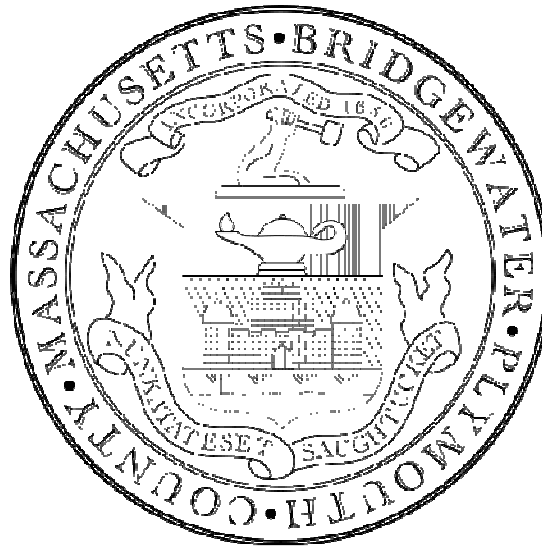

Bridgewater Town Government Study
Committee



Summary Presentation
Final Report

May 4, 2009



***Regardless of personal preferences, we
have to keep asking ourselves...***

***What will be the “best enablers” to
ensure the future success
of Bridgewater ?***

TGSC Mission



The authorizing article from Town Meeting on November 13, 2007 reads as follows:

"Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to form a Town Government Study Committee. The Committee will look at the general overall makeup of town government and make various recommendations to the Town for any changes to the current form of town government or for an alternative form of town government."

Current Members

Ed Ivaldi, Chairman

Sheila Whitaker, Vice-Chair

Vacant, Secretary

Jabbar A. Al-Obaidi, Member

Christopher D. Delmonte, Member

Anna M. Nalevanko, Member

Margaret Stout, Member

Past Members

James G.H. Moore, Member

Ernie Talpey, Secretary

What Prompts a Town to Examine its Local Gov't Structure



- **Increase in population and service demands**
- **Need for greater oversight of service and finances**
- **Retirement of key personnel**
- **Ineffective communications and coordination**
- **Poor town meeting attendance**
- **Inability to attract candidates and volunteers**

Source: Massachusetts Municipal Advocate Vol. 22, No.2

Looking Back Over the Past Year



✓ Solicited Public Input

- Completed over 50 interviews
- Conducted citizen survey
- Held many public forums

➤ **Met weekly for 14 Months**

➤ **Over 2,200 hours invested**

✓ Conducted Best Practice Research

- Peer community interviews
- Other town government study committees
- Articles and papers (*ICMA, MMMA. Etc*)

