



Town of Scituate

Review of Organizational Structure and Budget Process

Division of Local Services / Technical Assistance Section

June 2014



June 11, 2014

Board of Selectmen
600 Chief Justice Cushing Highway
Scituate, MA 02066

Dear Members of the Board:

Please find attached a review of the organizational structure and budget process in the Town of Scituate completed by members of the Division of Local Services' (DLS) Technical Assistance Section. It is our hope that the information presented in this report will further assist the town as officials seek to address areas of concern and improve operations.

As a routine practice, a copy of the report has been forwarded to the town's state senator and representatives and a copy will be posted to the DLS website.

If you have any questions or comments regarding our findings and recommendations, please feel free to contact Rick Kingsley, Bureau Chief of the DLS Municipal Data Management and Technical Assistance Bureau at 617-626-2376 or at kingsleyf@dor.state.ma.us.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Nunes
Deputy Commissioner &
Director of Municipal Affairs

cc: Senator Robert L. Hedlund
Representative Garrett J. Bradley
Representative James M. Cantwell

INTRODUCTION

The DLS Technical Assistance Section initiated this review of the Town of Scituate government structure and its annual budget process at the request of the board of selectmen.

During the course of completing this report, the DLS team interviewed selectmen in person and by telephone, and met with the town administrator, finance director, advisory committee chair and 14 department heads as a group. We reviewed, as well, the town charter, bylaws and organizational chart, special acts, general laws accepted by the town and data that resides in the DLS Municipal Data Bank.

This report presents our observations and conclusions on action the town can take to address the issues cited and to improve operations. We discuss opportunities within the existing structure to shift certain responsibilities and tasks from the town administrator to others. We believe they are worth pursuing. At the same time, we view the creation of an assistant town administrator position as the strongest option for a town with the population, budget and range of issues that perennially confront Scituate.

OVERVIEW

Scituate is a town of 31.8 square miles with a population of approximately 18,150 people, which doubles in the summer due to a location on the Massachusetts South Shore. The town has the characteristics of a bedroom community as 88.3 percent of all town property parcels are classified as residential and 95.5 percent of the town's total assessed value is attributed to residential properties. In common categories of comparison among cities and towns, Scituate also ranks high as illustrated in the chart below.

	State Avg (\$)	Scituate (\$)	Rank	In top
Avg single family assessed value	355,607	480,342	54	15%
Avg single family tax bill	5,025	6,268	65	19%
Income per capita	35,206	47,824	57	16%
Equalized Valuation per capita	146,805	227,695	63	18%

Town meeting approved a FY2015 operating budget of \$72 million, including expenditures in five enterprise funds, and authorized \$3.5 million in capital spending. Certified free cash has steadily increased from negative \$189,322 in FY2009 to \$2.8 million in FY2014, while the general stabilization fund balance has consistently remained in excess of \$2 million over the same period. By FY2014, these combined reserve levels grew to 6.5 percent of the town's budget and have helped the town earn a bond rating upgrade to AA from Standard & Poor's and maintain its Aa2 bond rating from Moody's.

The town experienced a transition in FY2010, when the long-standing town administrator departed and the current administrator began her tenure. Since then, she has brought on a new accountant, who is also a finance director by title, and a new treasurer/collector. She successfully advocated for a technology director, who has fulfilled an essential role and, as a result, internal computer-related functions are described as more streamlined, efficient and secure. With a view toward further upgrades, town meeting recently appropriated \$400,000 in its capital budget to fund the purchase of an integrated financial management software package.

The town administrator successfully advocated for a public facilities director position to oversee the town's 55 municipal buildings and implement the public facilities master plan. Parts of the plan that involve the public library renovation and expansion, a new public safety complex and new middle school have already moved forward. The overall plan could lead to the relocation of town hall to a larger school building together with a senior center and recreation facility.

