

**Committee to Study
Five-Member Board of Selectmen
Report 2005**

Brookline, New Hampshire



January 18, 2006

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Preface

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to report on the works of the Selectmen Study Committee formed out of Article 21 of the March 2005 Brookline Annual Town Meeting. The committee studied 3 vs. 5-member Boards of Selectmen to help the townspeople understand the relative merits of the two sizes of Boards.

Acknowledgements

This committee wishes to thank Brookline Town Moderator, Peter Webb, for providing the goal, task, and mission for the committee. The committee also wishes to thank all of the towns that responded to the questionnaires sent by the committee. The committee has special thanks for the Boards of Selectmen of the towns of Bow, Epsom, and Hopkinton for allowing the committee to interview them in person. And finally, the committee wishes to thank all of the townspeople who came to and participated in the public forum and who submitted a survey.

1 Introduction

At the March, 2005, Town Meeting Article 21 (by petition) was proposed and amended:

ARTICLE 21. (by petition) To see if the Town of Brookline will vote to increase the Board of Selectmen from three members to five members effective March 2006. One of those additional members will be elected for a one year term and the other for a two year term, Thereafter the added members will serve for a term of three years.

Town Counsel William Drescher determined that this petition Article is not legally presented, and can only be discussed for a sense of the meeting.

MOTION Betty Hall, 2nd Forrest Milkowski to establish a committee to study a five member Board of Selectmen and report the pros and cons and make a recommendation for an official ballot article for the 2006 Town Meeting. The report shall be made in time for printing in next years Town Report. The Moderator shall appoint the committee by April 15, 2005.

AMD Jack Flanagan, 2nd Forest Milkowski to establish a committee to study a five member Board of Selectmen. A report shall be made in time for printing in next years Town Report. This committee shall be appointed by the Moderator.

AMD HAND VOTE YES.

AMD MOTION HAND VOTE YES.

1.1 Letter From the Town Moderator, Peter Webb

“... there was an amended Motion which asked the Moderator to appoint a committee to study a five-member Board of Selectmen and to issue a written report for inclusion in the next Town Report. ... the task is to assess the pros and cons of having five versus three selectmen. ... the mission is to help the townspeople understand the relative merits of the two Boards.”

1.2 Goal

Study a 5-member Board of Selectmen and issue a written report for inclusion in the next Town Report.

1.3 Task

Assess the pros and cons of having three vs. five selectmen.

1.4 Mission

Help the townspeople understand the relative merits of the two sizes of Boards.

1.5 Members

Rena Duncklee
Russell Heinselman
Forrest Milkowski
Linda Saari, Secretary
Lorna Spargo, Chair

1.6 Organizational Meeting

The Committee to Study Five-Member Board of Selectmen (SSC) received the letter from the Moderator, Peter Webb, outlining the goal, the task and the mission for the committee. The committee met for the first time on May 12, 2005 and established the name, "The Selectmen Study Committee (SSC)". Lorna Spargo was elected chairperson; and, Linda Saari, secretary. A timeline was discussed and a course of action planned. The SSC members agreed that the report should be final for the inclusion into the town's Annual Report of Officers and Committees.

1.7 Accomplishments

- Contacted Local Government Center (New Hampshire Municipal) for information about Towns.
- Retrieved information on population growth.
- Prepared a survey questionnaire to collect opinions 3 and 5-member towns and tabulated the responses.
- Did follow-up calls to towns who did not return the questionnaires.
- Identified and interviewed towns to ask additional questions.
- Contacted petition originator of Brookline to discover the catalyst for creating the petition to increase the board to a 5-member board.
- Prepared a survey questionnaire to collect opinions from the townspeople of Brookline and tabulated the responses.
- Held a public forum to collect opinions from the townspeople of Brookline regarding a possible change in the size of the board.

2 Demographic Analysis

The study began with the demographic analysis of the towns of New Hampshire. The "2004 Wage, Salary and Benefits Survey" from the Local Government Center (LGC) in Concord, NH serves as the basis for an analysis of how common it is for town in New Hampshire to have 3-member and 5-member boards of selectmen. Table 1 shows the percentage of towns with 3-member and 5-member, or more, boards of selectmen. In Table 1 the population based groupings are directly from the LGC survey. With a 2003

population of 4533, Brookline is a member of the 4,000 – 6,000 population grouping. The NRPC grouping consists of towns that belong to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC). Brookline is an NRPC member. And, the 25-mile radius grouping consists of New Hampshire towns within an approximate 25-mile radius of Brookline.