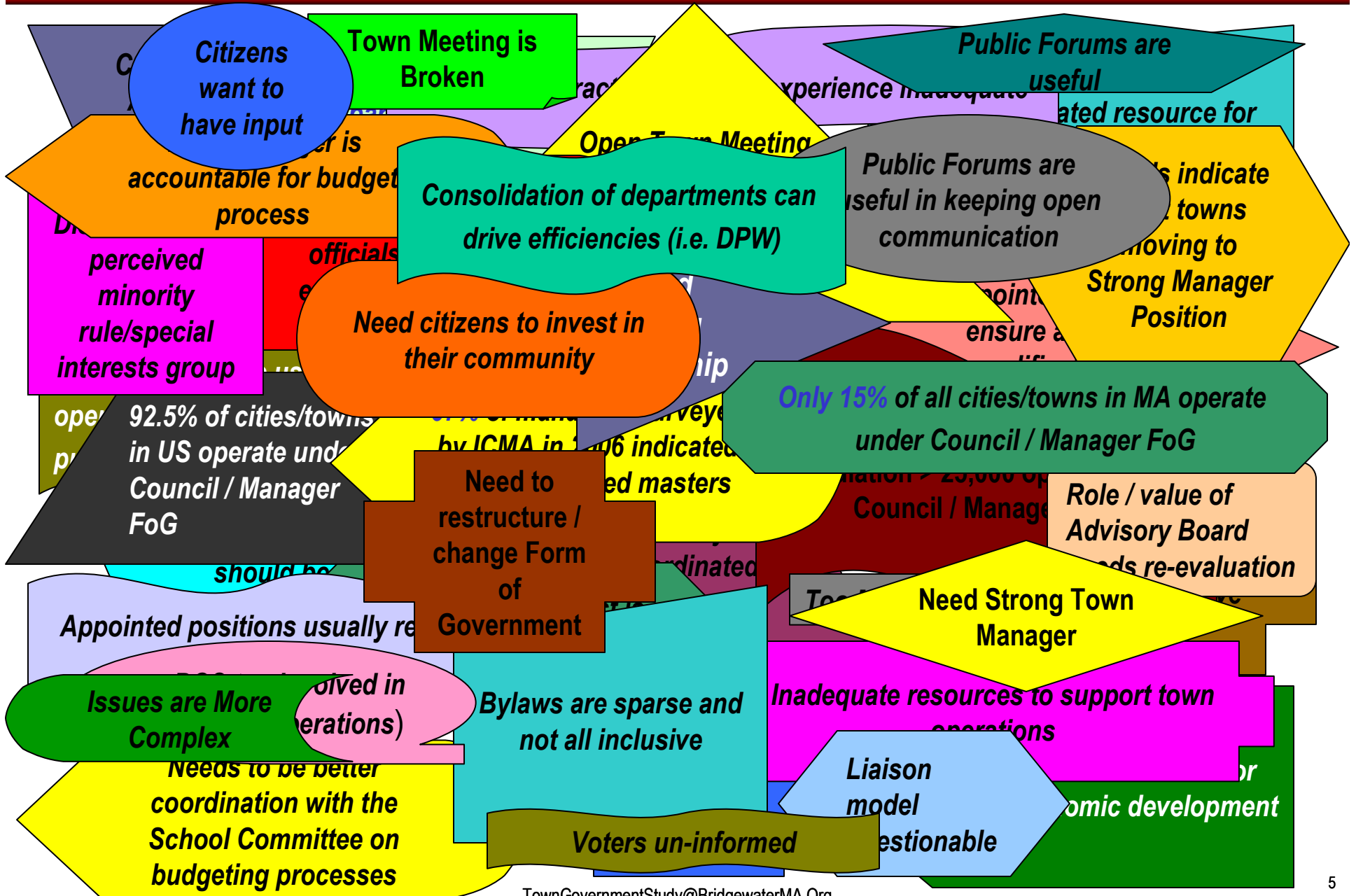
✓ Delivered Public Education Program

- Selectman updates
- Public forums
- Community meetings
- BTV Series
- CBB Forum
- Town Meetings

✓ Managed Search for Interim Municipal Administrator

- Reviewed 26 applicants
- Conducted 6 interviews
- Recommended 4 for final interviews ; one of whom was hired

What We Learned



A Shared Vision for Bridgewater



- **Strong financial management**
- **Balanced political and administrative leadership**
- **Convenient, integrated and efficient services**
- **Accessible information and processes**
- **Streamlined operational procedures**
- **Strategic human resource management**
- **Professional development**
- **Technological innovation and partnerships**



How Do We Get There ?

Recommendations:

1. **Forms of government**
2. **Changes to organizational structure**
3. **Status of appointed vs. elected positions**
4. **Charter vs. by-law constitution**
5. **Other recommendations**



NO Form of Government is Perfect !!

Open Town Meeting - Manager

Pros

- Direct and open citizen participation

Cons

- Shared executive authority
- Requires high level of citizen involvement
- Citizens not all knowledgeable
- Infrequent regular legislative meetings
- Meetings typically poorly attended, increasing potential for “special interest” control.

Council - Manager

Pros

- Citizen oversight reduced
- Increased productivity & efficiency
- Knowledgeable legislative body
- Single executive authority

Cons

- Citizen participation in decision making becomes informal and advisory in nature
(no voting on policy)

Forms of Government



Goal:

Create a “**Professionalized Government**” with continuing opportunities for
“**Citizen Involvement**”

Two Viable Options for Change:

MODIFIED Open Town Meeting - Manager

- Strong Town Manager (TM)
- Differentiate BOS / TM Executive Responsibilities
- Limited to 2 Meetings / Year
- Hold Public Forums to present/discuss articles
- Authorize TM to make budget adjustments
between Town Meetings
- Regularly scheduled Department Information
presented @ BOS Meetings