The town administrator has proposed and gained support for a coastal resources officer position. Anticipating that the occurrence of severe storms will continue into the future, a coastal resources officer would take on the significant post-storm administrative workload necessary to ensure that the town receives the cost reimbursements from state and federal emergency agencies that it is entitled to. The money is significant as town meetings in November 2013 and April 2014 appropriated almost \$1.5 million to cover costs associated with emergency response to and recovery from five storms this past winter.

The town administrator has been instrumental in re-activating a capital planning program and now works with a capital planning committee on developing annual expenditure requests and a long term plan. In addition to \$3.5 million in FY2015 capital projects and purchases, and the public facilities master plan investment, town meeting appropriated \$22 million to fund a three-year, 6.3 mile water main replacement project. The town has also completed wind and solar projects that now generate more electricity than municipal government uses.

At the operations level, the town administrator has directed municipal government with a management style that is far more hands-on than her predecessor. By all accounts, she is routinely involved in the business of town departments.

The charter identifies the town administrator as the chief administrative officer of the town. She is responsible and accountable to the board of selectmen "for the efficient and orderly conduct of the departments, offices, and functions" placed in her charge by the charter. She is assigned broad appointing authority by the charter and by the selectmen. She is the town personnel director, purchasing agent and procurement officer. She negotiates collective bargaining agreements. Otherwise, the charter imposes duties and responsibilities relative to reporting to the

selectmen, keeping records, overseeing public property and performing whatever other tasks the selectmen request.

The town administrator is also responsible for preparing the annual operating and capital budgets. She initiated and consistently follows a well thought out budget process, which includes involvement of department heads and reviews by the board of selectmen and advisory committee. Under the charter, however, all are under tight deadlines to complete their part and advance the budget process. The administrator submits her proposal to the selectmen, who review and return the budget to her. After incorporating any changes, the town administrator must submit the proposal to the advisory committee at least 90 days prior to town meeting (Bylaw Section 21020). From that point to 14 days before town meeting, the advisory committee and board of selectmen must meet jointly to conduct one or more public hearings on the proposed budget.

Because town meeting is called for the second Monday in April (the 14th in 2014 - the latest it can occur), the town administrator must complete her analyses and reach conclusions in early January. The selectmen have deadlines as well. They must submit all other articles to the advisory board at least 60 days prior to the publication of notice for town meeting (early February).

The board of selectmen is responsible for “the preparation and annual revision of the capital planning program,” which they are directed to base on the recommendations and five year capital plan developed by the seven-member capital planning committee. However, the capital planning process had been dormant until three years ago when it was revitalized by the town administrator. Now, she works with departments to prioritize submissions and acts on behalf of the selectmen in developing the final recommendation. The proposed capital plan must be submitted to the advisory committee at least five months prior to town meeting (around mid-November).

CONCLUSION

The Town of Scituate can cite many accomplishments and much progress toward goals in the five years since the town administrator arrived. We understand too that many engaged town officials and capable department heads were major contributors to the successes, but it is universally acknowledged that the town administrator has been a driving force throughout. She is credited for the amount of time, energy and intelligence she devotes to the Town of Scituate.

However, although the town administrator genuinely compliments town personnel as motivated and highly competent, there is concern that she does not, as a rule, delegate tasks to department heads or encourage them to make meaningful decisions without her involvement. The observation of many is that the town administrator’s management style causes her to retain too much on her table. All, including the town administrator, agree that the resulting workload

hinders her accessibility; often times delays decisions affecting departments; and takes a toll on her personally.

It is also apparent to us that at the time the town administrator took office, Scituate needed a person to take stronger control of municipal government if the community's agenda were to move forward. With that mandate, the town administrator has brought about significant changes in the operation of government and in the culture at town hall. Looking ahead, we do not advocate laissez-faire leadership, but we are also not certain that managing the town requires the same sense of urgency or control as in the past. Of greater concern, as expressed by many, is that the current dynamic is not sustainable. We view it as potentially counterproductive as well.

