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Committee to Study the Number of Selectmen
Report to Belmont Town Meeting
January 30, 2018

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Executive Summary

The Committee to Study the Number of Selectmen was created by a vote of Belmont Town Meeting in May 2017, and we began our deliberations in June 2017. During our work, the committee used a combination of background research, data-gathering, and discussion to gain an understanding of all facets of the question of whether Belmont should increase the size of the Board of Selectmen from its current three members.

After completing the research phase of our work, we identified the most persuasive arguments on each side of the question. These arguments are made in detail in the body of this report.

For increasing the size of the Board:

1. Greater stability for Town government in policy, planning, and hiring
2. Increased representation, diversity, and viewpoints
3. Reduced costs of entry, both financial and psychological
4. Less likelihood of one Board member being isolated or dominating others
5. Potential for wider range of skills and experience on the Board
6. Permits members to use one other member as a sounding board
7. Increased access to the Board of Selectmen for Town residents
8. Increased ability to communicate with Town committees
9. Increased ability to attend external meetings
10. Increased capacity to establish subcommittees
11. Increased ability to accommodate member absences without limiting the Board's effectiveness

For maintaining the size of the Board:

1. All Board deliberations remain transparent and open to the public
2. Every Selectman is vested in the job
3. Elections would remain competitive
4. Three members are more apt to reach a consensus
5. Meetings are efficient and reasonable in length
6. Current level of authority and accountability would be maintained
7. Salary and benefit costs would not increase
8. Town Administrator communications with individual Selectmen would not increase
9. Belmont has not strengthened the role of the Town Administrator
10. Too much is at stake for a change of this magnitude right now
11. Don't fix what's not broken

After compiling these arguments, the committee debated recommendations and decided to offer two recommendations and record the number of committee members supporting each recommendation.

- Recommendation: Increase the Size of the Board of Selectmen (supported by nine committee members)
- Recommendation: Maintain the Size of the Board of Selectmen (supported by four committee members)

During our research, we identified several additional, related topics about which we want to make observations. These observations appear after our recommendations in this report:

- Selectmen as a Policy-Making Board
- Role of Town Administrator or Manager
- Impact of Salaries and Benefits
- Options for a Larger Board of Selectmen
- Options for Implementation

Committee Charge and Process

The Committee to Study the Number of Selectmen was created by a vote at Belmont Town Meeting on May 8, 2017. The 13 members of the committee were appointed by Town Moderator Michael Widmer and the committee began meeting in June 2017.

Committee Charge

The following motion was passed by Belmont Town Meeting on May 8, 2017 to create the committee:

MOVED: That Article 8 be referred to committee to study and recommend whether or not the Board of Selectmen should be expanded from three members. Said committee shall be appointed by the Moderator, and shall consist of a Town Meeting Member from each Precinct, and five town residents selected at large and shall file a written report of its recommendations in the Town Clerk's office, for distribution to all Town Meeting Members, by January 31, 2018. (approved: Yes 192, No 67)

Steps Taken and Data Gathered

The Committee to Study the Number of Selectmen conducted its business through a combination of background research, data-gathering, and discussion. The steps described in this section were taken sequentially, and therefore the section also describes the process by which our work was done.

1. Collect Data to Define Comparable Towns

In order to identify a set of towns comparable to Belmont, so that the committee could examine their structure and governance, we first collected the following information about all towns in Massachusetts with populations between 19,000 and 31,000 residents:

- a. 2015 population
- b. Number of Selectmen
- c. Form of Town Meeting
- d. FY2016 Town budget
- e. Moody's bond rating
- f. Standard & Poor's bond rating
- g. Whether town has municipal light utility

The results (totaling 44 towns) are shown in Appendix A. From this list, nine towns were selected for further research: Acton, Concord, Hingham, Marblehead, Marshfield, Milton, Stoughton, Westford, and Winchester. To the list were added two nearby towns which often serve as comparisons for school systems: Arlington and Lexington. Wakefield was added because of similarity in town budget. Finally, the Town of Hanover was added because it was the only town undertaking an increase in the number

of Selectmen within the past 10 years. The table below shows data items for Belmont and the 13 other towns in our sample.

Town	2015 Population	Number of Selectmen	Town Administrator (TA) or Manager (TM)?	FY 2017 Total Budget	Residential % of Total Valuation	Moody's Bond Rating	S&P Bond Rating
<i>3 Selectmen & Representative Town Meeting</i>							
Belmont	25,584	3	TA	124,641,881	94.8	Aaa	
Milton	27,374	3*	TA	108,814,806	96.0		AAA
<i>5 Selectmen & Representative Town Meeting</i>							
Arlington	44,815	5	TM	167,976,625	94.1	Aa1	AAA
Lexington	33,394	5	TM	241,416,590	88.4	Aaa	AAA
Stoughton	28,431	5	TM	111,983,213	79.1	Aa3	
Winchester	22,417	5	TM	123,323,702	95.4	Aaa	AAA
<i>3 Selectmen & Open Town Meeting</i>							
Hingham	23,120	3†	TA	108,667,250	87.6	Aaa	AAA
Marshfield	25,709	3	TA	103,744,633	92.2		AA+
<i>5-7 Selectmen & Open Town Meeting</i>							
Acton	23,549	5	TM	98,270,842	88.4	Aaa	AAA
Concord	19,830	5	TM	103,056,816	91.6	Aaa	
Hanover	14,424	5	TA	63,670,994	83.7	Aa2	
Marblehead	20,517	5	TA	92,780,023	94.7		AAA
Wakefield	26,847	7	TA	101,743,779	86.1	Aa2	
Westford	23,831	5	TM	114,053,398	85.4	Aa2	AAA

* Milton will transition to five Selectmen in 2018.

† Hingham recently voted to not increase the size of its Board of Selectmen.

Additional data items collected on most or all of the comparable towns included:

- What are the lengths of term and rotation of elections?
- What have candidates spent on elections?
- How many candidates have run per election year?
- What are bylaws/description of Board duties for each town?
- What, if any, is relationship of Board with town Municipal Light Board?
- How often does the Board meet?
- What is typical length of meetings?
- What other committees include Board representation?
- How frequently do those committees meet?
- How long do Board meetings last?
- Do other towns have elected bodies that have sole oversight over committees that the Belmont Board administers (i.e. Parks and Rec)?

2. Collect Bylaws of Comparable Towns on the Role of the Board of Selectmen

The bylaws (and charters, as appropriate) of the comparison towns were reviewed for similarities and differences with respect to the powers and duties of the Board of Selectmen and the election of its members. These materials are posted online at

http://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/belmontma/files/uploads/csns_comparable_town_bylaws.pdf.

3. Gather Relevant Information on the Open Meeting Law

Some members of this committee had professional expertise regarding the Open Meeting Law, and all committee members studied and considered how that law affects the operations of three-member vs. larger Boards of Selectmen. See the section titled Introduction to the Open Meeting Law. The committee consulted and acknowledges the assistance of the Memorandum dated October 13, 2017 from Town Counsel George A. Hall, Jr. to Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Town Clerk, "Open Meeting Law: 'Working Groups' and Subcommittees."

