



West Hartford Democratic Town Committee: Role and Responsibilities

Updated February 2021

WHAT IS OUR DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE?

- The governing board and fiduciary body of the West Hartford Democratic Party.
- Represents all enrolled West Hartford Democrats. In-person meetings are open to public attendance unless closed by majority vote.
- Strives to reflect the diversity of the party and community.
- Promotes Democratic Party principles, candidates, and officeholders.
- Develops and directs the activities of the West Hartford Democratic Party.
- Operates in accordance with federal law, state law, rules of the Connecticut Democratic Party, local rules, and Robert's Rules of Order.
- Guided by national and state party platforms.

WHAT DOES OUR TOWN COMMITTEE DO?

- Governs the West Hartford Democratic Party.
- Maintains Rules of organization, procedure and activities on file with the state Democratic Party that can only be amended by two-thirds vote of the Town Committee.
- Elects Officers.
- Recruits and nominates candidates for election to Town Council, Board of Education, Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters, Judge of Probate and Justices of the Peace.
- On recommendation of the District Chairs, sends delegates to state, 1st Congressional, 5th District State Senate, 19th House and State Central Committee conventions. (Town Committee members in 18th and 20th House Districts directly select candidates.)
- Offers a forum for Town Committee members to discuss issues related to the election of Democrats and, at the invitation of the Chair, information from Democratic state and town officeholders, Democratic candidates, and others as may be related to the role and authority of the Town Committee.

WHO ARE OUR TOWN COMMITTEE MEMBERS?

- Registered voters enrolled as Democrats who demonstrate a record of regularly voting, volunteering to help with party-building activities, donating to the Town Committee and Democratic candidates, working for the election of Democratic candidates and active in the community.
- Apportioned by party enrollment in each of the town's nine voting districts (one member per 325 Democrats or part thereof with no district having less than two members).
- Democratic voters make their interest in election or appointment to a vacancy known by informing the Chair in their voting district.
- Biennially nominated, endorsed, and elected in even-numbered years by Democratic Party caucuses of enrolled voters in each district or by primary if no endorsement or sufficient signed petitions for challenge primaries in accordance with state law.
- Serve for two-year terms beginning in March.
- Permanent alternates may be appointed by District Chairs or alternates may be designated by written proxy from a member for a specific Town Committee meeting.
- Vacancies exist automatically when a member no longer legally resides in the district or is no longer enrolled as a Democratic voter and are filled by vote of the remaining members in the district or by the Town Chair if not timely filled at the district level.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF TOWN COMMITTEE MEMBERS?

- Promote the Democratic Party, advocate candidates for endorsement by convention or primary, and *exclusively* support Democratic nominees for public office.
- Donate to the Town Committee and Democratic candidates.
- Serve on committees of the Town Committee and participate in voter registration, election activities and other Town Committee efforts.
- Annually attend at least two-thirds of Town Committee meetings, unless excused by the Chair and making a reasonable effort to have an alternate or proxy attend.
- Comply with all laws and rules governing the Town Committee.

WHO ARE OUR TOWN COMMITTEE OFFICERS?

- **Chair** schedules, organizes, convenes and leads meetings; directs Town Committee activities; *solely* represents and speaks for the Town Committee; appoints special committees; appoints Parliamentarian; designates temporary convention officers; and may, if not otherwise a member, vote in the event of a tie.
- **Vice Chair** acts in the absence of the Chair and otherwise assists the Chair.

- **Secretary** provides required notice, keeps attendance, and disseminates summary minutes of meetings as well as current Town Committee member contact information.
- **Assistant Secretary** assists the Secretary with correspondence.
- **Treasurer** collects and disburses Town Committee funds, keeps financial records and is responsible for compliance with campaign finance laws and reporting.
- **Assistant Treasurer** assists the Treasurer.
- All officers are elected biennially by the Town Committee but need not be members of the Town Committee.

WHEN DOES OUR TOWN COMMITTEE MEET?

- Usually monthly and at least every other month (except December, July and August) at 7:00 PM on the third Thursday of the month at West Hartford Town Hall or online.
- Town Committee members, qualified alternates, and guests invited by the Chair may participate in Town Committee meetings. In-person meetings are open to public attendance unless closed by majority vote.
- Meetings may be supplemented by special meetings for a particular purpose at the call of the Chair or written petition by at least 25% of all members.
- No official business conducted at any meeting unless, including voting alternates and proxies, 50% of the current membership is present for purposes of a quorum.

WHAT COMMITTEES DOES OUR TOWN COMMITTEE HAVE?

- **Executive Committee:** Officers, District Chairs and, by invitation of the Chair, Democratic State Central Committee members, to plan and implement the functions and activities of the Town Committee, resolve disputes and screen candidates for election to town-wide office. Usually meets monthly.
- **Budget and Finance Committee:** Town Committee Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and one currently enrolled Democratic voter from each voting district appointed by the District Chairs to review expenditures and support fundraising.
- **Special committees** as may be appointed by the Chair, vote of the Executive Committee or vote of the Town Committee to address specific needs related to the authority and mission of the Town Committee.
- **District Committees** composed of Town Committee members who biennially elect a District Chair and Vice Chair, provide for the appointment of Permanent Alternates, fill Town Committee vacancies and promote voter registration, party enrollment, party-building and communication.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE TOWN COMMITTEE TO OUR ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS?

- Elected local and state legislative officials, as well as all those appointed to local boards or commissions, represent the public and are not associated as public officials with the Town Committee, but do regularly provide informational updates.
- The Town Committee has no authority to act as a public policy-making body but may sometimes discuss matters of public policy interest as determined by the Chair.
- The Town Committee may support community organizations and activities at the initiative of the Chair and with the consent of the Executive Committee.

ARE THERE WAYS TO HELP OTHER THAN BEING ON THE TOWN COMMITTEE?

- Help register new voters.
- Hold a fundraiser or donate to support Democratic Party building and our candidates.
- Volunteer to contact voters in a campaign.
- Write to newspapers and comment online in support of our candidates and elected officials.

HOW DO I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE TOWN COMMITTEE?

- Find contact information, local party rules, and news at www.whdemocrats.org.
- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and other social media.
- Speak with your local District Chair.