

**A Business Plan for the Town of Dartmouth
Improving the Governance Structure and the
Functioning and Interdepartmental
Relationship of all Town Departments**

1. Current Government Structure:

History of Government Structure

The Town of Dartmouth is governed by a Charter approved by the voters in 2000. The Charter grants legislative powers to a Representative Town Meeting and the administration of all the fiscal, prudential and municipal affairs shall be vested in an executive branch headed by a Select Board (Section 1-4 of the Charter). At this point, the Charter appears to be clear in its Division of Powers. However, as the Charter moves into Article 3, the Charter starts adding Elected Town Offices, such as a School Committee, Board of Assessors, a Cemetery Commission, a Board of Health, a Board of Library Trustees, a Board of Park Commissioners, a Planning Board, a Town Clerk, a Town Moderator, and a Town Agent. Later in the Charter, there is a requirement for a Department of Budget and Finance, Department of Executive Administrator, and a Department of Public Works which is managed by a Board of Public Works appointed by the Select Board.

Finally, the Town has numerous other Boards, Commissions, and Committees. Some of these are created by State Statute, such as the Conservation Commission. Some of these are created by By-laws, such as the Zoning Board of Appeals and Waterways Commission. Some of these are created by the Select Board, such as the Dartmouth Disability and Accessibility Committee.

Impact of Current Government Structure

The impetus for much of Dartmouth's organizational structure can be based on the development of local government in Massachusetts through its General Laws combined with the topical needs of society. While this is a structure that encourages citizens participation, it is a structure that is the anti-thesis of often heard claim that local government should operate more like a business, as I doubt that there is any successful business that follows the Dartmouth "model of local government", which strives to achieve some form of accountability with Section 3-1(g) stating that town elected officers shall be subject to the call of the Select Board or the Executive Administrator for consultation, conference, and discussion for any matter relating to their respective offices. While this section articulates a sense of coordination, there is no clear accountability for the average citizen or business person who assumes that there is a Select Board and Executive Administrator that are accountable for the various actions of Town boards, commission, committees and departments but in reality do not have control except through consultation, conference and discussion for many issues.

Accountability in Dartmouth's town government is further diminished by two other factors.

- *Over-abundance of commissions and committees* – As community issues have arisen, Dartmouth's town government and other municipal governments in Massachusetts dealt with the issue by forming a committee, such as a Personnel Board or Affordable Housing Committee. While these committees very often strived to address issues, very often their viability was determined by the interest level of the members or the issue itself. However, over time, there has not been the development of a clear accountability or staffing to handle the issue. This creates another accountability issue sometimes within the organization as to who if anyone is responsible for the issue (During my short tenure, I have encountered several calls from individuals who indicated that I was the third or fourth person to whom they talked to in their search for who was responsible for economic development or situations where there is not a central personnel file for an employee.)
- *Decentralized structure* – A major accountability concern is the decentralized nature of the organization that creates “span of control” issues. This means that there are so many departments, boards, and committees that no one can effectively manage them and many of them will operate very independently.

II. Current Administrative Structure:

History of Current Administrative Structure

The Town's Charter appears to grant executive powers to the Select Board who appoint an Executive Administrator who is responsible for the administration of the offices of the Select Board and the affairs of the Town. The Town's Charter also grants powers to the Select Board to re-organize, consolidate, create, merge or abolish any town agency. However, there are qualifiers to this language.

The first qualifier is that the Executive Administrator's hiring and supervision of department heads is exempted by department heads whose appointment is presently specially provided for by general or special law (Section 4-4 (b) 4. Thus, according to a recent analysis by Town Counsel, the Executive Administrator is responsible for the appointment of one Department Head. The second qualifier is the Select Board cannot re-organize agencies unless the Charter so provides that a function assigned to a town agency may be discontinued, Section 4-1 (a). Thus, the Charter throughout Article 3, has language that the respective Board or Commission shall have all other powers, duties and responsibilities which are given the Board or Commission by general laws, by this Charter, etc. By the failure to either exclude General Laws which call for a Board or Commission to have appointing authority or be responsible for the administration of their department, the Town has a fully decentralized operation.

