

GUIDE TO SOUTHBURY'S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS



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**PRODUCED BY THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, SOUTHBURY MEMBERS AT LARGE,
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE TOWN OF SOUTHBURY. MARCH 2010.**

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Guide to Southbury's Boards and Commissions

Introduction

This Guide is the product of a study by the Southbury Members of the League of Women Voters, a national, nonpartisan, volunteer organization of women and men to promote informed and active participation by citizens in government. Copies of this Guide are available at the Southbury Public Library, the Office of the First Selectman, and the website of the League of Women Voters www.lwvct@lwvct.org on the Southbury web page.

Purpose of this Guide

(1) To assist the screening and nominating committees of Southbury's political parties in interviewing and recruiting potential candidates by outlining the criteria for evaluating candidates for 17 boards or commissions; and

(2) To inform Southbury residents about the major boards and commissions which share the powers, functions and governance of the Town.

We hope this Guide will help voters to better understand the responsibilities of each board and commission, as well as the experience needed and the individual qualities considered most desirable for those who wish to serve.

Scope of this Guide

The following information may be found in this Guide:

1. Membership: Electors of the town who serve as volunteers. All are volunteers with the exception of the salaried First Selectman.
2. Powers and Duties: An overview of the powers and duties assigned to the body by the respective board or commission by-laws, the Town Charter and the State of Connecticut's General Statutes.
3. Qualifications: The education, experience and ideal attributes for individuals who wish to serve on a particular board or commission. These qualities were defined, not by the League, but by the boards and commissions themselves.

Desirable Qualifications of Candidates for Town Positions

Although the technical expertise needed to serve on the various boards and commissions varies with the type of work each does (specified in each of the profiles that follows), there are certain characteristics deemed desirable for all volunteers who are willing to serve the Town of Southbury

1. An elector of the town with a strong desire to serve the town, which includes the ability to make decisions solely on the basis of what is best for the town.
2. An understanding of the time commitment involved. This is particularly true for the elected positions on the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Planning Commission, and Region 15 Board of Education, which often meet several times a month and require a good deal of preparation for these meetings. Members of the Inland Wetland Commission, the Zoning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals are also elected while members of the other boards and commissions are appointed. Most of these groups meet once a month. Although some preparation and field trips may be involved in addition to meetings, the work-load of these groups is less demanding.
3. Background and/or knowledge relating to the work of the particular group, and an interest in that area.
4. The ability to work well with others, including the willingness to listen to different points of view with an open mind.
5. Understanding of the need to be impartial, and meet the expectation to recuse one (oneself) self if there is a possible conflict of interest because of financial, personal or other considerations. The Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest document can be obtained at the Office of the First Selectman.
6. The Town of Southbury maintains an extensive website www.southbury-ct.org, inclusive of meeting minutes for most boards, commissions and committees. Such minutes will provide useful information to prospective board members on current projects of the various boards, commissions and committees within the town.

If you wish to serve

Nominations for all the boards and commissions are made by the political parties. If you are registered in a political party, contact your local political committee for an interview. Said political party will then make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen for consideration. If you are registered unaffiliated or independent, you may contact either party or pursue the petition process. Nominating petitions and information on the number of registered voters required on the petitions are available from the Secretary of the State, 860-509-6100 and the Southbury Registrars Office at 203.262.0644.

Nominees should be aware of their need to review and conform to the Town's *Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest in order to serve as a member of Southbury's boards, commissions, and committees*. A copy can be picked up at the Office of the First Selectman.

BOARD AND COMMISSION PROFILES

ELECTED

BOARD OF SELECTMEN (BOS)

Membership: The First Selectman and five other selectmen elected for two-year terms. Meets twice a month except for special meetings and during the budget season (February-March) when it convenes more often.

Powers and Duties: **BOS** is the lawmaking body of the town. Adopts, amends or repeals ordinances (town laws). Confronted with any emergencies, it can issue all necessary rules and regulations. The BOS also has investigative powers relating to town agencies, boards, commissions and departments. The **First Selectman** is the full time executive and administrative officer of the town, and therefore, the only salaried selectman. Most appointments to town offices, boards and commissions are through recommendations made by the First Selectman to the BOS.

Qualifications: Knowledge of town government and its governmental relations to the state is essential to effective functioning of the Board. It is important that members have organizational and analytical skills and the ability to grasp and deal with complex issues and details. Requires ability to maintain good relationships with other BOS members despite different opinions; evaluate relevant data distributed prior to public meetings and render decisions based on the best interests of all the residents of the town.

