



## MUNICIPAL BOARDS OF FINANCE

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### QUESTIONS

Which municipalities have a board of finance and what is their form of government?  
How do municipalities with boards of finance elect members and fill vacancies?

### SUMMARY

Of Connecticut's 169 municipalities, 120 (71%) have a board of finance. These municipalities vary according to their form of government, but generally follow the same distribution as Connecticut municipalities as a whole: 95 (80%) have a selectmen-town meeting, six (5%) have a representative town meeting, 11 (9%) have a mayor-council, and eight (7%) have a manager-council form of government.

The methods for selecting and filling vacancies on boards of finance depend on whether a town operates under the state statutes (i.e., statutory town) or under a charter (i.e., charter town). For statutory towns, state law establishes the selection and vacancy-filling methods. For charter towns, the charter establishes the methods. Regardless of whether a municipality operates under the statutes or a charter, it must comply with state law's minority representation requirements, which prohibit members from the same political party from comprising more than a specified percentage (generally two-thirds) of a board's membership.

### MUNICIPALITIES WITH BOARDS OF FINANCE

Table 1 lists the municipalities with boards of finance according to their form of government and indicates whether each municipality operates under a charter or the statutes. Of the 120 municipalities, 73 are charter towns and 47 are statutory towns.

**Table 1: Connecticut Municipalities with Boards of Finance by Form of Government**

Municipality	Charter	
	Y	N
<b>Selectmen-Town Meeting (95)</b>		
Andover	✓	
Ashford		✓
Barkhamsted	✓	
Beacon Falls	✓	
Bethany		✓
Bethel	✓	
Bethlehem	✓	
Bolton	✓	
Bozrah		✓
Bridgewater	✓	
Brookfield	✓	
Brooklyn		✓
Burlington	✓	
Canaan		✓
Canterbury	✓	
Canton	✓	
Chaplin		✓
Chester		✓
Clinton	✓	
Colchester	✓	
Colebrook	✓	
Columbia	✓	
Cornwall		✓
Deep River		✓
Durham	✓	
East Granby		✓
East Haddam		✓
East Lyme	✓	
East Windsor	✓	
Easton		✓
Ellington	✓	
Essex		✓
Franklin		✓
Goshen		✓
Griswold	✓	
Guilford	✓	
Haddam	✓	
Hampton		✓
Hartland		✓
Harwinton		✓
Kent		✓
Killingworth	✓	
Lebanon		✓
Lisbon		✓
Litchfield		✓

Municipality	Charter	
	Y	N
Lyme		✓
Madison	✓	
Marlborough	✓	
Middlebury	✓	
Middlefield	✓	
Monroe <sup>1</sup>	✓	
Morris		✓
New Fairfield		✓
New Hartford		✓
Newtown <sup>1</sup>	✓	
Norfolk		✓
North Canaan		✓
North Haven	✓	
North Stonington		✓
Old Lyme		✓
Old Saybrook	✓	
Orange	✓	
Oxford	✓	
Plainfield	✓	
Pomfret		✓
Preston		✓
Putnam <sup>2</sup>	✓	
Redding		✓
Ridgefield	✓	
Roxbury		✓
Salem	✓	
Salisbury		✓
Seymour	✓	
Sharon		✓
Simsbury	✓	
Somers	✓	
Southbury	✓	
Sprague		✓
Stafford		✓
Sterling		✓
Stonington	✓	
Suffield	✓	
Thomaston		✓
Thompson		✓
Union		✓
Warren		✓
Washington		✓
Westbrook		✓
Weston	✓	
Willington		✓
Wilton	✓	

Municipality	Charter	
	Y	N
Windsor Locks	✓	
Woodbridge	✓	
Woodbury	✓	
Woodstock		✓
<b>Representative Town Meeting (6)</b>		
Branford	✓	
Darien	✓	
Fairfield	✓	
Greenwich	✓	
Waterford	✓	
Westport	✓	
<b>Mayor-Council (11)</b>		
Bristol	✓	
East Haven	✓	
Milford	✓	
Naugatuck	✓	
New Britain	✓	
New Canaan <sup>3</sup>	✓	
New Milford	✓	
Plymouth	✓	
Stamford <sup>4</sup>	✓	
Torrington	✓	
Trumbull	✓	
<b>Manager-Council (8)</b>		
Avon	✓	
Cromwell	✓	
East Hampton	✓	
Glastonbury	✓	
Granby <sup>5</sup>	✓	
Hebron <sup>5</sup>	✓	
Southington	✓	
Windham	✓	

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Selectmen-Council-Town Meeting

<sup>2</sup> Mayor-Selectmen-Town Meeting

<sup>3</sup> Selectmen-Town Council

<sup>4</sup> Mayor-Board of Representatives

<sup>5</sup> Town Manager-Board of Selectmen

Sources: 2013 State Register and Manual; municipal websites; and Frank Connolly, *Local Government in Connecticut*, 2013.