In the narrative that follows, we comment on the potential role of an assistant town administrator, a human resources director and the merits of formally organizing town departments into divisions with assigned division heads. Each of these options carries a cost and would require the approval of town meeting. When considering these alternatives, we also found it noteworthy that in an informal survey of 24 towns similar in size and tax bills to Scituate, 16 had an assistant town manager/town administrator or a human resources director. In three towns, the assistant handled human resources. For this and other reasons, we regard an assistant town administrator as the strongest, most flexible option for the town.

We also recommend taking steps that involve no cost. The town administrator can, on her own, arrange meetings with department heads in groups, or informal divisions with no division heads. This would effectively reduce the number of direct reports to her. Simultaneously, she can shift certain time consuming tasks to the finance director and other department heads. In fact, she has already introduced changes in the areas we discuss.

Lastly, we comment on the role the board of selectmen, town administrator and department heads play in the successful implementation of the options presented; and, we make recommendations relative to the budget process and a charter review.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The Town of Scituate operates under an open town meeting / board of selectmen / town administrator form of government, which took shape with the adoption of a Home Rule charter in 1972. Subsequent amendments were approved in 1978 and 1997, but it has been more than ten years (2003) since the charter was last revised.

While the charter and bylaws parse out appointing authority to the board of selectmen and the town administrator, in practice, the selectmen have informally delegated their power to appoint town officers to the town administrator. The board retains, however, in every case its power to

reject a town administrator appointment or waive its right to do so within 15 days. Under the charter, the town administrator supervises all positions she appoints.

The core issue that arises from the charter is an organizational structure where 23 department heads report directly to the town administrator. (See town organizational chart in Appendix A). The town administrator and department heads are in agreement that when staff need time with her, a schedule logjam or an immediate priority often does not allow it. Unless addressed, in part by changes in the structure of municipal government, we see this as a problem that will persist.

In this context, we offer recommendations that provide options for the board of selectmen and the town administrator.

1) Finance Department

The current town accountant was also hired as finance director, but does not yet fully function in that capacity. There is an expectation that she will over time. We recommend that the transition take place sooner rather than later and, further, that a finance department be formally created, which she would manage.

The advantages of taking this action are three-fold. First, the finance director would oversee the treasury, collections, assessing and accounting functions, including payroll and procurement. Those department heads would then report to the finance director, reducing the direct reports to the town administrator. Second, a fully engaged finance director can take on finance-related tasks that currently, and perhaps unnecessarily, consume the town administrator's time and she can manage special projects that the town administrator cannot get to. This shift has already started to happen. Third, the framework is already in place to implement this change. The town has a natural division head, i.e. the finance director, and the charter (Section 5-1(b)) allows town meeting to approve a departmental reorganization plan recommended by the selectmen and town administrator. (See Appendix B)

2) Assistant Town Administrator Position

A decision to create an assistant administrator position often reflects a conclusion that municipal operations have expanded in scope to the extent that professional support for the town administrator is justified. We believe this is the case in Scituate. The workload carried by the town administrator is a product of her management style and the way town government is organized. It is compounded by the town's exposure as an ocean-side community and pressured by the choices of prior generations of residents to defer needed capital improvements.

The role of an assistant town administrator can vary from town to town. In Scituate, he or she would be best utilized in a way that addresses issues and relieves pressure imposed by the town's organizational structure. As such, some or all departments might directly report to the assistant administrator. If informal divisions (no assigned division heads) are formed, department heads might meet and report to him or her instead of the town administrator. This type of buffer worked effectively in the aftermath of a storm when seven department heads, for a short period, reported directly to the interim director of public works rather than to the town administrator.

Other specific responsibilities might be assigned to the assistant town administrator as well, e.g., human resources administration, special projects oversight. Some towns have an assistant town administrator for finance, but in Scituate finance related matters and departments would remain within the finance director's jurisdiction.

We would expect the compensation for a full-time assistant administrator to approximate the cumulative pay increases that might be granted to several division heads (see discussion below). It is unlikely that additional support staff would be needed with the appointment of an assistant town administrator, but office space would have to be addressed.

