

**DRAFT**

RULES OF THE  
WEST HARTFORD  
DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

## Preamble

The Democratic Party of West Hartford is open to all registered voters of the Town of West Hartford, regardless of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, economic status, philosophical persuasion or disability. No test for membership in, nor oaths of loyalty to, the Democratic Party of West Hartford are required.

## Article I

### DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

Section 1. The policies and principles of the Democratic Party of the Town of West Hartford shall be formed, directed and executed by the Democratic Town Committee. All members of the Town Committee shall be enrolled Democratic Party voters of the Town of West Hartford.

Section 2. The Town Committee shall consist of representatives elected from their respective districts as provided for herein and the Democratic Registrar of Voters, who shall be a member of the Executive Committee of the Town Committee. Each district shall be entitled to one (1) member on the Town Committee for every three hundred twenty five (325) Democratic voters or any part thereof, on the last completed enrollment list prepared by the Registrars of Voters next preceding the election of the Town Committee. Each District shall have at least two (2) representatives on the Town Committee.

Section 3. In each even numbered year the Town Committee shall fix a day for the election of Town Committee members, and shall provide notice of such election, as provided in the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), as amended, and these rules.

Section 4. Terms of Town Committee members shall start on the first Monday following the date for the primary and shall end when successors are qualified or twenty six (26) months later, whichever event occurs first; provided, however, if no valid opposing candidacy has been filed for election to the Town Committee so that no primary will be conducted in West Hartford, the term of all incumbents shall end on the last day for filing said opposing candidacies as provided in the C.G.S., as amended, and these rules, and the term of those deemed elected shall begin on the following day.

Section 5.

- a) A vacancy on the Town Committee shall be deemed to exist when any member shall resign, die, [no longer personally reside in premises within the district] or whose name is removed for cause from the enrollment list. Upon written request of any member of the Town Committee, the Town Committee Chairperson shall request the Rules Committee to investigate whether a vacancy exists. Reasonable notice shall be given to all concerned parties. The Rules Committee shall render a written report to the Town Committee with a finding of fact and recommendation. The report shall be debatable and the Town Committee shall, by vote, accept or reject said recommendation.
  
- b) Any vacancy in the membership of the Town Committee shall be filled for the balance of the term in the following manner: Within thirty (30) days after a vacancy occurs in a particular district, the District Chairperson shall call a caucus of the enrolled members of the Democratic Party in such district for the purpose of filling said vacancy. If the District Chairperson does not call such caucus within such thirty (30) days, the Town Committee Chairperson shall call such caucus within twenty (20) days thereafter; provided, however, no such caucus need be held if such vacancy occurs within ninety (90) days of the regularly scheduled bi-annual caucus as provided in Article I Section 3 herein.
  
- c) The day, hour and place fixed for such vacancy caucus shall be no more than thirty (30) days subsequent to said call. The Secretary of the District or of the Town Committee shall give notice of such caucus by publication in a local newspaper no later than twenty-five (25) days prior to the date fixed for such caucus. Except as provided in Section 5 herein, such vacancy caucus shall be conducted in the same manner as prescribed in Article IV, Section I. There must be a week designated for filling.

Section 6. Any vacancy in any office in the Town Committee shall be filled by the Town Committee at a meeting called for that purpose upon giving of one (1) week's notice in writing to the membership of the Town Committee.

## Article II

### ORGANIZATION OF TOWN COMMITTEE

#### Section 1. Officers.

- a) The members of the Town Committee shall meet within thirty (30) days after the primary day as designated in Article I, Section 3 or 4, and shall proceed to elect a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson, a Treasurer and a Secretary, and an Assistant Treasurer and an Assistant Secretary. The officers of the Town Committee need not be current members of the Town Committee, but must be members of the Democratic Party of West Hartford.
- b) Officers of the Town Committee, if not elected members from a district as described in Article I Section 2, shall be entitled to all privileges of membership except voting, unless there is a tie, in which case the Chairperson is entitled to cast the deciding vote.

