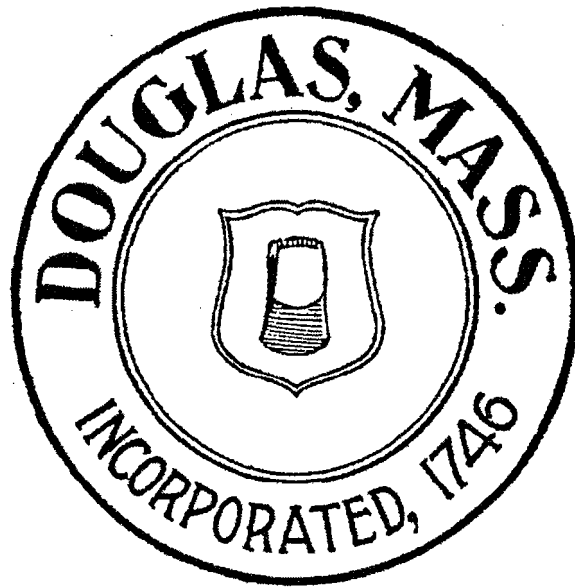


Government Study Committee



Final Report of the Government Study Committee

Town of Douglas

July 31, 2007

Final Report of the Government Study Committee
Town of Douglas
July 31, 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Charge to the Committee

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Methodology
- III. Work Conducted by the Committee
- IV. Findings & Recommendations
- V. Bylaws
- VI. Conclusion

Appendices (attached)

Located in Binders in the Board of Selectmen's Office:

Index of Government Study Committee Back Up Materials

Government Study Committee - Minutes and Agendas

Charge from the Douglas Board of Selectmen

The Selectmen presented the “Charge” to the appointed Government Study Committee members on May 16, 2006, as follows:

The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Douglas is forming a Government Study Committee to evaluate the suitability of the current town government structure, including the management of the town offices, boards and commissions. To keep pace with the continued rapid growth of Douglas, the Board of Selectmen seek to determine the most efficient method to operate the town over the next 10 – 15 years.

The Board of Selectmen’s Charge given to the Government Study Committee stated:

- 1) Review the Town’s current organization and management structure at a high level of detail in an attempt to determine what works and what does not. Carefully review all Town Bylaws and make recommendations for changes to content and format where appropriate.
- 2) Examine all appointed and elected individuals and committees to determine, along with the above, if the current method is effective and if not, to develop alternatives.
- 3) Review all potential methods for managing a town with a population of 8,000 – 12,000.
- 4) Present a full report including all recommendations to the Board of Selectmen by June 30, 2007.

Note: This charge was modified on March 13, 2007. Section 2 above was changed to allow the Committee to examine a minimum of nine appointed and elected individuals and committees.

The Committee actually interviewed a total of 11 on boards, committees and commissions. (See communication in Appendix A.)

Note: The Committee’s Charge was modified again on June 26, 2007, when the Committee requested and received a one month extension to complete its work (to July 31, 2007). (See Appendix B.)

I. Executive Summary

Excluding school budget and employees, the Town of Douglas has an FY08 \$11 million dollar budget and approximately 200 employees. The Government Study Committee (The Committee) looked at many such facts early in its research and realized that, in many respects, the town is like a small to medium-sized public service company. Its shareholders are the Town's citizens and the annual meeting is, in fact, our Annual Town Meeting and our Board of Selectmen can be loosely compared to a company's Board of Directors.

We were asked to explore ways to increase effectiveness and efficiency and we agreed that it would be helpful if we thought like a company president trying to improve a "company's" bottom line. What is the best way to get the highest return on our investment – our tax dollars? How can we improve communication, decision-making and resource use to best serve our customers?

The Committee used a variety of methods to explore, research, debate and analyze the conclusions found in this report. We collected other communities' reports, conducted interviews and surveys, generated organizational charts and synthesized data. We had complex and lengthy discussions and debates regarding the various options available to the town.

Does Douglas, in general, function well? Do employees respond to their customers needs? Are all departments able to meet their goals and objectives? Do they have goals and objectives? What is the mission of the government of the Town of Douglas? Is it organized in an efficient and effective manner?

Those were just a few of the many questions discussed and probed during a typical Government Study Committee meeting. In order to further delve into the particular workings of Douglas, the Committee conducted a public survey, interviewed Department Heads and the chairs of boards, committees and commissions and collected an extensive amount of material from communities that have undertaken a similar process and met with an expert from the Commonwealth.

The Committee's Charge was modified by the Board of Selectmen on March 13, 2007, to limit the number of boards, committees or commissions evaluated to a list recommended by the Government Study Committee. (See Appendix A for the list of committees and distributed letter).

The current structure works most of the time. The Committee agreed, however, that it is in fragile condition with a flat organizational structure that frustrates employees and officials alike. **While the town is currently not facing a severe economic burden or a management crisis it is, in fact, an excellent time to make fundamental changes in the government's working structure in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness as it moves into the future.**

At the **conclusion of our Charge** the Government Study Committee unanimously agreed and recommended that:

1. The current structure of the town's government should be reorganized;
2. The Board of Selectmen should charge the town's Executive Administrator with restructuring the municipal organization according to the recommendations found in this document within 18 months; and,
3. If Douglas chooses to change Town Government, some alterations can be made by changes in By-laws with Town Meeting Approval or through the acceptance of additional Mass General Laws (MGL). Others (such as the establishment of a Town Manager) would require a Charter Commission recommendation. It is our opinion that Douglas is well served by the Board of Selectmen, but should give serious consideration to forming a Charter Commission to investigate the additional benefits of establishing a Town Charter and Town Manager position.

The remainder of this Final Report contains further details on the methodologies, discussions and conclusions we derived from our work. Most importantly, it contains the findings and recommendations that the Committee hopes will adequately meet the charge we received from the Board of Selectmen in 2006.

II. Methodology:

The Government Study Committee met on a twice a month basis from June 2006 through July 2007. The Committee established an initial work plan and timeline to accomplish the various aspects of the Board of Selectmen's Charge and the Committee divided the work into four sections: Information Gathering, Review, Analysis and Conclusions. The Committee also developed a running project oriented Action Item List (See Appendix C).

The Committee's work plan outlined the need to:

1. Review documents of previous and current planning work of other town organizations.
2. Review documents of similar committees' work in other towns.
3. Develop a guiding document that depicts what other forms of Government are available to Douglas.
4. Meet with the Senior Program and Policy Analyst for the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development.
5. Collect primary data by surveying the town department heads as well as members of town boards and committees.
6. Analyze and debate information collected.
7. Prepare a final report.

III. Work conducted by the Committee

Recognizing the breadth and depth of the work before the Committee, members agreed to meet twice a month (on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month) from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Municipal Center. The Government Study Committee began its work with eight members.

Lisa Mosczynski, Chair
Dennis Bishop, Vice Chair
Keith Menard, Secretary
Sharon Brotherton
Derek Brown
Donald Gonynor
Suzanne Kane
Brian Newark

Both Ms. Brotherton and Mr. Gonynor resigned from the committee in January of 2007. The resulting six members continued to contribute to the Committee to date. Ms. Brotherton, due to a variety of conflicts, was unable to attend any meetings.

This Committee received no appropriation from the town budget and the volunteer committee members have done all work described herein (over 144 meeting hours, sub-committee hours, preparation hours drafting and compiling documents and notes, hours conducting surveys, etc.) Committee members also spent considerable extra time conducting individual interviews as well as in the documenting and preparation of those results.

In the first six months of our work, the Committee reviewed reports, drafted an organizational chart for appointed and elected town employees, identified all town boards, commissions and committees and discussed how they interact within town government (see Back Up Materials Section *Town of Douglas Operational Information*). The Committee invited Ms. Marilyn Contreas, Senior Program and Policy Analyst for the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development, to attend our September 28, 2006, meeting. She offered her extensive expertise and knowledge of how other towns have approached changes to their governing structure (see Back Up Materials Section *Forms of Local Government – Changing Local Government*).

We conducted a preliminary general satisfaction survey of Town Government that was sent to all households via the Finance Committee's voter information bulletin prepared for the Special Town Meeting held November 11, 2006. We collected completed surveys until December 1, 2006, and compiled the results. While the survey returns received were very small and the ability to derive anything statistically significant was not possible, some generalizations could be made. (See Appendix D.)

The Committee then proceeded to draft documents that depict other forms of government structures available to Douglas within the above referenced Charge as well as a number of working documents (i.e., information regarding a Town Manager vs Executive Administrator) to educate committee members and to further explore options available to us.

Members of the Committee also researched, requested and received questionnaires prepared by other towns. At the beginning of 2007, the Committee finalized a survey for the Town's Department Heads that focused on creating a survey that was designed to try to capture information from the people working on behalf of the town on a daily basis.

The survey was conducted through an interview process in the early part of this year. Committee members made an introductory presentation at the monthly Department Heads meeting and each Department Head was then contacted, an interview scheduled and conducted, and the responses recorded. The survey was subsequently slightly modified to use to collect information from the town's boards, committees and commissions. Given the number of boards, committees and commissions and considering the resources of the Committee, we asked for and received, some modification to the Committee's charge from the Board of Selectmen. (See Appendix A.)

Material from all interviews was then compiled for committee members to review and analyze. (See Appendix E.) Themes were pulled from each section, recommendations were written and the Committee's findings and suggestions are included here. (See Appendix F.)

The Town's Executive Administrator, while not an appointed member, worked closely with the Committee and was instrumental in providing excellent information to support our questions and our draft documents.

IV. Findings and Recommendations

The following recommendations have been derived from our findings captured via the surveys we conducted. Each is coded A, B or C to indicate what section of the survey details and explains the recommendation. The entire body of survey responses is in Appendix E and survey themes can be found in Appendix F.

Reorganization

1. Transfer from the Board of Selectmen to the Executive Administrator, as much as "legally possible" the ability to make day-to-day operational decisions. [A, B, C]
2. Reorganize the Town's structure so that decision making is transparent and concerns are able to be quickly addressed. This would include developing a clear hierarchy detailing who is responsible for what and to who to turn for final resolution. [B](See Future State Organizational Chart, Appendix G)
3. Realign the current organization and structure by grouping related functions. [B, C] (See Grouping Charts, Appendix H)
4. Ensure that all municipal employees (full and part time) are managed / supervised by full time Department Heads. [C]
5. Review existing administrative support personnel and determine if consolidating personnel into a "support pool" would be more cost effective. [C]

6. Consolidate the Treasurer and Tax Collector functions into one position and merge their respective staffs. [C]
7. Explore the creation of a Department of Public Works that would consolidate the functions of the Highway Department, Tree Warden, Recreation Commission, Cemetery Commission, Water / Sewer department, and/or Transfer Station. [C]
8. Review whether the Water/ Sewer Commissioners should be appointed. [C]
9. Conduct a comprehensive review of all appointed and elected positions to determine if any should be changed from elected to appointed or appointed to elected. [B, C]

Financial

10. Streamline the budget process in order to facilitate well defined and documented budget preparation by all submitting departments. See DOR's Financial Management Review – Town of Douglas June 2005, Appendix I [B]
11. Develop financial and personnel policies, including monitoring procedures. [B, C]
12. Identify regionalization opportunities available to the Town of Douglas and pursue those that present financial and operational benefits to the Town. [B, C]
13. Review purchasing procedures to ensure that the needs of the Town and departments are being best served. [C]

Administration

14. The administration and Board of Selectmen should develop and adopt a mission statement. [A]
15. Develop and maintain a town services booklet that highlights services provided, chain of command, roles and responsibilities, policies, and other information useful to towns' people and government officials and employees. Basically, create a "Town Government for Dummies". [C]
16. Review and improve current methods of communicating relevant information prior to town meetings to increase voter awareness and understanding. [C]
17. Create a mechanism that regularly obtains feedback from stakeholders (public, businesses, etc.) on processes and procedures to determine what works and what does not and regularly modify them accordingly. [A]

Above all, the Government Study Committee believes that it is paramount that:

Due consideration must be given to ensure that adequate checks and balances be built into the organizational structure to ensure fairness and accountability.

V. Examination of Town's Bylaws

The Government Study Committee evaluated the Town's Bylaws in the context of whether they conformed to state law and found that several did not. (See Back Up Materials Section Town of Douglas Operational Information – Bylaw Critique – General Code).

Early in its work the Committee realized that an analysis of the Bylaws required a significant dedication of hours, expertise and complex analysis – resources that were not at the disposal of the Committee. In addition, members argued, if the Committee was to recommend a substantive change to the town's governing structure, revising Bylaws could be premature.

It is the Committee's interpretation that the town's bylaws are static, seldom cover all aspects of a situation, and are complex to change and manage. As a result, the Committee recommends that the Board carefully weigh our recommendations before pursuing further revisions to the town's bylaws.

VI. Conclusion

The members of the Government Study Committee respectfully submit this report to the Board of Selectmen for its review and action. Should further clarification be needed, members of the Committee are available to answer questions. It is the Committee's hope that the Town of Douglas will continue to improve its government and services in an effective and efficient manner.

Sincerely,

Lisa Mosczynski, Chair
Dennis Bishop, Vice Chair
Keith Menard, Secretary
Derek Brown
Suzanne Kane
Brian Newark

Appendices (Attached to this document)

- A. Change to the Committee's Charge March 13, 2007
- B. Change to the Committee's Charge June 26, 2007
- C. Government Study Committee's Action Item List
- D. Public Survey and Analysis
- E. Compiled Department Heads/Boards, Committees, Commissions Survey Results
- F. Themes Identified from Department Heads/Boards, Committees, Commissions Survey Results
- G. Future State Organizational Chart
- H. Suggested Groupings Organizational Chart
- I. DOR's Financial Management Review – Town of Douglas June 2005

Supporting Materials Available in Binders in the Board of Selectmen's Office

Government Study Committee Back Up Materials Table of Contents:

Town of Douglas Operational Information

General Bylaws – Town of Douglas
Bylaw Critique – General Code
Committee Handbook – Town of Douglas
Organizational Charts
Organizational Chart Backup (M.G.L., Bylaws, etc. the Town of Douglas goes by)
M.G.L. – Sections governing Elected and Appointed Officers

Forms of Local Government – Changing Local Government

MMA – Form of Government Information Kit
MMA's Handbook for Selectmen – Organization of Town Government
Municipal Advocate – Changing Local Government Structure
Dept. of Housing and Community Development – Changing Massachusetts Local Government Structure
Dept. of Housing and Community Development – Information from "Managing Small Towns"

Charter Information

Process for Adopting a Town Charter – Letter from Kopelman & Paige
The Evolution of the City or Town Charter – City & Town, March 2006
MMA – Municipal Charters and Forms of Government in Massachusetts
Local Charter Procedures – Secretary of the Commonwealth
Minutes from Board of Selectmen Meetings on 'Charters'

Sample Charters

Special Act: Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2004 – An Act Providing for a Charter of the Town of Plymouth

Special Act: Chapter 73 of the Acts of 2004 – An Act Providing for a Charter for the Town of Dudley.

Special Act: Chapter 496 of the Acts of 2004 – An Act Authorizing the Town of Randolph to Establish a Town Charter

Special Act: Chapter 137 of the Acts of 2002 – An Act Providing For a Charter for the Town of Sandwich.

Government Study Committees' Sample Information

Memorandum to Municipal Clients from Kopelman & Paige – Appointing an Ad Hoc Committee – Conformance with the Conflict of Interest & Open Meeting Laws

State Ethics Commission – Commission Advisory No. 84-01 “Political Activity”

Office of Campaign and Political Finance, Interpretive Bulletin – Activities of Public Officials in Support of or Opposition to Ballot Questions.

Board of Selectmen charge to Government Study Committee in Hopkinton.

Local Government Structure – Community Action Statement

Dept. of Housing and Community Development – Sample Questionnaires for a GSC.

GSC Report – Town of Mattapoisett

GSC Report – Town of Westport

GSC Report – Town of Brewster

Government Study Committee - Minutes and Agendas June 2006 – July 31, 2007

Appendix “A”

----- Original Message -----

From: Michael Guzinski

To: 'L Moczyński'

Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2007 3:11 PM

Subject: RE: Government Study Committee question for BOS

Dear Lisa,

I forwarded to the Board of Selectmen, the Government Study Committee's proposal on how to deal with obtaining feedback from the Boards and Committees of the Town. The Board of Selectmen, at their meeting of March 13, 2007, voted unanimously to support your attached proposal. Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions in regards to this matter.

Best regards,

Mike

-----Original Message-----

From: L Moczyński [mailto:lmoczyński@hotmail.com]

Sent: Monday, March 12, 2007 12:12 PM

To: Michael Guzinski

Subject: Government Study Committee question for BOS

Dear Mike,

The Government Study Committee is about to turn its attention to gathering information from the town's boards, committees and commissions. At our last meeting our discussion focused on the time and resources involved in our pursuit of information. Some members have averaged 3 hours apiece on the Department Heads surveys. Committee heads will be more difficult to schedule. As a result, we've come up with the following:

We identified the nine (9) major boards, committees and commissions operating in town including the BOS.

We will interview the chairs of those committees (unless the entire committee chooses to participate).

We will write a letter to the balance of the committees not interviewed outlining that we don't want to leave anyone out and if they would like to participate, we'll arrange an interview at their request.

With this proposal we hope to be as inclusive as possible but also attempt to lessen the burden on GSC members. Since the charge from the BOS stated:

- 2) Examine *all* [my emphasis] appointed and elected individuals and committees to determine, along with the above, if the current method is effective and if not, to develop alternatives.

we would greatly appreciate the Board of Selectmen's opinion on this before we move forward. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 22nd.

Best regards,

Lisa Moczyński

Chair

Government Study Committee

508-341-4876

**Government Study Committee
Interviews – Boards / Committees**

Interviewed:

Board of Selectmen
Planning Board of Selectmen
Water / Sewer commission
Finance Committee
Capital Improvement Committee
Conservation Commission
Board of Health

Contacted but unable to interview:

Board of Assessors
Library Trustees

Appendix “B”

----- Original Message -----

From: Michael Guzinski

To: 'L Mosczynski'

Cc: Suzanne Kane

Sent: Wednesday, June 27, 2007 12:41 PM

Subject: RE: Government Study Committee Request for Extension

Hi Lisa,

Please be advised that the Board of Selectmen, at their meeting of June 26, 2007 voted to grant the request of the Government Study Committee for a one month extension. Please inform me as to when the Government Study Committee would like to meet with the Board of Selectmen. The Board's regular meetings for the month of August are August 7th and August 21st. Please let me know if you have any questions in regards to this matter.

Best regards,

Mike Guzinski
Executive Administrator

-----Original Message-----

From: L Mosczynski [mailto:lmoscynski@hotmail.com]

Sent: Friday, June 22, 2007 10:50 AM

To: Michael Guzinski

Subject: Government Study Committee Request for Extension

Hi Mike,

The Government Study Committee would like to request a one month extension from the Board of Selectmen to complete its work. According to our charge, our deadline is June 30. We would like that extended to July 31, 2007, in order to finalize a final report and to prepare a presentation before the Board.

Please advise if any additional information is needed and I look forward to the Board's response.

Best regards,

Lisa Mosczynski
Chair
Government Study Committee

Appendix “C”

Douglas Government Study Committee
Action Item List
07/30/07 version 1.14

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
36	Follow-up with Dept Heads	6/21/07	All	7/10/07	8/14/07		6/21/07 – Keith informed committee that during the original presentation to dept heads, a commitment was established to review the results with the Dept Heads when completed. 6/28/07 Dept Head Meeting date ID'd. Reservation on what is presented before BOS receive them. 7/9/07 – Email By Lisa; DH Mtg cancelled due to vacations. 7/19/07 – dept head mtg for july was cancelled.
38	Create Remaining Sections of final Report	6/28/07	ALL	7/19/07	8/2/07		6/28/07 appears the most material is available but not assembled into a reviewable document. However there are still outstanding pieces and front-end intro yet to be agreed upon. 7/19/07 see task #37 7/19/07 Draft report for BOS still incomplete but a target date for release to the BOS is 8/2/07. One more meeting on draft needed for either wed/thur of next week depending on mbr availability. To be confirmed.

CLOSED

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
1	Check with TownCounsel and document position that since GSC is advisory, public officials on the board don't require disclosures to be made	6/14/06	Mike G			8/13/06	See Email 8/8/06 from Kopleman & Page. As an adhoc committee; no, unless the appointments are more formal in nature than contemplated for an adhoc committee.
2	Generate a Draft of forms of Gov't available to GSC	6/14/06	Dennis	6/22/06		6/22/06	Accepted as a guiding document for the committee. Will modify accordingly.
3	Review Fy06 annual rept	6/14/06	All	6/22/06		6/22/06	
4	Each member, create their view of Douglas's As Is Organization	6/14/06	All	6/22/06		6/22/06	Mbrs present had various layouts and views. Use DB view as top layout,, add Detail from Derek's cross reference and then add Org Chart (see task 5)
5	Create a Town org chart (aka Mgmt Structure) using previously prepared views, wherever applicable.	6/22/06	Derek, Suzanne, Mike G	8/10/06		Incl	A similar version of an appointment chart was created. See Action Item 12
6	Create a Detailed x-reference list of elected/appointed/hired individuals	6/22/06	Derek	8/10/06		Incl	See Action Item 5 & 12 A different Level 0 was created that add number of committee members and terms was added.

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
7	Resch & Obtain, if available from other sources – questionnaires that can be used as a basis to assess town's operating effectiveness (dept/committee oriented)	6/22/06	Mike G	8/10/06	8/24/06	9/28/06	8/10/06 – Mike has inquired and it seems a number of these types of documents exist. Once task is complete (see AI 14) 9/14/06 – Mike distributed some info received from State Level Ms. Contrias some questions extracted from the 1995 (no longer published) Managing our Town Guidebook 9/28/06 M.Contrias also brought a few additional ones to the meeting. While there may be additional ones out there it appears we may have enough info to create.
8	Determine how, when and in what fashion the existing bylaws would be either deferred, reviewed and/or assessed	5/22/06	Lisa, Suzanne	tbd			8/10/06 SK has been doing a related activity that identifies applicable MGL's for an apt & how they line-up to existing by-laws. 10/12/06 Review existing bylaws for consistency and accuracy 4/12/07 – general feeling is that based on the recommendations any further review of bylaws would follow.

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
9	Develop operating effectiveness questionnaires (town depts, committee, and residents)	5/22/06	Brian , Dennis	Part 1 (10/26) Part 2 (11/30)		Part 1 (10/26) Par 2 12/14/06 deferred to new task	10/12/06 create a brief summary questionnaire for residents that can be filled out during the 11/06 STM. (part1) P1; 10/26/06 Comm modified draft and expanded to coincide with the FINCOM mailer. 10/12/06 (part 2) create a questionnaire for depts. & committees that may also be used for the BOS. P2; reviewed twice but the committee did not feel it was adequate. See task 22
10	Schedule State Level "Town Gov't Structure Guru) to visit the committee with insight and options.	6/22/06	Milke G	TBD			8/10/06 Target for Sept time grame (marilyn Contrias – State Community Development) 9/14/06 will have Ms. Contrias attend on 9/28/06 meeting
11	Determine if there is someone thru the Sr. Work Off Program or a H/S Volunteer who might be willing to keep minutes	5/22/06				Being closed as the outlook gloomy 11/30	8/10/06 Re-review when there are new openings in Oct. 11/2/06; SK added the opening to the assessors list. DB send info onto Sr. Center Director for posting.
12	Create a Town org chart (aka Mgmt Structure) using previously prepared views, wherever applicable	8/10/06	Suzanne	8/24/06		9/14/06	See Action Item 5. 9/14/06 – an initial chart was created that represented "town paid employees" See Action Item 17
13	Begin Initial Creation of an end-point document.	8/10/06	Lisa Keith	5/4/07	5/24/07	5/31/07	Proposed outline was created. Also, a presentation outline was submitted by Derek depending if a presentation was warranted.

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
14	Discuss consideration on how interviews will be conducted including the development of focus groups	8/10/06	All	1/11/07		2/8/07	9/28/06 M. Contrias advised against 1/1 interviews being conducted. She indicates that a survey be developed, administered, themes developed and then a focus group with the target area be conducted. 12/14/06 – Majority of committee feels that one on one interview need to be conducted. 2/8/07 – by a majority consensus, each member will have “x” dept heads and will conduct a 1/1 interview.
15	Read material on Gov’t study documents sent by Dennis and Suzanne backup material on org chart	8/10/06	All	8/24/06		9/14/06	
16	Reconfirm committee interest on Sharon’s part	8/10/06	Lisa M	8/24/06		9/28/06	9/21/06 DB discussed this with Sharon and due to a number of items., SB indicated she would be unable to actively participate.
17	Revisit org chart created in task 12 for completeness and accuracy.	9/14/06	All		7/19/07		See task 12 It has been generally acknowledged that all created charts have a +/- error facto. However, the charts are merely examples and not hard and fast examples.
18	Create a draft “to be” view of a possible town organization based on a number of documents done to date (i.e. Org Chart, or As Is models).	9/14/06	Mike G	Oct 12		9/28/06	See classification handout
19	Create a proposed time line of activities/deliverables	10/12/06	Lisa, Derek	10/26/06		10/26	See 10/26 minutes

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
20	Draft a document that will provide themes etc., based on the responses from the Resident Survey (see Part 1 Task 9)	11/9/06	Keith	12/14/06	12/28/06 1/11/07	1/25/07	11/9 – SK will collect and deliver returned surveys to Keith. 12/14/06 – Keith provided preliminary results but there were still a few surveys outstanding. 1/25/07 Keith compiled the survey results and comments. Keith further submitted his own viewpoint with regards to conclusions that he might personally draw.
21	Press Release created	11/9/06	Lisa	11/30/06	N/a		11/9 – review the document for approval (all) 3/22/07 – became unnecessary and now obsolete.
22	Develop a “different type” of Dept Head Questionnaire	12/14/06	Lisa	12/28/07		1/28/07	1/28/07 – final edits of questionnaire completed.
23	Draft Resignation Letter for committee mbr who has never attended a meeting and if left unsigned schedule meeting with BOS, as applicable.	12/14/06	Lisa	12/28/06	1/11/07	1/11/07	12/28 mtg – no quorum 1/11/07 – Lisa obtained resignation of S. Brotherton effective 1/07. See AI 16
24	Obtain an opinion from town counsel on the ability of the GSC to review and discuss/edit draft works such as the questionnaire while avoiding the tripping of the open meeting laws.	12/14/06	Mike	12/28/06	1/11/07	1/11/07	12/28 mtg – no quorum 1/11/07 – Lisa relayed to the committee that based on the BOS's office, that all document reviews and edits need to be discussed in an open meeting.
25	Create write-up of committee work for 2006 Annual Town Report	1/11/07	Lisa	2/8/07	2/22/08	2/22/07	2/8/07 write-up had been completed and submitted but was not available to committee for distribution at 2/8/07 meeting.

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
26	Committee Members to schedule Dept Head Interviews and conduct survey	2/8/07	All	3/19/07		3/22/07	2/8/07 – a dept head meeting to advise of this event is scheduled for 2/13/07. The revised survey edits from 2/8/07 is also a prerequisite. 3/19/07 All interviews completed, submitted and consolidated document created & released. 3/22/07 combined draft of responses released. 3/27/07 revised draft released that included Administrative Assist response with some document clean-up
27	Obtain advisory from BOS regarding scaled back reviews for Boards, Committees and Non Dept Heads	3/8/07	Lisa	3/22/07			3/9/07 Boards, Committee and Non-Dept Heads were classified into an A, B, C categories. The suggested foc BOS agreement would be A category. 3/22/07 – email communication from EA received with BOS validation (see 3/22/07 minutes)
28	Develop or Revamp Survey for Boards, Committees and Non Dept Heads	2/22/07	Lisa	ASAP		3/29/07	2/22/07 – generally consensus that the Dept Head survey might be useable for this. 3/29/07 Letter released to All, Survey and assignments for members completed.
29	Committee Members to schedule Committee/Commission/BOS Interviews and conduct survey	3/22/07	All	4/15/07	5/4/07	5/10/07	3/22/07 – prereq is notification letter, survey & assignments. 4/26/07 – 2 committees outstanding and one in progress. Committee majority established 5/4/07 as deadline.

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
30	Determine how the themes of the Dept Head survey will be developed	4/12/07	All	5/10/07			4/12/07 – suggestion of having 2 people sub committee reviewing A,B, C sections and develop themes for review by committee 4/26/07 – 2 person teams assigned by Lisa to extract and develop themes. Intent is to have an initial release by 5/8/07 and then review at the 5/10/07 mtg. It was also noted that a few the A committees were still outstanding and another in progress.
31	Develop a future state (to be) org structure “document”	4/12/07	Derek Dennis	4/26/07		4/26/07	Init Discussions held during the 4/26/07 and will continue throughout the remainder of the effort.
32	2 person teams develop “themes” based on consolidate document	4/26/07	All	5/10/07	5/31/07	5/31/07	(see task 30) 5/10;Derek/Keith delivered level 1 summary. Dennis/Kieth delivered a Level 2 wumination. Suzanne/Lisa did not submit one. 5/31/07 Suzanne submitted a combined document and Dennis/Keith submitted additional Level 1.

