

**REPORT OF
THE TOWN OF BOW
ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE**

**December 20, 2001
Bow, New Hampshire**

Introduction

Over the past twenty years, Bow's rural character has changed profoundly. Dirt roads were paved, new roads were established, meadows and wetland gave way to housing developments, and one school blossomed into three. During the past forty years our population nearly doubled as Bow grew from 1,360 in 1960 to over 7,200 today. These changes have strained the ability of our current form of government. The infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of our growing community has required higher taxes and, too often, divided and fragmented the community.

Just as the population and landscape of Bow have changed, so have the demands on government. In response, Bow citizens found it prudent to consider whether the current form of government is suited for the Town today. At the direction of the voters, the Selectmen appointed the Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee.

Forms of Government Reviewed

The Committee identified and reviewed several optional forms of municipal governance. Those forms included the following:

1. Town Meeting/Selectmen/Town Manager/Budget Committee;
2. Representative Town Meeting (a legislative body made up of elected representatives who represent all citizens and would be the only citizens with a vote at town meeting);
3. Official Ballot Referendum (SB-2) form where the Town Meeting is divided into two sessions. The first is the deliberative session where articles are discussed and amended. The second session consists of ballot voting on articles as determined at the deliberative session.

4. Town Council form. A legislative body, which replaces Town Meeting, with representatives chosen by voters from either at-large or specific districts within the town. With this form a manager would typically be hired to fulfill administrative duties.
5. Town Council with school budget authority. This is similar to (4), except all budget authority of the Town, including that for the school district, is subject to Town Council approval. There would be no Town Meeting.

Summary of Findings

Through the course of examining available forms of governance, it became abundantly clear to the Committee members that while our current form of government is not perfect, it can be improved through simple changes. These improvements of our existing form of government will continue direct citizen participation in Town decisions, through the Town Meeting, while improving the system of representative government we employ with the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee.

The Committee also found there exists widespread confusion within the community over the responsibilities of the Selectmen as opposed to the School Board. Also, it is apparent many citizens do not distinguish between what is addressed at Town Meeting and what matters are decided at School District Meeting. This confusion became apparent in 2001 when many citizens were upset by how the School District meeting was run. Citizen frustration and anger resulting from the School District meeting did not distinguish between the School Board and the Selectmen.

The Bow School District is a separate body politic elected at-large with the ability

and responsibility for construction and operation of schools in Bow. The Selectmen do not control the School Board or the School District Budget.¹

The Town Government Committee identified a number of recommendations for how the current form of government could be improved. These recommendations are discussed in summary fashion and, for easy reference, are also included in this Report as Appendix 2.

The Committee

At the March 14, 2001, Town Meeting, the voters approved Article 8, directing the Selectmen to create a study committee with the responsibility to:

1. investigate alternatives to the current town meeting form of government;
2. make a formal report and recommendation to the Town on the preferred alternative, if any, to the current town meeting form of government;
3. recommend revisions to the Town Charter, and any other authorizing document, law or regulation, that would be necessary or advisable in order to best implement and recommended alternative. Said study committee shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen and shall consist of five members representing a range of experience and opinions, at least one of whom shall be a Selectmen. This committee may serve jointly with, and coordinate its efforts with, a committee appointed by the School Board to investigate alternative forms of school government if such a committee is approved by the voters of the Bow School District; and
4. to report the results of the investigation no later than Town Meeting 2002.

On April 23, 2001, the Selectmen appointed five voting members and six non-voting alternates to the Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee. Committee members were Gary Nylen, Marge Welch, Karen Wadsworth, Harry Judd, and Leon

¹ The School District holds its own annual meeting and is, through a separately constituted review committee, considering how that meeting should be conducted. Therefore, this committee did not consider school district issues.

Kenison (Chairman). The alternate members of the Committee were Neil Ordway, Ann Baier, Van Mosher, Gary Light, Rick Hiland, and Pamela Urban-Morin. The Committee was assisted by the generous donation of expertise and advice of Richard Minard of the NH Center for Public Policy Studies, Linda Dianis of the NH Municipal Association, and Town Moderator, Peter Imse.

The Committee members and the volunteer experts donated their time. The Committee spent no public funds.

Starting on June 5, 2001, this diverse group of Bow residents spent six months studying various forms of town governance, including what problems exist with the current Town Meeting. The Committee held fourteen public meetings, one public forum, and one meeting with the NH Municipal Association. Research included meeting with government officials from across the State at the annual meeting of the NH Municipal Association. Minutes of the Committee meetings are included as Appendix 4.

Bow Town Government

The Town of Bow was founded on May 10, 1727, by a charter from King George of England, as issued by Lieutenant Governor John Wentworth. (Appendix 1) The Bow Charter named three men as Selectmen “until Selectmen shall be chosen to serve in their stead” Bow has continued to have three Selectmen for the past 274 years. Selectmen are elected at-large and serve staggered 3-year terms.

Over the ensuing years, the Town of Bow established a Budget Committee whose members are elected by the Town voters. The Budget Committee is responsible for recommending appropriations for Town departments and the School District. The Budget

Committee recommendations for Town departments are presented to voters at the annual Town Meeting, at which time voters can adopt, reject or amend the Budget Committee recommendations. Recommendations of the Budget Committee for the School District are presented at the School District Annual Meeting.

More recently, the citizens of Bow voted to hire a Town Manager. The Town Manager serves at the pleasure of the Selectmen and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of Town government.

Town elections and the annual Town Meeting are held in March of each year. At the Town Meeting voters approve the annual Town budget and vote on warrant articles presented by the Selectmen or by citizen petition.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the Town Meeting/Selectmen/Town Manager /Budget Committee form of government be continued, with a number of recommended improvements. The recommended changes are as follows.²

1. Increase the number of Selectmen from three to five.

The Committee believes that it is unreasonable to expect three Selectmen to fulfill all that is required of the Board of Selectmen. The Committee's research finds that most New Hampshire communities have five Selectmen, once their population exceeds 5,000.

2. Change the date for the Town Meeting from March to April or May.

The weather in March is a deterrent for many citizens who would like to attend Town Meeting and moving the meeting to later in the year would make attending easier.

² The minutes of the November 15, 2001, meeting sets forth the vote of the voting members of the Committee on each of the forms of governance considered.

3. The Town Meeting and School District Meeting should be held in different weeks.

Citizen attendance at both Town Meeting and School District Meeting would likely be increased if the meetings were held in different weeks.

4. The Annual Town Report should be redesigned.

The Annual Town Report is an excellent means of providing information to citizens. The Report should be redesigned to make current information more prominent, with reports on the prior year given a secondary position. The Report should use visual aids, such as colored paper and tabs, to make the information relevant to Town Meeting more obvious. A brief explanation of voter rights and responsibilities at Town Meeting should be in the Report. This explanation should address the issue of reconsideration. A sample ballot for Town elections should be included in the Annual Town Report so voters can review it before going to the polls. The Annual Town Report should include an outline of the Moderator's rules for conducting the Town Meeting so that voters can be familiar with them prior to the meeting. Finally, the Annual Town Report should be delivered in a more effective manner and at least three weeks before the Town Meeting. Finding the Annual Town Report on the lawn after the snow melts greatly reduces its value.

5. The fiscal year should be changed to a July 1 – June 30 basis.

This change will permit adoption of the Town's budget before the start of the fiscal year. Also, cost savings will be realized any time tax anticipation notes are eliminated.