Impact of Current Administrative Structure

The Town's daily administrative operations are managed by the Executive Administrator, Director of Budget and Finance and Town Clerk and their respective staffs. In examining our administrative operations, I have discovered the following areas of impact:

- *The Office of the Select Board/Executive Administrator* – The Executive Administrator often serves as the catch all for all items that do not fit elsewhere or for which there is no staff or assignment of responsibility for a function. Thus, the Executive Administrator becomes responsible for facility maintenance at some Town facilities, responsible for some personnel issues involving collective bargaining but not responsible for appointing all employees or disciplining them, responsible for project management of capital projects which fall outside the direction and control of the School Department and Public Works Department for which a department does not assume control, vehicle maintenance for those vehicles not under the direction and control of the Public Works Department, Police Department, Council on Aging, and Parks Department. Additionally, the Executive Administrator appears to be the focus for Affordable Housing, Economic Development issues, Community Development Block Grant Administration, Shellfish Warden, etc. Since so many functions are decentralized with the Town and the Executive Administrator serves as the catch all, there is often the focus on day-to-day operations rather than a focus on management work.
- *The Office of Budget and Finance* – The Budget and Finance Director is responsible for the Budget and Finance Department including Tax Collector's office, Accounting Division and Board of Assessors. Also, the Budget and Finance Director performs the Treasurer's function and has staff for Computer Services and is supposed to have staff for a procurements division but none exists. Whether by local government history or policy decisions, this department has evolved into a centralized operation for the Town. While in some areas, this is understandable and could be a good idea; the end result is one that has become so centralized that it impedes the delivery of services to residents. Staff focuses so heavily on processing work that departments are not held as responsible as they could be for their purchases and budgets. Additionally, due to the lack of a Personnel office or staff, this Department performs in addition to a payroll function some of the functions of a Personnel office but one that is decentralized within the department with payroll staff enrolling employees for fringe benefits and accounting staff preparing and monitoring the salary adjustments for employees.
- *The Town Clerk's Office* – The Town Clerk manages the Town Clerk's office, which is the Town's official record keeper, responsible for managing elections within the Town and assisting the Town Moderator in conducting Town Meetings, and issuing certain licenses as required by the State. Due to centralized collection procedures in the Budget and Finance Department, this Department's ability to service the public is very often frustrated as residents apply for a license

or desire to pick up a vital statistic record but are then sent to the Collector's office to make a payment and return with a receipt before attaining the license or record. Additionally, this has not facilitated the use of automated systems but this becomes more problematic in terms of record keeping. With the increased utilization of computers, there are more records rather than fewer records within an organization. However, within municipal governments in Massachusetts where the Town Clerk is most often elected rather than appointed, there has been the lack of a development of a town-wide records retention program. Thus, numerous Town offices maintain numerous documents. This probably creates the need for more file cabinets and/or more computer storage space. For a resident searching for information or for even Town employees this often creates a lot of additional work as someone needs to search in multiple locations for the documents

III. Recommendations for Government and Administrative Structural Improvements:

1. *Charter Revision regarding town employees carrying out statute and directives* – The Charter's language needs to be revised that while the Town may need to have certain Boards and Commissions to carry-out certain State statutes, such as governing the licensing of various business operations or regulating sub-divisions, the employees of such Boards and Commissions shall be working for the Town Executive Administrator, which shall govern their appointment in consultation with the respective Board or Commission and supervise the operation of the agency provided such direction does not conflict with a Board or Commission regulation or State law, regulation or policy that relates to the employee performing the "official" duties granted to the Board or Commission by State law, regulation or policy. (For example, a Town official may make certain decisions concerning the administration of an office but cannot direct the Health Director to not file a public health complaint that is granted to the Health Director as a responsibility under State law.)
2. *Charter Revision to clarify re-organization capacity of Select Board* – The Charter's language needs to be revised to clarify the Select Board has the right to propose a re-organization of a Town agency or agencies to perform the Town's services but the Select Board may not abolish any elected Board or Commission. As noted in the introduction, the Town has numerous Boards, Commissions, and Committees. While this encourages citizen participation, the number of elected Boards and Commissions in Dartmouth represents the historical development of local government in Massachusetts rather than recognizing what has occurred in society over the past forty years. Today, most families are represented by two wage earners. Thus, the family after their workday tends to focus on issues that directly supports the family rather than people having the flexibility to run for elected office. Thus, there has been a growing trend of less competition among candidates for an elected position or the situation where no one runs for an office by petitioning to be on the ballot and wins

