

TOWN GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE

Annual Report, FY2006

Allen B. Reinhard, Chairman, at-large representative
Jack Gardner, Vice Chairman, at-large representative
Pam Lohmann, Secretary, Nantucket Civic League representative
Jeanette Topham, Treasurer, Nantucket Town Association representative
Jane Miller, School Committee representative
Nancy Severns, at-large representative
Whitey Willauer, Board of Selectmen representative

The Town Government Study Committee was formed by vote of Town Meeting 2005 with a mission and budget to study all aspects of Town and County government on Nantucket. Our objective is to see if improvements can be made in the operation and structure of local government, and the delivery of government services to the community. The Board of Selectmen appointed four members representing various constituencies, and three at-large members from the community.

During the 2006 fiscal year, our committee held twenty-seven public meetings during which we refined our mission, began identifying the issues and questions relevant to our study, invited speakers, held a public forum in connection with the Nantucket Civic League, hired a consultant and issued a preliminary report to Town officials and the public prior to Annual Town Meeting 2006. Our committee also established a web site (ackgovstudy.org) on which we post our detailed minutes and other relevant data. After Town Meeting, we began compiling a list of specific recommendations, distilled from our issues and questions, which will be presented to voters at the 2007 ATM.

Our plan is to present the findings of our study in three areas: first, charter change recommendations; second, recommendations needing a by-law or warrant article approval; and third, general recommendations relating to policies or department methods or structures. Our specific recommendations for change will be supported by the rationale we used to arrive at our recommendations. Our Final Report and Recommendations will be presented in December 2006 for discussion and debate prior to Town Meeting 2007. Any charter recommendations will need to be passed by a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting and ratified by a majority of voters at the next annual Town ballot in April 2008. Warrant articles must be approved by a vote of Town Meeting and the Attorney General. Policy recommendations are implemented at the will of the concerned government officials.

Local government has three broad components: Voters and Town Meeting, elected officials and appointed committees, and administration. Our committee is studying and will make recommendations in each of these areas. We are considering options to our present open Annual Town Meeting system of

government. We are looking closely at the role and responsibilities of the Board of Selectmen and County Commissioners. We are examining the responsibilities and position of Town Administrator to see how this position might be strengthened. We are also examining the important role committees, boards and commissions play in regulating, and advising on important community issues.

On Nantucket, registered voters are the ones who possess the greatest power through their votes on candidates to represent them, their votes on ballot issues and their votes on warrant articles at Town Meeting. An educated and informed electorate is essential if local government is to operate in the best interests of our community. Our committee was created by voters to put local government under the microscope and see how we might improve its performance. Our hope is to focus the attention of our political leaders and the voters and residents of Nantucket on ways we can make our local government more effective and responsive to ever increasing local needs.

Allen B. Reinhard, Chairman