

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

CHRONOLOGY OF TOWN GOVERNMENT STRUCTURAL CHANGE

- 1970 In 1970 the Holliston Jaycees prepared a comprehensive Town Management Study. The Study recommended the creation of a Charter Commission with the expectation that it would recommend a new management structure for Holliston and the employment of professional management.
- 1973 Charter Commission vote in Yes 818 43.3% 48.1%
Town Election was defeated No 881 46.6% 51.9%
Blanks 192 10.1% 100.0%
Total 1,891 100.0%
- 1980 Finance Committee contracted with the Massachusetts Municipal Association to undertake a Management Capacity Study. The report recommended the creation of a full-time Administrative Assistant position for the Board of Selectmen
- 1982 Special Town Meeting on November 4, 1982, approved Article 2 which created the position of Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen.
- 1897 Board of Selectmen voted on May 11, 1987 to change the title of the Administrative Assistant position to Executive Secretary with no change in responsibilities and to enter into an employment agreement with the Executive Secretary.
- 1987 Annual Town Meeting in May, 1987 (Article 24) directed the Board of Selectmen to appoint a Government Study Committee to study Holliston's current government structure and recommend improvements. The Committee submitted recommendations to expand the responsibilities of the Executive Secretary and create appointed positions of Treasurer and Accountant in its report on March 14, 1988.
- 1987 Board of Selectmen, at the request of the Government Study Committee, requested the Commonwealth's Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services to analyze Holliston's financial management structure and recommend improvements. The report was presented in February, 1988 and a key finding by the Committee was that Holliston's management authority and power was widely dispersed which increased governmental fragmentation. The DLS report recommended that the financial management responsibilities of the Executive Secretary should be broadened and supported the appointment of the positions of Treasurer and Accountant.
- 1988 Annual Town Meeting on May 9, 1988 approved Article 26 and 27 to strengthen administrative, operating and capital budget and coordinating responsibilities of the Executive Secretary's position and to establish the positions of appointed Treasurer and appointed Accountant. Legislation to implement both Articles was enacted as Chapter 99 of the Acts of 1988 on July 5, 1988.
- 1993 Board of Selectmen, on October 1, 1993, appointed a Government Study Committee to analyze the Town's government structure and recommend improvements. The Committee presented its recommendation to the Board to create a Town Administrator-Selectmen form of government on April 4, 1994.

- 1994 The Annual Town Meeting, on May 9, 1994, approved Article 10 authorizing a special act establishing the position of Town Administrator. Special Act (H5008) was enacted as Chapter 94 of the Acts of 1994 on August 16, 1994.
- 1995 In May of 1995, voters agreed on a Town election ballot to establish a Charter Commission to review town government. In 1988, the Commission issued its recommendations to retain Open Town Meeting, increase the Board of Selectmen to five members, enlarge the Library Trustees to seven members and appoint the Tree Warden. At the 1988 Town Election, these recommendations were defeated – Yes 850, No 1,682 and Blanks 71.
- 2021 The Select Board, at the request of the Governance Committee, requested the state Division of Local Services/Financial Management Resource Bureau to conduct a financial management review for the Town of Holliston. The report issued on November 2, 2021 found that Holliston’s governmental structure remains decentralized. The report noted that over 40 years, Holliston only achieved incremental change to the town’s managing structure while municipal government has grown more complex. The Bureau’s top two recommendations included developing a Town Charter to achieve better accountability, improved management and efficient operations and develop and adopt a budget development By-Law.
- 2020-2023 The Select Board approved the creation of a Governance Committee in 2020 to recommend policies to improve the management and governance of town government. The Committee presented its final report in February 2023 outlining its work, describing its findings and providing an organizational strategic plan consisting of six key recommendations to meet the current and future challenges facing the Town. The Committee’s top three recommendations included creating a Town Charter, updating the Town Administrator Special Act and establishing a budget development By-Law.

Sources: Government Study Committee 1994 and Governance Committee 1993