3) Human Resources Director

The town administrator devotes an inordinate portion of her time to human resource (HR) matters, which are becoming increasingly important in towns. In particular, negotiating union contracts has been demanding and she has, by necessity, taken a larger role in the significant volume of hiring that has occurred in recent years. It helps that the town administrator has an HR background, but this expertise does not have the effect of lessening the workload.

A human resources director can assist the town administrator with many HR issues as well as take primary responsibility for more day-to-day personnel functions. Those might include a role in benefits administration, employee relations, union grievances, worker's compensation and unemployment compensation programs, employee recruitment and training, etc. An HR director can contribute to the development of personnel policies and an employee handbook. He or she can ensure that job descriptions, classification plans and salary schedules are up-to-date.

In the context of this report, creating a HR director position is an option for further redistributing the workload of the town administrator. However, by comparison, we view the addition of an assistant town administrator position as a more far reaching investment.

4) Informal Department Groupings

The town administrator calls periodic department head meetings, which include a large number of managers and primarily general topics. She meets regularly with the department of public works director and police chief, but her schedule does not allow sufficient time to meet with every department head, when more specific issues can be discussed.

As a middle ground option, we recommend that the town administrator regularly meet with groups of department heads whose functional areas have a logical connection. This approach does not reduce the number of direct reports to the town administrator, but it provides a more efficient communication model. It is our understanding also that the town administrator has begun moving in this direction.

Division meetings will frequently prompt discussion on matters of common interest and concern; they inspire new ideas; they encourage collaboration on major projects or initiatives that cross into multiple departments; and, for both the town administrator and the department heads, division meetings will enhance overall communication and trust.

Division meetings work well in other towns and, in Scituate, there is a precedent for the approach in the town bylaw. Section 20120 directs that the advisory committee arrange the annual town meeting warrant articles under the following headings:

- 1) Elections and Reports
- 2) Fiscal (Operational-General)
- 3) Public Safety (Police, Fire, Health, Water and Sewage)
- 4) Education (School, Libraries)
- 5) Public Works (Highway, Parks, Waterfront)
- 6) Town Planning (Zoning, Building Codes, etc.)
- 7) General

The groupings for warrant articles may not make the most sense for town governance purposes, but they represent a starting point for determining alignments. We recommend the town administrator work with department heads with a goal of defining each division or group and setting fixed times to meet at least once a month. Needless to say, meetings would occur more often if particular events or circumstances so warrant. If the system is to work, however, honoring the regular meetings must be a priority for all.

5) Formal Divisions of Government with Division Heads

Reorganizing municipal departments into divisions, with assigned division heads, is a more formal and dramatic structural change that requires town meeting approval. Under this configuration, department managers would meet with a designated division head, who would report directly to the town administrator.

In addition to the benefits cited earlier, the presence of division heads could advance more timely and efficient decision-making at the departmental level. There is also value when the town administrator can focus more closely on the larger issues that impact the town.

There is a cost associated with this change in structure. We would envision that a current department manager, rather than a new hire, would assume the dual role of a division head, of which there might be four or five. In each instance, he or she would receive an increase in compensation for taking on greater responsibilities. Whether a dollar amount or a percent of salary, the increase is usually applied consistently to all division heads.

There are drawbacks. Department heads may not react well to reporting to a division head - an elevated co-worker - whose area of expertise lies elsewhere. They may question the value of denying them access to the town administrator, even if it is now very little. The town administrator may feel uncomfortable being more detached from daily operations than in the past.

On balance, we support the concept of divisions, but view the drawbacks associated with assigning division heads as very real obstacles. While we are aware of municipal operations where departments are organized into divisions, we can cite none where division heads are appointed.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

The town administrator's duties and responsibilities are enumerated in the charter and are not beyond the scope of job descriptions commonly seen in other communities. An assistant to the town administrator provides meaningful support. However, it appears that the town administrator has taken on tasks that her counterparts might delegate or track in a different way. In fairness, the town administrator has taken a strong role in decision making and inserted herself into wide ranging areas of activity by necessity. The town was operating in deficit and many procedures were loosely followed.