Population/Group	# Towns	3	5+
10,000 – 15,000	13	0%	100%
5,000 – 10,000	28	61%	39%
4,000 – 6,000	35	74%	26%
2,000 – 4,000	63	79%	21%
NRPC	12	33%	67%
25 Mile Radius	46	65%	35%

Table 1. Number of Selectmen in New Hampshire Towns

3 Board of Selectmen Surveys

A written survey questionnaire was sent to 26 towns – 10 with 3-member boards and 16 with 5-member boards. The surveyed towns were chosen to be generally within 25-30 miles of Brookline and generally in the 4,000 to 6,000 population grouping. Twenty-two surveys were returned – 10 from 3-member boards and 12 from 5-member boards. The surveyed towns are listed in Tables 2 and 3. For 5-member towns, Table 3 has a column that shows the year each town changed from 3 to 5 members, as reported in the survey responses. The survey responses are reported in Appendices A and B for boards sizes 3 and 5, respectively.

For 3-member towns, the surveys show that most (70%) of the towns have never considered going to a 5-member board. Sixty percent (60%) of the towns surveyed, report that they are happy with the way the board is working; 50% say that workload doesn't warrant a change to 5 members; 50% also say that their town's population doesn't warrant a change to 5 members; and, 40% speculate that it could be difficult to fill seats if they were to change to a 5-member board.

For 5-member towns, the surveys show that the majority of the towns returning surveys converted from 3 members to 5 members since the year 2000. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the towns reported that the change in board size was the result of a petition warrant article; 33% report that the Board of Selectmen sponsored the warrant article to change board size. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the towns reported that workload was a reason for the change to 5 members; 50% report diverse opinions as a reason for the change; and 50% reported that growth of the town was a reason. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the towns reported that the 5-member board is working well.

4 Population Growth

Population growth is often cited as a factor in making the change from 3 to 5-member boards. Brookline had a 1990-2000 growth rate of 73% according to the “NH Municipalities Arranged in Rank Order by Percent Growth 1960 to 2000” report from the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP). This same report serves as the basis for the 1990-2000 growth rates shown in Tables 2 and 3 for each of the towns receiving a survey. For those towns with 3-member boards, the rate of growth ranged from 2% to 29%, with an average of 15.4% growth; and for those towns with 5-member boards, 1% to 41%, with an average of 15.6%. The “2004 Wage, Salary and Benefits Survey” LGC survey reports Brookline’s 2003 population as 4533.

5 Town Manager or Town Administrator/Administrative Assistant

Tables 2 and 3 show whether or not the surveyed towns have a Town Manager (ref RSA Title III Chapter 37) or a Town Administrator/Administrative Assistant as reported by “2004 Wage, Salary and Benefits Survey” LGC survey, augmented by direct question response. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the 5-member towns surveyed have a Town Manager or Town Administrator/Administrative Assistant as do 60% of the 3-member towns. Brookline does not have a Town Manager or Town Administrator/Administrative Assistant. Brookline has an Executive Assistant/Office Manager.

Town	2003 Population	1990 – 2000 Population Growth	Town Manager/Administrator
Atkinson	6578	19%	Y
Auburn	4984	15%	
Hampstead	8529	23%	Y
Hillsborough	5331	10%	Y
Jaffrey	5665	2%	Y
New Boston	4716	29%	Y
New Ipswich	4842	7%	
Peterborough	6086	12%	Y
Rindge	5940	10%	
Sandown	5563	27%	

Table 2. 3-Member Survey Towns

Town	2003 Population	1990 – 2000 Population Growth	Town Manager/Administrator	Year of Change
Barrington	7968	21%	Y	2001
Bow	7635	30%	Y	2003
Chester	4488	41%		
Deerfield	4151	18%	Y	1991
Epping	5879	6%	Y	
Epsom	4380	12%	N	2003
Farmington	6273	1%	Y	
Haverhill	4561	6%	Y	2003
Henniker	4757	7%	Y	2005
Hollis	7454	23%	Y	1998
Hopkinton	5582	12%	Y	2003
Litchfield	7829	33%	Y	1995
Newport	6363	3%		1950
Pembroke	7231	5%	Y	2004
Plaistow	7906	6%	Y	1978
Weare	8405	26%		

Table 3. 5-Member Survey Towns

6 Board of Selectmen Interviews

Face-to-face interviews were held with three towns – Bow, Epsom, and Hopkinton. All three of these towns responded in full to the survey. Each of the three towns converted from 3 to 5-member boards in 2003. And, all three towns have rates of population growth greater than 10%. Notes from the interviews appear as Appendices C, D, and E, respectively.

7 Brookline Public Forum

A public forum was held on December 13, 2005 in the library at Captain Samuel Douglass Academy. Six Brookline residents were in attendance. Notes from the forum appear as Appendix F.

