

**RULES GOVERNING THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
WOODSTOCK, CONNECTICUT**

Amended July 20, 1991
Amended January 18, 2000
Amended July 16, 2003
Amended October 13, 2012
Amended April 2, 2025

Section 1 - Membership

A. Voting Members

1. The town committee shall consist of up to 40 voting members, elected at large. The town committee shall strive to achieve proportional representation from each voting district based on the number of registered Democrats residing in each district, ensuring that no less than one third of the voting members are from each of the two districts.
2. No person shall be eligible to serve as a voting member of the town committee unless they are a registered member of the Democratic Party in the town.
3. The payment of dues shall not be a requirement for election or endorsement as a voting member of the town committee. The town committee may establish suggested dues for its voting members.

B. Alternate Members

1. The town committee may appoint up to 10 alternate members.
2. Appointment: Alternate members shall be appointed by a majority vote of the voting members present at a regular meeting.
3. No person shall be eligible to serve as an alternate member of the town committee unless they are a registered member of the Democratic Party in the town.
4. The payment of dues shall not be a requirement for election or endorsement as an alternate member of the town committee. The town committee may establish suggested dues for its alternate members.
5. Participation: Alternate members may attend and participate in meetings, serve on subcommittees as assigned, and assist with events and activities as determined by the chair.
6. Seating and Voting:
 - a. In the event of the absence of a voting member from a meeting, the chair may, at their discretion, seat an alternate member to fill the vacancy for that meeting.
 - b. Seated alternate members shall have full voting rights for the duration of that meeting and shall be counted towards a quorum.
 - c. Non-seated alternate members shall have no voting rights and shall not be counted towards the quorum.
7. Term: Alternate Members shall serve a term that coincides with the term of the voting members of the town committee and shall renew upon appointment and approval at the start of each new voting member term.

C. Members Emeritus

1. Eligibility: Any former member of this Democratic Town Committee or former or current elected Democratic official who has demonstrated significant service and commitment to the Democratic Party may be nominated for Members Emeritus status.

2. **Nomination and Appointment:** Nominations for Members Emeritus status shall be submitted to the Secretary and approved by a majority vote of the voting members present at a regular meeting.
3. **Participation:** Members Emeritus may attend and participate in meetings, provide advice and support, and assist with events and activities as requested by the Chair, but shall have no voting rights.
4. **Recognition:** The Town Committee may publicly recognize the contributions of Members Emeritus.
5. **Term:** Members Emeritus status shall be granted for an indefinite term, subject to review by the town committee.

D. Community Members

1. **Eligibility:** Any person who expresses an interest in the goals of the Democratic Party and the town committee may apply for Community Membership. This may include, but is not limited to, youth, individuals exploring voting membership, and like-minded citizens who may not be registered Democrats.
2. **Application:** Applications for Community Membership shall be submitted to the Secretary and approved by a majority vote of the voting members present at a regular meeting. The application shall be a simple form created by the town committee.
3. **Dues:** The town committee may establish suggested dues for Community Members, which may differ from any dues established for voting members or be waived.
4. **Participation:** Community Members may attend and participate in meetings, serve on subcommittees, and assist with events and activities as determined by the Chair, but shall have no voting rights.
5. **Term:** Community Members shall serve a term that coincides with the term of the voting members of the town committee and shall renew upon application and approval at the start of each new voting member term.

E. Absences of voting members

1. The unexcused absence of any full town committee member from three consecutive regular meetings shall be cause for the town committee to consider the resignation of the member.

Section 2 - Election of Town Committee Voting Members

A. General Election Rules

1. Candidates for voting members shall be selected by the enrolled members of the Democratic Party in caucus or via a direct primary held in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes.
2. Any candidates who are endorsed at the caucus in the circumstances where there is no primary shall be deemed elected as of the primary date.

B. Caucus Rules

1. At caucus meetings, any eligible person may be nominated from the floor, notwithstanding any notice or pre-registration requirements in the local rules.
2. Notice of the time, place and purpose of said caucus shall be given to all enrolled Democratic voters of the municipality at least five (5) days, but not more than fifteen (15) days, in advance of the caucus by publication of the same in a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality.

