

A REVIEW OF THREE CHARTERS: DARTMOUTH, FALL RIVER, & WINCHCESTER

by Betsy Hall

DARTMOUTH: Population: 34,000 (2010) Annual budget \$91,055,580 Charter Updated 2007

EXECUTIVE BRANCH 5 member Select Board (3 year term) and 1 Town Administrator
(3 year term)

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH Representative Town Meeting 390 members elected from 8 precincts
(3 year term) Fall and Spring Town Meetings annually

"FILLING OF VACANCIES. Any vacancy in the full number of town meeting members from any precinct may be filled until the next annual election by the remaining town meeting members of the precinct from among the registered voters thereof. The town clerk shall promptly give notice of any vacancy to the remaining members from the precinct in which the vacancy or vacancies exist and he shall call a special meeting of such members for the purpose of filling any vacancy. A notice specifying the object, time and place of the meeting shall be mailed to every such member not less than seven days before the time set for the meeting. At the said meeting a majority of the members present shall elect from their own number a chairman and a clerk. The choice to fill any vacancy shall be by written ballot and a majority of the votes cast shall be required for a choice. The chairman and clerk shall count the ballots and shall make a certificate of the choice and forthwith file the same with the town clerk, together with a written acceptance by the member or members so chosen who shall thereupon be deemed elected and qualified, subject to the right of all the town meeting members to judge of the election and qualifications of the members."

SCHOOL COMMITTEE 5 Elected members Three year terms

ELECTED BOARDS Planning Board (5 year term) , Board of Library Trustees (3 year term), Board of Assessors (3 year term), Board of Health (One year term), Board of Parks and Recreation (3 year term) , Dartmouth Housing Authority (5 year term), Dartmouth Historical Commission (3 year term)

TOWN CLERK Elected for a three-year term

TOWN MODERATOR Elected for a three-year term

"The Town Moderator shall preside over every Town Meeting, except in the case of a conflict of interest or as otherwise provided by law. If the Town Moderator is absent or is unable to preside over a Town Meeting or a portion thereof, whether due to a conflict of interest or otherwise, then the Town Clerk shall preside until and unless the Town Meeting appoints a moderator pro tempore for that Town Meeting.

Rulings made by the town moderator may be appealed to the representative town meeting by a motion so to do which shall be put to the meeting by the moderator in the form: Shall the ruling of the moderator be reversed? A majority vote shall be required to reverse the ruling of the moderator."

REAL ESTATE TAXES Split Tax Rate: Residential: 9.99; Commercial: 17.6