6. Communications at Town Meeting should be improved.

Confusion can be eliminated by using technology already available at the High School. In particular, all articles and any amendments should be displayed before a vote is taken. Overhead projection can easily meet this goal.

7. Moderators should be encouraged to use standard procedures.

Confusion and anger have resulted from the Town Moderator and the School District Moderator using different rules for conducting meetings. While each has the authority to create rules, the community would benefit from standardization. Draft rules of the current Town Moderator are included as Appendix 3.

8. The Town Moderator should establish procedures to eliminate lengthy and repeated voter check-in and voting at Town Meeting.

The process of voters receiving a ballot before each secret ballot vote is time consuming and generates frustration. The Moderator should be encouraged to develop and use more efficient procedures, while at the same time ensuring the integrity of the voting process.

9. The Town Moderator should ensure easier access to the polls.

The Committee heard complaints from voters who felt they were “running a gauntlet” at the polls as they navigated through loiterers and sign-waving partisans. While the right of expression must be respected, the Moderator is encouraged to enlarge the area through which voters may pass unimpeded from the parking lot to the polling place.

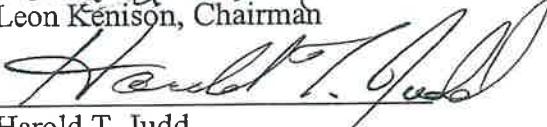
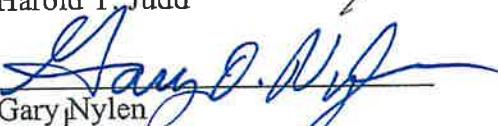
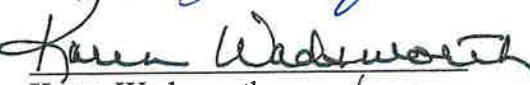
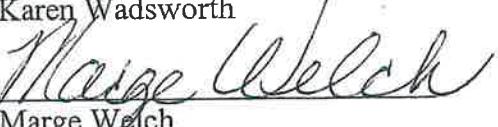
10. The Town Moderator should revise voter check-in procedures to reduce waiting time at the polls.

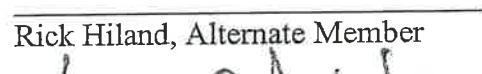
Long lines form at the polls at peak voting times, which are typically at the start and end of the day. The Moderator is encouraged to increase the number of poll checkers and the number of check stations during peak voting hours.

11. The form of government should be reviewed again before 2006.

The Committee recognizes the Town is growing in population and that a review similar to this study will likely be warranted in the future. Some of the governmental forms not receiving current endorsement may well deserve consideration as the community grows. Accordingly, the Committee encourages the Town to revisit these issues within five years.

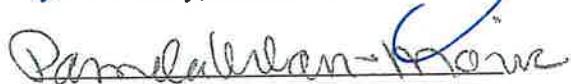
Respectfully submitted by the Town of Bow Alternative Forms of Government Committee.


Leon Kénison, Chairman

Harold T. Judd

Gary Nylen

Karen Wadsworth

Marge Welch


Ann Baier, Alternate Member

Rick Hiland, Alternate Member

Gary Light, Alternate Member

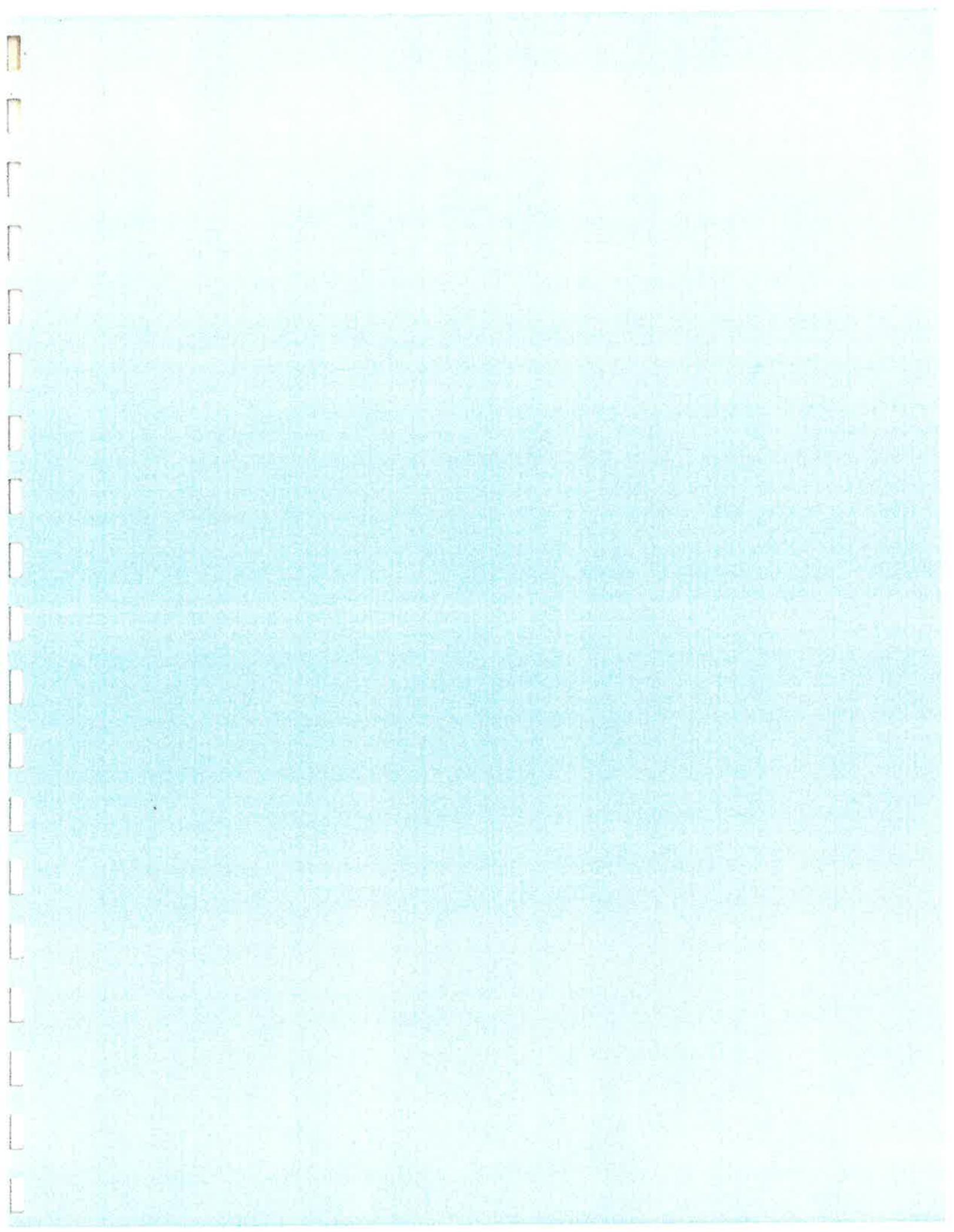
Van Mosher, Alternate Member

Neil Ordway, Alternate Member

Pamela Urban-Morin, Alternate Member

³ Ms. Baier was an active member of the Committee for much of the study, but resigned for personal reasons before the Committee completed its work.

APPENDIX INDEX

Appendix 1	Town of Bow Charter
Appendix 2	Recommendation of the Town of Bow Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Appendix 3	Draft Moderator's Rules of Procedure
Appendix 4	Minutes of Meetings



BOW.