4. Collect Input from Town Meeting Members and the General Public

In a public meeting on October 12, 2017, the committee explained its charge and posed these questions to those attending:

- Question 1 – Would moving to 5 Selectmen lead to a lack of transparency?
- Question 2 – Would moving to 5 Selectmen impact the competitiveness of elections?
- Question 3 – Would moving to 5 Selectmen affect willingness to serve?
- Question 4 – Would moving to 5 Selectmen be more representative and capture a greater diversity of opinions?

Responses to these questions were followed by open discussion. Minutes of the public meeting can be found in Appendix E.

5. Collect Responses to Questions from Past and Current Selectmen

We surveyed all current and former Belmont Selectmen, asking them the following questions about the time commitment and division of labor on the Board of Selectmen, and their opinions regarding the pros and cons of increasing the number of Selectmen:

- Why did you decide to run for the Board of Selectmen?
- How many hours per week did you devote to your work as a selectman? How did these hours vary during the year?
- How would you break down this time into the following categories?
 - Meeting time
 - Time interacting with constituents
 - Time interacting with town staff
 - Other areas

- What town committees did you sit on as a selectman? How much time did you spend on this committee work?
- What was the division of labor among the three selectmen when you were a member of the BOS in respect to committee assignments?
- What involvement did you have with town departments?
- What, in your opinion, are the pros and cons of moving to a greater number of selectmen?

Sixteen past and current Selectmen were contacted for their input, with 14 responding to our request:

Name and Number of Terms	Dates Served
<i>Respondents</i>	
Ann M. Paulsen (1)	1989-1992
William R. Skelley, III (2)	1994-2000
Stephen Rosales (1)	1995-1998
Ann Marie Mahoney (2)	2000-2006
William Brownsberger (3)	1998-2007
Paul Solomon (2)	2002-2008
Angelo Firenze (2)	2006-2012
Dan LeClerc (1)	2007-2010
Mark Paolillo (3)	2010-
Ralph Jones (2)	2008-2014
Andres Rojas (1)	2012-2015
Sami Baghdady (1)	2014-2017
James Williams (1)	2015-
Adam Dash (1)	2017-
<i>Non-Respondents</i>	
Harry T. O'Hare, Jr. (2)	1977-1983
Anne Warner (1)	1999-2002

Appendix B contains the responses of the former and current Selectmen to the committee's questions.

6. Interview Selectmen from Comparable Towns

A substantial effort by committee members went into interviewing one or more Selectmen from the 13 comparable towns in the study. We used a template built from questions members felt were important for addressing the committee's charge, as follows:

Board of Selectmen

1. Is your Board a policy-making board or do you participate in the day to day management of the town?
2. What are the Board member duties?
3. What is the decision making process and workflow?

4. Where are the more controversial issues decided?
5. How do you as a body communicate with Department heads?
6. How do you communicate with residents/community members?
7. How do you communicate with each other?
8. Does your town offer salaries to Board members? And if so, what are they?
9. Does your town offer benefits to Board members? And if so, what are they?
10. Does your town offer salaries or benefits to any other elected officials?
11. FOR TOWN WITH 5 MEMBERS: Do you feel that you have a more diverse board than might happen with fewer members? Gender, age, ethnicity, town district/precinct?
12. FOR TOWN WITH 3 MEMBERS: Have you ever considered expanding the size of the Board? Why or why not?

Open Meeting Law (OML)

13. How do you apply OML to the operations of the Board?
14. Have you had issues arise related to OML?

Town Administrator/Town Manager

15. What authority does your TA/TM have?
16. What is the division of labor /decision making process between the Board and TM/TA?
17. How does the TA/TM communicate with individual Board members?

Elections

18. Does your town have competitive races for Board? Why or why not?
19. If town is on a 2-2-1 seat cycle, how competitive is the 1-seat election?

Other Thoughts and Comments

Results of these interviews were reported across a number of meetings, the minutes for which are posted on the Committee to Study the Number of Selectmen page of the Town website.

7. Poll Committee Chairs and Department Heads

As the committee discussed the potential arguments for and against increasing the number of Selectmen, we also reached out to chairs of Belmont's many committees and to heads of Town departments for their views on this topic. They were asked: "As a committee chair or department head, what do you need from the Board of Selectmen?" The replies received from 18 individuals are found in Appendix D.

8. Interview Past Town Administrator

The committee's final data collection step was to interview former Belmont Town Administrator Mel Kleckner on his views concerning the size of town Boards of Selectmen. After leaving Belmont, Mr. Kleckner served as Town Manager in Winchester (five Selectmen), and then in 2010 became Town Manager in Brookline (five Selectmen). As the current president of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, he also has a broad view of town and city government in the Commonwealth. Notes from the Kleckner interview are contained in Appendix E.

Rationale: Why Study the Number of Selectmen?

It is crucial that we understand fully the potential advantages and disadvantages of a larger Board of Selectmen before making a change. Therefore, our purpose is to determine whether increasing the number of Selectmen might alleviate some of the governance challenges facing Belmont now and in the future.

It is in Belmont's best interest to have quality Town governance. A well-run Town benefits residents, business owners, Town staff and volunteers, and all others who interact with them. Town leaders should strive to be effective, efficient, and accountable to these diverse parties.

The Board of Selectmen is a significant part of Belmont's leadership structure. In addition to making policies that affect the entire Town, they also appoint significant members of the Town staff and many Town committees, and function as the Municipal Light Board. If the Board of Selectmen is operating efficiently and effectively, the Town as a whole benefits. On the other hand, a dysfunctional Board of Selectmen would be a serious detriment to the Town.

Changing the number of Selectmen could have significant effects on how the Town is run and how decisions are made. It's possible that an increase in the number of Selectmen would improve Town governance and benefit the Town. Conversely, it's possible that the current size of the Board of Selectmen is optimal for Belmont and increasing the number would negatively affect Town governance.

Introduction to the Open Meeting Law

Disclaimer: The following summary is abbreviated, is not an official interpretation of the Open Meeting Law (OML), and should not be deemed legal advice or relied upon as such.

As part of its charge, the committee studied the extent to which increasing the size of the Board of Selectmen might permit an individual member to discuss Board business with other members outside of public meetings without violating the Open Meeting Law.

The Massachusetts Attorney General's Guide to the Open Meeting Law states:

The purpose of the Open Meeting Law is to ensure transparency in the deliberations on which public policy is based. Because the democratic process depends on the public having knowledge about the considerations underlying governmental action, the Open Meeting Law requires, with some exceptions, that meetings of public bodies be open to the public. It also seeks to balance the public's interest in witnessing the deliberations of public officials with the government's need to manage its operations efficiently.

The text of the Open Meeting Law and educational materials can be found on the Attorney General's website at <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>.

