



**Governance Task Force**  
**of**  
**The Town of Carlisle**  
**2022 Report on Findings and Proposed Actions**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Paul Anagnostopoulos, Member

Brian Cruise, Member

Kyle Dalbec, Member

Vanessa Moroney, Vice Chair

Rebekah Vieira, Chair



## INTRODUCTION

The Town Governance Task Force<sup>1</sup> (Task Force) is a seven-member committee that was established by the approval of Article 17 of the Spring 2021 Annual Town Meeting for the purpose of making recommendations to improve the efficacy, efficiency, responsiveness, and transparent functioning of Town Government. Various mechanisms, including a town-wide survey (Survey), one-on-one interviews and external research, were conducted by the Task Force in order to better understand opportunities for improvement. The Task Force concluded that a variety of improvements would benefit the Town and proposes various types of Recommendations as detailed in this Report. The Task Force believes that its Recommendations will result in: (i) improvements in the communications and quality of services that the Town provides to residents; (ii) an increase in the transparency of Town operations; (iii) improvements to the internal operation and management of Town Hall and its employees; and (iv) an increase in residents' ability to understand and impact the Town's use of tax dollars. This Report is structured so that actions that are best accomplished through Town Meeting action are presented first, followed by actions that can be accomplished through administrative changes, followed by the lessons learned by the Task Force during this process, and concluding with some experiences of the Task Force. Supporting materials for the Report are found in the Appendices, which include links to Town-maintained websites.

### I. **RECOMMENDATIONS: Actions for Town Meeting**

The Task Force believes that the implementation of the following Recommendations would best be effectuated through direct action by Town Meeting. Some of these recommended Town Meeting actions are fully fleshed out in the form of draft warrant articles, including alternative versions thereof, while others remain in the conceptual phase.<sup>2</sup> In some instances, while less than ideal, a less permanent and less enforceable version of the recommended action could be accomplished through the informal policies of Town officials.

#### **A. Strengthen the Authority of the Town Administrator**

Town residents have indicated a preference for the maintenance of the Town's volunteer form of government.<sup>3</sup> During interviews with the Task Force, however, members of the Select Board, the Town Moderator, and several other Town personnel noted the difficulties that volunteer boards, commissions and committees have in exercising control and oversight over Town departments and

---

<sup>1</sup> Town Meeting named this committee the "Town Governance Task Force". During its initial research phase, the Task Force reviewed and discussed the work of the governance task force bodies of other towns, some of which had similar sounding names, and therefore chose to refer to itself as the Carlisle Governance Task Force or CGTF in order to avoid confusion. These alternative names of this committee will be found throughout this Report's supporting materials.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of why the drafted warrant articles have been included in this Report for consideration by the Select Board, rather than being sponsored directly by the Task Force for inclusion in the Town Meeting warrant, see Section IV.

<sup>3</sup> See Survey Question 45: "How satisfied are you with the Town's volunteer form of government?" Of the 322 respondents that provided a satisfaction rating, 225 or 70 percent responded that they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the volunteer form of government.

employees. These control difficulties arise because most Town services are provided, and most Town employees work, during daytime hours, while the volunteer boards, commissions and committees to which they report, generally meet during evening hours. This disconnect often creates information deficits for supervisory boards, commissions and committees with respect to understanding and evaluating the performance, responsiveness and reliability of their department heads and other employees. The interviews and Survey both indicated that the following abilities of the Town Administrator are too truncated: (1) coordinating the departments, officials, and staff of the Town's government; and (2) directing particular policy and administrative outcomes on behalf of the Select Board. The general authorities of the Town Administrator, lacking sufficient codified authority and instead, being created through informal agreements, leads to a local government that is often at internal loggerheads, incapable of effective long-term planning and inefficiently managed. A common theme in the Survey and interview responses was a desire for a less "siloe" and more centralized approach toward the Town government's functioning. The Survey results also revealed a widely held perception that Town departments were slow to change, did not coordinate or cooperate with each other, and were not operating in a manner that was conducive to being helpful or accessible to the average resident.<sup>4 5</sup> All told, it was readily apparent that it was necessary to ensure that the Town Administrator could both implement uniform and standardized operational procedures and policies within Town Hall and facilitate interdepartmental communications. To that end, the Task Force recommends the implementing a Town Administrator bylaw, changing the Town Clerk from an elected to an appointed position, empowering the Town Administrator to participate in the budget process, and clarifying the human resources / Personnel Administrator roles and responsibilities. The Task Force considered the possibility of a town manager who is empowered through a charter or special act that mandates more discretionary authority than would otherwise be possible through bylaw.<sup>6</sup> The Task Force ultimately determined a less drastic change, i.e., enacting a bylaw which enumerates the responsibilities and authorities of the Town Administrator, would best meet the Town's needs. Strengthening the authority of the Town Administrator is perhaps the most important proposed change in the Town's administration, which would lead to immediate improvements in staff management and policy coordination. These four recommendations for Town Meeting action directly address this issue, which recommendations ideally should be viewed as aspects of a single governmental revision, but which ultimately could be implemented in a piecemeal, though less effective, fashion if necessary.

---

<sup>4</sup> See Survey Question 39: "How well do Town departments adapt practices to the changing needs of Town residents?" Of the 205 survey participants that provided an assessment, 113 or 55 percent indicated that the rate of adaptation was "not well at all" or "somewhat not well."

<sup>5</sup> See Survey Question 35: "How well do departments and committees collaborate with one another to execute plans and achieve the Town's goals?" Of the 183 respondents that offered an opinion on how well departments and committees collaborate with each other to execute and achieve town goals, 68 percent felt that collaboration was "not well at all" or "somewhat not well." Survey Question 36: "How well do departments and committees collaborate with one another to assist you?" Of the 145 that offered a response to this question, 59 percent stated that collaboration was "not well at all" or "somewhat not well."

<sup>6</sup> See Madeleine Blake, Nathan Brown, James Darr, Tim Goddard, David Model, and Brian Sorrows interviews.

## 1. Enact a Town Administrator Bylaw

The first Town Administrator-related recommendation consists of a bylaw that both establishes the position of Town Administrator and enumerates certain powers and duties of that position, without intending that enumeration to be comprehensive. Presently, there is no such formal codification of the Town Administrator position, and this recommendation in fact repeats the recommendation of the previous iteration of the Task Force from 1996. This bylaw would eliminate ambiguities with respect to the authority that the Town Administrator has over various personnel and more firmly ground the Town Administrator as the primary operational manager within the Town's government on behalf of the Select Board. It concurrently would include the Town Administrator in the performance review and hiring process for all non-school Town employees, which will allow various volunteer and elected boards, commissions and committees to take advantage of that individual's professional experience and administrative knowledge of the needs and practical functionality of the Town's government. Finally, it would clarify that the scope of the Town Administrator's authority is not intended to extend to the School Department or its personnel.

The current draft<sup>7</sup> of this potential warrant article is as follows:

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws by recodifying Sections 3.3 through 3.26 as Sections 3.4 through 3.27;

And concurrently, to amend the General Bylaws by creating a new Section 3.3 of the General Bylaws, for the purpose of detailing certain functions and responsibilities of the Town Administrator, as follows:

### 3.3 Town Administrator

3.3.1 The Select Board shall appoint, and may remove, a Town Administrator. The Town Administrator shall be the primary agent of the Select Board, and shall be responsible for managing daily municipal operations on behalf of the Select Board; provided, that the Town Administrator shall not have the authority to create policy independent of Select Board approval or authorization.

3.3.2 The Town Administrator shall directly supervise all current and future department heads, and any other employees, who are directly appointed or hired by the Select Board.

3.3.3 The Town Administrator shall administer the Town's performance review process in order to establish consistency in the implementation of performance reviews across all departments. In order to ensure that all performance reviews are conducted in a fair and timely manner, it shall be the responsibility of the Town Administrator to:

---

<sup>7</sup> For the earlier iteration of this draft warrant article that was originally proposed for the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting, along with the rationale for its inclusion on the warrant, see Appendix D. For an explanation of why this earlier version ultimately was not placed on that warrant, see Section IV.

- a) Conduct performance reviews for all department heads and other employees who report directly to the Town Administrator; and
- b) Oversee the performance review process for all employees who report to a department head or to an appointed or elected Town board, commission or committee, and provide written feedback on each such employee to their respective supervisory authority; provide, that nothing shall preclude the Town Administrator from delegating the creation of such written feedback.

3.3.4 The Town Administrator shall be included in the hiring process for all employees of the Town, including those employees who are hired directly by any appointed or elected Town boards, commissions and committees, unless otherwise stated in a statute. The Town multi-member bodies retain the hiring decision.

3.3.5 At the direction of the Select Board, the Town Administrator shall establish working conditions, working hours, holidays, and vacations days for all department heads and other employees reporting directly or indirectly to the Town Administrator. The Town Administrator shall establish working conditions, working hours, holidays, and vacations days in consultation with Town multi-member bodies for the employees of the same.

3.3.6 The Town Administrator shall establish and maintain Town operational systems, Town facilities operations, hours of operation, and proximity of departments to ensure that Town facilities operate in an efficient manner for the benefit of the citizens.

3.3.7 The Town Administrator shall conduct regular meetings of department heads not less than monthly and report on such meetings to the Select Board.

3.3.8 The Town Administrator shall develop and maintain a comprehensive organizational chart of all department heads and other paid employees, including all reporting relationships between them.

3.3.9 The Town Administrator shall be responsible for leading collective bargaining negotiations for contracts covering Town employees.

3.3.10 The Town Administrator shall perform such other duties as directed by the Select Board.

3.3.11 The provisions of this Section are not intended to provide the Town Administrator with any authority over, or involvement with the governance or oversight of, the School Department, School personnel or School facilities.

Or take any other action relative thereto.

## 2. Make the Town Clerk an appointed position

The second Town Administrator-related recommendation is to convert the Town Clerk from an elected to an appointed position.<sup>8</sup> In addition to serving residents' various front-office needs at Town Hall, the Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the Town is in compliance with more than 450 statutes and regulations. As such, the Town Clerk must be knowledgeable and proficient at compliance-related functions, but does not have any discretionary authority under statute. In Carlisle, the Town Clerk is currently an elected position, and thus, the candidate pool is limited to the Town's residents, which creates the possibility of an unqualified elected resident who becomes responsible for what is in reality a professional position. Accordingly, the Task Force recommends that Town Clerk be appointed by the Select Board and report to the Town Administrator. In addition to guarding against the risks to the Town associated with inexperienced personnel in such a crucial administrative position, this change further enhances the Town Administrator's ability to create a cohesive and functioning team within Town Hall, establishes a reporting structure and guarantees an experience-based hiring process for this administrative position that does not engage in discretionary policy-making. This recommendation does not arise as a result of any specific concerns relating to the individual who happens to be the Town Clerk at the time of this Report. Moreover, nothing would preclude the Select Board from re-appointing the current Town Clerk to the position after this recommendation is implemented.

## 3. Revise the budget process

The third Town Administrator-related recommendation is to revise the budget and finance provisions of the General Bylaws in order to explicitly integrate the Town Administrator and Treasurer into the budget process. Presently, the Town Administrator has no official role in the budget process other than presenting the Select Board's departmental operating budget to the Finance Committee at the direction of the Select Board, and the Treasurer has no official role whatsoever.<sup>9</sup> Under the current provisions of Sections 3.9.4 and 3.9.5.1 of the General Bylaws, each department head must individually create an operating budget, and thereafter present and defend it to the Finance Committee. The Town Administrator, and indirectly the Select Board, have been effectively excised from this process.<sup>10</sup> This compartmentalization of the budget process inherently reduces the Town Administrator's ability to perform their duties and adds to the siloed effect of departments due to the exclusion of executive policy-direction within the operating budget decision-making process. Additionally, in interviews with a number of department heads, the Task Force was informed that the current budget process, in which individual department heads were solely responsible for crafting their own budgets and defending them before the Finance Committee, was an administrative burden and a stressful stretching of comfort zones.<sup>11</sup> The early involvement by the Town Administrator may also reduce missed opportunities for the

---

<sup>8</sup> For the draft warrant article for this issue that was originally proposed for the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting, along with the rationale for its inclusion on the warrant, see Appendix D. For an explanation of why the Task Force believes this article ultimately was not placed on that warrant, see Section IV.

