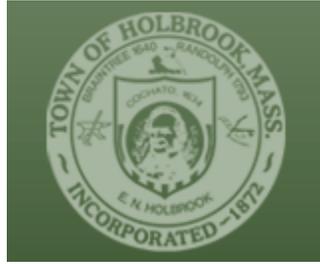


Holbrook
Massachusetts



Town Government Study

The Report

of

The Holbrook Town Government Study Committee

This report was voted and approved by TGSC March 31st 2010

Holbrook Town Government

Study Committee Report

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Section 1: Executive Summary

In the summer of 2008, the Board of Selectman reactivated the Town Government Study Committee (TGSC). After several years of financial instability, structural weaknesses and systemic failures, the town and the Board of Selectmen sought a review and recommendations on how to improve town government. Since the TGSC reactivation, the Town of Holbrook has joined a limited group of communities that have been sanctioned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts due to their unreliable financial reporting. The TGSC's charge was to examine all aspects of town government and provide recommendations on its improvement. The TGSC took this very broad charge and further developed it to "examine the Town's by-laws as well as the distribution of powers among all elected and appointed individuals and boards of the Town, and the review of other community's organizational models, for the purpose of improving the Town of Holbrook's government structure." The findings of this committee would be presented to the voters for consideration.

In September 2008, the TGSC was officially formed with nine (9) members consisting of the four (4) existing town meeting precinct chairs, two (2) appointments from the Board of Selectmen, two (2) appointments by the town moderator, and one (1) member of the Finance Committee to serve ex-officio. The first meeting of the TGSC was conducted on October 1st, 2008, and the TGSC members have been meeting on a regular basis since that date. All of the TGSC meetings have been posted and open to the public. The first fifteen minutes of every TGSC meeting is reserved for public comment and input. Public apathy, which will be discussed further in this document, resulted in little to no attendance by the public at these meetings. The TGSC has surveyed or met directly with nearly all of Holbrook's elected and appointed policy boards and Department Heads. Separate questionnaires were issued to all department heads, employees, and town meeting members for their input on both positive and negative aspects of existing town government. The TGSC has also met with officials of many area communities, and has visited area town offices. We have met with, listened to, and read the advice of several state experts in town government oversight and structure.

This report contains the TGSC's observations, its conclusions, recommendations, and the reasoning behind the recommended changes it believes essential to properly resolving the Town of Holbrook's structural and oversight issues presented in the Department of Revenue's 2002 Management Review Report and in various Town audit reports dating back to the early 1990's. The TGSC recommendation is to create a Town Charter, and we have therefore included as part of this report a proposed governance structure and Town Charter. The final charter must be approved by town meeting, the state legislature as a special act, approved by the Governor, and then approved by a majority of Holbrook voters in order to take effect.

Section 2: Introduction

The Government Study Committee members are:

* Kevin Costa - Chairman

- * Rob Austin - Vice Chairman
- * Carolyn McDonough
- * Stephen Gallagher
- * Vincent Digiacomio
- * Fred White
- * Robert Powilatis
- * Daniel Lee
- * Benjamin Wells

Prior members included Alex Mann and Bill Clarke

The committee members' backgrounds and experience include finance, business, technical, state and federal government, organizational, and general managerial skills.

The committee's review process included the formal preparation of a questionnaire, which was completed by most elected and appointed policy boards and department heads.

The questionnaires were designed to facilitate discussion about the structure of each town department, the efficiency of the department, and the effectiveness of the department. The committee found the majority of elected and appointed officials to be extremely dedicated, and is grateful for the cooperation and insight they provided.

Section 3: Findings and Observations

The findings listed below were developed based on employee questionnaires, department head questionnaires, town meeting member questionnaires, discussions with State officials, and several open hearings with Holbrook town departments.

Section 3 - 1: Organization Structure

3-1-1 The Town's government structure lacks a centralized authority. It is unclear when competing elected boards/officials fail to reach agreement who the final decision maker is. While some may say it is ultimately up to the Town's voters, it is both inefficient and impractical to say that the Town must wait for a Town Meeting before it can move forward on day-to-day management, policy, and planning issues.

3-1-2 While most residents believe the Board of Selectmen is in charge, it lacks authority over various elected boards and elected officials.

3-1-3 While most elected officials serving on the various Town boards were found to be dedicated and hard working individuals, their perceived independence and direct reporting to the voters/residents, gives rise to conflicts and "turf protectionism". Such conflict results in an inability to properly and promptly establish accurate Town priorities.