8 Brookline Public Surveys

A survey questionnaire for completion by residents was made available via the Internet and at the public forum, as well as referenced in several newspaper articles. Twenty-four (24) surveys were returned. The survey responses are reported in Appendix G.

Fifty-four (54%) of the Brookline survey respondents expressed the opinion that the 3-member board is not working well. Seventy-one (71%) of the respondents expressed the opinion that the Town should consider changing the size of the Board of Selectmen from 3 to 5 members. Sixty-seven (67%) of the respondents report diverse opinions on the board as a reason for changing to 5 members; 50% report growth of town, 50% report workload, and 38% report size of town. Most respondents reported regularly, or occasionally, attending selectmen meetings (38% and 46%, respectively). Seventy-nine (79%) of the respondents reported attending Town Meeting.

9 Brookline Board of Selectmen

On Wednesday, January 4, 2006, the Brookline Board of Selectmen conducted a self interview using the questions from the survey questionnaire available to Brookline residents. From the minutes of the meeting, these are the questions and answers:

Question: Is a 3 member board working well?

Answer: Yes it is because of the availability, personality and flexible schedules of the current board, the workload is not overly demanding, efficiency of the Executive Assistant and everyone gets a chance to be heard.

Question: Should the town consider changing to a 5-member board?

Answer: Clarence and Linda said no, not at this time. Frank said that we should consider it.

Question: Some reasons why the town should consider a 5-member board?

Answer: Only reasons would be the size and growth of the town

Question: Some reasons why the Town should stay with a 3-member board?

Answer: Happy with the way the board is working, population doesn't warrant it and lack of unchallenged candidates.

10 Board of Selectmen RSA References.

New Hampshire RSA Title III Chapter 41:8 governs the election and duties of selectmen, as well as prescribes how to change the size of a Board of Selectmen, either an increase

or a decrease. Appendix H contains the complete text of the applicable paragraphs of RSA 41:8.

11 Recommendations

The committee recommends that the Town hire a Town Administrator or Town Manager as a first step. As a second step, the committee recommends expanding to a 5-member board after the Town Administrator or Town Manager is in place.

Adding a Town Administrator or Town Manager could offer positive results for Brookline. As a first step most of the towns in our demographic study with 3 or 5-member boards hired Town Administrators or Town Managers when they were 3-member boards. Many of the duties are best served with a full-time position, thus spreading out the workload amongst 4 people. The results of the study show that the statistics and supporting similarities between our town and those we studied support the need to change to a 5-member board as a second step.

The recommendations were unanimously voted on by the committee 5-0.

Appendix A – 3-Member Town Survey Responses

1. The size of the Board of Selectmen in our Town is a 3-member board.

(100%) Yes No _____ (size of board)

2. Our Town has had a 3-member board since _____ (year)

[Atkinson] Since God created selectmen

[Auburn] Always

[Hampstead] Last 150+ years

[Hillsborough] At least 1894

[Jaffrey] 1765

[Peterborough] Always

[Rindge] As long as we know

[Sandown] 1756

3. Has the Town considered or is the Town considering increasing to a 5-member board?

(30%) Yes (70%) No If no, go on to question 9.

4. What are some of the reasons your Town considered a 5-member board?

Check all that apply.

(0%) Size of Town

(0%) Growth of Town

(0%) Number of Departments

(10%) Workload

(0%) Diverse Opinions on board

(0%) 2 members can meet without quorum/posting

(20%) Other: please comment:

[Hampstead] Citizen petition

[Peterborough] Wanted to know if it was warranted. Performed survey and determined it was not.

5. Was a 5-member board presented to the Town Meeting?

(20%) Yes Year(s): _____ (20%) No If no, go on to question 9.
[Hampstead] 1990
[Jaffrey] 1990

6. Was a 5-member board presented as a petition warrant article, or as a warrant article by the selectmen?

(20%) Petition warrant article (0%) Selectmen’s warrant article

7. Please comment on the reasons for failure of the warrant article.

[Hampstead] Lack of support by informed voters
[Jaffrey] Presented by a taxpayers group. It had no support beyond that group.

8. Is the Town considering bringing this up again at a future town meeting?

(10%) Yes (60%) No If no, go on to question 10.

9. What are reasons you are staying with a three member Board vs. a larger board?

Check all that apply.

(40%) Difficult to fill seats

(0%) Too many diverse opinions

(0%) Too costly

(50%) Population doesn’t warrant it

(50%) Workload doesn’t warrant it
[Hampstead] Committees share in much of our work

(60%) Happy with the way the board is working

(20%) Never thought of it

(10%) Other: please comment
[Hillsborough] Lack of interest at a public meeting held to discuss issue.

