

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE:  
GOVERNANCE OPTIONS – PROS & CONS

**Option #1** Status Quo / Current Existing Structure

Executive Branch: Three (3) person Board of County Commissioners elected Cape-wide (partisan) with a strong-appointed County Administrator

Legislative Branch: Fifteen (15) Assembly Delegates, one elected from each Cape town (non-partisan) voting in proportion to their population (a weighted vote). Ordinances (laws) passed by a majority of the weighted vote cast.

PROS (for both Executive & Legislative Branches):

- system of checks and balances
- existing costs to operate are a known factor
- each Cape town has an individual voice in Cape-wide Legislative Branch
- no complaints from towns
- many feel it has worked and has been effective
- historic (Legislature in existence since 1989; Executive much longer)
- represents all citizens Cape-wide (in Executive Branch)

CONS (for both Executive & Legislative Branches):

- proportional system (weighted vote in Legislative Branch) not considered the “gold standard” for equal representation of citizens
  - can be subject to domination by a few (2 to 4) individual town representatives that can carry the vote (in the Legislative Branch)
  - power is highly concentrated in Executive Branch yet responsibility there is defused
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**Option #2** Assembly of Delegates (Legislative Branch) Resolution #13-01

Executive Branch: Five (5) person Board of County Commissioners (one elected from each of five Cape-wide districts) with an appointed County Administrator

Legislative Branch: Fifteen (15) Assembly Delegates one elected from each Cape town (non-partisan) with a weighted vote

PROS (for Executive Branch):

- increasing the number of elected County Commissioners will help
  - avoid quorum issues
  - lessen the potential for open meeting law violations
  - broaden the regional aspect and increase Cape-wide representation with County Commissioners being elected from regional districts
  - ability to create a legal sub-committee (involving two County Commissioners) without violating Open Meeting Laws

CONS (for Executive Branch):

- more diffusion of authority and responsibility
- increases the number and cost of officials to oversee and operate a small budget
- no clear “leader” for the County
- less efficient

[See pros and cons referenced above under Option #1 (Status Quo) for Legislative Branch. Under Option #2 Legislative Branch remains unchanged. Only changes are to the Executive Branch]

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Option #3 Charter Review Committee Model

Executive Branch: One (1) appointed County Executive (replaces the elected Board of County Commissioners)

Legislative Branch: Eleven (11) District Representatives (one elected from each Cape district) non-partisan, with an equal vote - becomes the policy making body for the County, responsible for appointing the County Executive

PROS:

- citizens could be more “invested” in their district representation than in the current County Commissioners
- district representative would serve citizens versus towns
- would create equal representation (no weighted vote)
- would create a single policy-making body (Legislative Branch) to increase efficiency
- creates more opportunity to think ‘regionally’ and could increase visibility as each district would have equal power and thus generate more electoral interest in some areas especially if representatives were paid more than current Assembly members
- would work well with and in contrast to the Cape Cod Commission where every town has an equal individual vote

CONS:

- does not provide the same system of checks and balances as existing structure
- unknown cost (cost of legislative representation could increase)
- each individual Cape town would not have a separate and single voice
- voters may be less familiar with the people they elect due to districts not towns (Legislative Branch)

[for purposes of presentation at public comment sessions scheduled for 10/2/13, 10/9/13 and 10/16/13]

submitted by  
Jari Rapaport on 10/2/13  
Public  
Comment  
Session

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE CAPE COD AREA**

**Presentation to the Charter Review Committee**

**October, 2013**

We're pleased with the work of the charter review committee in outlining both the positives and the problems with alternate suggestions for County structure. Ever since the recommendations of the Special Commission on Governance in 2012, strong positions have been taken by various groups. Your approach gives everyone a chance to think through all the alternate proposals from a fresh start, looking at goals and how to get there.

The challenges facing our regional government are many. They include wastewater, off shore pollution, transportation, land use approaches to sustain and preserve our limited resources, and population changes which affect our economy and require responsive action to build a vibrant layered population which includes children and young people.

These issues require a regional approach, and our county home rule charter was designed to provide the basic structure to make this possible. Our towns give us our strong, meaningful identity, a sense of belonging grounded in our history, and serve us well for local governance. However, the framework to enable all parts of the Cape to tackle necessary action jointly is not now sufficient. Our current structure is diffuse, we need a structure in which government can anticipate and/or discern problems as they arise, seek solutions, and bring us together for decision-making on a timely basis.

To do this we need to develop a structure which will provide clear leadership, responsibility and accountability. Our current government has spread these attributes thinly across too many layers. We believe an increase in the clarity of leadership, responsibility and accountability will lead to a corresponding increase in the effectiveness of government. It would also increase county visibility and citizen understanding of county functions and issues.

At this point we favor a strong executive to give visibility and leadership to the county role in meeting these regional issues. This would supplant the current administrator who responds to policy decisions of the three elected commissioners. We also believe the current structure should be replaced by a single elected Board/Council which represents a broad cross section of Barnstable County. This would give real meaning to the legal standard that gives equal standing to each person's vote, 'One person, One vote'. This new body could carry out both policy and budget oversight, combining the functions of the Board of Commissioners and the Assembly of Delegates. The duties of such a merged body require each member to have a broader and more in depth understanding of the issues facing the county.

We believe regional representatives would help foster greater public understanding of regional perspectives and solutions. Such representatives would be in regular contact with their various constituencies They would be able to both hear their individual concerns and to respond to those concerns with interpretations and solutions that help the constituencies see the benefits of regional approaches while not detracting from any town's uniqueness in terms of its identity.

BARNSTABLE COUNTY  
ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES  
SANDWICH TOWN HALL  
GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT SIGN UP SHEET

Date: 10/2/13

Purpose: Comments on Proposed County Governance Options

Example:  
Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_

1. JARI RAPAPORT ↓ county league of women voters (EASTHAM)
2. James Pierce Sandwich BOS (JP)
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10/2/13

Public who spoke  
Does not reflect in  
add'l public but  
attendance but  
not speaking JP