3. The Town Chair also may post a notice of such caucus on the State Party website, the local town committee website, the local municipal website or other websites as the Town Chair deems appropriate.
4. At any caucus duly called for the endorsement of voting members of a town committee, nominations for such town committee members may be made by (1) presentation to the caucus of a slate composed of a number of persons equal to or less than the number of town committee members to be elected as prescribed by local party rules or (2) by nomination of individual candidates.
5. Voting by slate is only permissible when the election is between two or more slates of equal number.
6. In the endorsement of such candidates, voting shall be in accordance with the local party rules, but in no event shall a member of the caucus vote for a greater number of candidates than those to be elected.
7. In the event no endorsement is made by the above stated method, then there shall be no endorsement, and election to such town committee shall be made by direct primary as provided by law.

C. Primary Election Rules

1. On the first Tuesday in March in each even-numbered year, each town committee, if needed, shall hold a primary for the election of the town committee voting members.

Section 3 - Terms of Members

Unless otherwise provided in this Article, members of the town committee shall serve for a term of two (2) years, commencing on the Wednesday after the first Tuesday in March in each even-numbered year and ending on the first Tuesday in March of the next even-numbered year.

Section 4 - Vacancies

A. Filling Vacancies:

Any vacancy on the town committee, arising from any cause, including failure to elect, may be filled by a majority vote of those members present at a meeting.

B. Term of Appointment:

A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Section 5 - Meetings

A. Regular Meetings:

1. The town committee shall hold regular meetings on the first Wednesday of each month, at a time and place designated by the chairperson.
2. Meetings shall be held in a location that is accessible.
3. A meeting may be canceled by a majority vote of those members present and voting at a preceding meeting, or by the chairperson in case of emergency.

B. Meeting Notices and Agendas:

Notices of regular town committee meetings and the meeting agenda shall be provided to the town committee members and posted electronically not less than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

C. Meeting Format:

Meetings may be conducted in person, virtually, or both, at the discretion of the committee chair. If the meeting is to be held virtually, the town committee shall implement measures to ensure that individuals who participate in the meeting are identifiable and are able to participate fully.

D. Public Access and Executive Session:

1. All meetings of the full town committee (excluding committees, subcommittees, and other sub-groups) shall be open to the public for observation, and votes shall not be taken by secret ballot.
2. The town committee may enter executive session only in appropriate circumstances, which may include:
 - a. Discussion concerning the performance, evaluation, health, dismissal, or removal of:
 - i. a public officer or employee;
 - ii. a candidate or potential candidate for election or appointment to a public position;
 - iii. an officer or member of the town committee or a person holding a position within the Democratic Party, or a candidate or potential candidate therefore.
 - b. Discussion of strategy and negotiations with respect to pending or threatened claims or litigation.
 - c. Discussion of strategies with respect to election campaigns.
 - d. Discussion of financial matters, including fundraising strategy.
 - e. Discussion of security strategy.
 - f. Discussion of matters deemed confidential by law.

Section 6 – Proxy Voting

Proxy voting shall not be allowed at any town committee meeting or for the endorsement of candidates or delegates.

Section 7 - Special Meetings**A. Calling Special Meetings:**

Special meetings of the town committee may be called by the chairperson at any time, or upon written request signed by twenty percent of the members of the town committee and presented to the chairperson.

B. Notice of Special Meetings:

The chairperson shall instruct the secretary to provide notice to all members of the committee of the time, place, and purpose of the special meeting. Such notice shall be given at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Section 8 - Quorum

Two-fifths of the current voting membership of the town committee shall constitute a quorum at any meeting.

Section 9 - Election of Officers

A. Initial Meeting of Newly Elected Committee:

1. Not more than 30 days following the day fixed for the holding of a primary for the election of town committee members, the chair of the town committee in office at the time of said primary shall call a meeting of the newly elected town committee as prescribed by these rules.
2. If the chair fails to call the meeting within the prescribed 30-day period, the vice-chair shall call the meeting within 48 hours.
3. If the vice-chair fails to call the meeting within the prescribed 48-hour period, the state central committee members in the district shall call the meeting within the next 48 hours. When the meeting must be called by the vice-chair or a state central committee member, the call of the meeting will be valid notwithstanding any otherwise applicable rule concerning time and notification of town committee meetings.

B. The officers shall include, but are not limited to, Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 10 – Qualifications

The officers of the town committee shall be elected from among the voting members of the town committee.

Section 11 - Term of Officers

Officers so elected shall hold office for the term of the town committee electing them.

Section 12 - Duties

Each of such officers shall have the duties usually incident to the office and such other duties as the town committee may from time to time prescribe.

Section 13 - Filing List of Offices and Members

Within one week after swearing in a new town committee and the election of officers for any given term, the chair of the town committee shall file a copy of the town committee's Local Rules, as well as a list of the names and addresses and other pertinent contact information of the officers and members of the town committee (in a format designated by the Democratic State Central Committee) with the Secretary of the Democratic State Central Committee and the town clerk.