BOARD OF FINANCE (BOF)

Membership: Six members plus three alternates elected for four year terms on a rotating basis. Meets monthly, except July and August, more frequently during budget season.

Powers and Duties: The Board of Finance is essential for the financial operations of the town. Focuses on activities and responsibilities in reviewing budgetary, additional or supplemental appropriations, before, during and after public hearings. The BOF is required to review itemized statements for all expenditures and appropriations for the preceding fiscal year as well as develop the proposed budget expenditures and revenues for the new fiscal year. It has similar duties regarding Additional and Supplemental Appropriations. Necessary changes or adjustments are made after public hearings. Representatives of the BOF may participate in the budget-making process of the Region 15 Board of Education. The primary purpose of the BOF is to recommend a budget and a mill rate to the Town.

Qualifications: Members should have a strong financial background, education that may include an MBA, CPA, legal or insurance experience and/or analytical skills acquired through corporate or municipal finance and accounting, The BOF needs members who see the "big picture" and know how to tie things together to balance opposing interests, when necessary, to promote the best interests of the town and its fiscal health.

REGION 15 BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)

Membership: Currently the Board of Education has 10 elected members, six from Southbury and four from Middlebury, who serve four-year terms. The Superintendent of Schools and three student representatives are nonvoting members of the board. Meets twice a month except during midsummer.

Powers and Duties: BOE members are responsible for all education and school-related policies and procedures, as well as teacher contracts. In monitoring the implementation of policy, a clear understanding of the differences between policy and administration is essential. BOE selects, directs and evaluates the regional superintendent, who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the district. Board members prepare the region's annual budget which includes payments for bonds or other capital indebtedness for land and buildings. They supervise the building of schools, including additions or renovations of buildings and the purchase of equipment. Members are expected to participate in meetings, discussions, public hearings, workshops and retreats. They authorize the purchase, lease or rental of property for school purposes.

Qualifications: Candidates should have a strong commitment to quality public education and be able to balance education values with the fiscal abilities of the towns. An understanding of the extensive time commitment involved is required. Because criticism and conflict occur, BOE members need to be tolerant and respectful of opposing opinions. Members come from a wide variety of backgrounds with experience in financial matters, education, community affairs, human resources, education, legal matters and management.

PLANNING COMMISSION (PC)

Membership: Six members plus three alternates, elected for four-year terms on a rotating basis. On the average the PC meets once a month.

Powers and Duties: Prepares, amends and adopts "Southbury's Plan of Conservation and Development" (Town Plan) which must be done every 10 years. The Town Plan shows the PC's recommendations for the most desirable use of land within Southbury for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes, and for the most desirable density of its population. The Town Plan is of broader scope than zoning. Planning oversees the town's systematic development to promote the general welfare and prosperity of its people, while zoning is based

upon the Comprehensive Plan of Development, sets specific zone definitions and boundaries and defines detailed parameters such as setbacks/coverage/height, etc. within each zone. In accordance with state statute, PC referrals must be considered as the ZC makes its decisions as authorized under the law. The PC also approves all subdivision plans, conducts hearings on applications for special permits or exceptions and approves applications involving inland wetlands and watercourses.

Qualifications: Members should care about the various aspects of the town's growth and development. The candidate should be 1) sensitive to balancing the need to protect the environment and enhance overall safety; 2) willing to participate in professional land use seminars/training, and 3) cognizant of PC's efforts to maintain quality in Southbury's residential and commercial areas as the Town continues to develop in a measured and organized manner. It is helpful, but not mandatory, for members to possess expertise in land use, engineering, consulting, finance or law.

INLANDS WETLANDS COMMISSION (IWC)

Membership: Six members and a panel of three alternates are elected for four-year terms on a rotating basis. Meets monthly; frequent site visits. One IWC member is required to complete a comprehensive training program of the State Commissioner of Environmental Protection.

Power and Duties: Perform the duties prescribed in the State's General Statutes; Issues regulations necessary to protect, preserve, maintain and use Southbury's wetlands and watercourses in accordance with the standards set by federal, state and local authorities. IWC is empowered to minimize pollution and prevent damage from erosion, siltation, loss of fish, wildlife, vegetation and natural habitats and to protect potable freshwater supplies. Goal is to balance economic growth and land use with the need to protect the environment and ecology.

Qualifications: The IWC requires the ability to deal skillfully with adversarial relationships and conflicts of interest to achieve workable solutions. Supervisory experience in business, education, law, or consulting services and a background in biological sciences are desirable.

