

Holliston Governance Committee

Select Board Update #3

Town Population and Select Board Size

The Holliston Governance Committee is in the process of studying whether Holliston should continue with its current Select Board of three elected members or change to a Select Board of five elected members.

In Massachusetts, there are 291 towns in which the towns' policy body is the Select Board. The research phase of the Governance Committee's exploration of this issue has involved analyzing the relationship of population size to Select Board size.

In a sample of 119 towns whose populations in 2020 ranged from 7,000 to 23,000, with Holliston in the middle at 15,000, 70% of the towns had five-member Select Boards and 30% had three-member Select Boards. View the Table at:

<https://www.townofholliston.us/governance/files/select-board-table-town-7-23k>

In a second sample of 77 towns with 2020 populations between 10,000 and 20,000, with Holliston in the middle at 15,000, 80% of the towns had five-member Select Boards and 20% had three-member Select Boards. View the Table at:

<https://www.townofholliston.us/governance/files/select-board-size-by-town-10-20k>

The table below provides similar information for Holliston and 11 peer or comparable towns which are identified based on criteria recommended by the state Division of Local Services.

Population & Select Board Size of Holliston and 11 Peer Towns

No.	Municipality	Population 2020	Policy Body	Select Board Size	Legislative Body
1	Ashland	18,832	Select Board	5	Open Town Meeting
2	Foxborough	18,618	Select Board	5	Open Town Meeting
3	Grafton	19,664	Select Board	5	Open Town Meeting
4	Hanover	14,833	Select Board	5	Open Town Meeting
5	Holliston	14,996	Select Board	3	Open Town Meeting
6	Hudson	20,092	Selectmen	5	Open Town Meeting
7	Medway	13,115	Selectmen	5	Open Town Meeting
8	North Reading	15,554	Select Board	5	Open Town Meeting
9	Northborough	15,741	Selectmen	5	Open Town Meeting
10	Pembroke	18,361	Select Board	5	Open Town Meeting
11	Sharon	18,575	Select Board	3	Open Town Meeting
12	Swampscott	15,111	Selectmen	5	Representative TM

Prepared by: Holliston Governance Committee

Source: Mass. Division of Local Services, Data Analytics & Resources Bureau

Population size is one metric point and not a reason alone to make a decision on the size of a Select Board.