10. Please comment on the subject of 3 vs. 5 member boards for any issue not covered in this survey.

[Hampstead] I feel a three member board can communicate better and get more accomplished when supported by well run boards and committees in the town.

Appendix B – 5-Member Town Survey Responses

1. The size of the Board of Selectmen in our Town is a 5-member board.

(100%) Yes No size of board: _____

2. Our Town has had a 5-member board since _____ (year)

- [Barrington] 2001
- [Bow] 2003
- [Deerfield] 1991
- [Epsom] 2003
- [Haverhill] 2003
- [Henniker] 2005
- [Hollis] 1998
- [Hopkinton] 2003
- [Litchfield] 1995
- [Newport] 1950
- [Pembroke] 2004
- [Plaistow] 1958

3. Did your Town change from a 3-member to a 5-member board, or did the town always have a 5 member board?

(100%) Changed from 3 to 5 Always 5 *If always 5, go to question 8*

4. What are some of the reasons your Town changed to a 5-member board?

Check all that apply.

(8%) Size of Town

(50%) Growth of Town

(17%) Number of Departments

(67%) Workload

(50%) Diverse Opinions on board

(17%) 2 members can meet without quorum/posting

(33%) Other: please comment:

[Barrington] A warrant article out of spite.

[Bow] Selectman availability to residents - ease in attaining quorum

[Deerfield] The 5 member board works well for Deerfield. Duties can be delegated easily.

[Haverhill] Petition of voters

[Hopkinton] One group felt they weren't being represented with 3 member board.

[Newport] Have no idea why. Happened long ago.

[Pembroke] Changes in departments and overhaul of personnel issues and benefits - keep just 2 people from controlling board

5. Was a 5-member board presented to the Town Meeting?

(92%) Yes Year(s): _____ No *If no go to question 8.*

6. Was a 5-member board presented as a petition warrant article or as a warrant article by the selectmen?

(58%) Petition warrant article (33%) Selectmen's warrant article

7. Please comment on the reasons for successful passage of the warrant article.

[Barrington] Townspeople thought more was better.
[Bow] Selectman availability to residents - ease in attaining quorum
[Epsom] 2001 town meeting amended warrant article from "change from 3-5 to research 3-5" passed 394-294. 2002 passed 3-5 520-188.
[Hopkinton] The small group that wanted the 5 member board were extremely well organized and the existing 3 member board felt it was anti-democratic to take any position.
[Pembroke] People wanted to see more points of view being represented, more involvement in different committees and events
[Plaistow] Made sense to taxpayers

8. Is the 5 member board working well from the Town's point of view?

(75%) Yes (8%) No

Why or why not? Please comment.

[Barrington] I don't think that most people know how many are on the board.
[Bow] Availability of selectmen especially when signatures are required between meeting dates. Also, better dispensation workload.
[Epsom] More diverse opinions, less apt to meet at unauthorized times, decisions need more votes for a quorum, ability to better delegate work
[Haverhill] More representative of the town
[Hollis] There are more opportunities for town residents and employees to provide input and feedback
[Hopkinton] Too many people meddling in the affairs of the department heads
[Newport] There has never been an article to go back to a 3 person board
[Pembroke] More ideas and perspectives, more involvement in different committees and events

[Plaistow] More opinions. More difficult for one or two members to dominate the board. People feel they are more likely to have someone who thinks like them.

9. Is the 5 member board working well from the Board's point of view?

(75%) Yes (17%) No

Why or why not? Please comment.

[Bow] Availability of selectmen especially when signatures are required between meeting dates. Also, better dispensation workload.

[Deerfield] Because the town is growing and diverse, 5 Selectmen make the workload lighter. It isn't as difficult to get a quorum.

[Epsom] More people to divvy the work up

[Haverhill] More board members available for committee and board assignments

[Hollis] When the Board is diversified it creates a more dynamic outcome. Spreading workload has allowed for expansion of the number of committees.

[Hopkinton] Too much talk and little or no action

[Newport] 5 is a manageable number and it allows for more diverse opinion on issues. This better represents to town. Also a manager will always prefer a 5 person over a 3.

[Pembroke] No one or two people controlling, more involvement in different committees and events, lighter workload (evenings working), more feedback with more involvement by selectmen (selectpersons)

[Plaistow] More opinions. More difficult for one or two members to dominate the board. People feel they are more likely to have someone who thinks like them.