Summary of Open Meeting Law Requirements

1. All meetings of a public body must be open to the public;
2. A public body includes a town Board of Selectmen;
3. A meeting is a deliberation by the public body about any matter within its jurisdiction;
4. A deliberation is an oral or written communication, including by electronic mail or other media, among a quorum of a public body on any public business within its jurisdiction;
5. A quorum is a simple majority of the Board; thus, no two members of a three-person Board can communicate privately about Board business;
6. Business is within the public body's jurisdiction if a quorum of the public body may make a decision or recommendation on it;
7. A local public body must post a public notice of its meeting 48 hours in advance, excluding weekends and holidays, in the municipal clerk's office or on the municipal website;
8. Members of the public are allowed to attend open meetings of public bodies but must have permission of the chair to address the public body;
9. With advance notice to the chair, a member of the public may record an open meeting of a public body;
10. A public body can meet in executive (closed) session only for ten specific purposes, and only after announcing such purpose in an open meeting and taking a roll call vote to enter executive session.

Summary for Communications by Less Than a Quorum

A communication on public business by less than a quorum can be a deliberation subject to the Open Meeting Law as follows:

1. When a public body delegates a piece of its work to a smaller group of its members, that group is subject to all requirements of the Open Meeting Law even if it is smaller than a quorum;
2. A series of communications among enough members to make a quorum violates the law—this is known as the "serial communications" rule;
3. Therefore, if two members of a five-person Board discuss an issue privately, neither of them may discuss it with any other member because three members constitute a quorum;
4. Email, text messages and other electronic communications are subject to the serial communications rule and may not be shared among a quorum;
5. An expression of opinion on a matter of public business by one member to a quorum, for instance by email, is a deliberation subject to the Open Meeting Law even if no other member responds.

The committee consulted and acknowledges the assistance of the Memorandum dated October 13, 2017 from Town Counsel George A. Hall, Jr. to Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Town Clerk, "Open Meeting Law: 'Working Groups' and Subcommittees."

Introduction to Our Recommendations

The approach we followed in compiling this report involved research about Belmont and comparable towns followed by a process of identifying the most persuasive arguments for maintaining the size of the Board of Selectmen and for increasing the size of the Board. We then divided the writing of the draft text advocating these arguments among committee members, with most individual committee members writing the text for two arguments, one on each side of the question.

Once we had compiled the text of these arguments, we took a straw poll of committee members to determine how individual members were leaning on the question of increasing the number of Selectmen. Then, one individual on each side volunteered to write a draft recommendation and the entire committee commented in open meetings on each of these recommendations, suggesting ways to refine or strengthen them.

Throughout this process, the committee debated and discussed these two recommendations, and the arguments that support them, in a true collaborative spirit. At the end of the process, nine members of the committee endorsed the recommendation advocating increasing the size of the Board of Selectmen and four members of the committee endorsed the recommendation advocating maintaining the size of the Board of Selectmen.

Although each committee member ultimately voted to endorse one or the other recommendation, that endorsement should not be seen as a rejection of the other recommendation. We reached differing conclusions but we all participated in the process of making these recommendations as persuasive as possible. And we all see considerable merit in the arguments on both sides of the question. In that positive spirit, we offer these recommendations to our fellow Town Meeting members, to Town leaders, and to all other Belmont residents.

The Case for Maintaining the Size of the Board

Recommendation: Maintain the Size of the Board

After completing the study and weighing the issues, some members of the committee believe that the Town of Belmont should keep the Board of Selectmen at three members. From these individuals' perspective, the Board of Selectmen has served the Town effectively for decades. Making such a large change in Town governance is not without risk, and the Town should be careful of "the grass is always greener" mindset. Furthermore, there are just too many important capital projects facing Belmont for it to contemplate making such a significant change in governance. We should not "fix" what isn't broken.

Belmont has always valued transparency in Town governance. One argument in favor of more Selectmen is to allow members to discuss policy matters in private, without a quorum. This goes against the spirit of the Open Meeting Law, which requires that deliberations be transparent and open to the public. Factions and back room dealings could develop—factions that may work against reaching consensus. Selectmen meetings may become less efficient and reasonable in length. As for the argument of easing the workload with more Selectmen, a vast majority of past Belmont Selectmen are of the opinion that the workload is not overly burdensome and that the Board should remain at three members.

Limiting the number of members to three increases the likelihood that there will always be enough qualified candidates running, and that the elections will be competitive. Currently, Board elections are competitive, and allow for a thorough vetting of the candidates throughout the election process. With a larger number, an unopposed candidate could be voted into office. This would be a suboptimal outcome since a competitive election allows for a comprehensive assessment of the candidates.

A well-studied dynamic that plagues larger boards and committees is the free-rider problem. By keeping a three-person Board, Belmont benefits from having three highly-engaged, vetted, talented, and dedicated members.

There is also the question of whether increasing the size of the Board would create more diversity on it. Currently, everyone has an equal shot at an election—men and women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. It is not guaranteed that increasing the size of the board would encourage more women and people of diverse backgrounds to run. In the past, Belmont has elected diverse candidates who have served on the Board effectively. Furthermore, we believe that the Board has fairly represented all of Belmont's residents. We also believe that Board members have been adequately available for their constituents.

There are only two towns in our study that recently voted to increase the size of their Board of Selectmen, and that was done in conjunction with or after strengthening the role of their Town Manager or Town Administrator. Contemplating such changes for Belmont's Town Administrator was neither in our charge nor part of this study, so it is hard to envision increasing the size of the Board without offloading more of the day-to-day management responsibilities onto our Town Administrator and making the Board of Selectmen just a policy-making board.

Arguments for Maintaining the Size of the Board

During the work of the committee, we identified the following additional arguments in favor of keeping the current three-member Board of Selectmen.

1. All Board deliberations remain transparent and open to the public
2. Every Selectman is vested in the job
3. Elections would remain competitive
4. Three members are more apt to reach a consensus
5. Meetings are efficient and reasonable in length
6. Current level of authority and accountability would be maintained
7. Salary and benefit costs would not increase
8. Town Administrator communications with individual Selectmen would not increase
9. Belmont has not strengthened the role of the Town Administrator
10. Too much is at stake for a change of this magnitude right now
11. Don't fix what's not broken

1. All Board deliberations remain transparent and open to the public

Belmont has always valued transparency in its Town governance. The requirement for transparency was emphasized during the discussion at Town Meeting that established this committee, and by Belmont residents at the committee's public meeting seeking comments from the Town.

On a three-member Board of Selectman, no two members may discuss any Town matter outside of a public meeting, because two members constitute a quorum and discussion of public business by a quorum is a deliberation that must take place in a public meeting. Were the size of the Board of Selectmen to be increased, such communication would be allowed if the number of Selectmen involved was smaller than a quorum. If Belmont increased the size of the Board of Selectmen to five, two members could discuss a topic or idea in private, if neither of them discussed it with a third member. Some Belmont residents have expressed a strong view that private communication among Board members would defy the spirit of the Open Meeting Law, which requires that deliberations be transparent and open to the public. If Board members could talk to each other in private about Town business, there is the potential for behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing. In addition, factions could develop which would work against reaching a consensus.