## **BOARD OF FINANCE SELECTION AND VACANCY FILLING METHODS**

### ***Statutory v. Charter Towns***

The methods for selecting board of finance members and filling vacancies depend on whether a town operates under the statutes or a charter. For statutory towns, state law requires the board to consist of six electors who serve six-year, staggered terms; two members are elected at each regular municipal election ([CGS § 9-202](#)). Statutory towns may, by ordinance, opt to elect or appoint up to three alternate members, subject to minority representation requirements ([CGS § 7-340a](#)). In the case of a vacancy, the remaining board members appoint a temporary replacement at a special meeting called for that purpose. The appointee serves until the next municipal election, at which point a successor is elected to fill the remaining portion of the term ([CGS § 7-343](#)).

For charter towns, the methods for selecting board members and filling vacancies are determined by the charter. We selected and reviewed a sample of 35 (out of 73) Connecticut municipalities that have a board of finance and operate under a charter (see Table 3). Two of the 35 municipalities (Branford and Bristol) have an appointed board of finance. The rest elect their board members at regular municipal elections, typically for staggered terms.

The boards in our sample have between six and nine voting members, and four years is the most common term length. The boards fill vacancies by appointment initially, typically by either the board itself or by the board of selectmen or town council. In many municipalities, the appointee serves only until a special election or the next regular municipal election, at which time a successor is elected to fill the remaining portion of the term.

### ***Minority Representation***

Regardless of whether a municipality operates under the statutes or a charter, it must comply with state law's minority representation requirements.

The law requires minority political party representation on certain governmental bodies of the state, its towns, and other political subdivisions. No more than a specified number of members (generally two-thirds of the total) enrolled in the same political party can serve on a particular body, as shown in Table 2. Municipalities may enact a greater degree of minority representation than required by the state through the adoption of a charter provision that sets a lower maximum number from the same party ([CGS § 9-167a](#)).

Most of the 35 municipal charters we reviewed establish minority representation requirements that conform to those established in state law. Only three municipalities in our sample (Branford, Burlington, and Columbia) impose minority representation requirements for the board of finance that are stricter than those imposed by state law.

**Table 2: Minority Representation Law**

Total Membership	Maximum From One Party
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	4
7	5
8	5
9	6
More than 9	Two-thirds of total membership

Source: [CGS § 9-167a](#)

### ***Selected Charter Provisions***

Table 3 shows charter provisions for selecting and filling vacancies on boards of finance in a sample of 35 municipalities.

**Table 3: Charter Provisions for Selecting and Filling Vacancies on Boards of Finance**

<b>Town and Charter Citations</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Selection Method</b>	<b>Term Length</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
Andover  Ch. II, §§ 203, 208	7  (Additionally, Capital Improvement Plan Committee designates a non-voting member)	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board for unexpired portion of term; board chair must notify major political parties and general public of the vacancy; recommendations for appointment must be made within 35 days of notification  Board of selectmen fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days of the notice
Avon  Ch. 2, § 2.5 Ch. 3, § 3.5	7	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by town council for unexpired portion of term or until January 1 following the next regular municipal election, whichever is sooner  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member  Board of finance fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days; board appointee serves until January 1 following the next regular municipal election  If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term
Bolton  Ch. 2, § 2.5 Ch. 3, § 3.5	7	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days (selectmen have 30 days to do so)  Appointee serves until successor elected at special or next regular municipal election

Table 3 (continued)