<sup>9</sup> See Massachusetts Department of Revenue, *In Our Opinion*, 93-310.

<sup>10</sup> See Tim Goddard interview.

<sup>11</sup> See Tim Goddard Interview and this was raised in other informal discussions with department heads.

Town since they have visibility into Town operational needs across departments, and could promote efficiency across departmental operating budgets, reduce interdepartmental conflicts, and avoid budgetary redundancies.

To address these areas of concern, the Task Force reviewed both the budget processes that are used by other towns in the Commonwealth and the budgetary standards as detailed in the *Finance Committee Handbook* (2017) that is published by the Association of Town Finance Committees, and found that Carlisle's process for presenting proposed departmental operating budgets to the Finance Committee deviates from standard practice. This Handbook notes that typically the Town Administrator and Select Board review departmental budget requests, and that the Town Administrator could even present a consolidated budget for consideration by the Finance Committee.<sup>12</sup> This Handbook states specifically that it is the job of the Town Administrator "to collect budget information, develop budget priorities and formulate a balanced budget".<sup>13</sup> Concurrently, "[i]t is the [F]inance [C]ommittee's responsibility to receive the budget from the executive branch (either as a collective whole or individually by department), analyze them, have hearings...and present a balanced budget to [T]own [M]eeting."<sup>14</sup>

The Task Force would emphasize that it is not recommending any change that is outside of this process description that is found in this Handbook. ***The role of the Finance Committee as it currently exists per statute and the General Bylaws would remain unchanged.*** The only thing that would change is the manner by which proposed departmental budgets are presented to it. The Task Force recognizes that that the budget outcome is generally viewed positively by the Town and that the Select Board ensures that the Finance Committee is an experienced and thoughtful body that undertakes its tasks in a serious and deliberate manner. The purpose of the recommendation is to eliminate inefficiencies in the leadup to that outcome, consolidate administrative authority within the Town Administrator, and ensure that the Select Board, Town Administrator and Treasurer have the appropriate and direct input into the proposed operating budget that is presented to the Finance Committee. As such, in recommending amendments to Sections 3.9.4 and 3.9.5.1 of the General Bylaws, the Task Force intentionally focused solely on the internal operating budget creation process within Town Hall, while maintaining both the existing budget process once the initial operating budget is presented to the Finance Committee and the authority of the Finance Committee. The Task Force's primary concern is to ensure that the Town Administrator and Treasurer are empowered to participate in that process alongside the respective department heads and officers who have spending authority. Again, to reiterate, this recommendation would not in any way detract from, alter or otherwise interfere with the existing powers, duties and authorities of the Finance Committee. Rather, it simply changes the mechanism by which the Finance Committee obtains the initial operating budget, from a piecemeal

---

<sup>12</sup> See Association of Town Finance Committees, *Finance Committee Handbook* (2017), page iii.

<sup>13</sup> See Association of Town Finance Committees, *Finance Committee Handbook* (2017), page iii.

<sup>14</sup> See Association of Town Finance Committees, *Finance Committee Handbook* (2017), page iii.

fashion from each individual department, board, commission, committee and officer, to a consolidated fashion from the Town Administrator and Treasurer.

The Task Force has contemplated several iterations of this potential warrant article, given various and often contradictory feedback from the Finance Committee. What is presented below is a potential version that explicitly excludes the School Department budget from the Town Administrator's purview. This language could be deleted or could be modified to require cooperation between the Town Administrator and School Committee in creating a proposed consolidated budget to be submitted to the Finance Committee. Additionally, language could be added to provide an explicit date by which the combined departmental operating budget must be submitted to the Finance Committee, whether as a set date or tied to a timeframe prior to the Town Meeting date. Finally, depending upon the timing during the fiscal year of the adoption of any such bylaw amendments, language that would delay the effective date of these amendments could be included in the warrant article, so as to not interfere with any ongoing budget creation processes.

Possible language<sup>15</sup> for this warrant article is as follows:

To see if the Town will vote to amend Section 3.9.4 of the General Bylaws by deleting the first sentence thereof and replacing it with the following:

Each fiscal year, the Finance Committee shall request and receive from the School Committee a proposed budget for the School Department for the next fiscal year, and from the Town Administrator a proposed combined budget for the next fiscal year for all other town departments, multi-member bodies and individual officers charged with the expenditure of town money. It shall be the duty of all such other town departments, multi-member bodies and individual officers to coordinate and collaborate with the Town Administrator and the Treasurer in order to ensure that the Town Administrator is able to submit this proposed combined budget to the Finance Committee in a timely fashion.

And further, to amend Section 3.9.5.1 of the General Bylaws by adding the following clause at the end:

provided, that the scheduling of each such hearing shall be coordinated with the Town Administrator, and the Town Administrator and the Treasurer each shall be permitted to participate in each such discussion;

Or take any other action relative thereto.

---

<sup>15</sup> For the earlier iteration of this draft warrant article that was originally proposed for the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting, along with the rationale for its inclusion on the warrant, see Appendix D. For an explanation of why this earlier version ultimately was not placed on that warrant, see Section IV.

#### 4. Update human resources functions

The fourth and final Town Administrator-related recommendation would update the General Bylaws to reflect current human resources practices and require all human resources functions to be the responsibility of one individual. As it stands, there are overt contradictions between Section 3.25 of the General Bylaws, dealing with the Personnel Board, and Article XV of the General Bylaws, dealing with Personnel. For example, Section 3.25 provides that the Personnel Board appoints the Personnel Administrator, drafts personnel policies (subject to Select Board approval), administers the personnel policies, and engages in collective bargaining on behalf of the Select Board. In contrast, Article XV provides that the Town Administrator drafts personnel policies (subject to Select Board approval), while the Select Board (rather than the Personnel Board) has presently appointed the Town Administrator as the Personnel Administrator. Additionally, the Select Board expects the Town Administrator to administer the personnel policies and the Town Administrator is the actual official who engages in collective bargaining on behalf of the Select Board. The language of the proposed Town Administrator Bylaw reflects what appears to be the way the Town operates with respect to these roles.

All of these issues derive from the current defunct nature of the Personnel Board. Throughout the Round 1, Round 2, and Round 3 Interviews, the Task Force heard that the Personnel Board wasn't properly functioning. Independent review of Personnel Board meeting information uncovered that meetings appear infrequent and meeting minutes are unavailable. However, rather than resolving this dysfunction or eliminating that board, the Town instead created Article XV language that contradicts Section 3.25. The Task Force therefore recommends that the Town undertake a complete review of both Section 3.25 and Article XV of the General Bylaws in order to update them to reflect current human resources practices and eliminate contradictions. The intertwining of the proposed Town Administrator Bylaw and these ongoing human resources bylaw concerns serves to reiterate the need for these various Town Administrator-related issues to be tackled comprehensively.

In terms of specific recommended revisions to these bylaws, the Task Force is of the opinion that the Personnel Board should be eliminated in its entirety (or at best left in a purely advisory role), with all human resources functions and duties thereafter consolidated and assigned to a single individual. Whether those functions and duties are assigned to an individual who is a new hire or is an existing employee would need to be determined, though it presently appears to be the intention of the Select Board to hire an Assistant Town Administrator who would then be appointed as the Personnel Administrator instead. In that respect, the Task Force would note that former Town Administrator Timothy Goddard identified the non-policy making aspects of the Personnel Administrator duties (i.e., typical human resources functions) as a burden that reduced his ability to focus on more outward-facing needs of the Town. Additionally, other interviewees identified that human resources functions were shared among several staff members (including the Assistant to the Treasurer) who had other responsibilities, resulting in four issues: 1) there is disjointed administration of benefits and policies; 2)

employees must seek out various staff members for support with different issues<sup>16</sup>; 3) human resources responsibilities are secondary to the responsible staff member's primary responsibilities; and 4) no one person is tasked with ongoing updates to benefits to keep staff offerings competitive. Interviewees also noted that many of the requirements in the existing personnel bylaws, policies and procedures are not being met. The result is low morale, a lack of competitive benefit offerings (compared to other similarly situated positions in other towns), additional burdens on individuals seeking support, and overworked staff members being tasked with human resource functions in addition to their primary responsibilities. Again, the key reform that is needed is the consolidation of these responsibilities in a single individual whose primary task is to create and operate a professional human resources administration.

The Task Force would note that the administrative aspect of human resources could be separated from the policy-making aspect, with the Town Administrator retaining the latter even in the absence of being appointed as the Personnel Administrator. Such a split in duties would be in concert with the provisions of the proposed Town Administrator Bylaw relating to establishing Town Hall holidays and work hours, for example. With respect to those personnel policies themselves, the Task Force is of the belief that, in general, it is not its role to recommend specific granular policies, the drafting of which is best left to the Select Board and professional staff. That being said, there is one bylaw revision that should be adopted that is more structural in nature, providing explicit scaffolding for human resources administration: required annual performance reviews for all employees.<sup>17</sup> This revision would ensure that, even when an employee does not report to the Town Administrator, an annual performance review is still undertaken. This recommendation dovetails with the provisions of the proposed Town Administrator Bylaw delineating the Town Administrator's involvement with those performance reviews. The Task Force would also note that the current bylaws do not specifically reference the authority to create a uniform disciplinary policy for all Town employees and recommends including such authority in any bylaw revisions.

## **B. Increase Town Meeting Participation**

The residents of the Town consistently provided feedback within the Survey indicating that it is difficult to participate in the Town Meeting process.<sup>18</sup> Reasons given included: having young children; travel; the length of the meeting, possibly stretching into multiple nights; limited time to prepare; and accessibility issues. Preserving all voting residents' access to this direct and unique means of self-government is crucial to ensuring an effective and responsive Town government. Toward that end, the

---

<sup>16</sup> This may result in a greater number of individuals than what is necessary having personal information that should otherwise be protected.

<sup>17</sup> The Task Force heard that the Town is currently in a "ramp up" period as new policies take effect, but interviewees experiences as relayed to the Task Force do not reflect any awareness of an impending change, never mind being subject to the new policies.

<sup>18</sup> See Survey Question 44 with only 60% of respondents indicating they could attend Town Meeting as much as they would like to.

Task Force recommends making three changes to the Town Meeting process that should be effectuated by vote of Town Meeting.<sup>19</sup>

### 1. Hold a Recurring Fall Special Town Meeting

The General Bylaws should be revised to provide for a recurring Special Town Meeting every Fall.<sup>20</sup> Notwithstanding the failure of the previous warrant article to that effect at the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting, which failure the Task Force firmly believes resulted solely from the last-minute disapproval of the article by the Finance Committee on erroneous grounds and without having sought confirmation from Town Counsel of the accuracy of their contentions<sup>21</sup>, the Task Force firmly believes that having such a bylaw in place is still to the benefit of the Town. It would prevent the Annual Town Meeting from devolving into a multi-day affair with high attendance-attrition rates, it would increase the likelihood that busy residents would be able to attend and participate in at least one Town Meeting annually, it would ensure that proposed bylaw revisions do not suffer from a rushed drafting process in order to meet the deadline for the sole Town Meeting in a year, it would allow issues requiring Town Meeting action to be addressed in a more timely fashion, and it would mitigate against the annual budget-creation process detracting from other potential non-budget related warrant priorities.

It is important to note that only the budgetary and finance matters *must* be completed by Town Meeting prior to the start of the fiscal year on July 1<sup>st</sup>. As the Secretary of the Commonwealth has noted in the published Citizens' Guide to Town Meeting, "A town may divide its business meeting into two meetings. Towns that do so hold one business meeting at the beginning of the year. The focus is primarily on the budget, finances, and taxes. The second business meeting is held in the fall. It is still part of the annual Town Meeting. The focus is on zoning, planning and by-laws." To be clear, the Task Force is not recommending that the Annual Town Meeting itself be split, as such a recommendation would require a Town Charter or the enactment of special legislation. But the premise of conducting the business of the Town in both the Spring and the Fall is a common one throughout the Commonwealth and has been a rather routine occurrence, particularly prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. As importantly,

---

<sup>19</sup> See also Section II.B.2 discussing the establishment of a policy to require detailed warrant articles.

