

Thank you Mr. Moderator.

Hello I am Travis Snell Vice Chair of the Select Board, presenting the Select Board's support of Warrant Article #9.

This Article was brought forth by the Select Board in response to recommendation #2 in the 2022 Governance Task Force Report to the Town of Carlisle: "Make the Town Clerk an appointed position."

It is important to note, and be clear, that this article does not relate to any specific concerns related to our current Town Clerk, but this article relates to future town policy and the Town of Carlisle's governance responsibilities.

The 2022 Governance Task Force's report is an independent report which came from Town Meeting and the task force formed by the Town Moderator to study governance within the Town of Carlisle.

The Select Board supports the position of *an appointed Town Clerk* for the following reasons:

- 1. The Town Clerk Job has become increasingly Broad and Complex.**
  - The responsibilities and technical demands of the Town Clerk as required by the law have increased substantially and significantly in the last decade. The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the Town is in compliance with more than 450 state statutes. We want to ensure that the Town Clerk is best prepared to meet those responsibilities for the town.
- 2. Currently, only Carlisle residents qualify for the Town Clerk position.**
  - This majorly reduces the pool of qualified applicants, who will need to be adept at duties ranging from all aspects of election oversight, campaign finance laws, absentee balloting, as well as conducting the annual town census, issuing marriage licenses – just to name a few.
- 3. An Appointed Town Clerk will be more accountable, skilled, and offer critical continuity in the role, reducing training and possible performance gaps.**

- Currently, if the Town Clerk decided not to come into the office or not to post meeting minutes, there is no authority over the person, and there is no annual performance review other than a town election or a recall election.
- In addition, it takes significant time to train to be a Town Clerk. The Town can offer training, but as an elected position, there is no assurance or requirement that the Town Clerk will train or become skilled in compliance of the laws.

**4. The current elected Town Clerk Position is out of Step with other Key Positions in our Town Governance Structure, as well as Best Practices for Town Employment.**

- We do not elect our Fire Chief, Police Chief, Town Administrator, Town Treasurer/Collector. These are appointed positions because they require technical skills, experience, credentials and certifications.
- Also, the Town Clerk's pay is currently tied to a singular vote at Town Meeting which causes pay disparity with other town employee positions. There is no standard employment contract, and Town and the Candidate cannot negotiate for pay or benefits in the same manner as union/non-union employees.

**5. An appointed Town Clerk Position Reduces Potential Risks and Liabilities to the Town of Carlisle.**

- There are no qualifications to be Town Clerk (aside from being a resident of Carlisle and a registered voter), but a potentially untrained Town Clerk is responsible to ensure that the Town is in compliance with more than 450 state statutes and has wide-ranging day to day duties – *this is a summarized and partial list:*
  - Chief Election Official overseeing polling places, voter registration, administers campaign finance laws, absentee balloting, and the annual town census.
  - Recording Officer recording and certifying all official actions of the town including meeting legislation and appropriations.
  - Registrar of vital statistics including births, marriages, deaths, adoptions, and others.
  - Public Records Officer posting the meetings of all governmental bodies and ensuring that all elected and

appointed officials are informed of the Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest Laws.

- Licensing Officer, issuing state and local licenses, permits as mandated by statute or bylaw.
  
- As of 2022, 153 of the 351 municipalities in Massachusetts have appointed town clerks, and all recent changes have been from an elected to an appointed position.

We have received numerous emails on this topic, we had two public meetings where we sought comments and questions on this warrant article, and the Select Board has taken into consideration these comments in arriving at its support of this article.

If Article #9 passes tonight by majority vote, the question will then go on Spring town election ballot. If the Article passes at the Spring town election, whoever wins the Town Clerk election will still be sworn in and serve, and the Select Board will then begin the process of obtaining applications for an appointed town clerk.

In summary, the Governance Task Force's Report says it best – an appointed Town Clerk “guards against the risks to the Town associated with inexperienced personnel in such a crucial administrative position, [and] this change further enhances the Town Administrator's ability to create a cohesive and functioning team within Town Hall, [it] establishes a reporting structure and guarantees an experience based hiring process for this administrative position that does not engage in discretionary policy-making.”

Again, to be clear, this article does not relate to any specific concerns related to our current Town Clerk, but this article relates to how to best structure our town governance and policies.

Thank you Mr. Moderator.