3-1-4 In many instances individually elected boards end up hiring and managing their own staff. This results in an ineffective allocation of resources throughout the Town. It also results in limited opportunities for cross-training, conflicts between under-worked

and over-worked individuals, and an inability to properly prioritize all of the work that needs to be performed by Town employees.

3-1-5 The Town's personnel by-law prevents the Town Administrator from resolving personnel and administrative conflicts which arise daily throughout the Town, and to coordinate staff to maximize efficiency.

3-1-6 An inordinate amount of the Town Administrator's and several other department heads' time is being spent on personnel related issues, including health insurance contracts, union contract negotiations, absenteeism issues, staffing resource issues, performance, and training issues. The Town is lacking an experienced HR (Human Resource) staff, needed to properly handle all of the Town departments, including the School Department.

3-1-7 Elected board members of several boards are too involved in the "day-to-day" processes of the Town and the management of staff/employees. More of their time should be spent on strategic planning and policy making decisions affecting the Town's services.

3-1-8 Because of the problems cited in this report, the Town's fiscal reporting and record keeping has been untimely and, in many instances, inaccurate. Although the current administrative staff and management have made significant progress in addressing many of the daily operating and reporting issues, the various elected board members and their respective staffs continue to harbor a sense of distrust, which is evidenced by a lack of cooperation.

3-1-9 There is a lack of coordination and effective utilization of Town resources between various elected boards, their staff, and the Town Administrator.

3-1-10 There is no centralized purchasing authority. As a result, the Town may not be maximizing its purchasing power, or following consistent policies across all departments.

3-1-11 There is no clearly documented Town structure or charter. The Town's legal framework appears to be a collection of by-laws and legislative acts approved over a period of many years.

3-1-12 There appears to be a lack of cooperation and communication between various boards and other elected and appointed officials, as demonstrated at recent Town Meetings.

Section 3 - 2: Performance and Accountabilities

3-2-1 Many of the issues cited in this report are identical to those found and reported in the 2002 DOR Report and in various Annual Town Audit reports. The townspeople and their elected representatives have failed to properly address and resolve the long outstanding weaknesses in our Town government.

3-2-2 The Town's external annual audit reports show a historical pattern of non-responsiveness towards untimely and incomplete general ledger and cash account

reconciliations. Former elected and appointed officials repeatedly failed to hold staff accountable for timely and accurate performance, and failed to take disciplinary action.

3-2-3 There is no overall system or culture of accountability. There is a lack of written guidelines and policies in many areas, including the delineation of each elected board or department's powers and responsibilities. While there may be some job descriptions, there does not appear to be a clear set of performance standards upon which to measure the employees' level of accomplishment.

3-2-4 There is a need for increased financial oversight. There is a need for a Town municipal calendar of events and deadlines, particularly an annual budget calendar, in order to ensure that every department completes its deliverables on time, and to meet the Commonwealth's published municipal calendar deadlines for financial reporting.

3-2-5 In some areas there appears to be a general disregard with respect to delivering good public service. Town residents are not always viewed as the "customer".

3-2-6 There is a lack of proactive planning, and several departments and boards appear to be in a reactionary mode, rather than an anticipatory mode.

3-2-7 While the Town has had some success in pursuing state and federal grants, there is no one available or assigned to work with all areas of the Town to evaluate departmental needs and plan strategically for the pursuit of such grants. This can result in lost revenue opportunities for the Town.

3-2-8 There has been a lack of cooperation between elected boards/departments when it comes to pursuing economic development in Town. Individual board priorities have been at odds with what should be a common set of economic development goals and objectives. There is no "one stop" designated authority or individual to interact with potential developers, who would oversee the approval process by the appropriate town boards/departments.

3-2-9 Town officials have failed to keep residents fully informed of all the happenings within the Town, and tend to rely on the local media to accomplish this for them. This contributes to the apathy of Town residents, and results in poorly attended Town Meetings, an uninformed electorate, and a lack of qualified individuals running for elected office. This also results in town meetings being "packed" by special interest groups, leading to the approval of programs and expenditures that may not be in the best overall interests of the Town. With the addition of the town website it is anticipated that the level of communication shall improve.