[Granted by Lieut. Gov. John Wentworth, May 10, 1727, to Jonathan Wiggin and others, and was so named on account of a bend in the river within the town limits. A portion of Bow was combined with Suncook and Buckstreet to make the parish of Pembroke, Nov. 1, 1759. Two tracts of land were severed from Bow, and annexed, one to Concord, and the other to Pembroke, Dec. 13, 1804. A portion was severed and annexed to Allenstown, June 22, 1815.

See Masonian Papers in following volumes: IX, Bouth Town Papers, 62; XI, Hammond Town Papers, 209; Index to Laws, 64; sketch, by Harrison Colby, Hurd's History of Merrimack County, 1885, p. 263; Baptist Churches in N. H., by E. E. Cummings, 1836, pp. 12, 16; Lawrence's N. H. Churches, 1856, p. 357.]

[Bow CHARTER, 1727.]

*GEORGE By the Grace of God of Great Brittain *1-7
ffrance & Ireland King Defender of the ffaith &c—
L. S. To ALL PEOPLE to whom these Presents Shall
Come Greeting Know ye, that we of our Special
Knowledge & mere motion, for the Due Encourage-
ment of Setling a New Plantation, By & with the
Advise & Consent of Our Council have given &
Granted And by these Presents as far as in us lyes do give & Grant
in Equal Shares unto Sundry of our beloved Subjects whose names
Are Entred in a Schedule here unto Annexed that Inhabit or Shall
Inhabit within the s^d Grant, within our Province of New Hamp-
shire all that Tract of Land within the following Bounds Viz—
Beginning on the South East Side of the Town of Chichester &
runing nine miles by Chichester, And Canterbury And Carrying
that Breadth of Nine Miles from Each of the afores^d Towns South-
west untill the ful Compliment of Eighty one Square Miles Are
fully made up & that the Same be A Town Corporate by the
Name of Bow to the Persons afores^d and their Associates for-
ever—To HAVE & TO HOLD the s^d Land to the S^d Grantees and to
Such Associates as they shall admitt for ever—upon the Conditions
following—

- 1) That the Proprietors build or Cause to be built Seventy five
Dwelling houses on S^d Land & Settle a family in Each House &
Clear Three Acres of Land fitt for Mowing or Plowing within
Three years And that Each Proprietor pay his Proportion of the
Town Charge When & So often as Occasion Shall Require the
Same
- 2) That A meeting House bee built for the Publick Worship of
God within the Term of four years—
- 3 That upon Default of any Particular Proprietor in Complying
with the Conditions of the Charter upon his part Such Dilinquent
Proprietor Shall forfeit his Shear to the other Proprietors
*1-8 which Shall be *Disposed of According to the Maj^r Vote
of the S^d Proprietors at a Legal Town meeting—
- 4) That a Proprietors Shear be reserved for a Parsonage
another for the first minister of the Gospell: which Shall be
Settled and ordained in S^d Town Another Such Share for the
benefit of the School in S^d Town PROVIDED nevertheless that the
Peace with the Indians—Continue Duering the Space of Three
Years but if it Should So happen that A War with the Indians
Shall Com'ence before the Expiration of the S^d Three years then
the Term of three years Shall be Allowed the Proprietors after the
Expiration of the War for the Performance of the afores^d Con-
ditions—rendring & Paying therefor to us our heirs & Successors

or Such officer or officers as Shall be Appointed to recieve the Same The Annual Quit Rent or Acknowledgment of One Ear of Indian Corn in the S^d Town on the first fryday In December Yearly for Ever (if Demanded) reserveing alsoe unto us our heirs & Successors all mast Trees Growing on y^e S^d Land According to Acts of Parliament in that case made & Provided & for the better order rule & Governm^t of the S^d Town We do by these Presents for our Selves our heirs & Successors Grant unto the S^d men & Inhabitants or Those that Shall Inhabit the S^d Town That yearly & Every year upon the first Thursday in April forever Shall meet to Elect & Choose by the maj^t part of the Proprietors then Present Constables Select men and other Town Officers According to the Laws & ussages of Our S^d Province & we do Appoint Andrew Wiggin Esq George Veazey & W^m Moor to be Select men of Our S^d Town untill the first Thursday in April which will be in the year of Our Lord 1728 with full power & Authority as other Town Select men have to Call a Town meeting or meetings as there may be Occasion And to Continue untill other Select Men Shall be Chosen in their Steed in Such Manner as is in *These *1-9 Presents Expressed IN TESTIMONY whereof we have Caused the Seal of our S^d Province to be hereunto affixed WITNESS John Wentworth Esq our Leiu^t Governour & Com'ander in Cheiff in & over our S^d Province at our Town of Portsm^o in our S^d Province to the 20th Day of may in the 13th year of Our Reigne Anno Domini 1727

J Wentworth

By the L^t Gov^t Command
with advice of the Council

Rich^d Waldron Cler Co'n

A Schedule of the Proprietors of the Town of Bow—

Jon ^a Wiggins	Thomas Wiggins	Sam ^{ll} Piper
Thomas Veysy	George Veysey	William Moore
Edward ffifield	William ffrench	James Palmer
Jon ^a Chase	Moses Leavit.	Joshua Hill
Thomas Rollings	Rich ^d Crochet	Isaac floss
Thomas Piiper	Rich ^d Colley	Sam ^{ll} Goodhue
Joseph Mason	John Hanniford	Joseph Rollings
Zachel Rundlet	John Mead	Joseph Merrill
Nathaniel Stephens	David Robinson	John ^a Derburn
Joseph Merril Jun ^r	Jude Allen	James Merril
John Piper	Sam ^{ll} Veasey	James Kenniston
John Sinkler	Sam ^{ll} Green	W ^m Burley
Benj ^a Hoeg	Sam ^{ll} Hillton	Mathew Thompson
Benj ^a Palmer	Owen Renals	Joshua Neal
Thomas ffrench	Nath ^{ll} Piper	Joseph Jewet
John Hill	Thomas Odell	Abraham Stockbridge
Rich ^d Colley Jun ^r	Thomas Bryer	Joseph Mason Jun ^r
Edward ffifield.	W ^m ffrench Jun ^r	Eph ^m Leavit
Benj ^a Veasey	Thomas Veasey Jun ^r	Nathan Taylor
Jon ^a Clark	George Veasey Jun ^r	John Levet
Symon Wiggins	Sam ^{ll} Stevens	John Sachell
John Speed	Sam ^{ll} Piper Jun ^r	Chace Weggins
Thomas Wiggin 3 ^d	Benj ^a Mason	Joshua Kenniston
Walter Weggins	Caleb Rowlings	Joseph Palmer
Edward Taylor	Benj ^a Norris	John Green
Joshua Stephens	Tho ^t Piper Jun ^r	Nath ^{ll} ffolsham
*1-10 Henry Weggins	Joseph Pevey	*Jeremiah ffolsham Jun ^r
John Palmer	James Norris	Abra ^m Morgan
Broadstreet Weggins	Thoph ^t Smith	Stephen Thurstin
Rob ^t Willson	John Avery	Joseph Hoeg
Benj ^a Taylor Jun ^r	Benj ^a ffollet	Nathan White
Benning Wentworth	Hunking Wentworth	W ^m Wentworth
Mark Wentworth	Rich ^d Wibird Jun ^r	George Jaffrey Jun ^r
Henry Rust	Cyprean Jaffry	Ebenez ^t Wear
Rob ^t Auchmuthy	John Read Att ^r	Sampson Sheaff
George Long	Rich ^d Waldron Jun ^r	