<b>Town and Charter Citations</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Selection Method</b>	<b>Term Length</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
Branford  § 11	6  (Additionally, first selectman is ex-officio member, but cannot vote except to break a tie)	Selectmen appoint 2 members each year  No more than 3 members may be from same political party	3 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term
Bristol  § 25	9	Mayor serves as ex-officio member; other 8 members are appointed by mayor and confirmed by city council	4 years or until a successor is appointed	Appointed by mayor and confirmed by city council for unexpired portion of term
Brookfield  Art. II, § C2-6 Art. III, § C3-2	6  (Additionally, first selectman is ex-officio member, but cannot vote except to break a tie)	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days  Appointee serves until successor elected at special or regular municipal election; successor serves for unexpired portion of term
Burlington  Ch. 2, § 2-5 Ch. 3, § 3-4	7	Biennial election for each expiring term  No more than 4 members may be from same political party	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen within 60 days  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member  If former member was unaffiliated, appointee must be unaffiliated or from a political party on whose slate the former member ran  Appointee serves until next regular municipal election, at which a successor is elected for unexpired portion of term

Table 3 (continued)

<b>Town and Charter Citations</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Selection Method</b>	<b>Term Length</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
Canton  Art. VI, § 6.05(H) Art. IX, § 9.03	6	3 members elected biennially	4 years	Filled by board of finance until next municipal election; board of selectmen may fill vacancies that exist for more than 45 days  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member or be unaffiliated  Town may also opt to fill vacancy by special election
Colchester  Art. II, § C-202 Art. III, § C-302 Art. VI, § C-601	6  (Additionally, first selectman is ex-officio, nonvoting member)	2 members elected biennially	6 years	Filled by board of finance within 60 days  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member, or be unaffiliated if former member was unaffiliated  If former member changed affiliation after being elected, then appointee's affiliation must match former member's original affiliation  Appointee serves until next municipal election, at which a successor is elected for remainder of unexpired term
Columbia (known as Financial Planning and Allocation Commission)  Art. 6, § 6.5 Art. 7, § 7.3(g)	7	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term; commission fills vacancies that are not filled within 90 days  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member

Table 3 (continued)

<b>Town and Charter Citations</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Selection Method</b>	<b>Term Length</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
Cromwell  Art. 5, § 5.02 Art. 6, § 6.04	6	2 members elected biennially	6 years	Filled by town council within 45 days for the unexpired portion of the term or until the next municipal election, whichever is sooner  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member  If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term
Darien  Ch. II, § 4 Ch. II, § 8 Ch. V, § 20	7	Biennial election for each expiring term  If two board positions are to be filled, each elector can cast one vote; if three, two votes; if four, three votes	4 years	Filled by board of finance until the next municipal election, at which a successor is elected to serve any unexpired portion of term  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member
Durham  § 2.1 § 2.6 § 5.1	6	2 members elected biennially	6 years	Filled by board of selectmen for the unexpired portion of the term or until the next biennial election, whichever is sooner  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member
East Hampton  § 5.1 § 6.4	7	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by town council for the unexpired portion of the term
East Haven  Ch. II, § 1 Ch. II, § 13	6  (Additionally, mayor is ex-officio member, but cannot vote except to break a tie)	6 members elected biennially  Each party nominates 4 candidates; each elector votes for four candidates	2 years	Filled by mayor until next municipal election  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member



Table 3 (continued)

<b>Town and Charter Citations</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Selection Method</b>	<b>Term Length</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
Fairfield  § 1.4 § 2.3 § 2.5 § 8.3	9  (Additionally, board of selectmen and fiscal officer are ex officio, non-voting members)	3 members elected biennially  When an uneven number of members are to be elected, political parties cannot nominate, and electors cannot vote for, more than a bare majority of the number of people to be elected	6 years	Filled by board of selectmen until next municipal election, unless the period for making nominations is over when the vacancy is created, in which case the appointee serves until the position is filled at a general or special election  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member
Granby  § 2-6 § 3-6	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for the unexpired portion of the term or until the next biennial election, whichever is sooner  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member  If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term
Hebron  § 203 § 208	6	Quadrennial election for each expiring term  Parties may nominate, and electors may vote for, as many candidates as there are available seats	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term
Killingworth  § 4-4 § 4-17 § 4-10	6	Up to 3 members elected biennially	4 years	Filled by board of finance for unexpired portion of term; board of selectmen fills vacancies that exist for more than 45 days  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member

Table 3 (continued)

