

# Committee to Study the Number of Selectmen

July 18, 2017

Room 1, Town Hall 455 Concord Avenue, Belmont

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TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA

Members attending: Lynn Read, Maryann Scali, Doug John, Michael Crowley, Andrew Plunkett,  
Laurie Graham, Judith Feins, Debra Deutsch, Paul Rickter, Peter Whitmer,  
Ralph Jones

2017 SEP -7 PM 2: 12

Members Absent: Dan Halston, Amy Trotsky

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7: 08 PM The meeting was convened by Chair Paul Rickter

1. Introductions: Each member introduced themselves, giving name, precinct and, if appropriate, other service on Town committees

2. Approval of Minutes: Moved to approve minutes from June 27, 2017 moved by Maryann Scali, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Doug John. Voted 10 approved, 1 abstention. Ralph Jones agreed to take minutes at next meeting, August 8<sup>th</sup>.

3. Discussion of Timeline: Benchmarks to meet

- Report due: 1-31-2018
- 1<sup>st</sup> draft target: week of 12-15-2017
- Public Hearing: 10-12-2017. Maryann Scali will investigate potential venues for Public Hearing

4. Questions we need to answer: Discussion of general topics and categories. Suggested by Debra Deutsch:

- Data gathering
- Transition/logistics of moving from 3-5 members (comparable towns)
- Operation of BOS
- Mechanics of elections
- Comparable data

Committee members participated in a brain-storming session to identify specific questions and will spend time at next meeting, fine-tuning.

1. Towns with 5, what are the lengths of term and rotation of elections?
2. Identify town(s) with recent transition from 3-5 or other changes
3. How would an increase (to 5) affect policy deliberations?
4. Does a larger # of Selectman make recruitment to BOS easier or harder?
5. Does larger # of Selectman lead to increased operational involvement by Selectmen ?
6. Does larger # of Selectman lead to more factionalism?
7. How do larger BOS get paid (amount)? What benefits do larger BOS receive?
8. For larger # of selectman, how much time per week do members put in?
9. For 4 other towns with RTM and 3 selectmen, why staying with 3? What are the bond ratings of other towns?
10. Do Belmont Selectmen feel overworked ?
11. Does the committee want to talk with town staff on this topic?
12. How do past Belmont Town Administrators feel about the # of Selectmen? How do other Towns' Administrators feel about the # of Selectmen?
13. How are OML operationalized if 5 Selectmen?
14. Have issues arisen since OML changes of 2010, whether 3 or 5 Selectmen?

representation?

16. What do candidates spend on elections in towns with 5 Selectmen?

17. What do people see as the pros/cons of the # of Selectmen in their town?

18. For Boards with 5 Selectmen, does the work get shared evenly or is there sometime disparity?

19. Are sub-committees permitted under OML with 5 Selectmen?

5. Introduction to Selectmen role/Q&A w/ Ralph Jones: Ralph Jones shared his thoughts about the role of Selectmen and answered questions from members of the committee

- BOS should be a Policy Board, delegating operations to professionals hired.
- BOS as leaders, need to "step-up" to make decisions and lead the community.
- Direction of the current BOS is to enhance the role of Town Administrator.
- Day to day work flow of BOS – Ralph said that in his experience, typical work is between 5-7 hrs. per week other than during budget season. Suggests looking at BOS agendas for past year to understand full work flow.
- Belmont BOS has oversight/policy authorization of several Departments such as Municipal Light Board, Parks and Recreation. Ralph suggests looking at other towns that have Municipal Light Departments to compare work flow and organization
- Question from committee members – ask Town Counsel if a 5 member board changes how to function within the parameters of OML (ie. Sub-committees/posted meetings)

6. Next steps and future meeting dates:

- At next meeting committee will refine questions to ask and set-up schedule/actions steps for interviewing and gathering data. Mike Crowley and Laurie Graham will provide list of comparable towns used by Warrant Committee and the Financial Task Force.
- Meetings are scheduled for the following dates, all being at 7:00 pm:

Tues, Aug 8, Conf room 1	Tues, Nov 7, Conf room 1
Tues, Sept 12, Conf room 1	Tues, Nov 21, Conf room 1
Tues, Sept 26, Conf room 1	Tues, Dec 5 , Conf room 1
Tues, Oct 3, Conf room 1	Tues, Dec19, Conf room 1
Thur, Oct 12 Public Hearing. Selectmen's Room	Tues, Jan 9, Conf room 1
Tues, Oct 17, Conf room 1	Tues, Jan 23, Conf room 1

- Next meeting will be on August 8<sup>th</sup>, in Paul Rickter's absence, meeting will be chaired by Maryann Scali. Ralph Jones will record minutes.

7. Adjournment at 9:02 with motion made by Peter Whitmer, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ralph Jones.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laurie Graham