ZONING COMMISSION (ZC)

Membership: Six members and three alternates, elected for four-year terms on a rotating basis. The Commission generally meets monthly.

Powers and Duties: Regulates the height, number of stories and size of buildings, the percentage of lot area that may be occupied; the size of open spaces; population density; location and use of buildings and land for all purposes, as well as the nature and location of signs as spelled out in zoning laws. Zoning regulations encourage the development of housing opportunities and may include incentives for cluster and high-density housing. They are made with reasonable

consideration for their impact upon agriculture and historic preservation. The Commission sets standards for roads, sidewalks and underground facilities in subdivisions.

Zoning and planning are not interchangeable terms. Zoning is concerned primarily with use of property, while planning is concerned with systematic development to promote general welfare and the prosperity of people.

Qualifications: Members should be able to comprehend the intricacies of the zoning regulations and to apply them judiciously. Members are expected to visit sites as well as attend meetings.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA)

Membership: Six members and three alternates elected for four-year terms on a rotating basis. Meets monthly, except during midsummer.

Powers and duties: Determines whether a literal enforcement of zoning regulations, solely with respect to a specific parcel of land, would result in exceptional difficulty or unusual hardship, with due consideration for conserving public health, safety, convenience, welfare of citizens and property values. ZBA also decides appeals where it is alleged that an error has been made by a relevant official, as well as matters involving special exceptions and exemptions.

Qualifications: Members should be able to comprehend the intricacies of zoning regulations and have a rational, analytical approach to solving often complex proprietary problems.

APPOINTED

CONSERVATION COMMISSION (CC)

Membership: Seven members appointed by the First Selectman for four-year terms on a rotating basis. Meets monthly.

Powers and Duties: Conducts research on proposed land use changes and makes recommendations to the Planning, Zoning and/or Inlands Wetlands Commissions. In researching the use and possible uses of open space, CC inventories natural resources; formulates watershed and drought management plans and coordinates related activities of other private environmental groups organized for similar purposes. Its jurisdiction over Town parks considers passive versus active recreation. When assigned, CC will supervise and manage Town-owned open space.

Qualifications: Candidates should be especially interested in the outdoors, land preservation and the environment. Professional backgrounds in management, forestry, civil engineering and scouting are desirable.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

Membership: Seven members and three alternates appointed by the Board of Selectmen, serve a five-year term on a rotating basis. EDC meets monthly.

Powers and Duties: Promote and develop Southbury's economic resources. EDC researches the Town's economic conditions and trends; develops strategic plans; makes recommendations to appropriate town officials on ways to improve economic conditions and increase the business tax base and jobs. Works to attract additional business through publication and distribution of pertinent town materials and, where advisable, coordinates activities regionally in order to promote economic development. The EDC shall perform the duties prescribed by the Connecticut General Statutes.

Qualifications: A background in business, economics, planning and development or government is desirable. EDC also benefits from long term residents who can lend an historical and cultural perspective to future planning and development.

COMMISSION ON SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY (CSE)

Membership: Seven members, one of whom shall be the Municipal Agent, appointed by the First Selectman and six of whom are appointed by the Board of Selectmen on a rotating basis: three for four year terms. Non-voting, ex-officio

members may include the Senior Center Director, minibus coordinator and president of the Senior Council. CSE meets monthly during the afternoon.

Powers and Duties: Researches, initiates and promotes programs to benefit Southbury's elderly residents, assists the Town's Director of Services for the Elderly in developing policies on local issues affecting seniors. CSE also informs residents about issues related to the elderly and advocates for state and federal services and legislation on their behalf.

Qualifications: CSE members should have demonstrated interest and concern for the social needs of the elderly and be familiar with issues of health care, housing and financial needs. Most desirable, would be those with special backgrounds or experience in the related fields of business, health care, mental health, nursing and/or geriatrics.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSIONS - SOUTHURY AND SOUTH BRITAIN

Southbury has two historic districts: Historic District #1 encompasses an area around Main Street North and South Britain's Historic Commission encompasses, an area around Route 172.

Membership: Both commissions require that some of its members and alternates live within the district. Both have five members plus three alternates appointed by the Board of Selectmen to a five-year term on a rotating basis. They usually meet once a month.

Powers and Duties: Aims to preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of structures associated with the history and style of architecture of each district. No structure within the district can be erected or its exterior altered without a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission. The Commissions advise the Planning and Zoning Commissions whether developments proposed for abutting parcels would adversely impact the aesthetic integrity of the district.

