

March 16, 2015

Mayor and Council of the City of Norwich  
City Hall  
Norwich, Connecticut 06360

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Dear Mayor Hinchey and Members of the Council of the City of Norwich

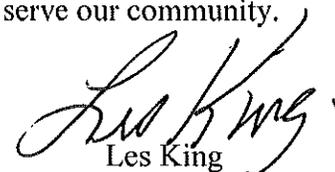
Enclosed herein is the report of the Norwich Charter Revision Commission (NCRC). As you selected a bi-partisan membership for the Commission, I am pleased to state that our recommendations are, in most cases, unanimously and enthusiastically supported by all members.

After its organizational meeting on January 22, 2014, the NCRC held public hearings in accordance with statutory requirements in March, 2014 and March, 2015. We also had an additional public hearing in November 2014 to gather information on a specific issue: the possibility of adopting a single mill rate for the entire City. We had many regularly scheduled meetings wherein people with specific knowledge and expertise were invited to speak on issues in order to ensure a thorough review at the appropriate breadth and depth. All meetings were open to the public, with the minutes regularly posted on the City website.

The Council directed the NCRC to examine seven specific issues, but we also added many matters at the behest of Norwich citizens, City officials, staff and advisors. From all of these suggestions, we identified the most important and pressing topics. The NCRC determined that several of the issues researched and debated were not worthy of recommendation to revise the City charter. In fact, to minimize the length of this report, we chose not to include several issues where the Commission conclusion was that "no change" was recommended. You can find specific reference to these topics in our Commission minutes.

The Commission, respectful of the Council's goal to improve the governing language of the City Charter, presents the following report for its consideration. This report of the NCRC represents the honest result of months of a transparent process, careful consideration, and robust debate. No individual opinions are represented in the report. Rather, this report should be seen as the collective judgment of the NCRC. We respectfully request that the Council approve this draft report and forward it for consideration by the voters.

We thank you for your trust, and the opportunity to serve our community.



Les King  
Chairman

**DRAFT REPORT OF PROPOSED REVISIONS  
TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF  
NORWICH, CONNECTICUT**

**AS SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWICH  
BY  
THE NORWICH CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 2015**

**MARCH 12, 2015**

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## CHAPTER IV. Elections

### Sec. 8. - Registrars of voters and justices of the peace.

The registrars of voters and justices of the peace in office at the effective date of the charter shall remain in office until the termination of the term for which they were elected and until their successors are elected and qualified. ~~Biennially~~ ~~€~~ ~~Thereafter~~, there shall be elected at a town and city meeting to be held coincidentally with the general state election on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November (a) two registrars of voters for whom no elector shall vote for more than one and no more than one of whom shall be a member of the same political party, and (b) such number of justices of the peace as the city is entitled to for whom no elector shall vote for more than one-half if the number is even and a bare majority if the number is odd. At the first general state election following the adoption of the amendment to this section, ~~€~~ ~~the terms of the registrars of voters shall be for two~~ four years from the Wednesday following the first Monday in January next succeeding their election and the terms of the justices of the peace shall be for four years from the first Monday in January following their election. Registrars of voters and justices of the peace shall be nominated and elected as provided in the general statutes. Any vacancy in the office of registrar of voters shall be filled in the manner provided in the general statutes. However, in case a vacancy shall exist in said office in consequence of a refusal or failure of the deputy registrar to accept the office or the failure of the registrar to have appointed a deputy registrar, the council shall fill such vacancy by appointment of some suitable person, who shall not belong to the same political party as the other registrar. Selectmen in office at the effective date of the adoption of this amendment of this section shall remain in office until the termination of the term of which they were elected; thereafter, there shall no longer be the office of selectman.

