

FW: Referendum Voting

Town Manager

Sent: Monday, September 15, 2014 11:24 AM**To:** Rebecca Davis (lyn-beck@comcast.net); Grant Hirst [ghirst@comcast.net]; Steve Beckert (stephen.beckert@navy.mil); Roland Fernald (rfernald@msn.com)**Cc:** Charles Rankie; Wendy Rawski**Attachments:** Charter - Adopted Nov. 2010.pdf (147 KB) ; Budget Referendum Ballot ~1.docx (147 KB)

FYI

From: John Hawley [mailto:jchawley@roadrunner.com]**Sent:** Monday, September 15, 2014 11:22 AM**To:** Town Manager**Subject:** RE: Referendum Voting

Dana,

We had our Charter changed to allow for referendum voting five years ago (used it for the past four budgets). All the articles are set up just like they would for a town meeting warrant but on a paper ballot. Our charter is set up in a way that if individual articles do not pass, those specific articles must be revisited by staff, Council and budget committee and sent out to re-vote. There is a public budget hearing before each referendum. This year was the first time in four years that the budget as a whole did not pass. We had nine articles that had to be reworked and sent back out to voters in which we were successful the second time. This method has worked for us in a way that it increased participation. What used to have maybe 40 people at a town meeting, now brings out almost 300 for a secret ballot vote.

The one drawback I have seen with this method is that we don't get any more participation at the public hearings than we did when we had town meetings. When the nine articles didn't pass this last time, we had no way of knowing what the pleasure of the voters was. We just had to assume they thought the amounts were too high, so we lowered them. In hindsight, I would have suggested the Charter be set it up in a way that if the referendum doesn't pass any article the first time around, a town meeting would then be planned for the second time so that you have opinions from the voters. This also guarantees a passed budget the second time as opposed to a scenario like Livermore Falls where they had to go out like six times to get an approved budget. It becomes costly and puts off your commitment if you have to secret ballot vote too many times.

With the exception of that flaw, people seem to like this method here because it also gives us the ability to offer absentee ballots.

I have attached our Charter and the referendum ballot for this budget year.

John

From: Town Manager [mailto:townmanager@eliotme.org]**Sent:** Monday, September 15, 2014 10:18 AM**To:** John Hawley**Subject:** RE: Referendum Voting

John,

Have you had any budgets shot down? What happens if a budget is shot down? Do you have a public hearing before the referendum voting?

Can you send me the most recent ballot?

Thanks.

Dana

From: John Hawley [mailto:jchawley@roadrunner.com]

Sent: Monday, September 15, 2014 10:04 AM

To: Town Manager

Subject: Referendum Voting

Hi Dana,

We switched from town meeting to referendum four years ago. What would you like to know?

John Hawley, Town Manager

Town of Mechanic Falls

108 Lewiston Street

Mechanic Falls, ME 04256

(207) 345-2871, Fax (207) 345-9201

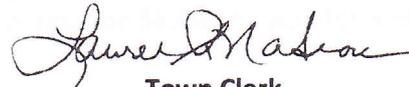
mechanicfalls.govoffice.com

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MUNICIPAL BUDGET BALLOT

MUNICIPAL ELECTION TOWN OF MECHANIC FALLS

June 10, 2014


Town Clerk

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTERS

Complete the arrow to indicate your vote.