<sup>20</sup> The Task Force would note that this recurring Special Fall Town Meeting effectively would act as a second Annual Town Meeting. However, absent a Town Charter or the passage of special legislation (as some towns operate under), a formal second Annual Town Meeting is not possible. As such, any recurring Fall Special Town Meeting would retain the requirement that at least 100 registered voters must request that an article be placed on the warrant, rather than the minimum of 10 registered voters that an actual Annual Town Meeting requires. The Town may wish to consider seeking special legislation to reduce this requirement to 10 registered voters for the recurring Fall Special Town Meeting as well. It would be incongruous to how a guaranteed Fall Town Meeting each year while rendering it difficult for registered voters to place articles on its warrant.

<sup>21</sup> The Finance Committee asserted that holding a Fall Special Town Meeting would delay the calculation of the tax levy and create staffing issues. How that contention squares with the regular usage of Fall Special Town Meetings in the recent past, as well as the availability of preliminary tax billing if necessary, is unclear. In any event, absent a citizens' petition, nothing even requires the Select Board to include on the Fall warrant any budgetary articles. For a more detailed discussion of the Task Force's concerns with both the manner in which the Finance Committee objected to this warrant article, and the underlying premise of that objection, see Section IV.

the proposed warrant article would allow the Select Board to set a Fall Special Town Meeting, while still reserving its ability to decline to publish the warrant if nothing of consequence is presented for inclusion. This bylaw revision can only help the Town.

As previously presented to Town Meeting, the proposed warrant article language<sup>22</sup> is as follows:

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws by adding a new Section 2.1.1 as follows:

2.1.1 The annual town meeting shall be held in February, March, April, May or June. Additionally, the Select Board shall call a regularly-scheduled special town meeting in each year, to be held in September, October or November. Nothing herein shall be construed as precluding additional special town meetings throughout the year. In the event that, after establishing the date of this regularly-scheduled special town meeting in a given year, the Select Board neither receives any warrant articles that it is obligated by statute or bylaw to include on the warrant, nor decides to include any warrant articles itself, then the Select Board may decline to call the regularly-scheduled special town meeting or publish the warrant for the same.

Or take any other action relative thereto.

## 2. Ensure earlier access to the warrant

Presently, the warrant publication timeframe in Section 2.1 of the General Bylaws is 7 days prior to the Annual Town Meeting, and 14 days prior to any Special Town Meeting, in accordance with the minimum requirements of M.G.L. c. 39, sec. 10. The Task Force recommends that the publication timeframe in Section 2.1 for the Annual Town Meeting be revised to 14 days. Concurrently, while Section 2.1 requires notice of any Special Town Meeting to be sent by mail to every household, it is unclear whether such notice includes the warrant itself; nor is there any requirement whatsoever to send notice of the Annual Town Meeting, whether the warrant itself or otherwise, by mail to every household. While it is present practice to mail copies of the warrants to each household, there is no permanent obligation that this practice continues. The Task Force recommends that Section 2.1 be revised to require that each warrant be mailed to every household, postmarked by the same 14-day deadline. Importantly, the warrant is often the first opportunity that many citizens have to see, study and understand the proposed articles; it should not be assumed that every Town Meeting member has the time or ability to attend the numerous board, commission and committee meetings that precede Town Meeting. Moreover, a longer period of time with the printed warrant will allow the *Carlisle Mosquito* to publish informative articles and letters to the editor regarding the warrant articles. Overall, these revisions to Section 2.1 will ensure that every Town Meeting member has sufficient time to review the warrant, discuss the warrant articles with their peers, and be educated and prepared to participate at Town Meeting.

---

<sup>22</sup> For the rationale for its inclusion on the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting warrant, see Appendix D.

### 3. Implement electronic voting

The Task Force wholeheartedly supports the ongoing efforts to research and report on the use of electronic voting at Town Meeting. As a separate committee was established for that sole purpose during the middle of the Task Force's tenure and there appeared to be an imminent adoption of the technology, the Task Force ceased reviewing this issue in detail, and accordingly declines to propose any particular warrant article language or policy prescription. Nonetheless, as a general premise, electronic voting at Town Meeting should increase participation rates by resident voters, as not every resident is comfortable voting publicly.

### 4. Include line-item department budgets in the published warrant budget

The Town operating budget that is presented to Town Meeting currently does not include line-item budgets for each Department. As it stands now, any Town Meeting member would need to attend Finance Committee budgetary meetings in order to know what the breakdown for a particular Department's budget is. As is the practice in many other towns, Town Meeting members should be able to see and place holds on portions of a Department's budget.<sup>23</sup> Section 3.9.5.2 of the General Bylaws should be revised to require that the budget that the Finance Committee distributes to the voters of the Town shall include departmental line-item budgets.<sup>24</sup>

## **C. Other Proposed Town Meeting Actions**

There are a number of other miscellaneous issues that the Task Force feels would best be addressed through Town Meeting action. While each of these recommendations could be reserved for implementation as policies, the Task Force feels that they address issues of sufficient concern that a Town Meeting-imposed mandate will best ensure that needed actions and changes are both taken and maintained thereafter.

### 1. Create a bylaw to standardize the Governance Task Force.

The Task Force was comprised of seven members, appointed solely by the Town Moderator, and was expected to conduct the first governmental review in decades in less than a year. This breadth of the scope of work, combined with this limited timeframe, placed wholly unrealistic expectations upon the Task Force. Concurrently, and as discussed in more detail in Section IV, it was inaccurately (and perhaps naively) represented during the creation of the Task Force that it would be able to operate in a political vacuum and be treated as a truly independent body as described to Town Meeting. Given both the political realities in which the Task Force ultimately was expected to operate and the need to produce detailed work product within the constraints of the Open Meeting Law, the Task Force would

---

<sup>23</sup> See also Section II.D.2 discussing the need for more financial transparency and the public's concerns over lack of understanding of where tax dollars are going.

<sup>24</sup> See Massachusetts Department of Revenue, *In Our Opinion*, 92-145, which states that only a town meeting may determine the format of the budget.

function more efficiently and obtain better buy-in from various departments and boards if it were comprised of five members: two appointed by the Select Board, and three appointed by the Town Moderator. The Task Force recognizes that this could result in less objectivity, but ultimately may make it more effective. Regardless, the Task Force should be reconstituted every five years for terms of two full years, assuming that more frequent attention to governance would allow it to have a more limited and focused scope of work in each iteration, while simultaneously allowing a deeper dive into the most pressing issues. The Task Force also should be guaranteed a certain minimum budget for administrative tasks, surveys, marketing, publishing, etc., should be provided with administrative staff support, and should be guaranteed a certain minimum number of hours from Town Counsel. Ideally, these long-term parameters for future iterations of the Task Force should be codified into a bylaw, rather than simply being part of a recurring reauthorization by Town Meeting, in order to ensure that those future iterations must be appointed.

As part of any such bylaw, the Task Force also recommends that the Select Board be obligated to include in each annual report to Town Meeting a summary of which Task Force recommendations from prior years have been implemented and to what extent, which recommendations are still being considered, and which recommendations have been rejected and why.<sup>25</sup> If the work of the Task Force, whether in this iteration or a future one, is to have truly lasting impact, then Town Meeting needs to be given the information necessary to assess the status of those recommendations. Absent such annual reporting, many recommendations invariably will become lost in the ether even without an intentional decision to not implement them. If nothing else, Town Meeting is owed an explanation of how the Town's government has chosen to respond to the recommendations of the Task Force. Toward that end, the Task Force urges the Select Board, in the interests of transparency and responsiveness, to make such annual reporting even in the absence of such a bylaw provision.

## 2. Create a bylaw to establish a Bylaw Review Committee

A committee should be established by bylaw to review all Town bylaws every five years. The committee should consist of the Town Administrator and other professional staff and designated members of boards, commissions and committees, with perhaps one or two qualified members of the public. The particular officials and boards, commissions and committees that should be represented on the committee, and the particular appointing authorit(ies) for the committee are beyond the scope of the Task Force to determine. The committee should spend a full year on this review, coordinating with each department to determine which bylaws are antiquated, in violation of statute, or otherwise not in accordance with present practice. Recommendations should then be made to the Select Board and Planning Board for general and zoning bylaw revisions, respectively. It is clear that such recurrent reviews of the bylaws are necessary, as the Town often appears to be acting in practice in ways that are

---

<sup>25</sup> For the earlier iteration of this recommendation that was originally proposed as a warrant article for the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting, along with the rationale for its inclusion on the warrant, see Appendix D. For an explanation of why this article ultimately was not placed on that warrant, see Section IV.

not reflective of the bylaws. The discussion above in Section I.A.4 regarding personnel policies is but one example of this problem.

3. Create a bylaw to require submission of minutes to the Town Clerk for posting online

There is currently no statutory obligation that boards, commissions and committees provide copies of approved open meeting minutes to the Town Clerk for posting online. This gap in the law results in disparate levels of accessibility to the minutes of various boards, commissions and committees bodies by the public, with the Town Clerk only able to post minutes of those bodies that actually submit them to the Town Clerk. The result is that the minutes of other bodies are virtually absent from the Town's website. It is the Task Force's firm belief, in accordance with its mandate to recommend solutions to increase governmental transparency, that all open meeting minutes should be readily available online. This recommendation is in line with the recommendations of the Public Records Division in ensuring public access to useful records. Establishing this requirement as a bylaw rather than Select Board policy will ensure that all boards, commissions and committees, even those bodies that are not appointed by the Select Board, are required to comply with it.

4. Correct bylaw reference to "Finance Director"

As displayed on the Town Website, the Town currently entitles its principal finance officers as follows: a Finance Director/Treasurer/Collector, a Principal Assessor and a Town Accountant. The Town Accountant's Office and Assessor's Office act independently, while the Treasurer's Office and Collector's Office have been combined. As currently constituted, this setup violates statute. The title of Finance Director is a specific statutory municipal office, one which can only be utilized if the Town by referendum has adopted the provisions of M.G.L. c. 43C, sec. 11, and if Town Meeting thereafter adopts a municipal finance department bylaw, neither of which has occurred. There is only one current reference to the "Finance Director" in the bylaws, in Section 3.10.3 of the General Bylaws, which notes the Finance Director's involvement in the appointment of the Long-Term Capital Requirements Committee. This bylaw provision does not create the position of Finance Director and incorrectly presumes that the position already existed or may just be a drafting error. Even if the Town had adopted the applicable statute, and had thereafter adopted an appropriate bylaw, thereby allowing the appointment of a Finance Director, said statute concurrently envisions that a consolidated Finance Department would be created in which the Town Accountant's Office and potentially even the Assessor's Office would also report to the Finance Director. That is, unless other principal finance officers report to the Finance Director, there is no purpose to having a Finance Director. The simplest solution to this improper use of the Finance Director title is to delete the reference in Section 3.10.3, and solely refer to the position as Treasurer/Collector (assuming the Town desires to continue to retain the same person for both positions).

5. Consider a bylaw to establish information technology authority<sup>26</sup>

Lastly, the Task Force undertook preliminary inquiries into the establishment by bylaw of an Information Technology Department and/or Information Technology Director position. The Task Force heard repeated feedback that the hardware and software systems of the Town are antiquated, inefficient, and incapable of communicating with each other across departments. It is evident that there needs to be a single individual who is responsible for these systems, and who has the authority to establish information technology policies and mandate the utilization of uniform technology platforms. Given that the Town is in the process of hiring such an individual, the Select Board should evaluate whether that individual is able to undertake such duties and successfully implement such policies without the need for a formal codification of that authority. Should departments be reticent or obstinate in adhering to the directions of this individual, then a bylaw requiring that adherence should be considered.

**II. RECOMMENDATIONS: Actions for Town Officials**

The implementation of the following recommendations would best be effectuated through direct action by Town officials as policies. These actions either require too much discretion or too frequent updating, or are otherwise too granular, to practically allow for Town Meeting involvement.

**A. General Administrative Recommendations**

There are several policy actions for which a bylaw is not appropriate that the Town could take that would make the administration of Town Hall more effective, efficient and transparent, both for Town staff and the general public.

1. Reconfigure Town offices

Individuals that routinely deal with confidential information, whether of residents, Town Hall staff, or of the Town government itself, should have private offices. Departments that potentially could share staff could also share office space. The Select Board also should investigate transitioning Town Hall to all-electronic document management in order to reduce the need for filing cabinets, thereby greatly improving the efficiency of physical office space.<sup>27</sup>

2. Utilize software to make Town documents searchable.

The Select Board should investigate the use of an enterprise content management (ECM) software system for the electronic databasing of Town records. Compatibility with existing Town-utilized software should be a consideration when evaluating what ECM system to purchase. The Task Force recommends that such a system be bifurcated by a firewall, with an internal system in which all records are accessible to Town staff, and an external system in which the public can access and key-

---

<sup>26</sup> See *Carlisle Master Plan (2022)*, Recommendation 12B.