Among other tasks, the town administrator signs all procurement contracts; she approves online content before it is posted to the town website; she rewrites job descriptions when vacancies occur; she writes all requests for proposals; she initiated a strict employee performance review process, which demands that department heads annually identify five new goals with three

objectives each; she personally takes on special projects and financial analyses. She has taken a strong role in the process to fill vacant positions. Up until recently, she reviewed and approved all purchase order (PO) requisitions before they are forwarded to the accountant. In general, she communicates frequently with department heads on a daily basis, typically by email.

Given the town's progress in the last five years and the town administrator's role in those accomplishments, it is evident that her management style has produced results. In important respects, the town has achieved some continuity and stability, but major issues still lie ahead. The time may be appropriate for the town administrator to pull back somewhat, delegate more and allow department heads greater freedom to manage their operations. She can then redirect her energies toward more global, long range concerns. More importantly, she can strive to establish a healthier, more sustainable pace for herself and for municipal government overall.

Therefore, whether the town opts to organize departments into divisions or create an assistant administrator or an HR position, we again encourage the town administrator to begin by increasing her reliance on the finance director. Below, we offer examples of how the town administrator can relinquish other portions of her workload.

6) Shift Purchase Order Review and Procurement Duties to Finance Director/Accountant

In Scituate, as in many towns, a purchase order system (PO) is in place, which requires department heads to secure advance approval for all expenditures, in this case, first from the town administrator and then from the accountant. The process also allows the town administrator to review expenditures and ensure compliance with the state procurement rules (M.G.L. Ch. 30B).

A key component of a PO system is that it allows the accountant to encumber, or reserve, funds for payment once a purchase is approved. The system is also often implemented as a means to control departmental spending, especially if managers are overspending their appropriations. However, we have heard no suggestion that Scituate department heads are mismanaging funds or overspending accounts. On the contrary, the town administrator regards them as uniformly capable and competent.

We recommend the town administrator remove herself from the process of approving POs and checking for procurement compliance and allow the finance director/accountant to fulfill these functions. To her credit, the town administrator has already begun to remove herself from the PO approval process.

Still, there remains good reason for a town administrator to monitor the town's financial activity. Accordingly, she can have the finance director provide a periodic report of all expenditures that triggered procurement rules as well as monthly departmental expenditure reports. Or, she might

have the finance director hold and forward to her all expenditures over \$25,000, which require sealed bids.

7) Discontinue Approving Departments' Web Content in Advance

A municipal website is a public face. Residents and others draw conclusions about the competence and professionalism of town government from their online experience. For this reason, it is important that web content is current, accurate and well presented.

It is our understanding that this was not always the case prompting the town administrator to review web content before it is posted. There are occasions however that because she is often pulled in another direction, the town administrator sometimes does not immediately get to the task. This has occurred at least in one instance when posting a time sensitive notice was delayed.

With an interest in making web content available to the public quicker, many towns impose greater responsibility on departments to add content and keep their web pages up-to-date and accurate. Nonetheless, there is still good reason for fresh eyes to review any written message directed to the public that originates from town departments.

We recommend that this role is better filled by the IT director, than the town administrator. We recommend that sending so-called "email blasts" and posting "web blasts" remain subject to the approval of the town administrator. This is an instance where contact with residents needs to be managed. Too many messages over too short a period, consecutive issuances with the same messages, or messages on frivolous subjects warrant control. Otherwise, credibility will be damaged and the goal of communicating something important to all residents will be lost.

8) Allow Managers to Screen Applications to Fill Vacancies in their Department

The town has experienced significant turnover of personnel in the last five years - reportedly up to 150 positions, including ten department heads. Because in some instances past hiring practices at the departmental level did not reflect well on the town, the town administrator was compelled to take a more involved role in the process.