Perception can be as important as fact. Even the perception of a problem can be disruptive and divisive. It is only by keeping the size of the Board of Selectman at three that Belmont can maintain the legal restriction that all communication among Board members take place in public. This maintains maximum transparency in Town government for Town residents.

2. Every Selectman is vested in the job

A well-studied dynamic that plagues larger boards and committees is the free-rider problem. By keeping a three-person Board of Selectmen, Belmont has largely benefited from having three

highly-engaged, vetted, talented and dedicated members. Board members generally know the Town and its management very well, often having progressed through committees such as the School, Warrant and Capital Budget Committees. While all Board members must ascend a steep learning curve, limiting the number of members to three sets a heightened bar that increases the likelihood that all members will have a great level of commitment to the job. Membership at three increases the likelihood that members will have the strong background that makes for high performing members of the Board of Selectmen.

Citizens seeking the office appreciate that its limited membership implies a significant level of commitment. Expanding the membership beyond three people invites a new calculus. With a three-member Board, the absence of any member does not negate a quorum but it does impose a requirement of unanimity of the remaining members for any voting and is therefore not done lightly. Being absent from a meeting as a member of a larger Board lacks that mathematical constraint and connotation.

3. Elections would remain competitive

Most towns with a greater number of Selectmen (usually five) typically have an election rotation of two seats/two seats/one seat. Given that Belmont currently fields two candidates for one seat per year, getting three or four candidates to run in a single year to fill two seats could be difficult. This could result in more candidates with potentially little or no experience running unopposed. With a three-member Board of Selectmen, candidates are thoroughly vetted throughout the election season, and residents can gain a comprehensive knowledge of the candidate's views on all Town matters. In addition, candidates are more likely to have more relevant range of experience in Town government, for example, on the Warrant Committee, School Committee, etc. Furthermore, filling just one Selectman seat per year forces candidates to consider concerns of the entire Town. This could be lost on a larger Board, if two seats were open and candidates could more easily cater to specific constituencies. Citizens could vote for only one of the two open seats to give their candidate an edge. The outcome could be Selectmen beholden to particular vocal and active groups rather than the entire community. Furthermore, the difficulty of generating candidates to fill seats on a larger Board may result in less turnover of seats, lessening diversity of thought and fresh ideas.

4. Three members are more apt to reach a consensus

Consensus (that is, unanimous votes) among the current three-member Board of Selectman happens regularly. Expanding the size of the Board would probably result in a greater proportion of split votes and might promote factions that work against consensus. Consensus has considerable benefits compared with a split vote. Reaching consensus engenders the smooth operation of the Board. When everyone is satisfied with the outcome of a discussion, there are no lingering questions and it is less likely that a member will feel the need to reconsider the same issue in the future. A second benefit of consensus is in the signal that it sends to the Town and others about the stability or finality of the decision. A unified decision can signal closure.

5. Meetings are efficient and reasonable in length

Maintaining the current size of the Board of Selectmen would most likely keep the length of Board meetings close to current duration. Increasing the number of Selectmen might increase the meeting lengths and make them less efficient because of the greater number of opinions needing to be expressed, as well as a possible increase in deliberation time in order to build consensus or develop majority opinions. Selectmen bring their own agenda to the position, and (for example) five Selectmen mean five agendas, not three. This could also leave less time for the public to express their views on a matter.

6. Current level of authority and accountability would be maintained

The current three-member Board of Selectmen has clear authority that is concentrated in those three individuals, who are held accountable for the decisions that they make. A larger Board could be expected to spread that authority and accountability among a larger number of individuals. That change could make both the individuals and the Board as a whole weaker. Our current governance structure, where power clearly resides with the Board of Selectmen and citizens know how to engage with them on issues that concern them, could be upset by a shift to a larger and potentially weaker Board. If that happens, citizen engagement with Town government might be expected to decrease.

7. Salary and benefit costs would not increase

If the size of the Board of Selectmen was increased, the cost of additional salaries and benefits to the Town could be significant. In particular, health care benefits are required to be made available to Board members according to the Town of Belmont's HR Director. Although very few Selectmen have taken advantage of health care benefits in the past, increasing the size of the Board could attract candidates who may elect to accept such benefits. Some citizens could be enticed to run for a Selectman seat because a larger Board increases their likelihood of election and by the opportunity for health care benefits, particularly as the cost of health care continues to rise.

8. Town Administrator communications with individual Selectmen would not increase

Communication between the Town Administrator in Belmont and the Board of Selectmen is critical. The Town Administrator needs to brief Selectmen in advance of meetings or when an emergency arises. Currently, the Town Administrator needs to brief Selectmen individually under the Open Meeting Law. At most, the Town Administrator could brief two Selectmen at the same time under a larger Board, but most Selectmen prefer to be briefed individually in order to freely bounce issues off of the Town Administrator. If Belmont were to increase the number of Selectmen, it would significantly add to the time the Town Administrator has to spend on this task. Given all of the other responsibilities placed on the Town Administrator, this is not a particularly efficient use of his/her time.

9. Belmont has not strengthened the role of the Town Administrator

There are only two towns in our study that have recently voted to increase the size of their Board of Selectmen, and those changes were all done in conjunction with or after the towns strengthened the role of their Town Manager or Town Administrator. It is hard to envision increasing the size of the Board without changing the responsibilities of our Town Administrator. A larger Board should operate more like a Board of Directors and less like executives of the town. This would require a stronger Town Administrator.

10. Too much is at stake for a change of this magnitude right now

Belmont is facing many important issues right now, involving large capital projects and their associated financing. The Town needs to decide how to replace the high school, the police department building, the public library, and public works facilities. The high school project alone could come with a \$300+ million price tag, which raises fundamental questions about how the Town will finance capital improvements without substantial increases to property taxes. The Town will need to hold a vote on a debt exclusion for the high school by this coming November. With decisions of this kind to be made, and the need for Belmont's political leaders and the public to focus on them, can the Town really afford to divert its attention to a potential change in governance for which the benefits are speculative? This is not the right time for Belmont to consider a large change in its governance.

11. Don't fix what's not broken

The current three-member size of the Board of Selectmen is the historic norm for Belmont. In its present form, the Board has been effectively leading the Town for decades. Belmont has always had highly qualified candidates who are extremely dedicated and perform well when elected to the Board. We surveyed present and former Selectmen in our study, and a vast majority of them were in support of maintaining the status quo. Belmont has rejected the idea of increasing the size of the Board of Selectmen several times in recent memory. Making such a large change in governance is not without risk. Once implemented, it would be hard to change back if problems emerged. It is critical to ask "what is broken" in assessing whether or not to increase the size of the Board of Selectmen.

The Case for Increasing the Size of the Board

Recommendation: Increase the Size of the Board

After more than six months of study and weighing all the issues, a majority of the members of this committee concluded that the Town of Belmont should increase the size of the current Board of Selectmen. The experience of the many other towns with larger Boards, the input from Town residents, and weighing the pros and cons of maintaining the status quo versus expanding the Board, led the majority to conclude that Town governance could be improved by expanding the current Board.