Admitted Associates

His Excelency & Hon^r—Sam^{ll} Shute Esq John Wentworth Esq
Each of them 500 Acres of Land And a home Lot
Coll Mark Hunking Coll Walton George Jaffrey
Rich^d Wibird Coll Tho^o Westbrook Archibald Mcpheadris
John ffrost Jotham Odiorne Esquirs

Each A Proprietors Shear—

Peter Wear	John Plaisted	James Davis
John Gillman	Andrew Wiggin	Cap ^t John Downing
Cap ^t John Gillman	Sam ^{ll} Tibbets	Paul Gerrish
M ^r Eph ^m Dennet	John Sanburn	Theod ^r Atkinson
Eben ^r Stevens	Rich ^d Jennes	Cap ^t W ^m ffellows
James Jeffry	Jos Loverin	Dani ^{ll} Loverin
Zah Hanahford	Jos Wiggin	Peirce Long

Bow Schedule Certifed $\frac{1}{2}$

Richard Waldron Cler Con

Joseph Low	James Robinson	Noah Barker
George Clark	Daniel Moody	Tho ^o Wiggin Jun ^r
John ^a Rowlings	Holdrge Cilley	Daniel Davis
W ^m Moor Jun ^r	Abigail Powel	Mary Smith
Mary Jones	Kathorin Wiggans	Nich ^o Wiggins
	Ben ^a Taylor	

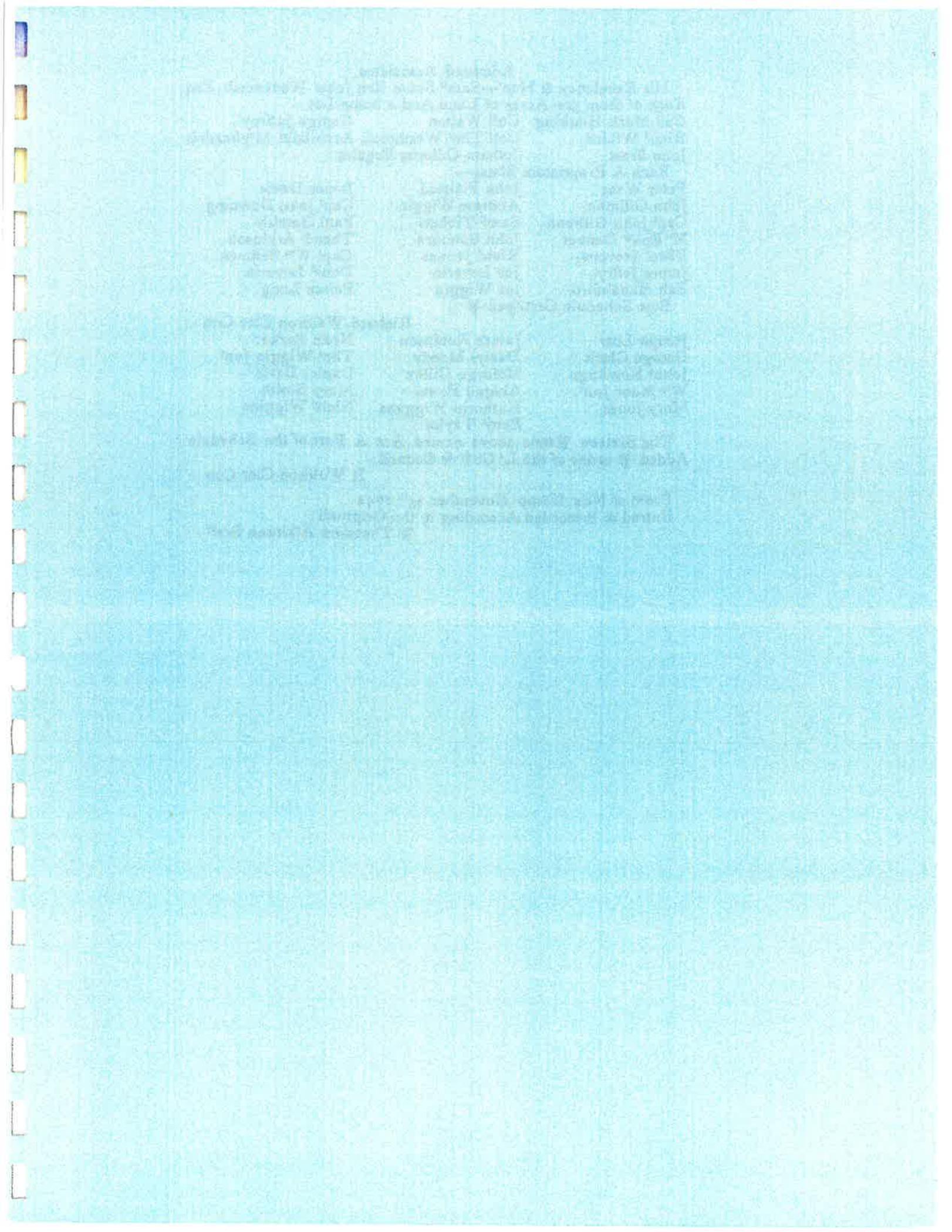
The Sixteen $\frac{1}{2}$ sons above named Are A Part of the Schedule
Added $\frac{1}{2}$ order of the L^t Gov^r & Council

R Waldron Cler Con

Prov^a of New Hamp^r November 25th 1742

Entred & Recorded According to the Originall

$\frac{1}{2}$ Theodore Atkinson Sce^r



Recommendation of the Town of Bow Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee

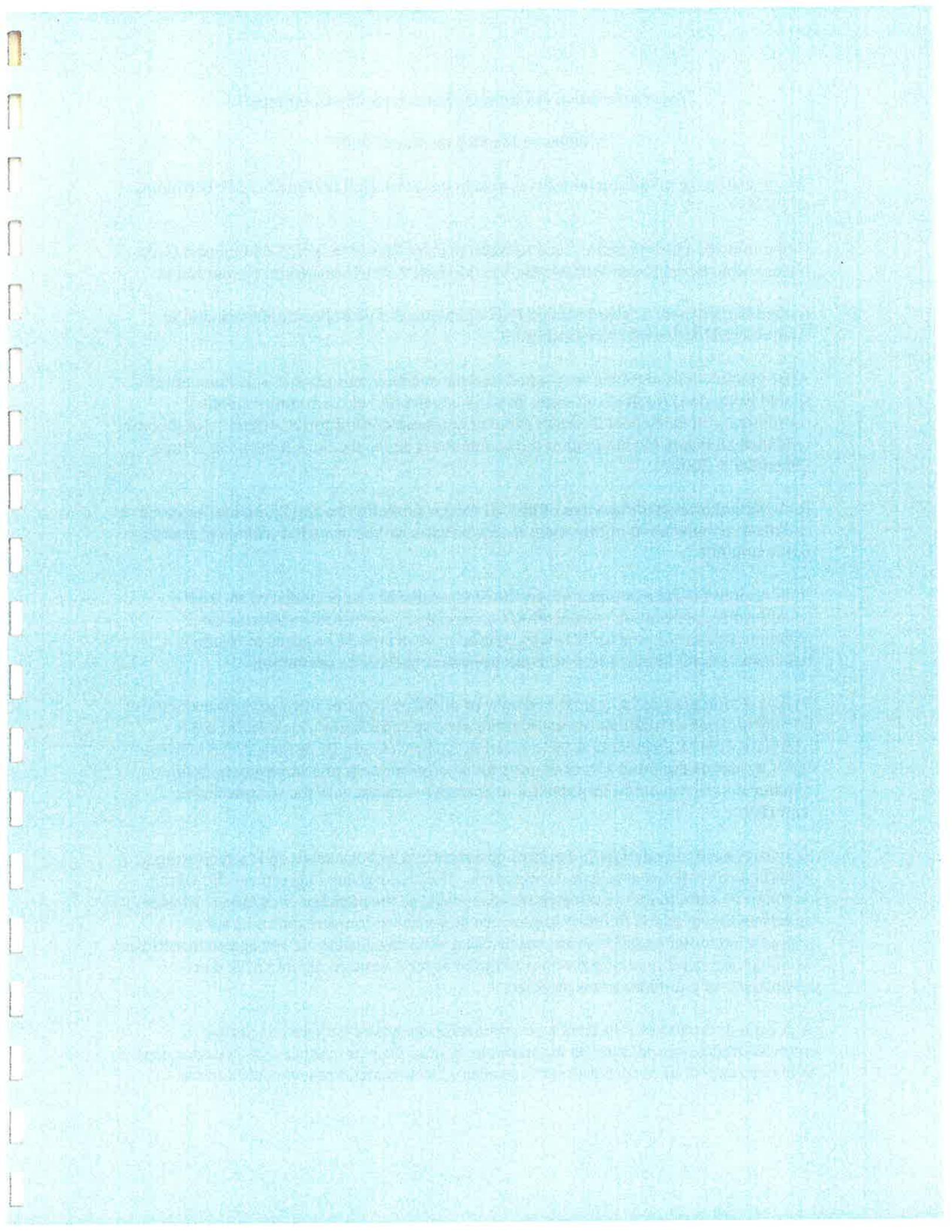
1. Increase the number of Selectmen from three to five
2. Change the date for the Town Meeting from March to April or May
3. The Town Meeting and School District Meeting should be held in different weeks
4. The Town Report should
 - a. be redesigned to:
 - i. highlight matters that will be before the Town Meeting
 - ii. be more user-friendly through color-coding, tabs, etc.
 - b. include a sample ballot
 - c. be delivered in a more timely fashion
 - d. include a brief explanation of voters' rights and responsibilities at Town Meetings
 - e. include draft Moderator Rules for Town Meeting and School District Meeting
5. The fiscal year changed to a July 1 – June 30 basis
6. The Selectmen and Town Moderator should improve communication at Town Meeting. For example, each article, with any amendments, should be projected for all to see before a vote is taken
7. Moderators should be encouraged to use standard procedures
8. The Town Moderator should establish procedures to eliminate lengthy and repeated voter check-in and voting at Town Meeting
9. The Town Moderator should make access to the polls easier by increasing the area to be free of politicking and loitering
10. The Town Moderator should revise voter check-in procedures to reduce waiting time at the polls
11. The form of government should be reviewed again before 2006

I have a Point of Order." Once I recognize you, you may proceed.

5. Motions to Call the Question limit debate and, therefore, require a 2/3 vote. If passed, these motions stop debate on a motion, however, all those voters standing at or holding the mike and anyone at head table who has previously told me that they wish to speak on the Motion will be allowed to speak.
6. Non-voters cannot speak without the permission of the Town Meeting except, I will allow non-resident Town officials and consultants or experts who are here to provide information about an article to speak.
7. When you speak, I expect you to be courteous. No personal attacks and no inappropriate language. You may be removed from the meeting.
8. All questions and comments should be addressed to me, as the Moderator. I will choose who responds to a question.
9. With the exception of initial presentations on Articles which I will try to limit to ten (10) minutes, all speakers in debate will be limited to three (3) minutes.
10. Each speaker can only speak once until everyone has spoken.
11. I will allow only one motion on the floor at a time, with only the following exceptions:
 - Points of Order
 - and, if you have the floor:
 - Motions to amend the pending motion.
 - Motions to Call the Question.
12. We will follow tradition in this Town of prohibiting motions to reconsider unless they are made immediately after the vote on the Article, and unless they are made by someone who voted on the prevailing side.
 - However, since that rule can be overruled by majority vote of this meeting at any time, it is no guarantee that there will be no reconsideration of an article this evening.
 - The only way to guaranty that there will be no reconsideration of an article this evening is to vote after Article to restrict reconsideration in accordance with RSA 40:10.
 - If you do pass such a motion, then the article cannot be reconsidered until a reconvened meeting that is at least seven (7) days from tonight

**BOW TOWN MEETING
MODERATOR'S RULES OF PROCEDURE**

1. Our goal is to complete the Town's business and to have an enjoyable social time while we are at it.
2. We will not be following Robert's Rules. We will follow the following general rules of procedure, whose main purpose is to keep the meeting moving and not get bogged down in procedural quagmires.
3. I will
 - Take Articles in order they appear on warrant [or announce plan to take Articles out of order].
 - Announce Article Number; display on screen; will not read unless amended.
 - Recognize Budget Committee Member/Selectmen/petitioner to move Article.
 - If seconded, recognize Selectmen/petitioner to explain.
 - Then Debate.
4. Everyone who speaks must use a microphone so you can be heard. We will use two (2) stand up mikes at mid-point of auditorium.
 - We have one or two hand held mikes for those who are unable to get to the stand-up mikes.
 - Raise your hand if you need one.
5. No one can speak unless they have the floor.
 - You cannot have the floor unless I recognize you.
 - Except for Points of Order, I will not recognize you unless you are standing at or holding one of the microphones.
 - Whenever you speak or make motion or second, please give your name and address.
 - Even if you do not have the floor, you may
 - raise a Point of Order to challenge Moderator's ruling or overrule the Moderator, or
 - You should raise a Point of Order by standing at your seat or proceeding to microphone and saying, "Mr. Moderator,



Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee

Minutes of Meeting on June 5, 2001

The first meeting of the committee was held in the Town Hall on June 5, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Marge Welch, Neal Ordway, Gary Nylen, Anne Baier, Karen Wadsworth, Van Mosher, Pam Urban-Morin, Harold Judd.

Invited Participants: Richard Minard (NH Center for Public Policy Studies) and John Andrews (NH Municipal Association)

After introductions, the Chair suggested, and the members agreed, that maximum effort should be made to reach a consensus on all issues and that the committee should coordinate with the School Board to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Also, Leon reminded all that the final report of the committee is due to the Selectmen no later than December 1, 2001.

Rick Minard offered the services of the NH Center for Public Policy Studies for research and the accumulation of information. These services will be provided without charge to the committee.

John Andrews made a presentation on the services that can be provided by the NH Municipal Association, such legal advice on complying with requirements to get recommendations on a ballot, when legislative action would be required to proceed, handbooks, and information on what has been done in other communities.

Rick and John provided a general overview of different forms of town governance, with an identification of different communities that use specific forms. Included in the overview were: Representative town meeting; Town Council; Budgetary Town Meeting for budgetary matters and a town council for all other matters; and imposing quorum requirements that could be imposed for deliberative sessions with the so-called SB 2 approach.

Gary suggested identifying the forms of governance to be considered and then creating a "pros and cons" list as a basis for comparison. There was general agreement that this would be a useful tool once research was completed so the members would have a better understanding of which forms of governance they want to compare, and a better appreciation for the possible variations that should be considered. It was agreed that Rick would help create a matrix that would be the basis for a more complete pro & con comparison as information was gathered.