10. Has the Town considered or is the Town considering changing the size of the board?

(17%) Yes to what size? _____ (83%) No

[Barrington] 3

[Hopkinton] 3

11. In hindsight, would you have remained a 3-member board? Please check any of the following which apply.

(8%) Difficult to fill seats

(17%) Too many diverse opinions

- (8%) Too costly
- (8%) Population doesn't warrant it
- (8%) Workload doesn't warrant it
- (50%) Happy with the way the board is working
- (17%) Never thought of it
- (0%) Other: _____

12. Please comment on the subject of 3 vs. 5 member boards for any issue not covered in this survey.

[Barrington] ... Five years ago, a group of people in town were unhappy with the administration and decided that 5 members would be better than three. That year they also submitted three other petition warrant articles. The articles were aimed at one individual ... The year after the change, we tried to change it back and the vote was turned down. ...

[Bow] Only problem is that board membership still prefers to have all 5 members present for meetings which sometimes involves some difficulty in scheduling.

[Epsom] I was on the committee that researched it and I am glad I was. Now I am in my second year as chairman of the board. If you had told me when I was on the committee that would have happened I would have not believed it.

[Hollis] It is a challenge to find qualified candidates to fill all 5 seats. However, spreading the workload among 5 members makes the job easier.

[Newport] It makes for a more democratic process - better decisions come out of a 5 person board. If you ever hire an administrator or manager he/she will prefer a 5 person board to work with.

[Pembroke] Was concern for filling seats but with people seeing that their options could count there have been more than the minimum needed candidates on the ballot. Wasn't too costly - salary paid to 3 was divided by 5

[Plaistow] Discussions take longer - everyone has an opinion on every subject and feels the need to express it. Leads to some longer meetings.

Appendix C – Notes From the Interview with the Bow, NH Board of Selectmen

Board of Selectmen, Bow (vote won 1760 YES to 298 NO)

October 4, 2005 at 7:00 pm

Questions:

1. What was the catalyst for going from a three to five member board?

SB2 had failed for seven years. To encourage participation from the town and They battled having a quorum because of work obligations and illness pulling members of the board away from meetings. A 5-member Board addressed the inappropriate meetings between two members of the board. There was a desire to spread the workload amongst more members. The end result was a more efficient board that the Town embraced.

The Town decided to form the **Alternative Forms of Government Committee** in 2001. The committee studied all forms of town government. The conclusions were to improve upon their current form of government, hence increasing the board from 3 members to 5, change the date for the Town Meeting from March to April or May which was to be held in a separate week from the School District Meeting, change the fiscal year to July 1 – June 30, improve communication at Town Meetings by projecting each article and amendment for all to see before a vote is taken, establish procedures to eliminate lengthy and repeated voter check-in and voting, access to the polls free of politicking and loitering, and the form of government should be reviewed again in five years. They also allowed Selectmen to teleconference into meetings with voting power (created that rule – although there must be a quorum in the room to hold the meeting).

Also, people were educated in Roberts Rules. The Selectmen appeared at the Municipal Association and invited a number of towns who changed from a 3-member board to a 5-member board and who remained 3-member boards.

2. Have you seen an increase/decrease in productivity of the board? Where has the productivity increase/decreased?

Accomplish more, more organized and the meetings run more like a streamlined business. The meetings are strictly kept to an agenda as much as possible. Moved their meetings from 7 to 5 pm so that people can stop by on their way home from work, and the members of the board can get home at an earlier time.

3. Have you had an increase in diversity on the board? In what ways has diversity helped? In what ways has diversity hurt?

There is a positive increase in diversity on the board which is directly related to the diversity in expertise. The expertise forces the Town Manager to pay close attention.

4. Have the results/expectations been met for going from a three to five member board? Have the results/expectations changed as a result of going from three to five members?

The meetings are shorter (there was some transition in the first year). The disappointment is that more people don't run opposed. They encourage many people to run for all positions. However, the increase in the board has directly increased the number of participants on other boards. Bow would love more diversity in age to maintain a well-balanced board. It is easier to meet the quorum criteria.

The Town Manager asked to speak and concluded that going to a 5-member board was positive and would rather not work for a 3-member board again.

Town Administrator [for 15 years]

SB2 **No** **Yes** **before** or **after change to a 5-member board.**

My conclusion: This board had a very positive response to the SB2 7-year failure. They embraced their goal to create a town government that would work for Bow, and they continue to maintain that positive attitude.

Appendix D – Notes From the Interview with the Hopkinton, NH Board of Selectmen

Board of Selectmen, Hopkinton

Has a Town Administrator (for at least 20 years)

2nd year as 5 member board (vote won by 10 votes)

September 26, 2005 at 7:00 pm

Questions:

1. What was the catalyst for going from a three to five member board?

There has been a history of contention between the villages (Contoocook and Hopkinton) of whether or not the board was trustworthy (a desire for more opinions for decision making and rounded discussion). The workload was increasing and business obligations pulled away board members on meeting nights leaving some nights.