3-2-10 The Town's budget process is flawed. The Finance Committees goal has been to come away with a "balanced budget" each year. The Finance Committee has been unable to monitor actual expenditures and revenues to budget throughout the year, which has been due in part, to the absence of timely financial reporting. Concerns have also been raised with respect to the Assessors' Office revenue projections and financial modeling.

3-2-11 There has been a lack of oversight on the part of the Town's Audit Committee, in part due to the Town's organization and structural issues, and a perceived lack of investigative authority over various Town departments.

3-2-12 Notwithstanding the fiscal challenges it has faced, the Town has not been able to complete a five-year capital plan due to a non-existent revenue stream to support a five-year capital plan.

Section 3 - 3: Management Information Systems

3-3-1 Although the School Department has a dedicated MIS (Management Information Systems) staff, the other Town departments lacks such a resource.

3-3-2 Different systems and spread sheet software are being used by individual departments.

3-3-3 There is little or no interconnectivity between the various computer systems being used by individual departments throughout the Town of Holbrook. This lack of automated interface results in redundant manual reentry of data, which is not only an inefficient use of staff, but is also error prone.

3-3-4 There is no single individual or department responsible for MIS within the Town. This has resulted in departments making decisions concerning software and hardware purchases on their own.

3-3-5 There is no centralized procurement system in place, and a lack of purchasing standards and oversight.

3-3-6 There has been a lack of training in the use of computer systems owned and operated by the Town, resulting in an inefficient use of this expensive resource.

3-3-7 Properly conducted business in the 21st century requires access to daily, on-line, up to date, revenue and expense data. Failure to do so will result in lost revenue generating opportunities for the Town, especially in its cash management activities.

3-3-8 The lack of an MIS technical staff has lead to inexperienced Town employees attempting to fill the void with limited success. This also takes time away from the tasks employees should be performing. It has resulted in ineffective use of the limited technology the Town has already invested in, and has contributed to the Town's inefficient operations. Finally, the Town's official website was launched in March 2010, after several months of delays. This new resource can prove to be a great tool, its potential to provide residents with real-time information about goings-on in Town, to procedures for acquiring licenses, permits and other services, to a means for collecting municipal tax revenues.

3-3-9 Given the importance of accurate accounting and timely financial reporting and the need for more timely management information, including personnel data, the Town is not

keeping up with the investment needed in technology or staffing resources, and has under funded budgets in this area.

3-3-10 The convoluted payroll verification and approval process currently in place creates unrealistic deadlines/cut off times for submission of time worked records, resulting in some employees estimating future worked hours and creating the need for adjustment, redundancy in calculating and verifying payroll amounts, and delays in processing.

Section 3 - 4: Physical Resources

3-4-1 The Town's administrative offices are poorly laid out, and generally not conducive to good work habits. While some departments voluntarily share resources, other departments do not. The physical separation of the Town's administrative offices and the School administrative offices, makes the sharing of resources less likely, and does not foster the level of cooperation the Town needs to achieve if it is to maximize the use of personnel and capital resources. There are also disagreements and increased tensions between elected boards, as they vie for a greater share of the Town's overall budget.

3-4-2 The Town's Public Library and School Department do not appear to have been able to find ways of sharing or cataloging books and other materials.

3-4-3 The maintenance of Town buildings and equipment, including the School Department, and the sharing of these resources appears to be very limited or non-existent given the organizational structure of the Town and the positions taken by various elected boards. Failure to do so can lead to increases in the overall operating costs of the Town.

3-4-4 Poor communications and conflict between Town departments and between elected boards makes it difficult to establish overall Town priorities, and to share Town resources, both equipment and personnel.

Section 4: Recommendations and Reasoning

Section 4 - 1: Keep Representative Town Meeting Government Structure

4-1-1 The committee reviewed several different forms of town government structure, including "open town meetings" and "town council/town manager" structures. Each has its shortcomings and is subject to potential failures when voter apathy and non-participation prevails. We believe that the Town is best served by continuing with the five member Board of Selectman, "Representative Town Meeting" government structure currently in place, and implementing a "strong" Town Manager. It offers the best chance for democracy to succeed in Holbrook. We recognize that the Representative Town Meeting can be problematic when voter apathy results in low attendance levels, and special interest groups take advantage of such situations by "packing" meetings. We also found that voter apathy and low levels of voter participation have a similar effect on other forms of Town government. Other recommendations are intended to address the attendance and voter participation issues.

4-1-2 We believe that the Town should formalize the practice of holding the Annual Town meeting the first week in May each year, for the purpose of approving the Town's balanced fiscal budget. Additional Town Meetings may be scheduled as needed.