#### Section 2. Chairperson.

- a) It shall be the duty of the Town Committee Chairperson to chair meetings of the Town Committee and to work with the Town Committee and officers and district committees for the best interest of West Hartford and the Democratic Party.
- b) The Chairperson will be responsible for the preparation of the annual Town Committee budget in coordination with the Budget Committee (consisting of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, Assistant

Treasurer and Assistant Secretary of the Town Committee). This annual budget will be presented to the membership of the Town Committee within thirty (30) days of the election of the Town Committee, or from the first of the year in those years when no election is held, for their approval at the first regularly scheduled meeting following presentation. The Chairperson will have authority to allocate a fixed amount, up to \$5,000.00, of the proposed budget as discretionary funds that the Chairperson can utilize without specific approval of the Budget Committee.

- c) The Chairperson, or in the Chairperson's absence, the vice-chairperson, shall prepare the agenda for the upcoming meeting and provide same to the Secretary for distribution to the Town Committee members as set forth in Article II, section 4.

Section 3. Vice Chairperson. It shall be the duty of the Vice-Chairperson to chair any Town Committee meetings in the absence of the Town Committee Chairperson and to assist him or her in his or her duties and responsibilities. He or she shall act as Town Committee Chairperson in the event of a vacancy, until a new Town Committee Chairperson is elected.

Section 4. Secretary. The Secretary, or in the Secretary's absence, the assistant Secretary, shall mail to all members of the Town Committee, the minutes of the previous meeting, along with an agenda for the upcoming meeting, not less than seven (7) days prior to the upcoming meeting. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep written minutes of meetings of the Town Committee and to circulate them to the Town Committee for acceptance at the next meeting. The Secretary shall give such notices as are required herein and remain in continuous communication with the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, members of the Town Committee and Precinct captains to create an efficient functioning organization. Within one (1) week after organization of the Town Committee, the Secretary shall file with the Secretary of the Democratic State Central Committee a list of the names and addresses of the officers and members of the Town Committee and the name and address of the Democratic Registrar of Voters. The Assistant Secretary will assist the Secretary, at the Secretary's direction, in the duties of the office and will act in their stead when the Secretary is unavailable.Section 5. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive such money as may be collected for the Democratic Party and disburse the same as directed by the Town Chairperson or by

the Town Committee or its duly authorized agent and to keep accurate accounts showing all receipts and expenditures. The Treasurer shall:

- a) Receive and hold all Town Committee funds;
- b) Disburse such funds in accordance with the budget and with the oversight of the Budget Committee at the direction of the Town Committee or of its authorized agent (expenditures in excess of \$5,000.00 must be co-signed by the Town Committee Chairperson);
- c) Maintain current accurate accounts of all receipts and expenditures and provide periodic written reports, including copies of any required state or party filings, not less than quarterly to the Town Committee;
- d) Perform all other duties established by Statute; and,
- e) Be bonded.

The Assistant Treasurer will assist the Treasurer, at the Treasurer's direction, in the duties of the office and will act in their stead when the Treasurer is unavailable.

Section 6. Two-fifths (2/5) of the total membership of the Town Committee shall constitute a quorum. Any matter brought to vote shall require a simple majority of those present and voting.

Section 7. The Town Committee shall meet upon the call of the Town Committee Chairperson. He or she shall call no less than six (6) meetings per year; at least one of those meeting shall be formally called to ascertain the ideas and opinions of all Democratic voters on all issues and matters of policy concerning the welfare of our local, state and national government, and the Democratic Party. All meetings shall be open to the public unless closed by majority vote of the Town Committee.

Section 8. Special meetings of the Town Committee may be called by fifteen (15) members of the Town Committee upon petition to the Secretary of the Town Committee. The Secretary shall certify to the Town Committee Chairperson such petition and the Town Committee Chairperson shall call a meeting of the Town Committee within ten (10) days of receipt of the certification of the petition.

Section 9 - Committees of the Town Committee shall include the permanent committees specified in this Section (a.) and any Ad Hoc committees established in accordance with this Section (b.).

- a. Permanent Committees - The permanent committees of the Democratic Town Committee shall include the Budget Committee, the Rules Committee, the Finance Committee and the District Chairpersons' Committee. Chairpersons of those permanent committees not chaired by the Town Committee Chairperson shall be appointed within fourteen (14) days following the first organizational meeting of the Town Committee after its election (as specified in Article I, Section 3 or 4). Organizational meetings of the permanent committees shall be held within forty five (45) days following the appointment of the chairperson, and the permanent committees remain in effect for the duration of the term of the Town Committee.

