

White Paper Report
of the
Government Study Committee
May 13, 2016



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Preamble

“The Government Study Committee was formed at the May 18, 2015 Annual Town Meeting, Article 15:

“To see if the Town will vote (a) to authorize the Board of Selectmen to create a purely advisory government study committee, and report back to Town Meeting with any recommendations for possible improvements to the current form and processes of Charlton town government, (b) such committee to be composed of: one appointee by the Bylaw committee; one appointee by the Personnel Board; two appointees by the Moderator; and three members at large appointed by the Board of Selectmen, (c) the term of such committee to be for one year, or take any action relative thereto or thereon.”

White Paper Definition

“A white paper is an authoritative report that informs readers concisely about a complex issue, and presents the issuing body's philosophy on the matter. It is meant to help readers understand an issue, solve a problem, or make a decision. White papers have tried to perform the dual role of presenting firm government policies while at the same time inviting opinions upon them. White papers are a way the government can present policy preferences before it introduces policy, bylaws or other legislation. Publishing a white paper tests public opinion on controversial policy issues and helps a government gauge its probable impact.” (WiKi)

Background

Initially voted to be formed in July of 2015, and officially organized in August, the Government Study Committee was created with the intention of reflecting on areas where there's an opportunity for change. Change isn't necessarily the “Boogeyman” that most people perceive it to be in government, nor is it mundane and dull as is often associated with any form of bureaucracy.

The residents involved in the town government are an indomitable group of volunteer-minded individuals who selflessly give back to the town when possible. The town itself has a positive reputation throughout Worcester County. This begs the question of why “fix” something that isn't inherently “broken”.

The Committee doesn't seek to find problems that don't exist, and if that were the case then it would be hard to imagine the Town Meeting moving to establish the Government Study Committee at all. Rather, the committee was created out of a need to examine how the current form of government in Charlton is meeting the ever-growing and ever changing needs of the town. The reality is that Charlton is growing every single year in a multitude of ways.

“Does our current form of government hamper you from doing your job in any way” was the heart of our mission in finding room for improvement. No stone was left unturned by the committee over the last nine months, as committee members met with every department that has a say in day-to-day functionality, as well as with the Chiefs of both Public Safety Departments. Furthermore, a decision was made to open up the opportunity for town employees to communicate directly with the Committee through an available survey. We also offered residents of the town itself to directly contribute to our mission through the use of a Government Study Committee e-mail.

While the committee itself lacks the ultimate authority to bring about change unilaterally, instead leaving the definitive and final say to the will of the Charlton Annual Town Meeting voter, it seeks to shine light on a number of issues where there exists an opportunity for considerable improvement. Everyone wants to make the community they live in the best that it can be, if not for their children or neighbors, but for themselves.

To the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator, and the voters of the 2015 Charlton Annual Town Meeting who empowered us to be able to work towards improving the town we all love and call our own, we, the committee members, sincerely thank you.

Approach

Over the months following their first official meeting in August, the Charlton Government Study Committee conducted a series of one-on-one meetings with various department heads and committee members within the Town of Charlton. These meetings, frequently running between twenty and forty minutes, gave department heads and appointed officials the opportunity to voice their concerns and suggestions for better serving the residents of Charlton, as well as improving the effectiveness of their own board. Departments and individuals who did not exclusively meet with the Government Study Committee were still given the opportunity to express their opinions and concerns through an online survey known as a “Survey Monkey”, as well as a Government Study Committee e-mail address. This survey was open to town employees, and allowed individuals the chance to answer the open-ended question: “Does our current form of government hamper you from doing your job in anyway?” A Government Study Committee e-mail address was created for the general public to provide feedback about any recommendations or changes that were proposed.

The committee also studied the reports of past Government Study Committees from other Commonwealth communities, as well as an in-depth analysis of Massachusetts General Law, when required, to better understand what would be realistic recommendations to pursue, as well as how communities similar to our own fared under a similar environment. The Committee also met with the Massachusetts Municipal Association to discuss various forms of municipal government.

A methodology of organizing information known as a SWOT, or more formally an acronym for “strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats”, was then used to better interpret the struggles the Town of Charlton currently faces, as well as the viable opportunities that exist to improve the functionality of the town government. A copy of the SWOT analysis is provided under the following section headed “Analysis” for both interested individuals and future similar committees alike.

