

### Appointment v Election of the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer

The Charter Committee is currently considering a change in the Town Charter that would specify the appointment of the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer rather than the election of both positions.

#### Recommendation:

The White Paper suggests the appointment of the positions of Town Clerk and Town Treasurer by the Town Manager. Suggested language for the Charter Revision follows a model adopted by the Town of Stowe in 2010.

*Appointed Town Clerk, Town Treasurer Stowe Language Revised charter 2010*

*(h) The Town Manager shall have authority to hire, appoint, fix the salary of, discipline, suspend, and remove the Zoning Administrator, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Assistant Town Clerk(s), Assistant Treasurer(s), and all other employees of the Town not hired or appointed by the Selectboard, subject to the provisions of this charter or personnel rules adopted pursuant to this charter. The Town Manager may authorize any department head subject to the Town Manager's direction and supervision to exercise these powers with respect to that department head's subordinates. Prior to hiring a department head, the Town Manager shall notify the Selectboard of the intent to hire a department head, and the Selectboard may take action within seven days of receipt of that notice that overrides the Town Manager's authority to hire that department head. Thereafter, the Town Manager shall select and submit notification to the Selectboard of an alternate choice for that department head.*

#### Advantages and disadvantages of each method of selection:

Advantages and disadvantages of appointment and/or election follow a pattern of issues related to the assurance of professional competence and responsiveness to the electorate. That is, the evolution of complexity of the job requirements for both positions has created expectations for specific **qualifications** that include technical skill and competence related to job requirements for each position. Recruitment and selection of individuals who have the higher levels of skill and competence (known as "professionalism" in the literature) may not be supported by an election process and compensation which is less responsive to the position market place than a selection process that is driven by market analysis of candidate pools. On the other hand, it may be the case that the perception of citizens that appointed public servants are less **responsive** to their needs than elected officials will be the dominant view inspiring confidence in town government. Central issues seem to be: Professional Competence and supervision v Responsiveness and direct accountability to the voters (sometimes termed the "democracy" issue.

There are several other related issues attached to the method of selection of town officials. Some issues have clear advantages to one or the other selection methods; other issues may apply to either method. Other issues include:

- residency requirement for incumbents,
- willingness to engage in skill development and upgrade in competency,
- evaluation of performance,
- conflict of interest,
- supervision and oversight of handling funds,
- increased responsibility of the town manager to reflect the supervision and evaluation issues,