MODIFIED Council - Manager

- Strong Town Manager (TM)
- Town Council (TC)
- Establish frequent TC meetings
- Ability for citizens to create local ballot
initiatives by petition
- Allow public to present at TC Meetings
- Hold regular information meetings

Forms of Government



Goal:

Create a “**Professionalized Government**” with continuing opportunities for
“**Citizen Involvement**”

Modified Council - Manager  Is the Preferred Solution

- Open Town Meeting begins to fail in towns with complex operations / increasing growth in populations
- **93%** of cities/towns in US operate under Council Form of Gov't (**63%** with pop. > 25K)
- Council Form of Gov't offers more productive & efficient legislative decision making
- Administrative operations are in the hands of a qualified, highly accountable executive (*Town Manager*)
- Level of citizen oversight of elected officials becomes more reasonable
- Only **30%** of MA communities with populations 20-40K have OTM FoG (*Remaining 70% is RTM / Council*)

Changes to Org Structure



Goal:

Centralize to improve overall accountability, communication, and efficiency

- **Consolidate similar functional areas into work groups**

- Streamline authority through the Town Manager
- Establish direct reporting lines to the Town Manager for all Town Departments, while still serving as support to Boards, Commissions, and Committees
- Increase needed expertise (*i.e. Town Planner, Information Technology, HR*)
- Combine Boards, Commissions, & Committees with “like” functions

- **Conduct Strategic HR Management Study**

- Determine “Right Size” of Government
- Formalize Salary Structure based on Position Market Ranges
- Explore changes to employee benefits & associated reporting processes
- Investigate merits of leadership positions being civil service
- Explore potential service sharing at neighboring town or county levels as well as schools

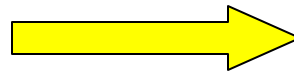
Appointed vs. Elected Positions



Goal:

Ensure adequate **qualifications** and experience as well as **increased accountability**

Fewer Elected Positions



Is the Preferred Solution

Under Council – Manager FoG:

- *Most official positions are appointed by the town manager*
- *With most boards, commissions and committees appointed by the council*
- *Council has final approval*

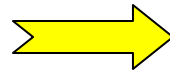
Charter vs. By-law Constitution



Goal:

We need to **chart our own course** for success!

Home Rule Charter



Is the Preferred Solution

- *Would serve as the basic framework for our gov't structure*
- *Gives the town increased autonomy from the State*
- *Positions the town for a strong town manager*

Other Recommendations



- Provide annual report that includes historical and projected revenues
- Develop plan to implement DOR Recommendations
- Develop / conduct bi-annual citizen survey
- Develop cooperative agreement with BR School District
- Restrict town employees from holding elected office
- Change Advisory Board to Financial Committee (FINCOM) and revise appointment process
- Design & implement integrated process / systems framework (*i.e., permitting, vital records*)
- Investigate opportunities for additional revenue

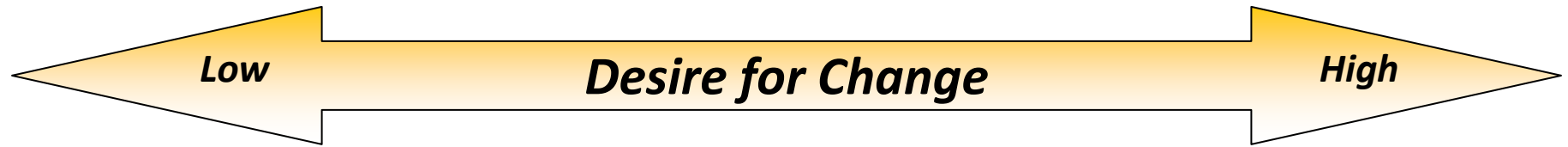
Summary of Recommendations



How Well Do the Recommendations Bring Bridgewater Closer to Our Vision?

		FoG	Org Changes	Appt/Elected	Charter/Bylaws	Other Issues
Convenient, integrated and efficient services		✓	✓			✓
Accessible information and processes		✓	✓		✓	✓
Balanced political and administrative leadership		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strong financial management		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Streamlined operational procedures		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic human resource management			✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional development				✓	✓	✓
Innovation			✓			✓
Cost Impact	L =<\$50K M =\$50K-\$150K H =>\$150K	L	M	L	L	L-M
Implementation Impact	L =<6mo M =6-18mo H =>18mo	H	L-M	H	M-H	L-H

Where Do You Stand?