For the sake of organizing the information gathered by the Government Study Committee in an easy to comprehend and straight forward manner, the most significant of suggestions which the committee has deemed as worthwhile recommendations will be presented along with the recommendation of the committee. Suggestions that gained minimal interest outside of a single individual, that were deemed impractical, or that would be inconsistent with what’s allowed under Massachusetts State Law will be listed in the section titled “Areas for Committee Investigation”.

Analysis

The SWOT Analysis was utilized in order to better understand where our community flourished in relation to where it needed to be reevaluated, as, like a business, the Town of Charlton had areas of proficiency just as it had areas that needed improvement. One of the benefits in the way that the committee itself was structured is that the seven member board was made up of individuals with very different backgrounds, appointed by three different agencies. This particular methodology was essential in establishing a board of individuals with seven different outlooks and backgrounds, but united in the mission of looking at the betterment of Charlton in an objective manner.

Following the initial interviews conducted over the fall and winter of 2015, as well as the results of the “Survey Monkey”, members were instructed to deliberate on the results of their findings, and present a list of positives, negatives, and concerns they had with what they heard. While not everyone’s findings were the same, the presence of considerable overlap for a number of significant points greatly assisted the committee in adding a sharper focus and better understanding of where needed changes to the community could be most effective.

In an effort to not point out a problem and have no solution, the committee felt it appropriate that when we list the weaknesses where applicable we offered a suggestion on how to improve.

1. Strengths

- a. The Town of Charlton manages current finances well and currently has a positive bond rating. There is a positive cash flow and the town owns tangible assets.
- b. Charlton is an affluent community and there’s strength in the variety of demographics.

- c. The majority of people enjoy being able to take part in their current form of government and hold a strong approval of the current model.
 - d. Volunteerism is found in some Charlton residents, and those that do get involved are adept at serving their positions to the best of their ability.
2. Weaknesses
- a. Roles and responsibilities of employees and boards are not always clear. They should be clarified to better educate the public and town employees alike.
 - b. The posting of meeting minutes is something lacking across boards and committees.
 - c. Pay scales are not equal for positions that should be interpreted as being within the same scale.
 - d. Employee evaluations are not being conducted consistently throughout town, and this leads to concerns about employee performance.
 - e. The lack of uniform financial policies is a real concern, and this puts the town budget at risk when money isn't being properly handled in an efficient manner.
 - f. Not keeping the public engaged in town government and allowing apathy.
 - g. There is a perception of an abuse of power by way of management style leading to a "fear factor" mentality in local government.
 - h. Not enough is being done to promote our town and encourage work with other communities.
 - i. The budget process is not timely, and should be started earlier in the fiscal year to provide greater availability and transparency to the public, as well as more opportunity for in depth conversations with department heads.
 - j. There is a lack of consistent communications between various departments, boards and committees and more should be done to foster increased partnerships.
 - k. There exist situations where employees are wearing "too many hats".
 - l. There's a concern that various departments are unaware of their chain of command.
 - m. No formal Human Resources function is currently in place.
 - n. The volunteer pool is in danger of diminishing and more needs to be done to foster the mentality that government is easy to access and capable of making improvements.
 - o. Free training is currently offered to numerous positions both elected and appointed and is underutilized.
3. Opportunities
- a. Increasing the volunteer pool would be an immediate solution for a number of issues.
 - b. The BOS should encourage the Student Selectperson to actually contribute and give opinions on how they would vote on any and all issues, as well as assigning them to a committee in which they could contribute. This is an underutilized concept which could benefit both Board of Selectmen and the Student Selectperson.

- c. If more voters were educated and informed on budget issues substantially prior to Town meeting we could see a greater involvement and more enlightened solutions.
 - d. The All Boards and Committees Meetings could be better utilized to foster inter-departmental cooperation.
 - e. Restoring the Planning Director's working hours could ease some burden on the Planning Department and EDC to foster better efficiency.
 - f. More should be done to bolster the morale of the current employees to keep them invested in the well-being of the town and the community.
 - g. The town should invest in internships to help educate young adults within the schools and build an interest in the government.
 - h. The town needs to establish standardized hours to better serve the public, and to bridge communication gaps between employees.
 - i. Establishing, and advertising public policies would allow the town to focus on goals in a more efficient manner.
 - j. Free public training is offered for numerous positions, courtesy of the state and organizations such as the Massachusetts Municipal Association.
 - k. Restoring the position of part time local Building Inspector could ease some burden on the Building Commissioners office and foster better efficiency.
4. Threats
- a. Without a formal Human Resources Department to help handle certain situations, lawsuits remain the biggest threat to the community. A Human Resources Department would assist employees in navigating sensitive personnel and legal aspects of their jobs.