that office by write-in. This has created a trend among many of the more recent town charters that start to reduce the number of elected offices. While this has not occurred with the Select Board or School Committee in Dartmouth there does appear to be this phenomena-single person running for office or no one petitioning to be on the ballot for some of the Boards and Commissions.

3. *Charter Revision to consider reduction in the number of elected offices and appointed board* – The review of the Charter should consider reducing the number of elected offices to Select Board, School Committee, Moderator, Planning Board, Library Board of Trustees, and Dartmouth Housing Authority with the Board of Health, Board of Assessors and Park Commission appointed by the Select Board. (In a later recommendation there will be the recommendation to combine the Park Commission and Recreation Commission into a Park and Recreation Commission.) The Cemetery Commission should be abolished and its duties assumed by a Parks and Recreation department. The Town Agent position should be abolished as its duties are already performed by insurance providers or Town employees. The Town Clerk’s position should be appointed as will be addressed later. The Board of Public Works should be eliminated.
4. *Recommendation for Administrative change* – The Executive Administrator position needs to have the legal authority that the public assumes exists with such a position. This means that the department should have the total personnel responsibility for the employees of the Town of Dartmouth. This means the “appointing authority” for all positions, which means the hiring, promoting, and disciplining authority. In some cases, this may need to be done in consultation with appropriate boards and commissions where appropriate.
5. *Recommendation for improved Personnel Administration* – Within the Executive Administrator’s office there needs to be a staff to perform the personnel function for the Town. As noted earlier, this function is somewhat centralized in the Finance Department but even in that office it is decentralized. With the development of a variety of new and old state and federal regulations/laws over the past twenty years, the Town is currently exposed to potential financial consequences due to its lack of a modern personnel function to handle regulations and laws, such as Family and Medical Leave, HIPPA, ADA, COBRA, Affirmative Action, Sexual Harassment, Immigration Laws (I-9), Ethics Laws, Workers Compensation, 111F, Unemployment Compensation, Chapter 150E, etc. as well as to maintain a central personnel file for Town employees. The personnel staff should also be responsible for employees’ professional development.
6. *Recommendations for Improved Administrative Accountability* – The Executive Administrator needs to be responsible for the administration

and management of the Town's departments. While the Executive Administrator needs to recognize that State Laws give certain Town officials and boards and commissions the authority to perform certain functions, the Executive Administrator needs to have control over all other aspects, such as budgetary authority and personnel authority, as noted earlier. In particular, the Executive Administrator should be signing the warrants for the Town and assuming certain authority of the Board of Public Works, which is not assumed by the Select Board.

7. *Recommendation for Budget Planning* – As the Town's Chief Administrative Officer, the Executive Administrator should prepare a proposed budget for the Town each year. Said budget shall be presented in May of each fiscal year and represent a fiscal plan for the next fiscal year.
8. *Recommendation for Improved Fiscal Accountability* – The Finance Department needs to develop a plan where some of its functions may be delegated to other departments. This will make departments more responsible for collecting funds from residents and businesses and the Finance Department responsible for auditing the work. This will improve customer service. More importantly, this should avoid the proliferation of forms, which currently exists, and provide department personnel and managers better information to manage their operations.
9. *Recommendation for Centralization of Financial Services* – There needs to be a further examination of the services provided by the Budget and Finance Department and personnel in the School Department performing similar services to determine if there are opportunities to consolidate services.
10. *Recommendation for Improved Records Management* – The Town Clerk position should be appointed rather than elected, as there should be no political issues as to how the office operates in a non-partisan manner. More importantly, this would allow this office to become more involved in the Town's operations and serve as the Town's sole record keeper, which should reduce the existence of multiple files and improve service to the public.

