

Salem Charter Commission

# **PROPOSAL FOR NINE COUNCILORS**



Prepared by Bonnie Wright – July 2022

**Salem  
Residents  
Want  
Fair  
Representation**


**To keep it fair, and to  
appeal to as many  
citizens as possible:**

- ✓ **Elect four at-large councilors**
- ✓ **Elect one councilor from  
each of 5 wards**


Data for  
electing  
additional  
Selectmen /  
Councilors  
in Salem is  
not available

To compare potential elections for Councilors, we must look at other recent elections in our town.

***TO BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR:***  
Election by wards for councilors would have **NO EFFECT** on any other Town, State, or Federal election ... including special elections such as the Charter Commission



**Why should we elect  
our Councilors by  
Wards?**



# Councilors by Wards/ Districts

## Why By Wards?

- ✓ Salem is a large town with 30,000+ residents
- ✓ It's a challenge for voters to know all of the candidates/councilors both before and after an election
- ✓ Different districts have different concerns. People want someone who is familiar with the issues in their own neighborhoods

**Case in  
Point:**

**Phil  
Camarata  
for Charter  
Commission**

The 2022 Charter Commission election had 35 candidates for 9 seats. Mr. Cammarata came in 16<sup>th</sup> overall.

However, the final vote tally for Mr. Cammarata showed:

- ✓ Top vote-getter in North Salem
- ✓ More votes from his own ward than any other candidate, *including those who were elected*
- ✓ Voters from North Salem clearly wanted one of their own to represent them on the Charter Commission
- ✓ If this election was for councilors, with voting by ward, Mr. Cammarata would have won a seat on the Council

Rank		First	Last	Fisk	Soule	Barron	Sr. Center	N. Salem	Total	% of votes	Home Ward
1	1	Bernard W	Campbell	76	70	48	136	133	463	39.4%	2
2	2	DJ	Bettencourt	75	69	56	129	123	452	38.4%	6
3	3	Bonnie	Wright	72	65	57	129	126	449	38.2%	4
4	4	Kevin J	Breen	63	55	60	122	99	399	33.9%	4
5	5	Kelly	Moss	64	48	54	94	117	377	32.1%	4
6	6	Joe	Sweeney	48	58	52	89	101	348	29.6%	2
7	7	Joseph	Feole	50	45	47	90	110	342	29.1%	6
8	8	John	Janigian	53	51	42	92	87	325	27.6%	4
9	9	Donna	Loranger	52	46	42	87	95	322	27.4%	2
	10	Lisa	Withrow	59	44	37	70	72	282	24.0%	2
	11	Betty I	Gay	49	34	42	82	71	278	23.6%	4
	12	Patrick M	Hargreaves	49	29	44	82	71	275	23.4%	3
	13	Pamela	Berry	47	42	29	84	71	273	23.2%	2
	14	Steven L	Goddu	45	53	32	71	68	269	22.9%	2
	15	Wayne	Haubner	44	44	40	65	73	266	22.6%	2
	16	Phil	Cammarata	22	19	16	60	141	258	21.9%	6



**Why should we  
elect  
At-Large  
Councilors?**

## At-Large Councilors

# Why At-Large?

- ✓ It's the way we currently elect all candidates
- ✓ It's the process with which people are most familiar
- ✓ Some candidates are known throughout the town



**Why five  
wards?**



# Current Wards in Salem


**Salem has six wards/polling locations, but only five are currently used**

1. Fisk School
  2. Soule School
  3. Barron School
  4. Senior Center
  6. North Salem School
- 5. Lancaster School is no longer used for voting purposes; not necessary**


Wards in  
Salem

Should we have fewer  
Polling locations?

**No!** We should not make it  
harder for people to go to the  
polling location where they are  
required to vote



**Why should we elect  
our Councilors by  
Wards AND At-Large?**



**Councilors  
by  
Wards  
and  
At-Large –**

**The Best of  
Both Worlds!**

**This proposal gives  
everyone ONE councilor  
from their district and  
FOUR councilors from  
across town.**

- ✓ **Better representation**
- ✓ **Satisfies the representation  
concerns of more voters**
- ✓ **It's the best of both worlds!**

# Councilors by Wards and At-Large


## Why use both methods to elect our Councilors?

- ✓ Each person will still get to vote for 5 of the 9 councilors.
- ✓ If they don't like the councilor from their neighborhood, they still have 4 more that they helped elect, and another 4 who live in other parts of the town that they can turn to.