<b>Town and Charter Citations</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Selection Method</b>	<b>Term Length</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
Madison § 3.1 § 6.4 § 6.6	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member
Marlborough § 2.2.6 § 2.3 § 2.6	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen for unexpired portion of term  Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member
Middlebury § 202 § 209 § 212 § 506	6 (plus 3 alternates)	Biennial election for each expiring term	6 years (members)  2 years (alternates)	Filled by board of selectmen within 90 days for the unexpired portion of the term or until the next municipal election, whichever is sooner  Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member
Monroe Ch. VI § 8 Ch. VII §§ 2, 5	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by town council for the unexpired portion of the term or until next municipal election, whichever is sooner  Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member
New Milford § 202 § 205 § 302 § 803	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Town council fills vacancy within 60 days  Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member  Appointee serves the unexpired portion of the term or until a successor is elected at the next regular municipal election, whichever is sooner

Table 3 (continued)

<b>Town and Charter Citations</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Selection Method</b>	<b>Term Length</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
Newtown  § 2-30 § 2-40 § 2-50 § 2-130	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	2 years	Filled by first selectman within 60 days, with the board of selectmen's approval, until next municipal election  Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member
Salem  Ch. 2, § 2.02 Ch. 3, §§ 3.04, 3.09	6  (plus 3 alternates)	2 members and 1 alternate elected biennially	6 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fills vacancies that exist for more than 30 days  Appointee serves the unexpired portion of term, or until the next regular election, whichever is sooner  If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term
Seymour  Ch. 2, § 2.1 Ch. 3, § 3.4 Ch. 12, § 12.1	7  (plus 3 alternates)	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of finance; first selectman fills vacancies that exist for more than 30 days  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member  Appointee serves until next regular municipal election, at which a successor is elected for remainder of unexpired term
Simsbury  Ch. 2, § 205 Ch. 3, §§ 301-302	6	2 members elected biennially	6 years	Filled by board of selectmen within 45 days for unexpired portion of term, or until the next regular municipal election, whichever is sooner  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member  If there is a regular municipal election before the term expires, then the position must be filled at that election for the unexpired portion of the term

Table 3 (continued)

<b>Town and Charter Citations</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Selection Method</b>	<b>Term Length</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
Somers  Ch. 2, §§ 2-1, 2-5 Ch. 3, § 3-2	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	6 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fills vacancies that are not filled within 60 days (selectmen have 30 days to do so)  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member; vacancies that exist for more than 30 days may be filled by any eligible person, as long as board's membership conforms to statutory minority representation requirement  Appointee serves until successor elected at special or next regular municipal election; successor serves for unexpired portion of term
Southbury  Ch. 2, §§ 202, 210	6  (plus 3 alternates)	3 members and 1 or 2 alternates elected biennially	4 years	Filled by board of selectmen within 45 days for unexpired portion of the term  Appointee must belong to same political party as former member or be an unaffiliated elector
Stamford  § C1-80-2 § C1-80-6 § C6-20-1	6	Biennial election for each expiring term	4 years	Filled by board of representatives within 60 days  Appointee serves until December 1 following the next municipal election, at which a successor is elected for unexpired portion of term
Stonington  Ch. 2, § 2-4 Ch. 6, § 6-5	6	2 members elected biennially  Each of the two political parties that polled the most votes for state treasurer at the prior state election nominate one candidate; each elector votes for one candidate	6 years	Filled by board of finance for unexpired portion of the term; board of selectmen fills vacancies that exist for more than 60 days  Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member

Table 3 (continued)

<b>Town and Charter Citations</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Selection Method</b>	<b>Term Length</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
Trumbull  Ch. 7, § 1 Ch. 8, § 5	6  (plus 3 alternates)	3 members elected biennially  1 alternate appointed by town council each year	4 years (members)  3 years (alternates)	Filled by first selectman for unexpired portion of the term  Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member  Voters may petition to fill vacancy by special election
Wilton  Art. VIII, §§ C-48, C-51, C-53	6	3 members elected biennially	4 years	Filled by board of finance; board of selectmen fill vacancies that exist for more than 30 days  Appointee serves until November 30 following the next regular municipal election, at which a successor is elected for the unexpired portion of term
Windsor Locks  Ch. 2, § 205 Ch. 7, § 709	6  (plus 2 alternates)	2 members elected biennially  Alternates, who must belong to different political parties, appointed by board of finance	6 years	Filled by board of finance within 60 days  Appointee must belong to the same political party as former member  Appointee serves until the next municipal election, at which a successor is elected for the unexpired portion of term

Sources: Municipal websites and charters

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