4-1-3 Given the expertise and familiarity with the annual budget current elected officials possess, having gone through the current year's budget deliberations, as well as the public role elected officials play at Town Meeting, we are recommending that the annual election of Town officers be held the week following the Annual Town Meeting.

4-1-4 The Board of Selectmen should ensure that the annual audit of the Town's financial records includes every department's revenue and expense accounts, including the School Department, and any other accounts involving cash movement, such as the Community Preservation Act Fund. The external audit firm should have complete investigative authority over every Town department, and to improve transparency the Board of Selectmen should be required to present the findings of the annual audit to the residents of the Town at a Town Meeting. The Chairman of the Board of Selectmen and Chairman of the School Committee should be required to report on the Town's operating condition, and any actions taken in response to the external audit firm's recommendations.

4-1-5 We recognize the difficulty the Town has in getting Town residents to actively participate in Town government. Many of the appointed board members we spoke with suggested that they would not be serving the Town if they had been required to campaign and stand for election. Too many of Holbrook's elected officials run for office unopposed. This unwillingness to serve the community, by the vast majority of the Town's residents, and being elected to office unopposed, has resulted in less than qualified individuals serving in key positions, and has contributed to the deteriorating financial condition of the Town. The result is the heavy price we are all paying for additional borrowings, inadequate financial reserves, inadequately staffed departments, legal fees, and the lack of confidence residents have in town government officials.

4-1-6 Despite the difficulties mentioned above, we do not believe that it is necessary at this time to change all elected positions to appointed positions within Town government. We charge the Board of Selectmen with the authority to recommend such changes in elected versus appointed positions in Holbrook, to Town Meeting and the voters at large. We would encourage the Board of Selectmen in conjunction with the Town Manager, and the various elected officials to evaluate whether or not a change is needed, whenever office vacancies go unfilled, or uncontested elections occur with regularity.

4-1-7 Given the critical role the Assessors Office plays in providing timely and accurate financial information that forms the linchpin of the revenue assumptions on which the annual Town budget rests, and the importance of having good communications with the Town Manager and other elected officials, the TGSC is recommending that the Board of Selectmen be given greater authority over this area, by changing the Board of Assessors from that of being an elected board to that of an appointed board. We further believe that the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager can more effectively recruit and appoint experienced/qualified individuals to this board more efficiently than the current electoral process.

4-1-8 The TGSC is recommending that all currently elected employees shall be appointed, except Town Clerk. These positions will then be accountable to the Town Manager and allow a greater level of cooperation and overall efficiency of duties and resources.

4-1-9 The TGSC is not recommending any other changes in elected versus appointed board status at this time, but we do believe that over the long term the Board of Selectmen should move to reduce the number of elected boards, in direct response to the increasing level of resident and voter apathy, as well as to simplify the management and reporting process. We believe that the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager can more effectively recruit and appoint experienced/qualified individuals to boards and commissions, than the current apathetic electoral process.

4-1-10 We would like to encourage voters to pay particular attention to the qualifications of candidates running for office. Although well intentioned individuals may run for office, it is the duty of every citizen to ensure that the most qualified individuals actually end up holding office. We also believe that it is an obligation of the Board of Selectmen to ensure that there is sufficient public forum and discussion to allow the citizenry of Holbrook the opportunity to properly evaluate each candidate running for public office in the Town.

Section 4 - 2: Town Management - Create Centralized Authority

4-2-1 We believe in the importance of maintaining a democratic society, and the right of residents, and in particular the right of elected officials, to have differing opinions on what is best for the Town of Holbrook. We also recognize that these differing opinions at times within the Town have risen to a level of conflict and disagreement that has hindered the Town's ability to move forward in a timely and efficient manner. We are therefore recommending that the Town of Holbrook would be better served by having a single central authority, excluding the School Department, when such disagreements arise. This authority currently rests with the residents/voters at the Town Meeting. We further believe, that conflicting elected board positions on issues of importance, which surface throughout the year, and that require the need for immediate attention, should not have to wait until the next Town Meeting to be resolved. We are therefore recommending that the final decision making authority with respect to any Town business, outside of the School Department; rest with the Board of Selectmen.

