **Creating the positions of Assistant Fire Chief for Career Services and Assistant Fire Chief for Volunteer Services.**
3. **Acknowledging that the Volunteer Departments are an important component of the new combined Department.**

**Background:** Stamford's fire protection services are provided by a combination of the City-controlled and operated Stamford Fire and Rescue Department staffed by paid firefighters and five volunteer departments, known as the "Big Five". When the charter was created in 1949, the jurisdictional boundaries of the city's paid career fire department and volunteer fire departments remain aligned with the old Town and City boundaries: Belltown, Glenbrook, Long Ridge, Springdale, Turn of River and downtown.

Prior City administrations have explored consolidating Stamford's fire services and eliminating the volunteer management agreements/contracts with the city. Currently, the charter allows for jurisdictional boundaries to be changed; however, such a change requires a 2/3 vote of the Board of Representatives and the advice of the City Fire and Rescue Chief and Volunteer Chief(s).

**Result of Charter Change:** Creation of a single Stamford Fire Department inclusive of career and volunteer firefighters, with one Fire Chief who will appoint one Assistant Chief for Career Firefighters and one Assistant Chief for Volunteer Service Firefighters and one Fire Marshal for the City of Stamford. The Assistant Chief for Career Services shall be selected from the ranks of career firefighters. The Assistant Chief for Volunteer Services shall be selected from a pool of nominees nominated by the Chiefs of the volunteer fire companies. All nominees must have a minimum of ten years of firefighter experience and at least five years of supervisory experience.

**Charter Sections That Will be Amended:** C5-40-3 and C6-90-1

**Ballot Question #3: Revise the Charter to establish, by Charter, the Water Pollution Control Authority and to ensure that the provisions concerning the WPCA comply with State law.**

**Background:** By state statutes, the Water Pollution Control Authority is required to be separate from the City. The degree of independence, however, varies by municipality. In some, such authorities are run by government officials and in others by an independent body with its own fiduciary, policy-making, administrative and operating authority and responsibilities. Stamford's is a hybrid. Administration and appointed officials serve on the WPCA Board. The WPCA coordinates certain activities with the City's Operations Director, receives administrative support from the City, and bond funds that are raised to support its activities are bundled with the City's general obligation bonds.

**Result of Charter Change:** The change is intended to eliminate conflicting duties of the WPCA and City Operations Director, while maintaining the assistance of the City as needed. The Charter change will not establish a totally independent agency or change the overall responsibilities of the WPCA Board, the Administration and elected Boards.

**Charter Sections That Will be Amended:** C5-30-2 and C6-160-3

**Ballot Question #4: Revise the Charter to create a Historic Preservation Advisory Commission.**

**Background:** In 2011 the Federal Government made Stamford a Certified Local Government (CLG), a status that also enables it to secure certain grant monies to identify, preserve and protect its historic resources. To maintain its CLG status it is required to establish a Historic Preservation Commission.

**Result of a Charter Change:** A Historic Preservation Advisory Commission will be established in accordance with an ordinance that will be enacted by the Board of Representatives. The ordinance will establish the composition, membership, powers and duties in accordance with State and Federal statutes and CLG procedures.

**Charter Sections That Will be Amended:** C6-00-1, C6-00-2, C6-200-1 through C6-200-3 (new)