1. Purpose - The purpose of each of the permanent committees is:

- i. Budget - To prepare, present, report on and manage the annual budget and expenditures of the Town Committee.
- ii. Finance - To participate in and sponsor fund raising activities to support the objectives of the Town Committee.
- iii. Rules - To review, consider modifications to and interpret the Rules of the Democratic Town Committee.
- iv. District Chairpersons - To serve as an overall advisory group to the Democratic Town Committee Chairperson regarding the functioning of the Democratic Town Committee and to act as a preliminary review group for prospective candidates for town wide office.

2. Chairpersons - The Town Committee Chairperson will chair the Budget Committee and the District Chairpersons' Committee, and will appoint chairpersons for the other permanent committees who will also serve as the representative from their district. Such appointed chairpersons must be current members of the Town Committee.

3. Membership - The Town Chairperson, or the Vice-Chairperson if designated by the Chairperson, shall serve, ex officio, as a member of all permanent committees, which do not specifically include the Chairperson (i.e., Finance and Rules). In addition, the membership of the permanent committees shall consist of the following:

- i. Budget - The officers of the Town Committee as set forth in Article II, Section 2b.
- ii. Finance - One person, who need not be a member of the Town Committee (excepting the Chairperson), from each district within the town as selected by the Town Committee members from that district plus the either the Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer of the Town Committee as determined by the Treasurer.

- iii. Rules - One person, who must be a member of the Town Committee, from each district within the town as selected by the Town Committee members from that district plus the Democratic Registrar and the Counsel to the Town Committee, who are non-voting members of the committee.
    - iv. District Chairpersons - The elected chairperson from each district within the town plus the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Town Committee.
  - 4. Sub-committees - Sub-committees of any permanent committee but the Budget Committee may be formed by action of the permanent committee.
- b. Ad Hoc Committees - Ad Hoc Committees of the Town Committee may be formed at anytime, for any purpose, as long as it does not conflict with the purpose of any permanent committee as set forth above or the roles and responsibilities of the officers of the Town Committee as specified in this Article.
  - 1. Formation - Ad Hoc committees may be recommended by the Town Committee Chairperson for approval by the membership or created by vote of the Town Committee at an official meeting.
  - 2. Duration - An Ad Hoc committee remains in existence for as long as specified in the motion which created it, if this period ends before the end of the current term of the Town Committee, or until the end of the Town Committee term in which it was created.
  - 3. Chairpersons - The Chairperson of any Ad Hoc committee of the Town Committee shall be appointed by the Town Chairperson. If such Chairperson is not a member of the Town Committee, they are encouraged to attend all Town Committee meetings and shall be granted the privileges of the floor.
  - 4. Membership - The membership of any Ad Hoc committee shall be as specified in the resolution, which created it, or, if none is specified, on a volunteer basis. The Town Committee Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson if designated by the Chairperson, is entitled to full membership, ex officio, on any Ad Hoc committee. Members of Ad Hoc committees must be members of the Democratic Party of West Hartford, but need not be members of the Town Committee unless restricted to members of the Town Committee by the resolution, which created the committee.
- c. Reporting - Permanent committees shall file written reports with the Secretary of the Town Committee not less than annually, in December, unless required to file more frequently by other provisions of these Rules. Ad Hoc committees shall file written reports annually in December or at their expiration, if the committee is in existence for less than a year.

Section 10. Any member of the Town Committee who is unable to attend any meeting of said committee may designate in writing a proxy who is an enrolled Democratic elector within his

or her district to act for him or her in his or her absence. This proxy shall be filed with the Secretary of the Town Committee before the start of the meeting.

### Article III - Duties And Obligations

**Section 1.** Membership in the Town Committee constitutes a firm commitment to the Democratic Party. This commitment shall be fulfilled by:

- a. Attendance at the regularly scheduled Town Committee meetings;
- b. Attendance at the special Town Committee meeting;
- c. Attendance at meetings;
- d. Attendance at fundraising events; and
- e. Attendance and participation in election activities.

**Section 2.** It is mandatory that each Town Committee member attend at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Town Committee meetings. Extenuating circumstances will be recognized by the Executive Committee.

