

Holliston Governance Committee

Select Board Update #2

Arguments for Select Boards of 3 or 5 Members

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.

We have and will continue to review the work of Government Study Committees in other Massachusetts towns that have addressed this issue. From the studies reviewed so far, we have identified a few common arguments for the three and five-member Boards which include the following:

Arguments for maintaining a Three-Member Select Board

- Will there be enough quality candidates for five seats?
- All Board deliberations remain transparent and open to the public
- Increasing the size will require more time of the Town Administrator. Strengthen the role of the Town Administrator first
- Don't fix what is not broken

Arguments for changing to a Five-Member Select Board

- Offers a broader representation of experiences, viewpoints and skill sets
- Increases the prospects for greater collaboration since winning a majority of three votes versus two is more difficult
- Two Select Board members may legally speak with one another (but not deliberate) which offers more opportunity for mentoring new members, offline discussion between Select Board members and the organization of two-member subcommittees
- Better resident access to a Select Board member.

Other Considerations

- The issue of Select Board size is subjective. The number of Board members does not matter. The quality of the Select Board members is all that matters.
- Understanding how the current duties of the Select Board and Town Administrator should be aligned to achieve the maximum efficiency for both is a key factor in determining the size of the Select Board