## CHAPTER V. The Council

### Sec. 2. - Officers.

(a) *Mayor.* The mayor shall be the chief presiding officer at and shall have the right to vote at each meeting of the city council and shall set the order of the agenda for the city council. The mayor shall be the chief representative for the City of Norwich at all official functions and shall ~~may~~ attend all state, regional and national conferences of mayors, and shall receive reimbursement for his actual expenses as shall be necessary to attend such functions. The mayor shall be the general advocate for public policy of the City of Norwich and shall give the annual "State of the City" address at the first meeting of the city council held in the month of January of each year. The mayor shall be an "ex officio" ~~voting~~ non-voting member of all commissions and committees, created by the city council. The mayor shall have primary responsibility for economic development and be the catalyst, in consultation with members of the City Council, the City Administrator, and any other agencies created by the City Council, for the economic development of the city. Specific duties of the mayor in this capacity shall include, but are not limited to: promotion and development of the economic resources of the city and coordination of public and private activities relating to its development; initiation of contact and negotiation with potential businesses and developers and determination, through appropriate analyses and consultations of the economic impact and feasibility of proposed developments. The mayor shall have no other powers except as herein stated. The mayor shall be provided with a furnished office at city hall, and shall maintain those office hours deemed necessary for the efficient and effective conduct of business, which hours are to be published. The mayor shall be provided with a secretary who shall maintain a minimum of three and one-half (3.50) working hours per day. ~~and, to assist in the performance of economic development duties, an assistant (who shall be the Economic Development Coordinator, if any) with appropriate education and/or experience in the field.~~ The secretary shall be chosen and shall be employed at the will and pleasure of the mayor. The salary of such secretary ~~and such assistant~~ shall be commensurate with people doing similar duties, and the secretary shall be considered an unclassified employee in accordance with Section 6 of Chapter XIV of this Charter.

## CHAPTER V. The Council

### Sec. 2. - Officers.

(b) *Other officers.* Each newly elected council shall, at its first meeting, appoint as a ~~president pro tempore~~ deputy mayor for a term of two years the alderman who has received the highest number of votes in the general municipal election. In the event of a tie vote the council shall elect a deputy mayor from the aldermen tied for the highest vote. The city clerk shall serve as secretary of the council and, in addition to his duties prescribed by this charter, shall perform such other duties as the council may require. He shall keep a journal of all meetings of the council which shall be a public record open to inspection at all reasonable times by any taxpayer or elector of the city. Upon authorization by the council, the secretary may sign on behalf of the council all formal notices and records, excepting contracts, required to be signed by the council. In the absence of the mayor, the ~~president pro tempore~~ deputy mayor shall act in his stead.

## CHAPTER VI. City Manager

### Sec. 4. - Power of appointment and removal.

The city manager shall appoint the heads of all departments, except as otherwise provided in this charter, and such other officers and employees of the city as this charter or an ordinance of the council consistent therewith may provide. He shall have power to remove any officer or employee appointed by him, except a member of the classified service, provided the officer or employee shall have been served with a written notice of the intention of the city manager to remove him, containing a clear statement of the grounds for such removal and of the time and place, not less than ten days after the service of such notice, at which he shall be given the opportunity to be heard thereon. After such hearing, which shall be public at the option of such officer or employee, the action of the city manager shall be final. The city manager may suspend from duty for not more than thirty days any such officer or employee pending final action. The city manager shall also have the power to restructure or reorganize any department of the city of Norwich, the head of which is appointed by him, including the elimination, addition or separation of divisions of any department.

## Chapter VII. Budget

### Sec. 17. - Scope of capital budget.

As a part of the budget message, the chief executive officer of the city shall present a program, previously considered by the city planning commission as provided in Chapter XV of this Charter, of proposed capital projects for the city for the ensuing fiscal year and for the four fiscal years thereafter. Estimates of the cost of such projects shall be submitted by each department, office or agency annually in the same manner as estimates of other budgetary requirements are prepared for the chief executive officer of the city. The chief executive officer of the city shall recommend to the council those projects to be undertaken during the ensuing fiscal year and the method of financing the same. The council shall levy annually a tax of not less than ~~one mill~~ two percent of the general fund budget from the previous fiscal year or such greater amount as they shall determine, to be assessed on the ratable estate within the city at the same time as the regular annual taxes for city expenses, for the benefit of a fund to be known as the "Capital Improvement Fund of the City of Norwich." Said capital improvement fund shall be established for the purpose of paying the cost of capital improvements for which the city is authorized by this Charter to issue bonds and for no other purposes. ~~The proceeds of such levies shall be kept by the city treasurer in special bank accounts until invested as provided in chapter IX of this charter.~~ The council shall have power to transfer from time to time to the capital improvement fund any portion of a general fund surplus. Appropriations for construction or other permanent improvements, from whatever source made, shall not lapse until the purpose for which the appropriation was made shall have been accomplished or abandoned, provided any project shall be deemed to have been abandoned if three fiscal years elapse without expenditure from or encumbrance of the appropriations therefore.