Areas for Committee Investigation

The Government Study Committee, in the months in which it gathered information through comprehensive interviews, research, and discussions, covered a large area of suggestions and inadequacies found within the community. Some of these issues were wide in scope, requiring authority that local municipalities don't own, whereas others were overly narrow in focus, presenting minimal overall benefit to the town. The mission of the Government Study Committee is to pursue every option available, therefore, so no suggestion put forward was left undiscussed.

The questions presented to the committee have been organized into three major categories. Furthermore, the benefits, and possible downsides, of each suggestion have been included. The recommendations from the committee have been documented in their own section titled "Committee Recommendations".

i. Structural Changes

- a. Charter v. Bylaws – One of the earliest issues brought in front of the committee was whether Charlton should adopt a Charter form of government to replace our current form of Bylaws, which would cause the Office of the Town Administrator to be reclassified into that of a Town Manager. The opinions expressed by employees and boards varied on this issue, with some having the perception that the Town Administrator is exercising authority outside of the purview of the position. As a result, there exists heightened tensions between employees of the town. However, the majority interviewed wants to see no change in the form of town government; therefore this committee recommends that no action be taken at this time.
- b. Department of Public Works – The committee considered the consolidation of the offices of the Cemetery Commission, Conservation Commission and the Highway Department into a single entity known as the Department of Public Works. This department would be similar to how other towns in the Commonwealth have structured their own Departments of Public Works in the face of a growing population and economic development within their communities.

Considering the rather small size of the entities in Charlton that would constitute being absorbed into a Department of Public Works, there is little financial benefit to see stemming from such a change at this time. A Charlton consolidated Department of Public Works would be stretched in a way that would minimize efficiency.

Discussions with members of each department also show a preference to retain individual department autonomy, and that the various departments currently work together in close proximity as it is. Whatever advantages that come from a close partnership already exist. It is in the opinion of this committee that any attempt to change the current system would fail to provide any significant and positive advantages and the town should take no action at this time.

- c. Departments of Water and Sewer – While it was only discussed amongst the committee and members of the Water and Sewer Department in a public interview, the proposal of dividing the entity known as “Water and Sewer” into two separate departments was considered. Similar to the discussion had regarding the consolidation of various departments into a larger department, such as that for a Department of Public Works, the exact same outcome would be met if the Town were to pursue the division of Water and Sewer.

The current entity known as Water and Sewer would become understaffed, and ineffective, if the two functions were separated at this time. Members of Water and Sewer acknowledge that much further in the future this could be a very real issue that may need to be considered, citing a possible timeline of fifteen years. It is the opinion of the committee that it would be unwise of the town to pursue this venture at this current time.

- d. Finance Director – The offices of the Treasurer, Collector, and Accountant are currently three separate entities, and a recurring complaint seems to stem from the added trouble of dividing entities that many would assume would work together. While it is law for Charlton to have a Finance Committee, there is nothing preventing the town from consolidating the office of the Treasurer and the office of the Collector together for the sake of improving efficiency.

A new position of Finance Director would be a paid and professional position, and, in the event of no substantial change to the current form of town government, the committee also notes that a subsequent bylaw would need to be passed in order to give the position of Finance Director the authority to create financial policy. Currently, no one involved in the financial roles of the Town has the authority to make financial policy, and in order to play an effective role in town government, such a change would need to be made.

The committee has also discussed, and decided, that the Finance Director should be separate from the Finance Committee in-as-far as membership, and that members of the Finance Committee should not serve in the role of Director. Examples of the system that the Government Study Committee discussed were those of the school systems, and the role of the Finance Director and the School Committee. The Director would offer advice and recommendations to the Finance Committee, and whether or not the committee seeks to follow the advice is purely on the committee.

Furthermore, and perhaps the most significant reason to pursue this change, is that currently the town Treasurer and town Collector are not always present at Finance Committee meetings. Instead, information is relayed through the office of the Town Administrator. It is the opinion of the committee that having the Director, an entity empowered to handle both of those decisions, present at the meeting would assist in the decision making process and assure that no information is being left out of the discussion.