# Councilors by Wards and At-Large

**If we elect councilors only by wards, we would:**

- ✓ Only elect 5 councilors, which defeats the purpose of adding more councilors, or
- ✓ Add wards, which would add costs and a shortage of poll workers, or
- ✓ Assign more councilors to certain wards, which means some neighborhoods would have more representation than others.



# **FAQs And Additional Details**

Will there  
be enough  
candidates  
for at-  
large?

With only 5 Selectmen, and very little turnover, it's hard to know who will run for Councilor.

We must look at other town elections to get a sampling, *even though at-large elections would not apply for these positions.*

**Where do  
Salem  
politicians  
live?**

## **Select Board:**

**2 from Ward 1 (Fisk)**

**2 from Ward 3 (Barron)**

**1 from Ward 6 (North Salem)**

**None from Ward 2 (Soule)**

**None from Ward 4 (Senior Center)**

**Where do  
Salem  
politicians  
live?**

## **State Reps:**

**4 from Ward 1 (Fisk)**

**1 from Ward 2 (Soule)**

**4 from Ward 4 (Senior Center)**

**None from Ward 3 (Barron)**

**None from Ward 6 (North Salem)**

**Where do  
Salem  
politicians  
live?**

# **Charter Commission (elected):**

**3 from Ward 2 (Soule)**

**4 from Ward 4 (Senior Center)**

**2 from Ward 6 (North Salem)**

**None from Ward 1 (Fisk)**

**None from Ward 3 (Barron)**

**Where do  
Salem  
politicians  
live?**

# **Charter Commission Candidates:**

**8 from Ward 1 (Fisk)**

**11 from Ward 2 (Soule)**

**3 from Ward 3 (Barron)**

**7 from Ward 4 (Senior Center)**

**6 from Ward 6 (North Salem)**

**Where do  
Salem  
politicians  
live?**

# **Total Politicians' Home Wards:**

**14 from Ward 1 (Fisk)**

**12 from Ward 2 (Soule)**

**5 from Ward 3 (Barron)**

**11 from Ward 4 (Senior Center)**

**7 from Ward 6 (North Salem)**

**It's not a perfect balance, but there are enough from each ward that we shouldn't be concerned about people running for office.**



**But what about the fact  
that Salem residents  
voted against electing  
State Reps by wards?**



# 2019 Warrant Article 15

- ✓ 2019 Municipal Election Voters turned down voting by wards for NH State Representatives
- ✓ There was minimal explanation for the Warrant Article prior to voting day
- ✓ Voters often vote for State Reps by party, rather than who would best represent their town
- ✓ Elections for town offices are intended to be non-partisan
- ✓ All candidates had to be elected by ward, or all candidates had to be elected at-large. No other options were allowed to be offered
- ✓ Salem is growing and changing from a small town to a thriving and welcoming community



**How would our  
elections  
take place?**



**When  
Do  
These  
Changes  
Get  
Implemented?**

**This proposal calls for  
the Charter:**

- ✓ **To be approved at the March 2023 municipal election.**
- ✓ **To go into effect with the 2024 municipal election.**

# Why Does This Proposal Not Go Into Effect Sooner?

- ✓ This proposal would allow the Town adequate time to re-proportion the voting districts, so every resident has an equal voice.
- ✓ A staggered approach allows for continuity of government: After the 2024 election, we would have at least three experienced councilors. Thereafter, we would always have at least six experienced councilors.
- ✓ This proposal is fair to the current Select Board members who campaigned with the expectation of serving for three years.

## How would it work?

After the March 2024 election, those who are currently **Select Board members** will be re-titled as **Councilors-at-Large**. They will complete their elected terms of office

- ✓ Selectman Keith Stramaglia (elected in 2022) becomes Councilor At-Large until 2025
- ✓ The two elected to Select Board in 2023 (same election as the charter) become Councilors At-Large until 2026

# March 2024: How would it work?

At the first regular Town election following the effective date of this Charter (2024), there shall be elected one councilor-at-large and five councilors by wards:

- ✓ Councilors for Districts 1 and 2 for one year
- ✓ Councilor for District 3 for two years
- ✓ Councilors for Districts 4 and 5 for three years

Thereafter, Town Councilors shall be elected on the same schedule in each ensuing 3-year cycle.