YES ← -	To see if the Town will fix the date that one half of annual taxes be due and collectible on or before October 15, 2014 and that second half of taxes be due on or before May 15, 2015, and to see if the Town will fix a rate of 7.00 % interest to be charged on taxes unpaid after said date.
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will allow the Town Council to act on their behalf in matters of making necessary transfers among over-drafted accounts when such overdrafts do not exceed ten percent of the approved budget or \$10,000, whichever is larger, and when such transfers will not make the Town's budget as a whole over-drafted.
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Council to approve payment of bills, pertaining to emergencies and unforeseen expenses, that they deem necessary from the Contingency Account.
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will vote to apply \$ 747,327 of anticipated revenues against the total amount authorized to be raised by taxation.
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will authorize the Town Council to accept and expend unforeseen funds from insurance settlements, grants, gifts and other limited receipts for the support of a balanced municipal budget with any surplus funds transferring to the fund balance account at the close of the fiscal year.
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$12,035 for Boards and Council Budget. (Council recommends \$12,035 and Budget Committee recommends \$11,073).
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$7,500 for Legal Services Budget. (Council recommends \$7,500 and Budget Committee recommends \$6,700).
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$83,066 for Municipal Complex Budget. (Council and Budget Committee So Recommend.)
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$141,205 for Town Clerk/Elections Budget. (Council recommends \$141,205 and Budget Committee recommends \$129,910).
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$70,410 for Town Manager Budget. (Council and Budget Committee So Recommend.)
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$8,238 for Safety Compliance Budget. (Council and Budget Committee So Recommend.)
NO ← -	
YES ← -	To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$168,086 for Utilities Budget. (Council

MEMORANDUM

TO: ELIOT CHARTER COMMISSION
FROM: TOWN MANAGER
RE: FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THE CHARTER
DATE: SEPT. 22, 2014

I have reviewed the existing Town ordinance "To Establish the Eliot Fire Department" and in that document it states that The Selectmen upon certification from the Secretary of the Eliot Fire Department shall appoint the person who is duly chosen and qualified by the membership of the Eliot Fire Department to serve as the Fire Chief.

The Ordinance does not talk about evaluating the performance of the Chief, nor what if (or can?) the Selectmen choose not to appoint the membership's selected Fire Chief. It does not address whether the Fire Chief falls under the Personnel Policy, nor does it address who may remove the Fire Chief due to performance issues, nor what process to use for removal for whoever has that authority. It does limit the term of the Chief to year-by-year, so if a performance issue began, it theoretically could be stopped at the next election of officers, but only membership could opt to "put up" a different candidate to be appointed by the Selectmen, or IF the Selectmen can choose not to honor the request to appoint the chosen person as Fire Chief.

Pure organizational theory would have it such that all department heads and all departmental functions would be the responsibility of the Town Manager, and that each staff member would be picked based on character, qualifications and experience. The Town Manager would hire and terminate poorly performing department heads. That is the normal command and control structure. Currently, we have an unclear, hybrid system with regard to Fire Chief oversight and removal, if necessary