A general discussion was held on how information should be gathered, including interviewing persons in other communities to learn of their experiences. All options were held open and all were encouraged to consider what information they would want to

consider and how it should be gathered. Rick agreed to search for the most recent demographic information on Bow and report back on what is available. However, he cautioned that the 2000 census information would not be available within the timeframe of the committee, so other sources would have to be used, to the extent they are available.

Karen suggested all consider what they view as problems with the existing system of governance in Bow and be prepared to identify them at the next meeting. Leon suggested that particular attention be given to identifying the concerns that underlay the effort to use the SB 2 approach in Bow.

Leon committed to talk with the School Board and learn what they are doing with a survey of the community, and report back with a recommendation on whether this committee should participate in that survey in any way. Also, Leon committed to provide a report on what the School Board is doing in its review of the governance issue.

The next meeting will be held at the Town Hall on Tuesday, June 19, 2001 starting promptly at 7 PM. All members are to have their summer schedules available so that future meetings can be scheduled. Also, Rick will provide a draft of a matrix, Harry will have information on the last review of Town Government undertaken in Bow, and Leon will report on the efforts of the School Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee

Minutes of Meeting on June 20, 2001

The committee met in the Town Hall on June 20, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Marge Welch, Neil Ordway, Gary Nylen, Anne Baier, Karen Wadsworth, Van Mosher, Pam Urban-Morin, Gary Light, Rick Hiland, Harold Judd.

Invited Participants: Richard Minard (NH Center for Public Policy Studies), Mark Lefebvre (Bow School Board), Linda Dianis and John Andrews (NH Municipal Association)

The minutes of the June 5, 2001 were adopted.

Mark LaFave, Chair of the Alternative School Governance Committee, reported on the activities of that committee to date. That committee has held two meetings and identified 5 government forms they will consider. He explained that the approach used by Kearsarge is a variation of the "SB 2" approach with a school board budget, budget committee budget and an amended school board budget all put to a vote with the one getting a plurality being adopted. Mark also discussed the Seabrook approach where 5% of voters must attend a deliberative session in order for an amendment to the school budget to be adopted.

Mark explained that the school committee would be conducting a survey of the town. A sub-committee was formed to develop questions and would be willing to work with this committee on one survey.

A discussion was held about whether the committee should participate in a survey and how any participation should be undertaken. Also, discussion was held on whether to ask the Selectmen to mail out any survey so that it would be received as unbiased and to enhance credibility. The consensus of the committee was that further study should be made before using a survey to confirm that the course selected by the committee is a valid one, but only after the committee has had time to focus attention on a more limited set of options. The committee agreed to revisit the question of whether to participate in a survey at the July 17th meeting. A sub-committee will be formed to work on survey questions, if the committee decides to go forward with a survey.

The committee discussed ways to learn more about what other communities have done, including interviewing officials and interested citizens in other communities. The committee agreed that it might be difficult to get folks to travel to Bow to meet with the committee, but that it should be explored.

The committee discussed the matrix produced by Rick Minard. The committee agreed it was an excellent starting point. The committee members agreed to complete the matrix,

reviewing the forms of governance the committee has discussed and also including hybrid forms that members can envision. For example, some members commented that the once yearly town meeting may not be the best way to set goals and to do business as Bow grows. Also, Neil expressed the view that there should be more than 3 selectmen so the workload could be divided among more individuals.

Leon reported that the Town Planner estimates that under current conditions (e.g., no sewer/water expansion, the density and zoning is unchanged, etc.) the maximum population of Bow will be approximately 12,000.

The committee set the following schedule:

July 5 – meeting to discuss the matrix and set preliminary positions on (1) whether to conduct interviews, and how any would be conducted and (2) outline of governance forms for further review.

July 17 – further matrix review. Revisit issue of whether to participate in a survey: form sub-committee if survey will be conducted.

July 31 – begin survey process.

The committee is to meet every two weeks. All members were requested to notify Leon of vacation schedules and other conflicts that will keep them from attending meetings. Leon will reschedule meetings if there will not be enough members to hold a meaningful meeting.

Linda Dianis informed the committee that from October 31 – November 2 there will be a meeting of municipal officials at the Center of NH. Noting that the dates were close to the end of the committee's completion date in December, the members agreed that conference might provide a final opportunity to get additional input from selected municipal officials.

Harry provided an overview of the last review of town governance in 1996-1997 with the observation that the review was more limited in focus than this effort.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Minutes of Meeting on July 5, 2001

The committee met in the Town Hall on July 5, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Marge Welch, Neil Ordway, Karen Wadsworth, Van Mosher, Pam Urban-Morin, Gary Light, Harold Judd.

Invited Participant: Linda Dianis (NH Municipal Association)

The minutes of the June 20, 2001 were adopted.

The meeting was dedicated to continued review of the various forms of town governance by using the matrix developed by Rick Minard. The consensus was that the initial review each had done was a useful exercise for each of the members. The members decided refinement is in order before there can be a meaningful tabulation of the views of the members on each matrix entry. The members agreed to revisit the matrix, ranking each entry as follows:

- “0” = not applicable, that is, the criteria does not fit the governance type
- Ranking of 1 – 5, with “5” being the most desirable or fits the criteria well.
- The two columns on referenda that were printed under “Town Council” should be set-aside as separate items that are to be ranked, as they would be useful for any type of governance.

Members are asked to rank them using their own views on how well and/or desirable the form of governance is for each criteria. The members agreed this will be a subjective review, but that it is the collective views and wisdom of the group that should be tabulated.

The members are asked to send their version of the matrix, with the revised ranking, to Harry by close of business on Wednesday, July 11, 2001. They can be mailed, send via email, or by fax (fax number is 225-4923). Harry will tabulate the forms into one and have it prepared for discuss at the July 17, 2001 meeting.

The committee also discussed the suggestions for a survey that were provided by John Andrews. The members agreed that during the July 31st meeting a decision will be made on whether to participate in a survey.

Linda informed the committee that a room could be reserved, at no cost, for interviewing municipal employees during the annual meeting of municipal employees at the Center of NH, starting on October 31, 2001. The committee agreed to reserve a conference room for November 1, 2001, and to inform Linda in October if they decide they will not need the room.

Members were again reminded to inform Leon if they will not be able to make any of the scheduled meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Minutes of Meeting on July 17, 2001

The committee met in the Town Hall on July 17, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Marge Welch, Van Mosher, Gary Light, Anne Baier, Rick Hiland, Gary Nylen, Harold Judd.

Invited Participant: Richard Minard, NH Center for Public Policy Studies

The minutes of the July 5, 2001 were adopted.

Leon advised the committee that Linda Dianis has reserved a room for November 1, 2001, from 2 – 4 PM at the Municipal Association meeting in Manchester. The committee discussed how the program for the event should identify the use of the room, so Linda can have the program prepared. The committee is considering using the time to meet with invited municipal officials or as an open forum to discuss what Bow is exploring with whomever appears. Some committee members expressed reservation about the ability to get the attention of the conference participants unless individuals are invited.

Most of the evening was dedicated to discussing the matrix of views on various forms of local government. Harry presented a chart showing the average response to each matrix entry. As he explained, the averages were derived by adding the number applied by each respondent, and then dividing by the number of respondents. When a respondent inserted –0- in every place in a column, that response was not included when calculating the average. When an individual responded with –0- in some places and other numbers in others in a column, the responses were averaged along with the other respondents.