<sup>27</sup> See also Section II.A.2 discussing electronic document management software.

word search typically requested records that would always be produced in response to public records requests, such as open meeting minutes, agendas and packets, and Town Meeting records.<sup>28</sup> For internal purposes, utilizing such a system should improve transparency, accessibility and collaboration across all departments, should reduce the amount of time administrative staff must dedicate to the management of electronic files, and should greatly reduce the need to maintain on-site physical files. For external purposes, utilizing such a system should ease the administrative burden for residents to obtain public records, and could potentially result in a decrease in public records requests. Adoption of an ECM system would make it easier to comply with a bylaw requiring the posting of minutes as proposed in Section I.C.3 of this Report.

3. Utilize an online database of bylaws and regulations.

The Town's bylaws and regulations should be platformed in an online, searchable database, such as General Code. Doing so will make them much more accessible to the public and will ensure that the most recent versions are always what is posted online. Many towns have instituted this online bylaw transition in the past decade. Employing such a database will facilitate easier access to these bylaws and regulations by boards, commissions and committees, the public, and Town staff, and will decrease the administrative burden on the Town Clerk in maintaining and updating the official copies of these documents and keeping the histories of the bylaws.

4. Undertake an annual review of regulations and policies.

Each department and board, commission and committee should conduct an annual review of its regulations and policies. The Town Administrator should coordinate and provide a timeframe for this endeavor and should inform the Select Board of any boards or departments that failed to undertake this annual review. The Task Force has determined that too often there are policies and regulations that are disregarded or not fully known by those persons who should be administering them.

5. Create more effective Open Meeting Law administration

The following recommended actions in relation to the Open Meeting Law stem both from the comments that the Task Force has received and from the Task Force's own experience. Templates for agendas and minutes should be created and then provided to all boards, commissions and committees, thereby establishing consistency in townwide record creation. Additionally, the Town Administrator should designate someone to remind boards of outstanding minutes that need to be approved and should report to the Select Board monthly regarding any failure to approve minutes that is in violation of the Open Meeting Law.<sup>29</sup> All staff and volunteers should receive comprehensive training in the Open Meeting Law, possibly through regularly scheduled seminars with Town Counsel or the Division of Open Government, and the Town Administrator should take responsibility for ensuring that all Open Meeting

---

<sup>28</sup> See also Section II.A.3 discussing the use of General Code.

<sup>29</sup> See also the discussion in Section I.C.3 regarding the promulgation of a bylaw requiring the online posting of minutes.

Law requirements and local procedures are being followed by staff and volunteers. The Select Board should ensure that all boards, commissions and committees and department heads have access to Town Counsel for any questions regarding Open Meeting Law compliance. Any meetings that include a public hearing should be recorded, and all recordings, whether video or solely audio, should be posted online within an established and widely communicated time frame. It should be very clear to the public how to access these recordings. Ideally links to these recordings should be located where the meeting agendas and minutes are found.

6. Ensure that all Town staff and volunteers have Town-issued email addresses, and that all of these are posted and easily accessible on the Town website

There would be many benefits to requiring all Town staff and volunteers to utilize publicly posted and accessible Town-issued email addresses. The benefit for both daytime and nighttime government to be able to easily access contact information for staff and volunteers alike cannot be understated. As importantly, the residents of the Town have a right to be able to contact the staff and officials of their Town government. The Governance Task Force spent weeks trying to obtain contact information for volunteer committee and board members, despite it being an expectation that the Task Force would meet with and get feedback from them. Moreover, the use of private email addresses by Town officials creates multiple complications for responding to public records requests, including the inability to readily conduct keyword searches of email records, the possibility of email record loss, and the exposure of personal email records to public search. Having a Town-issued email address would be a benefit for volunteers because they would easily be able to keep Town work separate from their personal email. Having Town email addresses also would maintain some sense of privacy for citizen volunteers by not publishing their personal email addresses online. Finally, eliminating the use of personal email addresses would simplify compliance with records requests by allowing information technology personnel to perform keyword searches and reduce the need for the particular email addressees to perform activities relating to the request.

7. Address internal and external Town communications issues

The Town Administrator should delegate to a particular staff member the duties of overseeing the Town's online media presence, including messaging and postings to the public on the Town website and/or social media, and of improving and streamlining both external communications to and from residents, and internal communications with and between volunteers and staff. Ideally, this individual would coordinate these functions with information technology personnel in whatever capacity the Town has them. The Task Force leaves to the determination of the Select Board whether this individual should be a new employee or an existing employee who is given these additional duties.

## 8. Implement administrative staff flexibility / pooling<sup>30</sup>

Administrative staff from various departments should be cross-trained, and the Select Board should consider hiring one or more floating administrative staff. Alternatively, the Select Board could consider enacting such policies (or possibly bylaws, if Town Counsel determines the necessity) as would allow all administrative (non-permitting and non-enforcement) staff to be pooled and not tied to a particular department. Each of these recommendations will help with intermittent staffing shortages due to vacations, medical leave and seasonal concerns, without the need to hire additional staff in each department.<sup>31</sup>

### **B. Recommended Actions Relative to the Town Meeting Process**

The Task Force recommends that several administrative actions be taken that will make the Town Meeting process more accessible to the general public, which again was an issue of concern for a broad swath of the Survey-responding residents.<sup>32</sup>

#### 1. Publish Select Board policy on warrant article submission

The Select Board should create and publish on the Town's website a standardized policy for the submission of warrant articles for consideration on the warrant. This policy should include timeframes for drafts and final documents. It should clarify any differences in timeframes and requirements for articles that are being petitioned by a citizen or citizens pursuant to statute and articles that are being submitted for potential sponsorship by the Select Board. This policy should stipulate what discretionary and mandatory criteria the Select Board will require to be met to sponsor an article that is presented to it. It is the Task Force's understanding that the Select Board does have a policy that is entitled "Policy #9 – Procedure for Preparation for Town Meeting," but that this policy is both out-of-date and inaccessible to the public.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, this policy should be updated accordingly and published on the Town's website. Concurrently, for each Town Meeting, once the date has been set, the Select Board should place the warrant article due dates for that Town Meeting on the Town's website.

#### 2. Ensure more detailed warrant article drafting

To the extent feasible, warrant articles as published in the warrant book should be drafted with sufficient specificity that they could be adopted by Town Meeting as drafted, without the need for more detailed language in the motion for the article and should include the proposed final bylaw language. Too often, warrant articles are drafted in generalized terms, with the specifics only known to Town Meeting members upon receiving the motions at Town Meeting. This practice inhibits informed debate, limits the ability to propose floor amendments, and creates the impression that the warrant creation process is being rushed.

---

<sup>30</sup> See *Carlisle Master Plan (2022)*, Recommendation 6C.

<sup>31</sup> See also the discussion on Land-Use Staff coordination in Section II.E.2.

<sup>32</sup> See the discussion in Section I.B regarding bylaw revisions to the Town Meeting process.

<sup>33</sup> This policy was never provided to the Task Force.

### C. Recommended Actions for Select Board Policy Planning

In interviewing various Town officials and employees, surveying the residents of the Town, interacting with various Town boards, commissions and committees, engaging in the Town Meeting warrant drafting process, and reviewing both the recommendations of the prior iteration of the Task Force and the practices of other municipalities, the Task Force has concluded that the process by which the Select Board identifies and addresses medium-term (annual) and long-term goals is inefficient, opaque and ad hoc. While Select Board Chair Barney Arnold noted that the Select Board does vote on goals, the Task Force has concluded that the prioritization, implementation and coordination of those goals could be improved.<sup>34</sup> The Task Force has several recommendations for improving the Select Board's policy planning and goal completion.

#### 1. Delegate to the Town Administrator

The Select Board should seek to offload administrative tasks, and day-to-day Town operations, to the extent possible to the Town Administrator and other staff.<sup>35</sup> As an example, a bylaw could be drafted to designate a particular police officer as the dog hearing officer, rather than have the Select Board tackle dog hearings.<sup>36</sup> As another example, perhaps a way could be found to handle cemetery plots administratively.<sup>37</sup> The Task Force would note that, with the recent hiring of the new Town Administrator, the Select Board publicly voiced approval of the general idea of delegating more operations.

#### 2. Incorporate public comments

The Select Board should incorporate into its medium-term and long-term planning the feedback that it receives from the public.<sup>38</sup> In that respect, the Select Board may wish to consider implementing a regularly scheduled (perhaps quarterly) open forum meeting for the specific purpose of receiving and reviewing public comments.

#### 3. Define clear goals annually

The Select Board should define its major policy goals and capital project goals for each year and for the long-term, and the Town Administrator should coordinate the prioritization and effectuation of these goals. One particular area of concern is the need for timely undertaking of capital projects in order to avoid several such projects occurring simultaneously or being delayed.<sup>39</sup> Toward that end, the

---

<sup>34</sup> See Kimberly Kane interview, for a discussion of the current meandering, and sometimes fruitless, process for capital investments; and the responses of the Planning Board members to the Follow-Up Questionnaire, for a discussion of capital investments prioritization issues.

<sup>35</sup> See James Darr and John Fisher interviews.

<sup>36</sup> See James Darr interview.

<sup>37</sup> See responses of Select Board Chair Barney Arnold to the Follow-up Questionnaire.

<sup>38</sup> For repeated public comments regarding various public projects, including the proposed public safety building, the Highland Building improvements, the proposed pickleball facility, and the proposed community center, can be found in the comments to Questions #25, 28, 31, 32, 33, 35, 43 and Additional Comments of the Survey.

<sup>39</sup> See Barney Arnold, Nathan Brown, and Kimberly Kane interviews.

Task Force recommends establishing a method of reviewing capital projects for budget prioritization and financial appropriateness. The Select Board may want to consider creating a new advisory committee to assist them in this task, which could consist of members of the Select Board, the Finance Committee and the Planning Board.

4. Plan for facilities maintenance<sup>40</sup>

The Select Board should ensure consistent scheduling and planning of facilities maintenance, creating annual assessments and multi-year projections of when the maintenance of various facilities will be needed and the likely costs of the same. The past practice of deferring evaluation of maintenance costs until such maintenance becomes immediately necessary results in inefficient and inaccurate long-term budgeting and budget prioritization. This "kick-the-can-down-the-road" mentality preferences short-term political expediency at the expense of honest policy deliberation, often forcing financing decisions to be made under exigent circumstances. The Task Force recognizes that the Municipal Facilities Committee has engaged in some of this work, but the Select Board should be more actively coordinating planning and budgeting.

5. Coordinate large public projects<sup>41</sup>

Interviewees noted that longer-term financial planning would benefit from greater coordination among parties engaged in the development of projects that would entail a future draw on Town resources.<sup>42</sup> Finance Committee members noted that they are often slow to hear of proposals that are under development. For large public projects, the Town Administrator should act as a liaison between various departments and boards, commissions and committees that will have oversight, regulatory and/or permitting roles. In that role, the Town Administrator should offer guidance and support, and should facilitate interdepartmental communication, but should only be responsible for shepherding the project to completion if it is a Select Board-sponsored project or a Municipal Facilities Committee-sponsored project.<sup>43</sup> The Town Administrator should also ensure that the Finance Committee is apprised early of such public projects, in order to allow incorporation of such projects into long-term budget calculations.<sup>44</sup> See also Section I.A, discussing coordination by the Town Administrator of interdepartmental meetings.

---

<sup>40</sup> See *Carlisle Master Plan (2022)*, Recommendation 7C.

<sup>41</sup> See *Carlisle Master Plan (2022)*, Recommendation 7A.

<sup>42</sup> See James Darr and Nathan Brown interviews.

<sup>43</sup> See Tony Mariano, Jerry Lerman, and James Darr interviews for discussions of need for interdepartmental coordination on projects.

<sup>44</sup> See James Darr and Wayne Davis interviews.