2. Have you seen an increase/decrease in productivity of the board? Where has the productivity increase/decreased?

The increase in the board size has created a better product and the budget is understood more overall. However, it takes more time for the board to wade through the discussion to get to the better decision making. The first year had growing pains/issues, but they are now into their second year and unanimously feel that they will have a great product to produce to the towns people this year.

3. Have you had an increase in diversity on the board? In what ways has diversity helped? In what ways has diversity hurt?

Diversity was looked at as a negative term. This board does not feel that they necessarily disagree on many items, and they get along very well. It just takes longer to satisfy each individual on some discussion. The Town Administrator would prefer to work with a 3 member board, the meetings would be shorter in his opinion.

4. Have the results/expectations been met for going from a three to five member board? Have the results/expectations changed as a result of going from three to five members?

The petitioners expectations were met because of the appreciation to have more opinions heard on the board and in her opinion the products are better and worth the time it takes to discuss each one. Although admits that it does cause for a longer meeting on some topics. The opposing petitioner stated that all his expectations were met, "the meetings are longer and he prefers 3, possibly one".

5. Why is it more costly to be a 5-member board vs. a 3-member board?

It costs the tax-payers \$6,200 more a year according to the Town Administrator.

6. In the board's and town's people opinion, what size population warrants a 5-member board vs. a 3-member board?

Both the board and the town stated that a 5 member board provided a better board for both villages to be represented. Although, they do not pull a pre-decided number of people from either town; whoever runs and wins, regardless of the village they live in, is elected to the board.

7. Is the town petitioning to retract their decision to go to a 5-member board or is the board of selectmen submitting their own warrant article to revert back to a 3-member board?

The town is happy with a 5 member board and has no plans to go back to a 3 member board, however, one board member stated that in his opinion, if a strong enough campaign was launched to return to a 3 member board, it could win. (This board member was on the 3 member board prior to the vote, doesn't work, and can devote his time to the board.)

Appendix E – Notes From the Interview with the Epsom, NH Board of Selectmen

Board of Selectmen, Epsom

September 26, 2005 at 7:00 pm

Questions:

1. What was the catalyst for going from a three to five member board?

Between the answers from the board and the audience it was unclear whether it was started by Petition to ‘Talk about the change from 3 to 5’ or if it was a signed Petitioned Warrant Article. But, it was the spirit in the form of a ‘Petition’ that the argument was raised to make a change to the size of the board, over a period of several years of discussion. A list of arguments surfaced such as:

- growth of town directly impacting the need for more help on the board
- school board changed first, setting an example of the need
- break up the ‘good-old-boy’ network
- turned into a study (a committee such as ours)
- more diverse representation was needed on the board with a growing town

2. Have you seen an increase/decrease in productivity of the board? Where has the productivity increase/decreased?

It was agreed that there is more work for the board regardless of having 3 or 5 on the board, and that going from 3 to 5 has been better for the town, but more time for the board at meetings. However, it was also pointed out that more is on each agenda now that the town is growing.

They have taken a new approach to spreading the work amongst them by appointing board members as liaisons to the departments.

3. Have you had an increase in diversity on the board? In what ways has diversity helped? In what ways has diversity hurt?

Yes, there has been an increase of diversity on the board (agreed by both board and audience). There was a full audience that was allowed to speak freely. Many shared that they felt the board was now a better representation of the town’s people and that the board was a better ‘quality’ board. Diversity was not looked at negatively.

4. Have the results/expectations been met for going from a three to five member board? Have the results/expectations changed as a result of going from three to five members?

The audience feels that their expectations have been met. They feel more represented on a 5 member board. Some board members are very happy, some are still skeptical and one felt she/he knew what is best because of her/his experience on 'private boards' and that a 3 member board would always be better (she did not have prior experience on the 3 member board).

OTHER COMMENTS:

The board and the audience was extremely gracious.

Epsom has agreed to send us the results of their Selectmen Study Committee Survey.

There is always the concern whether or not 5 people will run or be put in by default.

Epsom went to SB2 before becoming 5 member board.

There has always been grumbling in town about whether or not board members are meeting outside scheduled meeting nights.

The town (board and towns people – supported by audience) has talked for years to hire a Town Administrator, but the cost was not supported. (ONLY Selectmen for a governing town body)

Tuesdays or Fridays are good nights for Epsom Board members to attend our meetings.