IV. Current Community Development Structures

History of Current Community Development Structure

In Dartmouth as in many other Massachusetts municipalities, this function is fractured. There is a Planning Board and Planning Office, a Board of Health and Health Department, a Conservation Commission and Coordinator at Environmental Affairs, a Building Department, a Board of Appeals with staff, and now a Director of Development.

Additionally, there are numerous committees, boards and commissions providing Community Development services. These include the Historical Commission, Agricultural Commission, Soil Conservation Board, Community Preservation Committee, Dartmouth Agricultural Preservation Trust, and Alternative Energy Committee.

Impact of Community Development Structures

While staff appears to work well together, the fractured nature of this function creates multiple problems for the public as there is no one to whom they address their issue and must go from to department to department to seek answers. For the Town, this model is costly in two instances. First, it creates separate offices with separate clerical staffs so that staff is not always used efficiently. Second, unless the Executive Administrator or Director of Development inserts themselves into an issue, there is no coordination to benefit the Town. Even if they do insert themselves into an issue, there is no legal requirement that staff will follow. To date, this has been less of an issue but this lack of legal authority creates a scenario where the Town has not had anyone responsible for Affordable Housing for several years. Instead, this was handled in the “Dartmouth” way by forming a committee but after a period of time the committee is no longer active. This has placed the Town in a vulnerable position in terms of being exposed to certain M.G.L. c 40B requirements but more importantly the Town has not effectively utilized the Community Preservation funds to address Affordable Housing issues. Another problem is “community development” issues where the Town has had mixed results is in terms of implementing the “Green Communities” initiative. While the Town has done an extraordinary job of promoting municipal wind energy production the Town has given little attention to energy conservation or other alternative energy production processes. Once again, the lack of a central point person with authority to make assignments to staff means the Town misses opportunities to secure additional funding or saving funds.

Another issue encountered in the Community Development area is the Town’s authorization to the Board of Appeals to grant, “use variances”. This tends to denigrate the Town’s planning function as the Board of Appeals may grant an exception to the Town’s by-laws rather than focusing on variances allowed by Massachusetts law. While even focusing on solely variances granted by Massachusetts law can create frustration among the public, particularly when staff and the Board of Appeals does not strictly follow the law and focuses instead on an applicant’s personal story, the granting of use variances makes developers presume that they can just avoid the Planning Board or avoid requesting the Planning Board and Town Meeting to address whether the Town’s Zoning By-Law needs to be amended or not.

V. Recommendations for Community Development Improvements

1. *Recommendations for Improved Efficiency and Effectiveness* - The Planning, Health, Conservation, Building and Board of Appeals office need to be merged into one department similar to the Finance Department

with one individual responsible for managing the department. Additionally, staff needs to be re-located so that over time that there is one central point for the public to access the services of the staff, as well as to efficiently utilize staff.

2. *Recommendation for Improved Planning* – The Town needs to amend the Town’s Zoning By-law to eliminate the granting of use variances.

VI. Current Public Safety Structure

History of Current Public Safety Structure

The Public Safety function in Dartmouth consists of the Police Department, contracted Ambulance Service, and Civil Preparedness department. Additionally, due to its coastal location, the Harbormaster and Natural Resources (Shellfish Warden) provide public safety services. Due to its historical development, Dartmouth’s Fire Service is provided by three independent Fire Districts. While there could be some discussion about the viability of having three independent districts and how they coordinate with Town departments, there appears to be little interest in addressing this issue by consolidating them and developing more of a full time staffing component. Instead, this will be an issue that the Town will have to confront over the next ten years as the two wage earner family evolves and a greater percentage of the workforce is not located within Dartmouth or neighboring New Bedford where they can respond to service calls forcing the development of a Fire Department with more full-time personnel which would function more as an Emergency Response Department handling all types of non-police emergency responses, particularly medical, motor vehicle accident and hazardous material responses plus providing a large pool of resources to handle more recent concerns, such as mass medical outbreaks. Instead, the Town will need to follow a more informal approach to addressing this issue. At the suggestion of one of the Fire Chiefs, the Executive Administrator is starting to establish a Public Safety Committee, which will try to bring together some of these departments together on a periodic basis.