## **D. Recommended Actions for Financial Management Systems<sup>45</sup>**

### **1. Update financial information systems**

Carlisle currently lacks a common town-wide system for the collection of financial information. This is due to a combination of staffing challenges, a lack of investment in software systems in the past, and slow adoption of new practices by department managers. For instance, the Task Force learned through its interviews that the Town's chart of accounts has become outdated and that the update has been delayed by a shortage of staff resources.<sup>46</sup> The chart of accounts is the conceptual framework for the Town's financial management system. The update would improve the quality and relevancy of financial information available to senior Town management and various boards, commissions and committees, and in particular, to the Finance Committee. Given its importance, the Select Board should ensure that the chart of accounts is updated in the near future including, if necessary, by procuring the services of an external consultant.

Task Force interviews also identified a need for improvements to the software systems that support the financial management process.<sup>47</sup> The 2022 Annual Town Meeting approved the purchase of additional modules for the MUNIs system. However, in the past, implementation of changes to systems for the collection of financial information has been a challenge due to lack of staffing and the hesitancy of some Town departments to migrate to new systems and to submit data in a common format. Successful implementation of a Town-wide system for financial management should be a policy priority. Furthermore, movement to a common system for financial reporting that includes the School Department could facilitate the identification of potential areas for cost savings.

### **2. Create greater transparency regarding departmental expenditures and Town longer-term financial commitments**

The Survey found high levels of satisfaction among respondents regarding the Finance Committee and Treasurer. However, many respondents expressed dissatisfaction concerning the Town's use of tax dollars and long-term financial planning. Thirty-one percent of respondents to the Survey were not satisfied at all or somewhat dissatisfied with the town's use of tax dollars.<sup>48</sup> Forty-four percent of Survey respondents were not satisfied at all or somewhat dissatisfied with the Town's long-term financial planning and budgetary oversight.<sup>49</sup> The Task Force notes that improvements in the amount and availability of financial information should enhance the ability of Town management, Town boards and committees, and Town residents to identify areas where efficiencies could be realized. This information would also enhance debate on Town priorities.<sup>50</sup> The investments in financial management

---

<sup>45</sup> See *Carlisle Master Plan (2022)*, Recommendation 6A.

<sup>46</sup> See James Darr and Kimberly Kane interviews.

<sup>47</sup> See James Darr and Kimberly Kane interviews.

<sup>48</sup> See Survey Question 32.

<sup>49</sup> See Survey Question 33.

<sup>50</sup> See also Section I.B.4 regarding a bylaw revision to require line-item department budgets.

information systems discussed above should result in greater access to granular data on Town expenditures and strengthen budgetary oversight. Many comments received in response to the Survey questioned the level of expenditures by certain Town departments or the schools. With regards to resident concerns relating to Town expenditures, the Task Force notes that additional disclosures of financial information may allow residents to identify areas where Town expenditures truly are excessive; will in other cases provide greater confidence that budgeted expenditures are necessary; and, in general, may heighten the level of discussion among Town residents regarding expenditures and Town priorities.<sup>51</sup>

## **E. Recommended Actions for Land-Use Permitting**

The Task Force received consistent feedback that the land-use permitting processes in Town were cumbersome and burdensome on both residents and staff. The Task Force recommends taking the following administrative actions to mitigate these issues.

### **1. Land-Use Coordinator**<sup>52</sup>

There were many resident complaints about the opacity and complexity of the land-use permitting process in Town<sup>53</sup>, with at least one department head indicating that these complaints stem from a lack of understanding of the process, rather than a problem with the process itself.<sup>54</sup> To rectify this disconnect between residents and permitting departments, the Town Administrator should assign someone familiar with land-use procedures to act as the Land-Use Coordinator. This person would be responsible for tracking the progress of the various land-use applications and advising applicants on that progress.<sup>55</sup> The person would also be the first point of contact when applicants have questions. Whether this Land-Use Coordinator should be a new position or a duty that is assigned to an existing position is an issue that should be reviewed in more detail by the Town Administrator.<sup>56</sup>

### **2. Cross-training and workload sharing**

The Task Force repeatedly heard examples of understaffed departments due to vacations and sick leave, with board members needing to perform administrative duties such as staffing the front desk and answering phones.<sup>57</sup> By way of example, while Covid-19 related demands were admittedly temporary, the Board of Health became overburdened with tasks to support the Town's pandemic response, while other departments, like Planning, halted projects and drastically decreased their workloads. The ability of the Town to easily shift administrative staff responsibilities would have been helpful. Should the Town choose not to ameliorate this issue by pooling all administrative staff as

---

<sup>51</sup> See also Sections II.C.3 and II.C.5 regarding long-term planning and prioritization of capital projects.

<sup>52</sup> See *Carlisle Master Plan (2022)*, Recommendation 4A.

<sup>53</sup> See Survey Question 28.

<sup>54</sup> See Sylvia Willard interview.

<sup>55</sup> See Madeleine Blake and Tim Goddard interviews regarding the need for such a position.

<sup>56</sup> For clarity, the creation of a position does not necessitate additional administrative staff.

<sup>57</sup> See Tim Goddard, Tony Mariano, and Sylvia Willard interviews.

recommended in Section II.A.8, then a memorandum of understanding should be executed among the land-use boards to promote cross-training of land-use administrative staff and increase workload sharing and balancing. Doing so would reduce the need for every board, commission and committee to have separate administrative staff available during all business hours to address resident and developer inquiries and would mitigate against the effects of administrative staff absences.

### 3. Online permitting application

The Town should move all land-use permitting processes online. This would allow simpler and more secure access by citizens and contractors, and also make the processes smoother. As importantly, it would be possible for both employees and citizens/contractors to track the status of applications,<sup>58</sup> and potentially reduce the burdens on administrative staff. Online permitting would also eliminate the need for the printing of many hard copies of plans and other large-scale documents, which are typically created in electronic format in any event. Departmental software should be upgraded and cross-departmentally integrated to the extent necessary to ensure this online permitting functionality.

### 4. Interdepartmental meetings

The Town Administrator and Land-Use Coordinator should ensure that regular (at least monthly) meetings take place between all land-use department heads in order to discuss the status of outstanding public and private projects in Town that involve multi-departmental approval processes.<sup>59</sup>

### 5. Pre-permitting review

It is the Task Force's understanding that an informal process currently exists for contractors and engineers of commercial and multi-unit residential projects to hold a pre-application meeting with, and receive feedback from, all relevant land-use department heads. The Task Force recommends that this informal pre-application review process be extended to single-family residential projects as well.

## **F. Recommendations for Topics Warranting Further Research**

The following topics were beyond the scope of the Task Force's time and efforts to delve into to a serious extent, and therefore the Task Force has declined to provide particular recommendations with respect to them. Nonetheless, they are topics about which the Task Force repeatedly heard concerns or were otherwise presented preliminary policy options, and it is suggested that the Select Board and Town Administrator investigate them further:

- Possibly regionalizing one or more public-oriented services.
- Possibly hiring additional professional staff such as a Town Engineer or a Town Facilities Manager.

---

<sup>58</sup> See Jon Metivier interview.

<sup>59</sup> See also I.A.1, the proposed Town Administrator warrant article, relative to the establishment of department head meetings.

### III. Lessons Learned for Future Task Forces

The Task Force has learned a number of lessons from its experiences in researching and drafting this Report. While some of these lessons are incorporated into its Recommendation that a Town Governance Task Force be standardized,<sup>60</sup> the Task Force nonetheless feels strongly that it would be helpful to highlight all of these important take-aways in a separate Section of this Report. These lessons would be applicable to any future Town Governance Task Force, even one that is created ad hoc in the absence of a bylaw standardizing the process.

**Budget.** Request and/or understand whether there is a budget available to the Task Force for survey subscriptions, postage, printing, etc.

**Administrative support.** Determine early on whether the Town will offer administrative support to the Task Force and if so, then contact that person in order to establish a working relationship.

**Town counsel.** Contact Town Counsel early on to introduce the Task Force and establish protocols for engagement. Determine with the Select Board how much of Town Counsel's time is available to the Task Force and the timing of such availability.

**Select Board.** More time is needed with the Select Board's designated liaison to the Task Force, and possibly with members of other committees, early on in the process, if there is a desire to create and submit to the Select Board any warrant articles for inclusion on the Town Meeting warrant.

**Contact information.** The Task Force had great difficulty in finding the contact information for board members and Town employees. Assuming that the Town fails to follow the Recommendation that all such contact information be made available on the Town's website,<sup>61</sup> then be relentless in the pursuit of this information. Also take into account the fact that some members or employees will not return calls.

**Town interviews.** Interviews with Town employees and with members of Town boards, commissions and committees, were quite useful, though time-consuming. Consider carefully the timing of these interviews. It may also be helpful to attend meetings of other committees and even have on-the-record discussions at those meetings.

**Citizen survey.** As with Town interviews, consider carefully how much time it takes to complete a citizen survey and schedule it appropriately. The Task Force found the Survey also to be both time-consuming and quite useful.

**Other towns.** Consider interviewing board members from similar towns about specific issues being addressed by the Task Force. Be careful about doing so, however, as any recommendations should be tailored to Carlisle, and it should not be assumed that a town of similar geography or population metrics inherently would be a relevant comparison.

---

<sup>60</sup> See Section I.C.1.

<sup>61</sup> See Section II.A.6.

#### **IV. Task Force Experiences**

The Task Force believes that a detailed explanation of its interactions with the Select Board and the Finance Committee is necessary in order for Town Meeting and the public at large to have a full and clear understanding of why the Task Force ultimately declined to seek the placement of any articles on the warrant for the Fall 2022 Special Town Meeting that originally was called specifically for that purpose.<sup>62</sup> What was intended by Town Meeting to be an apolitical process, which would take an objective look at improvements that could be made to the Town's government, inevitably became mired in political considerations that were beyond the scope of the Task Force's mandate. Town Meeting and any future task force should have a clear understanding of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of any such task force operating independently and without politicization. The Warrant Book for the Spring 2021 Annual Town Meeting included the following summary of the Task Force's intended mandate:

Summary: The Town Governance Task Force will be charged with studying the "form, organization and practices" of Carlisle's government and making recommendations to improve the efficiency, responsiveness and transparency of our government. The committee will be appointed by the Town Moderator and report only to Town Meeting (i.e., not to any other boards or committees) and can make recommendations of any magnitude, from those involving small or routine practices, to larger recommendations that concern the structure and organization of the town. This committee will spend the next year studying Town government, and it will be charged with issuing a report no later than six weeks prior to the 2022 ATM. The committee will have the authority to place articles on the Warrant and make any other recommendations it deems appropriate, such as recommendations to town boards, committees, or department heads on matters that do not require Town Meeting approval.

In supporting the motion to create the Task Force, Kate Reid, a member of the Select Board, stated at the Spring 2021 Annual Town Meeting that the Select Board "commits to placing [the Task Force recommended warrant articles], regardless of whether they support them or not."<sup>63</sup> In response to a question about whether a Town Meeting-formed Task Force would be empowered to place articles on the Warrant, Selectperson Reid confirmed that the Select Board places articles on the Warrant and the Task Force could not do so itself directly without the consent of the Select Board. She also acknowledged that no formal vote by the Select Board had been taken to confirm the statement that any articles that the Task Force proposed would be placed on the Warrant by the Select Board irrespective of actual support for the same.<sup>64</sup> That being said, no other member of the Select Board rose to contradict Selectperson Reid's statement of the Select Board's commitment.<sup>65</sup> After some discussion, Moderator Wayne Davis stated, "As the moderator and the appointing authority, if the committee

---

<sup>62</sup> Upon the Task Force informing the Select Board on August 29, 2022, that no articles would be forthcoming, the Select Board voted to cancel this special town meeting.

<sup>63</sup> See 2021 Annual Town Meeting Video at 1:28:30.

<sup>64</sup> See 2021 Annual Town Meeting Video at 1:31:25.

<sup>65</sup> Of the five Select Board members during the Springs 2021 Annual Town Meeting, four of them – Barney Arnold, Kate Reid, David Model and Luke Ascolillo – were also members of the Select Board during the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting warrant drafting process.

comes to me next spring and says, ‘Gee, we want to recommend this, but it looks like the Select Board is resisting,’ then I will simply say, ‘Okay, go ahead. You're seven people; get 3 more signatures and put it on the Warrant as a citizens’ petition... So there will always be an out for people to get things on, for this committee to get its recommendations directly to you for your consideration. Having said that, I fully would anticipate that our current Select Board and also the long Carlisle tradition of the Select Board being willing to put things on the warrant irrespective of when they thought it was important for the Town to decide even if the Select Board itself wasn't supportive, there is a tradition of that in Carlisle and I would expect that this Select Board likely would follow that.’<sup>66</sup> Town Meeting approved the measure and the Moderator appointed seven (7) residents to undertake the work and report back to Town Meeting.