This recommendation is premised on the expectation that a larger body would bring a greater diversity of representation, viewpoints, skills, and experience to the governance of the Town. During the meeting where Town residents shared their views with the committee, some expressed a desire for greater representation of the Town on the Board. For example, to date there have been only three women ever elected to the Belmont Board. A larger body could lead to greater gender, racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and age diversity on the Board. A broader array of ideas and viewpoints could also lead to a more informed and inclusive, deliberative body. A larger Board would also be less likely to be dominated by a single member of the Board. At the same time, a larger body may be more stable given there would be less turnover in any given election cycle. Candidates for election may also perceive an election to a larger Board as less competitive and a campaign as less costly, thereby reducing the barriers to entry in any election cycle.

Of the 13 most comparable towns to Belmont, only two have a three-person Board. Most towns function with a larger Board and typically have the Board operate as a policymaking body that delegates the day-to-day operations of the Town to the Town Administrator or Manager and town committees. Although beyond the charge of the committee, it may be more effective for a larger Board to be coupled with a stronger Town Administrator or Manager. While Belmont need not follow the practices of other towns, the committee also learned through interviews of Selectmen from other towns that a larger Board with a deeper set of skills and experience may ultimately produce operational efficiencies. A larger Board could better share and distribute the workload. For example, a larger Board could delegate more in-depth study of certain issues to members with particular expertise and designate individual Board members to communicate with specific Town committees, as needed. A larger Board could also permit individual members to be more available to their constituents and participate more actively in Town events.

Finally, there is no compelling reason to believe that a larger Board will fail to comply with the Open Meeting Law any more than a smaller Board. The Town currently has many committees that have five or more members and there is no reason to believe they are not complying with the Open Meeting Law.

Arguments for Increasing the Size of the Board

During the work of the committee, we identified the following arguments in favor of increasing the number of Selectmen.

1. Greater stability for Town government in policy, planning, and hiring
2. Increased representation, diversity, and viewpoints
3. Reduced costs of entry, both financial and psychological
4. Less likelihood of one Board member being isolated or dominating the others
5. Potential for wider range of skills and experience on the Board
6. Permits members to use one other member as a sounding board
7. Increased access to the Board of Selectmen for Town residents
8. Increased ability to communicate with Town committees
9. Increased ability to attend external meetings
10. Increased capacity to establish subcommittees
11. Increased ability to accommodate member absences without limiting the Board's effectiveness

1. Greater stability for Town government in policy, planning, and hiring

Stable direction is crucial to effective and successful Town policy-making, planning, and hiring. While many Board decisions are made unanimously, Belmont has certainly seen a number of contentious and split votes in the past. With a three-member Board, every election can mean significant changes to the direction taken by the Board. Any election can flip the balance from 2-1 to 1-2 on an issue, if the seat up for election was held by a member of the 2-person majority.

Larger (typically five-member) Boards of Selectmen are generally held to be more stable. For example, a Board that is split 4-1 on a matter would have to replace two of the four incumbents sharing a position with new members of an opposing viewpoint for a decision on that matter to go the other way.

The increased stability of a larger Board of Selectmen would have many potential benefits for Belmont because:

- Changes in policy can cause confusion and can incur costs for communication and training required to implement the new policy.
- Changes in direction can cause delays and increase costs when projects must be rethought, discarding progress that had been made and requiring that some work to be completed a second time.
- Changes in management can result in potentially arbitrary changes in job responsibilities and work environment, due to differing management styles of departing and new Selectmen. The effects of unstable management are greatest on the Town Administrator, who works directly with the Board of Selectmen, and secondarily on the department heads who must implement the Board's decisions.

- Instability can cause valuable, experienced employees to feel insecure or discouraged and ultimately to leave their positions. The potential for this can even discourage high-quality candidates from applying in the first place. It is to the Town's advantage, when hiring for any positions, to be able to choose from the largest possible pool of qualified applicants.

While stability is often beneficial, sometimes change in direction is necessary. Changes can still happen with a larger Board, if changes are what the voters want. But it is less likely that those changes would be the unintended side effects of election cycles that focused on other matters.

2. Increased representation, diversity, and viewpoints

An increased number of seats on the Board of Selectmen would allow greater opportunity for more diverse representation, which could more accurately reflect the population of Belmont in age, gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions.

Nearly all Belmont Selectmen have been between 50 and 70 years old, with a substantial share of retirees, even though the median age in Belmont is 41 and most residents work. With growing numbers of people under 50 moving into Belmont (as evidenced by the growing student population at the elementary level), more seats on the Board would offer a chance for those in the 20 to 49 age bracket, with or without children, to take on the responsibilities of Selectman. A larger Board would allow for greater sharing of the workload, making it more feasible for those with greatest work and family responsibilities to take on Board duties. In particular, while there are slightly more women than men among Belmont's population (53% to 47%), there have only been three women ever elected as Board members and none since 2004.

Though the majority of Belmont's population is Caucasian (about 81%), there are substantial numbers of Asian (about 14%) and Black and Hispanic (about 5%) residents. Again, an increase of seats on the Board would present opportunities to diversify the Board's makeup by race and ethnicity.

Belmont has a substantial renter population—approximately 37%. While some renters are more transient, there are also long-time renters who are committed to staying in Belmont and who participate in Town government in various ways. Increasing the seats on the Board would open opportunities for renters to run for this office.

Along with age, gender and ethnic diversity, expanding the number of seats would provide increased opportunity for greater socio-economic diversity on the Board. If it were less costly to run a campaign and the work burden was shared to a greater extent, it might be more likely that individuals who are not in the median income bracket of slightly less than \$111,000 would run for the seat.

** Sources of data: American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2012-2016; also US Decennial Census. <https://factfinder.census.gov>

3. Reduced costs of entry, both financial and psychological

With a larger Board of Selectmen, Belmont residents might expect there would be greater flexibility, in terms of managing the workload demands on any individual member of the Board. With lower time requirements, more Town residents would be able to balance the time commitment of the Board with the demands of their regular job, family, or other responsibilities. This would permit a wider range of residents to consider running for the position.

Although it is desirable to have complete attendance at meetings, a larger Board would reduce the impact if an individual member was absent from a Board meeting. A larger Board would also reduce the number of other committee meetings to attend.

Having more Board positions might also lead to less costly—and perhaps less competitive—campaigns. Therefore, more Town residents might be inclined to pursue election, as they might perceive some races would not be as competitive and their chances for election would thus be better.

4. Less likelihood of one Board member being isolated or dominating the others

With a larger Board of Selectmen, there would be less chance of significant divisions, as the path to a majority can be less contentious with more members. Alliances can be more flexible; someone who digs in her/his heels or remains unbendable on issue after issue might find former allies joining with other colleagues instead. We heard from some towns with five Selectmen that often members will agree to disagree and move on, not getting stuck on an issue.