Impact at Current Public Safety Structure

Focusing on the Public Safety Departments within the Town, the Police Department is the largest. With the recent appointment of Chief Lee, the Police Department is focusing on several initiatives, such as the introduction of new technology, greater supervision, and improved professional development. Looking at the relationship between the Police Department and the Town government, several changes are already occurring. With the agreement and support of the Police Chief the Executive Administrator is assuming more responsibility for administering “occupational injuries”. This creates a better check and balance system on these benefits. Additionally, if some of the earlier recommendations are developed, there would be improvements in managing the personnel function in the Police Department

and managing the Town. Under the current structure, the Select Board is the appointing authority and the party responsible for handling union grievances. This means the Select Board spends a substantial amount of its time focused on personnel issues of one department rather than focusing on developing the Town's policies. Furthermore, the system has evolved so that while the Select Board is the appointing authority there are almost no records related Civil Service actions within the Select Board Office and those records are at the Police Department. With the prior recommendation to centralize and staff a personnel office this should change and the Executive Administrator, and the Police Chief have already started to shift some of these records for new Civil Service actions to the Executive Administrator's office.

Several years ago, the Town purchased all its Streetlights from NSTAR as a cost saving initiative. However, the Town never set up a functioning system to maintain and replace the streetlights. Since the Police Department is the only Town department staffed 24/7 plus the fact that streetlights provide a public safety benefit, it is appropriate that this function be turned over to the Police Department to manage and administer.

Several years ago, the Town purchased a Reverse 911 system as a means to contact the public regarding public safety emergencies. Due to its need to grab telephone lines and use them when the system was operational, it was installed at Town Hall rather than the Police department. Thus, the Police Department never took ownership of the system and does not use it. In fact, a non-employee seems to be the only individual with knowledge how to operate the system. Over the past several years, similar public safety systems have been developed which are web-based. These systems can notify a larger number of residents in a more expedient period of time than Reverse 911, which makes them better for communicating with the public.

With the decentralized nature of Dartmouth Town government, the Town has never made an investment in a system to give public safety vehicles priority-a green light while holding all other directions with a red light. With the significant amount of traffic in Dartmouth along Route 6 and the Faunce Corner Road this creates two problems. First, public safety vehicles are delayed in their response, as they have to weave around traffic or wait for traffic to move out of the way. Second, this creates a greater risk of accidents.

VII. Recommendations for Public Safety Improvement

- 1. Recommendations for improved Personnel Management* - The Charter should be revised that the Executive Administrator is the Police Commissioner, which will transfer the Appointing Authority to this position plus grant this position authority to act on Occupational Injury claims.

2. *Recommendation for improved Public Safety Coordination* - A Public Safety Committee should meet quarterly to address public safety issues impacting the public safety departments. This should provide an opportunity for the departments to better plan for emergency disaster responses.
3. *Recommendation for improved Street Lighting* - The Police Department should assume responsibility for the Town's Streetlights.
4. *Recommendation for improved communication with the public* - The Police Department needs to acquire a web-based public safety notification system.
5. *Recommendation for improved Public Safety Service Delivery and Safety* - The Town's Police Department needs to attain an Opticom traffic management system and this should be a joint endeavor with the Fire Districts and the Town ambulance contractor.

VIII. Current Public Works Structure

History of Current Public Works Structure

The Town's charter provides for a Board of Public Works, which is assigned all the powers and duties regarding public works activities in Dartmouth including the appointment of the Public Works Director and all staff of the department. While the Select Board appoints the Board of Public Works, the Select Board has very little involvement in setting the policies, programs and budget for this department. The Public Works Director works with the Executive Administrator but does not report to this position.