Appendix F – Notes from the Brookline Public Forum

1. In your opinion should the Town consider changing the size of the board from 3 to 5 members?

(3) Yes (1) No (2) Undecided/no opinion

2. Why?

- Larger pool, More diverse/ideas
- Okay to have 1 person missing
- More discussion
- Quorum with 2 is a problem (“outside” meetings)
- 3 people more like a public meeting – less chance of outside meetings – 3 make a quorum
- Is there any merits?
- Should be investigated
- 5 members spread workload
- Quality vs. quantity

3. Why not?

- Is there a problem with 3?
- What is best size? 5? 7? 9?
- 3 members since 1769
- 5+ - long meetings
- Will 3 being quorum make it more efficient?
- Can we find 5 people?

4. Why Undecided?

- No time to study yet
- Both have merit
- 3 could be quicker
- Workload may be better served with 5
- Brookline School Board has increased [from 3 to 5]. Is it working?
- Information is needed for decision
- Incentive if more seats
- People who are not available for all meetings might consider being on the board [if there are 5 members]

5. General comments

- Workload sharing depends on makeup of board
- Better decision with 5 over 3? More input?
- 5 gets more diversity?
- Do meetings need to be quicker? Need to spend time to make decision.
- Meetings are open
- Town manager or larger board?
- Scheduling with 3 is hard; 5 is more difficult
- With more members it is more likely to hash out decision (more diversity)
- As Town grows, need for more members

**Also other things to ask—if so when? Now-immediately
In a few years?**

- When? - 2006 Town Meeting
- Education? Is that what needs to be done first? (plan then intelligent decision)
- Report before vote?!?
- What we know
 - Has to be a paper ballot
 - Has to be petitioned by a qualifying number of voters
 - Time constraints

Etc.

- Board of Selectmen: appoint, delegate, enforce, legislate via ordinances, hire/fire
- Selectmen govern
- Town Meeting legislates
- Voter to selectman ratio not a factor – governing body
- Budget process – overseen by Board; managed by department heads
- Approve road improvements
- Town manager?
- Managing the Town is a BIG JOB

Appendix G – Brookline Public Survey Responses

1. Is the 3 member board working well from the your point of view?

(33%) Yes (54%) No (13%) Undecided/no opinion

2. Please list reasons for your answers to question 1 above.

- [S1] If the system is not broken - what are we fixing? If you consider the system is broken - have you told the selectmen about the break and suggested how it could be fixed?
- [S3] It is working well enough, but I feel that a 5-member board is an improvement that would add value.
- [S4] Checks and balances among the selectmen. The board sways in one direction.
- [S5] Possibility of not having decisions in town's benefit.
- [S6] Too easy to have one selectman's position on an issue be adopted with little or no discussion.
- [S8] We need more diversity. The members might need to start spending more time on projects. Because the Town is growing and more issues are arising.
- [S10] Not enough diversity of opinion. Not representative enough.
- [S11] Last 3 member board in the state. Need a wider representation from old and new families. The Town is too large to be represented by 3 people. Board is too entrenched and needs new blood. It's harder to bully four people than two.
- [S12] To cliquy.
- [S13] Even though Brookline is growing fast, it still is a very small town. I feel that during my years here as a resident, the board has leaned one way or the other depending on whomever two of the board members were and their views on things. This has gotten better in the past few years but I still think that the number should be increased.
- [S14] They can easily become exclusive.
- [S15] Too easy for one opinion to sway votes. Too much work for 3 people. Town is growing - need more diversity on Board. Need more "new blood" to balance with long-time residents, as well as older along with younger members on the Board.
- [S16] Not enough diversity. Board tends to "stick together" on opinions. Need more representation.
- [S18] Our board works well together and accomplishes all they need to.
- [S19] Seem to move efficiently and easily come to consensus on issues.
- [S20] Towns with more selectmen seem to have more chaos. More selectmen make decisions more difficult and play more political games.
- [S21] Better attendance at meetings with 3 people than there would be trying to get 5 people together.
- [S22] No hidden agendas. Work well together even though variety of opinions. Willing to listen to public input. Open to new ideas. Some board members available during day.
- [S24] Currently, I think it works well because of the people on the Board. Other times, we could have used more.
-
-

3. In your opinion should the Town consider changing the size of the board from 3 to 5 members?

(71%) Yes (25%) No (0%) Undecided/no opinion

4. Some of the reasons why Brookline should consider going to a 5-member board:

(38%) Size of Town

(50%) Growth of Town

(25%) Number of Departments

(50%) Workload

(67%) Diverse Opinions on board

(50%) 2 members can meet without quorum/posting

(8%) Other: please comment:

[S10} More objective

[S13] Based on what I said above, I believe going to a 5 member board would increase the discussions of the board regarding a particular topic and therefore result in a more fair and well thought out decision.

[S14] The size of the Town is such that there are new energetic and talented people. 3-person board can be exclusive.

