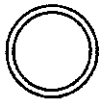
Town Meeting - Selectmen - Manager Form of Government



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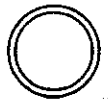
Home Rule



- Under the Connecticut Home Rule Act, "municipalities have the power to adopt a charter to serve as the organic law of that municipality." Connecticut General Statutes § 7-188(a).
- "It is well established that a [town's] charter is the fountainhead of municipal powers."
- "The charter serves as an enabling act, both creating power and prescribing the form in which it must be exercised."

Supreme Court of Connecticut per Justice Katz n Windham Taxpayers Association et al v. Board of Selectment of Town of Windham, 234 Conn. 513, 529, 662 A.2d 1281, 1290 (1995). (Citations and internal quotation marks omitted.)

Permitted Forms for Legislative Body

Under Connecticut General Statutes §7-193(a)(1), a municipality's "legislative body" … "may be:

(A) A town meeting;

(B) a representative town meeting;

(C) a board of selectmen, council, board of directors, board of aldermen or board of burgesses; or

(D) a combination of a town meeting or representative town meeting and one of the bodies listed in subparagraph (C)."

Forms of Local Government

Two basic forms of local government:

- The "direct" form = Town Meeting serves as the legislative body, passing laws, approving the spending of monies.
- The "representational" form = elected group serves as the legislative body.

Maine Municipal Association

http://www.memun.org/public/local_govt/government.htm

Variations of Government

Five basic variations:

1. Town Meeting-Selectmen Form of Government
2. Town Meeting-Selectmen-Manager*
3. Council-Town Meeting-Manager
4. Council-Manager
5. Council-Mayor-Administrator

* The 1939 Town Manager Enabling Act

Maine Municipal Association

http://www.memun.org/public/local_govt/government.htm

Town Meeting Remains

- For years in Westbrook, the Town Meeting has been the central core of our government.
- The Town Meeting remains unchanged as the "legislative body" of the town.
- The Town Meeting will continue its practice of sending issues deemed appropriate to Referendum.
- The Town Meeting approves the Budget from which a tax rate is determined.

How Selectmen – Manager Form Works

- **Board of Selectmen and First Selectman generally serve without compensation.**
- **Town Manager is a salaried employee who reports directly to the Board of Selectmen**
- **Corporate analogy:**
  - **Town Meeting = Shareholders**
  - **Selectmen = Board of Directors**
  - **Town Manager = CEO**

How does Selectmen – Manager government work?

Elected Board of Selectmen

- represents community and develops long-range vision.
- establishes policies to govern overall operation of municipal organization.
- appoints competent, professional Town Manager to implement policy and to oversee daily operations.

Role of the Board of Selectmen

Power is centralized in an elected Board of Selectmen which:

- Serves as community's policy-making body.
- Focuses on community goals, major projects and other long-term issues.
- Appoints and/or removes a Town Manager who serves at their will.

Role of the First Selectman

- First Selectman serves as key political and policy leader.
- Specific duties depend on Charter, but typically the First Selectman:
  - Is a voting member of Board of Selectmen who presides at meetings
  - Represents the municipality in intergovernmental relationships and at ceremonial functions
  - Sets Board of Selectmen agenda with Town Manager

Role of the Town Manager

- Hired on basis of merit to serve Board of Selectmen and community
- Serves at pleasure of the Board of Selectmen
- Makes policy recommendations to Board of Selectmen for its consideration and final decision
  - Implements Board of Selectmen policy
  - Bound by action the Board of Selectmen takes
  - Control always remains in the hands of elected representatives

Duties of appointed Town Manager

Serves as CEO which includes the duties to –

- Oversee work of municipal departments.
- Serve as personnel administrator– provide direction and leadership to department heads.
- Manage public funds.
  - Prepare annual budget and multi-year capital improvement program.
  - Ensure fiscal responsibility and modern accounting practices.

Duties of appointed Town Manager

- Implement programs and policies – work with elected officials and community leaders to achieve common goals and objectives.
- Coordinate service delivery – anticipate future needs; organize work operations.

Manager is Non-Partisan & Apolitical

- Town Manager is a non-partisan and apolitical position.
- Standards of ethics of the International City Managers' Association (ICMA) require Manager to *"refrain from participating in the election of the members of the employing legislative body and from all partisan political activities that could impair performance as a professional administrator."*
- Broad policy development and politics remain clearly the purview of the Board of Selectmen.

Benefits of Selectmen–Manager Government

- Frees elected officials to focus on policy making and community issues.
- Empowers elected officials to lead and to develop a vision for the community.
- Offers the flexibility required to enable a community to go in new directions while providing continuity during transitions.
- Helps Bond Ratings through continuity.

Benefits of Selectmen-Manager government

- Encourages open communication between citizens and government - political power is not concentrated in the chair, but is shared by all members of the Board of Selectmen.
- Diffuses the power of special interests - all constituents and interests have a voice, not just those that are well-funded.
- Education, training, and experience of a professional Town Manager will likely:
  - Reduce legal fees, and
  - Provide opportunities to find, apply for, and obtain Grants.

Benefits of Selectmen - Manager Form

- Eliminates partisan politics from personnel, financial and contracting decisions - merit based decision making based on qualifications and performance
- Encourages the development and retention of talented municipal employees
- Fosters professional ethics

Benefits of Selectmen - Manager Form

As we know from past experience, an elected First Selectman cannot be removed from office.