## CHAPTER VIII. Borrowing

### Sec. 3. - Term and form of bonds and notes.

No bonds shall be issued for any public work or improvement for a term longer than the estimated life of the public work or improvement for which they are issued. No bonds shall be issued for any public work or improvement for a term longer than permitted by the general statutes. The terms, conditions, details and particulars of issuance of bonds and notes of the city shall be determined in accordance with the Connecticut statutes and law. ~~Notes in anticipation of bonds shall mature not later than twelve (12) months after the date of issue and may be renewed from time to time in accordance with the provisions of the General Statutes. Notes in anticipation of taxes shall mature before the end of the fiscal year in which issued. Notes issued to prevent default on the principal and interest of the city's bonded debt shall mature not later than the first day of June of the ensuing fiscal year. All bonds shall be in serial form payable as consecutively numbered in substantially equal amounts each year beginning one year from the date of issue, provided, if dividing the amount of the issue by the number of years in which the particular issue matures does not result in even five thousands, the maturities of the last year may be reduced sufficiently to produce such a result. Whenever a bond ordinance provides for the right of the city to redeem bonds prior to maturity, such rights shall be set forth in the bonds. Bonds and notes shall be authenticated by the seal of the city and the signatures of the city manager and the comptroller or may be executed with a facsimile of any signature or seal, provided at least one signature required or permitted to be placed thereon shall be manually subscribed. Bonds shall be sold at public sale upon sealed proposals.~~

## CHAPTER VIII. Borrowing

### Sec. 4. - Bonds and notes, how authorized.

The issuance of bonds shall be authorized only by ordinance adopted by the council by the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of all the members of the council, and, if the total estimated cost of an improvement for which bonds are proposed to be issued exceeds eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000.00) no bonds shall be issued for such improvement unless the ordinance authorizing such issue shall also be approved by a majority of those voting thereon at a general municipal election or shall also be approved by a special election called and warned for the purpose in which at least fifteen (15) per cent of the electors qualified to vote, as determined by the last completed list of the registrar of voters, shall have voted in such majority. Two (2) or more simultaneous bonds issued for substantially the same purpose whose aggregate amount exceeds eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000.00) shall be regarded as a single issue. Notes in anticipation of taxes shall be authorized by the council by resolution. Notes in anticipation of bonds may be issued by the comptroller on the recommendation of the city manager. Notes to prevent default on the principal and interest of the city's bonded debt shall be issued by the comptroller on the recommendation of the city manager, provided that the comptroller shall certify to him that except for such borrowing a default on the part of the city would take place. Such certification shall be spread on the minutes of the council. If the purpose for which the bonds were authorized is not pursued within three (3) years from the effective date of the ordinance or the date of the general or special election authorizing the issuance of the bonds, whichever date is later, such authority for the issuance of the bonds shall be deemed to have lapsed. There shall be excluded from the \$800,000 referendum provision of Chapter VIII section 4, general obligation bonds issued by the city which are the subject of a payment agreement between and approved by the city council and the board of public utility commissioners, or water pollution control authority, as applicable, which provides that the city's debt service expense on the bonds subject to the agreement shall be paid from revenues of a city utility, and through the board, revenues are agreed to be levied, collected and paid to the city for debt service payment. The payment agreement may contain provisions customarily associated with revenue pledges, including those provided for in the general statutes, and shall be enforceable by the city, which shall be entitled to all remedies in equity and law to enforce payment and the terms of the agreement. All general obligation bonds that are the subject of a payment agreement, shall be paid when due from ad valorem taxes to the extent not paid by the utility pursuant to the payment agreement, and the expectation of payment pursuant to the payment agreement shall not affect the full faith and credit of the general obligation pledge of the bond ordinance with respect to any portion of the issued bonds. In the event payment pursuant to a payment agreement is not received when due, the comptroller is authorized to, and shall without further authorization pay, from any available funds of the city debt service on the bonds subject to the payment agreement, such payment obligation constituting an appropriation. A payment agreement is solely between the city and the board and does not cause such bonds to become secured by revenues pursuant to Chapter VIII section 7.