Shortly thereafter, on July 20, 2021, the first meeting of the Task Force was held. The next meeting was August 5, 2021 and the chair was selected. The Task Force operated independently as it pursued its objectives, establishing a timetable that would produce its report and any warrant articles six weeks prior to the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting, as established at the Spring 2021 Annual Town Meeting. The Task Force estimated this deadline to be early March 2022, a total of seven (7) months to deliver this Report and any warrant articles.

In January 2022, then-Town Administrator Timothy Goddard, on behalf of the Select Board, requested warrant article topics from the Task Force for the purposes of being used by the Select Board as placeholders as the Warrant was being developed. The Task Force wasn't prepared to provide topics at such an early juncture and was dedicating its meeting time toward fully developing recommendations so it would be prepared with warrant articles for Town Meeting. The Select Board, through Mr. Goddard, made it clear that following their process was a prerequisite to having articles placed on the warrant, which was not the stated intention of the Select Board in proposing the creation of the Task Force to Town Meeting. Following submission of the topics, which were at that time only broad-brushed and unfinished concepts that the Task Force had been mulling, Mr. Goddard informed the Task Force that its submission would appear on the agenda for the February 9, 2022, Select Board meeting, and indicated that what was submitted “wasn't very specific” and that the Task Force should be prepared to talk about the intended warrant articles. The Task Force also heard from the Mr. Goddard that “The [Select] Board makes the call on which articles get on the warrant so the more information they have the better the likelihood that they vote to include and potentially support the articles.” This statement directly contradicted what the Select Board represented to Town Meeting – i.e., to vote to place on the warrant any articles the Task Force proposed.

The result of the Task Force having to pivot its workload and develop warrant articles in late January and early February of 2022, rather than complete its recommendations, was problematic in several ways. First, the Task Force was already operating under very tight time constraints, attempting to accomplish in less than one year what had taken its predecessor committee almost 3 years to

---

<sup>66</sup> See 2021 Annual Town Meeting Video at 1:34:15.

accomplish.<sup>67</sup> Trying to draft warrant articles before recommendations were fully fleshed out was disjointed and unnatural. It asked for the specific solution before the full analysis had been accomplished. Second, a concurrent workload was placed on the Task Force that required answers to the Select Board, emails to various parties trying to manage various questions and concerns, and appearances at meetings. Third, the Task Force felt compelled to respond to assumptions by members of other committees/boards who envisioned “worst case scenarios” based on just a few words early in the development of this Report. The inability of the Task Force to point to a completed report was a disservice to this process. This continuing managing of expectations and opinions based upon incomplete data ended up becoming a significant distraction that took up time that the Task Force simply didn’t have.

By far the most time-consuming was the objection by the Finance Committee to the suggestion that Carlisle should align with best practices and empower the Town Administrator, through a bylaw change, to participate in the budget process. At the time of this Report, the Town Administrator **has no overarching authority** to participate in the budget process, with that authority reserved solely for the Finance Committee.<sup>68</sup> In particular, Section 3.9.4 of the General Bylaws states that:

The Finance Committee shall each year request and receive copies of each proposed budget for the next fiscal year from the various town departments, officers, and bodies charged with the expenditure of town money. The committee shall also be furnished by the Select Board with copies of all articles in the town meeting warrant, within fourteen (14) days after the warrant closing.

The Task Force proposed that the Town Administrator and Treasurer be the coordinating authority for consolidating and compiling various departmental budgets and presenting that consolidated operating budget to the Finance Committee. The role that the Finance Committee would take in the budget process once it received those budget numbers, as detailed in statute and the General Bylaws, would remain unchanged. Only the manner in which those numbers were presented to it initially – consolidated versus piecemeal – would change. This change would not impact the Finance Committee but would increase the authority of the Town Administrator within Town Hall. The final draft of the revised language for Section 3.9.4 of the General Bylaws that the Task Force proposed for the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting was as follows:

It shall be the duty of the Town Administrator and Treasurer to consider expenditures and develop a draft budget for the next fiscal year after collaborating with the various town departments, officers, and bodies charged with the expenditure of town money. The draft budget for the next fiscal year shall be submitted to the Finance Committee by a mutually

---

<sup>67</sup> The Carlisle 2000 Task Force was created by the 1995 Annual Town Meeting, and while it did produce an initial report on April 10, 1996, its mandate was repeatedly extended by Town Meeting for several years thereafter, with its final report being produced for the Spring 1998 Annual Town Meeting.

<sup>68</sup> To the extent that the Town Administrator is involved in the creation of the operating budget for the Select Board’s Office as its department head, this involvement in no way detracts from the Task Force’s concern that the Town’s General Bylaws exclude the Town Administrator from the overarching budgetary process as a whole.

agreeable date, but no later than December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current fiscal year. The committee shall also be furnished by the Select Board with copies of tall articles in the town meeting warrant, within fourteen (14) days after the warrant closing.

Conversations around the Task Force's draft proposal led to some contentious discussions between members of the Task Force and the Finance Committee. When the Task Force Chair was introduced to the Finance Committee to discuss the Task Force's Budget-related proposal and clarify its intent and impact, the Finance Committee's then-Chairperson Jim Darr began by stating that the proposed warrant article was going to be discussed, "or as I like to call it, the 'eviscerate FinCom' Article." The Task Force believes this hyperbolic remark was a complete mischaracterization of a proposal that made minor changes to Section 3.9.4 of the General Bylaws. With this introduction, it appeared to the Task Force that the proposal was never given objective consideration by the Finance Committee. To address what the Finance Committee indicated was their main concern that they would not have enough time to truly digest the budget if department pieces were delivered to the Town Administrator first, the Task Force added to the draft warrant article the requirement that the consolidated operating budget be provided to the Finance Committee by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, which date the Task Force calculated to be approximately 60 days more than the statutory requirement.

During this period, the Task Force attempted to coordinate with Town Counsel to confirm that all of its proposals were legally feasible and to craft the warrant articles in the style appropriate for the warrant. For reasons that the Task Force can only speculate, during the warrant article-drafting process in February 2022, the Select Board minimized Town Counsel's involvement. It was only after the Select Board Chair and Vice Chair met with the Task Force Chair on February 25, 2022, that they committed to directing Town Counsel to actively assist. This delay in legal review brought the Task Force work to a halt at a critical time so close to when the articles had to be completed.

Despite these different hurdles, the Task Force submitted six draft warrant articles to Select Board on March 17, 2022, along with a set of Rationales.<sup>69</sup> At the March 22, 2022, Select Board meeting, the Select Board agreed to place only two articles on the Warrant: (1) a proposed amendment to the General Bylaws that would create a regularly occurring Special Town Meeting in the fall; and (2) a proposal to extend the term of the Task Force to allow for the completion of this Report and the submission of warrant articles at a Fall 2022 Special Town Meeting. This result was disappointing and impacted the morale of the Task Force, since it appeared that the assumptions created at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting and under which both Town Meeting and the Task Force had been operating were unreliable. Nonetheless, the Task Force had to appear at the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting to defend its two remaining warrant articles and then attempt to refocus and work toward completing both this Report and the previously rejected warrant articles in time for the Fall 2022 Special Town Meeting.

---

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix D.

The Task Force proposed amendment to the General Bylaws creating a regularly scheduled Fall Special Town Meeting in order to increase participation at Town Meeting by enabling non-finance-related issues to be heard separately and thereby avoid having the Annual Town Meeting continue late into the evenings and for multiple late nights in a row.<sup>70</sup> (A timely example of how this amendment could have been useful, was for residents to have had the opportunity to weigh in on the pickleball proposal that consumed the Town in the fall of 2021, rather than having to wait 9 months to do so.) Through the Survey and interview responses, residents and Town officials expressed that the way Town Meeting has been held in the past has made participation difficult. The Task Force saw the Fall Special Town Meeting measure as a simple way to promote basic democratic participation and increase opportunities for more diverse voices in the Carlisle community to be heard.

The Select Board was supportive of this measure, and the Finance Committee explicitly communicated to both the Task Force and the Select Board that it was not something on which the Finance Committee would take a position. It therefore was a complete and stunning reversal when the Finance Committee voted just prior to the start of the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting<sup>71</sup> to oppose this measure, with the Select Board, the Moderator and the Task Force all learning of this last-minute reversal on the floor of Town Meeting.

The Finance Committee claimed that having a regularly-scheduled Special Town Meeting could delay an administrative piece of the budgeting process. Yet, prior to the impacts of the Covid pandemic, Carlisle had held Special Town Meetings in the fall in 5 of the previous 10 years. Nor did the Finance Committee seek confirmation from Town Counsel before issuing in front of Town Meeting what was effectively a legal opinion. As no one was prepared to rebut the Finance Committee's bald and wholly unanticipated claims, the warrant article failed to pass.

Following the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, the Select Board met, as is its norm, to discuss what had occurred. The Task Force's Chair expressed its disappointment with the Finance Committee's surprise opposition and raised concerns about how the Finance Committee's last-minute vote seemingly contradicted its obligations under Section 3.9.5.3 of the General Bylaws. Town Moderator Wayne Davis and Select Board members Dave Model and Kate Reid, were all very vocal about being blindsided by the Finance Committee's position on the article at Town Meeting. Moderator Davis went so far as to suggest that the manner in which the Finance Committee acted precluded him from recusing himself so he could speak in support of the article. The Finance Committee's then Chair Jim Darr represented to the Select Board that the vote occurred immediately prior to Town Meeting because the Treasurer raised the budgeting-process issue at the last minute, which meant there was new information that Finance

---

<sup>70</sup> See Section I.B.1 for a more detailed discussion of the reasons for this Recommendation.

<sup>71</sup> This meeting of the Finance Committee was held on the same day as the Town Meeting, with the agenda and meeting notice posted on August 19, 2022. The Finance Committee's vote on the proposed bylaw amendment appears to be in conflict with its obligations in Section 3.9.5.3 of the General Bylaws, which requires that any recommendations relating to warrant articles be completed not less than seven days prior to Town Meeting.

Committee hadn't had time to consider. In direct contrast, the Mosquito reported<sup>72</sup> that this information was discussed at the previous Finance Committee meeting of April 11, 2022, at which meeting the Finance Committee had declined to vote on the matter.

Despite this difficult history, the Task Force was committed to trying to assuage the concerns of the Finance Committee regarding the proposed change to the budget process. Following the Spring 2022 Town Meeting, the Task Force and the Finance Committee agreed to designate two members each to a new joint subcommittee, which would meet and review the proposed bylaw language, discuss suggestions, hear concerns, and explain the rationale for the proposal. This joint subcommittee met on August 4, 2022, and the result was to have the Task Force revise its draft warrant article in line with suggestions. The revised draft then would be discussed by the full Finance Committee at its next meeting, and comments would be provided in turn to the Task Force with enough time to finalize a new draft prior to the Select Board's discussion of the warrant for the proposed Fall 2022 Special Town Meeting. The revised draft of the warrant article was provided to the Finance Committee on August 11, 2022. Notwithstanding that the Finance Committee met on August 15, 2022, no comments on this draft were ever provided to the Task Force. Additionally, on August 22, 2022, the Finance Committee members of the joint subcommittee specifically declined to meet again. Instead, it was indicated to the Task Force members of the joint subcommittee that any comments of the Finance Committee would be provided directly to the Select Board at the August 29, 2022, joint meeting that the Select Board and the Finance Committee would be having to discuss the warrant for the proposed Fall 2022 Special Town Meeting. Once again, the Finance Committee was refusing to communicate with the Task Force in a timely fashion. While the Task Force was not formally invited to participate in this joint meeting, Rebekah Vieira, Chairperson, was invited to attend.