Confront the Realities

- Content with the status quo
- The future will take care of itself
- Don't fix what isn't broken
- Want Bridgewater to stay small
- Trust in existing leadership
- Low awareness of issues
- OK with reactive management

- No Longer a small town
- Serious financial distress
- Severe resource constraints
- Reduced services
- Unsustainable staffing levels
- Public apathy
- Unclear accountability
- Increased backlogs
- Deficient technology & record-keeping
- Conflicting objectives
- Low employee morale
- Mistrust of leadership

- Belief there is a better way
- Concerned for the future
- Familiar with professional Gov't
- Desire to manage future growth
- Discontent with existing services
- Willingness to take some risks
- Shift to proactive management

Implementation of Recommendations



Town Meeting Vote

Requires Charter

- Provide annual report that includes historical and projected revenues
- Develop plan to implement DOR recommendations
- Develop / conduct bi-annual citizen survey
- Develop cooperative agreement with BR school district to include:
 - Adoption of coordinated, transparent budget process
 - Changes to funding process
- Design & implement integrated systems / process framework (*i.e.. permitting, vital records*)
- Investigate opportunities for additional revenue

- FoG change
- Combining treasurer / collector positions
- Appointed vs. elected changes
- Restricting town employees from holding elected office
- Change begin date for newly elected officials
- Functional org re-alignment
- Change advisory board to financial committee (FINCOM) and revise appointment process

Where Do We Go From Here?



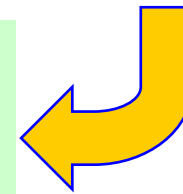
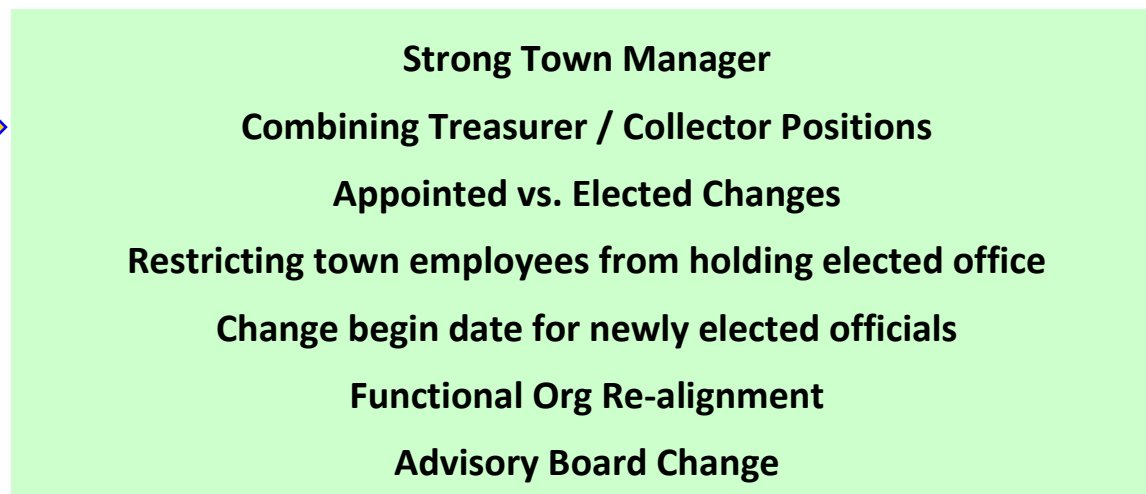
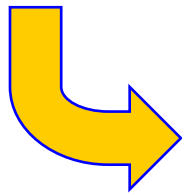
- Accept Final Report
- Approve Articles
- Extend TGSC for 12 months to **develop two Charter options**

Charter #1

Modified Council - Manager

Charter #2

Modified Open Town Meeting



- Present Charters for approval for submission at November 2009 Town Meeting
- Submit Charters to Legislature for approval
- Ballot Referendum to select Charter at April 2010 Town Election



Thank You !!!