**Section 3.** At the end of each calendar year, the Executive Committee shall advise any member who has not fulfilled his or her commitment as set forth in Section 1 of this Article that he or she will have to meet those requirements in the following year to remain eligible for re-endorsement *by the Town Committee*. At the end of the term, the Executive Committee may recommend that any member who has not fulfilled his or her requirements not be endorsed *by the Town Committee* for re-election.

**Section 4.** No member of the Town Committee shall publicly endorse or take any public action which may be construed as an endorsement of any candidate who is not a member of the Democratic Party. Any member of the Town Committee who violates this section will be subject to a vote of censure by a majority of the Town Committee present and voting at a meeting properly

called for the purpose. If censured, the member shall not receive endorsement for election *by the Town Committee* at the next party caucus.

Article IV

ENDORSEMENT OF CANDIDATES FOR  
ELECTION AS TOWN COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND  
DELEGATES TO CONVENTIONS, AND  
NOMINATION FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICES

Section 1. The Town Committee shall fix a day, hour, and place in each even-numbered year, which day shall be in conformity with Chapter 153 (Sections 9-391 and 9-425) of the C.G.S. as amended for the holding of a caucus of the enrolled members of the Democratic Party in each of the voting districts for the purpose of endorsing candidates for election as Town Committee members and transacting such other business as may be proper to come before said caucus. Any person desiring to become a party-endorsed candidate for the position of Town committee member, provided his or her name appears on the last completed Democratic enrollment list immediately preceding such caucus, shall file, or cause to be filed, with the Democratic Registrar of Voters, not more than twenty-five (25) days and not less than eighteen (18) days prior to the date fixed for such caucus, a signed statement that he or she desires his or her name to appear on the ballot. Any Democratic voter whose name appears on the last completed enrollment list immediately preceding such caucus shall be entitled to vote in the caucus in the district in which his or her name appears. The top vote getters of all nominees up to the number of seats said district is entitled to will be declared endorsed. Rules and guidelines for the manner in which the caucus shall be conducted shall be established by the Rules Committee and such rules shall be made available seven days prior to such caucus to all interested parties by the Town Committee Secretary. The form for filing may be obtained from the Democratic Registrar of Voters, and shall be in the following form:

I desire to have my name placed on the ballot at the caucus to be held on  
\_\_\_\_(date)\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of selecting party-endorsed candidates for the  
position of Town Committee members from the \_\_\_\_ (District Number) \_\_\_\_  
District. I reside at \_\_\_\_ (Street Address) \_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_(Signed)\_\_\_\_\_

If two or more persons who desire to become party-endorsed candidates for the position of Town Committee member choose to have their names appear as a group on the ballot at such caucus, they may do so by filing, or by causing to be filed, with the Democratic Registrar of Votes, not more than twenty-five (25) days and not less than eighteen (18) days prior to the date fixed for such caucus, a statement in the following form:

We \_\_\_\_\_ (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (Street Address) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (Street Address) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (Street Address) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (Street Address) \_\_\_\_\_

desire to have our names placed as a group on the ballot at the caucus to be held on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of selecting party-endorsed candidates for the position of Town Committee members from the \_\_\_\_\_ (District Number) \_\_\_\_\_ District.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

No person can have his or her name appear on such ballot more than once. Such a group statement may not be filed by a group containing a number of persons, which is greater than the number of Town Committee members to be elected from such District. In the event the number of persons who have filed is less than the number of Town Committee members to be elected in said District, the caucus shall accept unlimited nominations from the floor to complete the full number of Town Committee members to be elected from said District and shall thereupon vote only upon said nominations made from the floor to fill said full number.

Any person or group of persons who have properly filed with the Democratic Registrar of Voters, a signed statement requesting their name or names to be placed upon the ballot at the caucus may withdraw from the caucus not less than twenty-four (24) hours before the date and

time fixed for such caucus by filing, or causing to be filed, with the Democratic Registrar of Voters a signed statement in the following form:

I desire to have my name withdrawn from the ballot at the caucus to be held on     (date)     for the purpose of selecting party-endorsed candidates for the position of Town Committee member from the     (District Number)     District. I reside at     (Street Address)    .