# How would At-Large Elections work?

	Current	Election Schedule				
	2022	2023 Charter Approved	2024 Charter In Effect	2025	2026	2027
At Large #1	Selectmen Keller & Bryant Year 2 of 3	Selectmen Keller & Bryant Year 3 of 3	Elect ONE At-Large Councilor	Year 2 of 3	Year 3 of 3	Elect one At-Large Councilor
At Large #2	Selectman Stacey Year 3 of 3	Elect One Selectman	Selectman now Councilor Year 2 of 3	Year 3 of 3	Elect one At-Large Councilor	Year 2 of 3
At Large #3	Selectman Lyons Year 3 of 3	Elect One Selectman	Selectman now Councilor Year 2 of 3	Year 3 of 3	Elect one At-Large Councilor	Year 2 of 3
At Large #4	Selectman Stramaglia Elected	Selectman Stramaglia Year 2 of 3	Selectman Stramaglia now Councilor Year 3 of 3	Elect one At-Large Councilor	Year 2 of 3	Year 3 of 3

# How would we elect Councilors by Wards?

	Election Schedule				
	2023 Charter Approved	2024 Charter In Effect	2025	2026	2027
Ward 1		1 year	x		
Ward 2		1 year	x		
Ward 3		2 year		x	
Ward 4		3 year			x
Ward 6		3 year			x

**How  
would  
the  
transition  
work?**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023 Charter Approved</b>	<b>2024 Charter in Effect</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>
Selectmen Elected	1	2	--	--	--	--
Councilors Elected At-Large	--	--	1	1	2	1
Councilors Elected by Ward	--	--	5	2	1	2
Total Elected	1	2	6	3	3	3
Total on Committee	5	5	9	9	9	9

# Won't Salem Voters Get Confused?

There will be some initial confusion. However:

- ✓ The Town will have one year to educate its residents about polling locations.
- ✓ The rotating schedule of Councilors will be similar to that of the Budget Committee, Planning Board and ZBA.
- ✓ If all 13 cities in NH can elect State Reps by ward, if 11 of 13 cities can elect their councilors by wards, and 2 of 7 towns with councilors can elect their councilors by wards, aren't Salem voters smart enough to figure this out, too?



**What do other NH  
communities do?**

# How NH Towns Elect Councilors

	Population	SQ MI	Density	At-Large	By Wards
Derry	34,317	35.6	964	3	4
Salem	30,089	24.7	1,218	4	5
Merrimack	26,632	32.6	817	7	
Londonderry	25,826	42.0	615	5	
Bedford	23,322	32.8	711	7	
Durham	15,490	22.4	692	9	
Hooksett	14,871	36.4	409	3	6
Newmarket	9,430	12.5	754	7	

Closest to Salem

2nd closest

3rd closest

# How NH Cities Elect Councilors

(Aldermen in  
Manchester and  
Nashua)

## At-large only

City	Population	Density	Councilors
Berlin	9,425	153	8
Portsmouth	21,956	1,398	9

Closest to Salem

2nd closest

3rd closest

## By Ward only

City	Population	Density	#Wards	Total by Ward
Franklin	8,741	319	9	3
Laconia	16,871	848	6	6
Rochester	32,492	722	12	6

## Combination

City	Population	Density	#Wards	Total by Ward	Total At-Large	Total Councilors
Claremont	9,425	218	3	3	4	7
Concord	43,976	671	10	10	4	14
Dover	32,741	1,226	6	6	2	8
Keene	23,047	621	5	10	5	15
Lebanon	14,282	354	3	6	3	9
Manchester	115,644	3,494	12	12	2	*14
Nashua	91,322	2,965	9	9	6	*15
Somersworth	11,855	1,210	5	5	4	9

# How Places in NH Most Like Salem Elect Councilors

	Derry	Dover	Rochester	Salem	Merrimack	Londonderry
Population	34,317	32,741	32,492	30,089	26,632	25,826
SQ MI	35.6	26.7	45.0	24.7	32.6	42.0
Density	964	1,226	722	1,218	817	615
Type	Town	City	City	Town	Town	Town
# Ward	4	6	6	5	--	--
# by Ward	4	6	12	5	--	--
# At-Large	3	2	--	4	7	5
Total #	7	8	12	9	7	5

**This proposal, for  
4 At-Large Councilors  
and  
5 Councilors By Wards,  
gives us the  
best solution for our  
large and growing community.**