4-2-2 We have clearly recognized that many of the town's elected boards/officials are spending time managing day to day staff and operations within the Town. They are involved in staffing issues, operating issues, and conflicts that can be better managed by the Town Manager. It is our strong belief that all elected board members should be focused on the policy making and strategic planning requirements of their respective boards, and not day to day operations. We are therefore recommending that the new Town Charter require all town employees/staff, with the exception of School Department and Library employees, report to a centralized authority under the Town Manager. We also feel that because of the length of time required to get a new Town Charter approved, it would be in the best interests of the town, for the independent boards and elected

officials, to begin working immediately with the Town Administrator to achieve this objective voluntarily, before the charter takes effect.

4-2-3 Successful performance on the part of the Town Manager is critical to the success of the Town. The Town has charged the Town Manager with significant responsibilities, but the Town has failed to properly fund and provide the technology and professional resources the Town unquestionably needs to succeed in the 21st century. It is the TGSC's recommendation that the Town properly fund and budget the resources needed to implement the improvements being recommended in this report.

4-2-4 Town Officials and Departments Heads need to establish a culture of "providing customer service" to its residents. The Town Manager should seek professional assistance in developing a training program for all Town employees who come in direct contact with residents in their daily activities. This training should also include elected officials as well.

4-2-5 The Town should establish the position of Human Resources Director (HR Director). This individual would report to the Town Manager and be responsible for developing and implementing consistent personnel policies across the entire Town, including the School Department. Town budget constraints may require that this individual hold more than one position within the town. This person will ensure that job descriptions exist and performance reviews are conducted regularly for all Town employees. Performance reviews for School Department employees will be conducted by School Administration and subject to review by the School Committee. This HR Director will be responsible for preparing comparative analysis of all personnel salaries and benefits, including insurance, vacation, sick leave, and performance rewards. The HR Director will also be responsible for negotiating with external third party providers of insurance, payroll, and other personnel related services. The HR Director will be responsible for providing advice and guidance to all Town employees, including School Department employees, as relates to their benefits. The HR Director will work with the Town Manager and School Department to develop the Town's position with regard to all union contractors.

4-2-6 The Town should create the position of Finance Director, reporting directly to the Town Manager. Town budget constraints may require that this individual hold more than one position within the town. The Finance Director will be responsible for overseeing all financial functions, and ensure accurate and timely financial reporting. The Town Treasurer/Collector, Town Accountant, and Principal Assessor will report to the Finance Director.

4-2-7 The Town should create the position of Planning Coordinator. This can be accomplished by the reclassification of the existing building and/or inspectional services positions. The Planning Coordinator would report to the Town Manager. The Planning Coordinator would facilitate the entire process of obtaining building permits for those looking to build or expand within the town. This would entail the scheduling and planning necessary to obtain all necessary Zoning Board, Conservation Commission, Building Inspector, Water/Sewer Board, Board of Health and any other approvals required by federal law, state law or regulation, or town By-Law.

4-2-8 The Town Manager should appoint a Grant Coordinator. Town budget constraints may require that this individual hold more than one position within the town. This individual should work with all areas of the Town in an effort to pursue state, federal and private grants.

Section 4 - 3: Management Information Systems

4-3-1 The Town should create the position of MIS (Management Information Systems) Director. All of the Town's management information systems, including those of the School Departments, should be the responsibility of the MIS Director. This individual will be responsible for establishing uniform standards across the entire town, including all hardware and software applications used by the Town. The MIS Director will also be responsible for ensuring seamless integration of all departments accounting and financial records, as well as ensuring timely online real time access to budget versus actual financial statements. The MIS Director will be responsible for training all town employees in the use of the Town's computer hardware and software applications. The MIS Director will ensure that the Town has an effective and efficient interactive web-site for the residents to conduct business with the Town and School Department, and will ensure that timely and prompt communications with the Town's residents can occur through this web-site. Because of the School Department's significant need for management information, the existence of dedicated technical resources within the department, and the department's training abilities, this individual may best be located within the School Department, reporting to both the Superintendent of Schools and the Town Manager. Development, implementation, and training priorities would be established jointly with the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools. The expenses associated with this position would be shared between the School Department and Town Administration.

Section 4 - 4: Financial Oversight

4-4-1 In light of the DOR's recommendation that the "town establish a financial team and conduct quarterly meetings," the TGSC recommends that a strong Financial Review Team be formally recognized under the new Town Charter. The Financial Review Team would meet monthly or more frequently if necessary. The Financial Review Team would be led/chaired by the Town Manager, and its membership would include the School Department Business Manager, Town Financial Director, Town Human Resource Director, Town Administrative Assessor, and the Town MIS (Management Information Systems) Director. This team will be responsible for providing the financial oversight needed to ensure the timely and accurate record keeping and reporting of the entire Town's financial data.