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

If two or more persons desire to withdraw from such caucus, they may do so by filing, or causing to be filed, with the Democratic Registrar of Voters not less than twenty-four (24) hours before the date and time fixed for such caucus a signed statement in the following form:

We     (Names)     of     (Street Address)     desire to have our names withdrawn as a group from the ballot at the caucus to be held on     (date)     for the purpose of selecting party-endorsed candidates for the position of Town Committee member from the     (District Number)     District.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

Any person forming a part of any group may withdraw from such group by executing an individual withdrawal and filing the same with the Democratic Registrar of Voters, as hereinbefore provided.

**Section 2.** The Town Committee, at a meeting called for the purpose, shall, by a majority vote of the Town Committee members present and voting, select party-endorsed candidates for each municipal office. Any person receiving party endorsement as a candidate for municipal office or appointment to office must be a duly enrolled party member. In the endorsement of any person for

any municipal office for whom only the electors of a political sub-division or assembly district of the Town may vote, only the members of the Town committee elected from said political subdivision or assembly district may participate. The Town Committee shall be the sole body to interview candidates for municipal office.

**Section 3.** The Town Committee, at a meeting called for the purpose shall, by a majority vote of the members present and voting, shall endorse a slate to be presented at the Democratic Caucus to elect the new Democratic Town Committee.

**Section 4.** The enrolled members of the Democratic Party in the municipality at a caucus called for the purpose shall, by a plurality vote of those present and voting, select party-endorsed candidates for the Town Committee.

**Section 5.** The recording secretary shall prepare a printed ballot with the names of the Town Committee-endorsed candidates, so designated, in alphabetical order. In a separate section of the ballot, the recording secretary shall list, also in alphabetical order, any other names of duly enrolled Democrats presented for nomination that are submitted to him or her at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the caucus. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the caucus, and the recording secretary shall leave enough space on the ballot to write in said nominations.

**Section 6.** The Town Committee, at a meeting called for the purpose, shall select delegates to conventions. The selection of delegates to any convention shall be by nominations of individual candidates equal to the number of delegates to which the town is entitled under the state rules of the Democratic Party.

**Section 7.** Candidates for municipal office chosen as provided in Section 2 above shall run in the primary for such office as party-endorsed candidates, provided any such candidate shall be the nominee of the Democratic Party for the office for which he or she is a candidate if no valid opposing candidacy has been filed for nomination to such office by four o'clock on the twenty-first day preceding the day of the Democratic primary for such office.

**Section 8.** Candidates for Town Committee members chosen as provided in Section 3 above shall run in the primary for Town Committee members as party-endorsed candidates, provided such candidates shall be deemed elected as members of the Town Committee if no valid opposing candidacy has been filed for Town Committee member by four o'clock on the twenty-first day preceding the day of the Democratic primary for Town Committee members.

**Section 9.** If for any reason the Town Committee fails to make sufficient endorsements of candidates for municipal office or selection of delegates to conventions, State Party Rules should be used.

**Section 10.** The secretary or the chairperson or presiding officer of the Town Committee or caucus, as the case may be, shall certify to the Town Clerk the names and street addresses of the party-endorsed candidates and delegates selected as provided in Sections 5 and 6 above, the title of the office or position as delegate for which each person is endorsed or selected, and where appropriate, the date upon which the primary is to be held. In the case of the endorsement of a person for an office for whom only the electors of a political sub-division of the municipality may vote, the secretary of the Town Committee shall certify to the Town Clerk the name or number of such political sub-division.

**Section 11.** Each party endorsement of a candidate to run in a primary for the nomination of candidates for municipal office shall be made not earlier than the fifty-sixth (56<sup>th</sup>) day nor later than the forty-ninth (49<sup>th</sup>) day preceding the day of the primary and shall be certified to the clerk of the municipality, by the chairperson or presiding officer and secretary of the Town Committee not later than the forty-eighth (48<sup>th</sup>) day preceding the day of the primary.

**Section 12.** Each selection of delegates to a state or district convention shall be made not earlier than the one-hundred-fortieth (140<sup>th</sup>) day and not later than the one-hundred-thirty-third (133<sup>rd</sup>) day preceding the day of the primary for such state or district office, and shall be certified to the Town Clerk by the presiding officer and Secretary of the Caucus not later than the one-hundred-thirty-second (132<sup>nd</sup>) day preceding the day of the primary.