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
33	Each mbr or "theme" team create a write-up of what they would propose for the final document sections (Sections 4 & 6)	5/31/07	All	6/14/07	6/21/07	6/21/07	6/14 – determined that the outline is a guide and it might not look as is (pro/cons –vs- no pro/cons. 6/21/07 – there are as many views as there are content inclusions submitted. The 6/21/07 meeting established the particulars of what is to be included/excluded in the exec summary. Section C submission appeared to be acceptable and Sections A & B to follow suit.
34	Take Recommendations submitted by teams and classify them into one of 3 categories; Under EA Structure Change, Under Town Charter or Other	6/21/07	All	6/28/07	7/19/07	inc	6/28/07 Section C reviewed but due to lack of criteria, perspective and method it became a difficult task. Determined to include full list as suggestions. Section B & A not available. 6/28/07 preliminary draft submitted for B but not finalized. 7/19/07 the task was too difficult too complete. Since the "developing teams" had different viewpoints or understandings it was determined that all recommendations except the 1 st two would appear in the appendix and referred to in the summary write-up.
35	Request one month extension in order to create final report.	6/21/07	Lisa	6/28/07		6/28/07	Approved by BOS. Refer to M.Guzinski Email.

	Action Item	Created	Resp	Due	Revised Due	Compl	Resolution/Comment
37	Create Exec Session Section of report	6/21/07	Lisa/ Keith	6/28/07	7/19/07	7/25/07	6/21/07 – based on specific inclusion/exclusion of paragraphs & wording changes, Lisa/Keith to rewrite Exec Session from 6/14/07 submission by Lisa & Dennis. 7/19/07 Dennis submitted update as the draft provided was not consistent with the 6/21/07 direction.

Appendix “D”

**Town of Douglas
Government Study Committee
Questionnaire**

Dear Douglas Citizens:

We have been charged by the Board of Selectmen to look at the organization and structure of our town government. We would appreciate your time and your thoughts as we look for ways to understand and improve the way our town government works. The following questions are being asked to get your input for our study and we would appreciate your insights and ideas. Our findings will be reported to the Board of Selectmen next year and we thank you for your participation.

Government Study Committee

1. How long have you been a Resident in Douglas? _____
2. Have you ever been in an "official" capacity within Douglas? Check all that apply.
☐ Elected ☐ Employed ☐ Appointed ☐ Volunteer

How do you rate the following? Circle one.

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion /Not used
3.	Public Schools	5	4	3	2	
4.	Vocational Schools	5	4	3	2	
5.	Fire Protection	5	4	3	2	
6.	Police Protection	5	4	3	2	
7.	Road Maintenance	5	4	3	2	
8.	Snow Removal	5	4	3	2	
9.	Recreation Facilities	5	4	3	2	
10.	Recreation Programs	5	4	3	2	
11.	Recycle/Waste Removal	5	4	3	2	
12.	Permits and Process	5	4	3	2	
13.	Water & Sewer	5	4	3	2	
14.	Library	5	4	3	2	
15.	Sr. Citizen Programs	5	4	3	2	
16.	Public Health	5	4	3	2	
17.	Public Welfare Services	5	4	3	2	
18.	Town Hall Services	5	4	3	2	

Are there specific Departments you would like to rate within the Town Hall....please list below.

	5	4	3	2	
	5	4	3	2	
	5	4	3	2	

Additional Comments: _____

Once you have completed this questionnaire, please return it to the Government Study Committee's box at the Municipal Center or mail it to the Government Study Committee at 29 Depot Street, Douglas, MA 01516.

Government Study Committee Questionnaire, as compiled by Keith Menard

Methodology: Needs to be filled out

For meeting 12/14

Total Questionnaires received: 23

Average years living in town (answers life lifetime and eons were given a value of 40 years) 23 years

Questionnaires received from people serving in some town capacity: 79.31%

The following percentages will not equal 100% due to multiple categories being allowed

Percentage of received questionnaires by elected officials: 30.43%

Percentage of received questionnaires by town employees: 21.74%

Percentage of received questionnaires by town appointees: 47.83%

Percentage of received questionnaires by town volunteers: 26.09%

Town Service Ratings: 5 – Excellent; 4 – Good; 3 – Fair; 2 - Poor

Town Service	# of respondents	Average Rating
Public Schools	19	3.63
Voc Schools	12	4.08
Fire Protection	20	3.95
Police Protection	23	4.00
Road Maintenance	23	3.70
Snow Removal	23	3.76
Rec Facilities	19	3.21
Rec Programs	16	3.13
Recycle/ Waste Removal	19	3.16
Permits & Process	18	3.22
Water & Sewer	13	3.85
Library	17	3.00
Sr. Citizen Program	8	3.75
Public Health	11	3.55
Pubic Welfare Svc.	6	3.08
Town Hall Svc.	22	3.70

Other Ratings:

	# of respondents	Average Rating
Town Service		
Treasurer/ Collector	1	4.00
Selectmen	3	3.33
Building Grounds	1	4.00
Dog Officer/ Animal Control	1	2.00
High School	1	5.00
Elementary School	1	2.00
Intermediate School	1	2.00
Planning Board	1	2.00
Assessors	3	3.67
Town Clerk	4	4.25
Kindergarten	1	4.00
Notary	1	5.00
Tax Collector	1	5.00
Board of Health	2	3.50
Teachers	1	5.00
School Admin	1	2.00
Lady in the Health dept	1	5.00
Community Development	2	3.00
Town Administrator/ Office	1	4.00
Town Accountant	1	4.00

Comments:

Water & Sewer: Rates are too High

Road Maintenance: Depends on your street how good the Road Maintenance is

Snow is piled in front of our house and they use our lawn to turn around on, there should be curbing on Gilboa St.

Curb across from our house has been unfixed for years after snow plow wrecked it

Parking should be one side only in downtown Main st area, and have brighter lighting

Rec Facilities: Baseball & Basketball facilities are good, but nothing else

Martin Rd Baseball field needs to be completed

How about a summer spot for kids, pool, swimming lessons, hang out spot

Town Clerk: Very Nice, but Adelle is very rude

Very helpful when I was looking for day care & voter reg.

Permits:	Adelle is not nice & Makes easy processes difficult
Town Buildings:	Need more accountability of Public Building & an ongoing assessment of their condition & Needs to Avoid expensive Costly Repairs.
School:	Don't have enough information to form an educated opinion to the school, daughter is only 2 yrs old, seems fine @ the moment. <i>High School has worked out well, but the Math program is horrendous, we keep telling the teachers/ principal, but they won't budge, and then they wonder why math scores are so low. Its called every day math. It cuts parents out of the loop</i> Only just entered school system, would like to see a higher percentage of students going to college! <i>The towns' people as well as kids at school would benefit with a track at the school.</i>
Library:	We go to the Oxford Library <i>They try but it is not big enough; no parking</i> Should have built a new facility <i>Library needs to move out of the 70s & step into the future, including the building</i> We certainly don't need a new & bigger library
Community Involvement:	the town needs more community involvement, not to just be run by a few families
Recycle/ Waste:	Recycle station should be open on Fridays, especially in the summer <i>Dump permit is too expensive</i> Change to buying bags for disposal of trash at transfer station <i>Health dept. should audit workers at dump</i>

Taxes: Taxes seem to keep going up in Douglas, maybe put a cap on building new houses making the town bigger

Town continues to waste taxpayer monies

Town structure/ General: We deal with many of the town departments and generally they are very supportive (*identified self as Appointed*)

Board of selectmen don't listen to residents, maybe a charter would be better (no town affiliation reported)

Selectmen should not be able to hold office for more than (2) three year terms *hired (identified self as Elected/Appointed/ Volunteer)*

Time for a town manager, change to representative town meeting format, consolidate and reduce expenditures (identified self as Appointed)

We live in a town dedicated to families and devoted to the best for our kids, we love Douglas (no town affiliation reported)

More authority should be given to the administrator; treasurer, clerk, & collector should be hired (identified self as Elected/Appointed)

Police: Police should give feedback to citizens about what is happening, many neighbors find this insulting but are reluctant to voice opinion

Public road safety needs more attention

Appendix “E”

Survey Answers

A - 1 How many years have you been a Department Head?

14 in Douglas.

10

8

22

13 overall with 3 in Douglas.

11 years in douglas and 4 prior to douglas.

5

3

5

7

12 years in Douglas and 8 years prior to Douglas.

1 year

6 months

21

17

6.5

1 year

8

A - 2 How many people do you supervise?

1 full time and 1 Senior Tax Workoff person

0

5

1

9 Direct . Although, I have never been through a termination process and can provide direct discipline, when required, I only have recommendation capability to hire/terminate. The final decision would be required from the Board of Selectmen. Thus an additional layer of review and delay would be involved.

30. I have direct hiring and firing of Part Time personnel but require the BOS approval on full time.

2 Directs. I have direct hire/fire responsibilities. On hires, I also have an independent review committee to assist in candidate selection.

33. I have hiring/terminating recommendations but the BOS are required to make the appointment.

1 part time

3 at Transfer Station; several part-time employees

7 full; up to 20 part

200

1, 15 seasonally

5

2

5

4

A - 3 Does your department have a mission statement?

no

Yes

Do not have a formal written mission statement. A large amount of my time is spent in day-to-day operations although not a specific "goal" purse. Large part of this department's mission is to create an environment and provide tools and a support system that enables others to be successful.

Written and posted in an open area.

No

no

yes, posted in every office and lobby

The by-law charge to the committee.

No. There are three members on this committee. We have 42, 28 and 2 years of experience on this committee. We have been town residents for 62, 40 and 37 years.

Yes.

No.

May have been one in past; unclear if one presently exists

Yes, we have a mission statement and there is a MGL that provides overall guidance.. There are nine members on this committee. We have 16, and 3 years of experience on this committee. We have been town residents for 20, and 4 years.

Town Bylaws and MGL

Not to my knowledge

No

No

There are 5 people on this committee. I have been on the committee for 1 year and have lived in town for 10 years. I do have approximately (estimated) 25 man-years on other committees. This committee does not have a written mission statement.

one is in the works, working with people in same position in other towns to craft one

no

yes

no

Yes

No. But MGL and DOR regs are specific

No.

No

Job descriptions, MGLs and procedure manual.

***No

A - 4 Does your department have written goals and objectives?

No

No, however the Dept. of Revenue (DOR) establishes general goals, guidelines and requirements for the department.

No. But DEP standards require daily monitoring and monthly and annual reports.

yes, it is on the district website and updated as progress is made

msdd general law

a 5 year plan is in the works

Yes - I have developed them for myself. The department does not.

Daily operations of office. Interfacing with outside.

No. While not specific goals and objectives there are MGLs and Bylaws that provide some oversight. The lack of receiving financial and supporting information and data with available back-up when requested in a timely manner typically hampers our ability to effectively meet our goals and objectives. Typically, we are not involved with others in option analysis but rather just providing a ratification of a presented position. Accessibility of people can also cause delays. Some are more willing than others. On occasion, the information provided can also have errors of omission (accidental or purposely). The information may also be couched in a political way, glossed over or presented in the "best light". Depending on the people and personalities involved and the time constraints, information is delayed.

No formal goals and objectives.

No.

I have specific annual written goals but within the department they are generally not specific to others beyond their current job descriptions. Roadblocks to the goals can often be found in budgetary constraints that limit providing tools and support. Working in a democratic system has built in layers that are not necessarily in the private sector.

no

Yes, I have created goals and objectives with input from my staff. My staff does not have specific goals and objectives but we rely on the job descriptions that each of them has

***Board sets goals for Town Administrator; none for Board itself

No. No direction from governing board.

yes, kept in the Executive Administrators Office. The goals are mainly for the EA though.

yes

No - I have been working on writing a procedure manual for the office administration.

No.

no

No

No.

We do not currently have one. We have spoken on a number of occasions with regards to creating one so hopefully this becomes a future objective. There is a lack of cohesive written policies for the Town as a whole.

No However they are discussed at our monthly meetings.. The DEP has governing MGL's and issued regulatory policies. The system manager has goals and objectives. There are also DEP guidelines in addition to MGLs. In pursuit of our goals we cannot complete all initiatives by ourselves. The BOS seem to delay certain key requests that we deem a priority and provide little to no rationale as to why. The Executive Administrator generally works in a cooperative mode but is very limited in terms of decision-making. In the past, with other administrators, this has not always been the case. The Town Engineer interferes often even though his assistance has not been requested.

No.

Written policies

No

Yes

A - 5 What do you spend the majority of your time on?

90% administration, contacting dig safe, scheduling, getting materials

varies by time of year, census, dog licenses, vital records

Entering data and developing (humane) payment schedules with individuals.

Problem solving for clients

day-to-day operations, order materials, develop programming, helping others (customers)

Regular maintenance of buildings

Meeting State deadlines

Mostly maintaining payroll and benefits. When required, a considerable amount of time can be spent on debt management and related items. Typically, once the debt is approved our dept prepares the mounds of required paperwork.

It's split 50-50 between town projects -- design, review, development and reviewing submitted applications from individuals or developers for boards.

Day to Day 50%, addressing unplanned issues 10%, 35% is involved in preparing for meetings, meetings, following up on action items from meetings. Administration 5%. Since the government structure is fragile (i.e. elected, appointed and decentralized) there is a lot of effort required in the negotiation and power of persuasion that takes an exorbitant amount of time.

keeping the books straight for the town

50% administration. 50% operational involvement.

Administration - 80% that includes internal and external to others in Douglas or to the related function of our department. 20% is operationally oriented.

Dealing with the public; questions about septic systems and housing regulations

Majority of time is spent on the current priority item. With interruptions for phone calls, walk-ins, issues that come in through the mail, including the day-to-day operations. We must know how to multi-task.

Day to day supervision.

improving educational outcomes for students, depends on the day, could be admin, curriculum, etc.

50-50 doing paperwork and in the field. There are permits, notices, complaint and zoning issues and the rest of my time is spent in the field.

A - 6 How do you measure your department's efficiency/effectiveness?

through public interaction, if they leave happy, we are doing our job

We don't.

Past experience (things running more smoothly now) and public support of recommendations at Town meeting.

Typically it comes informally from the town meeting or the community at large. We'd rate that our efficiency and effectiveness ranges between a 3 - 4. Timeliness of information has improved but there is still away to go. There is minimal analytical information provided. There is minimal coordination of plans and objectives with this committee as it is often time viewed that the committee is trying to micromanage.

with statistics, number of questions answered and self-evaluations

There are only 2 full time employees. I measure it by the fact that we are able to keep up on the permit process within the timeframe the law allows.

Problems solved = success

We conduct an annual review of personnel on their individual performance.

no metrics

Meeting State deadlines

district improvement planning goals

Accomplish goals in a timely manner - don't waste time.

timeliness, getting end of the month reports done and reconciliations by quarter, currently working on getting things cleaned up from prior department head, all the way back to 2001

From a broader town perspective – is the day-to-day operations going smoothly. If there are no blow-ups being reported in the paper then we are doing a good job. The resident perceptions along with Dept Heads and Board of Selectmen are also good indicators.

By providing adequate and quality delivery of water and sewer capabilities. We also meet DEP requisites and various reporting requirements and have not been penalized. Even though we send the state requisites reports by mandated deadlines we often have a lengthy delay with regards to responses from the state. We also provide timely notices and updates to all users as well as the Executive Branch of Town Government. Receiving timely information from the general government varies depending on the situation.. We try as best we can to work cooperatively with other departments and have primary contact with the Highway Department and from time to time with the economic opportunity development committee.

Employee reviews. Whether fees cover expenses or not.

amount of complaints we receive, people are quick to complain, not so quick to compliment

Comments. Meeting the time frame set by the State.

By the amount of complaints I receive. I provide service to all departments so I get feedback regularly.

***No formal measure; receives feedback from T.A.; electoral changes make consistency difficult

We have a very low turnover rate and that is a sign of overall department satisfaction. We have excellent morale that to me is an indicator of department effectiveness. We compare our operations to published operational statistics and we also receive feedback from the public. The department is organized in such a way that allows us to work hand in hand with other plans and goals of the Town. Perhaps some of this is based on my management style which can be characterized by Management by "walking around" and finding out what is going on in Town.

Meeting deadlines and positive feedback.

Currently, we do not have a review mechanism in place that allows us to review our efficiency and effectiveness

Today's accounting procedures are relied upon based on the effort of the new Town Accountant. In the past however that has not always been the case.

With the Growth, we are going to need more and more resources and financial support. While decision-making has been somewhat effective when I have asked for it, it could be better and there ought to be one stop shopping and less layers.

Essentially, the job performance in the field. From an effectiveness perspective, if the department can operate both efficiently and effectively in my absence (which occurred with 2 major incidents) and do extremely well, the department meets the above.

Public feedback-not a lot of complaints; ability to adapt to change factors; use of budget- no increase in several years; effective use of part-time employees

Our current department organization is organized to the extent necessary to make other's successful without micro managing. We coordinate with a number of departments to ensure plans and goals are aligned. We do this in a variety of ways; the budget process, department head meetings, and weekly discussions on existing and new initiatives.

Effectiveness from my perspective can be described by our consistency in meeting deadlines as outlined by the Dept. of Revenue (DOR) e.g. Debt and cash reconciliation. Efficiency can be summed up by the following fact – When I became a department head the budget was 6 million. The budget is now 20+ and we have only added one part-time staff position. Internally, the work processes are adequate to meet the requirements of the function.

A - 7 Is there an “outside” measure of your department’s efficiency/effectiveness?

Insurance Service Organization

state rates all facilities and the measure is related to state aid, not efficiency; receive comparative stats from state not that I am aware of

Customer feedback

Yes, the state level has awarded the operation a number of awards. State Level regulators also provide governance as well.

dept of revenue audit, no set schedule for these though

Yearly evaluation by 5 member Board of Health

No.

No, except for those established by the DOR and governing MGLs.

Positive measures - Awards, recognition in the form of a certificate or letter, feedback. Negative -we could get letters from officials bringing to our attention that something is being done wrong, worse case we are fined.

User feedback

There are national and Local statistics.

We strive for efficiency in the time and amount of effort it takes to reach a decision. Regardless of whether or not we, on the committee and the requester, all come to an agreement on a specific issue we are obligated to provide recommendations. The results at Town Meeting determine how effective we are overall based on our recommendations. Overall financial position of the Town is an indicator of prudent fiscal decision-making. It is always subjective in terms of what is the "highest and best" use of resources.

***No

By complaint or praise received in comments.

Compliance with State regs.

department of revenue yearly audit, and independent audit

No, The department does not have any statutory authority. The resident perceptions along with Dept Heads and Board of Selectmen are also good indicators.

Not in a quantitative manner. The general public however decides whether we are or are not being efficient or effective, albeit subjective at times.

Not known.

No.

MCAS

meeting deadlines with state offices

Statistical data

No, aside from praise or complaint letters.

Good reviews from the State - acting on certain submittals their process is presented to other State Officials as a good example.

Completed projects.

That's the general public. Complaints might go directly to the Board of Selectmen but my department operates under state regs.

A - 8 What do you enjoy most about being a Department Head?

Knowing make a difference in people's lives.

Every day is different with unique situations

I like the times when I can help solve problems like being called in and being able to make things better. To be able to make changes when they can be made.

making a difference for the community

Seeing how the town works from the inside

Love the profession. Interacting with the public on a daily basis.

Having a breadth of experience working with all departments. Being able to act as the narrow point of and hourglass with the top representing residents and BOS and funneling initiatives to department heads.

making progress implementing policy & procedures to streamline. Making things routine as opposed to dramatic

Sense of accomplishments. Being elected provides the ability to have the freedom to speak or act for or against initiatives that in my opinion are either controversial or just not well founded. Also, the freedom of not having to be told what to do.

Working with excellent people on the committee. Challenge.

Sense of accomplishment when getting things done.

Having an impact on how the town moves forward; being a part of the check and balance w developers; being in a position to "truth check" the information put before boards and committees.

Being given a task and doing it better than expected. Helping other. Problem solving.

being in charge, being able to provide direction

being a 'leader' getting the job done wel

***Solving problems; have learned and gained experience from dealing with new problems; formulating designs like the Road Plan; facets in managing the town infrastructure; discussions with townspeople

Knowing that if I achieve my goals I am satisfied no matter what. I am self-motivated and the position gives me the opportunity to be self-motivated.

Interacting with everybody else.

Enjoyable to be part of setting a positive town direction. Rewarding in the sense of trying to improve services when we can. It is also a privilege to work with such a diverse group of interesting people.

when I can help people or when an event like elections goes flawlessly

Working diligently on behalf of citizens and other communities telling them they do a good job.

Being better informed about community living.

Understanding municipal finance information and how the town operates. I would not have this same understanding if not for participating on this committee. Being involved in town government and attempting to maintain a stable tax rate for residents.

Independence of elected position.

love working for kids and helping them become successful

Trying to better the system while keeping the costs down. Being involved in maintaining a key part of the Town s infrastructure while looking for avenues of improvements.

Sense of accomplishment that comes with the job. From a self satisfaction, I take stock of where I am now, from whence I came and the job/career accomplishments I have made.

Supervising others for good results. Team work. Pride.

A - 9 What do you enjoy least?

Administrative work - that sometimes includes the time and effort required in dealing with the abundance of "administrators" within the town.

making unpopular decisions even if they are in the best interest of the town as a whole

The flip side of above. That is, it can be stressful, tiring and the need to manage personality or conflict, when applicable.

making decisions that may negatively impact a family, but is in the best interest of the school or town

Politics; strife between Boards

Nothing I don't enjoy

***Dealing with issues laden with emotion or when validity of information is unclear.

When board members get off task, side conversations, and tantrums.

This is a 24/7 position. I'm never off. It comes with the job, but I'm always "on-call".

When people judge me because of my job and they think I'm being the bad guy.

Justifying (arguing for) our existence.

dealing with other elected officials when and being assigned jobs or responsibilities that do not fall into my offices description

Politics -- I can personally take a beating for representing the interests of the town on a project because someone has a personal agenda.

Lack of efficiency by people that are coming before them and a lack of consideration for clients. The average person does not realize they are protecting water/sewer/air and the Committee doesn't get anything out of it (monetary). Also do not like dealing with people that yell.

Personal agendas and adversarial relationships. People often don't do a good job of selling what they are presenting. Have to be the focal point to pick-up on an apparent problem and having to surface it when it could have been recognized by others much earlier. As such, that can often put us in an adversarial position.

Too many tasks tend to fall into the chair's lap.

The municipal politics that are played based on various agendas.

Not having the necessary revenue to support needed services which results in having to engage in difficult discussions to choose what services cannot increase. Also having discussions to prevent short term initiatives that are either detrimental or unsupportable in the future.

The politics that seem to exist at the Town Hall. Other people who seem to have personal agendas or repeatedly try and put road blocks in the way of accomplishing important initiatives.

Politics that occurs in Town Government. Spend too much time on this -- we have a job to do and a business to run and need to be on the same page.

Being diplomatic with angry people is tough.

Public expectations and complaints

Picky details.

not being able to satisfy an irate tax payer

Dealing with (few) angry people. Lack of support by governing board.

trying to clean up previous work and it not being as big of a priority when the process was started

politics on multiple levels and dealing w other people's agendas

Dealing with unreasonable, difficult people and not let it bother you.

A - 10 **On a scale of 1 to 5, with five being total understanding, how would you rate the public's understanding of what your department does? [ask why?]**

3. People don't always know the state laws we are bound by. Sometimes difficult to get the 'why' of what we do out to the people

4 - Not everyone knows what goes on specifically within the department but the public has a general idea of what the department is about. The public is not always aware of some of the programs we run so we have been trying to do a better job on promoting as well as soliciting ideas of new programs.

3 - from the general public's perspective. Many people think that I have more statutory authority than I actually have. The authority I possess has been granted upon me by the Board of Selectmen. That authority can be removed by the Board of Selectmen

***3

3; most familiar with Transfer Station- least familiar with housing inspection

3, its not unusual to only have 2-3 people at our informational meetings

B - 1 What about the process to change policies? (if applicable)

Executive Administrator will research policies, make recommendations. BOS will then vote on them *BOS policies need to be updated.

Not overly problematic and possibly can't be any faster when you factor in the variables associated with operating procedures, governance policies and bylaws. Each has their problems and with layers of government involved in can be a good balance and check as well as a delay.

Dept. must follow many State regulations; Douglas has numerous Town policies; Board determines most with some decided by Town Meeting

It's not applicable but it's clear how the process works.

Tedious - have to go through the public hearing process which takes a long time.

Proposals made, considered, then majority vote of board.

Concurrence between dept head and governing council

Since we are governed by MGL it takes lengthy time to change. Internal policies that fall within are jurisdiction is straightforward. However, bylaws that places constraints or when they operate as a roadblock are difficult to change. Bylaws and initiatives by other departments need to become consistent with DEP regulations.

We have an informal policy system. If there's something systematic we try to create a non-binding policy for the board. We don't really have policies within the department.

Proposed to Town Meeting for approval.

Operationally they appear to be non-existent. Yes, I understand there are Personnell manuals but that does not mean that policies exist. Once a union contract exists any policy change issues are moot until renegotiation time. Although the department is affected by indirectly by bylaws it is timeconsuming to change a bylaw and usually the operational change, if it needs to be made, will be made. However, othertimes the bylaw is an impediment.

* Question B - See pg. 47

1, most people think the only thing I do is the interaction that person receives with me, like dog licenses

3-4

customers: 4.5 -- non-customers: 2

1-2 most people don't know what I, or any one else in my position in other towns do until something goes wrong. Most people just want to know town is run efficiently, not the who or how.

3. Improved over last 2-3 years because of more/better info to public.

4, people understand what we do, but not always the why.

3 Much work done behind doors and not in public view.

5 - the general public has a fundamental understanding of the services provided but not necessarily the service constraints or the internal organizational structure of the department

2. Misconceptions about functions performed.

Although, an information bulletin is provide we believe the understanding from the public is a 2 while within "committees" is a 3.5 It perhaps is due to not having a good understanding and clarity our roles and responsibilities.

Users vary from 2 - 3 and non-users 1 - 2. We believe it is because the service is taken for granted with a lack of understanding of the complexities involved. Although we publish studies on the product's quality, we perhaps don't market ourselves enough

2 because no one knows what I do. People have no idea what I do and people ask me what I do all the time.

2 People - even contractors - play dumb and act like they don't like being told what they can and cannot do according to building codes, etc. Our issues are also often time sensitive and we're just the messengers

3 - We are the "junk drawer" of the building. If you don't know what to do with something; send it to us.

1 - the general public has little perspective. 4 - 5 from a municipal employee perspective. The general public when they come in for services are more interested in obtaining licenses or tax inquiries as an example but not municipal payroll. On the other hand, municipal employees are very interested in their paychecks and benefits.

1; The public does not read or take advantage of information that is out there or just come to a meeting. They have associate members.

3 - Don't understand rules, regulations, and bylaws. They don't understand procedure. There was no manual with the position and doesn't really think they could come up with one. The learning curve is long.

4. Evidenced by Town Meeting support.

2.

2. We perform a wide spectrum of functions that are not simple to explain.

2 The vast majority of tax payers do not comprehend the processes for land development from application submittal for a simple deck to our inability to outright stop a project. We try to educate the public on an individual basis because it's only important to them when it effects them.

3 - 4 The public has a general idea of what we do but not an in-depth understanding of all the mechanics and issues we deal with.

I have a good familiarity with the applicable Bylaws and MGLs. The internal bylaws are accurate with regards to our current form of government. Bylaws, while they can be time consuming to change also provide a cushion to obtain stakeholder inputs and some balance and checks. On the whole they work but time must also be spent to review them often as there are different scenarios that may occur that a bylaw, although applicable, did not consider when it was first enacted. Our problem is that we do not currently have a policy in place that addresses policy changes which is now a goal for us. Operating in a vacuum of a specific policy, we do a reasonably good job on the changes.

Until there are financial oriented policies in place, we don't know about the degree of difficulty for change processes. MGLs are what they are and there are a minimal number of Bylaws that provide overall guidance to this committee. Typically, we learn about overall constraints or impacts to the committee, after the fact. There is no upfront involvement in their development.

those are dictated by mass general law

Not great. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) are very lax when it comes to financial and employee oriented policies. There are no Bylaws that affect this department.

we have a policy review sub committee, but decided by school committee

Policy decisions made by commissioners

the Board of Trustees -- they are the policy makers

n/a

This is used seldomly. We are governed mostly by MGL. From a Department perspective there is much more leeway to change internal policies. There is a lack of good personnel operating policies and bylaws, while changeable, take time and cannot often change quickly enough to support a specific incident.

They do not have to go to Town Meeting to change policies. They do have to go to Town Meeting to change Wetland Bylaw. All are available to the public.

***Board is presently developing financial standards for the town. There is no existing policy manual.

This department is driven by state regs. The only changes might come through personnel issues. Or there might be changes through zoning regulations that are bylaw changes.

Either State defines new regulations or parameters, or via vote of the board.

Policies that I am directly involved with (not requested by the BOS) are initiated because I have gone to a seminar and learn that it would be in the Town's best interest to have one. I go to other Towns for examples of what they have or get sample templates from our Insurance provider. I put together a draft policy for Douglas, have the Executive Administrator, Property/Liability Insurance Company and Town Counsel review it (to protect the Town against liability) and then present it to the BOS for approval.

B - 2 What is the process used to change your enforcement capabilities such as regulations or fees/fines (if applicable).

Discussion and votes.

Pay as you go for copying fees, etc. Else, N/A.

MGL primarily, and 1 bylaw however even then that one is superceded by an MGL.

Through public hearing - not done often. First is discussion, then public hearing, then approval.

We're part of a regional network that sets and enforces fines, etc.

Varies but typically we focus on MGL

dictated through town by-laws

***Keep fees/fines in line with surrounding communities; comply with state or other guidelines. Complaints about violations are directed to particular departments.

Defined by commissioners

N/A. MGL defines protocol.

This department goes to the BOS when it needs to increase fees, etc. Most of the rest is under my jurisdiction under state regs.

We hold public hearings and use as many outlets as possible to educate the public.

vote by school committee

We have control of existing fees and fines and when a change appears needed a public hearing will be held.