Section 14 - Vacancy in any Office

If there shall be a vacancy in any office of the town committee, arising from any cause, the town committee may fill the same by a majority vote of those members present.

Section 15 - Standing Committees

A. Establishment of Committees:

The town committee may establish standing committees and shall define the duties of such committees.

B. Types of Committees:

Standing committees may include, but are not limited to, committees on Nominations, Elections and Campaigns, Public Relations, Finance, Public Affairs, and Research.

C. Appointment of Members:

Members of standing committees shall be appointed from among the members of the town committee by a majority vote of those members present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the town committee. Community Members, Alternate Members, and Members Emeritus may serve on committees in addition to voting members.

D. Duration of Committees:

Each standing committee shall serve until discharged by the town committee.

Section 16 - Candidate Endorsement and Delegate Selection

A. Selection Authority:

The voting members of the Democratic town committee shall select party endorsed candidates for each municipal office and delegates to conventions. All members of the Democratic party in the municipality shall select party endorsed candidates for town committee voting members.

B. Procedure:

1. Such selection in each case shall be made by a majority vote of such members present and voting at a special meeting or caucus called for that purpose.
2. The time and place of such special meeting or caucus shall be determined by the town committee, with the time of such meeting to be held during the period of time specified by the Office of the Secretary of the State.
3. The chairperson of the town committee shall be the chairperson of all such meetings.

C. Ballot Procedures:

1. The election of town committee members shall be by single ballot.
2. The ballot sheet shall contain the town committee endorsed slate in alphabetical order, with additional space available on the ballot sheet for any additional nominations from the floor of the meeting.
3. In no event shall a member vote for a greater number of candidates than the number to be elected.
4. The secretary of the meeting shall preserve the ballot sheets for thirty days.

Section 17 - Party Endorsed Candidates for Municipal Office

A. Party Endorsed Candidates:

Candidates for municipal office chosen as provided in Section 16 shall run in the primary for such office as party endorsed candidates.

B. Unopposed Candidates:

Any candidate shall be the nominee of the Democratic Party for the office for which they are a candidate if no valid opposing candidacy has been filed for nomination to such office by 4:00 p.m. on the 21st day preceding the day of the Democratic Primary for such office.

Section 18 - Slate Endorsement

The party endorsement of candidates for delegates to any convention shall be by a slate composed of a number of persons equal to the number of delegates to which the town is entitled under the state rules of the Democratic Party, and such slate shall be endorsed as a unit.

Section 19 - Party Endorsed Candidates for Convention Delegates

The slate of candidates for delegates to a convention chosen as provided in Section 16 and 17 above shall run in the primary for delegates to such convention as the party endorsed slate; provided such slate of candidates shall be deemed elected as delegates to such convention if no valid opposing candidacy by a complete slate including persons other than party endorsed candidates has been filed by 4:00 p.m. on the 21st day preceding the day of the Democratic Primary for delegates to conventions.

Section 20 - Insufficient Endorsements

If for any reason sufficient endorsements of candidates for municipal office, town committee members, or delegates to conventions are not made, the provisions of section 9-418, 9-419, and 9-420 of the general statutes, as the same may be amended from time to time, shall govern.

Section 21 – Certification of Party Endorsed Candidates

The secretary and the chairperson or presiding officer of the town committee, caucus, or convention, as the case may be, shall certify to the town clerk the names and street addresses of the party endorsed candidates selected as provided in Section 16 and 17 above, the title of the office or position as committee member or delegate for which each such person is endorsed, and the date upon which the primary is to be held.

Section 22 - Date of Party Endorsement of Candidates

Each party endorsement of a candidate to run in a primary for the nomination of candidates for municipal office, or for the election of town committee members, or delegates to conventions shall be made no earlier than the 49th day nor later than the 35th day preceding the day of the primary, and shall be certified to the town clerk by the chairperson or presiding officer and secretary of the town committee, caucus or convention, as the case may be, not later than the 34th day preceding the day of the primary.

Section 23 - Tie Vote

In the event that a vote on the selection of a party endorsed candidate results in a tie, such tie vote shall be dissolved by the vote of the permanent chairperson of the caucus, but this provision shall not affect his or her right to cast any vote as a member of the caucus to which he is otherwise entitled.