4-4-2 The Financial Review Team will be responsible for ensuring that the Town has a formal financial reporting calendar, with event deadlines scheduled for every department, and properly scheduled to ensure accurate and timely reporting of financial information to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Town's residents. The Financial Review Team working closely with the Town Manager will ensure the timely delivery of information from all Town departments, including the School Department.

4-4-3 The Board of Selectmen should continue to engage an external audit firm to perform the annual audit of the Town's recordkeeping process and its reporting. The Selectmen should work with the auditor to establish the areas to be examined, and the level of detail testing that is to be performed during the audit. The auditor should report their findings to the Board of Selectmen, who in turn will be responsible for meeting with The Financial Review Team and ensuring the timely implementation of any audit firm recommendations and corrective actions. The Audit firm will also be required to present its findings during the annual audit in a report to the Board of Selectmen, which shall be available for distribution to the residents at the soonest Town Meeting each year.

4-4-4 In an effort to eliminate redundancies, errors, and delays in payroll processing, the payroll system and department interfaces need to be improved. In addition to improving the payroll process, a standard bi-weekly payroll procedure should be implemented town wide. All Town employees, including the School Department employees, should be on the same bi-weekly payroll schedule.

4-4-5 The Town should implement purchasing guidelines and a centralized procurement system, which should be adhered to by all Town departments, including the School Department. The Town Manager should be designated the Chief Procurement Officer for the Town of Holbrook. Consistent with section 48 of chapter 70 of the Massachusetts General Laws, the Superintendent of Schools may designate a purchasing agent for the School Department who shall at the expense of the School Department purchase textbooks, reference materials, and school supplies consistent with the purchasing guidelines adopted by the town. Every effort should be made to take advantage of Town-wide economies of scale in purchasing.

4-4-6 The Board of Selectmen should, by October 1st each year, issue a budgeting calendar guide, which all Town agencies, including the School Department and Library, must adhere to.

Section 5: Proposed Governance Structure

Section 5 - 1: Organization Chart

5-1-1 The proposed organization chart attached as Exhibit I depicts what we believe to be important and necessary changes needed to address the Town of Holbrook's major governance issues, as summarized in this report. The chart depicts the Town Meeting voters as the ultimate and final decision making authority, and also reflects the clear line of central authority of the Board of Selectman and "strong" Town Manager.

5-1-2 The chart depicts all Town Department Heads, with the exception of the School Department, reporting to the "strong" Town Manager.

5-1-3 The chart also depicts the Moderator and other elected officials reporting to the Town Voters/Meeting, and other appointed officials reporting to the Board of Selectman.

5-1-4 The TGSC believes that the Town needs to employ more professional resources in the areas of Human Resources, Management Information Systems, Finance, and

Planning. We further believe that the most effective way to go about doing this is for the voters to require that Town departments and the School Department share some of these professional resources. The town cannot afford to fund each department separately, and runs the risk of continuing failures in these areas if such professionals are not engaged. These added resources are noted on the proposed organization chart.

5-1-5 The chart also depicts the members of the new Financial Review Team.

5-1-6 The chart depicts the Board of Assessors as an appointed board reporting to the Board of Selectmen, as well as a full time Administrative Assessor reporting to the Town Manager.

5-1-7 The new organization structure would become effective with the approval of the new Town Charter, which must be approved by Town Meeting majority vote, the State Legislature, and by ballot vote at a special election.

Section 6: Proposed Holbrook Town Charter

Section 6 - 1: Town Charter

6-1-1 The TGSC will meet with the Board of Selectmen to proceed with the submission of the proposed Town of Holbrook Charter to the Town Meeting for approval to petition the Massachusetts Legislature for adoption as a special act. It is strongly recommended that the voters within the Town of Holbrook vote to adopt the proposed Town Charter at the earliest Town election possible after approval by the Legislature.

6-1-2 The Town Charter is essential to implementing a strong town government structure, with clear lines of central authority and accountability. Approval of the Town Charter also minimizes the risk of unwarranted and unnecessary changes in government structure and authority going forward. The Town Charter approval process can be onerous and time consuming, and should be seriously viewed by all voter residents as a way of helping to strengthen Town government.