I have to kick back paperwork to department heads until the proper paperwork is received and it meets with mass general law

None

We don't have fee/fine enforcement capability.

Our board sets certain types of fees but not in a broader perspective of the Town as a whole. In limited cases, for example licenses that are we are jurisdiction, we have enforcement capabilities. We tend to receive information from other departments, state and executive administrator's office with regards to setting or changing existing fees. Based on that information we will set or revise an existing fee.

For fees, I survey other Towns similar to and around Douglas. I put a chart together and present it to the BOS for approval. I have done this twice now and it has not been approved yet. Enforcement capabilities and fines are usually in the Bylaws and would need to be changed at Town Meeting. All other changes go through the BOS.

Through the Town Bylaw they can enforce fines which are issued by the Conservation Agent. It would take Town Meeting to change.

Within State defined limits, by vote of the board.

Not applicable

State and Town set most fines and fees

about the only one I am aware of is people shoveling snow into the road, that is handled by the police, but have never seen a citation issued

B - 3 How do you resolve interdepartmental problems?

Typically the elected officials that we come in contact with are generally responsive to our needs. However, when there is a problem that needs to be resolved in a timely manner it is generally poor amongst elected officials, departments and boards. While isolated, there is a poor working relationship amongst some boards, committees and elected officials.

Elected officials are typically responsive to our needs. We seldomly have inter-department problems. When there is I can sometimes count on the elected officials and other departments to help resolve the issue in a timely manner.

It is smooth right at the moment when dealing with other elected officials and there is generally an overall excellent response when it comes to elected officials and other depts. (on a scale of 1 - 5 a 3) providing assistance and working together when there is a problem beyond my area. The interaction on the BOS varies depending on what the situation is. I strive to understand the different perspectives and reach a consensus. I try not to convince someone how to solve it but rather determine that perhaps we need to change our opinions or goal.

Only depts. interacted with are Highway and Tax collector. No problems.

None - they have good people on their board.

Negotiating to a solution when needed. Sometimes, it would be better if we had a policy of who's in charge. The elected officials I interact with are typically responsive to my needs. However, when I have a problem beyond my department I can only rely on them 50% -vs- relying on other department's for assistance that typically comes. Factoring in all of the above and working together, I would offer it's good..

I haven't ever really had any. Concerns are usually discussed at department heads meetings. We all work well together and we talk it out.

Typically the elected officials such as the BOS would be rated between a 2 - 3. Based on the issue we can sometimes rely on other officials to help solve problems in a timely manner but generally it would rate as a 3. Some departments such as the Town Engineer are extremely difficult to work with while others are much less difficult thus a 2 - 4 rating.

I talk to people. Expect Exec. Administrator to take lead.

being willing to talk with others

Wait until it passes over; sometimes a long process when officials avoid conflict and work to resolve impasse

***Invite parties to meeting to discuss and resolve. Boards and committees must work together

Joint meetings.

Carefully - discussion. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak.

Too rare to have standard approach.

go right to the department head and resolve with as little people involved as necessary. As a back up I would go to the town admin, but haven't had to do that yet

talk to them directly, never had to go above that

Sometimes speaking with elected officials, when there is a problem beyond my area (e.g. BOS), they are not very responsive and it can be like talking to a wall. We don't change a position because someone says we should but rather it has to be factually justified. Depending on the circumstances, there is much more cooperation with other department heads.

Typically with the department. There can be quite a bit of headbutting going on depending on the issue until a reasonable agreement can be hammered out. For the most part departments cooperate with the needs of this department. When an agreement stalls, I will go to the executive administrator. My perspective is that he tries to work out an agreement but his hands are often tied by the BOS that in turn may cause a lengthy delay in a resolution.

Meetings and discussions, else appeal to BOS.

Power of persuasion with the last resort of involving the board of selectmen. The focus is to broker a deal that everyone can live with. Generally, elected and appointed officials are responsive. It works but at times it's fragile due to the town structure. I am positive when it comes to boards and committees working together but it can change dramatically, as you well know, within a fragile system with a simple changing of elected leadership.

Communication - Use Executive Admin to look @ different ways to resolve issue.

Discuss issues at Department Heads meetings or with my supervisor. Communication is crucial. If there's something new, I prefer that it's documented.

Only one area/dept problem: impasse.

Communicate. We deal with problems as they occur and it's our experience that the results are dealt with satisfactorily. The Executive Administrator is also called in to assist or mediate.

None encountered.

usually just deal with department directly, otherwise I work with Mike to get the problem resolved. IT helps that he is a certified chief procurement officer

I pick my battles. Small, petty things I ignore otherwise I deal with them head on. I have been told I am direct but diplomatic; which I feel is a good thing. Most times I find the problem was due to people being miss-informed or assumed something that wasn't so. When I first started there was a lot of miss-trust of this department. Most of that is gone now and I believe it is because I try to communicate and be upfront and honest with people. I also do not get involved with the rumor mill.

B - 4 Are there other processes that come into play that help or hinder your department's effectiveness?

The organizational structure of the town functions can limit efficiency.

No

Not having the adhoc financial team meetings is problematic. Not being involved or advised earlier with regards to the personnel boards establishment of steps and COLAs.

It's difficult getting other Boards (elected and appointed) to meet with them. They have asked verbally and in writing. The decisions the other boards make cross over to the decisions they must make. There should be more joint decisions with other Boards. There is no cooperation.

State laws - availability of money

End runs around the committee. Budget constraints.

Computer resources back up.

working with certain committees can be a hinderance to me getting the job done. some members can make it 'unnecesarily' hard'

No.

Not really.

Lack of governing board's support: e.g. FINCOM meetings and getting positions upgraded by Personnel board.

Not having zoning consistent with DEP requirements is often a hindrance.

Not any that I can think of at the moment.

trying right now to implement those processes, people want it done, but it's a lot of work. I work with the departments directly, but keep Mike informed of the progress

Other boards invade their turf telling them how to do things. The help is Town Hall staff.

Moving forward in a proactive approach would help across the board. People are afraid of change and thus adopt the status quo. Why change, when we have always done it this way? Thus layers build up and delay becomes inevitable. Political end often requires a disaster to occur but a proactive approach is better. A Town Charter would provide, for example, stability to a certain degree with regards to operations. It is not solve all but it provides the framework

A lot of things that we do require reviews/comments from other Board/Committees. Getting that information in a timely manner can sometimes be a problem. There are times when I need to send a follow up memo or place a phone call. I give deadlines but am flexible.

Politics. We often get applications and other submittals that are lacking information. The regs and forms are clear with what's required but applicants submit them incomplete and then it takes much longer to complete what's required. We want to encourage boards to look at a tiered review. Administrative first, then technical with time frames that are clear to all. This would improve the department's efficiency and much of what we require is driven by the town's bylaws and state regs.

More support and resources from the State would help; lack of accessibility to regulations by residents, i.e. not posted on Town website

Department heads meeting lets us share information, communicate and brainstorm to solve problems. But, the board of trustees can be hindering because they look to preserve their autonomy from the town before they look at the larger goal. Very focused on self-preservation before working with others. Becomes a tug of war.

Growing shortage of grant monies.

***Lots of different entities are involved in financial decisions which is cumbersome and leads to confusion. No Chief Financial Officer or other coordinating strategy is in place to streamline the process.

working to fix the way things were done in the past and implementing what should be standard procedure

Fees tables and special permits when it's a matter of interpretation and there's disagreement over who has the jurisdiction in a matter. Where is the line drawn to handle the process?

No

Not directly with what I do.

Not that I can think of at the moment.

guidelines are very structured from state and town

B - 5 How do you obtain feedback about the services you offer?

unsolicited complaint or praise letters

Informal. Citizens you meet in town. I will ask certain people what they have heard. Phone calls at home.

open forums with parents, being accessible to people, meetings with administrators

we work with the departments, don't really receive feedback from the general public

Conversations with customers and circulation statistics.

***Reports from Town Ad.; election results; comments from residents.

Verbal and "customer" notes on forms.

Interaction with public

Customer feedback: formally solicited Customer Confidence Reports collected annually as part of DEP requirements, plus complaints and Xmas cards.

The town based on the verbal we receive has generally accepted programs that we offer. There is good acceptance and support of the Town.

It's unsolicited and usually verbal

Questionnaire in annual flyer plus verbal.

Verbal, written, Thank You cards, trust from residents shown when they keep coming back for more help.

Mostly verbal comments, made to myself, the Administrator or the Selectmen. We also have "Request for Review" form that anyone can fill out and submit or letters. There is also the possibility of being sued by someone.

Verbal expression of concerns, complaints, and suggestions.

We don't.

Varies completely based on the situation. Feedback comes in from the public and officials (state and town) primarily.

Talking to people. Open forum @ selectmen meeting. any one can be put on the agenda

phone calls

feedback by people who come in personally and the occasional letter

There are typically differing opinions of acceptance even though other stakeholders seem to support us. The BOS give the appearance of a "brush off" on top priorities that we conduct and submit.

The public lets me know.

User feedback, written complaints, phone calls, meeting attendees.

Via Q/A and Q/I initiatives. For example, we conducted a survey during the recent Octoberfest. We have also from time to time sent surveys out to residents.

Typically, it's from the stakeholders of the town. The stakeholders can provide it verbally or in writing.

Typically, it's from the DOR. Human Resource items (H/R) feedback comes direct from municipal employees.

Verbal comments, thank you notes, etc. Such comments are filed.

Typically, we try to talk to other areas and determine how things are going.

**B - 6 How much feedback do you get? In what form do you receive it?
(complaints vs compliments)**

only get complaints when things aren't going the way a department head would expect. Some times there is an authority struggle over the budget, but as long as policies are followed, they will never hear from me, and the only time they do is when something is wrong and needs to be fixed

Approx. 20% response to questionnaire

compliments are rare, people just expect you to do your job

Same as previous response.

Mostly verbal unless it's official from the DOR although they would not be characterized as complaints or compliments.

a half dozen running 50-50

Probably split 50/50. Thank-you notes from town residents (verbal or in writing). We also receive complaints that typically do with differences of opinions on code/condition assessments. Other complaints in this category also fall into the ones where someone is complaining about someone else.

Complaints - not very often. Complaints are usually because someone isn't happy with rules and regulations, not because of our job performance. If a co-worker is unhappy with me I usually hear about it second hand. Only once has someone come to me face to face. The positive feedback comes in job offers, by other departments or outside businesses and organizations. Having people copy my way of doing things, or if someone states that they are surprised that I gave them information quickly; I take that as positive feedback. And "Thank You" is a big one.

We get some constructive criticism and we get compliments. Don't get many letters.

once per week

Infrequent.

There is not that much feedback from the general public. Primarily the feedback comes from the board of selectmen or department heads. On occasion, a resident may express an opinion at a BOS meeting.

Complaints about costs at billing time. Questions about treatment methods that could affect consumers.

a lot of interaction comes via email. Also through one on one meetings

Few complaints.

Not much feedback; usually in the form of complaints

We create a lot of our own feedback (i.e. How are we/I doing?). We start with treating others as you would like to be treated. So far it has worked as we receive approximately 1% complaints, 99% compliments.

**B - 7 - a How would you rate your department's relationships with other
departments that you work with most frequently?**

5. Fine. Mutual respect typical.

***Board tries to facilitate positive relationships within town govt. 1. School Comm.-4.5 ; 2. Economic Dev.-4;
3. Acct. Office- 4.5

A 5 - Highway and Fire primarily. We are not aware of any jurisdiction issues as it relates to our department.

3 at best. The committee is not considered an equal. Thus other departments may not truly understand our mission. Some on this committee feel we could be used as a sounding board on a number of priorities.

5 - typically, it is with the Town Accountant and on occasion the School Business Manager. If the matter is debt related then we work with all departments directly and for the most part the information required is received within acceptable time frames. When it is debt related, it can also include the Town Clerk who has been very supportive as well as the BOS who need to approve certain matters. The latter however can also cause a delay due to availability.

4; because our role is to assist other departments to become successful by providing tools and support.

Overall, I'd venture to say a 4. We typically interact with Public Safety departments, highway, or the board of health.

4 not 5 because of authority/jurisdictional role overlay or confusion related to regulation interpretation - some see boundaries crossing but it's not personal

We are a 5 - Cordial and polite. Other's are a 0 - no responses from meeting or sitewalks.

5 - I come from corporate America. You do what ever it takes to get the job done. Most people appreciate that and don't feel I'm stepping on their toes, however some do.

5 every one works well together

5

5 as we typically interact with the highway department, tax collector and accountant. 3 - 4 for the Treasury Department and Executive Administrator and a 2 for the Board of Selectmen.

3 - 4. We have a fairly good working relationship with other Departments we come in contact with. There are occasional debates on jurisdiction but we discuss it as best we can until we gain a resolution. There are also overlaps as well on jurisdiction but that is not necessarily in a "bad way".

5 We talk it through when the need arises.

4, Community development can be tough, not getting info needed to service the towns people

4 work with all departments

Good,

4. The Executive Administrator @ the direction of the BOS does a good job of working with other boards

5

5 don't work with lots of others but those I work with I have a good dialogue with and there's lots of give and take and respect for each other.

1. Building- 4, 2.Conservation-2, 3. Selectmen-3

4 - Lines are clearly drawn; there is not much overlap. They act with integrity so they don't seem abusive. The areas of overlap that cause friction but are rare.

5, we have very open communication and share resources very well

4 wonderful working relationship with others

B - 7 - b How would you rate your department's relationship with boards, committees, or commissions you work with?

2 - 4 depending on the board and because of philosophical differences.

4; although we don't work with many committees there is an occasion to work with the Finance related ones.

A 3 as we have working relationships but they are minor interactions. There have been overlapping jurisdiction issues that eventually get worked out (i.e. policies or understandings). One of those occurred with the Planning Board. Other committees we work with typically from time to time are the building department and conservation.

5 - A lot of Board/Committees come to this department for help and information.

4.

A 5, very well.

3-4

4 - 5 as we interact with all municipal or school employees.

Varies. We sometimes have to agree to disagree.

5 usually just room reservations, meeting postings

4 in general [there's one at a 1 because they are unreasonable and difficult to work with]

4, some make it more difficult than it needs to be, but on the whole everyone works together

4 mainly with BOS and Fin Com

4.5 - Fin Com & Personel Board

2 - 3 The Planning Board initiatives can overlap with our jurisdiction and this could be due to either misunderstanding or a conflict in objectives.

3 - 4. We have a fairly good working relationship with other boards committees, commissions and non-dept heads that we come in contact with.

3 - There are often times debates amongst these constituencies with regards to jurisdiction on an issue as it relates to our committee.

4, only been here for 6 months, there is room for growth through building trust

With Board this person represents- 5

4

***Positive and productive

1. Inflexibility.

5 - No trouble - They went to RI to help another community.

Not a problem

4 - Same

B - 7 - c How would you describe your department's interaction with the Executive Administrator?

Today it's a 4. Four years ago I would have said a 2. He is a good negotiator, but I feel based on the way it is structured there are too many layers for him to deal with that prevents from obtaining straightforward decisions.

5 Open door policy.

Excellent. We have a very honest dialogue regardless of whether or not it is good or bad news. The EA is very responsive to our information requests and will to work through dept scenarios.

4. Primarily as liason to BOS

5, he has always been very timely in response

Very little

Good. The EA tries to be responsive to our information requests but we are excluded from early involvement in a number of areas where we believe we ought to be involved. The timeliness, thought process, or backup information is not always available when it appears there ought to be some. We seemed to be viewed as a procedural requirement.

Good

Every Administrator is different. I have worked for two good ones and one really bad one. But I am here to do a job and I do it. If I have problems with the way they do things I let them know it. The current Administrator and I have a very good relationship. He is very knowledgeable, helpful and easy to talk to.

5 - No trouble.

Excellent. We have "frank" discussions and there is good give and take with full duplex communication.

5 Very good communication.

Excellent working relationship but his hands are often tied by the BOS. He sometimes has to negotiate thru the swamp rather than make a pretty straightforward decision or has to wait for direction by the BOS. Although, we have a good relationship I worry about having a problem with the EA that would require resolution from the BOS and my perspective it would become stalled.

4 but minimal

5 Excellent communicator, professional and very open to input and to how to do the job better.

5, He has an open door policy and is the best executive administrator I have worked with, he the most cooperative and brings the clout of the board of selectmen when something that needs to get done, is not.

Good. The EA tries to be responsive to our information requests but is limited with regards to decision-making.

Good

5.

5, been very helpful, works with me to help achieve goals

***Excellent

5. He does what the group asks & will get info for individual members that they request

5 we communicate on a daily basis and deal with issues quickly and expediently

5. Open door and always leave with an answer.

5 excellent

5, great relationship, very supportive, always willing to listen and try new ideas if you can back them up

5 - Fine.

5. Good communications and information flow.

B - 7 - d How would you describe your department's interaction with the Board of Selectmen?

5 very supportive and willing to listen

Very well and supportive. So long as there is a willingness to discuss the matter and then not re-discuss it later in different circles. The latter of which makes it difficult as in those cases, when they occur, there are past factors introduced that don't necessarily have any relationship to the matter at hand.

No problem

N/A. Very little interaction.

Generally a 4 except when it comes to the budgetary outcome that we discussed is not quick. They listen to operational/policy issues; take them under advisement and more often than not the outcome is agreeable.

4, Need to earn their trust more, which we will over time

5 we communicate with the Board with the Exec Admin as a conduit and overall our interactions have been good experiences

5. Supportive of committee function.

We have a very good working relationship with the BOS.

5 respect there

When we need them to do something for the department, it is typically good but there needs to be marked improvement in policies. There is a serious problem with lack of agreed to financial management policies and their openness to accept financial policies from outside experts.

5 - No trouble. Assessors Office is great.

Not a lot

Poor -While they can be supportive they are typically a roadblock.

5. Because of current board members

5 Not a lot of interaction.

Very good. They have been generally supportive of my initiatives

Some BOS indicate they are pretty supportive.

4

5, when I need support, they are there

4, sometimes they try to micromanage departments

5 - Fine.

5.

4 but minimal

4 We don't communicate a lot but there's mutual respect when we do. They are good listeners.

Being made up of 5 members, the potential for having problems is there. But by keeping an open mind and not having pre-conceived opinions my relationship has always been good.

B - 8 What would you like to see changed to improve your department's efficiency and effectiveness with any of the above?

make things more routine, rather than constantly putting out fires, get everything caught up and keep it there

Better handle on revenues and enterprise fund account. One of the biggest obstacles is the Technology limitation to my account information to determine if it is up-to-date or if I need to use local information. Recently, we had an outage on the intranet and email was out for 2 days. Seems our former technology manager is no longer at the school and even though on retainer, his hours of availability are not beneficial for what I need.

time & development of trust

For us to be effective we would suggest that people worry about their own jobs instead of worrying about what others are doing. Approve or inform us why our key submittals are stagnated

For my department; nothing. However, if the State keeps giving us more work, I would need another person. For the Town; an Administrator that has more authority.

We need to set an initiative and at the same time have a concrete and set timelines to follow-up on progress. We all need formal town governing and governing policies for ourselves (e.g. financial, stabilization, debt). We also need a better structure for governing policies.

***Development of a Financial Department; a Business Manager; more cohesive process

A more robust dialogue of where we are headed and clear direction of which town initiatives need to occur.

Prior notification. If there is something another board is concerned with, they should talk before their meeting rather than showing up at their meeting to talk about it.

Member vacancies filled promptly.

A more hierarchical structure with BOS as Directors and the Town Administrator as CEO.

Get the Board who wont meet with them to meet.

Reduction in negative comments by those not valuing services offered.

more physical space in the office, there are shelves in the bathroom!

We are in the process of bringing our permitting records on line.

would be easier if Town administrator could make decisions on his own like approving paving of a road already with in the budget

My own board structure needs to change. It's entrenched and self-preserving.

We don't have enough time. We spend most of our time doing our jobs and if we had another day we could institute forms and mechanisms to reduce the burden of applications and streamline processes. It would take us a year to get into good shape if we had that extra time.

We could use some upgraded software and the future may require some additional staff.

Nothing.

Significant changes that range from having more authority to streamlining and eliminating layers or duplication.

Nothing in particular. I'd like another person so resources could be expanded. I'm pleased with my efficiency; I'm happy with it.

Implement a 5 year plan within 5 years. It makes no sense to create one and then have it fall on deaf ears or take 10 years to implement.

Another person in the office

Like to see EA have more managerial control. BOS be policy makers. Every day issues should be EA responsibility. EA should be able to Hire/ Fire & day to day ops. Skill positions should be appointed not elected

B - 9 On the same scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate overall inter-department communication?

4.

4 - 5; we have department head meetings monthly and I touch bases with a number of departments during the week for various discussions.

There are a number of stakeholders involved. From an Internal Cohesiveness perspective it's a 4. On occasion however the full board not individual members should address an issue. Also at times we receive issues without very good supporting documentation that we are being asked to make a decision on. To and From the E/A it's a 4 and to and from general government it ranges from a 3 to a 3.5. Our lowest rating would most likely be to the general public which is a 2.

4. Dept head meetings work well.

We don't do enough self-promotion so on the outbound it's between 3.5 - 4. Inbound from the administration a 4 and - the walk around management style - a 5

Not a problem

3-4, for the most part very good, but people are getting burned out trying to catch up, I think once everything does get caught up it will be better as things just become maintenance

4

Within and amongst the group a 4 – 5. To the Group is 2-3 and from the group to others a 3 – 4. It is difficult to improve the communication of outputs in isolation when the inputs are either delayed, not timely or not provided.

On the inbound it's a 4. On the outbound, it can improve from a 3 as I will try and establish a priority to a request (e.g. Development) and it will not be as timely as the requestor might hope for.

5 every one has a basic understanding of what other departments do, people always willing to help

Outbound and Inbound a 4. The new Town Account and accounting procedures have worked well together however that had not been the case previously. The new administration at the school with information sharing has vastly improved.

4 - There is staff in the building and they communicate. They are not sure of the day to day stuff.

5 excellent. Even if we don't agree we have good communications among departments. The communication with the Highway Dept has improved dramatically.

From the BOS and the town engineer a 1. From a to the users of the product a 4. To and from the state a 2 - 4. The Town Engineer feels compelled to tell us how to do our job and the BOS are slow to discuss key initiatives.

5.

5+

4. EA helps facilitate

4 Overall we work well together.

5. Information requirements are specific.

5, I use town administrator as a middle man, it works well

Regular meetings of dept. heads a very good thing for communication. Not previously available.

***3.5; could be better but mostly adequate

5 - No problem - everyone is willing to help everyone else even in their personal life.

4 - Department Head Meetings are good.

5 especially today when there's no excuse for someone not to know unless they don't read their e-mail.

3- sometimes communication breaks down when Boards disagree although most issues are dealt with effectively

5, boards and commissions we work with have been very helpful in helping to unify the town

C - 1 What is the most common compliment you receive about your department?

State provided awards. Customers indicate surprise that very few chemicals are required to produce the quality product.

Repave of a road that was in rough shape

Fairness and objectivity of decisions.

I do a good job and feedback isn't very specific.

Fast response when service required. Service courteous and professional.

Questions answered, and politely so.

Polite to each other. Hold good meetings, treat people with respect, we actually listen to the people who come before us

going above and beyond, getting back to people quickly

Recognition that what we do is hard work. Also a realization by others that after going through the process "that wasn't so bad after all".

That we're friendly and helpful.

That we provide assistance to people who haven't gone through the process or to abutters who don't know what they are able to do about a problem. They are very appreciative

This is usually related to a specific issue. It is especially complimentary if the decision is in favor of the request.

Has an open door and we take time with people to discuss the issues. My department is approachable and easy to deal with.

Outreach program services are effective and appreciated.

Mostly how organized we are. The second would be how helpful we are.

I get compliments for being chair. People say I am fair and give people a chance to talk. I rarely hear things about the rest of the board but everyone participates and we have good attendance.

Positive change for kids in happening

Dedicated to their mission.

Accommodating and helping employees. We do what we have to do to improve a specific situation.

we're nice

***Town runs fairly smoothly

Overall interaction with the public and if there is an issue - we are open and deal with it until there is a resolution.

Accessibility.

When people say "wow, I didn't realize you do this and don't get paid" especially when they do things on Saturday or Sunday.

Recycling program improvements.

We provide good information and services.

User friendly- Dept. works well with people

C - 2 What is the most common complaint you receive about your department?

That we're too driven by the book and regulations and that we don't use "common sense."

That we're making them do something that they think they don't have to do.

"Why can't something be done about _____?"; frustration if Dept. is not empowered to act.

Taxes too high

That we are clueless, that we don't understand, and we don't care about landowners.

We mostly hear complaints about other departments/boards/committees. The most common complaint we get is that everything is requested to be in writing.

"You don't do anything worthwhile".

Charges too high, but comparison with state wide figures do not support this

Spending issues.

too small, no parking, physical constraints

Too few to mention.

***Decisions and actions are not fast enough

concerns about the special education dept.

mail box damage

Administrative issues. Perceived as taking too long to make decisions.

that's not the way we 'used' to do it

no direct complaints

Code compliance difference of opinions.

It's mostly just jesting and busting my chops. I'm visible all over so I'm a likely target.

late fees

Will have to think of this and ask the staff as I can't think of any, at the moment.

Lack of agreement with solutions, but a minor issue.

From a public perspective, it takes too long to get things done. We are also a collection agent for other areas who then have to address the issue.

Enforcement disagreements.

Bills

Poking one's nose in where it don't belong or trying to micromanage.

That they don't expedite fast enough on approvals. They don't hear that so much now that building is down.

C - 3 - a How do you rate the Executive Administrator's ability to function effectively under his current job description?

don't know his current job description

A 5 based on his current job description. Does a good job at getting his job done. Due to the job description however he is hindered and limited in what he can do.

3 - His authority is very limited

3 He should be able to do more o his own and have more power to execute what needs to be done.

5, working well with in current job description, but would be better if he had some autonomy to stream line the small stuff

I think somehow he needs more ability to do more -- to be proactive -- more responsibility -- have more say. For example, if the Administrator had more authority to execute what needs to be done, things could move ahead more quickly to improve Main Street.

3- sees no problems at this time

2. the people he works with on a day to day basis - some are hired, some elected. Town runs well because of the people we have now, not the structure

4

4; takes time to discuss the issues and works toward trying to find a solution that people can live with.

2 - poorly. Essentially the position acts as a secretary who has little authority and oversight. We don't have a clue as to what the EA's job description is suppose to be

2-3. The current job description is a hindrance. It should be that of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with authority to carry out policies as defined by the BOS.

No idea.

3 but we are not sure of what the exact job description is so it is difficult to measure. However from a stylistic perspective, the EA is generally laid back and will not "make waves" even though a error of decision or omission has been clearly made. We feel the EA's expertise is in this area but regardless of reason does not appear comfortable in making the call. In one specific case with regards to personnel board positions it was this committee that pointed out the potential for conflict with existing union contracts. It was not evident that this concern had been raised previously.

Job description not known.

4 - based on the current operating roles and responsibilities.

5.

Appears that he is more than accommodating.

5 under current job description. But he should have more authority

I would need to review his job description but he is effective as an Ex. Admin. and his efficiency might be delayed due to policies and procedures and the need to wait for meetings.

***4

3. Job description too limiting.

3 The Position operates within too many layers. While there is no controversy, he appears to be a weak manager that may be due to being more of an information carrier than decision maker. Decision-making is constrained due to the way the structure of the town is set-up.

4, limited in power due to current structure (elected officials, boards, etc), but is effective in the structure we have

2 as I believe he is too constrained by the BOS and the existing layers and decentralized nature of our municipal government structure.

4

5, Mike has expressed some frustration with the job description as is, and that he can't get every thing done he would like. The process can be cumbersome, but he functions very effectively in the current job description

C - 3 - b Is the Board of Selectmen effective and efficient in dealing with your department?

2; The BOS and my department communicate well when needed but much more is needed in terms of financial policies and their openness to experts (i.e. financial advisors) as well as governing employee policies. The financial management team has delivers a plan and it seems to fall more often than not on deaf ears.

Yes because they channel almost everything via the administrator and use the administrator effectively.

3 It eventually gets done but some of the decisions ought to be made by the Executive Administrator.

4 -5; The BOS and my department communicate well.

4

Yes - there is a paper trail. We receive notices with plenty of time to deal with it.

no because of the structure of my Board of Trustees being autonomous from the Selectmen

3 - Critical items that need BOS approval have to wait for a meeting. They are very good about coming in to sign warrants.

2 - very poorly but perhaps that is a good thing. They appear to generally try and micro-manage departments. They don't provide us with a sense that they are looking out for the town on big-ticket issues as well as town employees.

4, we are trying to re-open communication and redefine our relationship with them

Yes 4, More often than not they are open and listen to the needs.

5, most things are governed by state statute, but on things like warrants, they are efficient in getting that done

4

3- not much interaction

5. This board is.

4

OK

2-3

Yes - when they ask for assistance it is dealt with.

5, never been a problem getting support for actions I want to take

We've had smooth dealings and communicate as needed again, we have a good line of communication through the Ex Admin.

5. Supportive and being on cable provides PR for our function.

4 But I have very little interaction with them.

It is currently the way the town government is structured. The difficulty is often in the information gathering phase. Determining the right timeline and speed is essentially done on a case by case basis. It would be great if the BOS received information from other departments and committees earlier in order to avoid delays.

3 - timely information from the BOS is seldom received. They are effective sometimes based on the issue and we feel they appreciate the input this committee provides to them.

don't deal with them that much, but they have been supportive

C - 4 In your opinion, is the Board of Selectmen spending adequate time focusing on policy development / big picture issues for the town?