The Town of Charlton should; (1) consolidate the following offices – Town Collector and Town Treasurer into a single unified office that will undertake

the responsibilities of both offices, and; (2) the new single position will be known under the official title of “Finance Director”.

- e. The Budget Process – An issue that was continuously raised to the Committee was that of the budget. Not necessarily of the structure of the budget, or which departments received what funding and where, but the issue of timing. The budget process is such a massively important part of the town’s basic functionality, and yet many of the individuals we met with expressed a concern with the transparency and availability of the budget during the period preceding the annual town meeting, and the ability to prepare accordingly.

The budget process is structured in a way that it allows it to be finished and completed within a time frame consistent with the state scheduling requirements. However, there exists no reason why the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator, and the Finance Committee can’t begin the process months sooner, as is the practice in other communities, and pursue attempts to make the budget process more transparent and readily available prior to going into the Annual Town Meeting.

- f. Town Constables - While the authority of a constable has diminished from that of its original purpose over the decades, it still remains a position unlike those of other commonly elected officers. Constables are regularly sent into situations where, due to the emotional and volatile nature associated with the job of civil process, they could be put the path of possible conflict and the situation would call for the ability to quickly deescalate tensions. Furthermore, the threat of danger that might arise in such a situation must be anticipated and readily handled in a professional manner to ensure the safety of all parties involved.

The Committee does acknowledge that removing the electoral aspect of the position of Constable would diminish the democratic nature of the office. However, based on election returns for the position in 2010, 2013 and 2016, where three times now one of the two positions has been filled by a write-in candidate whose vote totals constituted less than 1% of the total voting body, there exists a very realistic chance of someone ending up serving and not being at all qualified to handle the responsibilities of the position.

It is because of these concerns that the opinion of the Committee would be; (1) to change the position of Constable from an elected position to an appointed position, and; (2) the term length of each appointment, as well as job title description, would remain consistent and incur no change, and; (3) the position would continue to report to the Board of Selectmen.

- g. Human Resources – The lack of an autonomous Human Resources Department within the town hall is an issue that has many concerned about what can be done in a worst case legal scenario, ranging from pay grade related disputes to sexual harassment cases. In the event something along these lines was to happen now, Charlton would currently find itself at an immediate disadvantage.

The benefits of creating a Human Resources officer would constitute having a professional dedicated to assisting in the administration of classification and salary plans for all Town employees, maintenance of employee records, consultation with boards, committees, and department heads on employment issues, professional development, and compliance with state and federal employment laws.

It is because of these concerns, as well as the immediate solutions offered by having a professional Human Resources officer on staff, we recommend the establishment of the office of a professional Human Resources officer.

- ii. Organizational Changes

- a. Financial Policy - There does not currently exist any financial policies which require that the various government agencies turn in their checks and other finances to the Town Collector's office in a timely manner. During our interviews with various employees whose offices handle money on a consistent basis, there is an inconsistent basis for when checks are returned to the Collector. Some departments admitted a loss of funding stemming from checks expiring before they reach the office of the Collector. It is in the opinion of the Committee that this behavior is a major detriment to the fiscal well-being of the Town and the perception of trust in the local government.

An argument can be made that allowing independent departments the liberty to set their own schedule to return checks is consistent with a policy of autonomy, but when the taxpayer's funds are the subject of the question, there is little reason to see why the Town should not pursue a unified financial policy, and it's in the opinion of the committee that the Board of Selectmen pursue a solution for this issue.

- b. The Planning Director – The scaling back of the Planning Director's hours has negatively impacted the capacity in which the office of Planning Board Director is able to fulfill their duties, and that the restoration of both (1) the

hours of the Director, as well as (2) the salary associated with it will allow him or her to better serve the town's needs.

Furthermore, such a decision has the support of the Planning Board itself, as well as the acknowledgment that the Board would be able to function more effectively if the position was restored to maximum capacity. As a result of these conversations, it's in the opinion of the committee that the Board of Selectmen seek a solution for this issue.

iii. Procedural Changes

- a. Frequency of Town Meeting – Current bylaws call for an Annual Town Meeting in the spring, with Special Town Meetings to be held as the selectmen may designate. An idea brought forward to the committee was the possibility of conducting town meetings bi-annually. The reasoning presented to the committee was that Special Town Meetings have gradually come to include topics more appropriately fitting for a regular town meeting, and that it would be in the best interest of the voters if such issues were presented in such a way. While this was considered among members of the committee, no individuals have cited opinions on this issue strong enough to warrant a change, and it is in the opinion of the committee that no action be taken at this time.
- b. Intra-Department Meetings – When anyone discusses the issue of department autonomy, it implies a certain sense of privacy. Privacy, by definition, tends to act as the antithesis of transparency. Considering that there seems to be a lack of communication between the various boards in town, the committee investigated whether ample opportunities for intra-departmental meetings and communication currently existed.