In interviews with Selectmen from Belmont and other towns, it was also noted that the potential for greater division with three Selectmen has resulted in extra demands on the Town Manager or Administrator to respond to the requests of Selectmen with conflicting views.

With a larger Board, there is also less chance for one member to dominate. On a three-person Board, one strong member can shape direction on issue after issue, especially if he/she has a reliable ally.

5. Potential for wider range of skills and experience on the Board

A Board of Selectmen with more than three positions offers the chance to attract members with a wider range of skills and experience, thus improving the range and mix on the Board. Belmont has had Selectmen with expertise in various fields, notably finance (accounting or banking), utilities and public works, law, and labor relations. But rarely does it have Selectmen whose skills and experience span the wider set of Town functions, and the mix is not necessarily varied on each specific three-person Board.

As an example, the transition from three to five Selectmen gave Hanover (the only town with a recent increase in number of Selectmen) a Board consisting of two members in high tech, two business owners, and a lawyer. This Board was more varied in skills and experience than previous ones.

Further, many members of the prior Board were retirees (as in Belmont), but Hanover's expanded Board has been able to accommodate the travel schedules of people still in the work world.

6. Permits members to use one other member as a sounding board

Under the Open Meeting Law, a Board of Selectmen of five (or more) members would permit each member of the Board to discuss Board issues with one other member outside of a public meeting. This cannot happen with a three-member Board, where two members are a quorum; under the Open Meeting Law, discussion of public business by a quorum is a "deliberation" that must take place in an open, posted meeting. With a Board of five or more members, two members do not constitute a quorum and therefore may discuss public business with each other, so long as neither of them also discusses this business with a third member.

Discussing challenging issues with one other member might well help Board members to consider questions more deeply and develop their thoughts synergistically. As one former Selectman observed, "People learn from discussion but not every discussion needs TV time. The discussions today are usually not very deep because there is a political theater in operation when the cameras are rolling." Instead, after discussion with one other member, Selectmen on a larger Board could arrive at public meetings with both greater understanding and more ideas on how to approach or resolve those issues. This could make the Board's discussions in public meetings clearer and more to-the-point, with sounder outcomes as a result.

7. Increased access to the Board of Selectmen for Town residents

An increase in the size of the Board could increase access to the Board for Belmont residents in several ways. More residents might be acquainted with or have a personal connection to one of the Selectmen, or feel they shared similar views on a particular issue. Adding members to the Board could also increase the potential for interaction between members of the Board and Town residents by expanding the availability of Selectman office hours.

8. Increased ability to communicate with Town committees

The committee heard from a number of other Belmont committees that they feel the lack of a formal connection—and in some cases a lack of access—to the Board of Selectmen. Some have liaisons from the Board, but many do not. Even those with liaisons may not have an actual working relationship with the liaison. With five or more Selectmen, it would be feasible to establish a practice of each committee having a designated member of the Board as liaison. The liaison would be the point of contact for the committee with the Board, the conduit for channeling questions and reporting on the committee's work. This would permit more communication and involvement, without requiring Selectmen to attend meetings.

9. Increased ability to attend external meetings

If the number of Selectmen were increased, the Board would be more able to send representatives to external meetings of importance to Belmont. Meetings of bodies such as the MBTA Advisory Board, the Minuteman School Committee, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the MWRA Advisory

Board, and the Logan Airport Community Advisory Board would benefit from the attendance of a Belmont Selectman; the Town would benefit from more consistent participation in these deliberations. In addition, increasing the size of the Board would allow up to two Selectmen to attend external meetings without forming a quorum. This could result in a better understanding of issues of particular importance to Belmont.

10. Increased capacity to establish subcommittees

Sometimes it makes sense to conduct some of the Selectmen's work by subcommittees. This may be because members' skills, backgrounds, and interests may apply to matters under consideration, or due to the complexity of an issue requiring Board action.

Any public body can delegate some of its work to individual members or to subcommittees. But it cannot delegate decision-making: the full body must vote. The current Board, because of its three-person membership, can form three different two-person subcommittees, with all subcommittee meetings governed by the Open Meeting Law.

A larger Board of Selectmen would have increased capacity, both in numbers and in time, to work within subcommittees. Subcommittees established by a larger Board—just like any established by the current Board—would still be required to conduct open, posted meetings under the Open Meeting Law, even those that are smaller than a quorum. The ability to work in subcommittees has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of Belmont's Board of Selectmen, including the attention it devotes to all aspects of Town governance.

11. Increased ability to accommodate member absences without limiting the Board's effectiveness

With a greater number of seats on the Board of Selectmen, member absences would have a lesser impact than with the current three-member Board. While it is possible at present to achieve a quorum with only two members in attendance—and it is legal to take binding votes on matters with only two present—having more Board members would reduce the impact if one or even two members could not attend a particular meeting. In such an event, having matters discussed among just three or four members would still provide for greater input and representation of thought than with just two members of a smaller Board.

Additional Observations

The charge to the committee was limited to making recommendations on the number of Selectmen. However, during our work we have made additional observations about the governance of Belmont and we think Town Meeting members and Town leaders would benefit from these observations.

Selectmen as a Policy-Making Board

During our research on other towns, our committee learned that most Boards of Selectmen regarded their role as making policy. As products of elections, where candidates were required to articulate their policies on important issues, Board members work together to debate and define the policy positions of the voters and Town Meeting Members. In their capacity as policy-makers, Board members do not participate directly in the administration or management of the Town – a task assigned to the Town Administrator or Manager and department heads. Having Selectmen who maintain the role of policy-makers is reported to be essential to the morale of professional administrators and department heads. Selectmen as policy-makers can devote substantial attention to listening to constituents about these policies. Finally, they can follow up on all tasks delegated to administrators to ensure that their policy objectives have been met.

Role of Town Administrator or Manager

During the past fifty years, many neighboring towns have passed town charters that called for “Selectmen-Manager” forms of government. The essential element in these charters is the designation of a strong Town Manager who acts as the chief executive officer of the town. The charter specifically identifies the authority of the Town Manager. It includes substantial appointing authority, giving him/her the ability to hire and fire department heads. In some cases, this extends to hiring the general manager of the municipal electric system. The authority of the manager enables her/him to implement the policies adopted by Town Meeting, which are then translated into more specific policy direction by the Board of Selectmen. The manager is accountable to the Selectmen who evaluate the administrative results achieved by the manager.

Belmont, in contrast, has never had a strong Town Administrator or Manager. Until 1993, the only administrative support to the Selectmen was an Executive Secretary. The Bylaws of 1993 added a Town Administrator position, but made it clear that the Town Administrator “shall act by and for the Selectmen in any manner which they may assign to him or her relating to the administration of the affairs of the Town, . . . and, with the approval of the Selectmen, may perform such other duties as may be requested of him or her by any other Town officer, board, committee, or commission.” This is a step up from an Executive Secretary, but there is no language in the bylaws that authorizes independent action or appointing authority. Committees created to review government structure (most recently in 2009) have tried without success to increase the role and authority of the Town Administrator, because Town Meeting has not adopted that recommendation.