No. They seem to want to spend time in operational items that they are not versed nor skilled in. At the moment they have not provided good financial direction for being fiscally responsive.

Don't know. Can't judge.

Yes.

Currently, appear to be moving toward policy -vs operational. I'd estimate it is 40 - 60 at the moment. It depends however on the members of the board and their focus. Even with Towns that have Charters, there are some BOS who continue to be involved in operational matters.

no

Not in a position to know/say.

not here long enough to know

I don't know.

not here long enough to really know

4, like to see them be more involved with pulling in the reigns of the school system, though that does seem to be getting better

No. Things get bogged down compromising what's best for the town because they don't want to deal with difficult people/dissenters.

No. it is easier to work on operational items then policies that take time to create and implement. At the moment I would estimate 30 Policy and 70% operationally.

Maybe not.

***No. Need to spend more time on policy, esp. financial. Town Ad. could be designated to make more unilateral decisions. Board is in the process of making some of these changes.

Number of Selectmen might be a factor which prevents adequate time spent on policy development but a smaller number would present its own problems

Can't see how they could spend more time on things....but there are things that could be done that aren't. For example empty buildings. Lots of studies have been done but they are still empty.

I think there's some room for improvement. The communication between the BOS and some boards could be improved.

Yes.

No., currently I estimate that 30% is spent on policy and 70% on operations. In the future that should be reversed.

We have our own policies but our opinion is that they appear to be spending 75% of the time in the operations and maybe 25% in policy. In the future, these numbers need to be reversed

Given the absence of policies, we don't believe they have spent adequate time on policy development over time. It is difficult to break into a percentage of policy -vs- operational but since there have not been written policy in a number of areas.

Yes. They know the financial constraints the Town is under and in different ways are working to bring more revenue to Town as well as stabilize and use what we have. The majority of the Board are on other Board/Committees working for the good of the Town. They are recognizing tasks that they can turn over to the Administrator and are doing that. They have set up this committee just for that purpose.

Yes.

No., they spend 0% on policy and 100% on operations.

2, way too much time on little issues like property use. Building study committee has been going on forever with no resolution

Yes.

C - 5 Would it help efficiency and effectiveness in your Department if the Executive Administrator would have a greater capacity to make day-to-day decisions? On what levels?

Yes. Maintenance.

It would have a limited impact on this department. It might on some mundane issues but it would be infrequent.

Yes. It would reduce the time it takes to act upon issues/problems.

haven't had a circumstance yet, but I could see it. We are very schedule driven here though, so I think it makes it easier.

They don't need him to. Probably would be good for the rest of the Town.

***Yes. Scheduling use of town property- personnel issues

yes, minor issues should be able to be handled

For this department, not really. A lot of what we do has to go before the BOS per MGL.

No

yes, stuff that is already budgeted for shouldn't need approval from the board of Selectmen

Yes.

Yes. Now there is too much back and forth and time consumed especially over legal issues and would allow us to be more direct with town counsel.

Yes, emergency spending and financial reserve process are two that come to mind at the moment

Don't know. So much of what we do is driven my MGL and bylaws.

yes -- example is the sign to be placed outside the building. It has gone around and around with no result after 2+ years

Absolutely! Should be responsible to BOS on financial matters only

Yes -- across the board. He should be the operational decision maker.

Yes, the administrator ought to be responsible and accountable for day to day operational decisions. The other part should be implementing the policies that the BOS develop. The BOS should be out of operational decision making, unless there is a problem, for the most part.

Am unaware that the EA does not have the authority and capacity to make day to day decisions. To have a greater capacity, if needed, would depend on the individual's knowledge, skills and personality to lead and a Board of Selectmen directive to shift some Administrative functions directly to that position.

Presuming that the qualifications and knowledge of our area exists, then yes. This would be helpful in day-to-day operational matters.

Absolutely especially within the day to day operations. I believe he could do a better and more effective job if he operated in a Town Manager environment.

Yes. Absolutely!

Yes. Would allow faster pace with same results.

As far as my department, No. Right now the BOS delegates to the administrator. Overall the interaction with the Department Heads makes things quicker, facilitates getting things done.

yes, town building usage. Town Legal questions, hire appointed people. spending of approved funds

yes, if he didn't have to get buy off on all decisions, it could help resolve issues with elected positions

C - 6 - a Should any town functions be consolidated?

No.

Having a Town Manager & a Town charter would be important

- Step 1; A consolidated DPW that includes highway, tree inspector, recreation, facilities, cemetery, & highway which would be important.
- Step 2; adding the water/sewer department would be fairly important as well at some point.
- Having a combined Treasurer, Collector is not as important but changing the positions from elected to an appointed capacity is important.
- Have a Town Clerk appointed would not be that important.
- Wherever possible, there should be regional and central dispatching.

Having a Town Manager & a Town charter would be huge so long as it is accompanied by some of the following;

- Step 1; A consolidated DPW that includes highway, tree inspector, recreation, facilities, cemetery, some transfer station functions unless BOH required & highway which would be very helpful.
- Step 2; add the water/sewer department once the above begins to gel although this would be fairly important..
- Having the Treasurer, Collector in an appointed capacity would also be helpful.
- Have a Town Clerk appointed would be less important from a structure perspective.
- Town assessors would be better if appointed due to the complexity rather than reliance on volunteers.
- Committees or "part-time" elected officials should not have employees as a direct relationship be it salaried or grant supported.

no, it still takes as many people to do the job, you just lose a dept 'head'

no. Treasurer and Clerk do totally separate things, it doesn't make sense

Merging Collector and Treasurer proposed three times in past and was voted down. Concern re. checks and balances.

No.

Yes. I think there should be a DPW to include Highway, Water/Sewer, Recreation and Facilities Maintenance. Having one person in charge would, in my opinion, consolidate projects and cut down on waste of material and resources.

-
- Having a Town Manager would be very important. Generally, all municipal (non-school) employees, not elected, should be governed by a full time manager.
 - Having a Town charter may be important but that depends on changes required. A charter is a tool to change the structure of a municipal government.
 - Having a combined Treasurer, Collector position may not make a tremendous difference but as part of a - Town Manager Structure" having the position(s) appointed would be important.
 - Step 1; A consolidated DPW that includes highway, tree inspector, recreation, facilities, cemetery, & highway which would be very important.
 - Step 2; adding the water/sewer department would be very important.
 - Have a Town Clerk appointed would be extremely important within a Town Manager form of government.

***Financial responsibilities; Department of Public Works would be a plus- would help avoid situations like the Martin Rd. fields

Probably. Streamline for efficiency.

In general, I don't know enough about other departments. There's not a lot of duplication, but I think the Water/Sewer has to be looked at. Get rid of the Enterprise Fund.

no, it's a growing town and to consolidate leaves vacuums

- Not sure if it would be important to have a Town Manager.
- Not sure if it would be important to have a Town charter.
- Having a combined Treasurer, Collector could be helpful and being appointed would be advantageous.
- Step 1; a consolidated DPW that includes highway, tree inspector, recreation, facilities, cemetery, highway & transfer station would be important. This positions the Town to become eligible for Grant funding in many areas.
- Step 2; adding the water/sewer department would be important as a second step.
- Have a Town Clerk appointed could be probably advantageous.
- The administrators should be consolidated in a pool for support of departments and committees.
- In terms of consolidation, if it makes sense, then nothing should be off the table. More thought should be given to regionalization such as dispatching, ambulance and possibly the library. The concept of appointed positions is under the premise that it affords the town access to talent outside of town.

We need a DPW and include Water/Sewer

Consolidation is difficult to accomplish; the parties involved must be consulted; all contingencies should be anticipated or obstacles arise

Having a Town Manager & a Town charter would not be that important

- Step 1; A consolidated DPW that includes highway, tree inspector, recreation, facilities, cemetery, & highway which would be very important.
 - Step 2; add the water/sewer department would be fairly important especially if there was an engineer that could assume the function of the water/sewer commissioners.
 - Having the Treasurer, Collector in an appointed capacity would not be that important but this function should be part of a finance department.
 - Have a Town Clerk appointed would not be that important.
 - Public Safety activities, where possible, should be considered for regionalization. The problem here is that other Towns prefer to have their own.
-

The town is already run @ a bare minimum, I would say no

DPW

Tx Collector & Treasurer

I'm a believer in a DPW. It would suit the town because now we've got individual departments doing their own thing and missing regulations that they may just not know about. There's an economy of scale that we have to look at in procurement, for example, and one person needs to be accountable for all of this. I see it including Water/Sewer, Highway, Parks & Rec, Cemetery, Buildings & Grounds and possibly the Transfer Station. Right now efficiency is impacted because you are dealing with many philosophical differences.

Don't know. I don't have enough sense of the flow chart. We need revenue but I'm not sure if consolidating would bring it in.

Probably. e.g. DPW and/or Finance areas.

Possibly DPW

Collector and Treasurer

It is very important to have a Town Manager & a Town charter that provides a stable operating and governing environment including;

- The Community development department could be restructured, as there are independent groups within this department.
- A consolidated DPW that includes highway, tree inspector, recreation, facilities, cemetery, transfer station & highway. Very important.
- Adding the water/sewer department could be phased in once the above begins to gel although this would also be very important added feature..
- Having a combined Treasure/Collector in an appointed capacity would not be helpful with the current people in place. However in the future it could be helpful especially if there is a finance department with a TM. As an appointment the pool of candidates could be expanded -vs- elected where they have to be a town resident.
- Having a Town Clerk appointed would be less important from a structure perspective.

-Administrator support consolidation should be examined. For example, the community development department could have 1 combined administrator.

- The building inspector could be consolidated to a part time position.
- Having a Town Manager would be important based on the individual overall qualifications. Generally, a full time manager should govern all town employees, not elected.
- Having a Town charter might be important but it's a tool and would need to be well crafted..
- Having a combined Treasurer, Collector could be helpful and being appointed may not be a bad thing but not under the existing structure.
- Step 1; A consolidated DPW that includes highway, tree inspector, recreation, facilities, cemetery, & highway could be important but these would require a closer examination and only under the direction of the highway superintendent. We think the Transfer Station should stay with the board of health.
- Step 2; adding the water/sewer department would not be important.
- Have a Town Clerk appointed would not be very important.

the budget process needs to be consolidated and revised to incorporate negotiation and to use more fiscal management practices

C - 6 - b Should any functions be added to the current structure?

pretty robust as it is, we have things like town engineer, full time building inspector, school business manager that many towns do not

New facility for the Highway Dept.

While perhaps not a function, the departments should have an inventory of boiler plate oriented items for grant writing to select from rather than spend money and have to go to Town Counsel on them for review and additional verbiage added.

not at this time

Data vulnerable. Problems if lost.

no

Technology support. Current part time and not days is insufficient.

Access to IT support functions during work hours.

A finance director and consolidated finance department that includes the assessors, accountant, treasurer & collector.

no

No

Yes. I think there should be a central HR Department. Right now the Treasurer handles payroll and health insurance. The Selectmen's Office handles Workers' Compensation. There is no central area for tracking vacation, sick, or personal days. Each department is responsible for themselves. Also should have an IT Director. Because of my IT background people come to me for hardware and software support. I can only give them help up to the point that the problem resides on the server, then they have to wait until one day a week, after hours. I am the phone administrator and support technician for all the equipment in the copy/mail room, a job that would fall under IT Director.

Don't know.

No. I feel we are pretty good. I am curious about the 4 Town Group.

Information Tech. support.

I like the idea of adding a grant writer to staff where their salary could be off-set by the dollars they bring to town. A planner and someone focused on GIS/computer technologies.

Tech person

Financial director. We need flexibility to meet changing needs.

***Chief Financial Officer; Town Planner; town should supervise construction of new fields

A finance director and consolidated finance department that includes the assessors, accountant, treasurer & collector.

- It would be very important to have a Finance Director and consolidated Finance Dept. The Department could include assessors, treasurer, tax collector and accountant while grouping all related financial functions.
 - It is very important to have an Information Technology Dept
 - It is not terribly important to have a Personnel Director but the function's roles and responsibilities could be done by a Town Manager presuming the requisite human resource skills and knowledge are present.
-

Depending on how the following positions are created and the resulting cost drivers along with better financial oversight of the organization then perhaps

- It would be important to have a Finance Director and consolidated Finance Dept. The Department could include assessors, treasurer, tax collector and accountant while grouping all related financial functions.
 - It would be important to have better Information Technology support
 - It would be important to have a Personnel Director instead of a personnel committee.
-

Depending on how the following positions are created and the resulting cost drivers along with better financial oversight of the organization then perhaps

- It would be important to have a Finance Director and consolidated Finance Dept. The Department could include assessors, treasurer, tax collector and accountant while grouping all related financial functions.
 - It would be important to have better Information Technology support
 - It would be important to have a Personnel Director but not necessarily a separate position..
 - Town planner would also be helpful.
-

town manager as opposed to executive administrator, BOS should be a policy making board

A finance department with a Finance Director. This department would have the accountant, assessors, treasurer & collector as well as in some way the School's business agent.

Based on feedback at the Department Heads meeting, technology needs more time and attention. I don't have a computer but will be getting one soon. A grant writer is very needed!

Not at this time

Financial Director to plan budgets, pay off outstanding debts, timing for financing of new projects - best time/least amount of tax impact

A finance department with a Finance Director who is qualified to hold the post. Some functions that would exist within are accountant, tax collector and treasurer. They may be some other ones as well but whether or not elected or appointed they need to have the credentials and qualifications.

We also need a Personnel Director not a committee. The pay matrix has too many steps. We should be looking at longevity in a better way. By-laws are inflexible and difficult to change.

C - 6 - c Should any town functions be eliminated?

no, we operate pretty efficiently

-Generally, all municipal (non-school) employees, not elected, should be governed by a full time manager and not be "part time elected officials" or appointed committees.

- The elimination of elected assessors since we have a full time assessor within the department.
 - Eliminate disparate purchasing functions while providing a consolidated purchasing operation.
-

***May be a few ceremonial but mostly barebones government

Don't know.

needs improvement. Lots of dedicated people, but we can do better

Probably.

-We don't need a full time town engineer. The Planning/conservation agent can handle the day-to-day operations for the community development dept and hire engineers at the expense of the applicant. Seems a lot of requisite engineering is outsourced and is paid for by the applicant.

No.

No

not that I can think of right now

The water and sewer enterprise fund could be a possibility.

No

Water/Sewer -- needs to be professionalized

There are probably some duplicative aspects and redundant process that could be eliminated.

I can't judge, I have no experience.

No.

No.

No

no

Animal inspector? Have MGL made redundant?

If the work is similar they should be one group. Regardless of whether they are a board, dept., function or committee, they need to be associated in like groups in a centralized manner –vs- the current decentralized operational approach that currently exists.

None that I can think of at the moment.

The problem with this question is you need to have experience and insight into all the town functions. Perhaps someone should look at the DPW consolidation and adding an engineer that would eliminate the water and sewer commissioners. Others might be these volunteer part-time boards while having their functionality consumed by operating departments, where applicable. Again, none come to mind but an area to look at.

town engineer. He does a good job, but not sure why the company we used before didn't work. He subs a lot of stuff out, which if you are an engineer, you shouldn't have to do. Wastes time on things that don't fall into his job description. Town council is also contacted too often which ends up costing the town money

C - 7 What are your impressions of our current form of government?

It's not working effectively right now.

typical town based govt. don't see the town outgrowing its current structure in the next 40 years. there are much bigger towns than douglas that function effectively with it

Adequate for us.

Favorable

Can improve and needs to be more "business" like. It is very important to have a stable operating and governing environment as long as there is rigorous accountability in place. At the current time the structure is too decentralized and there are too many fiefdoms. There are a lot of volunteers but do we get the best and brightest or merely accept those who volunteer. The Town Meeting attendance is generally sad based on how small the turn-outs usually are. It's difficult to resolve the complaints and issues when so few turn out. The satisfaction of the information on warrant articles being available is half and half. On some we feel it's adequate on others it's not.

Okay

First experience with local government was 30 years ago and would not want to go back to the way it was. Don't we have to change once the population goes up?

Annual town meeting is still important for people to be able to participate. I think the checks and balances are better with the town meeting structure.

***Works due to goodwill of participants

like the open town meeting form, would like a town manager though to allow him to do more, but I think the basic form works for Douglas

Generally we do a pretty good job. I would keep town meeting. The town administrator needs more authority and we could go back to three selectmen and I think we would be less bogged down. The BOS could be more policy driven if the administrator had more authority. I think the system works and we could get better quality and three selectmen could be more focused.

I think it would be good, though can have too much control to too little. but don't think town is ready to accept it

It is very important to have a stable operating and governing environment. Generally, satisfied except for a few areas. We like the existing town meeting process however more involvement and attendance would be nice. As it currently operates today, it serves particular interest groups more often than not and debate is too rigidly controlled. The information on the warrant articles presented at meetings has some available information published by the finance committee but overall the information is lacking and very poor.

Great

Overall, there are excellent people doing a good to very good job operating under rules that inhibit government from doing as well a job as it should.

It's a relatively well run operation with room for improvement and to become more efficient.

as town grows, the multiple layers make it more difficult to get things done, some people say it takes too long to get decisions from the board of selectmen

It works in spite of itself but can work a lot better with some of the items described above. There is a lot of political fracturing amongst functions. The Town meeting process, even though I am department head, always seems to leave me with unanswered questions. The Town Moderator is perhaps too authoritative and there are typically small resident turnouts. A lot of time more people who attend are not knowledgeable about the underpinnings of the article. That approach works well for those trying to push something through based on their agenda. The roadblocks are usually the hierarchy and the BOS. Perhaps a problem of not having stable financial policies.

Too many layers that we don't need. Put the decision making in the hands of the people who need to make the decision. The current government is not looking to the future. Town meeting has become a dinosaur. We have more and more people in town and less and less turnout. Alternate town meeting approaches should be considered (e.g. representative town meeting).

It's unfortunate that we cannot do away with political groups, in the sense of "Partys". The people who are currently making a lot of decisions (BOS – 5) have to be ready to change and in turn perhaps the individual "agendas" that come about by the local Political groups might change with it. Providing a change for the Administrator in terms of making more decisions could also be helpful.

It works but it is also a fragile environment. E.g., The treasurer and accountant currently have a good working relationship. That has not always been the case. The BOS initiatives can also overlap with the Water & Sewer departments. The need for very time consuming persuasion is often needed. It would help to delineate the powers of the Town Administrator and orchestrate a number of vertical organizations identified previously. Town meeting for a town currently of this size seems appropriate. As we reach upward to 15000 then it could be appropriate to review other approaches. My department is generally informed on the town warrant articles but for the general public it requires some initiative to become fully educated regarding the warrant. Some new initiatives such as televising on cable the FINCOM meetings in addition to their voter information bulletins along with having warrant articles and supporting documents on the town web site are some additional items in the works.

Works for the most part

would like to see the democrats and republican parties tossed and have every one run on their own

It is important to have a stable governing and operating environment. Although we seem to meet our missions and complete objectives we have too many layers and way to many decision makers as to how something gets done.

Pretty typical of a small New England community. It's positive. There are a lot of autonomous boards which only work if you have good people. The downside is people with agendas or people who are not fair. That could make it weak.

It's better than it has been. Could it be better? Probably

It is poorly structured, and too highly dependent upon individuals.

The Capital Improvement plan & approach, while needing some work, has run smoothly these last four years that has not always been that in the past. In the past, various departments have tried to sway the plan but we now try to be cooperative so no one department gets ahead of the other. The problem however is some of the bigger ticket items have been on this plan for along time and have gone nowhere. The building committee may not be a bad idea so long as they do something and don't become another bottleneck. They should be integrated with the Capital Improvement Committee.

Our Bylaws are inadequate and outdated. I think some of the problem lies with elected officials/boards that don't have oversight. You shouldn't have to worry that you won't get elected if you do your job right. I have heard elected officials say they are afraid of getting tax payers mad by enforcing fines, etc. People who have problems with elected officials/boards come to the Administrator for help, but he can't help them.

C - 8 What are your impressions of a charter form of government?

A Charter provides stability long term from a community standpoint. It becomes even more important over time and as the community grows to have a stable operating and governing environment.

It's a tool to help determine and formalize a government structure. Depending on it's specificity it may bring a more stable operating and governing environment which is very important. I am generally satisfied with the general government, and town meeting process. I am not generally satisfied with the availability of substantive information regarding warrant articles presented at town meeting.

We don't have a lot of insight into a charter form of government.

Town not yet large enough. Not ready

It needs to be done right, just like Bylaws.

Somewhat nebulous but a combination of governing and operating rules and regulations.

That decision-making goes back to the person with the most authority. I hate having to be appointed every three years. I rather just be hired.

A charter can be designed in a way to fit the Town, work best for the Town and hopefully would be better than what we have today.

No opinion

Brings a town in line with the needs of the community. If it is done correctly, it can provide stability for the community as a whole.

Not that familiar with a Charter from of government. We would have to have great hind sight if we are going to have a Charter since it would be harder to change. Would think we would also need more professionals in place like a planner and a finance director.

It's a double-edged sword. You have to be careful about how it's structured and checks and balances have to be built in to avoid a dictatorship. Efficiencies can be subject to bad personnel choices in a manager.

don't know much about it

***A 20 million dollar business needs better organization than what presently exists

not sure -- lack of checks and balances and more efficiency

A more hierarchical structure with more stability.

you have to be really careful when you set it up because changes are harder to make, its not an easy process and the transition is hard. It takes layers out but its both good and bad, with an appointed position you go to a boss/employee relationship as opposed to looking out directly for the electorate.
It is not really the position, it's the person. If you have a lousy town manager (like northbridge had), that is going to make more of a difference than rules and responsibilities of any position.

The right charter could be goof for the town.

Look to the future. Stronger management and decision making is provided for. It can be the backbone of a municipality and should be more rigorous and not change because an election occurred.

Not sure it is the best route at this time.

Mixed. Pro's and con's. You would need more quality people.

sort of like a constitution for the town

Don't know.

Would want to test drive prior to finalizing

I don't really know enough about it.

if done the right way, and for the right reasons it 'can' be good, shouldn't be done just to get rid of certain people

C - 9 Can you describe what a charter is?

when a town manager is in charge and the board of selectmen is eliminated

It's a set of rules in place to give towns the ability to take advantage of home rule aspects and to give authority to specific individuals in town.

Yes.

sets policies and guidelines for town structure and how it operates

A Charter provides a stable form of governing and municipal operations that don't change based on elections. There also needs to be flexibility to address issues since bylaws are inherently difficult to change.

Simply put; organizing the local government through legislation.

No

Yes.

no

Form of government that can sometimes provides stability long term from a community standpoint depending on what the charter says.

I know the big issue is hiring and firing; manager vs. administrator.

A specific form of government that gives a clear description of who does what.

An approach by which a municipality significantly changes its structure of government.

A set of governing rules for the community that doesn't change after an election.

Yes.

People are deciding on what their government will do. Based on what I've read, the government will need to live within these constraints.

A set of operating guidelines and a tool to provide a stable operating and governing environment if well constructed.

Yes.

No.

no, you work with people to accomplish a goal, it doesn't matter how you got there

No.

No.

Blank

you can make it however you want to make it, not that much different than by laws other than that you move some people from elected to appointed

A set of governing and operating guidelines that provides for a more stable operating municipality. It's a local constitution that clarifies the make-up of a government structure with the necessary changes as well as provide a codification for boards etc., on what is permissible –vs- not permissible.

***Not specifically

Yes.

C - 10 Is there a difference in the way you interact with department heads who are elected versus appointed?

We don't think so

no

No.

All work for the Town

No.

NO

no, regardless of how you got here, you are here to do a job

No.

No.

No

No

Persuasive negotiation is more in play with elected officials –vs – the having the authority and accountability to accomplish an objective

No

No

No - the difference could be how they respond to me.

No.

no

No.

No

I believe I interact the same way regardless of whether the individual is elected or appointed.

more a function of the person than how they got the job

***No

no

no

Hired by Board annually; sees no difference in interactions

No.

No.

C - 11 - a How would making your position appointed affect your department?

Blank

Not much. MGL reigns.

It could seriously jeopardize the flexibility we have in producing a quality product and focus for the users. While it is conceivable that if appointed qualifications were met and the structure was different then appointment may be possible but we would not recommend this, at this time.

it wouldn't change what I do since its governed by law, if you go to appointed, you are now beholded to to whatever the boss wants you to do, r you can just not be reappointed for whatever reason they come up with

Under the existing structure it would be detrimental to the town.

C - 11 - b Do you think your position would be better executed if it were appointed?

No

while the position should be held accountable directly by the electorate, the job does take a certain amount of experience or a real enthusiasm to learn to be effective

No!

Not necessarily as it is governed by the DOR. With the existing structure in place, being elected allows independence in the decision making process. . I would have a real problem being appointed by an elected board of selectmen.

No. As we have more accountability of funds that are 100% allocated to the operational effort. Previously, before there was a enterprise account there existed an unfair amount of debt to the Town and users that was not being adequately addressed.

C - 11 - c How would you recommend building checks and balances into the process?

Enough already

Ensure comprehensive qualifications. Eliminate the current bias and political climate that currently exists. Ensure that all fees collected are earmarked to the operational expenses.

We need to have better and more defined operating policies. The results of which should be measured often looking for variances. The policies should cover financial, governing and personnel.

Currently, with the new Town Accountant there are a number of effective checks and balances.

get rid of caussuses, we are 1 of 13 towns that still have them in MA. Overall, town govt. works Need to strike a balance with town manager responsibility and BOS policy making

C - 12 Is there anything you would you like to recommend to the Government Study Committee regarding improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of government in Douglas?

If MGL allows, elected officials need to come under the jurisdiction of the Executive Administrator. There needs to be accountability.

Identify and invite the various constituencies as a group and bring them in and have a good dialogue on what is being done, both good and bad.

Nothing outside of what hasn't been previously mentioned.

We question the motives of the Board of Selectmen in the reasoning for creating the GSC Committee. We also don't feel that having members on the committee who work in the Selectmen's office and are very much related to BOS members provides for an unbiased independent viewpoint. We are grateful that you are the one to have done this interview as you have done an excellent job with your approach and ensuring we are free to express our opinions

The development of administrative practices for a centralized purchasing.

Give Administrator more authority

Administrator doing more of the "small stuff".

Change Planning Board to a 3 year term. Assumptions are you want boards to communicate. Chairs are key and Town Hall staff is another big part.

A more hierarchical structure with authority matched to responsibility and the BOS not involved with the day to day decision making.

Appoint people with appropriate skills vs electing unknown skillss.

I've done that with previous questions.

No.

too new to make specific recommendations

streamline the small stuff, things like building use forms and other no-brainers

I've covered them. Physical space is also an issue. And we need a methodical reorganization of the bylaws so they make sense.

Create less sub-committees with less members; many times becomes a delaying tactic so that issue is never really addressed

***Keep 5 selectmen; it's good to have varied opinions and need a larger voting majority

Don't know how the infrastructure of the Town Hall should run. I see things I wish I didn't see. My tax dollars are being spent by people not working. I realize that all towns have town politics so I'm not sure if it is the same all over.

Change Water/Sewer. Appoint people to committees who are viable. Don't say that they can't be changed because there's no power to do anything. Remove appointments if they're not effective.

We need more money, more resources. The capital improvement committee hasn't had a complete picture and has had to compromise. Now with the permanent building committee I think we'll move forward with larger projects to complete. But the capital improvement committee is a good tool.

more info should come to towns people from the board of selectmen before town meeting

Department of Revenue recommendations should be implemented

Consolidation of functions within town government.

C - 13 What would it take for your department to be able to do a better job for the town?

More money. Good PR. A better understanding from Town Government and the public that what they do; they are not down on developers. They support them, clean water, sewer, and air.

removing the past. We need to rebuild trust with the town. We also need current educational materials.

Other or supplemental sources of required approval signatures other than governing board members. e.g. Town Admin.

More staffing for better maintenance of equipment. Minimum staffing for monitoring functions defined by DEP. Maint. defined by board.

We just need to keep organized and educated. I started a support group of area Administrative Assistants; we meet on occasion and help one another. (You can be in this job a long time but you will always come across something new.) That and seminars put on by ABCC, MIIA, and MMA.

Things are going to get better now that the schools are working with the town.

more money

A Town Charter that streamlines authority to make departments more effective while reducing layers and provides improved/cleaner lines of authority that aligns accountability with responsibility

space

A redundant question, see the above.

Make regulations and services more accessible to residents

Possibly more occasional back-up, e.g. roving assistance to permit concentration on tasks w/o interruption.

We are currently doing the best job possible for the town.

More money and Resources.

***Ability to spend more time of policy; less paper work, too much documentation is necessary; issue laptops

More money and more space for programs.

More timely state aid and information

time. need to move everything from cleanup mode, need cooperation from departments. Personalities are more important than structure to get stuff done. People are not robots.

a ton of money. department constraints are more financial than structural

Volunteer boards require support staff and support for administrative needs. We seem to have an abundance of administrators but untrained support for committee needs.

To be able to delegate tasks to a CEO.

It would be helpful to get more information out to people. Encourage them to call and ask before they run into trouble with violations. Trying to get info out is difficult.

Another person and a half. Right now we're scrambling to keep up.

Board members have to keep up with reading and doing homework. Weakest link is a member not being prepared. Things have improved with the hiring of the Town Engineer and the Planning/Conservation agent.

Approve our key initiatives and implement a number of the ideas submitted.

Staffing. Currently no back-up available for vacation or sickness coverage and functions are put on hold for the duration.