5. Some of the reasons why Brookline should stay a 3-member board:

(29%) Difficult to fill seats

(8%) Too many diverse opinions

(4%) Too costly

(17%) Population doesn't warrant it

(8%) Workload doesn't warrant it

(21%) Happy with the way the board is working

(4%) Other:

[S4} It should not.

[S5] No.

[S15] None.

6. Please comment on the subject of 3 vs. 5 member boards for any issue not covered in this survey

[S1] Selectmen are an executive body with the Town Meeting being the legislative body. We have vacancies on some boards now - can the Town assume qualified people will step forward to fill additional places?

[S4] The town is growing and small town corrupt politics no longer work.

[S6] The Town expenditures are out of control; with more selectmen, it will be more difficult for this to continue and the appearance of insufficient discussion of options will be reduced. Also, better oversight.

[S22] Size of Town doesn't warrant it. May be hard to get 5 committed folks to run.

Number of years as a Brookline Resident _____ years

22 responses: min .2; max 69; average 20

Do you attend/watch the Board of Selectman's meetings?

(38%) Yes (often, regularly) (46%) Yes (occasionally) (17%) No

Do you attend the Town Meeting

(79%) Yes (4%) No (8%) No, but watch on TV

Appendix H – RSA Title III Chapter 41:8 Selectmen

TITLE III
TOWNS, CITIES, VILLAGE DISTRICTS, AND UNINCORPORATED PLACES
CHAPTER 41
CHOICE AND DUTIES OF TOWN OFFICERS
Selectmen

41:8 Election and Duties

Every town, at the annual meeting, shall choose, by ballot, one selectman to hold office for 3 years. The selectmen shall manage the prudential affairs of the town and perform the duties by law prescribed. A majority of the selectmen shall be competent in all cases.

Source. RS 34:2. CS 36:2. GS 37:2. GL 40:2. PS 43:5. 1921, 9:1; 17:1. PL 47:12. RL 59:11.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/41/41-8.htm>

41:8-a Grant of Power

[Repealed 1990, 192:3, eff. June 26, 1990.]

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/41/41-8-a.htm>

41:8-b Petition and Ballot

Upon written petition of not less than 2 percent of the legal voters of any town, addressed and delivered to the selectmen not later than the fifth Tuesday before any annual meeting, the following question, as requested in the application, shall be submitted to the voters at the meeting: ""Are you in favor of increasing the board of selectmen to 5 members?" In towns having an official ballot the question shall appear upon the ballot, pursuant to RSA 656:13. In towns where no official ballot is used, the vote on this question shall be by special ballot. After the question, squares with the words ""yes" and ""no" shall be printed on the ballot in which the voter may mark his choice, pursuant to RSA 656:13.

Source. 1967, 325:1. 1979, 410:7. 1987, 299:2, eff. July 24, 1987.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/41/41-8-b.htm>

41:8-c Public Hearing

When a petition is submitted under RSA 41:8-b or RSA 41:8-d, the selectmen shall within 10 days designate a place and a time for a public hearing thereon. Said hearing shall be held not later than the Thursday before the annual meeting to discuss the proposed change in the size of the board of selectmen.

Source. 1967, 325:1. 1983, 180:1. 1987, 299:2, eff. July 24, 1987.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/41/41-8-c.htm>

41:8-d Revocation

A town which has voted to enlarge its board of selectmen may rescind its action in the manner described in RSA 41:8-b, except that the question shall read: ""Are you in favor of decreasing the board of selectmen to 3 members?"

Source. 1967, 325:1. 1979, 410:8. 1983, 180:2. 1990, 192:2, eff. June 26, 1990.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/41/41-8-d.htm>

41:8-e Effective Date and Manner of Increase or Decrease

If a town votes to enlarge or to decrease its board of selectmen the change does not take effect in either case until the first annual meeting following the meeting at which the questions were acted upon. If the town votes to enlarge the board to 5 members, at the first annual meeting following the meeting when the action was taken the town shall elect 2 members for a 3-year term and one member for a one-year term. At the next succeeding annual meeting 2 members shall be elected for a 3-year term, at the next following annual meeting one member shall be elected for a 3-year term, and at succeeding annual meetings members shall be elected to fill the vacancies regularly occurring. If a town votes to decrease its board to 3 members, at the annual meeting following the meeting at which it so voted, the terms of office of all members of the board of selectmen shall end and the town shall elect 3 members of the board of selectmen, one for one year, one for 2 years, one for 3 years and at all succeeding annual meetings shall elect a member to the board for a 3-year term.

Source. 1967, 325:1, eff. Sept. 1, 1967.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/41/41-8-e.htm>