

## Proposal by Bill Helm

**April 14, 2022**

With regard to this proposal, I have the following comments:

1. The Selectmen should not be voting members of any committees other than the Budget Committee and the Planning Board. The Budget Committee and Planning Board are voting positions designated by State statute. Selectmen are still citizens who may attend any town meetings they desire.
2. For Budget Committee members to not be permitted membership on other Town (I believe that you are proposing only Town committees) committees is difficult. I understand the possible conflict of interest that could result from that would strain the independence of the Budget Committee, but the reality is that finding capable involved volunteers to be on the various committees is not easy. With the exception of the Budget Committee, these committees and commissions have memberships appointed by the Selectmen. Perhaps the Selectmen can consider possible conflicts of interest when making these appointments.

There are possible conflicts with the present Budget Committee membership. State Statute, as interpreted by the Municipal Association, states:

### INCOMPATIBILITY WITH OTHER OFFICES

RSA 32:15, V states that “[n]o selectman, town manager, member of the school board, village district commissioner, full-time employee, or part-time department head of the town, school district or village district or other associated agency shall serve as a member-at-large.”

Therefore, department heads cannot serve as members-at-large on the budget committee, even if they are part-time employees. RSA 32:15, V. “Department head” is not defined in the law and is, therefore, a gray area. To avoid problems related to conflicts of interest, any employee responsible for submitting some portion of a budget should be treated as a department head.

Presently there are a Department Head and a Municipal Budget Committee member on the Committee. To prevent Budget Committee decisions from being invalidated, these potential conflicts should be reconciled.

3. With regard to establishing time limited small advisory panels, the Selectmen can presently do that any time they so desire.
4. I do not believe the dissolution of the Building and Facilities Committee is a good idea. From my observation, this has been a talented and considerate group of people, who for the first time ever are really looking into upkeep, upgrade and maintenance of the Town’s properties. We have clearly seen what happened to the Academy Building, the Bandstand, Buker Hall, and Whipple Hall when no capable

person or group was looking after them. This committee makes very reasonable recommendations which are not always politically acceptable by various parties, but this should not be reason to dissolve it.

5. The present makeup of the CIP Committee needs to be revised. It presently is the handy work of two people on the Planning Board. State statute states that the CIP should be a product of the Planning Board. My suggestion would be a return to having a CIP subcommittee made up of three Planning Board Members and two Budget Committee members. A combination of planning and budget leads to a more realistic CIP. The subcommittee offers its report to the Planning Board which in turn can approve or disapprove it.

John Wilson