The matrix was discussed as a means of focusing the attention of the committee, with the government forms receiving the lowest average response to be tabled until other forms were given further review. In particular, (a) binding referenda, (b) non-binding referenda, (c) elimination of the budget committee, (d) official ballot town council, and (e) budgetary town meeting, were all tabled for the time being.

Harry is to recheck the compilation of the first three columns of the matrix. Also, he will prepare the summary matrix as a handout for the committee.

The committee discussed the present restrictions on absentee ballots for town elections. At present, absentee ballots are only available for town elections for those claiming disabilities or religious reasons for absence. The matrix responses were seen as an indication of the concern of committee members for the use of absentee ballots.

The committee agreed that the responses concerning expanding the number of selectmen was a recognition of the workload of selectmen and an area that should be given further review.

Leon informed the committee that the school study group will be finished with their survey questions by the end of July. Leon will provide the final version of the survey, once it is provided to him by the chair of the school study group. The committee discussed whether to participate in that survey or conduct a different one. The committee agreed not to conduct a survey or participate in a joint one at this time. The committee also agreed that the chairman should work with the school study group to ensure that their survey clearly states that the survey is theirs alone, and that this committee is not conducting the survey.

The committee agreed that input from the town is important before a final report is produced. As an alternative to a survey, the committee agreed to consider conducting public sessions. A decision on whether to conduct public sessions to discuss preliminary findings will be discussed at the next meeting.

The committee agreed to collect a list of what members believe is wrong with the current form of governing. This list is to be used to focus the committee on solutions to problems that, as a committee, are agreed to need improvement. The committee made a preliminary list, which accompanies these minutes.

Committee members are asked to expand the list, as they see fit, and provide their observations to Harry by July 25, 2001. He will compile them into a list for the next meeting.

The next meeting of the committee will be on July 31, 2001. At the meeting the committee will

- continue its review of the matrix,
- discuss the list of concerns identified by committee members
- decide how to identify the meeting on November 1, 2001, at the municipal association conference
- discuss whether to hold public fora to review draft recommendations with citizens

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Minutes of Meeting on July 31, 2001

The committee met in the Town Hall on July 31, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Marge Welch, Gary Nylen, Neil Ordway, Karen Wadsworth, Van Mosher, Pam Urban-Morin, Gary Light, Ann Baier, Rick Hiland, Harold Judd.

Invited Participant: Richard Minard (NH Center for Public Policy Studies) and Linda Dianis (NH Municipal Association)

The minutes of the July 17, 2001 were discussed and adopted, with amendment noting Gary Nylen attended the meeting.

As requested at the prior meeting, the secretary had rechecked some entries to the composite matrix regarding criteria 16 (durable). That summary, along with hand-written copies of the matrix reviews was distributed. Also distributed was a hand written "Matrix Comparison" and three pages of voting history in the Town of Bow. The secretary acknowledged that the matrix observations of Rick Hiland were not among the hand-copied matrix reviews that were distributed. The committee members discussed the significance of the matrix observations and what weight, if any, should be given the matrix. It was agreed to put aside discussion of the matrix and discuss the list of areas of concern, instead.

At the conclusion of the July 17, 2001 meeting, the members agreed to compile a list of areas for review, based on their personal observations of what should be addressed in order to improve Town governance. The list was compiled and circulated. A discussion of the list was commenced.

Item I: Absentee ballots.

a. The concern about absentee ballots being too restricted was, upon examination, determined to be unfounded. There are no inappropriate restrictions on obtaining an absentee ballot.

b. The committee discussed the availability of absentee ballots for warrant articles. It was determined this would be possible with SB 2, or modified SB 2/Town meeting hybrid.

Items 2 and 3: Information & Town report

There was agreement among the members that there is a lack of good information that is made available to voters before Town Meetings. The members agreed the Town Report could be the vehicle for delivering such information, with some changes, such as:

1. Mail the Town Report rather than hand deliver. This would increase the probability it would be received by voters, and not lost in snow banks, etc.
2. A new design for the Town Report that would highlight issues that will be at the upcoming Town Meeting and other current information.

The committee agreed that these two suggestions should be included in the final report of the committee to the Selectmen.

Also, the committee discussed making recommendations on use of technology at Town Meetings, such as overhead projection of amendments prior to voting on an article. It was agreed that the current process permits confusion and steps should be taken to get the most up to date version of articles before voters before a vote is taken.

[NOTE: At this point secretary Judd departed and committee member Wadsworth prepared notes that were later shared with secretary Judd.]

There was a general discussion regarding the need for impartial information at Town Meetings. The committee agreed an effort should be made in this area, but that an absolute requirement would be impossible to attain. The committee agreed to note the goal, but not to recommend it as a requirement of Town Meetings. Similarly, the committee decided that it was not possible to guarantee that the pros and cons if each issue would be presented, and decided to delete this item from further consideration (2f).

Because the Town does not send information home with school children (Item 2d), the committee deleted this from further discussion.

The committee agreed the final report of the committee should include a section on better communications.

Item 4 Town meetings

The committee discussed ways to improve the Town Meeting process. It was the strong feeling of committee members that all moderators should use standard rules. Karen offered to work on sample rules for the committee to consider recommending to the Selectmen.

There was much discussion on setting a schedule for voting at Town Meeting and agreed that the committee would revisit this item.

The committee decided that the current process provides for balloting on every item, so this item (4c) was deleted from further consideration.

(4d) There was much discussion regarding requiring non-voters to be in a separate room. The committee agreed the issues should be discussed in the procedural rules and that the committee would revisit the issue at a later time.

(4e) Discussion was held on having the Town Meeting on a different date. It was recognized that the Town fiscal year would need to be changed to accomplish this. The committee discussed having the Town Meeting and School Board Meeting held in different weeks. The committee agreed to have more discussion of this issue.

Bow Alternative Forms Committee
Minutes of July 31, 2001

The discussion of the list of suggestion was suspended, with agreement it would be resumed at the next meeting.

Discussion was held on attendance at the NH Municipal Association conference. Leon will work with Linda Dianis to develop a notice to be included in the information provided before the conference. The committee agreed to use an informal "round table" format for discussions with those who meet with the committee at the conference.

The committee will hold informal meetings with the citizens in late September or early October to discuss the preliminary findings of this committee. Leon will pick two dates that are available for meeting at the Old Town Hall.

Leon distributed the draft of the school committee with agreement of the committee that the information was not to be released to anyone by any committee member.

As agreed by the committee during at the first, organizational meeting, all meetings of the committee will be held at the Town Hall and will begin at 7:00 pm. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for August 28, 2001.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 P.M.

Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Minutes of Meeting on August 28, 2001

The committee met in the Town Hall on August 28, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Marge Welch, Gary Nylen, Karen Wadsworth, and Harry Judd. Alternates present: Neil Ordway, Ann Baier, Van Mosher, Gary Light, Rick Hiland, and Pam Urban-Morin.

Invited Participant: Richard Minard (NH Center for Public Policy Studies)

The minutes of the July 31, 2001 were discussed, amended, and adopted.

The Committee agreed to hold a public meeting at the Old Town Hall on Wednesday, October 17, 2001, for the purpose of receiving public input and reaction to the work of the committee. It was agreed it would be a goal of the Committee to have some part of the final report to the Selectmen in draft form by that time so as to get reaction to the work up until that time. Leon is to pick a Tuesday or Thursday night in early November and reserve the Old Town Hall as a possible meeting date, if the Committee decides a second meeting for public input will be helpful.