Hiring good people is a critical management decision. As a manager, the town administrator interviews and recommends to the selectmen the appointment of department heads who will report to her. For the same reasons, it follows that department heads interview and recommend to the town administrator, the people who will work and report directly to them. A manager is best positioned to judge who is appropriately suited, in temperament and qualifications, for the particular position and work environment.

We understand that the town administrator has begun moving in this direction and we recommend that she continue on this course. However, there is an element of trust involved. Hiring for town positions is ultimately a public process. If residents perceive practices that are fair and equitable, it damages the credibility of all in government. Even if the town administrator gradually alters her role in the process, she has a continuing responsibility to ensure that procedures are clear and strictly adhered to.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Any effort to restructure town departments, add a position or otherwise lighten the workload of the town administrator will involve the board of selectmen. Whatever course of action is decided upon, the selectmen must also continue their support of the town administrator as others adjust to changes.

Forming divisions with division heads, or creating an assistant town administrator position with newly assigned responsibilities, is likely to require that the board of selectmen propose a reorganization plan in accordance with Section 5-1(b) of the town charter. It is a process that requires the involvement of the town administrator, public hearings and town meeting approval. They will also have to recommend adjusted or new compensation levels in the annual budget. Establishing a human resources director position should be less involved. Grouping departments into informal divisions, where no division heads are assigned, would not seem to require town meeting approval. It might be accomplished through a policy statement issued by the board of selectmen. We suggest before pursuing any course that town counsel be consulted.

Each selectman has expressed awareness of and concern about the town administrator's workload. We encourage the selectmen to also recognize their ability to influence it. This is not to suggest that the board, as the town's chief policy makers, inject itself into the day-to-day administration of town government. However, through the employee evaluation process, selectmen can make clear their performance expectations for the town administration.

Staying within the context of her job description, they can define the areas of government on which they wish her to focus more and those they view as less worthy of her time. The result may directly state or implicitly mean that she discontinue certain personal practices or divest herself of certain responsibilities. In any event, whatever understandings and expectations emerge should be the product of a thoughtful discussion and mutual agreement between the board of selectmen and town administrator.

DEPARTMENT HEADS

As a consequence of our recommendations, department heads may see a shift in reporting relationships and the emergence of circumstances calling for independent decision-making. Regardless, we caution sitting managers not to regard the changes as a step back to the management approach that pre-dates the current town administrator. She is likely to have less direct, day-to-day involvement in departmental activities, but the town administrator remains the chief administrative officer of the town. Her responsibility for the conduct of all departments, offices, and functions will continue.

If changes are to produce the desired results, the town administrator must place greater trust in and reliance on department heads. Department heads, for their part, must earn that trust by keeping her advised of critical issues, situations and decisions.

BUDGET PROCESS

The town charter and bylaws together dictate how the annual budget process unfolds. Although we comment on multiple areas where changes might be considered, most problematic is the date set for the annual town meeting. Per the charter, the date is set in bylaw (Section 20140) and is the 2nd Monday of April. The Bylaw Section 20720 (D) and Charter Section 6-5 (a) each require the town administrator to submit the budget to the advisory committee 90 days earlier (January). Charter Section 6-6 (d) requires completion of a capital plan five months earlier (November). Other deadlines for delivering or completing a review of the proposed budget are calculated from the date of town meeting.

The budget process suffered in recent years due, in part, to the turnover in the accountant's position. Although in the position for less than a year, the current accountant offers the prospect of greater stability and continuity.

Even so, an early town meeting date puts undo pressure on the town administrator, selectmen and advisory committee to complete work on the operating and capital budgets. It sometimes denies the town relevant information concerning state aid. Absent an early House-Senate joint resolution, the town only has the Governor's proposed state aid estimate to guide its revenue projections. Many towns have recognized that there is little justification for an early town meeting and have gained valuable time by moving the annual town meeting into May and even June.

Therefore, we recommend the selectmen place a proposed bylaw change before a town meeting moving the date of the annual town meeting into May or June.