Impact of Public Works Structure

This system creates numerous problems with public who presume that the Select Board and the Executive Administrator have authority over this department. For example, a resident recently had their water shut-off for failure to pay their entire water bill and kept calling the Select Board's Office for help but the Select Board and Executive Administrator were powerless to help. Also, as noted earlier, this system creates multiple personnel systems rather than a centralized system. An earlier recommendation disbanding the Board of Public Works and having the Public Works Director report directly to the Executive Administrator should address this function.

While the Charter centralizes the Public Works function, there are certain public works type services, which are centralized in other Massachusetts towns but decentralized in Dartmouth. The most obvious is motor vehicles. As of now, motor vehicles are managed by the Police Department, Council on Aging, Executive Administrator, Park Department and Public Works Department. This means that except for the Public Works Department most

vehicle maintenance work is contracted out. While there may be a fleet maintenance program at Public Works Department and the Police Department, the decentralized system means that not all vehicles are getting proper preventative maintenance. Most importantly, there is no central control over motor vehicles. This became evident when the Town went to attain insurance bids for its motor equipment and discovered from one vendor that it was insuring over 40 vehicles out of a fleet of 349 no longer belonged to the town and some were disposed as far back as 2007.

Building Maintenance is another service which sometimes is centralized in a Public Work Department in some municipalities or centralized in a Facilities department, which may focus solely on municipal buildings, or in some communities is a consolidated department serving municipal and school facilities. In Dartmouth, there is almost no consolidation of this service except between Town Hall and the Police Department where the custodians report to the Executive Administrator and the town hall line items which seems to serve multiple facilities but are lumped together so that there is no easy management reporting from the Town's financial system. The end result is Department Heads, such as the Library Director and Council on Aging Director, are facility managers. The end result is that there is very little preventive maintenance. Instead, it is a system that functions until there is a breakdown. Also, it is a function that does not focus on energy or costs saving improvements as the department heads are focused on providing services for which they were trained and hired.

IX. Recommendation for Public Works Improvements

1. *Recommendation for improved Vehicle Management* - Dartmouth needs to centralize its equipment maintenance function in the Public Works Department and properly budget to provide the services with staff and outside vendors capable of providing both preventive maintenance and repair services.
2. *Recommendation for improved Facility Management* - Dartmouth needs to centralize its Building Maintenance function. The ideal would be to consolidate school and municipal services. If this does not occur, then the function needs to be consolidated in the Public Works or Parks and Recreation departments. However, if consolidated into one of these two departments there will be the need for some type of supervisory staff to manage this function as facilities, particularly their HVAC systems are becoming more complex, to manage plus there needs to be someone who will be skilled at managing the maintenance of the facilities and staff and vendors who service them.

X. Current Human Services Structure

History of Current Human Services Structure

The Human Services function is compromised of the Veterans Services Office, Council on Aging, Library and Parks and Recreation. Since these departments service various groups of residents, there has been little activity in Massachusetts municipalities to try to consolidate their services. Instead, with the national economic problems occurring in 2001 and 2008, the trend has been to reduce budgets and services where possible or shift the expenses where possible to the service users in Dartmouth. Services have been reduced in several departments and expenses shifted to users in the Counsel On Aging and Parks and Recreation. The other trend has been on occasion to try to regionalize services. In planning for the continued delivery of these services in Dartmouth, there needs to be multiple approaches. In Veteran Services, the trend has been to try to regionalize these services. Dartmouth has had preliminary discussions with one of its neighbors about doing this.

