

## Local Government

- In MA = 300yrs
  - Foundation = “planting”
    - Town Meetings
    - Agreeing on rules
    - Adopting By-laws
    - 1<sup>st</sup> town meeting = Cambridge
  - *All men* each month = unnecessary
    - Pick committee & give it authority
    - 1<sup>st</sup> representative local govt
    - Selectmen
    - More power than present day
  - Body of Liberties of 1641
    - Origins of present-day town govt
  - 1780 Constitution ratified

- Towns recognized as subdivisions of state
- No specific provision for establishment
- Towns endowed w/ ability to form structure
  - Citizens had tremendous control
  - Town Charter
- Charter = plan for local self-govt
  - Type depends on size
  - Minimum requirements
    - Board of selectmen
    - School committee
    - Town clerk
    - Treasurer
    - Must provide for gov't activities:
  - Law allows variations
    - Selectmen responsible for most town business

- Gen Court provides combinations
  - Generally accommodates requests
  - Home Rule - towns may enact by-laws & ordinances
- Professional Administrators
  - Numerous Administrative Assistants
  - Most important = Manager
  - Does not possess governing power
- Most important element = Town Meeting
  - What is Town Meeting?
  - Every town meeting follows same pattern
    - Called by issuing of warrant
    - Any voter may have any subject included in warrant
    - Moderator presides
    - Directs & regulates conduct of meeting
    - By-laws regulates meeting

- Town clerk = clerk of meeting
- Voting
- Some towns = two regular business meeting

— Representative Town Meetings

- Only 1 major difference
- Voters = elected members of town meeting
- Elected by precinct

— By-laws

- Home Rule Amend (Art 89)
- 5 groups:
- Most submitted to Attorney-General

— Types of questions

— Town committees

- Town Gov't

- Selectmen

- In small towns
- In larger towns
- Serve as agents of state
- Report directly to state
- Also true of other town officers
- Boards do not vary much
- Powers & duties
- Appointment & supervision
- Financial responsibilities
- In charge of all town property

— Town Finance Committee

- Primary role = study all questions of \$\$\$
- Primary job = preparation of town budget

— Municipal Clerk

- Role = official record keeper

- Reports regularly to Sec of Comm
- Records of all licenses
- 2 responsibilities election process
  
- Cities
  - Article II of Amendments
    - Town of Boston
  
  - NOTE:
    - City charters not complete
  
    - Everett = most unique
  
  - Most operate under 1 of 5 mayor-council forms
    - Plan A: Strong Mayor
  
    - Plan B: Weak Mayor
  
    - Plan C: Commission
  
    - Plan D: Council-Manager
  
    - Plan E: Council-Manager

- Plan F: Partisan Strong Mayor

- Mayors

- Executive powers

- City Councils

- *Board of Aldermen*

- Legislative branch

- Most acts subject to ratification by voters

- Voters may force council to enact measure