CHARTER REVIEW

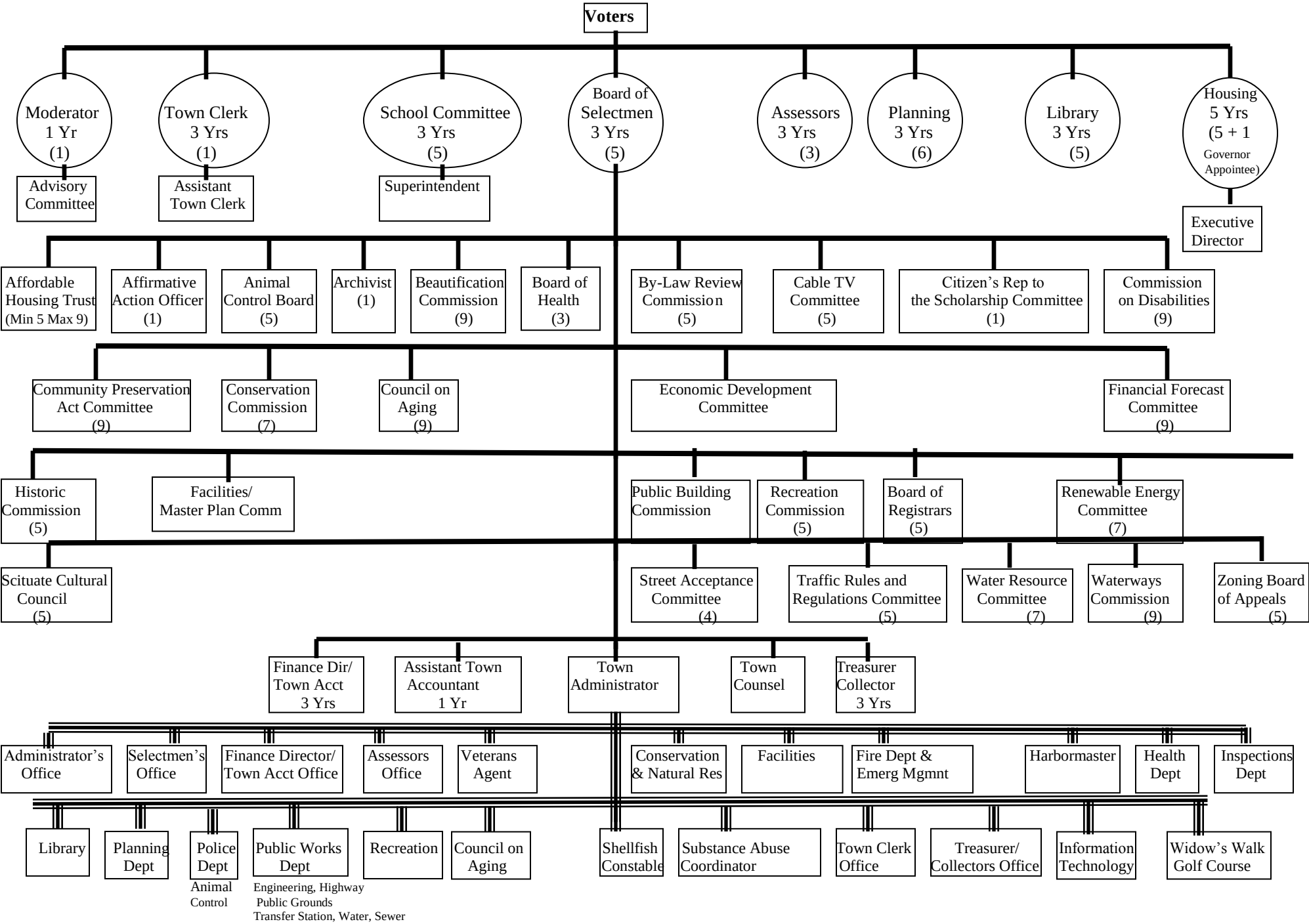
Town charters typically include a section calling for a review five years following initial adoption and every ten years thereafter. The Scituate charter has no such provision, but since 1972, town voters have on four occasions adopted amendments. However, the charter was last revised in 2003. Another review is now timely.

