

**Pat Chieski**

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**To:** Annie Hornish; David Russell; Diane Hensdorf; Francis Brady; Jim Lofink ; Lowell C. Johnson; Melissa Migliaccio; Sheri Litchfield; Terri Ann Hahn  
**Cc:** William F Smith  
**Subject:** FW: Letter to members of theTown Charter Revision Committee

Commission Members:

Per Ms. Fetridge request, please see her email below.

Pat Chieski  
Executive Secretary  
Town of Granby  
860-844-5300

-----Original Message-----

From: ~~l.fet@townofgranby.com~~ [mailto:~~l.fet@townofgranby.com~~]  
Sent: Wednesday, May 23, 2012 9:55 AM  
To: Pat Chieski  
Subject: Letter to members of theTown Charter Revision Committee

Hi Pat, would you please forward my note below to all members of the Charter Revision Committee as well as Town Manager Smith?

Thank you.

Laura Fetridge  
11 Silkey Heights Drive  
North Granby, CT 06060  
~~l.fet@townofgranby.com~~  
~~860.653.2741 home~~  
~~860.558.7249 cell~~

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Attn: Fran Brady, Terri Ann Hahn, Annie Hornish, Lowell Johnson, Sheri Litchfield, Jim Lofink, Melissa Migliaccio, Diane Hensdorf, Dave Russell

Dear Town Charter Revision Committee members,

As you may remember, I wrote to you back in March in favor of absentee ballots as a way for all Granby taxpayers to be fairly represented in a budget vote. I urged your committee to consider this option in lieu of an automatic budget referendum to avoid increased costs associated with one. Your committee opted not to amend the charter to implement an absentee ballot system. As evidenced by the recent petition signed by 900+ voters, including me, taxpayers are now calling for the charter to be amended to require an automatic budget referendum. I'd like to note that had the town charter been amended to require an absentee ballot option, I would not have signed the petition. I'd also like to note that I am still very much in favor of the public town budget meeting with presentations that communicate the budget being brought forth for approval. I believe that this is an incremental part of the budget process. I would urge the town to record the budget meeting and make it available through the town's web site at least one week prior to the town-wide budget vote. This would allow taxpayers who miss the meeting to view it at their convenience and make an informed decision before voting.

I am deeply disappointed that town representatives accepted votes from 299 taxpayers (less than 4% of voters) to pass a \$40,000,000 budget, but did not consider more meaningful action after a petition with almost 1,000 taxpayer (13% of voters) signatures calling for a change in our budget voting process. I hope that your committee and our elected officials will consider the issue at hand more carefully before making a final decision about revisions to the town charter. As I said before, if an absentee ballot system were put in place it might solve the problem quite easily.

Thank you for your time and service to our community.

Sincerely,

Laura S. Fetridge  
11 Silkey Heights Drive  
North Granby, CT 06060

~~lsfet@cox.net~~

~~860-558-7318~~

~~060-558-7318~~

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Date: Tue, 27 Mar 2012 11:26:31 -0400

From: <lsfet@cox.net>

To: Patchieski@granby-ct.gov

Subject: Letter to Mr. Francis Brady - Town Charter Revision Committee

Hi Pat, per our conversation would you please forward my note to Mr. Brady and Town Manager Smith? Thanks, Laura

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Dear Mr. Brady,

I am in complete agreement with Ms. Hollister that each taxpaying resident of Granby has the right to vote on the town budget regardless of whether s/he can attend the public meeting at which the vote is held. I believe that we are denying many taxpayers a basic right by not having at least an absentee ballot option. I understand that a town-wide referendum is costly for a small community such as Granby, so an absentee ballot is a good solution that would allow residents to vote without the town incurring substantial costs. Please consider adding an absentee ballot option to the town budget voting process in order to serve our residents fairly.

Sincerely,

Laura S. Fetridge  
11 Silkey Heights Drive  
North Granby, CT 06060

~~lsfet@cox.net~~

~~860-558-7318~~

cc: William Smith, Town Manager

~~860-558-7318~~

+++++

From: Valorie Hollister <valholl@granby-ct.gov>

Subject: Charter Revision Committee

Date: March 27, 2012 10:08:59 AM EDT

To: townmanager@granby-ct.gov

Hi Pat - Please forward this msg to Francis Brady. Thank you!

Dear Mr. Brady,

My name is Valorie Hollister and I am a proud resident of West Granby. I am writing to you today in your capacity as the Chairman of the Charter Revision Committee.

I have been working on getting world languages into the Granby elementary/intermediate schools for the last year and a half. I am one of the parents who helped to start the after-school Spanish program run through the Rec Dept. I have been attending all BOE mtgs and many of the BOF mtgs for the last 8 months. I am very pleased that the current BOE budget includes a 5th & 6th grade Spanish teacher. In order to compete in the global economy our children must be fluent in a 2nd language. In addition there have been many studies that show what a huge advantage learning a 2nd language gives children (better brain development, improved reading/spelling in English, improved standardized test performance, etc). Consistent with the Granby Public Schools mission, I believe that the Granby must continue to provide more opportunities for world language and cultural studies at the earliest age possible. Right now we wait until 7th grade -- and while if the new budget passes we will start catching kids in 5th grade, I believe we are still missing the window of easy/natural language development by not starting at Kindergarten and 1st grade.

Here is my concern relative to the town charter. I've been working on this effort for a long time and unfortunately due to my work schedule I will be traveling on business on April 23 and will be unable to attend the town mtg and vote on the budget. It is extremely disappointing to me that there is no process to accept my vote absentee -- and further that other people in a similar situation to me -- who can't make the extremely narrow confines of the 2 hour mtg -- will also not have their voices heard.

I know part of the argument is that our voter turnout is always very low -- so why should the town spend money on a full blown ballot process if people don't bother to show up. While I too am discouraged by our voter participation rates and have voted in every election open to me since I was afforded that gift at age 18 -- I don't think that we should embed cynicism in our voting process. ALL Granby voters/taxpayers should have an opportunity to vote -- either in person or by absentee -- on the town's budget. I support this right not just for myself, but for those I don't agree with, even if it means the initiatives I believe in don't get passed.

I plan to attend the Charter Revision Committee meeting tomorrow. Will there be an opportunity me to express my opinion during the meeting?

Thank you for your consideration -

Valorie Hollister

Taura S. Fetridge

Lsfet@cox.net

860.652.2741 Home