B Overall, let's discuss the processes currently in place and how they work for your department. Let's start with the budget process. We all know that the town must increase revenue (taxes) to increase budgets and that most departments probably have "wish lists" that go unmet. But for this discussion, we want to focus on the process of developing, presenting and negotiating your department's budget. Tell me how this works for you.

been level funded for 7 years, any time I need more money, its all laid out in MA General law (elections). I ask board of selectment, then get a transfer of funds through Fin Com.

Executive Administrator & Town Accountant work on a budget with the departments. Follow up with Department heads and juxtapose them against revenues coming in. EA makes recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. BOS makes changes as appropriate and votes. Then they send the budget to Fin Com. Fin Com will then question the departments and have a public hearing. Then they vote to recommend or not recommend the budget.

Basicaslly, operational budget usually level funded except for salaries.

No real problems. They have wanted to give scholarships but have no money. There are items of equipment that they could use but do not have. Town Engineer put the budget together and the Committee approves it. They level fund. If they had money they could buy land - what they have has been gifted.

Budget largely based on cost of necessary supplies plus COLA calcs. Presented to commissioners for approval.

Dept. has been level funded the past few years; Dept. Head submits the budget and keeps records; includes State mandated and Town funded tests, i.e. water quality; also, the self-generating Transfer Station user fee which can produce an overage which is kept in a State approved "Enterprise Fund"

I don't believe that the process is clear, well documented with realistic timetables. It does not appear that there are too many steps but too many layers of reviews. People who receive it need to understand what their role and responsibility of review is. When cuts are made they seem to always be at the 11th hour. We need to focus on service implications more. If I have a 5 year plan, it would be nice to see it implemented in five years. What is difficult is that there is seldom a forecast of revenues or parameters that I can base a budget around. I rely on my records of expenditures than what might be in the accounting system. The budget itself is thus line item needs driven and approximately 80% contractually based.

There is generally a process but it is not very clear, well documented with attainable timetables. From our perspectives it appears to be constructed by the executive administrator and it goes on behind "closed doors". We typically see the end results but are seldomly involved in the construction. Essentially policy should drive budgets but overall we'd rate the process as a 2. It is unfortunate that people's agendas even within the committee in terms of "review" come across as way too much "micro managing". The new town accountant has done a better job on providing past and current revenue expenditures that has not always been the case. We don't believe there are too many layers or steps in the process but some of the layers involved aren't always clearly defined. At the beginning of the budget cycle it is simply an iteration of the requests that often times have no plans, narratives, justifications and support documentation. Very few presenters show you what do they think they are not doing but rather it takes an "annual only focus". What is not being done very well are interim and long range plans.

There is a revised Chart of Accounts/Approach going on so it is difficult to look at history of past revenue/expenditures. At the moment we develop an annual plan that starts in January. There is a five year plan in the works that will hopefully smooth out operational expenditures with projected revenues. Expense wise, we tend to level fund and forecast more difficult items such as utilities and legal expenditures.

Internally out budget is done in advance and submitted 120 days in advance as mandated by regulations. We use a zero based budgeting methodology. However, the information we need from the budget process with regards to salaries is typically slow to receive. There is better delivery of information when it comes to receiving FICA and Insurance information. Step increases within our department are not considered an entitlement as it seems in other departments. Overall, the Town Budget process is not well documented, not clearly defined and the timetables are seldomly kept

The process is clear but always seems to start with requiring a level funded budget submission. While there are general timetables it is often difficult to address expenditures, as the revenue side is typically unknown. Thus, knowing what we can actually spend is unknown until the final budget is approved. There are past year revenue and expenditures available but often an inaccurate forecast of upcoming revenue or expenditures that makes it difficult for budget preparation. When budget cuts do and often occur the focus, for the most part, is on the service implication of the cut. There are many times that capital items have existed for years and are never addressed. There is no real plan in place that has any substance but there are people running around making you believe there is.

****Previously a member of Finance Committee for 6 yrs. so have experience. Board has own budget which pays out diverse monies, i.e. Town Ad. salary and legal account w/ Koppelman & Paige. Board needs more financial knowledge in general.

There are too many steps in the budget review. It should be streamlined. One item, for example is when the budget is given to the executive administrator he can then attend the review meetings that take place with FINCOM and BOS.

The budget process needs major rework. There isn't a clear documented process and realistic timetables. When I request information on the details of an account it may not be available not do I have direct access to my accounts. I trust my records moreso than what might exist at Town Hall. When you are working to published timetables it makes for a severe impediment. We typically receive a bottom line of prior expenditures but getting at the details is more difficult that I think it needs to be. When there are cuts made we usually focus on what's cut and not what the service implication is - the latter falls to me when a cut is made. There are way too many steps and meetings - meet with FINCOM, BOS, Capital, Executive Administrator.

We rely on costs incurred from the previous fiscal year. We do some analysis if change is needed. Our budget has actually gone down steadily until this year when we need to upgrade some of our equipment. The boards under this department usually as to be level funded. The Fin Com and BOS dialogue is open. They may not agree but they respect the request. The process is very clear and it's a good process and I don't feel it needs to be tweaked or repaired.

Straight forward.

As indicated previously, not having more State Aid hampers everyone's budget. I believe we do a good job considering the constraints (i.e. State Aid) we deal with. Overall, internally it works but it would be nice to have more time or at least wait until state aid numbers are firmed up. We do need to have a much better planning horizon for major goals and services and the expenditures that will be required. I believe there is a reasonably clear, documented budget with reasonable timelines. The main difficulty is nailing down available revenues that typically arrive well after anyone would like. I would like to believe we focus on the Service implications of a budget when cuts are being made. Essentially, we start with an overall budget then bring it down to a percentage and then a number of reviews. I believe we have 2 prior years plus current for historical revenue and expenses. The budget is as accurate as possible and the information (except state aid) is adequate. Timely is sometimes a problem with revenue, as it never arrives early enough in the cycle. We control expenses to a reasonable degree but there is a fine line between oversight & micro managing. One area that needs to be explored is whether or not step increases have become an entitlement.

Most services are outsourced and contracted for.

take past budget, go through line by line with head of Finance Committee, answer questions, get feedback, fin com will then either approve or recommend changes, fin com then presents at town meeting

There is no negotiation. I present to two levels -- the trustees and the town via Fin Com then to the annual town meeting. They seem to just be different tiers to pass through because there's no feedback, no opportunity to negotiate, it's just a process. Then all of a sudden it's "this is it" and then you're at the town meeting. Who's in charge here? The budget process needs to be more clearly defined so I can figure out where I can make my points and whether or not they're effective. Did what I present make a difference? I can't tell.

I submit a budget with detailed backup to support it to the Executive Administrator. We request exactly what we know we will need. On some line items we do have to estimate. In that case I average out what was spent last year and add 1-3 percent. Then through the year we try to stay within the budget that was voted on or we end up going to the Finance Committee for a Reserve Fund Transfer.

mid fall the admin team meets and identifies needs, we try to answer the question, what do you need to accomplish your goals. we then bring the budget to focus groups to prioritize the needs. Fromt here, we do a preliminary presentation of the budget to the school committee. We then have public hearings and the school committee votes on the budget that will be presented at town meeting

The budget package is sent out with overall time tables and has outlines and parameters to consider for each area. We use a zero based budget approach and justify every expenditure. There aren't specific dates to meet as the revenue picture is a moving target and thus difficult to balance expenditures. The budget is submitted to the town accountant. When there are budget cut discussions with the Town Administrator, service implications are considered along with the ROI as well as the ability to afford.

Complex but okay

Simple - cost are level funded year after year. The big money expenses are paid by the applicant. They vote on budget and then it's presented to Finance Committee by Town Engineer.

I am totally responsible for putting my buget together and for submitting it to the accountant. I appear before Fin Com to discuss or present my budget if requested. If we are facing level funding I discuss my budget with my supervisor - the administrator - first.

I prepare the budget and the governing board approves (eventually).

I don't really work with a budget of my own, I help others create their budgets.

We have one of the smallest budgets. It's straightforward and I've been working to get it more in line with surrounding towns. We are re-doing our fee schedule that should cover 75% of our budget and we have room to increase our fees. I've never had to go before Fin Com before because I substantiate my budget and it's usually accepted.

C11.b.1 If appointed; How would making your positin elected affect your Board/Committee/Commission?

Town would lose control of ability to select expertise required for the job.

No value would be added.

Don't know. I would question the motivation of why? Are people doing it for good reasons and not self-serving reasons?

This committee should be apolitical. With the partisan politics that are practiced by the local caucuses, having the position elected would be detrimental

There would be no change in terms of the day to day. It's the nature of what we do. I do feel we should go to a 3 year term instead of a 5 year term.

C11.b.2 If appointed; Do you think your position would be better executed if you were elected?

No, as I would not want to have to engage in the electoral process.

No.

No.

No. The nature of what a Chairman does is clear. I would still have an obligation to serve.

No.

C11.b.3 If appointed; How would you recommend building checks and balances into the process?

Don't know.

Multiple appointing authorities. Ie. 3- members appointed by 3 different entities - BOS, Moderator, Clerk, etc.

I look to the Madison approach; "checks and balances are called elections". Maybe appointed officials should be reviewed. Not really sure.

Currently self monitoring.

Appendix “F”

Survey Results Section A

- A-1 How many years have you been a Department Head?**
155 combined years in Douglas. 8.6 years average in Douglas.
177 combined years as a supervisor in Douglas and elsewhere. 9.8 years average
- A-2 How many people do you supervise?**
200 is the most supervised; 1 is the least. Some answers were not clear if the amount represents full, part-time, or both.
3 people responded that the Board of Selectmen make the final appointment at their recommendation.
- A-3 Does your department have a mission statement?**
7 – Yes , 17 – No, 4 – Other. The other categories included MGL; procedure manuals; job descriptions; DOR regulations and specifications; and General Bylaw.
- A-4 Does your department have written goals and objectives?**
19 – No, 8 – Yes, 2 – Other. Responses included MGL; DOR; DEP; and Bylaws. One person has developed them for him/herself. One person stated they have goals but staff only has job descriptions. One person stated that MGL and Bylaws provide some oversight.
- A-5 What do you spend the majority of your time on?**
The majority responded they spent the majority of their time on operational tasks followed by spending their time on administration. Other responses included working with the public; supervision; field work; maintenance; and problem solving.
- A-6 How do you measure your department's efficiency/effectiveness?**
The majority of respondents stated feed back / comments / complaints (some from Town Meeting) followed by; meeting goals / State deadlines; evaluations; meeting State requisites or reporting requirements; a low turnover ratio, statistics, and a small few have none.
- A-7 Is there an "outside" measure of your department's efficiency/effectiveness?**
Half of the respondents stated there were none.
1/3rd respondents stated feedback/complaints/compliments followed by State awards/recognition; audits, State Aid; completed projects; MCAS; meeting deadlines; evaluations; Insurance Service Organization (not sure what that means); and Statistical data.

- A-8 What do you enjoy most about being a Department Head?**
The majority of respondents stated they liked being involved in Town Government; getting things done; improving services; and helping people/kids.
Others enjoyed working on behalf of citizens; understanding the job; keeping costs down; solving problems; being elected; being in charge; challenges; and pride.
- A-9 What do you enjoy least?**
The majority of respondents stated what they enjoy least is difficult/angry/unreasonable people, followed by Politics/personal agendas and then administrative work.
Others stated what they like least is information that is unclear; emotional issues; decisions that are unpopular or have a negative impact on families; cleaning up someone else's mess; dealing with other elected officials; doing work not in their job description; managing personalities or conflicts; public expectations/complaints; not enough revenue to support needed services; board members getting off task; side conversations and tantrums; lack of support from governing board; and a job that is 24/7.
- A-10 On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being total understanding, how would you rate the public's understanding of what your department does and why?**
The rating scale was as follows:
-1 = 1
1 = 5
2 = 9
3 = 11
4 = 6
5 = 1
The majority of respondents feel that the public understands the "what" but not the "why". The only positive response was that there is more/better information to the public. The rest dealt more with why people are not informed, they included: more work behind closed doors and not in public view; the public only knows what they do to the extent of what they need; people/contractors play dumb; misconceptions; no good understanding and clarity of roles and responsibilities; people do not understand rules, regulations, and bylaws; people do not understand procedures; people do not read or take advantage of information available to them or simply go to meetings; and the job is too difficult to explain.

Observations:

Most respondents depend on MGL, Bylaws, and their job descriptions to do their job and use those in place of mission statements and goals.

The majority of their time is spent with operational items (day to day tasks) followed closely by administrative duties.

Most respondents use feedback/comments/complaints as a way to measure "inside" efficiency/effectiveness. On one indicates that they are accountable to any one individual with-in the organizational chart. There does not seem to be real consistent "outside" measures.

Most respondents enjoy their jobs and what their jobs stand for. They find dealing with difficult/unreasonable people as a down side. There is no clear distinction between other town members or residents. The other main issue was other people's agendas which they have coined as "Politics".

The majority of respondents feel there is not a full understanding as to why things are done the way they are. Each respondent had their own opinion as to why this is so but there was no consensus on any one reason.

Recommendation: Increase the atmosphere of "purpose" in the Municipal Center by adopting a Mission Statement.

The Department Heads in Douglas have served an average of 8.6 years in their current capacities. They supervise a range of 1 to 200 employees and the majority of them do not have written goals and objectives to guide their work. Several do depend on what they are required to do under Massachusetts General Law to guide their work. The majority of departments, and the town as a whole, do not have a Mission Statement that states what they do and why.

Recommendation: Increase accountability in the Municipal Center by:

- 1) Creating a clearer and stronger hierarchy
- 2) Strengthening the administrator's position by giving him the ability to hire and fire and make hard decisions

The majority of Department Heads stated they liked being involved in Town Government; getting things done; improving services; and helping people/kids. Others enjoyed working on behalf of citizens; understanding the job; keeping costs down; solving problems; being elected; being in charge; challenges; and pride.

Feedback is received very informally and in an unstructured manner. There is no formal mechanism to modify process and procedures in the context of feedback.

No Department Heads acknowledge that they are accountable to any one individual with-in the organizational chart. They cite the "politics" of other people's agendas as one of the most difficult aspects of their jobs.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY: SECTION B

B – The budget process. Developing, presenting, and negotiating the budget.

Summary

Responses range widely from satisfaction with a “straight forward process” to desire for major changes to be made.

Themes

- Revenue factors unpredictable or unknown.
- Budget process not well documented or understood.
- Timetables felt to be unattainable or not adhered to.
- Review process should be streamlined.
- Recently introduced concept of 5-year plan should help.

B – 1 What about the process to change policies?

Summary

Responses most often refer to MGLs, state regs., and Town by-laws

Themes

There is understandable tension between delays caused by the review/ approval process and the need for adequate checks and balances.

B - 2 What is the process used to change your enforcement capabilities such as regulations or fees/fines.

Summary

Responses suggest this process mostly outside departmental control and tied to MGLs, regional regs., town by-laws or BOS decisions.

Themes

B - 3 How do you resolve interdepartmental problems?

Summary

Majority of responses indicated that problems are few and that direct communications solve most, with an occasional impasse.

Themes

- Communication is key element.
- People work hard to resolve problems.
- A better procedure is needed to handle an impasse.

B - 4 Are there other processes that come into play that help or hinder your department’s effectiveness?

Summary

Answers ranged over “no problems”, “politics”, “resistance to change”, “inefficient organizational structure”, “inconsistency between requirements”, “inadequate information flow”, and disagreements over who is responsible, or in charge of what, and lack of cooperation between boards.

Themes

- Preservation of autonomy trumps effective change.
- Timely responses or access to information is not always forthcoming.
- Change comes with difficulty and requires consensus.

B - 5 How do you obtain feedback about the services you offer?

Summary

Feedback is typically informal and verbal from town residents and service users. Use of questionnaires is rare.

Themes

Formal channels to pursue, obtain, or follow up on feedback are notably absent.

**B - 6 How much feedback do you get? In what form do you receive it?
(complaints vs. compliments)**

Summary

Responses varied from “only complaints” to “mostly compliments”.

Themes

- Feedback is very sparse.

**B - 7 - a How would you rate your department’s relationships with other
departments that you work with most frequently?**

Summary (on scale of 1 to 5, 5 being excellent and N/A being a non-numeric response)

5	12
4	12
3	2
2	1
1	
N/A	2

Themes

-Large majority report being highly satisfied with current interactions.

**B - 7 - b How would you rate your department’s relationship with boards,
committees, or commissions you work with?**

Summary (on scale of 1 to 5, 5 being excellent and N/A being a non-numeric response)

5	5
4	10
3	5
2	1
1	1
N/A	4

Themes

- Complaints focus on jurisdictional or philosophical differences.

**B - 7 - c How would you describe your department’s interaction with the
Executive Administrator?**

Summary (on scale of 1 to 5, 5 being excellent and N/A being a non-numeric response)

5	17
4	5
3	
2	
1	
N/A	4

Themes

-Interactions with the Executive Administrator excellent, but EA options limited by limited authority.

**B - 7 - d How would you describe your department’s interaction with the Board
of Selectmen?**

Summary (on scale of 1 to 5, 5 being excellent and N/A being a non-numeric response)

5	10
4	8
3	
2	
1	1
N/A	8

Themes

-Problems arise when BOS policies are not clear.

B - 8 What would you like to see changed to improve your department's efficiency and effectiveness with any of the above?

Summary

A wide range of responses from "nothing" to "organizational restructuring".

Themes

- Better information technology service and/or software.
- More authority to the Executive Administrator.
- Plan long range, but then work to the plan, i.e., a need for continuity and consistency.
- Some shortage of staffing, either occasional or chronic.

B - 9 On the same scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate overall inter-department communication?

Summary

5	10
4	8
3	2
2	
1	
N/A	6

Themes

- Communication is generally good, with occasional breakdowns.
- A few functions feel overloaded.
- Things have improved in recent past.

IV Findings and Conclusions:

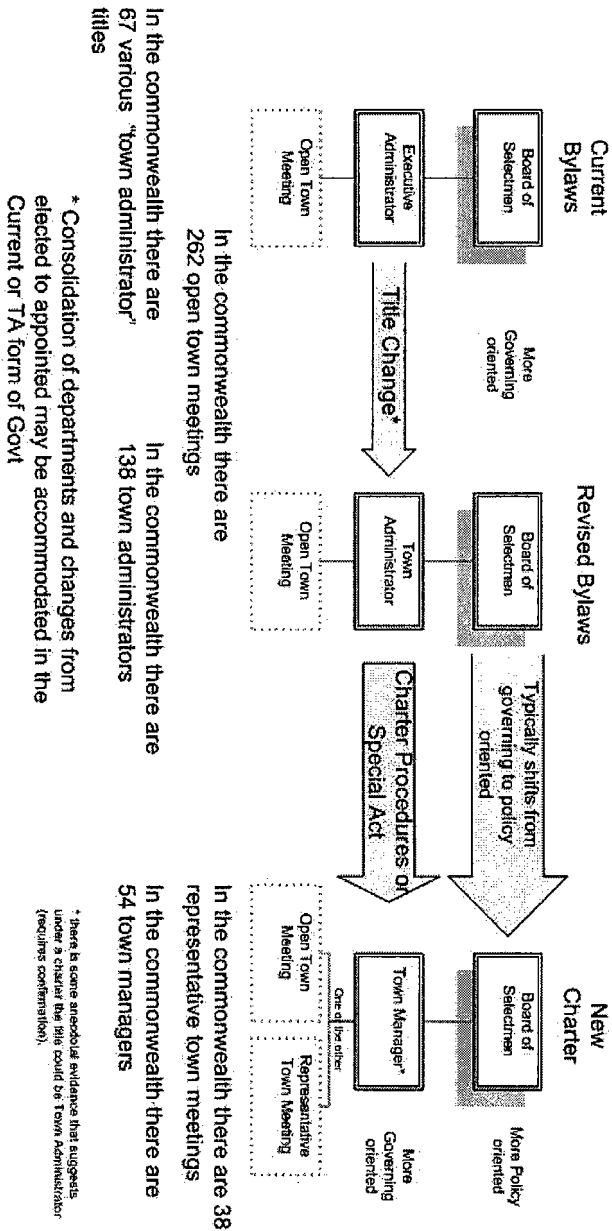
The Section C items below would follow the discussion on take No Action along with the Forms described below.

Forms of Government Available to
Douglas' Government Study Committee

Assumption 1: Population is greater than 6 thousand and less than 12 thousand as outlined in the committee change from the BOS
Assumption 2: City Forms of Government are not considered available within this population range.

Note 1. A Town Manager is the appointing authority for most (or all) other department heads, often including boards and commissions. The Selectmen retain appointing authority only over the TM (and sometimes a few boards or commissions). The Town Administrator is the day to day supervisor of other department heads, but those heads are appointed by the Selectmen (although even this distinction is starting to blur in some places, e.g., the Cape). Executive Administrator is just a Town Administrator by another name.

Note 2. If an objective is to have greater coordination in Douglas' major departments then major changes in the town management beginning with the Executive Administrator need to occur. The Administrator's lack of contractual and statutory authority is dwarfed by the position's scope of authority.



Chapter 41 Section 21

Presuming that the Town of Douglas adopted Chapter 41 Section 21 that allows the BOS to appoint (or act as) to begin with then the BOS can appoint an Executive Secretary (the ACT was later modified to reflect a Town Administrator title).

It also appears that most of the MGL's aligned with By-laws, require the BOS to make the "final" appointments.

"A town may by vote or by-law authorize and empower the selectmen to appoint an executive secretary or town administrator who may be appointed by them for a term of one or three years and to remove him at their discretion. An executive secretary or town administrator appointed under the provisions of this section shall be sworn to the faithful performance of his duties. During the time that he holds office he shall hold no elective town office, but he may be appointed by the selectmen or, with their approval, by any other town officer, board, committee or commission, to any other town office or position consistent with his office. He shall receive such aggregate compensation, not exceeding the amount appropriated therefore, as the Selectmen may determine. He shall act by and for the selectmen in any matter which they may assign to him relating to the administration of the affairs of the town or of any town office or department under their supervision and control, or, with the approval of the selectmen, may perform such other duties as may be requested of him by any other town officer, board, committee or commission.."

- **Section C**

1. Finding: The current process for measuring performance is left up to each governing unit. There is no formal or consistent method utilized for measuring performance of departments, either from an administrative viewpoint, or from a user viewpoint (responses C1- 2). Residents desire faster responses/ resolutions to their issues, but actual measuring sticks of performance are often left up to the governing units or references to state regulations, rather than local governance monitoring. State regulatory focus have very little to do with the towns people or their representatives satisfaction. *Also refer to C13 below.*

Description: Below is a summation of the survey results. For a full perspective of the respondent's answers refer to the combined survey.

C1	What is the most common compliment you receive about your department?
	Responses for the most part appear to be centered in and around the timely response to inquiries, providing information in a timely manner and especially noticeable when the response or service meets the recipient's expectations.
C2	What is the most common complaint you receive about your department?
	The responses are varied and not specific to a central theme. They tend to center on a specific issue that is typically tied to providing +/- to a service. Many departments do not have a formal method of obtaining feedback both positive and negative from the town's residents.
A-6	How do you measure your department's efficiency/effectiveness?
	The majority of respondents stated feed back / comments / complaints (some from Town Meeting) followed by; meeting goals / State deadlines; evaluations; meeting State requisites or reporting requirements; a low turnover ratio, statistics, and a small few have none.
A-7	Is there an "outside" measure of your department's efficiency/effectiveness?
	Half of the respondents stated there were none. 1/3 rd respondents stated feedback/complaints/compliments followed by State awards/recognition; audits, State Aid; completed projects; MCAS; meeting deadlines; evaluations; Insurance Service Organization (not sure what that means); and Statistical data.

A-10 On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being total understanding, how would you rate the public's understanding of what your department does and why?

	The rating scale was as follows:- 1 = 1; 1 = 5; 2 = 9; 3 = 11; 4 = 6; 5 = 1 The majority of respondents feel that the public understands the “what” but not the “why”. The only positive response was that there is more/better information to the public. The rest dealt more with why people are not informed, they included: more work behind closed doors and not in public view; the public only knows what they do to the extent of what they need; people/contractors play dumb; misconceptions; no good understanding and clarity of roles and responsibilities; people do not understand rules, regulations, and bylaws; people do not understand procedures; people do not read or take advantage of information available to them or simply go to meetings; and the job is too difficult to explain.
--	---

Conclusion:

- The ability to measure the effectiveness of operations, for the most part, is not available
- There is no consolidation pamphlet or “how to helpers” with regards to what essential services the “governing units” provide or procedural escalation processes.

2. Finding: The current Executive administrator is considered by many to be doing a good job in his current role, even if that role is not fully understood (responses C3-6). There is however a desire to see this position empowered to handle more responsibility for the management of the town. What exactly these roles are is subject to a wide array of expectations, ranging from more authority to resolve day-to-day issues in an expedited manner to much greater 'CEO' type authority that includes appointing and managerial authority.

Similarly, there is a general opinion that the Board of Selectmen, while garnering an overall favorable opinion at times, are immersed in too much day-to-day operations that could be made by the Executive Administrator, which leads to unnecessary delay to issues, and less focus by the Board of Selectmen on policies, monitoring processes and big picture items.

Description:

C3A How do you rate the Executive Administrator's ability to function effectively under his current job description?	Many of the Town's operating units are not fully aware of what the Executive Administrator's (EA) job description is nor his formal roles and responsibilities. The general opinion is that the EA performs from average to excellent in a majority of the responses. Although complementary of the EA's negotiating skills and general feeling that he is working well in his current role, there is an equal opinion that the EA is too constrained by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and needs more formal empowerment in day-to-day (operational) decision-making.
C3B Is the Board of Selectmen effective and efficient in dealing with your department?	Generally, there is a favorable opinion of the BOS when interacting with various governmental groups but it is not favorable in a "handful" of cases dealing with timely response to issues.
C 4 In your opinion, is the Board of Selectmen spending adequate time focusing on policy development / big picture issues for the town?	There is an unfavorable opinion by a majority of governing units' viewpoints that the BOS is not working on big picture items. There appears to be a perception that the BOS is too involved in operational matters (e.g. day to day decisions that some feel ought to be made by the EA).

C5 Would it help efficiency and effectiveness in your Department if the Executive Administrator would have a greater capacity to make day-to-day decisions? On what levels?	
	An overwhelming number of responses suggest that the EA needs to have more authority and capacity in making day-to-day operations decisions in a more “empowered” manner.

Conclusion:

- The executive administrator roles, responsibilities and decision-making authority are not well known to Town Municipal operating units.
- The Board of Selectmen is not perceived as working on Big Picture Items (e.g. Policies) and effective monitoring of results.
- The Board of Selectmen are viewed as having too much involvement in day to day decision making that could be done by the professionally hired executive administrator.

3. Finding: Depth and breadth of understanding varies by respondent in terms of operating the Town within a Town Charter (responses C 7-10). Generally, there is a feeling that the current government is working due to the goodwill of those currently involved. However, as had been cited in both this questionnaire, and (the Dept of Revenue study), the current form of government, though currently functional, is fragile. The solution to the fragility ranges from reducing layers of governance by giving the Executive Administrator more authority/ responsibility to implementing a Town Charter. *Also refer to C11 below.*

Description:

C7 What are your impressions of our current form of government?	The impression of the current form of government is that it sometimes works. Town meeting attendance is fairly poor and some question its effectiveness and how the meeting is managed while others feel that having an open town meeting is important. Town meeting warrant articles have little substantive information provided in advance to the taxpayers (the voter information bulletin while helpful seemed to lack sufficient details).
	Many agreed that it is important to have a stable governing and operating environment. Often cited as problems are the layers of governance, politics being played, conflicting roles, responsibilities and authority, lack of policies, roadblocks created by the BOS and antiquated by-laws, and not looking to the

	future. Generally, while the current form works sometimes it is a fragile environment based on too many individual agendas.
C8	What are your impressions of a charter form of government?
C9	Can you describe what a charter is?
C8 & C9	In a number of responses there does not appear to be a solid understanding of the charter form of government particulars. Many responses could be classified as not having a full understanding of a town charter, and feeling there are both positives and negatives to setting one up, and if done should be done very carefully Where there was insight it is generally regarded as a tool that can provide for long term stability in town operations and governing of a community that is not openly subject to election changes.
C10	Is there a difference in the way you interact with department heads who are elected versus appointed?
	An overwhelming number of responses indicated that there is no differences in the way town governing entities (dept heads, committees, boards) and officials interact with Department Heads that are elected –vs- appointed. One response however did cite that there is more persuasive negotiation in play with elected officials.

Conclusion:

- The Organizational Structure of Town Government needs to be improved.
- Town Charters are either somewhat understood or laced with misperceptions.
- There is a general perception of a lot of politics, political/personal agendas, and lengthy persuasive negotiations at play throughout the Town's operations.
- Aside from low turnouts at Town Meeting, there is a general feeling that the Town should retain an Open Meeting forum (e.g. Annual Town Meetings) but the operational effectiveness and informational availability is cited as needing to improve.