Based on the interviews held with various department heads, as well as the Town Administrator, regular meetings are conducted between the department heads and the Town Administrator. While these meetings take place once a month and are not open to the public, they offer an opportunity for the town to remain connected on all issues. Furthermore, the “All Boards and Committees Meetings”, or the bi-annual meetings conducted with the intention to keep the various boards, committees, councils, and departments in the town aware of the activities of one another, offers the same to elected officials and non-departmental head members, and is both open to the public and broadcast on Cable Access Charlton.

While the Committee feels the “All Boards and Committees Meeting” is underutilized as a channel and it behooves the community to make a greater effort to participate, it has no real solution that’s enforceable by town policy. Considering this channel is already preexisting, and in tandem with the regular monthly meetings held between department heads, the town is currently taking efforts to increase transparency between employees and, as a result, the Committee has no official recommendations to make regarding this issue.

- c. Trust – There exists a concern from those the committee interviewed that there is a current lack of trust that creates an atmosphere that is damaging to the welfare of the employees and the work environment.

While there is no one proposal or motion that can be put forward to rectify this issue, it is in the opinion of the committee that the Town Administrator, the Board of Selectmen, and the Town government as a whole work towards improving the environment in a way that would strengthen the bond between employees, and work against behavior that would knowingly damage intra and interdepartmental relationships.

- d. Knowledge of Responsibilities - A common problem being seen with many of the elected departments that exist within Charlton is a lack of knowledge regarding the responsibilities, and definitions of those departments. The Committee would support any advancements in the encouragement of professional development for these elected positions. While this particular problem could be levied against the individuals pursuing office within the Town, and not purely on the town, the fact of the matter is that this is part of a greater educational disconnect between the town and its residents. Furthermore, the lack of definition of particular positions creates a pitfall for volunteerism, as residents feel like they’re either under-qualified or overqualified for contributing to their community.

Within the last few years, the offices of Tree Warden and Constable have regularly had issues of contention in finding interested parties and have required either appointment or initial election based on the highest number of write-ins. There have also been numerous other posts that have been filled by the election of a candidate not on the ballot. This has created a bit of a cyclical logic loop where lack of knowledge is tied directly to voter apathy, and voter apathy is directly tied back to a lack of knowledge.

It’s in the opinion of the committee that information be more readily available to the public. Examples of what “readily available” would constitute include up-to-date descriptions of the various departments in town, recorded meeting

minutes being made quickly available on the Town of Charlton website. Other areas would include anything else the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator may deem worth pursuing. This problem is also directly correlated to the issue of trust discussed earlier in this white paper and that working towards one issue could very well help alleviate the causes of another.

- e. Leadership Hierarchy – It has come to the attention of the committee that many employees are unsure of who is their actual boss. The most immediate issue to come from an ill-defined “chain of command” is a misunderstanding of who reports to whom, which leads to gridlock as departments need to forward concerns to other departments, or become bogged down with responsibilities that they shouldn’t necessarily need to handle. The autonomous nature of the Charlton town hall is severely called into question when departments are reporting to individuals outside of this preexisting chain of command. Furthermore, the perception of an effective government is damaged when a resident of the town is unable to have concerns or grievances answered in a quick and efficient manner.

For the sake of clarity and restoring employee confidence in the system, it’s in the opinion of the committee for an official organizational chart to be constructed and made available to all employees and residents, as well as having the town leadership adopt a mentality of pursuing further ways to address this issue. Doing so will help restore confidence in the town government for both employees and residents.

- f. Evaluations
As of this moment, only three departments in town have employee evaluation processes in place; the Board of Trustees of the Charlton Public Library, the Board of Selectmen, and the Fire Department. Discussions with these three departments have shown us that these employee evaluations, when done truthfully, have the capacity to develop a sense of personal responsibility and self-criticism, as well as honesty between members and their department head. Honesty, efficiency and transparency should be qualities shared among all employees and officials of the Town and those employee evaluations help work to tie everything together, as well as offer the chance to bolster said qualities.