Qualifications: Candidate should have an abiding interest in and knowledge of historic preservation. Backgrounds in architecture, construction, law, property appraisal or real estate and sensitivity to architectural aesthetics are valuable contributions to the Commission's work.

HISTORICAL TREE RESTORATION COMMITTEE

Membership: Five members, appointed for terms of four (4) years on a rotating basis.

Powers and Duties: Promote preservation and maintenance of Southbury's Tree Heritage following the guidelines established in the Town of Southbury Tree Ordinance. Cooperate with the Southbury Department of Public Works, State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, and utilities companies in ensuring public safety. Prepares an annual Tree Plan and an annual application for renewal of

the National Arbor Day Foundation TREE CITY USA. Encourages community members to support the Tree Fund and businesses to support the eleven ADOPT-A-SPOT sites within the Town.

Qualifications: Candidates should appreciate and have knowledge of tree species and appropriate planting and maintenance measures to promote and prolong healthy tree growth.

LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS (LBD)

Membership: Six members plus three alternates appointed by the Board of Selectmen for four year terms on a rotating basis. Meets monthly.

Power and Duties: Establishes bylaws for the Library's governance and has control over all monies appropriated for the library. The LBD is responsible for all library policies, long range planning, budget, development, operations, programs and personnel. Members are expected to be familiar with applicable state and federal laws, work with the Friends of the Library Board and be available to attend regional and state library trustee meetings and workshops.

Qualifications: LBD members should have a broad based background in such fields as education, writing, business, the arts, culture and community affairs.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (P&R)

Membership: Seven members plus three alternates are appointed by the Board of Selectmen for four-year terms on a rotating basis. Generally meets monthly.

Powers and duties: Responsible for the administration, supervision and development of active and passive recreational programs and activities; provides oversight of the maintenance and improvement of Southbury's parks and buildings used for recreational activities and works in conjunction with the Director of Parks & Recreation to prepare and recommend annual budget.

Qualifications: In addition to the general qualifications listed in the Introduction, members should be interested in the town's active and passive recreational programs for children and adults of all ages. Persons of varied recreational interests should be considered in order to achieve a balanced recreational program for the community.

SOUTHBURY HISTORIC BUILDINGS COMMISSION

The Town of Southbury owns three (3) public historic buildings, the 1762 Bullet Hill School located on Southbury's Main Street North, and the 1783 Old Town Hall Museum and South Britain Library, located along Route 172 in the South Britain section of Town. All are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Membership: Consists of seven (7) members appointed for terms of four (4) years on a rotating basis as terms expire.

Powers and Duties: The Historic Buildings Commission is charged with restoration, preservation, maintenance, management and security of the Town's three public historic buildings and other historic properties owned by the Town as designated by the Board of Selectmen. Restoration plans must follow the United States Department of Interior Guidelines for Historic Buildings and other federal and state regulations.

Qualifications: Candidates should have an appreciation of our Town's rich history as reflected in the architecture and use of these ancient buildings. Familiarity with the principles of historic preservation is desirable.

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY (WPCA)

Membership: Five members plus three alternates appointed by the Board of Selectmen for rotating terms of two years. Meets monthly and takes field trips to appropriate sites as necessary.

Powers and Duties: Since Southbury has no municipal sewage system, the WPCA is responsible for ensuring that privately owned sewage systems are managed effectively and do not pollute Connecticut's water supply. Non-municipal water companies monitored include Heritage Village Water Co., IBM and Kensington Green. Southbury Training School is state operated and not under the town's jurisdiction. WPCA is currently developing a comprehensive water pollution control plan for Southbury.

Qualifications: Knowledge or expertise in the engineering fields, as well as finance, accounting or construction are desirable.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE GUIDE'S PURPOSE IS TO ENABLE POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS FOR POSITIONS ON SOUTHBURY'S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, THE PARTY OFFICIALS WHO NOMINATE THEM, AND THE TOWN'S RESIDENTS TO LEARN CURRENT MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF THE 17 BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS IN SOUTHBURY.

THE DATA WAS REVIEWED AND/OR SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIRPERSONS OF EACH BODY, COMPILED BY JENNIFER NAYLOR, ASSISTANT TO FIRST SELECTMAN WILLIAM DAVIS, AND EDITED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF LEAGUE MEMBERS CHARLOTTE SHAPIRO AND LORE JARMUL. THE ORIGINAL 2003 GUIDE WAS LARGELY THE WORK OF THE LATE STANLEY BARNETT.

THE CONTENT OF THIS GUIDE IS SOLELY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, SOUTHBURY.