At the Task Force meeting of August 25, 2022, members expressed their concerns about the ongoing need to change and defend the proposed warrant articles, which was again taking time away from completing this Report. Having not received substantive feedback from Finance Committee, and concluding that the objective process of the Task Force was being irreparably compromised, the Task Force made the drastic decision not to request placement of any articles on the warrant for the Fall 2022 Special Town Meeting, and instead to focus on completing and submitting this Report to the Town Moderator and the Select Board, while encouraging the Select Board to take charge of placing and defending such articles on any future warrant as it saw fit. The Select Board was informed of this decision at its August 29, 2022, joint meeting with the Finance Committee. Ultimately, this Report itself, explaining the disfunction that the Task Force encountered in attempting to fulfill its mandate, may be more useful to Town Meeting than any particular warrant article.

---

<sup>72</sup> See *Carlisle Mosquito*, "Few Fireworks as FinCom Presents Budget," published April 13, 2022.

## **Appendix A**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CARLISLE**

Carlisle became a town by Act of Incorporation in 1805 and operates under the Open Town Meeting form of government with a set of General Bylaws. Once an agricultural town, we are now mainly residential; a population of 876 in 1950 has grown to approximately 5,400 in 2022. Carlisle has 40 elected officials, with more than 270 appointed members on 50 boards, committees, and public bodies. There are 47 full-time employees with additional part time employees for special services and seasonal activities. In 2021, the Town Report recorded revenues of approximately \$31,000,000, of this \$28,500,000 came from local taxes, fines, and permits. Approximately \$19,000,000 or 61% of Carlisle's revenue is allocated to PK-12 education.

Simultaneously with the work of the Carlisle Governance Task Force, residents have been engaged in the Master Planning process. The Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Board on May 9, 2022.

## Appendix B

### TOWN GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE

The Task Force was created by approval of Warrant Article 17 at the Carlisle Town Meeting which was held on June 6, 2021. The motion, as adopted, was worded as follows:

MOTION: I move that the Town vote to establish a new committee, the Town Governance Task Force, that shall be charged with studying the form, organization and practices of Town government and making recommendations to improve the efficacy, efficiency, responsiveness, and transparent functioning thereof. If established, the Moderator shall appoint a committee of seven members, qualified by their interest, experience and commitment. Further, the committee shall be charged with issuing a report no later than six weeks prior to the scheduled date of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, such report to include proposed warrant articles for the Town to consider at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting and such other recommendations as the committee deems appropriate. Nothing shall preclude the committee from making minor interim recommendations that do not require Town Meeting approval prior to that date.

Interested persons were encouraged to submit an expression of interest to the Town Moderator, Wayne Davis, and ultimately, he selected the following members for appointment to the Task Force:

- Rebekah Vieira, Chair<sup>73</sup>
- Vanessa Moroney, Vice-Chair
- Paul Anagnostopoulos
- Jim Bohn<sup>74</sup>
- Brian Cruise
- Kyle Dalbec
- RJ Mathew<sup>75</sup>

Members Vieira, Moroney, Anagnostopoulos, Cruise, and Dalbec were re-appointed following the 2022 Annual Town Meeting which extended the term of the Task Force. Annual Town Meeting held in 1995 was the last time a Governance Task Force was appointed to serve the Town.

Regular meetings of the Task Force began in August of 2021 and continued throughout the term. At first the meetings were one or two hours long and every other week, but by September, 2021 the meetings were held twice per week and in January, 2022, meetings were extended to three hours in order to support the necessary pace.

All Task Force meetings were held remotely, using the Zoom videoconferencing facility. The meetings were open to the public and a video was made of each one and posted for public viewing. To manage the work of the Task Force, the Town established a SharePoint collaborative platform, which is

---

<sup>73</sup> Rebekah Vieira was appointed to replace original member Emily Lawson, who resigned following the first meeting of the Task Force.

<sup>74</sup> Resigned on June 16, 2022.

<sup>75</sup> Resigned on May 6, 2022.

integrated with Microsoft Office and made viewable to the public. The Task Force decided to upload as much of the supporting documents and work product as possible to the page. In addition, the Task Force used the platform to edit these documents during the meetings, in order to record our decisions in public. All meeting videos, agendas, draft and approved minutes, and working documents are available at the SharePoint site, which can be reached from the Task Force page at the Carlisle government website: <https://www.carlislema.gov/957/Town-Governance-Task-Force>. In addition, the agendas and approved minutes are available on the Town website on the Agenda and Meetings Center.

## Appendix C

### METHODOLOGY

The Task Force spent August 5, 2021, through January 15, 2022, gathering data and information to help it perform its appointed duties. This was done through a series of surveys, interviews, and research tasks. The following sections summarize the steps that resulted in the Recommendations, Warrant Articles, and this Report.

Throughout the data gathering period, the Task Force researched governance decisions made by similar towns in Massachusetts, including Andover, Belmont, Concord, Littleton, Needham, and Sherborn. The Task Force also investigated past governance decisions made in Carlisle by the Carlisle 2000 Task Force, the Organization and Efficiency Study of 2012, and the current Master Plan Steering Committee. The corresponding documents were collected in two folders on SharePoint.

The Task Force created a governance survey open to anyone who lives or works in Carlisle and was distributed to Carlisle citizens and employees. Task Force wrote the survey between August 15 and October 4, 2021, and then created the final survey on the Survey Monkey platform. (Survey Monkey is a popular survey platform that allows people to take surveys online.) Task Force announced the survey in a letter to the *Carlisle Mosquito*; posted it on the town website; and published it in the City in the Woods discussion group, on Facebook, and via email. The survey period ended on October 31. We received approximately 425 completed surveys, which represents about 10% of the registered voters in Carlisle. The Survey results are available on SharePoint.

Once the data was retrieved from Survey Monkey, Kyle Dalbec built a comprehensive spreadsheet with all the data and associated summaries. The spreadsheet is available on SharePoint.

While the Survey was active, the Task Force identified persons who it believed held key institutional knowledge and conducted two rounds of interviews. The Task Force felt that these people could provide useful information that was not necessarily connected to the results of the Survey. All interviews are available on SharePoint. A list of Interviewees is located below.

Following the analysis of the Survey results, the Task Force conducted a third round of interviews. This interview included 23 targeted questions that were derived from the results of the Survey and Round 1 and Round 2 Interviews. A list of Interviewees is located below.

From the interviews, the Task Force compiled a lengthy list of topics for in-depth consideration. The topics initially fell under 10 categories, listed below. Within a category, each topic was described by a short clause or sentence, tagged with the interviewee(s) who focused on the topic. Not surprisingly, there were duplicate topics and topics that were similar but not identical.

- Budget constraints / excesses
- Communication
- Facilities
- HR / personnel
- Information technology
- Land use
- Regionalization
- Town Manager / Town Administrator
- Town Meeting
- Volunteer / Appointments / Terms

The topics for consideration were compiled in a OneNote file and are available on SharePoint.

In order to determine the warrant articles and suggestions we would recommend, we first worked on the OneNote file, moving topics between categories, combining duplicate topics, eliminating some topics that we felt did not fall under our purview, and so forth. As we did this, we added notes to the category pages with ideas for warrant articles and suggestions. These notes can be seen in the OneNote file.

Once we were comfortable with the content of the OneNote file, we created a “potential warrant articles” spreadsheet. This spreadsheet contains a summary of each category and is available on SharePoint.

Finally, we created the “CGTF Warrant Topics” Word document, which started with a statement of each of 12 warrant articles that we were first proposing. Much discussion ensued, in which we added details to each of the articles and slowly reduced the number from 12 to 6. Placeholders for those 6 articles were delivered to the Select Board by the January 24, 2022, deadline. The progress of the Word document can be seen in the dated For Discussion folders on SharePoint.

## **INTERVIEWEES**

The first round included the following people:

- Tim Goddard, Town Administrator
- Joan Ingersoll, Director, Council on Aging
- Kim Kane, Finance Director, Treasurer-Collector
- Jon Metivier, Building Commissioner
- Jim O’Shea, Carlisle Schools Superintendent
- Peggy Wang, Town Clerk

The second round included the following people:

- Madeleine Blake, Co-Chair, Planning Board
- James Darr, Finance Committee
- Jerry Lerman, Chair, Municipal Facilities Committee
- Alex Parra, Chair, Conservation Committee

The third round included the following people:

- Barney Arnold, Chair, Select Board
- Luke Ascolillo, Select Board
- Madeleine Blake, Co-Chair, Planning Board
- Nathan Brown, Clerk, Select Board
- Wayne Davis, Town Moderator
- Mary DeAlderete, Former Town Clerk
- John Fisher, Police Chief
- Tim Goddard, Town Administrator
- Tony Mariano, Chair, Board of Health
- David Model, Vice-Chair, Select Board
- Snehal Patel, Personnel Board
- Ed Rolfe, Planning Board
- Brian Sorrows, Fire Chief
- Sylvia Willard, Conservation Administrator

## Appendix D

### WARRANT ARTICLES, MOTIONS AND RATIONALES SUBMITTED TO SELECT BOARD MARCH 17, 2022

#### Carlisle Governance Task Force Proposed Warrant Articles

**ARTICLE 26 – Town Administrator Bylaw Adoption:** To see if the Town will adopt a new General Bylaw 3.3 Town Administrator, to detail certain functions and responsibilities of the Town Administrator, be inserted before the existing Bylaw 3.3 Treasurer, with all Article III Bylaw sections correspondingly be renumbered to accommodate the new Section 3.3; and take any action related thereto.

#### 3.3 Town Administrator

- 3.3.1 The Select Board shall appoint, and may remove, a Town Administrator.
- 3.3.2 The Town Administrator shall directly supervise all current and future department heads appointed by the Select Board.
- 3.3.3 The Town Administrator shall administer the Town's performance review process in order to ensure consistent reviews across all departments. The Town Administrator shall have the following responsibility to ensure that the reviews are conducted in a fair and timely manner:
  - a) Conduct performance reviews for direct reports of the Town Administrator;
  - b) Oversee the review process and provide written input for employees who report to a department head or appointed or elected Town Board.
- 3.3.4 The Town Administrator shall have input in the hiring of employees of the of appointed or elected Town Boards unless otherwise stated in a statute. The Town Boards retain the hiring decision.
- 3.3.5 At the direction of the Select Board, the Town Administrator shall establish, working conditions, working hours, holidays, and vacations days for Town departments reporting to the Town Administrator in accordance with the Town's Personnel Bylaw, if any. The Town Administrator shall establish working conditions, working hours, holidays, and vacations days in consultation with Town Boards for their employees in accordance with the Town's Personnel Bylaw, if any.
- 3.3.6 The Town Administrator shall establish and maintain Town operational systems, Town facilities operations, hours of operation, and proximity of departments to

ensure that Town facilities operate in an efficient manner for the benefit of the citizens.

- 3.3.7 The Town Administrator shall conduct regular meetings of department heads not less than monthly and report on such meetings to the Select Board.
- 3.3.8 The Town Administrator shall develop and maintain a comprehensive organizational chart with the reporting relationships of all paid Town employees (not schools).
- 3.3.9 The Town Administrator shall be responsible for leading collective bargaining negotiations for contracts covering Town employees.
- 3.3.10 The Town Administrator shall perform other duties as directed by the Select Board.

***Summary:***

This Warrant Article would codify the role and responsibilities of the Town Administrator in the Town bylaws. Carlisle Town bylaws currently do not define the Town Administrator or specify the responsibilities of the Town Administrator.

This article strengthens the role of the Town Administrator by specifically enumerating the power and requirements associated with that position. The article establishes the Town Administrator as the supervisor of Town department heads other than department heads that report directly to elected or appointed boards. The article also requires that the Town Administrator oversee the Town's performance review process and review the performance of department heads that report to the Town Administrator.

The article also sets forth certain administrative requirements for the Town Administrator. These include the establishment of employee hours and attendance in accordance with Town Personnel Policies; the establishment and maintenance of Town operational and information systems, the conduct of regular interdepartmental meeting, and the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements covering Town employees.

**ARTICLE 27 – Appointed Town Clerk:** To see if the Town will vote to have its elected Town Clerk become an appointed Town Clerk, or take any action related thereto.

***Summary:***

Change from an elected Town Clerk to a Town Clerk appointed by the Select Board to report to the Town Administrator.

**ARTICLE 28 – Preparation of Annual Budget:** To see if the Town will vote to amend General Bylaws Section 3.9.4 to provide that the annual budget for the next fiscal year shall be prepared by the Town Administrator and Treasurer, or take any action related thereto.