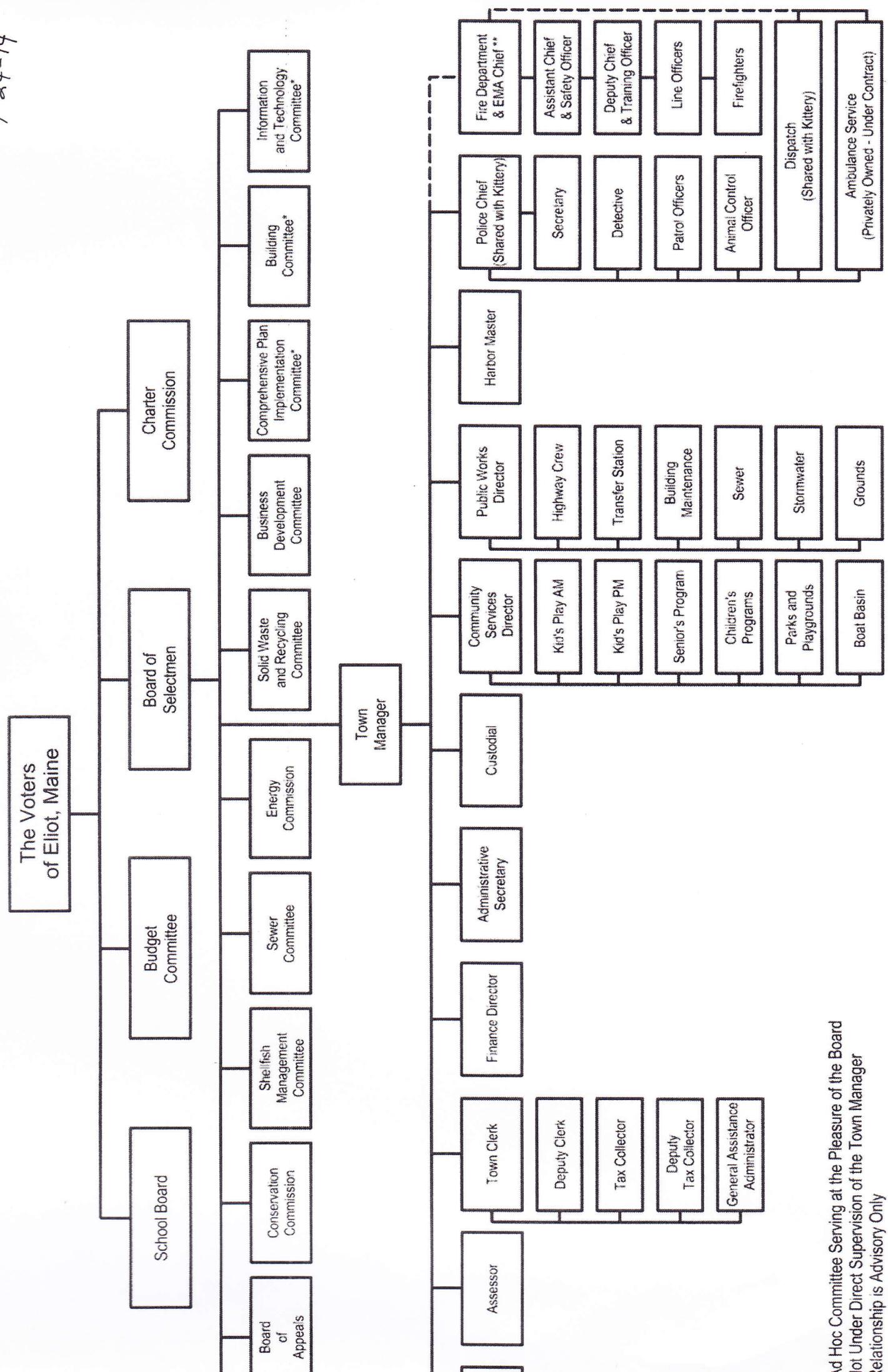
The Town does control the purse strings, owns the facilities and the fire trucks. The Ordinance does require the Fire Chief to put together an annual budget in the form determined by the Selectmen.

In the case of Eliot, we have had 100 years with limited incidents and just six chiefs, so it has long been a stable situation. I understand that you are thinking long term / worst case, so the past is not a solid indicator of the future.

I think this matter is one for legal review – the governing state statutes, the adopted local ordinance, etc. It is also my hope that you would invite the Chief to attend and share his views.

Attachment
9-24-14

Organization of Eliot Town Government



Ad Hoc Committee Serving at the Pleasure of the Board
Not Under Direct Supervision of the Town Manager
Relationship is Advisory Only

Subject: Re: Article on the Charter
From: Ralph Morang (morangphoto@comcast.net)
To: rma249@yahoo.com;
Date: Thursday, September 18, 2014 4:03 PM

Rosanne,

Thank you very much for your kind message.
It is very much appreciated.

Ralph

On Sep 18, 2014, at 3:46 PM, Rosanne Adams wrote:

Ralph,

On behalf of the Eliot Town Charter Commission I would like to thank you for the excellent article you wrote recently. Not only did you talk about our request to the Selectmen for an extension of time but you gave readers an overview of the Charter process from its very beginning and outlined the subjects we are looking at. Hopefully it will spur the public's interest in the work we are doing.

There are very few avenues open to the Commission through which we can keep the public informed of our progress. We find that your newspaper is one of the most important resources that we have available.

Articles such as yours help us immensely in our efforts to be transparent and keep the issue of the evolving Town Charter before the public.

Thank you so very much for your help,

Sincerely,

Rosanne M. Adams, Sec.
Eliot Town Charter Commission
207-752-0174