Impact of Salaries and Benefits

Currently members of the Belmont Board of Selectmen receive stipends in the amount of \$5,000 for the chair, \$4,500 for other two members; compensation levels have not increased since 2008. All members are eligible to receive benefits through participation in the Town's health insurance plan, though year-over-year participation fluctuates.

According to Belmont's Human Resources office benefits costs to the Town, for the past 10 years have been \$116,000 in total. The current annual cost for the health insurance plan is \$6,294.68 for an individual, \$17,054.21 for a family; dental coverage is not included and is paid for solely by the subscriber.

In reviewing the salary and benefits costs to the 13 comparable towns studied, the committee observed the following:

- Nine of the 13 towns do not provide benefits or are in the process of phasing them out.
- Of the 4 other communities that provide compensation, Belmont's \$5,000/\$4,500 is considerably more than the other towns. (Acton= \$300/\$200, Hingham = \$2,500/\$2,000; Marblehead = \$1,500/\$1,000; Marshfield= \$1,229/\$1,094)
- Only one of the towns providing compensation offers benefits as well (Hingham). It is unclear if the other towns do not offer benefits or if benefits are just not used by the Board members.
- Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 32B governs municipal insurance benefits and states that any employee receiving compensation (including those elected by popular vote) is eligible for benefits. If Belmont does take the step of removing compensation to the Board members, then it would no longer be obligated to provide access to benefits, according to the Belmont HR Director.
- Instead of individual salaries, Belmont could choose to provide a "pool" of funds for Board members to use for professional development, membership in organizations such as Massachusetts Selectmen's Association/Massachusetts Municipal Association, attending conferences or subscriptions to publications.

Options for a Larger Board of Selectmen

In the part of our report that recommends a larger number of Selectmen, no specific number is given. While increasing the number of Selectmen to five might appear obvious to most, because it is the common practice of comparable towns, we declined to specifically recommend that we expand to a five-member Board. It is our hope that anyone who considers placing an article on the Belmont Town Meeting warrant will consider the full set of options (described below) before proposing a specific number. There are valid reasons to propose increasing the Board to five, six, seven, or an even larger number.

Five Members

With one exception, all towns in Massachusetts have either three or five Selectmen, so it may seem obvious that a larger number of Selectmen should automatically mean five. The fact that five Selectmen is an extremely common practice is a powerful argument for following that convention. But there are downsides to five, too. Notably, it likely forces an election cycle where different numbers of Selectmen are elected in different years—one member elected every three years and two elected in the other two years. Still, most towns that have five-member Boards seem content with that number, and it would be reasonable for us to follow their lead if we were to increase the size of our Board of Selectmen.

Six Members

Moving to a six-member Board of Selectmen would be a highly unconventional decision. But this model would provide a balanced election cycle—two members elected every year. And it follows the example of Belmont's School Committee and Library Board of Trustees, both of which function effectively with six members. At the same time, no town in Massachusetts has six Selectmen and the prospect of 3-3 tie votes is not appealing. A six-member Board of Selectmen would be a fascinating exercise in seeing whether there is merit in an untried idea, but do we really want to experiment on ourselves in this way?

Seven Members

Wakefield is the only town in Massachusetts with a seven-member Board of Selectmen. This number may amplify many of the advantages of five, providing more opportunities for the Board to be broadly representative of the Town and dividing up the work. At the same time, it may also amplify many of the disadvantages of five. For example, it could increase the challenge of finding qualified people to serve. And it would also result in a different kind of unbalanced election cycle—three members elected every three years and two elected in the other two years. More than doubling the number of Selectmen would be a huge shift, and the advantages over five are not clear.

More Than Seven Members

Some have suggested increasing the number of Selectmen beyond seven. Because Belmont has eight precincts, electing one Selectman to represent each precinct would result in an eight-member Board. Adding one at-large member to make nine would avoid tie votes. This would provide optimal geographic balance, but could result in a huge change in Belmont political culture. The Selectmen have long understood themselves to be each representing the entire Town and moving to precinct representation could change that, with unforeseen consequences. This may be another case of an interesting experiment—one that might be intriguing to consider but would need to be studied closely.

Options for Implementation

If a decision was made to increase the number of Selectmen, the adoption process could be lengthy. Then the process for implementation would vary depending on the new size of the Board. No matter the new number, the implementation process should expand to the new size in one election cycle and should result in a set of terms that overlap no more than necessary. In other words, the newly elected seats would need to be staggered somewhat to avoid too many seats expiring in the same year.

To visualize how implementation might work, these two examples illustrate transitions from a three-member Board to a five-member Board and to a six-member Board.

Implementing a Five-Member Board of Selectmen

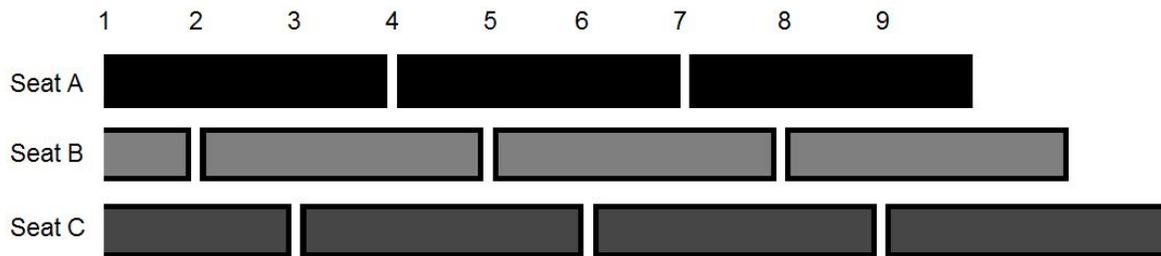
Almost all towns with five Selectmen that we researched use three-year terms and a three-year election cycle in which two Selectmen are elected in two years and one Selectman is elected in the third year. This 2-2-1 method is not the only possible way to elect a five-member Board of Selectmen, but it is the only method widely used in Massachusetts.

If we were to adopt a 2-2-1 election method with a five-member Board, how could we transition from the current three-member Board to a 2-2-1 five-member Board? That transition could be done in a single election cycle in which three Selectmen would be elected in the same year. One of these three seats would be the three-year seat of the incumbent whose term is up for re-election. Meanwhile, two new seats would be added to bring the Board to five members.

These two new seats would need to be elected to initial terms of contrasting length—they could not both be elected to one-, two-, or three-year terms. This is because electing them to matching terms would result in three Selectmen being up for re-election in the year the two new terms expire. To avoid this situation, there are three options for these two new seats: one three-year term and one two-year term, one three-year term and one one-year term, or one two-year term and one one-year term. These terms of differing length could either be elected separately on the same ballot (separate votes for seats that are less than three years) or elected together (where top vote-getters get three-year seats and lesser vote-getters get shorter terms).