3.9.4

It shall be the duty of the Town Administrator and Treasurer to consider expenditures and develop a draft budget for the next fiscal year after collaborating with the various town departments, officers, and bodies charged with the expenditure of town money. The draft budget for the next fiscal year shall be submitted to the Finance Committee no later than December 15th. The committee shall also be furnished by the Select Board with copies of all articles in the town meeting warrant, within fourteen (14) days after the warrant closing.

***Summary:***

This Warrant Article proposes to change budget process, so the initial budget is compiled by the Town Administrator and Treasurer. The remaining budget process and authority of Finance Committee as set forth in the existing bylaw remains unchanged.

**ARTICLE 29 – Bylaw Amendment Fall Town Meeting:** To see if the Town will amend its General Bylaws by adding a new Section 2.1.1 to provide for a regular fall town meeting, or take any action related thereto.

***Summary:***

The purpose of this Warrant Article is to create a second town meeting to be held in the fall to consider non-budgetary warrant articles. This change could enable the Select Board to better manage the number of Warrant Articles considered during the spring Town Meeting and allow non-budget related issues that come up in the spring and summer to be heard in a more timely manner. This change will likely reduce the need for Special Town Meetings and increase the chances that busy citizens will be able to attend at least one Town Meeting each year.

**ARTICLE 30 – Annual Report on Town Governance Task Force:** To see if the Town will require the Select Board to submit via the Annual Report a summary of the progress of the implementation of the Town Governance Task Force’s recommendations until all such recommendations have been resolved, or take any action related thereto.

***Summary:***

This Warrant Article requires the Select Board to report to and update the Town of Carlisle via the Annual Report (at a minimum) on the progress and implementation of the approved Warrant Articles (those passing at Town Meeting) and any recommendations made by the Town Governance Task Force.

**ARTICLE 31 – Term of Town Governance Task Force:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the continued operation of the Town Governance Task Force through the earlier of a fall Town Meeting in 2022, or December 31, 2022, after which time it shall be dissolved, or take any action related thereto.

**Summary:**

Creates a term for CGTF which was not included in the Motion that was adopted at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting and allows for some unfinished work to be completed.

**BALLOT**

**Question 2:** Shall the town vote to have its elected Town Clerk become an appointed Town Clerk of the Town?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

And you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting a true and attested copy thereof at the Town Hall and at the Post Office in said Town of Carlisle at least seven days prior to the time of holding said Meeting.

**Carlisle Governance Task Force Rationales for Warrant Articles**

**ARTICLE 26 – Town Administrator Bylaw Adoption<sup>76</sup>**

**RATIONALE:**

This article establishes the Town Administrator as the direct supervisor of Town department heads and specifies certain managerial responsibilities for the Town Administrator. Town residents have indicated a preference for the maintenance of the Town’s volunteer form of government.<sup>77</sup> However, members of the Select Board, the Town Moderator, and several others noted in interviews difficulties that volunteer board members have in exercising control and oversight over Town departments and employees. These control difficulties arise because most Town services are provided, and most Town employees work, during daytime hours while volunteer boards generally meet during evening hours. The article establishes the Town Administrator as an agent of the Select Board (3.3.1). The article provides the Town Administrator with direct supervisory authority over department heads (3.3.2). By providing the agent of the Select Board with direct supervisory authority over Town department heads other than those reporting to other elected or appointed boards, Section 3.2.2 seeks to ensure alignment between the activities and performance of Town departments with the desires and expectations of the Select Board. The article also seeks to bridge limitations on the information available to volunteer board members regarding the performance of Town department heads. The Town Administrator is expected to have detailed information regarding the performance of department heads that are direct reports as well as broad information regarding the overall functioning of Town government. Therefore, the Town Administrator is well positioned to evaluate the

---

<sup>76</sup> This was recommended by the Task Force established at the 1995 Annual Town Meeting.

<sup>77</sup> Carlisle Governance Task Force Outreach Survey Question 45: “How satisfied are you with the Town’s volunteer form of government?” Of the 322 respondents that provided a satisfaction rating, 225 or 70 percent responded that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the volunteer form of government.

department heads the Town Administrator supervises, to oversee the Town's performance review process, and to ensure that the review process is fair and timely (Section 3.3.3).<sup>78</sup>

The article also specifies certain managerial and administrative functions of the Town Administrator. Section 3.3.4 provides the Town Administrator with the opportunity to provide input into the hiring of town employees though final authority is retained by Town boards. Given the central role of the Town Administrator in Town government, the Town Administrator will likely possess useful information regarding Town and departmental talent and personnel needs. Section 3.3.5 provides the Town Administrator with basic administrative authorities such as the establishment of employee working hours for departments supervised by the Town Administrator. Section 3.3.6 assigns that Town Administrator the responsibility for the efficient operation of Town functions within the Town Administrator's supervisory authority. The article assigns the Town Administrator these authorities as the Town Administrator will have detailed information regarding the functioning and requirements of Town departments within the Town Administrator's supervisory authority. The requirement in Section 3.3.6 that the Town Administrator ensure the efficient operation of Town functions should provide an added impetus for the Town Administrator to be proactive in adapting Town operations to meet the needs of town residents. Task Force survey results revealed a widely held perception that Town departments were slow to change.<sup>79</sup>

Section 3.3.7 requires the regular conduct of interdepartmental meetings. This section is intended to address weaknesses in interdepartmental coordination in Town government. Task Force interviews and responses to the Task Force Outreach Survey revealed widespread concerns that Town departments and boards did not effectively collaborate when serving the needs of Town residents.<sup>80</sup>

Section 3.3.8 requires that the Town Administrator develop and maintain a comprehensive organization chart with the reporting relationships of all town employees. A Task Force inquiry revealed that the Town does not maintain an organization chart for town employees. An organization chart or other means for documenting employee reporting relationships is an essential element of a performance review process as well as other human resource management activities.

---

<sup>78</sup> The article requires that the Town Administrator oversees the performance review process for Town employees other than department heads. The article does not preclude the Town Administrator or Select Board from designating another individual to administer the performance evaluation process for Town employees that are not department heads and do not report to elected or appointed boards.

<sup>79</sup> Carlisle Governance Task Force Outreach Survey Question 39: "How well do Town departments adapt practices to the changing needs of Town residents?" Of the 205 survey participants that provided an assessment, 113 or 55 percent indicated that the rate of adaptation was "not well at all" or "somewhat not well."

<sup>80</sup> Carlisle Governance Task Force Outreach Survey Question 35: "How well do departments, and committees collaborate with one another to execute plans and achieve the Town's goals?" Of the 183 respondents that offered an opinion on how well departments and committees collaborate with each other to execute and achieve town goals, 68 percent felt that collaboration was "not well at all" or "somewhat not well." Carlisle Governance Task Force Outreach Survey Question 36: "How well do departments and committees collaborate with one another to assist you?" Of the 145 that offered a response to this question, 59 percent stated that collaboration was "not well at all" or "somewhat not well."

Section 3.3.9 (formerly 3.3.10) assigns the Town Administrator the responsibility for leading collective bargaining negotiations for contracts covering Town employees. The Town Administrator is well positioned to lead these negotiations as the Town Administrator is the agent of the Select Board and has detailed knowledge of Town department requirements, performance and finances.

3.3.10 (formerly 3.3.11) provides the Select Board with the ability to assign the Town Administrator with duties beyond those enumerated in this section of the Town bylaws.

## **ARTICLE 27 – Appointed Town Clerk**

### **RATIONALE:**

A common theme in the CGTF survey and interview responses was a less “siloed” and more centralized approach toward Town government functioning. As a result, CGTF proposed changing the Town Clerk from an elected position to a Select Board appointed position reporting to the Town Administrator. This change further enhances the Town Administrator’s ability to create a cohesive and functioning team within Town Hall and follows the other recommended changes for those not in policy-making positions. In a growing trend across the Commonwealth, changing to an appointed Town Clerk would help professionalize Town Hall.

In addition to serving residents’ various front-office needs at Town Hall, the Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the Town is in compliance with more than 450 state statutes. As such, the Town Clerk must be knowledgeable and proficient at compliance related functions and as an elected position, the Town is limited to only selecting from residents to fill the role if it is elected, but would be able to seek out candidates from other towns if it is appointed. CGTF is not submitting this in any way to suggest that the current Town Clerk should be replaced and the Select Board would be free to appoint her following the change.

## **ARTICLE 28 – Preparation of Annual Budget**

### **RATIONALE:**

The Town Administrator needs to play a stronger role in the budget process and the existing bylaw does not give them that authority. Therefore, the current process appears to unintentionally reduce the Town Administrator’s ability to perform their duties and adds to the siloed effect of departments due to a lack of executive policy direction within the budget decision-making process. Additionally, in the interviews conducted by CGTF, there was feedback that pointed to the budgeting process requiring improvements to reduce inefficiencies and administrative burdens. The early involvement by the Town Administrator may also reduce missed opportunities for the Town since they have visibility into Town operational needs across departments.

To address these areas of concern, CGTF reviewed the processes used by other towns in the Commonwealth and found that Carlisle's process is not standard. CGTF reviewed the Association of Town Finance Committees Handbook and because CGTF believed that the budget *outcome* is viewed positively, CGTF attempted to strike a balance of authority between the Town Administrator and Finance Committee, keeping the Finance Committee very much involved *after* the Town Administrator and Treasurer generate the initial budget and submit it to the Finance Committee.

CGTF anticipates the result to be the Town Administrator working with department heads to generate the initial proposed budget. This should alleviate some administrative burdens on all departments since this can be done as an administrative function and streamline the process. The Town Administrator will have the ability to identify cross-departmental issues and propose changes to the budget among the departments in order to address those shortfalls. The Town Administrator will also be able to avoid wasteful spending if several departments can benefit from the elimination of redundant purchasing, for example, by purchasing one software platform that performs needed functions, rather than purchasing several separate software platforms.

To ensure that the Finance Committee has sufficient time to review the budget and get the level of detail they may desire, CGTF expanded the timeframe to cause the Town Administrator and Treasurer to submit the proposed budget to the Finance Committee no later than December 15<sup>th</sup> (under statute M.G.L. c. 41, § 59, the budget must be submitted 90 days prior to Town Meeting, so this is approximately an extra month).

## **ARTICLE 29 – Bylaw Amendment Fall Town Meeting**

### **RATIONALE:**

Our survey indicated that many people have difficulty attending Town Meeting. Reasons given were: busy parents, young children, travel, length of meeting, multiple nights, preparation for meeting, and no remote option. The purpose of this portion of the warrant article is to address some of these concerns. By having Town Meeting twice a year, we hope to reduce the length of the meetings so that busy citizens are more able to attend, to reduce the number of warrant articles so that preparation is easier, and to give citizens two chances to attend rather than just one. In addition, a fall meeting allows issues that come up in the spring and summer to be addressed in a more timely manner. It also reduces the need for Special Town Meetings.

## **ARTICLE 30 – Annual Report on Town Governance Task Force**

### **RATIONALE:**

So that the work of CGTF can be followed up on, it is important that the Select Board reports out progress to the Warrant Articles and/or recommendations that the CGTF has made.

In the survey that was conducted by the CGTF, the overall feedback for the Select Board is positive. For feedback specific to the Select Board performance – over 59% of respondents rated their satisfaction with the Select Board as Very Satisfied or Satisfied.<sup>81</sup>

However, the response to the question of “How well do Town departments adapt practices to the changing needs of Town residents?” only 26% responded **Very Well** or **Well**.<sup>82</sup>

As the CGTF charter was to understand how the current structure of Town government is serving residents, it can be said that following up on this group’s work is a way for the Select Board to demonstrate to the Town that they have recognized the needs of the Town and are taking appropriate action.

**ARTICLE 31 – Term of Town Governance Task Force**

**RATIONALE:**

So that the work of the Carlisle Governance Task Force can be completed, CGTF would issue its final report and possibly propose two additional Warrant Articles to be considered at the next Town Meeting.

<sup>81</sup> Table 1 – Select Board Satisfaction

Select Board Satisfaction	Count of Responses
Not at all satisfied	14
Not sure	78
Satisfied	174
Somewhat dissatisfied	62
Very satisfied	51
(blank)	50
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>429</b>

<sup>82</sup> Table 2 – How well are Town Departments adapting

Qualitative Feedback	Count of Responses
Not sure	148
Not well at all	31
Somewhat not well	83
Very well	14
Well	79
(blank)	74
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>429</b>