## **CHAPTER IX. Financial Administration**

### **Sec. 2. - Comptroller.**

The comptroller shall be the head of the department of finance. He shall be a person skilled in municipal accounting, budgeting and financial control. He shall have charge of the administration of the financial affairs of the city and to that end he shall: (a) Compile for the chief executive officer of the city the estimates for the budget and the capital budget; (b) supervise and control all encumbrances, expenditures and disbursements to ensure that budget appropriations are not exceeded; (c) submit monthly to the chief executive officer of the city for presentation to the council ~~at its first regular meeting in each month~~ a public statement showing the amount of each appropriation with transfers to and from the same, the allotments thereof to the end of the preceding month, the encumbrances and expenditures charged against each appropriation during the preceding month, the total of such charges for the year to the end of the preceding month, and the unencumbered balance remaining in each appropriation and the allotments thereof. He shall also submit at the same time a statement showing the revenue estimated to be received from each source, the actual receipt from each source for the preceding month, the total receipts from each source for the year to the end of the preceding month, and the balance remaining to be collected. The comptroller shall furnish to the head of each department, office and agency a copy of the portion of the above statement relating to his department, office or agency; (d) prepare for the chief executive officer of the city as of the end of each fiscal year a complete financial statement and report of the financial transactions of the city for the preceding year; (e) appoint and remove, subject to the provisions of chapter XIV of this charter, the heads of the division of tax collection, and purchases and insurance, and all other officers and employees of his department, provided, in the case of employees of the divisions of tax collection, and purchases and insurance, he shall act after consultation with the heads of these respective divisions; (f) transfer temporarily any employee of one division or subdivision of the department to another for the purpose of meeting seasonal demands for clerical and other assistance; (g) supervise and be responsible for the efficient performance of the powers and duties conferred or imposed by this charter on the department of finance and on its several divisions and officers; (h) designate, with the approval of the chief executive officer of the city, an employee of the department of finance as deputy comptroller, who during the temporary incapacity or absence of the comptroller shall have and perform all the powers and duties herein conferred or imposed upon such comptroller.

### **Sec. 6. - Collection of taxes.**

All taxes in each district in each fiscal year shall be due and payable in equal semi-annual installments on the first business days of July and January, except that any tax of less than twenty dollars shall be due and payable in full on the first day of July. If any installment of such tax shall not be paid on or before the first business day of the month next succeeding that in which it shall become due and payable, such installment and all succeeding installments shall

immediately become delinquent and shall be considered as having become due and payable at the same time as the earliest installment of such tax to become delinquent and shall be subject to interest at the rate and in the manner provided for in the general statutes. ~~Any person may pay the total amount of any such tax for which he is liable at the time when the first installment shall be payable, and if such payment shall be made on or before the first business day of August following the date when such first installment became payable, the collector may allow a discount in such amount, not to exceed two per cent of the total amount of such tax, as shall be provided for by the council upon recommendation by the chief executive officer of the city at the same meeting of the council at which the tax rate is fixed.~~

#### **Sec. 10. - Competitive bidding.**

The city council shall prescribe by ordinance rules and regulations for competitive bidding. All single purchases which shall involve an expenditure of more than ~~twelve~~ twenty-five thousand dollars, or such higher amount as may be allowed by the general statutes, shall be made from or let by sealed bids, after such public notice as may be prescribed by ordinance, to the lowest responsible bidder, provided the chief executive officer of the city shall have power to reject any or all bids and to direct the purchasing agent to advertise again for bids. The city council may prescribe by ordinance authorization for the chief executive officer of the city to negotiate without further competitive bidding for the purchase of insurance coverage or surety bond in the event less than two bids are received in response to competitive bidding for such insurance coverage or surety bond. The provisions of this section as to the taking of bids for purchases shall apply to contracts for public works and improvements and also to sales of city property except that such sales shall be to the highest responsible bidder. A record of all bids showing the name of the bidders and amounts of bids and indicating in each case the successful bidder, together with the originals of all sealed bids and other documents pertaining to the award of contracts, shall be ~~reserved~~ preserved for not less than six years in a file which shall be open to public inspection. No transaction which is essentially a unit shall be divided for the purpose of evading the intent of this section.

#### **Sec. 20. - Disbursements.**

No disbursement shall be made from any funds of the city except ~~by check signed~~ those approved by the treasurer. Each check shall be based upon a voucher or payroll duly audited by the comptroller. Before attaching his signature to any check the treasurer shall satisfy himself that such check represents the payment of a duly authorized obligation of the city. He shall keep such books and records as the comptroller shall prescribe. His official bond shall be a surety company bond in an amount sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the general statutes and the ordinances of the city.

## CHAPTER XI. Department of Public Works

### Sec. 1. - Department of public works.

There shall be a department of public works which shall consist of the director of public works and such other officers and employees organized into such divisions as may be prescribed by ordinance. It shall have charge of: (a) The construction, maintenance and repair of streets, storm drains, bridges, docks, wharves, buildings and all other structures and works not specifically assigned by this charter to some other department or agency; (b) ~~street lighting~~; (c) ~~street cleaning~~; (d) ~~(c)~~ the collection and disposal of ashes, garbage and refuse, subject to the powers of the health officer in matters of public health; (e) ~~(d)~~ the care, management and control of all airports owned and controlled by the city; (f) (e) the care, management and control of all cemeteries owned and controlled by the city; (g) ~~house numbering~~; (h) (f) the provision of heat, light and janitorial care for all city-owned buildings except those under the jurisdiction of the board of education, the ~~police and~~ fire departments and the board of public utility commissioners; (i) (g) the establishment and operation of a municipal garage for the maintenance and repair of city-owned motor vehicles and other equipment; (j) (h) the setting out, care and removal of street trees, vines and shrubs; and (k) (i) the maintenance of public parks, and all public land, equipment and facilities for passive recreation.