Section 24 - Vacancies in Party Endorsed Candidacy

A. Procedure:

If a party endorsed candidate for nomination to a municipal office or for election as town committee member or delegate to a convention, prior to twenty-four hours before the opening of polls at the primary, dies, or, prior to ten days before the day of the primary, withdraws their name from nomination, or for any reason becomes disqualified to hold the office or position for which they are a candidate, an endorsement may be made to fill such vacancy by the town committee, by a majority vote of those members present and voting, at a meeting called for that purpose.

B. Authority of Chairperson:

The chairperson of the town committee may cast a vote on the endorsement to break a tie, but this provision shall not affect their right to cast any vote as a member of the town committee to which they are otherwise entitled.

C. Certification of Endorsement:

The secretary of the town committee shall immediately certify the endorsement to fill such vacancy to the Democratic Registrar of Voters.

D. Candidate Withdrawal:

No candidate shall be deemed to have withdrawn until a letter of withdrawal signed by such candidate is filed with the town clerk.

Section 25 - Plurality Vote Determinative of Nomination

The nominations of the Democratic Party to all offices and the election of members of the town committee and delegates to conventions shall be made in all respects as provided in the State Primary Law, as the same may be amended from time to time, whenever a primary for nomination to a town office or for election of town committee members or delegates to conventions is to be held under the provisions of said law, the nominee of the Democratic Party for such office, and the members of the town committee and the delegates to conventions shall be determined by a plurality of votes cast.

Section 26 - Vacancy in Nomination

A. Procedure:

If a nomination has been made for a municipal office and the nominee thereafter, but prior to twenty-four hours before the opening of the polls on the day of the election for which such nomination has been made, dies, withdraws their name, or for any reason becomes disqualified to

hold the office for which they have been nominated, a nomination to fill such vacancy may be made by the town committee, by a majority vote of the town committee members present and voting, at a meeting called for that purpose.

B. Authority of Chairperson:

The chair of the town committee may cast a vote on such nomination to break a tie, but this provision shall not affect their right to cast any vote, as a member of the town committee, in the first place.

C. Candidate Withdrawal:

In the case of a withdrawal, said nomination shall not be valid until the candidate who has withdrawn has filed a letter of withdrawal, signed by such candidate, with the Secretary of the State, and also has filed a copy with the municipal clerk.

D. Certification of Nomination:

The chairperson of the town committee shall certify the nomination to fill such vacancy to the Secretary of the State, and shall file a copy with the municipal clerk. Such certification of a nomination to fill a vacancy due to death or disqualification shall include a statement setting forth the reason for such vacancy.

Section 27 - Convention Delegates: Alternates and Filling Vacancies

A. Alternate Delegates:

Each delegate to a convention elected in conformity with law and with these rules may, in writing, designate an alternate delegate to act in their absence.

B. Filling Delegate Vacancies:

In the absence of such alternate delegate, the town chairperson shall fill any vacancy arising for any cause in delegations to conventions.

Section 28 - Conflicts with Law or State Party Rules

Governing Authority: In the event of any conflict between these rules and any provision of law or any rule of the State Democratic Party, the provisions of such law or rule shall govern.

Section 29 - Definitions

A. Municipal Office:

As used in these rules, "municipal office" means any office for which only the electors of the town may vote and includes the office of each elective public official of the town, justice of the peace, and judge of probate.

B. Other Terms:

Unless otherwise defined in these rules, other terms used in these rules shall have the same meaning as in the State Primary Law, as amended from time to time.

Section 30 - Special Caucuses

A. Calling Special Caucuses:

Special caucuses may be called for any lawful purpose by a majority of the town committee or by not less than ten percent of the registered Democratic voters in the town. The call for any such special caucus shall be in writing and signed by each of the persons issuing the same.

B. Notice of Special Caucuses:

Notice of the time, place, and purpose of any special caucus shall be given to all registered Democratic voters in the town at least five days in advance of such caucus, by publication in a newspaper having circulation in said town and by posting in a conspicuous public location.

Section 31 - Filing of Local Rules

Filing Requirement: After party rules are adopted by the Democratic Party in the town, a copy of the same shall be filed with the Secretary of the State, the town clerk, and the secretary of the State Central Committee.

Section 32 - Amendments

Amendment Procedure: These rules may be amended by a caucus called in accordance with these rules, or by any other method permitted by the Rules of the Democratic Party of the State of Connecticut.

Section 33 - Robert's Rules of Order

Governing Authority: Robert's Rules of Order shall be construed as applicable, controlling, and conclusive on all parliamentary issues, except as otherwise provided in these rules.