While the committee has no opinion regarding how evaluations should be conducted, it is in the opinion of the committee that failing to utilize such a simple concept of self-improvement consistently would be disadvantageous to the departments, boards, and committees of the Town, and that the adoption of

employee evaluations be a conversation to be had and pursued by every department for the sake of improvement.

g. Municipal Inspection Ordinance

It is the opinion of the Government Study Committee that the Town restores the part time position of Local Building Inspector to the Building Commissioner's office. In addition, we recommend the adoption of M.G.L. ch.43C §13 in order to maximize the efficiency of the supervision and coordination over part time local inspectors. The adoption of M.G.L. ch.43C §13 will allow the following provisions:

"Section 13. (a) The following shall be the summary to be inserted in the petition described in section five:

"Section thirteen of chapter forty-three C of the General Laws authorizes the legislative body to provide, by ordinance or bylaw, for a consolidated department of municipal inspections which may include the inspections currently being made by the building inspector, wire inspector, plumbing inspector, gas fitting inspector, health agent and others as the ordinance or bylaw may specify."

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in any city or town which accepts the provisions of this section by vote of the people, the legislative body, subject to all applicable provisions of the city or town charter, shall have the authority to adopt an ordinance or bylaw providing for a consolidated department of municipal inspections.

(c) Any ordinance or bylaw adopted pursuant to this section shall provide for (i) a director of municipal inspections who shall be appointed by and shall be responsible to the chief executive officer or the chief administrative officer of the city or town as the ordinance or by-law shall specify, (ii) the term of office of the director of municipal inspections which shall be not less than three nor more than five years, subject to removal as may be otherwise provided in the charter of the city or town.

(d) Any ordinance or bylaw adopted pursuant to this section may include, but need not be limited to, the following: (i) coordination of all inspection functions carried out by any municipal officer or agent, (ii) maintenance of all records relating to inspections in a central place through a common index, (iii) a single application process which would indicate all inspections which might be necessary, including, but need not be limited to, any inspections under the zoning and other local ordinance or bylaw, building code, wire code, plumbing and gas code, state sanitary code, board of health rules and

regulations, fire code, conservation commission, historic districts commission and any other local inspections as may be otherwise authorized. Any ordinance or bylaw adopted pursuant to this section may provide that any agency performing an inspection function shall be continued but that for administrative purposes all personnel performing inspection functions for the existing agency shall, when performing such inspection services, be subject to the administrative control and direction of the director of municipal inspections, but not otherwise.

(e) Any ordinance or by-law adopted pursuant to this section shall provide for the appointment of all other personnel necessary to staff the department as constituted in the ordinance or bylaw. Unless some other provision is made in the city or town charter for the appointment of officers and employees the director of municipal inspections shall appoint all personnel under his direction and control subject to the approval of the appointing authority as provided for his office.

However it should be noted, that all other duties and responsibilities assigned to the Building Commissioner be evaluated and reassigned in order for the Building Commissioner to more effectively manage the office. The position of Building Commissioner is overburdened with responsibilities outside of the regular purview of the position, and there's a concern that a high number of responsibilities added to this position is leading to leadership fatigue.

Committee Recommendations

I. Recommendations for Change

- a. We recommend the authorization of; (1) the creation of a Human Resources Director and; (2) that it is pursued in a way that would leave it autonomous from other departments in town in order to remain effective.
- b. We recommend the; (1) creation of the position of "Finance Director" to replace the-position of Treasurer and Collector, and that; (2) the position of "Finance Director" handles matters pertaining to day-to-day financial policy in a purely autonomous fashion.
- c. We recommend that; (1) the position of "Constable", an elected position equal to three years, be changed to an appointed position, also equal to three years, and;

(2) that the Board of Selectmen is the appointing authority for the position of Constable.