### Sec. 2. - Director of public works.

The director of public works shall be the head of the department of public works. He shall be chosen on the basis of his executive and administrative qualifications and shall have had experience in highway or public works administration. Subject to the provisions of chapter XIV of this charter he shall appoint and remove all other officers and employees of the department, ~~with the advice of the heads of the respective divisions.~~

### Sec. 5. - Engineering.

The director of public works with the approval of the chief executive officer of the city shall appoint an engineer who is experienced in the active practice of his profession who shall have charge of all engineering work of the city, provided that if the director of public works is a civil engineer licensed to practice in this state he may be assigned by the chief executive officer of the city to act as the engineer provided by this section. He shall make all surveys, maps, plans and drawings incident to the work of the department or of any other city department when so assigned by the director of public works and the chief executive officer of the city. The city engineer shall have custody of all maps of the city not specifically entrusted to other officials by the chief executive office of the city or under the general statutes. He shall furnish a copy of any map, drawing or memorandum in his possession which may be required by the city assessor or by the corporation counsel in the preparation of any opinion or the trial of any case.

**Sec. 8. - Cemeteries.**

The chief executive officer of the city through the ~~superintendent of parks and cemeteries~~ director of public works shall have the power and duty of carrying out existing cemetery trusts and shall administer the same and shall care for and maintain all cemetery properties in the name of the city or for which the city is now or shall hereafter be responsible.

## **CHAPTER XII. Utilities**

### **Sec. 11. - Contracts, leases and agreements.**

The board may in the operation and management of the department, either by itself or its duly authorized officers or employees, enter into leases, contracts and agreements, provided the term of such leases, contracts and agreements shall be limited to not more than ~~ten~~ twenty-five years. The board shall have the right, subject to the approval of the council, to purchase in the name of the city of Norwich, any real estate or franchises deemed necessary by said board for the enlargement, maintenance, equipment or management of the department.

## CHAPTER XIII. Public Welfare

### Sec. 1. - Board of education.

There shall be a board of education of nine members who shall serve without compensation. It shall have all the powers and duties conferred and imposed by the general statutes on boards of education in respect to the control and management of schools except as otherwise provided in this charter. At the first general municipal election following the adoption of the amendment of this section, there shall be elected ~~three~~ five members of the board of education to serve for a term of ~~two~~ four years, and at the second general municipal election, held following the adoption of the amendment of this section, there shall be elected ~~six~~ four members to serve for a term of two four years and every two years thereafter there shall be elected members adequate to fill the number of expiring terms. ~~and at the third general election to be held, following the adoption of the amendment of this section, and every two four years thereafter there shall be elected nine members of the board of education, to serve for a term of two years.~~

## UNCHANGED CHARTER SECTIONS

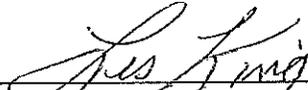
Pursuant to Resolution passed by the Norwich City Council on November 18, 2013, the Norwich Charter Review Commission considered the following Charter sections and determined as a body that it recommends that no changes should be made to:

- 1) Chapter V, Sec. 1(a), which provides for a two year term for Council members;
- 2) Chapter V, Sec. 1(b), which provides a one thousand two hundred dollar (\$1,200.00) stipend for each Council member;
- 3) Chapter VII, Sec 18, which provides for apportionment of expenditures between consolidation districts.

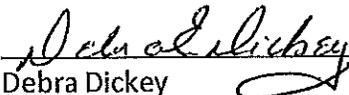
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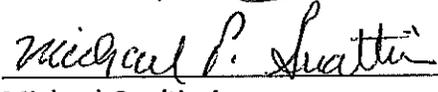
The Norwich Charter Revision commission respectfully requests that the City Council for the City of Norwich adopt its recommendations as set forth herein, in full or in part.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Norwich Charter Revision Commission

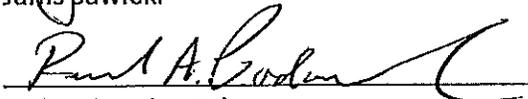
  
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Les King, Chairman

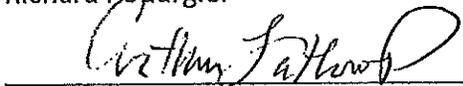
  
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Linda Becker

  
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Debra Dickey

  
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Michael Gualtieri

  
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Janis Sawicki

  
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Richard Podurgiel

  
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Arthur Lathrop