Impact of Current Human Services Structure

Councils on Aging have seen their budgets reduced and this has happened in Dartmouth. This has resulted in seniors using the facility either volunteering to provide staff resources and seniors paying for some of their activities. The Council on Aging plays an active role in managing the Senior Center but this results in another organization with a separate personnel system, which can mean that there is a lack of central control over personnel activities. Libraries have seen their budgets reduced and most have reduced services, which has been Dartmouth's experience. The Library is managed by an elected Board of Library Trustees, which once again creates a separate personnel system rather than being served by a unified system. With almost all employees being unionized, this creates a scenario where there can be conflicts between what the Board proposes for the Library employees and what is governed by union contracts. Parks and Recreation departments have seen their budgets reduced and costs shifted to users. In Dartmouth, the Parks and Recreation function is unusual in that it is governed by a separately elected Parks Board and an appointed Recreation Commission with the Parks and Recreation Superintendent managing the function. This individual has also assumed responsibility for managing the grounds of some of the Town facilities and recently agreed to assume responsibility for managing cemetery grounds for the Cemetery Commission. Additionally, funding for Parks and Recreation is managed differently in that the Parks function is supported by General Fund appropriations with some consideration of looking at it from a business model perspective, while the Recreation function is solely operated on a fee for service business model function. While this system is effective for providing existing services, it is a system that to date has not adequately focused on how to fund the necessary projects to maintain the Town's existing park and recreation facilities or expand them to meet the recommendations in the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. Finally, Parks and Recreation also manages its own personnel system.

XI. Recommendations for Human Services Improvements

1. *Recommendation for improved Veterans' Services* - The Town should continue its efforts to consolidate the Veterans Services function with one of its neighbors to improve services as the current Veterans Agent lacks clerical support.
2. *Recommendation for Improved Personnel Management of Department Staff* - The Council on Aging Director should report to the Executive Administrator. This will eliminate a separate personnel system.
3. *Recommendation for improved Personnel Management*, - While the Library Board of Trustees should remain an elected Board, the Library Director and staff should report to the Executive Administrator. This will eliminate a separate personnel system.
4. *Recommendation for improved efficiency* - As noted earlier, there should no longer be an elected Park Board. Instead, there should be a combined Parks and Recreation Commission appointed by the Select Board which will serve as an advisory group to the Town with the Parks and Recreation Superintendent reporting directly to the Executive Administrator. This will eliminate a separate personnel system. More importantly, this will allow the Parks and Recreation Commission to focus on addressing parks and recreation needs.
5. *Recommendation for Parks and Recreation Facility Improvement* - The Town needs to focus on the next several years on how to develop a financial system for providing Parks and Recreation services for both existing services as well as address the need to maintain and expand its parks and recreation facilities.

XII Current Additional Functions Provided by the Town of Dartmouth

History of Current Additional Functions

Dartmouth provides a number of services, which many other municipalities do not provide. In some cases, these services are unique to Dartmouth due to its coastal location, such as the Harbormaster, Waterways Commission, and Natural Resources. In other instances, these unique services have been assumed by departments, such as Town Agent and Cemetery Commission. In some instances, Dartmouth has provided a broader response to community needs than most Massachusetts municipalities with the Youth Commission, DCTV, and Dartmouth Disabilities Advisory Commission. Finally, Dartmouth has created a variety of committees to address certain community needs, which is not unusual among Massachusetts municipalities but has not always assigned any administrative connection or support to these committees which would allow them to function in conjunction with the Town's other departments.

Impact of Current Structure

The existence of these services creates issues over accountability, efficiency and span of control. In particular, the Cemetery Commission has demonstrated issues regarding accountability of funds, equipment and services. The Town Agent's function has been assumed by Town Counsel, Town staff and the Town insurer. While the Youth Commission, DCTV, and the Waterways Commission have staff which integrates them into the Town operations, the lack of staff or clear lines of accountability create issues for other organizations, such as the Dartmouth Disabilities Advisory Commission and the Soil Board.

XII. Recommendations for Additional Functions Improvements

1. *Recommendations for Improved Management* - The Town Agent and Cemetery Commission should be abolished. As noted earlier, the Town Agent's functions are already being performed by others within the organization. The Cemetery Commission's duties should be assumed by the Parks and Recreation Department for better accountability and efficiency.
2. *Recommendation for Improved Accountability* – Every board, commission or committee should be assigned a staff liaison to insure that the laws, regulations and policies, which govern Town operations, are followed plus this can assist these boards, commissions and committees in performing their work.

August 18, 2010

By: David G. Cressman
Executive Administrator