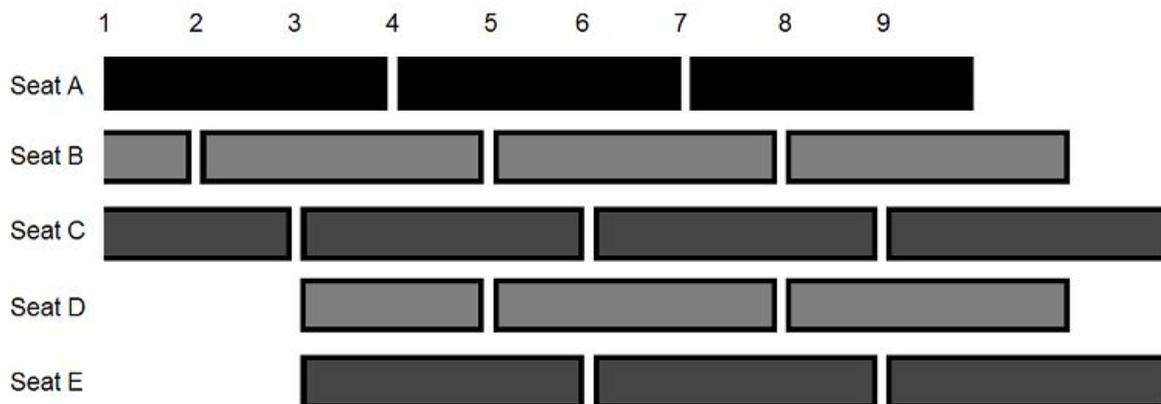
Of these three options, the first might be most desirable, because it is the only option that avoids electing a Selectman to a one-year term, which is a very short term for such a demanding position. After that transition election, the elections would follow the regular three-year cycle of electing two, two, and one Selectman, all to three-year terms—with the year we elect just one Selectman determined by which option we choose for the two new seats.

The image below shows our current system of electing three Selectmen.



In this example, Seat A is elected in years 1, 4, and 7; Seat B is elected in years 2, 5, and 8; and Seat C is elected in years 3, 6, and 9.

The next image shows one possible implementation of a transition from three to five members. In this example, the Board of Selectmen is expanded in year 3. In that year, Seat C is already up for election. Seat D is added with an initial two-year term and Seat E is added with an initial three-year term. After the transition, years 4 and 7 will see the election of only Seat A. In years 5 and 8, Seats B and D will be elected. And in years 6 and 9, Seats C and E will be elected.



It's worth noting that an intriguing alternative election method would involve electing one Selectman to a three-year term and one Selectman to a two-year term each year. These two positions could be elected in separate elections, or they could be elected in a single election in which the top vote-getter would get the three-year term and the second place finisher would get the two-year term. This method would allow the same five-member Board of Selectmen election procedure every year indefinitely. However, we have not identified any municipality that uses this election method for any governmental body and that fact makes us reluctant to recommend it.

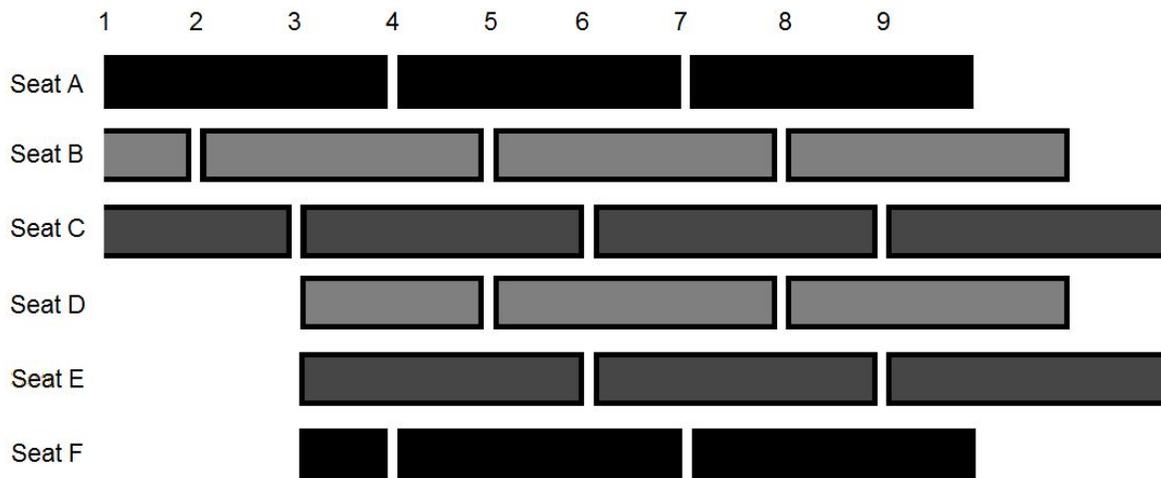
Implementing a Six-Member Board of Selectmen

Although no Massachusetts town has a six-member Board of Selectmen, two other elected Belmont boards, the School Committee and the Library Board of Trustees, have six members. In these boards,

two members are elected each year to three-year terms. If a six-member Board of Selectmen were to follow the same pattern, the result would be a 2-2-2 election cycle. Once implemented fully, it would result in two members being elected each year.

The transition to a six-member Board could be accomplished in a single election cycle in which four Selectmen are elected. As in the case of an expansion to a five-member Board, some seats would need to be elected to initial terms of varying lengths. In this case, two of the three new seats would need to be elected to initial terms of less than the normal full three-year term.

The next image shows a logical implementation of such a transition for a six-member Board of Selectmen with a 2-2-2 election cycle.



In this example, the Board of Selectmen is expanded from three to six members in year 3 (the same as the option discussed for a five-member Board, above). In that year, seat C already is up for reelection. Seat D is added with an initial two-year term, Seat E is added with an initial three-year term, and Seat F is added with an initial one-year term. After this first year, seat F will be elected in year 4 to a three-year term. In each subsequent year, two seats will be elected each year to a three-year term. For example:

- In years 5 and 8, seats B and D will be elected.
- In years 6 and 9, seats C and E will be elected.
- In years 7 and 10, seats A and F will be elected.

More than two candidates could run for the two open seats each year. If this were to happen, the top two vote getters in each election could be awarded the seats, as is currently the case for the School Committee and the Library Board of Trustees.

Appendices

The appendices of this report contain valuable and instructive resources that the committee used in its work. This data provides essential background information that will be useful to Town Meeting members wanting to learn more about this topic. To limit the size of the report, we have posted the appendices in a separate document on the Town of Belmont website at http://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/belmontma/files/uploads/csns_final_report_jan_30_2018_appendices.pdf. We urge you to read this material.

The following appendices of this report are available at the link above:

- Appendix A: Data on Towns Comparable to Belmont
- Appendix B: Responses from Current and Former Selectmen
- Appendix C: Comments from Town Residents
- Appendix D: Responses from Department Heads and Committee Chairs
- Appendix E: Interview with Former Belmont Town Administrator Mel Kleckner
- Appendix F: Committee Membership & Meeting Schedule