- d. Considering the confusion in regards to the current organizational structure within the town, we recommend to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator to work with other departments in the town in clarifying the government chain of command.
- e. Considering the significance of volunteerism in the town, we recommend to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator that they investigate ways of maintaining and increasing the pool of willing and able volunteers.
- f. Considering the importance of trust in fostering a functional environment within the Town, we recommend to the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator and to all other employees of the Town that they work towards implementing a spirit of camaraderie and trust within their employees for the betterment of the Town and for the sake of optimizing efficiency.
- g. After discussions with the Planning Board and in consideration of the level of responsibility and work required of the position of Planning Director, we recommend that the aforementioned position be restored to its previous hours.
- h. After discussions with boards in other communities that have their members conduct employee evaluations, it is in the opinion of this committee that these are practices that are both consistent with personal improvement, and foster both a sense of trust and honesty amongst members, and should be adopted as widespread practices across all boards, agencies, and departments within the Town.
- i. Considering the importance in having a reliable leadership structure, and the ability for an individual to handle responsibilities in a way that maximizes efficiency, it is in the opinion of the committee that; (1) the Town adopt a goal of working towards minimizing the amount of leadership fatigue, and; (2) the adoption M.G.L. ch.43C §13, otherwise known as the “Consolidated department of municipal inspections; petition summary; ordinance or bylaw”, and; (3) hire a part-time local Building Inspector to assist the current position of Building Commissioner.
- j. Considering the advisory nature of the committee, we advise that the Town directs the Board of Selectmen to discuss each recommendation, as outlined above, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the board prior to July 1, 2016, and to determine what action shall be taken. We further advise, that if the Board of Selectmen deems necessary, action be taken to form a Strategic Action Planning

Committee to move forward with creating an action plan to implement said recommendations, and to report back to the annual town meeting in May 2017 with their action taken or anything relative thereto or thereon.

Appendix A

Committee Guests

Robin Craver	Town Administrator
Joseph Szafarowicz	Vice Chairman, Selectman
Cindy Cooper	Clerk, Selectman
Rick Swensen	Chairman, Selectman
Curtis Meskus	Building Commissioner
Matt Gagner	Chairman, Board of Health
Willy Stevens	Vice Chairman, Board of Health
Stefan Sage	Chairman, Board of Library Trustees
Robert Hartwig	Secretary, Board of Library Trustees
Darlene Tully	Town Clerk
Peter Cooper, Jr.	Town Moderator
Rachel Hartwig	Personnel Board
Lisa Westwell	Guest
Robert Lemansky	Water and Sewer Commission
Todd Girard	Conservation Agent
Carl Hultgren	Planning Board
Ross Lemansky	Planning Board
Peter Starkus	Planning Board
Joe Spiewak	Water and Sewer Commission
Cheryl Hansen	Library Director

Richard Vaughan	Board of Assessors
Elaine Materas	Director, Council on Aging
Keith R. Arsenault	Town Treasurer
James Pervier	Chief, Charlton Police Department
Lucia A Blanchette	Town Collector
Deb Ceccarini	Principal Assessor
Alan I. Gordon	Town Planner
Charles E. Cloutier, Jr.	Chief, Charlton Fire Department
Blythe Robinson	Town Manager, Upton – MMA
Peter Lukes	Assistant Town Manager, Holden - MMA

Appendix B

Forms of Massachusetts Government

There are 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. Of these, 50 are cities and 301 are towns. There are numerous variations of local government structure. Generally the term "city" refers to a small legislative body such as a Council or Board of Aldermen (which meets frequently) and either an elected or appointed chief executive called a Mayor or Manager. Towns generally have a large legislative body, either an Open Town Meeting or a Representative Town Meeting (which meets at least annually and sometimes a few times a year). Towns also usually have a small (three or five member) elected executive Board of Selectmen as well as an appointed administrator called a Manager or Administrator.

Cities

Most of the cities in Massachusetts operate with a Mayor/Council form of government such as Boston, Lawrence, Springfield, Fall River, Taunton, etc. However, some fairly large cities have a Council/Manager form of government such as Worcester, Cambridge and Lowell. In the last 30 years or so, since the adoption of the Home Rule Amendment to the Constitution, a few medium to larger size towns have adopted a so called city form of government, either with a Mayor/Council form or a Council/Manager form. In many of these instances the municipality still calls itself a town. Thus for example Amesbury and Greenfield now have a Mayor/Council form of government, while Barnstable, Franklin and Southbridge have a Council/Manager form of government.

Towns

Most towns (well over 200) operate with an Open Town Meeting where any voter is permitted to attend and vote on legislative matters: budgets, bylaws, zoning, etc. Fewer than 50 towns operate with a Representative Town Meeting where voters vote for representatives to attend town meeting. These representative legislative bodies vary from less than 100 to more than 300. Towns of less than 12,000 may not have a city form of government and towns of less than 6,000 must have an open town meeting. The executive authority in towns is held by elected boards of selectmen together with an appointed chief administrative officer called a Town Manager or Town Administrator.