The town has in the past acted on charter changes recommended by an elected charter commission under Home Rule provisions and also by appointed study committees whose recommendations were adopted as a special act. We favor an appointed study committee appointed by the board of selectmen on their own initiative, or by the town moderator pursuant to a town meeting warrant article. In either case, the committee's composition, its charge and timeline can be defined to ensure an objective, thorough process.

A charter revision involves a review of all sections. Among specific topics, we recommend that the charter direct the town administrator to develop and present an operating and capital budget calendar to the selectmen and finance committee for their approval as a first step in the process. We recommend the addition of a section that establishes the advisory committee and consideration of whether the financial forecasting committee is justified. We suggest looking at whether all the requirements for the budget message content are realistic or informative. We suggest adding a definition that clarifies the meaning of "Administrative Code."

Through interviews with those who operate under the charter provisions, a committee will gain a complete picture of changes that make the most sense.

TOWN OF SCITUATE



APPENDIX B CHARTER EXCERPTS ADMINISTRATIVE OR ORGANIZATION

Section 5-1 - Creation of Departments, Divisions, Agencies, and Offices

The organization of the town into operating agencies may be accomplished through either of the methods provided in this article.

(a) By-laws - Subject only to express prohibitions in the constitution and general laws and provisions of the charter, the town meeting may, by by-law, reorganize, consolidate, or abolish any town agency, in whole or in part; establish such new town agencies as it deems necessary or advisable and may prescribe the functions of any such town agency; provided, however, that no function assigned by the charter to a particular town agency may be discontinued or, unless the charter specifically so provides, assigned to any other.

(b) Administrative Code - The board of selectmen, after consultation with the town administrator, may from time-to-time prepare and submit to the town meeting plans of organization or reorganization, which establish town agencies for the orderly, efficient or convenient conduct of the business of the town. Whenever the board of selectmen prepares such a plan it shall hold one or more public hearings on the proposal giving notice by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the town not less than seven days in advance, which notice shall describe the scope of the proposal and the time and place at which the hearing will be held. Following such public hearing, the board of selectmen shall submit to the town meeting by warrant article their proposal which may have been amended subsequent to the public hearing.

An organization or reorganization plan shall become effective at the expiration of ninety days following the date of the town meeting at which the proposal is submitted unless the town meeting shall, by a majority vote within that time, vote to disapprove the plan. The town meeting may vote only to approve or disapprove the plan and may not vote to amend or alter it.

The board of selectmen may through the administrative code, and subject only to express prohibitions in the constitution, general laws and the charter, reorganize, consolidate or abolish all town agencies in whole or in part; establish such new town agencies as they deem necessary; and for such purpose may transfer the duties and powers and, so far as is consistent with the use for which the funds were voted by the town, transfer the appropriation of one town agency to another; provided, however, that no function assigned by this charter to a particular town agency may be discontinued, or, unless this charter specifically so provides, assigned to any other.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by the
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and/or received information from the following local officials:

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John Danehey, Board of Selectmen

Martin J. O'Toole, Board of Selectmen

Anthony Vegnani, Board of Selectmen

Maura Curran, Chair, Advisory Committee

Patricia A. Vinchesi, Town Administrator

Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant

Sheila Manning, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Group Meeting with Department Representatives

Richard A. Judge, Fire Chief

Michael Stewart, Police Chief

Kathleen A. Curran, Town Clerk

Stephan Jarzembowski, Director of Assessing

William Sheehan, IT Director

Kevin Cafferty, DPW Director

Kevin Kelly, Facilities Manager

Donald S. Knapp, Veterans' Services Officer

Mark Patterson, Harbormaster

Laura Harbottle, Town Planner

Toni Snee, Acting Library Director

Robert Sanderson, Widow's Walk Golf Course

Neil Duggan, Building Department

Pamela J. Avitabile, Treasurer/Collector