4. Finding: There exists some desire for streamlining the government along with movement from elected to appointed or vice versa, if the structure of the town would change to allow for less political stifling in the governance portion (responses C6-7 & C11). Suggestions focused on having a more robust infrastructure that will provide for cost avoidance, cost reductions, alignment

of like operations, and solving current or future problems and ultimately improvement in efficient & effective operations with minimal taxpayer impact. (see examples of “to be” future state appointment and organizational charts”

Description:

C6a Should any town functions be consolidated?	
There is a stronger viewpoint for consolidation than against consolidation. However, there is also strong opinions that consolidation that also includes moving from elected positions to appointed would be difficult if the same governing oversight structure exists as it does today.	A common item cited was the creation of a Department of Public Works (DPW) in multiple steps. The 1st step would take functions and departments that provide “vertical services” such as parks and recreation, cemetery, tree warden, facilities and transfer station and combine them with the highway department. The 2nd step would evaluate the adding of the water and sewer department while addressing the best Town usage of the related enterprise account. There is a positive view that a Finance Department is created and is further elaborated on in C6b. Respondents lean more toward having the Treasurer and Collector as part of this department but vary with regards to consolidation into one position as well as making the position appointed. The Town Clerk becoming appointed appears to be unnecessary. Also cited as being important is having a Town Manager and a governing Town Charter in order to implement effective consolidations and shifts where applicable from elected to appointed. Other suggestions cited include; - Regional/Central Dispatching – Public Safety Operations - Community Development restructuring - Consolidation of Administrative Support services - Moving Building Inspector to Part Time - Consolidated/centralized purchasing functions - Eliminating paid employees from being “managed” by part time elected

	officials and committees instead of a “full time” Town Employee.
C6b	Should any functions be added to the current structure?
	A common response cites two areas; Information Technology support and a Finance Director aligned to the Finance Department. The Finance Department would consolidate and align all Town financial functions. (e.g. Assessors, Tax Collector & Treasurer, Accountant). A personnel director was also cited instead of a personnel board setting personnel direction. Like the finance director, the personnel director does not necessarily have to be a new FTE but perhaps a realignment of existing Town personnel with this role and responsibility. Also, in a few instances a Town Planner and Grant Writer were suggested.
C6c	Should any town functions be eliminated?
	For reasons mostly unstated there does not appear a desire to eliminate town functions. In a few instances the Town Engineer and the Board of Assessors were identified as functions to consider being eliminated.
C11a	How would making your position appointed affect your department?
	Under the existing form of Governmental oversight, there is a reluctance to entertain the idea of becoming an appointee. The general view is that by being an elected official it allows for a level of independence in decision making. Some felt that the “independence” perspectives would not be available if the current appointment process remains as is.
C11b	Do you think your position would be better executed if it were appointed?
	Generally No. Although limited responses there is some reluctance to change if the BOS maintain the appointing authority that is currently in place.
C11c	How would you recommend building checks and balances into the process?
	While there were limited responses in this section there appears to be a number of items cited that include; – Local political caucuses are a symptom of political climate problems that exists within the Town. – Policies or lack thereof was cited as well as the need for the BOS needing to

	strike a balance with the duties and responsibilities of an Executive Administrator on operational responsibilities. – Ensuring that focus remains on individual qualifications and the need to ensure continued and formal measurements of progress and results to “plan” are done more than they are today. – Ensure fees collected are earmarked to operational expenses.
C11b1 If appointed, How would making your position elected affect your Board/Committee/Commission?	
	Responses ranged from no value added to questioning current partisan politics that could be detrimental in making the position elected.
C11b2 If appointed, do you think your position would be better executed if you were elected?	
C11b3 If appointed, How would you recommend building checks and balances into the process?	
	Again, responses while limited cited different thoughts but unfavorably were the general perspective on becoming elected. Checks and balances ranged from “that’s what elections are for” to ensuring appointing authorities are balanced.

Conclusion:

- There are a number of improvements suggested that, from a survey respondent’s viewpoint, could improve the Town’s operations.
- There are underlying concerns with Elected officials becoming appointed if the existing appointment process remains as is.
- There is a viewpoint that there is too much involvement of partisan politics and political caucuses.

5. Finding: The two more generic questions (C12 – 13) while receiving various responses focused on the need for structural and operating changes while citing the need for additional financial aid specific to each unit.

Description:

C12 Is there anything you would you like to recommend to the Government Study Committee regarding improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of government in Douglas?	
	The commentary in this section is wide and varied but not necessarily inclusive of the number of suggestions made in the earlier sections. In general there appears to be some discontent in the how the overall administration governance

	of the Town affairs are being conducted. One questioned the motives for creating the GSC Committee as well as selection of some of its members. Combined with the earlier responses, the current operating structure, while sometimes working “at the moment”, has not always done so and can be characterized as being fragile with change needed with a multitude of suggestions. Amongst others, some respondents ask for streamlining the government and that giving the EA more authority might be a good way to do that. Some go as far as wanting changes in line with a town charter and giving the EA appointing power, while others want changes to allow the EA more power to process the day to day items.
C13	What would it take for your department to be able to do a better job for the town?
	More resources for the specific governing unit and financial support were two main points. The others, while varied, tended to focus on organizational governance changes.

Conclusion:

- There is a lack of a future looking operational staffing plan in concert with revenues.
- There is a lack of a realistic future looking capital plan integrated with staffing in concert with revenues.
- There is a general discontent and frustration with the overall administrative governance of the Town.

VI. Committee's Recommendations:

Note: The section C recommendations below would follow the discussion (not sure of who is writing it up) of the 3 options available to Douglas that was drafted and accepted as a committee-guiding document (i.e. do nothing, EA gets a little more empowerment, TM/Town Charter). – See IV findings and conclusions above.

Section C Recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:**
The executive branch of Town Government (Board of Selectmen and Executive Administrator) need to develop a comprehensive set of measurements that takes into consideration Town requirements, Resident requirements and applicable MGLs for each Town Department. Once developed, the measurements need to be monitored and results published in an official town document (e.g. Annual Town Report) that depicts the effectiveness of each department.
- **Recommendation 2:**
Develop a Town Service pamphlet that highlights the services provided, escalation procedures and other facts and information useful within a pamphlet for use by residents and others. Minimize changes by using Titles instead of peoples names as an example thus minimizing production and revision costs.
- **Recommendation 3:**
Distribute the Executive Administrators job description, roles and responsibilities, organizational charts and applicable policy and procedures. Have a compiled list of documents in a book that is easily accessible by governing units. While the focus of a survey was the Executive Administrator the above requirements could easily apply to all department and ancillary support personnel as well.
- **Recommendation 4:**
In the interim of not having a Town Charter, transfer from the Board of Selectmen to the Executive Administrator, as much as “legally possible”, the ability to govern and make day-to-day operational decisions.
- **Recommendation 5:**
Develop an Action Item List of “Big Picture Items” by the Board of Selectmen along with governing policies and monitoring process(es) of the Town’s future state needs (short and long range). Upon completion, execute a rollout plan and development of requisite procedures to enable effective monitoring.
- **Recommendation 6:**
Develop a list of requisite financial and personnel policies along with monitoring procedures.

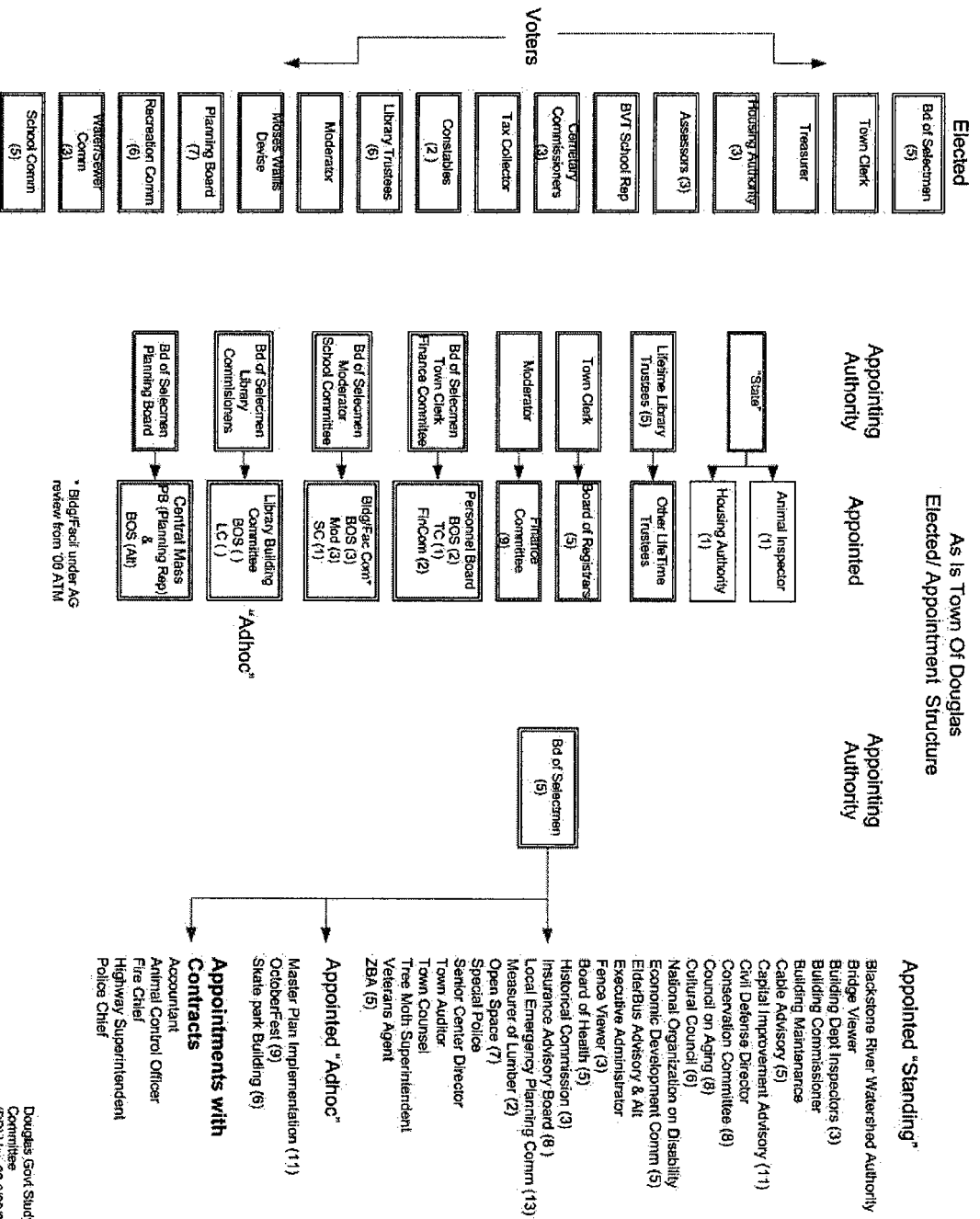
- **Recommendation 7:**
Petition the State Legislature to abolish Local Town Caucuses from being involved in nominating Town officials to a ballot.
- **Recommendation 8:**
Review the current Voter Information Bulletin and determine if it can be expanded or appendices (e.g. a for/opposed perspective) with additional warrant information background on an article as well as ensuring the motion of the article is included.
- **Recommendation 9:**
In lieu of a Town Charter, align the current organization and structure that group similar functions (boards, commissions, committees, officials) so that it establishes vertical and horizontal congruity and information exchange.
- **Recommendation 10:**
Review effectiveness and contributions with “Department” Stakeholders to determine an ongoing need for a full time Town Engineer and Building Inspector in addition to any other ancillary support position as well.
- **Recommendation 11:**
Identify a list of regionalization opportunities available to the Town of Douglas and pursue those that present financial and operational benefits to the Town.
- **Recommendation 12:**
Transfer management and oversight of “salaried” employees (FT or PT) employees from part time committees (elected or appointed) to Full Time Department Managers.
- **Recommendation 13:**
Review existing “administrative” support personnel and determine if consolidating personnel into a “support pool” would be more cost effective in the long run.
- **Recommendation 14:**
Change the Recreation Commission from Elected to Appointed.
- **Recommendation 15:**
Change the Board of Assessors from Elected to Appointed and rename them as an Advisory to the Executive Administrator.

- **Recommendation 16:**
Consolidate the Treasurer and Tax Collector into one position and merge their respective staffs.
- **Recommendation 17:**
Change the Constables from Elected to Appointed.
- **Recommendation 18:**
Change the Cemetery Commissioners from Elected to Appointed and rename them as an Advisory to the Executive Administrator.
- **Recommendation 19:**
Change the Housing Authority from Elected to Appointed. Exception would be the one State Appointed individual.
- **Recommendation 20:**
Consolidate all purchasing operations under the auspices of the Executive Administrator.
- **Recommendation 21:**
Create a Department of Public Works (DPW) that would initially consolidate the vertical functions of highway, tree inspector, recreation, facilities, cemetery, & transfer station under the auspices of the Highway Superintendent.
- **Recommendation 22:**
Perform a detail cost benefit analysis and ROI to determine if it would be beneficial to have the following:
 - Information Technology Support person
 - Town Planner
 - Personnel Director
 - Determine if the Personnel Committee could then be abolished or need to act as in an advisory capacity to the personnel director.
- **Recommendation 23:**
In concert with the Department of Revenue Report commission a Town Charter Development Committee that will develop a proposed Town Charter and form of open meeting for presentation and adoption at an Annual Town Meeting.
- **Recommendation 24:**
Create a Town Manager position.

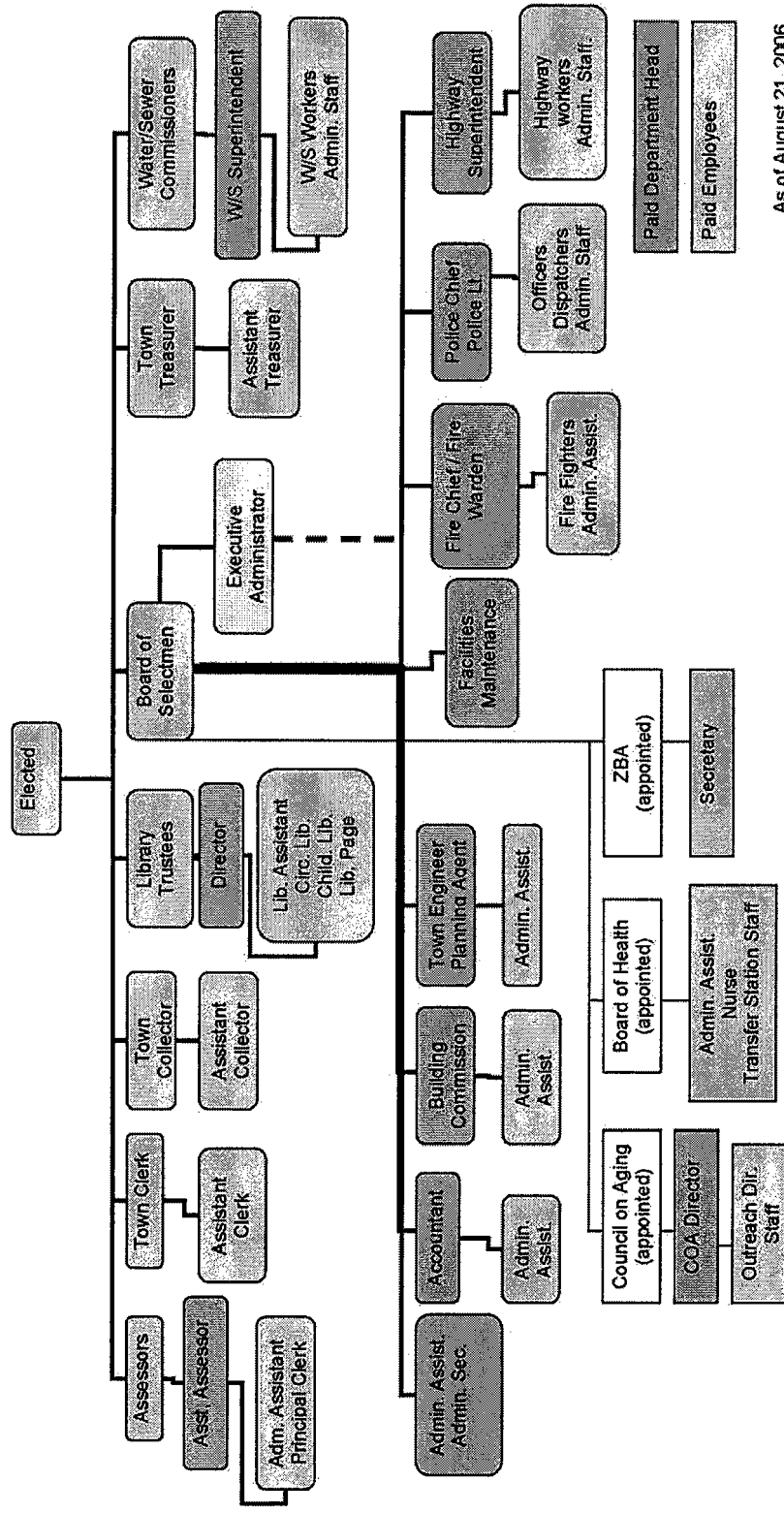
- **Recommendation 25:**
Create a Finance Director position and consolidate all financial Town Departments into a Finance Department.
- **Recommendation 26:**
Transfer appointment authority (see the example of “to be” future state appointment chart example) to the Town Manager.
- **Recommendation 27:**
Create an Appointed Treasurer/Collector position.
- **Recommendation 28:**
Create an Appointed Planning Board.
- **Recommendation 29:**
Evaluate the return on investment for consolidating the water and sewer department into the DPW.
- **Recommendation 30:**
Transform the Water/Sewer Commissioners into a Water/Sewer Advisory Board that is appointed.
- **Recommendation 31:**
Determine if they are any preventive constraints on moving the library trustees from elected to appointed. If they are not insurmountable, change the trustees to appointed.
- **Recommendation 32:**
Consolidate all revenue sources from boards, committees and associations that utilize town property or benefit from town funds into a revenue source for the Town.
- **Recommendation 33:**

Partially transfer the appointment of 5 FINCOM members to the Town Manager while establishing 4 fincom members to become elected and distributed amongst the existing voting precincts using At-Large when or if an odd number of precincts exists.
- **Recommendation 34:**
Align requisite Town by-laws to coincide with the above changes.

Town Of Douglas Organization & Appointment Appendix

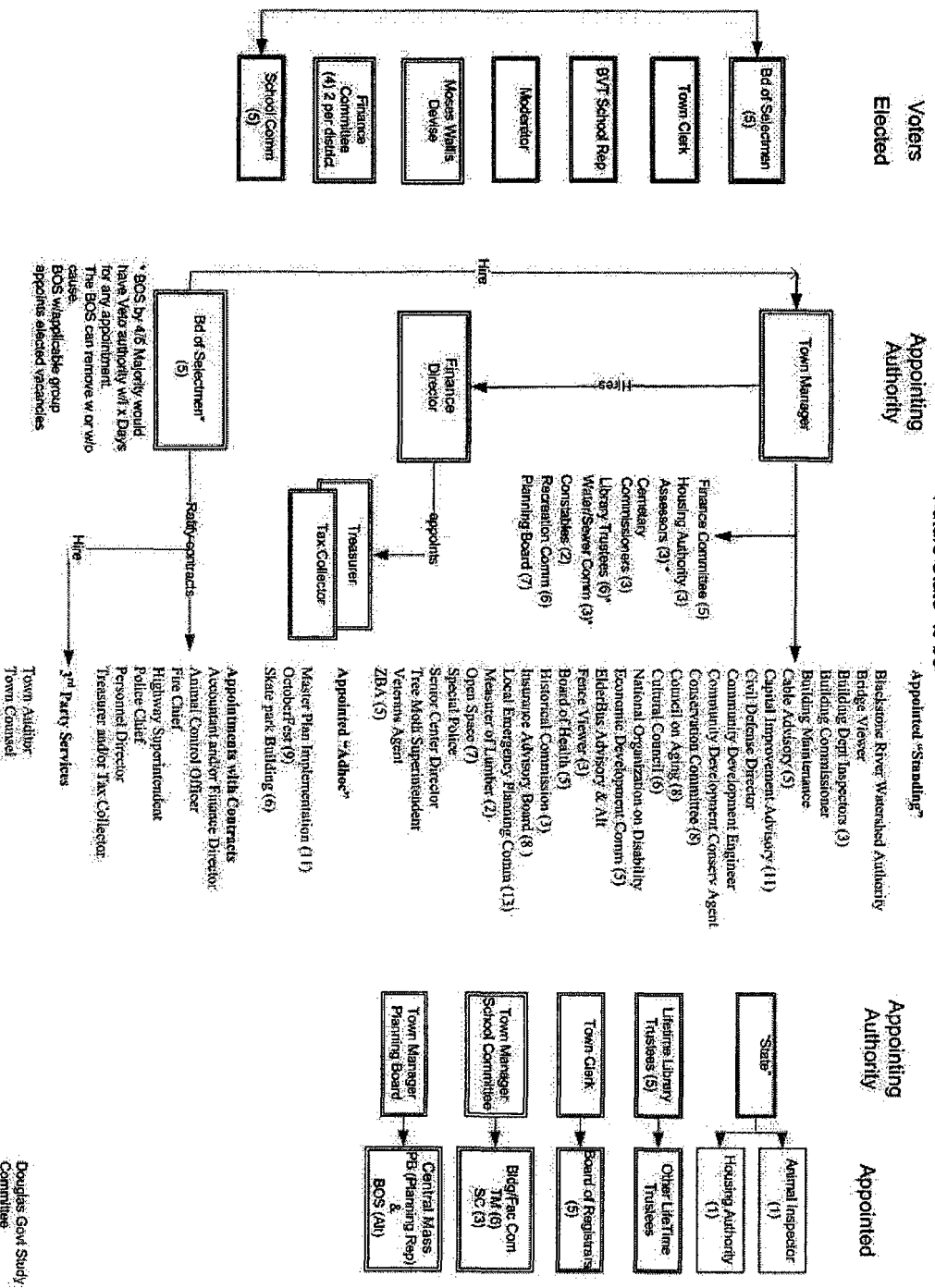


Town of Douglas – Employee Organizational Chart



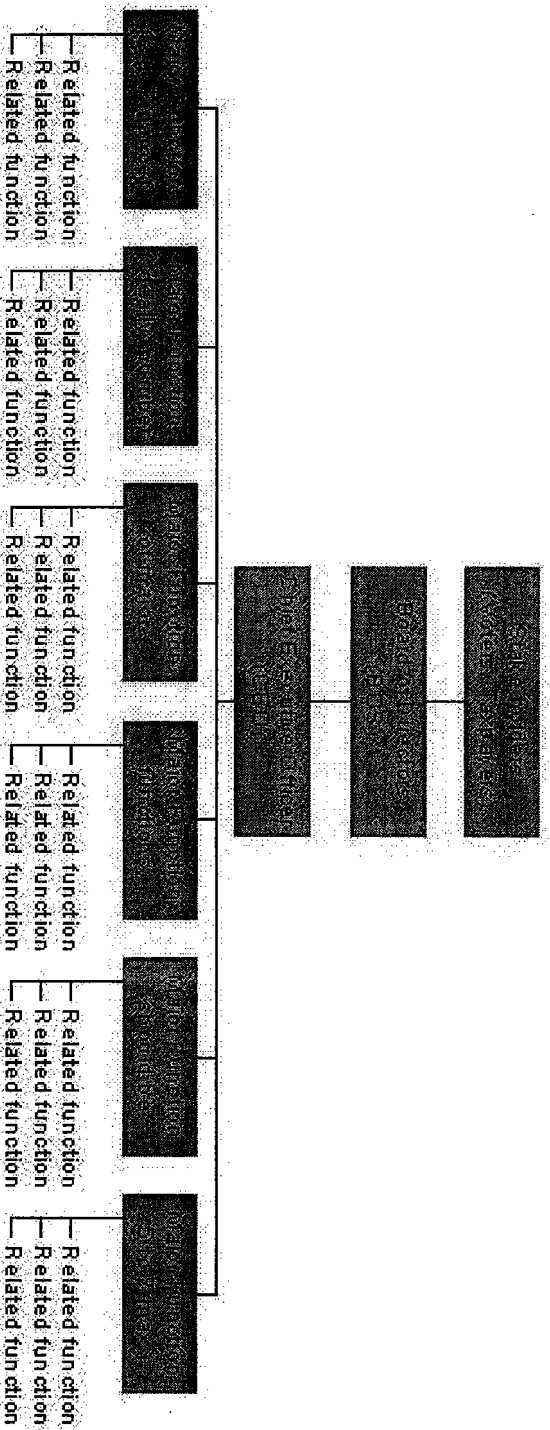
As of August 21, 2006
Printer 8/30/2006

Town Of Douglas Elected/ Appointment Structure Future State "to be"



Douglas Govt Study
Committee
(DB) Ver. 02 4/21/07

Idealized Organizational Structure



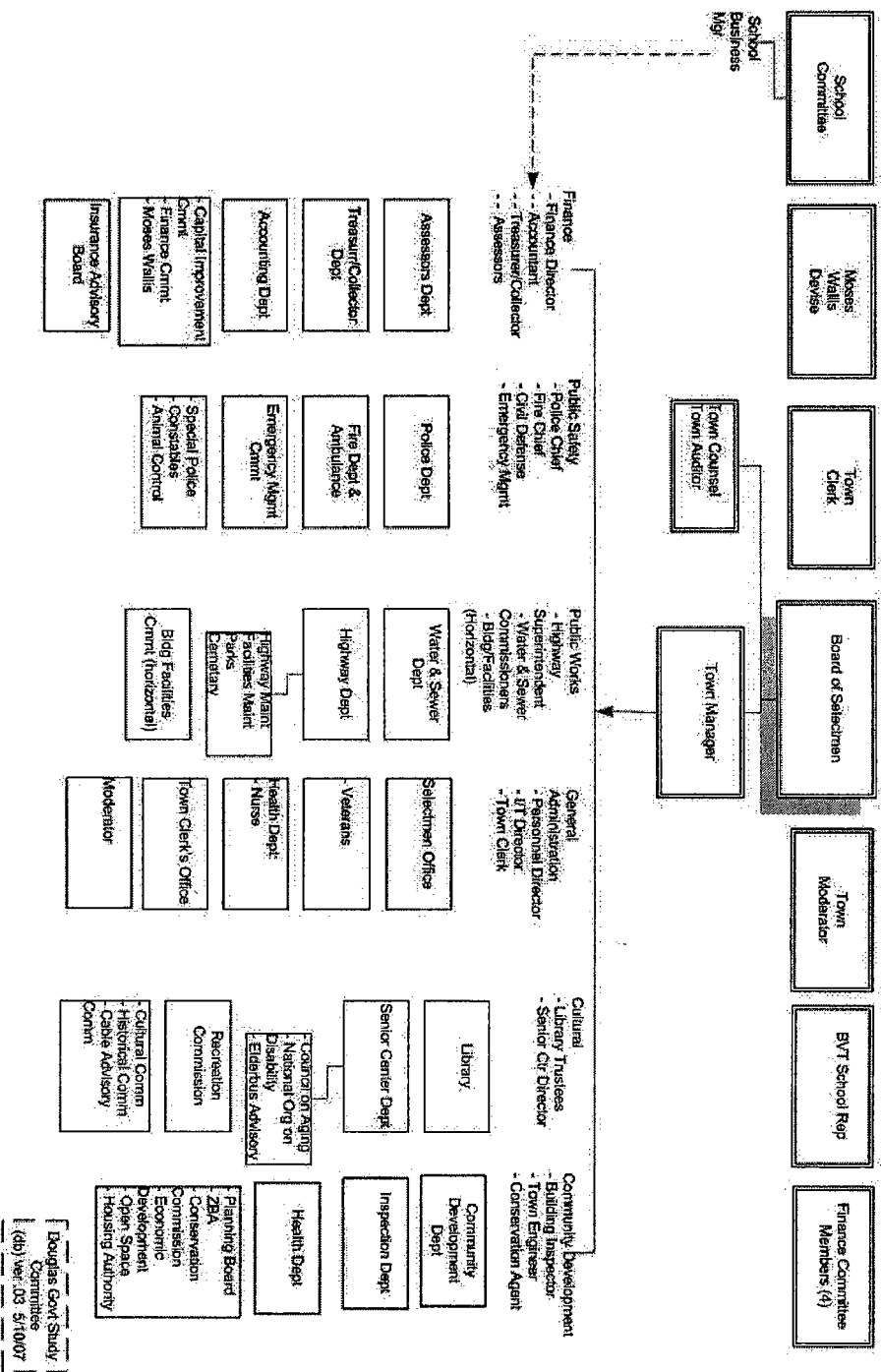
Some general characteristics:

- 1) Each major function and related sub-function would have a clearly defined "mission".
- 2) Each function would have measurable goals/objectives.
- 3) Regular meetings within and between major functions to facilitate coordination of activities.
- 4) Org. structure would be flexible enough to allow adaptation to change.
- 5) Authority would be matched to responsibility and accountability.
- 6) Adequate checks and balances, built in to avoid loss of confidence in authority.

