

TGCS QUESTIONS

Source	Topic	QUESTION	RESPONSE
LWV	TM	What could the Town Manager reorganize? Only departments within town hall or all departments, including those under independent boards?	We modified our proposal from May 11. Just as the Executive Director can now, the Town Manager has the authority to reorganize departments under his jurisdiction with the approval of the Selectmen. Our proposal states that if the TM wishes to reorganize departments working with a board, they must consult with the board, get the approval of the Board of Selectmen and the approval of Town Meeting. That essentially is the same procedure required today.
LWV	TM	Is management of personnel a problem for boards? According to whom?	Not that we have heard of. We are unaware of any board that has a problem managing its own staff. However, we do believe that the management of staff and the evaluation process are uneven across the Town. For some boards, the members are involved in the day-to-day running of their departments and do not rely on the professional staff as much as they could. Other boards limit their involvement to policy-making decisions and rely heavily on their department heads for management of the staff.
LWV	TM	Seems like most boards only manage one person: the Director. Are ALL the boards uncomfortable with this responsibility?	Not that we have heard of. Perhaps this question is directed at the responsibility for evaluating department heads. We are not clear from the question.
LWV	TM	Hiring of Directors: How would the Town Manager have the expertise needed to hire directors in each department?	The Town Manager will have extensive personnel management experience and will work with the HR department and the affected boards to develop job descriptions, implementation of and subsequent search processes, etc. This is one of the fundamental skills found in successful Town Managers. At the TGSC meeting on July 8, the Committee voted to require that the appointment of a department head by the Town Manager requires the APPROVAL of the affected board. This change was in response to important feedback the TGSC received.

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LWV	TM	Hiring of Directors: What does the Town Manager add to the process that isn't being accomplished with the current system?	A consistent and significant layer of professionalism in the hiring process throughout town government. The TM also provides and encourages an interdepartmental link for collaboration and cooperation among department heads.
LWV	TM	How does a director who answers to both a town board and the town manager (or land use director) balance competing demands/priorities?	With a strategic plan, department goals as a whole should be aligned within the town. We anticipate as well that a department head will work closely with the Town Manager to navigate through issues that might arise.
LWV	TM	What are the downsides/pitfalls to avoid with a Town Manager? Can you share lessons learned from other communities?	In our interviews with other Towns, we have learned about several pitfalls we should try to avoid. First, the search process should be transparent and thorough for the Town Manager. Second, it is extremely important to "match" the Town expectations of what the Town Manager is to accomplish with the level and breadth of authority provided to the Town Manager. Third, the transition process should be thought through carefully. Fourth, shorter term goals for the first Town Manager should be put in place to allow the Town Manager to succeed, while giving the Town Manager and Town the time to adjust to the changes.
LWV	TM	How many more people will need to be hired by the town as a result of this proposal? Will this be an increased cost to the town?	We are not able to determine at this point whether the headcount will increase. We do not anticipate increased headcount, but we are uncomfortable stating definitely that it will not. We anticipate that there will be increased salary costs for the Town Manager position, the Deputy Director position responsible for Land Use and possibly to the Town Clerk position. Whether costs overall will increase, we do not know at this time.
LWV	TM	If the Town Manager is not performing, will there be sufficient checks and balances in place for accountability and possibly dismissal?	Of course. Just as there are now provisions for removal of the Executive Director in his contract, there will be provisions for the removal of the Town Manager. The Special Act will also address the process for removal.
LWV	TM	What do we risk losing on all the boards if we move from a decentralized form of government to one that is more centralized? Silos have many good aspects: focus, individual cultures, efficiency, caring, creativity, etc. Have	First, no boards are being eliminated, so we don't envision losing any of the virtues and benefits of our volunteer boards and their focus, creativity, cultural competence, and advocacy for important constituencies

		you considered the tradeoffs?	and programs. Second, by introducing some degree of centralization, boards will be liberated from some administrative functions that will enable members to maximize their contributions at a higher level, focusing on policy and setting goals and objectives. Third, by creating some degree of centralization, we anticipate opportunities for boards to share their creativity, knowledge and skills more than they do now.
LWV	TM	Would the Town Manager be required to have a Masters in Public Administration? Why or why not?	The Selectmen are working on the job description now which will be ready for public review by early September. The Special Act and bylaws will also provide the essential requirements for the position.
LWV	TM	Who develops the job description for the Town Manager?	The Selectmen are developing this now. Since they are responsible for hiring and supervising the Town Manager, they will take on this responsibility. We will review the document with them, of course.
LWV	TM	What is the difference between a Town Manager and a Town Administrator?	A Town Administrator typically is an administrator to a Board of Selectmen while a Town Manager has more independent responsibilities, although still responsible to the Board of Selectmen. It should be noted that there are town administrators whose responsibilities are very much like those of a Town Manager so “titles” don’t tell the whole story.
LWV	TM	Hope to see, at some point, a detailed comparison of the Town manager role as proposed to the TM positions in the towns you studied.	We are providing you with our Index to our many documents that set out these comparisons.
LWV	BGT	What is the role of Advisory in this new process? Will they still review and be able to question the details of budgets, or are budgets going to be presented at a more aggregated, high level?	The Advisory Committee has the authority to structure itself any way that it wants to, and as a result Advisory can develop a process that its members find most useful. But the theory is that the Town-wide budget at a higher level would be presented to Advisory, and boards would continue to present at any level of detail the Advisory Committee requests. We have suggested that the Advisory Committee try to get more detailed written submissions from boards, because at present the Advisory Committee depends heavily on live presentations at their meetings that necessarily must be

