

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE REVIEW COMMITTEE

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS (3/25/09)

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Strengthen the role of the Town Administrator by granting the person in that position the responsibility and authority to:

- Appoint, remove, and discipline department heads, and appoint, remove and discipline the directors of all elected and appointed boards, with advice from their respective boards, with the exception of the School Committee, the Municipal Light Department and the Housing Authority, or as otherwise provided by statute.
- Centralize the budget and personnel functions of all elected and appointed boards, with the exception of the School Committee and the Housing Authority.
- Centralize lines of authority and control over buildings, parks, fields, grounds, information technology (IT), purchasing and health insurance.
- Ensure close alignment of collective bargaining and labor relations of all municipal employee unions.

COMMITTEES CURRENTLY APPOINTED BY THE SELECTMEN

- Permanent Committees:
 1. The Board of Selectmen should appoint members of the following committees:
 - Conservation Commission
 - Historic District Commission
 - McLean Land Management Committee
 - Municipal Light Board
 - Permanent Audit Committee
 - Planning Board
 - Registrars of Voters
 - Zoning Board of Appeals
 2. The Town Administrator, with advice from the Board of Selectmen, should appoint members of all other permanent committees, except as otherwise provided by statute.
- Temporary Committees:
 1. The Selectmen should continue to appoint members.
 2. Committees should dissolve after three years unless the Selectmen take action to the contrary.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Grant the Police Chief the same appointing authority as the Fire Chief.
Both continue to be appointed by the Selectmen as provided by law.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

- Anticipate that the Board of Selectmen would become a stronger policy board if the authority of the Town Administrator is strengthened as recommended above.
- Consider increasing the size of the Board of Selectmen, if the Board becomes a stronger policy board.

TOWN MEETING

- Maintain our representative Town Meeting
- Reduce the size of the Town Meeting from 288 to 216 elected members over a period of three election cycles.
- Require a minimum number of votes for election to Town Meeting, consistent with the number required for election in a precinct caucus.
- Close the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting in time for the warrant, including the budget, to be distributed to Town Meeting Members at least two weeks before the Annual Town Meeting is convened. All committee reports pertinent to articles on the warrant should be distributed with the warrant.
- Consider a Town Meeting Member Association.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Make no change in the election of members of the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Board of Library Trustees, Board of Health, Board of Assessors, or of the Town Treasurer or Town Clerk.

BELMONT MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT

Eliminate the current practice where the Board of Selectmen serves as the Belmont Light Board. Instead, have the Board of Selectmen appoint a five-person Board.

The Board of Selectmen and the Municipal Light Board should commit to a memorandum of understanding which outlines the role and the responsibilities of the Light Board.

See Appendix A

RECALL PROVISION

Create a provision in Belmont's government structure for recall of all elected officials.