Town of Douglas Organization Structure Future State "to be"

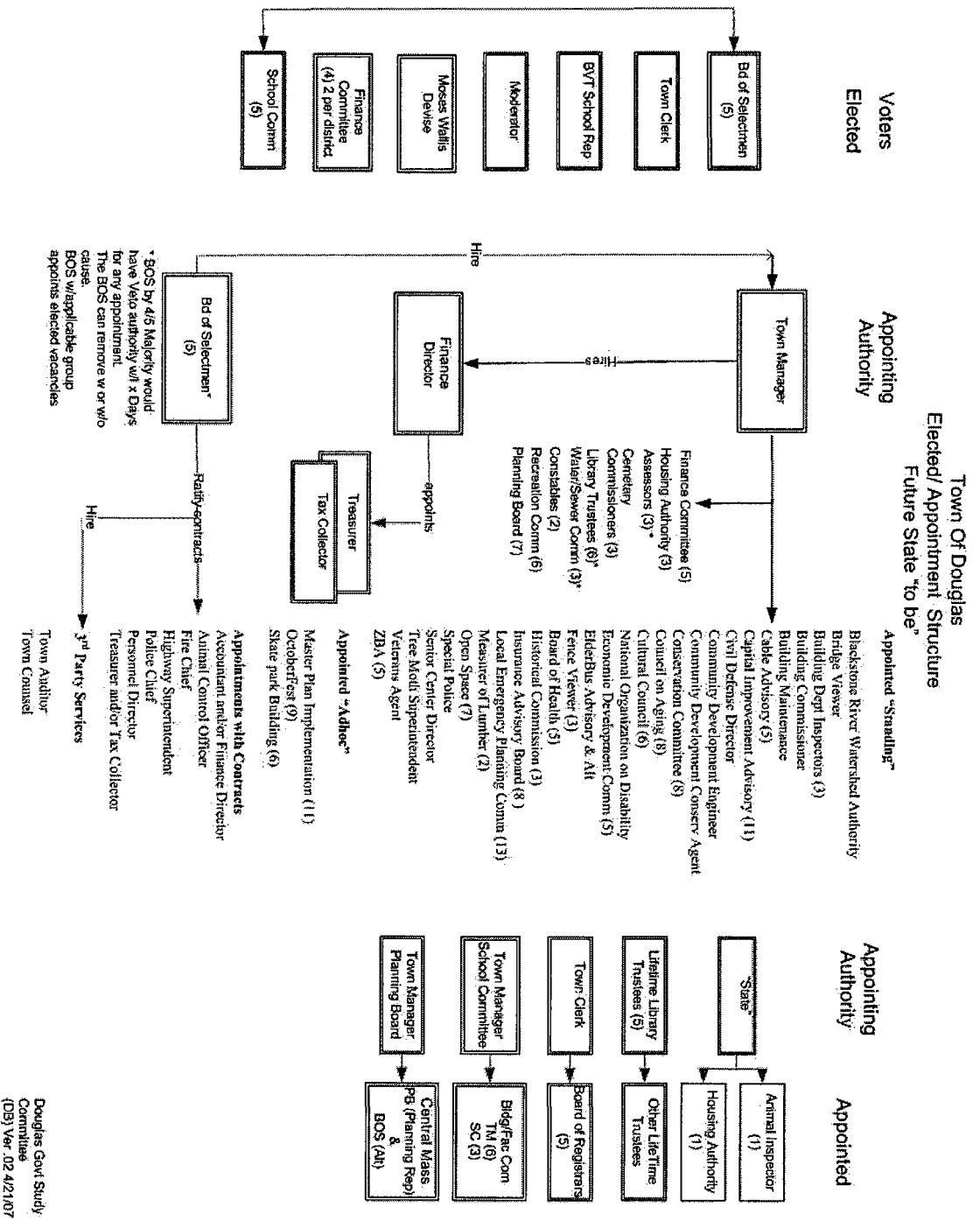
Town Voters

TOWN CHARTER



Douglas Govt Study
Committee
(db) ver. 03 5/10/07

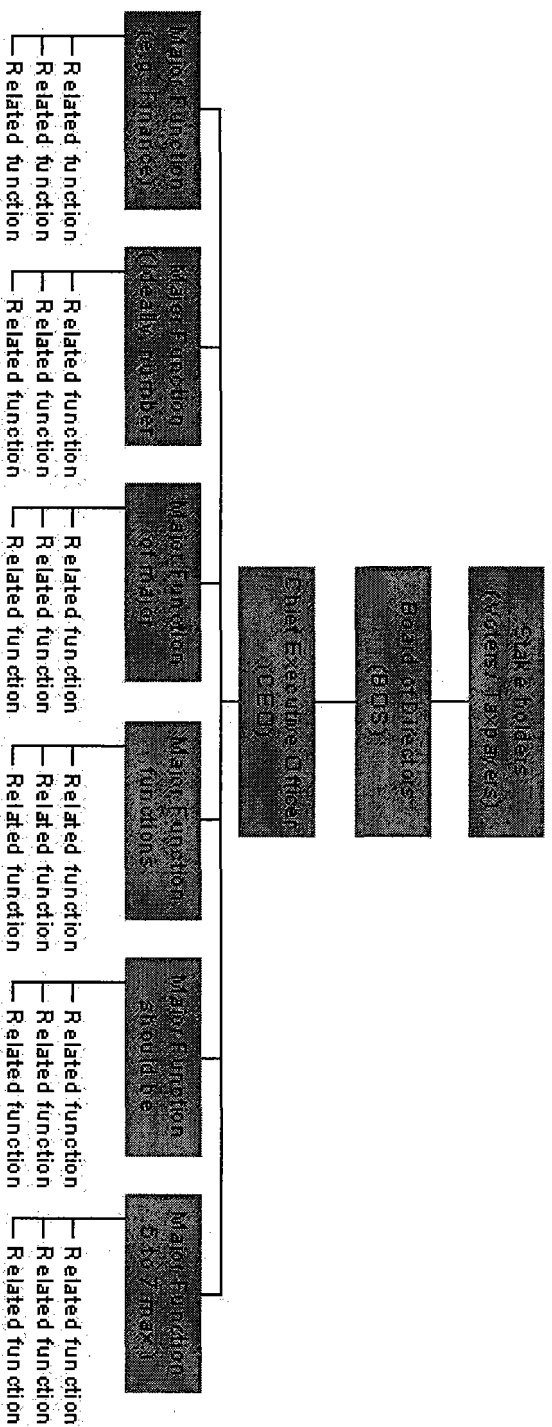
Appendix “G”



Douglas Govt Study
 Committees
 (DB) Ver .02 4/21/07

Appendix “H”

Idealized Organizational Structure



Some general characteristics:

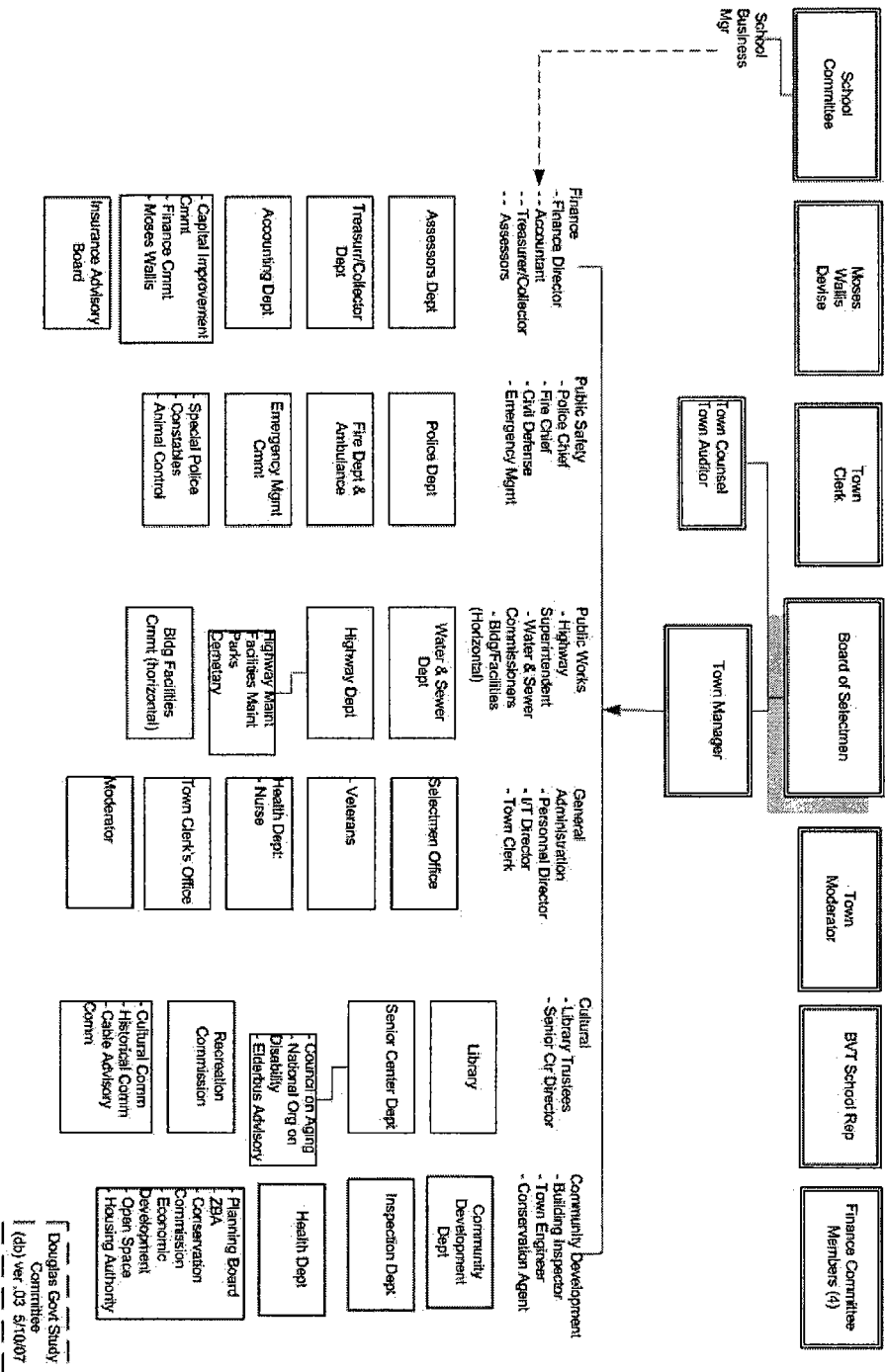
- 1) Each major function and related sub-function would have a clearly defined "mission"
- 2) Each function would have measurable goals/objectives.
- 3) Regular meetings within and between major functions to facilitate coordination of activities.
- 4) Org. structure would be flexible enough to allow adaptation to change.
- 5) Authority would be matched to responsibility and accountability.
- 6) Adequate checks and balances built in to avoid loss of confidence in authority.

D.Brown April, 2007

Town of Douglas Organization Structure Future State "to be"

Town Voters

TOWN CHARTER



Douglas Govt Study
Committee
(db) ver. 03 5/10/07

Appendix “I”



Town of Douglas

Financial Management Review

Municipal Data Management and Technical Assistance Bureau

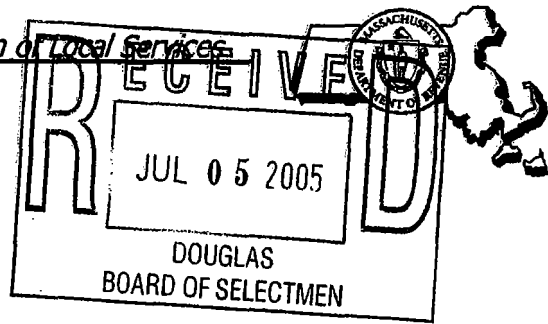
June 2005



visit our website at

<http://www.dls.state.ma.us>





Introduction

At the request of the Board of Selectmen, the Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services (DLS) has completed a financial management review of the Town of Douglas.

We have based our findings and recommendations on site visits by a Technical Assistance team consisting of staff from the Division's Bureau of Accounts, Bureau of Local Assessment, and Municipal Data Management & Technical Assistance Bureau. During these visits and by telephone, the team interviewed and received information from the members of the board of selectmen and the finance committee, the executive administrator, town accountant, treasurer, collector, assistant assessor, as well as other staff members, as available, in each office. Various consultants to the town were also contacted.

DLS staff examined such documents as the tax recapitulation sheet, warrants, annual budgets, balance sheets, cash reconciliation reports, statements of indebtedness, the town by-laws as well as other assorted financial records.

In reviewing the town's financial management practices, we have focused on: (1) town government structure in the context of the duties and responsibilities of financial officers; (2) the town's budget, warrant and capital planning processes; (3) the degree of coordination and communication that exists between and among boards, officials and staff involved in the financial management function; and 4) the general efficiency of financial operations measured by the town's success in maximizing resources and minimizing costs.

We encourage the members of the board and others, when formulating overall strategies for improving the town's financial management, to consider the observations, analyses and recommendations contained in this report. These are recommendations only and can be implemented, at the town's option, provided there is sufficient cooperation among the various town boards, committees and officials.

Executive Summary

The Town of Douglas is located along the Massachusetts-Rhode Island state-line in a lightly populated, rural area of southern New England. Characterized by abundant natural resources, including the 4,600 acre Douglas State Forest, the local economy was once fueled by area mill industries and establishments like the Douglas Axe Company.

Today, Commerce Insurance, the state's largest automobile insurer with 1,000 workers, remains a major employer in the area. Standing alone, the presence of Commerce even in combination with the development of Interstate-390 nearby, the expansion of Route 146 and its new interchange with I-90, has not lured other commercial and industrial development. Instead, highway upgrades have made retail and employment centers in Worcester (18 miles), Providence (30 miles), Boston (55 miles) and along the I-495 corridor more accessible.

The result for Douglas has been noticeable residential growth. The town population rose 24 percent overall, or 3.1 percent per year on average, from 6,145 people in 1996 to an estimated 7,650 people in 2004. In the last five years, the number of parcels in residential classifications has increase by 395 (16.8 percent), while commercial and industrial parcels have declined by five. Between 1996 and 2005 the total assessed valued of single family residential properties increased 212 percent compared to a 147 percent among all other cities and towns. The tax dollars generated by single family residences in the town increased 109 percent, compared to 60 percent statewide.

As a result, in FY05, Douglas residential properties generate 95 percent of all tax revenue and 45.4 percent of total town revenue (taxes, state aid, local receipts and miscellaneous sources). By comparison, the town's total tax revenue as a percentage of total revenue (45.4 percent) was below the average for all 351 cities and towns (53.7 percent), but its reliance on state aid (35.3 percent of total local revenue) was higher than the average for all communities (23.8 percent). The increase in those resources appear to have gone directly into the town budget which rose 106 percent between FY96 and FY05, and increased at twice the average of all Massachusetts cities and towns (52 percent).

Clearly, the cost of government has escalated and the burden of financing municipal services has fallen more and more on those who live within the town boundaries.

However, it appears this circumstance was not lost on local officials. As a sign of restraint, the upward trend in the town's single family tax bill (67 percent) closely paralleled the state wide average (58 percent) between 1996 and 2005. In fact, in each of the last 10 fiscal years, the single family tax bill in Douglas has not deviated more than five percent above or below the state median. During that time, the town's tax bill has ranked as high as 155th, and as low as 199th, among 340 reporting communities.

This reflects a conservative approach to budgeting by town leaders and appears to mirror public opinion as well, as the town has not passed an override since 1994, a capital exclusion

since 1997, or a debt exclusion since 1999. Still, through budget practices, the town has historically managed to generate free cash that exceeds three percent of the annual budget. Also, over the last five years, the town stabilization balance has averaged a robust \$1.9 million or 10.9 percent of the annual budget.

These strong reserves are valued among credit rating agencies, and Douglas has maintained a consistent A2 bond rating from Moody's since 1997. Still, there are other best practices which are encouraged by credit rating agencies. Looking forward, the town should explore ways to improve its credit rating through the adoption of formal debt and reserve policies and implementation of other best practices.

In a similar fashion, it is our observation that town finance offices function well and that town finances are well-managed. Nonetheless, there are immediate and long term steps that the town can take to further improve municipal operations and better its position for the future.

It is initially striking that government in Douglas succeeds within a structure characterized by a mix of appointed and elected finance officers, of part-time elected boards and the department heads they appoint, together with managers appointed by the board of selectmen. Absent is line accountability which runs from staff, through department heads to a single administrative authority with responsibility for all of town government. As a result, the coordination of financial departments and achievement of town-wide goals relies on the willingness of department managers and staff to cooperate and communicate.

To date, the system works due, almost exclusively, to the presence of a skilled and effective executive administrator and current finance officers, whether elected or appointed, who are collectively committed to doing a good job. However, this may not always be the case as personnel change, as financial pressures shift, or agreement on process or goals dissipates.

Therefore, to build a management foundation for the future, we recommend that the town elevate the position of executive administrator to a fully empowered town administrator position. We recommend that appointing authority for all non-elected managers be assigned to the town administrator. To complete the consolidation, we recommend that at the appropriate time the treasurer and collector be converted to appointed positions and that appointment power also be transferred to the town administrator. Ideally, these changes to the structure of government are best accomplished through the adoption of a town charter. Currently, the town has no charter.

Under the heading of overall financial management, we suggest ways for the town to refine its town meeting warrant. Chief among them is consideration of a more sophisticated and detailed presentation to town residents of departmental goals, performance and expenditures. In this regard, we encourage contact with other well-run communities to examine any sample of alternative approaches.

As a matter of course, the town should adopt an annual or bi-annual review and approval process for town and school imposed fees. The purpose would be to ensure that fee levels are sufficiently covering costs associated with the service provided and are consistent with corresponding fees in surrounding communities. A review of expenditures from special revenue

accounts should confirm that fee receipts are being expended in accordance with any restrictions that apply.

We also make recommendations in the area of technology, and relative to the offices of the assessors, treasurer, collector and accountant. Most significant among them is the call for the accountant and treasurer to implement a cash reconciliation procedure as we have outlined. The collector is encouraged to move receivables more quickly into tax title and to add subsequent year tax obligations to tax title accounts on a more timely basis. Otherwise, our recommendations involving the finance offices offer suggestions to improve operations in various ways.

Conclusion - The general opinion among virtually all those interviewed as part of this report was that Douglas town government functions effectively and that finances are well managed by municipal boards, managers and staff. We agree. However, our report is a snapshot in time which serves only as a measure of how the town operates under its present day circumstances. In a era of dramatic economic trends and increasingly complex demands on municipal governments, we encourage the town to continually be introspective, forward-looking and pro-active in a search for ways to improve financial operations and better serve the public.

Toward that end, central management is key. The current executive administrator, on the strength of management style and experience, appears to have built good working relationships with town hall personnel and managed to advance government operations. This should not, however, be perceived as validation of the position as it presently exists. For Douglas, the strongest commitment it can make to the future of the town is create a town administrator position fully empowered with the management tools and organizational support to do the job.

Summary of Report Recommendations

Overall Financial Management (page 5)

- 1) *Create a town administrator position*
- 2) *Consolidate appointing authority in the town administrator*
- 3) *Convert treasurer and collector to appointed positions*
- 4) *Formally adopt debt and reserve policies*
- 5) *Modify the town meeting warrant*
- 6) *Adopt a town charter*
- 7) *Periodically review town and school fees*
- 8) *School Department: Hire a business manager, turnover receipts more frequently*

Computers and Technology (page 13)

- 9) *Establish a technology committee*
- 10) *Regularly survey town employees*
- 11) *Expand use of GIS*

Accountant (page 16)

- 12) *Modify reconciliations procedures*
- 13) *Centralize record keeping for sick leave and vacation time*
- 14) *Modify MUNIS to reflect the Schedule A format*

Treasurer (page 19)

- 15) *Commit to a monthly reconciliation procedure with the accountant*
- 16) *Generate a payroll warrant by individual*
- 17) *Do not record payroll withholdings as receipts*
- 18) *Fast track high dollar tax title accounts*

Collector (page 22)

- 19) *Move receivables into tax title/issue subsequents*
- 20) *Review contractual arrangement with deputy collector*

Assessors (page 24)

- 21) *Initiate quality control of inspections*
- 22) *Consider a counter desktop computer*
- 23) *Follow through with owners unknown*

Overall Financial Management

A review of the town's overall financial management practices focuses on the procedures in place to accomplish tasks that typically cross over various municipal departments, as well as those that tend to impact town government on a global basis. Accordingly, we examined the budget process and the payroll and vendor warrant processes. We looked at long-term planning, financial monitoring practices and financial policies, as well as the effect of the town's organizational structure on the operation of government. We examined the purchasing system and personnel administration. We considered the roles and relationships among individuals together with the level of communication and cooperation that exists among offices. Finally, we reviewed local compliance with state laws and regulations relating to finance issues, adherence to acceptable form, and to timetables for the submission of periodic reports to the State Department of Revenue (DOR).

Douglas government operates under a five-member board of selectmen and an executive administrator who has little real authority to direct the activities of departments or to follow through on town wide initiatives. By job description, he works full-time for the board and oversees only those departments under the jurisdiction of the selectmen. Nonetheless, the executive administrator, accountant and the elected collector, each of whom has taken office within the last three years, work well with a longer tenured (elected) treasurer and assistant assessor.

Overall, finance department managers are experienced and capable. Staff are uniformly competent in carrying-out clearly delineated responsibilities. Established procedures in the day-to-day administration of municipal business have evolved over time and continue to improve due, in part, to a collective attitude that embraces technology. While communication can always improve, the town's financial business is carried out by personnel who are willing to work together and cooperate with one another.

In terms of procedures, town revenues are efficiently collected and accounted for. Town bills are paid on time through the payroll and vendor warrants process. Cash flow and debt are monitored. Purchasing guidelines exist and the executive administrator functions as the town chief procurement officer. Performance reviews take place, and the town has an active personnel board overseeing the personnel system. Although we comment on reconciliations of cash and receivables, checks and balances are intact to protect town assets.

At the same time, the budget process is deliberate and works toward consensus, but it continues to rely heavily on the part-time Finance Committee to weigh in on everyday funding questions. While a capital expenditure recommendation is offered annually, there appears to be a bifurcated process and limited long term plan. Nor are there formal policies guiding decisions on the incurrence of debt, or on the use of reserves and free cash.

Conclusion - It is clear that the Douglas town government functions well, but to preserve its health into the future, there are issues that deserve attention today. Our recommendations, therefore, encourage stronger management through the adoption of a town administrator position and establishing, over the long term, more uniform line authority in town hall. Other recommendations reflect ways that the town, even where managers and staff receive high grades, can elevate government performance and become more effective and responsive.

Recommendation 1: Create a Town Administrator Position

We recommend changes that firmly establish a town administrator or town manager as the central management authority in town hall. Even though the executive administrator's job description is wide ranging, comprehensive and actually reflects responsibilities closely associated with a town administrator, his role lacks the necessary underlying authority to act as one. The executive administrator has no formal appointing authority and his management oversight extends only to those departments that report to the board of selectmen. Consequently, missing in town government is the essential ability of one person to implement town-wide goals, to take initiatives to improve operations, and to establish equal accountability over all those responsible for the day-to-day administration of town business.

With these and other responsibilities, the town administrator should have a central role, on a substantive level, in the development of long range revenue and expenditure forecasts, budget guidelines and in the annual budget process. He or she should, through appointing power, exercise management authority over all departments, lead a financial management team and orchestrate analyses of financial data, and protect the integrity of fiscal controls. He can also serve a pivotal role to ensure that the selectmen and finance committee, functioning as the town's policy makers, receive the information they require from the accountant and other finance officers to make informed decisions. As a \$20 million enterprise, the time is now for the town of Douglas to put a day-to-day professional manager in charge of all of government.

Recommendation 2: Consolidate Appointing Authority in a Town Administrator

We recommend that the town consolidate appointing authority over non-elected department managers in a town administrator. A commitment to centralized management requires consolidation of appointing authority in a way that clearly establishes a line of accountability which, in this case, would converge in the town administrator. Under this structure, part-time boards and commissions can continue to provide expert guidance, make customary decisions, and formulate policy. However, the responsibility to oversee town government, and implement town-wide goals and initiatives, will be more squarely placed in the hands of a full-time professional hired for that purpose.

We recommend that the town convert the treasurer and the collector to appointed positions. A clear trend has emerged among Massachusetts communities in favor of appointed positions for a number of compelling reasons. Most relate to ensuring that office holders possess the experience and qualifications for the position and to expanding the pool of potential candidates for the job. Often mentioned is the prevailing theory of government practice that policy makers should be elected, but operational positions, where a certain skill set is required, such as the treasurer, collector, accountant, assistant assessor, etc., should be appointed. Some municipalities see value in placing all town hall positions on equal footing and subject to the same review structure.

Because Douglas is served by a treasurer and a collector who are competent, qualified and team oriented, there is no urgency for change. However, for Douglas, an appointed treasurer and collector goes hand-in-hand with a commitment to true central management. Like all other department managers, each would report to the town administrator, who under typical circumstances would be the appointing authority.

Under the provisions of MGL Ch. 41 §1B, the treasurer and collector can be made appointed positions by majority vote of town meeting and subsequent acceptance by the voters at a town election.

Recommendation 3: Formally Adopt Debt and Reserve Policies

We recommend that the selectmen and finance committee formalize a policy that establishes guidelines for funding and maintaining reserves. In recent history, the town has done well in maintaining its stabilization fund and generating free cash above recommended levels. To help ensure the continuation of sound practices, the town should formalize a reserve policies that, among other things,

- 1) Identify target levels and a funding source for the stabilization fund, free cash and other reserves in a total dollar amount or as a percentage of the total annual budget.
- 2) Direct the use of excess free cash, that is, the amount that exceeds the free cash target level, as a funding source for stabilization or as an outlay for one-time capital projects.
- 3) Restrict the use of unexpected, non-recurring revenues to non-recurring expenditures;
- 4) Restrict the use of stabilization funds to non-recurring expenditures and in an amount above a certain dollar threshold. Or, set limits on how much stabilization, or free cash can be used for operations, or other recurring expenses.

An effective debt policy should provide guidelines that, among other considerations:

- Specify purposes for which long and short-term borrowing will be permitted;
- Set goals for the average maturity (i.e., less than ten years) of long-term debt;

- Set limits on debt service payments as a percent of operating revenues (less debt exclusions, enterprise fund revenues, free cash, grants, transfers and non-recurring revenues);
- Dedicate special assessment or betterment revenues to support long term debt.

In considering factors that influence the town's credit rating and are within control of town management, policy makers should recognize that rating agencies (Moody's, Standard & Poor's, Fitch Investment Services) look positively on the following:

- Revenue forecasting and a community's ability to anticipate future events;
- Interim financial reporting and monitoring;
- Contingency planning policies (reserves);
- Policies on the use of non-recurring revenues;
- Debt management policies; and
- Long-term capital planning.

Recommendation 4: Modify Town Meeting Warrant

We recommend that the town look for ways to develop a more detailed budget document. The annual town meeting warrant is simple, in an unsophisticated way, and lacks detail to the extent that questions can be raised as to whether or not town meeting is sufficiently informed to make decisions. We encourage an effort to produce a more comprehensive budget document. Options may be available through the MUNIS budget module, but any modifications to form or substance should make more information available to residents and town meeting attendees. In particular, greater detail should be provided. Revenue estimates might be summarized. A five-year capital plan should be included. An increasing number of communities are including mission statements for each municipal departments, including performance measures and goals for the upcoming year. In this way, department needs are thoroughly analyzed each year, residents acquire a better understanding of municipal accomplishments, future priorities and how tax dollars are spent. Often this information is provided in an appendix or as a supplement, and is not subject to town meeting approval. Nor does the inclusion of back-up information necessarily change the format of the budget that town meeting actually votes.

We recommend that Articles 1 and 2 of the annual town meeting warrant be presented as a single article. Separate articles are unnecessary and can be combined to read as follows:

To see if the town will hear and act upon the report and recommendations of the Finance Committee to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow such sums of money as are necessary to fund the annual operating budget of the Town for Fiscal Year 200X, or take any action related thereto.

We recommend that Article 3 not be combined with other town meeting articles. As required, Article 3 of the Douglas town meeting warrant fixes the salaries of elected positions (MGL Ch. 41 Sec. 108). At town meeting the Article 3 is, by motion, combined with the budget article and the salaries for elected officials are then approved in a departmental line item in the annual appropriation. However, once included in the annual budget, the fixed salary amounts are not always identifiable because they are combined with other departmental salaries and wages. Because it is a statutory requirement, approval of Article 3 should stand alone and be separately voted by town meeting, or the amounts should be listed as separate line items in the departmental budgets.

We recommend that the annual town meeting warrant, in its capital improvement plan article, identify a funding source. Under Massachusetts law, all municipal appropriations must specify an amount to be expended and identify a funding source for the expenditure. The town's FY05 Capital Improvement Plan article as presented to the May 19, 2004 annual town meeting, and as approved according to the minutes, failed to identify funding sources for the list of projects. At the very least, the article as presented should state:

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the necessary funds, by borrowing or otherwise, for the following projects, or take any action relative thereto.

The clerk's minutes should indicate by asterisk with a note, by an additional column or some other means how each approved project is funded (property taxes, rates, grants, etc.).

We recommend that articles authorizing the use of bond proceeds to pay for bonding costs be excluded from town meeting warrants. Since MGL Ch. 40 Sec. 20 already authorizes the use of bond proceeds to pay for bonds costs, approval to do the same by a town meeting warrant article is unnecessary. More often, if included, the words "or cost related thereto" is incorporated into each bond authorization warrant article.

Recommendation 5: Re-Examine the Capital Improvement Program

We recommend the town consider changes to the capital improvement program. Currently, the town approves capital improvement projects at a fall town meeting, and then approves funding at the spring town meeting after decisions are made on available revenues. Logistically, this means that immediately after the close of one fiscal year and early in the subsequent fiscal year, departments must begin preparing their capital improvement requests. To prepare for a fall town meeting, the capital improvement committee must work to gather quorums during summer meetings. Despite fall town meeting action, decisions are in effect

preliminary until the spring. Although free cash is not directly allocated to capital improvements, until it is certified, revenues for capital projects are uncertain.

This is an unusual and atypical process. We recommend instead that municipal departments prepare and submit their capital needs simultaneously with their annual appropriation requests. Each would be in accordance with budget guidelines distributed at the start of the process based on revenue projections. We further recommend that the town establish a formula for calculating its annual commitment to capital improvements and formalize it as a written policy. In most communities, some percentage of projected revenues is allocated to capital outlay, to debt service for capital projects or to both.

As a result, with revenue projections at the start of the budget process in the fall, the capital improvements committee will know how much funding will be available for projects. With this kind of certainty, a realistic long-term plan can be formulated and avoided is the continual bumping of projects from year to year because funding did not materialize.

