

# Massachusetts Forms of Government

Presentation to Town Government  
Study Committee

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COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

# Presentation Overview

- Recap Forms of Government in Massachusetts
  - Four Current Forms
- Review of Trends and Current Status
- Reasons for Charter Changes
- Discussion

# The Four Basic Forms

- Open Town Meeting with Board of Selectmen and some Professional Management
- Representative Town Meeting with Board of Selectmen and some Professional Management
- Elected Council with Professional Management
- Elected Council with Elected Mayor

# Form of Government Breakdown and Recent Trends

# Data Regarding Forms of Government

- United States
  - 49% Council-Manager
  - 44% Council-Mayor
- Massachusetts
  - 292 Towns
    - 254 w/ Professional Manager
    - 33 RTM
    - 18 OTM with population > 20K
  - 59 Cities
    - 15 Council - Manager
    - 44 Council- Mayor

# Why a Change of Government is Considered

- Operations
  - Sense that people are not getting bang for the dollar
  - Lack of responsiveness or accountability
  - Greater oversight needed
  - Lack of strategic plan
  - Lack of communications
- Political Infighting or Lack of Interest
  - Infighting inhibits decision-making process
  - Not enough citizens interested to make it work
  - Parochial issues divide community
- Legal Suits
  - Suits amongst internal groups lead to anarchy

# Why a Change of Government is Considered

- Rapid Growth
  - Managing services
  - Has become too complex
- Stagnation
  - Need for tax revenue
- Town Meeting Ineffectiveness
  - Attendance issues
  - Representation
  - Stacking on certain vote
- Other
  - Retirement of key personnel
  - An inability to attract candidates to serve in either elected or appointed office

# Chief Executive Oriented Change

- Mayor vs. Manager
  - Political vs Professional
  - Mayor has more capacity to lobby?
  - People seek political power
  - Manager has more capacity to manage?
- Mayor/Council
  - More authority lies with political system
  - Council is separated from administration
- Manager/Council
  - Council has more authority and part of team

# How Does Change Occur

- Generally, there is a ground swell for change due to perceived issues
  - Typically leads to groups and committees for change
    - League of Women Voters
    - Business Community
    - Ad Hoc Groups

# Questions and Discussion