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			spread out over many weeks, resulting in a more fragmented and uneven view of the budget. See budget memo dated July 10, 2015 which provides a more detailed analysis of this question.
LWV	APPT	Could appointed board members live outside Wellesley?	Our current bylaws do not provide for this. The one exception is for certain designated board members for the SEC. We do not envision or recommend any change..
LWV	APPT	What are the checks and balances in the proposal to ensure that future BOS do not simply appoint insiders and friends?	Decision on the final recommendation of changing some boards from elected to appointed is pending.
LWV	APPT	How will we ensure that appointed boards respond to the needs of the citizens, if they don't face elections? (For example, will citizens feel that they need to go to the BOS with DPW concerns because otherwise they won't get results?)	See answer in block above
LWV	LUD	Under a Land Use Division, the importance of the NRC is being diminished. How does this proposal ensure that environmental considerations will be just as strongly weighed as they are now?	We strongly disagree with the first sentence. We believe that the Land Use Division (or whatever name is finally determined) will more effectively advance the mission of the NRC.
LWV	LUD	Who hires the Land Use Director? What are the job responsibilities of the Land Use Director	See the Land Use memo of June 5 which covers these matters.
LWV	LUD	Who develops the job description for the Land Use Director?	We anticipate that this would be done by the Town Manager, working with the HR department, and with the departments and boards that will be included in the Land Use Division.
LWV	LUD	If one purpose of the Land Use Division is flexibility of staffing with staffing for boards/committees not now staffed, why can't that be done right now by having a meeting of all effected groups and discussing needs?	Needs arise spontaneously and cannot always be anticipated. Under the current structure, no department is obliged to assist another department and no one can compel the staff of one department to assist the staff of another. The Director will have the ability, to ensure that proper cross-training and delegation of time and responsibilities is achieved to the benefit of all departments/boards, and to ensure the most efficient and user friendly functioning of the Land Use Division as a whole.

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LWV	LUD	If another purpose of the Land Use Division is to make permitting more user friendly can't that be done now?	The principal reason permitting processes are so difficult to navigate is that there is no one responsible to assist in the coordination and monitoring of the various processes. While various departments and boards work diligently to perform their statutory functions, under the current structure there is little opportunity, incentive or authority to work across departmental boundaries. The Director will have the authority to coordinate with and, ultimately, direct each of the departments, boards and committees that will make up the Land Use Division as to how better improve cooperation, communication and customer service.
LWV	SP	How does the Strategic Plan differ from the long range Comprehensive Plan?	The Planning Board is charged with creating a Comprehensive Plan that “ is designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long term physical development of the municipality.” The Strategic Plan, under the direction of the BOS and with participation from many town boards, will cover a broader range of areas such as schools, public works and human services. It will also take into consideration the financial aspects of town government.
LWV	SP	Could the Comprehensive Plan be adapted to be a stronger document, rather than creating a separate plan?	No, for the reasons stated above.
LWV	SP	What do you mean by core value? How will these core values be determined?	Core values are those values most important and significant to the Town as identified through resident surveys, focus groups and similar activities. Wellesley's core values serve to focus town government on the goals and priorities for all actions taken by town departments, boards, committees and by Town Meeting.
LWV	SP	What is an “evergreen” plan?	An evergreen plan refers to a plan that adapts with changing conditions. The town, through the BoS, will revisit the Plan annually to note progress and possible amendments.
LWV	GEN	Will this proposal require a town wide vote? Which aspects would have to go to a town wide vote?	The Special Act which creates the position of Town Manager and which sets out the appointment of Town Clerk , once approved by the General Court, will go to the voters for a town-wide vote.

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LWV	GEN	A “citizen safeguard mechanism” of initiative, recall, or referendum is sometimes included in a transition to Town Manager. Is this included in your proposal? Why or why not?	We are not recommending such a mechanism. In all of our meetings with boards, residents and TMMs, the issue has not been raised.
LWV	GEN	What will the impact be on citizen participation in Wellesley? Concerns stem from: Elected boards with less responsibility – will volunteers feel that there is a reason to serve? Appointed boards will not feel accountable to the voters the way that elected boards do – will this lead to an increase in voter apathy?	We are attaching a separate comparison of our 12 benchmark towns that show the number of elected and appointed boards and the number of residents who populate those committees. It does not appear that voter apathy results from serving on appointed boards or from having fewer elected boards within a Town.
LWV	GEN	With all the questions that have been raised and all the unresolved issues, why bring this to a fall town meeting? What is the urgency?	We were asked by Town Meeting to review the structure of town government and recommend changes if warranted following our review. That is what we have done. We need to position ourselves for future challenges while the town is stable and strong financially. We must also anticipate changes within our most experienced and senior staff in the near future.