To its credit, the capital improvements committee has defined what qualifies as a capital project. It also prioritizes projects through a ranking system. However, with funding uncertainty each year, coordinated and credible planning is virtually impossible. By merging the project approval and the approval of funding into the annual town meeting, a long-term capital improvement program can take shape.

For more information on, we refer the town to the DLS website and to a link under "Publications and Forms" entitled Developing a Capital Improvements Program: Manual for Massachusetts Communities (www.dls.state.ma.us/publ/misc/cip.pdf)

Recommendation 6: Adopt a Town Charter

We recommend that the town begin work toward the adoption of a charter. Today, Douglas has reached a point where it should give adoption of a town charter serious consideration. As the town makes decisions on how it wishes to be governed in the future, it should look to a charter to create an organizational structure, define relationships among officials, boards and commissions, and more clearly set out financial procedures. Accordingly, charter provisions can outline the authority and responsibilities of a town administrator, establish lines of accountability and address issues of elected versus appointed officers and boards. The budget process, capital planning steps, the elements of employee performance evaluations, as well as the duties of town officials are often set out in charter provisions.

A charter has become the preferred vehicle, over by-laws, to accomplish these goals and to achieve long-term continuity and stability in government. The more comprehensive and thought-provoking formulation and approval process for a local charter acts to discourage frequent, premature or frivolous amendments.

The townspeople can elect a charter commission as the start of a two-year process, or a home rule petition can be submitted to the State Legislature. Both procedures are outlined in

MGL Ch. 43B and would involve a process for community input into the development of charter language. In either event, we suggest that a town committee research each path to charter creation, and also provide a framework of charter issues. Its members or a separate study committee can be established to formulate and present a new charter proposal to town meeting and the voters.

Recommendation 7: Periodically Review Fees

We recommend that the town initiate a process to periodically review fees. There is case law (Emerson vs. City of Boston, et al - 391 Mass 415) that basically says a municipal fee cannot exceed the cost to provide the service to which the fee applies. Municipal managers, however, must ensure the corollary, i.e., that a fee charged for a specific service is sufficient to cover the cost of providing the service. The town should adopt a program for fee reviews on a scheduled basis.

If there is an appointed or elected board or committee that oversees a particular department, that board or committee should conduct the fee review and make recommendations to the board of selectmen. Increases would be approved by the board of selectmen, acting as the town's chief policy making body, or by town meeting on the recommendation of the selectmen. Fee reviews should involve an examination of direct and indirect costs associated with providing the service and might include a survey of similar fees in other communities.

Besides the typical, lower end fees charged by various town and school departments, the concept of a review should be applied to large operations as well. Enterprise fund revenues should be measured against enterprise costs each year. Even though operated under a fiscal autonomy umbrella, the fees associated with the school department kindergarten, pre-school, day care programs should also be reviewed. A review of revolving funds, in general, should also complete an analysis of the cost to provide the particular service and ensure that fees reflect those costs.

Recommendation 8: School Department: Hire a Business Manager, Turnover Receipts More Often and Review Legal Authority for Fees

We recommend that the school department fund the business manager position. It is our understanding that the school department FY06 budget includes a new business manager position. We support this appropriation request. Where \$10 million or over half of the total town budget funds education, it only makes sense that a professional business manager be engaged to oversee school department financial activity. Although the business manager has broader responsibilities, first among them is to account for expenditure of school related funds. He or she has the need to understand and manage the State net school spending requirements, grants, revolving funds and special education rules which represent only some of the financial

complexities confronting school districts. The Douglas school department should join the vast majority of school districts in Massachusetts that have turned to greater expertise in this position.

We recommend that the school department turnover receipts from the "special revenue" programs once per week. The school department programs that provide kindergarten, pre-school and day care services take in cash each week. This revenue should be turned-over to the treasurer at least weekly and credited to a school-related revolving fund. Although these revolving fund receipts can be expended without further appropriation by the school committee, the expenditure request must still pass through the verification process conducted in the accountant's office. The accountant is statutorily required to verify that money exists in the account to be charged, that the purpose of the expenditure is consistent with the intent of the appropriation and that there is no indication of fraud. In the case of the schools, the total budget appropriation would be the account charged. In the case of expenditures from revolving fund receipts, the purpose would have to support the revolving fund program.

In this regard, it is our understanding that the school department has recently initiated steps to streamline the revenue collection process and increase the frequency of turnovers to the town treasurer. To protect all funds in its possession, it has purchased a safe.

Computers and Technology

The town-wide computer inventory lists about 50 free-standing, desktop units. Most are in town hall where they connect to one of four servers which are dedicated to general use, assessors' office and MUNIS. Town hall is fully networked and, in addition to a local drive, each desktop has access to a shared drive. All are installed with Microsoft word processing and Excel spreadsheet applications, and by the end of FY06, all will be converted from the Windows 98 to the Windows XP operating system. Offices also have email capacity and internet access on a cable network.

With the start of FY06 on July 1, the town accountant expects to have converted to the MUNIS system general ledger from Fund Balance software which has been in use since 1998. Other MUNIS modules will include accounts payable, cash receipts, purchasing (for the school department), budget and fixed assets.

The town also relies on software programs developed by Customized Data Services (CDS) under an outside contract. Working with many town departments for over 10 years, CDS has designed free-standing software applications related to billing and collections for real and personal property, motor vehicle and boat excise, water and sewer charges and tax titles. Although developed in DOS, CDS programs are described as user friendly and exceedingly well-tailored to meet specific needs.

In a peripheral use of technology, the assessors' office contracts with a partnership between Cartographics Associates, Inc. and PeopleGIS to create the Douglas Geographical Information System (GIS). Through a link on the town's website, town departments as well as residents can access property data. Internet users can also view town maps at MapsOnLine under a similar arrangement.

In the absence of in-house technology staff, the accountant provides network support, as well as hardware or software assistance in town hall. His experience derives from his prior, private sector job experience in software support. In recognition of expanding demand, the FY06 budget request for technology includes an additional \$5,000 to cover two hours a week that the school IT person would devote to town network support. Otherwise, CDS provides software support as part of its services, the town clerk has a support contract for the IMAS permitting software, and a support contract will begin when MUNIS takes effect July 1.

As a rule, town hall staff are encouraged to save their work to servers which are backed-up on a daily and weekly basis by the accountant. There are no town-wide procedures directing the back-up of local drives by departments. Backup tapes are stored off-site, but not in a fire-proof location. At present the town has no email and internet policies.

Conclusion - The town of Douglas finance managers and staff are advanced in both their attitude toward and their use of technology. They seem to look for and welcome opportunities to expand on the use of available computer resources. The accountant's background and advocacy

of the electronic exchange of information has helped the town reach this stage. In addition, a good part of this success can also be credited to CDS which has made meaningful contributions to government efficiency through the development of original software programs that accomplish specific tasks. Our recommendations offer suggestions to help the town provide support to staff and to plan for an inevitable increase in demand for computer services. When that time arrives, the town should not expect that the accountant can fill the need without jeopardizing completion of his own fiduciary responsibilities. Although not a recommendation here, the town would be wise to include funding, to some extent, of technology position in its long-term planning.

Recommendation 9: Establish a Technology Committee

We recommend the town form a technology committee. A technology committee can be a meaningful and objective contributor of information, analysis and insight on computer and software issues. Its members can work with town personnel and consultants to produce a periodic report, or assessment, of the town's technology status with recommendations on options to enhance computer capabilities. Such a report would serve as a useful tool to evaluate and document the performance of hardware and software in town departments and spawn a long term replacement and upgrade program. It would encourage the town to look forward and prioritize the need for upgrades, and recommend the adoption of new technologies. Funding could be a series of direct outlays over time, or through bonding. In either event, the funding should be a subject of discussion involving the executive administrator and the capital improvement committee.

A technology committee might comprise only three or four members who have appropriate knowledge or work experience. To the extent possible, the town should recruit members from the town population, but the committee could be a mix of residents and town officials. In any event, the accountant in his role as technology support person should be a committee member. Involvement of the school information technology person would also make sense. Unless delegated to the executive administrator, power to appoint the committee members rests with the board of selectmen.

Recommendation 10: Regularly Survey Town Employees

We recommend that a goal of the technology committee be to survey town employees. The town should take advantage of the predisposition of many town employees toward computer use by conducting a survey of attitudes and proficiencies. Periodic meetings with town departments solely on technology issues are also useful in determining what works and what

doesn't, where training is needed, and what tasks might be better accomplished electronically. An action plan can then be developed that specifically address technology matters.

Recommendation 11: Expand GIS Use

We recommend that the town expand the use of its Geographical Information System (GIS). Currently, the town's GIS system data base only includes resident property information originating from the assessors' office. However, at full utilization, a GIS system typically incorporates overlay information of value to the water and sewer operation, the highway department, the conservation commission and any other town office that works with real property, infrastructure or natural characteristics of the town. Therefore, unless internet viewing of the information is problematic, we recommend the town explore expanding its utilization of GIS. One course of action is to meet with counterparts in other communities to learn of potential benefits.

Accountant

Around 2000, the 20-year tenure of the town's accountant ended. It was followed by a period of turmoil during which three interim, part-time accountants passed through the office in eighteen months. Then three years ago, the position was made full-time, and the current accountant was appointed by the board of selectmen. Due, in part, to his prior experience with Access Municipal Systems, a software company, the accountant also took on technology support responsibilities in town hall. He is assisted with accounting functions by a two-day per week clerk who also works in the water/sewer department two days a week. She previously worked at Unibank and has been in the accountant's office for approximately two and a half years.

The accountant has a legal obligation to oversee all financial activity of a municipality. Through the maintenance of independent records and by following well-defined procedures, the office documents the flow of money into and out of municipal accounts and plays a role in the system of checks and balances established by statute to monitor and protect local assets.

The Douglas accountant's office effectively fulfills these responsibilities for the town. The accountant or the clerk prepares vender warrants, maintains a general ledger and subsidiary ledgers, where receipts, expenditures and all other town financial activity are recorded. As required departmental expenditure requests go through a verification process. A debt schedule is maintained. The office produces expenditure reports and tracks revenue, typically in conjunction with the accountant's role in the annual budget process. As required by law, the accountant has copies of town contracts and grants, but there is uncertainty whether all school related documents are in his possession.

Among required submissions to DOR, the accountant is responsible for producing the town's annual Schedule A by October 31 and its year-end Balance Sheet (for Free Cash certification). Finally, the accountant works with the assessors and town clerk in the preparation of the town's Tax Recap Sheet. Although submission of the town's annual Schedule A has tended to be late, these tasks otherwise appear to be occurring on a timely basis.

The accountant has a process in place for reconciling receivables with the collector monthly and cash with the treasurer, but the exchange of information does not appear to take place on a regular basis. The ability of the accountant to report annually on the town's liability for accrued sick leave and vacation time, is also hampered by the absence of information from department heads on the timesheets they submit.

As the technology support person in town hall, the accountant expends his time responding to various network, hardware and software issues. He oversees tape back-ups of servers which occur daily, followed by a full-weekly copy.

As noted, beginning July 1, 2005, MUNIS will replace Fund Balance financial management software for general ledger, as well as annual budgeting purposes in the office. The

accountant also takes full advantage of Excel spreadsheets particularly to exchange information on the system's shared drive.

Conclusion - After three years, the current accountant has elevated the performance level, advanced the use of technology and brought some stability to the office. As a result, the accountant's office functions well and fulfills fundamental responsibilities relative to the general ledger and the payroll and vendor warrant process. Therefore, our recommendations are few, but focus on other legal duties which deserve attention.

Recommendation 12: Modify Reconciliation Procedures

We recommend that the accountant work with the treasurer and collector to modify the cash and receivable reconciliation process. This recommendation is intended to underscore the importance of cash and receivable reconciliations as critical financial controls and to prompt agreement on a monthly reconciliation process. DLS recommends the following procedure.

The process should begin, as it now does for the treasurer and collector, with their internal reconciliation of cash and receivables, respectively. On an agreed upon date after the close of each month, the accountant should forward his balance of cash in town funds to the treasurer, and his receivables total to the collector. In the case of the cash balances, whether a single aggregate number is provided, or a cash balance is presented for each major fund typically depends on the structure of the treasurer's records (i.e., are the general fund, capital projects fund, special revenue funds, etc. separate or combined into a single account), or merely on what they agree to.

If a variance appears between any accountant and treasurer cash balance, or accountant and collector outstanding receivable balance, the initial burden should fall to the treasurer and collector to verify entries through a re-examination of source documents. Other adjustments and timing issues should also be factored-in. If a variance remains unresolved, the accountant should provide the treasurer, or the collector, with his detail, or they can meet to review and compare source documents and entries. The process needs to continue into an examination of greater detail until any variance is reconciled.

To take advance of the electronic exchange of information, the accountant should modify the common drive version of the treasurer's cash book and the collector's receivable control to display his balances. On the designated date each month, the accountant should copy his cash balance amounts to the common drive so that the treasurer and collector can begin the reconciliation process. At the same time, the treasurer and collector should copy their record, for the particular month, to the common drive as well, so that accountant simultaneously learns whether a variance exists.

Recommendation 13: Centralize Records for Accrued Sick Leave/Vacation Time

We recommend that the town centralize record keeping for accrued employee sick leave and vacation time. Among his duties, the accountant must annually report, for the purposes of GAAP accounting, employee sick and vacation time vested and accrued. This accounting reflects the obligation of the town under contracts to compensate employees, upon retirement, for all or a portion of their sick and vacation time earned, but not taken. For many communities, this represents a future, and oftentimes unfunded liability, which can only be determined and planned for with proper procedures for the collection and maintenance of employee information.

It is our understanding that the personnel board is considering the merits of accrual and buy-back provisions for sick leave and vacation time. Even now, however, there is no uniform procedure in place that would centralize record keeping. Instead, reliance is placed on department managers to track employee sick leave and vacation time.

The maintenance of records at the departmental level represents good practice only if the practice is uniform, and if corresponding information is also retained in a centralized location, i.e., with the accountant. Otherwise, checks and balances do not exist. The absence of a systematic procedure for maintaining these records can give rise to circumstances where an employee's claim of accrued sick leave and vacation time cannot be corroborated or challenged with credibility.

Therefore, as a matter of establishing internal controls, we recommend that a system be installed where all employees include sick and vacation time taken on timesheets. With technology upgrades and under the Massachusetts Uniform Electronic Transactions Act, the transfer of timesheet and other payroll information can be accomplished electronically easing any additional burden on finance officers, departments heads and staff. In addition, payroll software applications are generally capable of automatically tracking employees' balance of sick, vacation and personal time.

Recommendation 14: Modify MUNIS to Reflect Schedule A Format

We recommend that the accountant adjust MUNIS to Schedule A formats. The Schedule A is a year-end statement of a municipality's actual revenues, expenditures, changes in fund balance and certain other financial information. It is a required report prepared by the town accountant which must be submitted annually to DOR by October 31. Communities that fail to meet the DLS Schedule A submission deadline run the risk of having their 3rd Quarter state aid distribution withheld.

We encourage the accountant to take advantage of the ability of MUNIS to generate financial data in formats and groupings that reflect those required in the Schedule A. In this way, the amount of work necessary to complete the Schedule A can be reduced, and the prospects for meeting the October 31 deadline can increase.

Treasurer

The treasurer was first elected to a three year term in 1993 following service in a local savings bank. She is up for re-election again in 2006. Staff includes a full-time assistant treasurer, who joined the office in 2002, and a one-day per week clerk who began in 2003. Each has specific responsibilities, and is cross-trained to help complete whatever task requires attention.

The treasurer is a community's cash manager and, as such, has custody of all municipal money regardless of how it is received, or whether it is intended for general town or school use, directed to revolving funds or associated with grant and trusts. Included is the responsibility to make certain that town receipts are deposited into appropriate bank accounts, to monitor balances ensuring that sufficient funds are available to cover town obligations as they become due, and to make payments from those accounts as directed by vender and payroll warrants. The treasurer invests town funds and manages debt to maximize investment income and meet cash flow needs. In Douglas, the treasurer also has payroll responsibilities and fulfill personnel/human resources functions.

To carry out these responsibilities, the Douglas treasurer maintains an electronic cashbook which lists all town bank accounts, tracks daily receipts, and accounts for disbursements through approved warrants. This information together with check registers, allows a staff member to complete the critical task of reconciling her cash book to bank statements each month. Equally important reconciliations of cash balances between the treasurer and the accountant, however, are occurring less frequently. As required, the treasurer keeps up-to-date debt schedules and monitors cash flow. Finally, among fundamental responsibilities, the treasurer maintains a record of tax title accounts, and foreclosed properties. As of April 21, 2005, the tax title list included 80 accounts and a balance of \$358,383 including interest and fees. Eighteen cases are pending foreclosure in Land Court.

Harper's, an outside service, generates paychecks and pays withholdings each period. This is at the end of a bi-weekly process which begins with submission of employee timesheets by department managers. From exception reports for salaried employees and actual time worked for hourly employees, the treasurer's staff completes worksheets then electronically delivers the data to Harper's. In return, the town receives employee checks, a check register and an accounting of withholdings for approval. Withholding amounts are maintained in liability accounts, paid when due by Harper's, and then recorded by the treasurer as cash receipts.

The treasurer's office also provides human resource services and fulfills personnel functions that are not within the province of the town personnel board. The office guides new town employees through the required paperwork, handles all retiree issues, and maintains personnel files.

As with the other finance offices, the treasurer's office makes effective use of CDS designed software together with Excel spreadsheets. A town hall computer network accommodates a shared drive, and electronic connections with the accountant, collector and assessors to facilitate the seamless flow and rapid exchange of information between offices.

Conclusion - Overall, the treasurer brings longevity and stability to the position and together with the assistant treasurer effectively fulfill the responsibilities of the office. Records are clear, complete and where ever possible maintained in an electronic format. While arriving at a process for reconciling cash with the accountant should be a priority, other recommendations we offer for the treasurer's office are relatively minor.

Recommendation 15: Agree to a Monthly Reconciliation Procedure with the Accountant

We recommend that the treasurer work with the accountant to reach agreement on a cash reconciliation process. This recommendation is intended to restate by reference our recommendation already in the accountant's section of this report regarding reconciliations. It is equally applicable to the treasurer. We again underscore the importance of cash reconciliations as a critical financial control and hope to prompt implementation by the treasurer and accountant of the monthly reconciliation procedure set out earlier.

Recommendation 16: Generate a Payroll Warrant by Individual

We recommend that the payroll warrant provide detail by employee. Under current practice, the selectmen are presented with a payroll warrant listing salary amounts by account number with totals for withholdings. While this format is appropriate for the purposes of the accountant, gross, and preferably net, salary amounts for each employee is required on payroll warrants for selectmen approval.

Whether incorporated into the warrant or attached as back-up documentation, payroll detail by employee must be made available to the board of selectmen if it is to fulfill its statutory responsibilities. Specifically, to approve the payroll warrant as required under MGL Ch. 41, §52, selectmen must be able to inspect and view each individual payment, which in this case would, at least, be an employee's name and gross salary. Net salary might also be included, but not individual withholding amounts. The same information must find its way to the treasurer so that checks may be drawn. It's understood and acceptable that outside payroll services are integrated into this process.

Recommendation 17: Do Not Record Payroll Withholdings as Receipts

We recommend that the treasurer discontinue posting payroll withholdings as receipts. In addition to salary amounts due individual employees, the payroll warrant should identify the aggregate amount due for employees' federal tax, state tax as well as for other withholding categories. With approval of the payroll warrant by the selectmen, the treasurer is thereby authorized to disburse withholding amounts, as well as release employee pay. In Douglas, the treasurer's software records a "no check" for withholdings which are maintained in a liability account until paid, by wire transfer, by Harper's payroll service.

Because the dollars that fund withholdings are initially brought-into town accounts as general receipts, and are subsequently disbursed by the payroll warrant, no further balancing entries in the treasurer's record are necessary. Specifically, withholdings need not be recorded as receipts (nor disbursed through a vender warrant).

Recommendation 18: Fast Track High Dollar Tax Title Accounts

We recommend that the treasurer target certain tax title accounts. Among 80 current tax title accounts, \$191,683 of \$358,384 in outstanding taxes, interest and fees are attributable to five properties and date back to 1980 (2), 1982, 1998 and 2000. From a different perspective, seven property owners, who own 33 parcels, owe the town \$151,978. We encourage the treasurer to devise a plan and estimate the cost to target certain tax title accounts than represent a high return for the town. If necessary, funding to pursue these accounts should be added to the treasurer's departmental budget, or raised on the Recap Sheet.

Collector

The Douglas collector was first elected to a three year term in 2001 following 19-years as an assistant in the office. She followed the 25-year tenure of her predecessor and was re-elected in the spring of 2004. Staff includes a part-time assistant collector who devotes only one day of her week to the department. However, with 17 years of experience, the assistant collector is fully capable of running the office in the absence of the collector.

The title of tax collector limits the authority of the collector to receive real and personal property taxes, excises, betterments and certain other charges added to and committed as taxes. In Douglas, this authority was expanded to specifically permit collection of water and sewer charges in 1981 with approval of a by-law.

On average each year, approximately 65 percent of all tax and excise payments, as well as water and sewer charges, are mailed directly to a lock box. Another 25-30 percent are collected over-the-counter, while a growing number of payments are made on-line through the Unibank website. The town has been on quarterly tax billing since 1994. Water and sewer bills are mailed every six months.

Computers in the collector, treasurer and assessors' offices connect over a network, and support software developed by Customized Data Services (CDS) for a wide range of functions. As a result, commitments are transferred to the collector electronically from the assessors, or from the water and sewer department. The collector receives abatement and exemption certificates electronically and transfers tax title accounts to the treasurer over the network. The collector uses CDS software to maintain real estate, personal property and motor vehicle records, and posts payments to those data management systems. She maintains an up-to-date receivable control in CDS which can be viewed on a shared drive by the accountant. Municipal lien certificates are generated through CDS, and are facilitated through an electronic connection to water and sewer records. Using a CDS program, credit reports are run to identify and confirm legitimate refunds due to residents.

With procedures and electronic systems in place, receipts are counted and deposited daily. Once posted to taxpayer accounts, the receipts are turned-over to the treasurer usually within a day or two. At year end, real and personal property delinquent are pursued and then tax title accounts are moved electronically to the treasurer. Under a contractual agreement with the Deputy Collector, Kelley & Ryan, personal property, motor vehicle and boat excise delinquents are pursued. Fulfilling a critical check and balance responsibility, the collector reconciles her receivables, maintains an up-to-date receivable control that she reconciles internally and then externally with the accountant each month.

Conclusion - Years of collection office experience and the maximum use of technology has provided the collector with the means to create a well-organized, efficient operation. Town receipts are deposited and posted quickly, a receivable control is maintained and reconciliations

occur regularly with the accountant. Looking forward, we recommend that moving receivables into tax title and adding new tax obligations to existing tax title accounts be given greater attention.

Recommendation 19: Move Receivables into Tax Title/Issue Subsequents

We recommend that the collector accelerate her schedule to move receivables into tax title. Normally, the collector's process for sending demands letters and initiating tax takings against delinquent property owners begins shortly after 4th Quarter payments are due in the spring. By the end of the year, takings are complete and tax title accounts are transferred to the treasurer for collection. Currently, the collector lags in processing FY04 receivables. Our recommendation is intended to underscore the importance of moving receivables into tax title and to encourage an accelerated process in the future.

We recommend that the collector notify the treasurer of subsequent taxes due on tax title accounts. When the collector transfers tax titles to the treasurer, the amount due on a particular property includes outstanding taxes, plus accrued interest and fees. For each ensuing year that a property remains in tax title, the collector must certify to the treasurer "subsequents," or the additional amount of unpaid taxes and assessments (MGL Ch. 60 Sec 61). As the end of FY05 approaches, the collector should place a priority on notifying the treasurer of the FY04 subsequents using State Form 347. The collector can then credit the amounts certified as paid, and clear the accounts for the particular tax year. In the future, subsequents should be certified to the treasurer by September 1 for the fiscal year just ending.

Recommendation 20: Review Contractual Arrangement with Deputy Collector

We recommend that that collector review the contractual relationship between the office and the deputy collector. In an Informational Guideline Release (IGR) No. 90-213, DLS published new rules governing the relationship between municipalities and deputy collectors. Section II has since been superseded by Section I of IGR 03-210. Both can be found at the DLS website (www.dls.state.ma.us) under the IGR Quick Link.

In particular, IGR 90-213 addresses financial controls in the collection and deposit of receipts, and in the payment of deputy collector fees. The collector's current arrangement with the deputy collector should comply with the provisions of the DLS IGRs.

Assessors

The assessors' office is responsible for valuing all the town's real and personal property, assigning tax payments to owners, and generating the commitment authorizing the collector to collect real estate tax and motor vehicle excise payments.

To ensure that residents are taxed equitably and accurately, the office maintains and updates property records with information received in response to mailings, from deeds and through the on-site inspection of sale properties and properties where a building permit has been issued. Additional information is gathered during an on-going property measure and list program. Upon resident application, assessors act on and track exemptions and abatements. They estimate new growth and conduct classification hearings. The assessors set the tax rate, recommend the annual overlay and provide levy information for use in the Tax Recap Sheet submitted to DOR. The office is also required by DOR to document an annual property value adjustment analysis and to prepare for State certification of property values every three years.

The volume of work in the Douglas assessing department involved 3,884 parcels in FY05, of which 2,725 are residential, 130 are commercial/industrial, 852 are vacant. Among the remaining 177 parcels, 84 are classified as chapter land, and 198 are personal property accounts. All real and personal property accounts are billed on a quarterly basis. Over the course of one year, motor vehicle commitments total about 10,200 accounts. Also in FY04, the office received 34 residential abatement applications and issued 94 personal exemptions.

The assessing department is managed by a full-time assistant assessor with 17 years of experience in the office. Staff include a full-time administrative clerk, a three-day per week principle clerk, with ten and six years respectively of experience in the office, plus a part-time contract "lister" who conducts inspections of all property types with the exception of personal property. The department operates under a three-member, elected board of assessors which meets once a month. In general, the board receives recommendations on abatements and exemptions from the assistant assessor, approves the department budget she develops, and is required to sign-off on overlay amounts and new growth estimates.

Since 1999, the office has used appraisal software produced by Patriot Properties which was upgraded to the most recent version in FY05. Under a service contract, Patriot also completes data analysis and valuations for all residential, personal, commercial and industrial property. For personal property, Patriot also collects data through "forms of lists" and inspections.

Although there is no counter access to a computer, the office is otherwise sufficiently equipped with desktop units. In addition to Patriot, the office uses CDS software, and together with other departments and the public-at-large, has access to a GIS system through a private internet vendor.

Conclusion - Overall, with in-house staff and contract services, the assessing department has systems and procedures in place to handle all that is required to maintain up-to-date property records, set property values, and commit taxes and charges for collection.

Recommendation 21: Initiate Quality Control on Inspections

We recommend that the assistant assessor implement a quality control program for inspections. Currently, the assistant assessor prepares a list of properties and pulls field cards for the use of the part-time contract "lister" during the on-going cyclical inspection program. For a more effective program, advance calls are made to property owners to arrange visits. The lister also inspects building permit properties every three-to-four months, and sale properties throughout the year. Although BLA conducts data quality studies as part of the triennial certification of property values, and even with confidence in the work being done, a community should implement its own quality control measures particularly during interim years. We recommend the assistant assessor communicate with the town's BLA community advisor to discuss how this can be accomplished.

Recommendation 22: Consider a Counter Desktop Computer

We recommend that the assessors place a desktop computer at the counter. In order to free-up staff time, a growing number of assessing offices make computer terminals available to the public. In this way, residents, appraisers and others can independently search property records and print field card type information without disrupting office staff. Sale information can also be included. Terminals are free-standing, read-only devices, and are placed on the counter or at another location on the public side of the counter.

Recommendation 23: Follow Through on Owners Unknown

We recommend that the assistant assessor follow through on her initiatives to certify owner unknown accounts. The assistant assessor reports that there are approximately 75 property tax accounts where information about the legal owner is absent or unclear. Until the assessors receive permission from DOR to bill each of these accounts to "owner unknown," no means is available to collect back taxes owed the town. The assistant assessor indicates that she has begun to prepare an application to DOR. We encourage her to pursue this course as quickly as possible. In this way, tax bills can be sent, and when unpaid, the delinquent account can be moved through the tax title process and toward foreclosure.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by

The Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services (DLS)

Gerard D. Perry, Deputy Commissioner

Frederick E. Kingsley, Bureau Chief
Municipal Data Management and Technical Assistance Bureau (MDM/TAB)

Joseph Markarian, Jr., Project Manager, Technical Assistance, MDM/TAB

Andrew Nelson, Field Representative, Bureau of Accounts

Robert Martin, Community Advisor, Bureau of Local Assessment

In preparing this review, DLS interviewed the following persons
and numerous other town hall staff members

Shirley Mosczynski, Chair, Board of Selectmen

Paula Brouillette, Selectman

Edward Therrien, Selectman/Public Works Director

Richard Preston, Selectman

Concetta A. Verge, School Superintendent

Michael Guzinski, Executive Administrator

Pamela Holmes, Chair, Finance Committee

Mitch Cohen, Chair, Capital Improvements Committee

Richard Mathieu, Town Accountant

Deborah Harris, Assistant Town Accountant

Sharon Brotherton, Treasurer

Kimberly Yargeau, Assistant Treasurer

Julie Kessler, Treasurer's Clerk/Assessors' Clerk

Pamela A. Carter, Tax Collector

Eileen Damore, Assistant Collector

Ida Ouilette, Assistant Assessor

Beth McKay, Assessor's Administrative Clerk

Dan Berman, CDS, Technology Consultant