A Town Manager can be removed from duty if deemed necessary or appropriate.

What value does a professional Manager contribute to a community?

- Assists the Board of Selectmen with the development of a vision and long-range strategic planning.
- Recommends cost-saving ideas and productivity improvements.
- Enhances the community's responsiveness to its citizens through administrative and fiscal accountability.
- Develops corps of professional staff - strong emphasis on professional ethics.

CTCMA Annual Salary Survey 2010

Town Managers and CAOs

Avon	17,328	$	127,500
Berlin	20,364	$	113,000
Bloomfield	20,727	$	148,100
Bolton	5,117	$	79,058
Columbia	5,315	$	85,000
Coventry	12,207	$	116,740
Darien	20,177	$	144,210
Farmington	25,116	$	128,707
Glastonbury	33,263	$	158,000
Granby	11,219	$	134,000
Greenwich	61,937	$	167,000
Groton (T)	39,167	$	130,175
Hebron	9,228	$	115,000
Killingly	17,826	$	109,000
Manchester	56,385	$	149,330
Mansfield	24,622	$	127,842
Meriden	59,186	$	136,000
New	25,891	$	162,500
Newington	29,699	$	129,000
North	14,374	$	118,450
Norwich	36,388	$	125,000
Plainville	17,221	$	118,438
Putnam	9,307	$	74,263
Rocky Hill	18,852	$	135,000
South	25,966	$	143,410
Tolland	14,705	$	129,984
Vernon	29,839	$	90,002
West	60,495	$	145,000
Weston	10,183	$	119,156
Wincheste	10,716	$	85,000
Windham	23,609	$	120,000
Total Salaries		**$**	**3,863,865**
Average Salaries		**$**	**124,641**

Salaries in Towns with Similar Populations

Towns with under 11,000 population

• 5,117	Bolton	$ 79,058.
• 5,315	Columbia	$ 85,000.
• 9,228	Hebron	$115,000.
• 9,307	Putnam	$ 74,263.
• 10,183	Weston	$119,156.
• 10,716	Winchester	$ 85,000.
		$557,477. /6 = **$92,912.83**

Towns with under 10,000 population

• 5,117	Bolton	$ 79,058.
• 5,315	Columbia	$ 85,000.
• 9,228	Hebron	$115,000.
• 9,307	Putnam	$ 74,263.
		$353,321. /4 = **$88,330.25**

Westbrook's Growing Grand List

Westbrook's Grand List is **$1,332,533,344**

12 towns with Town Managers have lower Grand List Amounts

Town	Grand List	Population
Plainville	1,390,283,620	17,221
Killingly	1,302,646,359	17,826
North Branford	1,296,741,514	14,373
Tolland	1,268,155,629	14,705
Granby	1,048,749,700	11,219
Mansfield	968,670,393	24,622
Coventry	955,456,543	12,207
Windham	925,815,494	23,609
Hebron	861,303,505	9,228
Winchester	813,828,330	10,716
Putnam	624,626,504	9,307
Columbia	527,994,372	5,315
Bolton	470,968,513	5,117

Is It Time for a Town Manager?

"For these reasons as well as a host of others, many local governments are deciding that a professional administrator or manager is the only way to assure that the municipality carries out its responsibilities completely and in accordance with the thousands of laws and regulations that accompany those responsibilities."

Vermont - *Karen Horn, Director, Legislative and Membership Services* ***VLCT News***, September 2001

Size of Westbrook Budget

- Westbrook's budget is >$25M with $14M managed by a volunteer Board of Education with a professional Superintendent of Schools to act as the CEO to administer board policy and run the operations of the school.
- The remaining >$11M budget should similarly be administered by a professional Manager to administer policies set by the Board of Selectmen and run the day-to day operations of the town.
- It simply makes sense to have a professional Manager, with appropriate education and experience, to run an $11M operation for the benefit of our town.

What types of communities use Selectmen-Manager form?

- Used by more than 3,500 (49%) of 7,171 US cities and towns with populations of 2,500 or more.
- 92 million in US live in communities operating under this form.
- Connecticut – 33 ICMA recognized communities.

Summary

- Selectmen-Town Manager government enables local officials to involve and serve the entire community, and to actively plan for the future.
- In turn, an appointed professional Manager applies professional skills and training to assist the Board of Selectmen and to administer the daily operations of the community.
- All is done while preserving the Town Meeting at the central core of our town government so that ultimately our town's people remain in control.

Is It Time for a Town Manager?

"Running a town is not growing easier. Municipal officials must keep track of personnel laws, water quality, water supplies and wastewater disposal, public safety departments; solid waste; tax payments and schedules; highway maintenance; thick books of environmental and labor relations; housing; land use planning and zoning; and budgeting under new GASB standards, to name only a few responsibilities. . . . How [best]… to address all those issues in a timely and complete manner?"

Vermont - *Karen Horn, Director, Legislative and Membership Services* ***VLCT News***, September 2001

What value does a professional Manager contribute to a community?

- Oversees day-to-day operations and frees elected officials to focus on policy issues.
- Shares and applies skills gained through education, professional experience and contacts.
- Has access to information about latest trends and best practices.
- Devotes time and skills to tackle a problem or opportunity.