The Committee next discussed the matrix. There was a request that the original submissions of members be provided to all members. The Committee discussed the value and use of the matrix. There was agreement that the matrix had been a useful learning tool as it forced the members to study different forms of town governance in order to complete the matrix. There was also agreement that the initial submissions were, at best, a snapshot of views and that most, if not all, members would complete the matrix differently today. As such, there was a consensus that the original submissions were only drafts and the Committee should spend no more time with the matrix, but should concentrate on the suggested areas of review list. Upon request, the Chair ruled that original submissions were sent to the secretary with the understanding that they would be used as part of a composite matrix and, as such, were drafts. Further, he ruled that individuals were free to release their original submissions, but were not required to do so, and that the original drafts were to be returned to the submitting member, if the secretary could determine who submitted them.

Gary Nylen made a motion that the matrix be considered as a learning tool for the purpose of educating the committee members on the different forms of government. Karen seconded it. Karen offered an amendment that the original copies should be returned to those who submitted them because the education process was completed. Harry seconded the amendment. Harry offered an amendment that the function of the matrix was completed, that it should be given no further weight, and that the matrix should be discarded. Rick Hiland seconded the amendment. All members voted for the second amendment. All alternates supported the amendment except Van who voiced opposition. All members voted for the first amendment. All alternates supported the first amendment. All members voted for the motion, as amended twice. All alternates

supported the motion, as amended twice, except Van because he felt that the vote was not in the spirit of openness, which in his opinion was essential.

The Committee agreed on the following schedule for meetings of the Committee:

September 11

September 25

October 9

All meetings will begin at 7 pm and be held at the offices of the Selectmen.

The Committee next returned to the list of Suggested areas for Review. The purpose of the review is to apply the concerns to the current situation and see what should and could be improved.

Item 4 (f): Requiring a minimum quorum vote at Town meeting. The Committee discussed various ways this could be accomplished. The members agreed the idea could be revisited at a future meeting, but that it was unlikely to redress the concern that a minority could undo a vote of the majority, simply by waiting until some voters leave a meeting.

4(g) Voting procedures.

The Committee discussed various ways that the voting procedures could be simplified and made more user-friendly. It was agreed that there would be written suggestions to the voting officials and moderator of what could be done to streamline and standardize voting procedures at Town Meetings. Included would be a suggestion that voters be shown a written text of the final version of a matter that is to be voted, before the vote is held, such as using overhead projection.

5. Barriers: Time of year, etc.

The Committee discussed the time of year for Town Meeting and ways to better coordinate the Town Meeting with the budget process. Rick suggested that we all review the Town Charter and Leon agreed to get a copy for the Committee. The Committee discussed holding the meeting on a different day or time of day and agreed that there was no perfect time. The Committee agreed that the following recommendations should be made: The Town Meeting should be held in a different week than the school committee meeting; The Town Meeting should be moved to April or May.

6. Voting: Logistics

The Committee discussed the pros and cons of suggesting more voting locations. After reviewing the barriers to such a change, the Committee agreed this is not the time to make such a move. Karen agreed to check to see if there would need to be legislation before Bow could use more than one voting location. The Committee next discussed all day voting for Town Meeting issues, and, likewise, agreed it was not a practical idea at this time. Next the Committee discussed having all voting by mail and agreed that absentee ballots provide the means for voting by mail for anyone who wants to use the mails.

7. Process is too cumbersome.

There are 5,400 eligible voters in Bow. If there were a substantial turnout, there is no location in town that could accommodate all or most voters. The Committee agreed there is no current problem. Further, the Committee agreed that the report of the Committee should recommend the development of a contingency plan, e.g., an alternative location, to be prepared for the possibility of a large turnout in the future.

8. Free zone at the polls.

The Committee discussed whether to recommend increasing the “politic free zone” at the polls. The moderator has the discretion to set the unrestricted zone outside the building. This issue is on hold for now as the ordinances will be reviewed to see if they address the issue.

9. Expand the size of the budget committee.

The Committee discussed this suggestion and agreed there is no reason to recommend a change at this time.

10. Extend voting rights to younger citizens.

The Committee discussed this and agreed it was not something to be advocated at this time, especially since legislation would likely be needed. The Committee agreed the recommendations to the Selectmen and voting officials should include suggestions on ways to encourage young people to become active in Town governance and well-informed citizens.

11. Fiscal year.

The Committee agreed the fiscal year should be changed to July 1 – June 30 rather than being on the calendar year basis, as it is today. It would take approximately 18 months for a transition. The reasons recognized for changing the fiscal year include: Savings on borrowing through limiting or eliminating outright the use of anticipation notes; the tax burden would be unchanged, so there was no harm to citizens. There will be an attempt to review the use of anticipation notes over the past 10 years, though no member was assigned that task as of yet.

The Committee agreed the next meeting will be used to revisit the items on the list that were previously discussed, but then held for further review.

For the next meeting Harry will have a list of the items the Committee has agreed, so far, to include in recommendations to Town officials, and a list of the issues from the suggestion list to be revisited.

The Committee agreed the list of recommendations would be used to consider if there is a form of government, or a hybrid form of government, that would permit the implementation of all recommendations.

The Committee discussed what the final report would include in very general terms. It was agreed that all members should be prepared to offer suggestions, but that there should be no pride in authorship until there is a final product that is agreed to by the Committee. The Committee also agreed the report should include a review of each form of governance the Committee has reviewed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Minutes of Meeting on September 11, 2001

The committee was scheduled to meet in the Town Hall on September 11, 2001, beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Marge Welch, Karen Wadsworth, and Harry Judd. Alternates present: Neil Ordway, Van Mosher, and Pam Urban-Morin. Invited Participant: Richard Minard (NH Center for Public Policy Studies)

At the suggestion of the Chair, the committee unanimously decided to not hold the meeting out of respect for the loss of life in the terrorist attacks earlier in the day.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on September 25, 2001.

**Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Minutes of Meeting on September 25, 2001**

The committee met in the Town Hall on September 25, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Marge Welch, Karen Wadsworth, Gary Nylen, and Harry Judd. Alternates present: Neil Ordway, Van Mosher, and Gary Light.

Invited Participant: Richard Minard (NH Center for Public Policy Studies)

The meeting was opened by the Chair. The minutes of the September 11, 2001, meeting were adopted without discussion. Karen moved that the minutes of the August 28, 2001 meeting be amended to reflect concerns of Van. Marge seconded the motion. The adoption of the minutes of August 28, 2001, with amendments, was moved by Karen, seconded by Gary Nylen and unanimously adopted.

HANDOUTS:

Leon distributed a letter from Ann Baier resigning from the committee.

Leon distributed a letter from Pam stating she was unavailable for the meeting that night and the next meeting, but will continue to work with the committee.

A excerpt from the NH Town and City July/August 2001 Notice of a study of on-line and electronic voting. A copy of the final report will be provided to Karen.

Karen provided a copy of the Attorney General's Memorandum on NH's Right to Know Law dated December 1999.

Leon distributed copies of the Charter for the Town of Bow dated 1727. After some discussion, the committee agreed that it should, before finalizing its report, revisit whether to recommend amending the Charter.

Rick Minard provided a memorandum on Appropriations at Town Meetings and Deliberative Sessions. There was a discussion of what could be changed at a Town Meeting and how changes would be addressed with a Deliberative Session.

The committee reviewed the list of recommendations compiled by the Secretary. The committee agreed to recommend:

1. Increasing the number of selectmen;
2. Changing the date for the Town Meeting to April or May;
3. That the Town Meeting and School Committee meet in different weeks;
4. That the Town Report
 - a. Be better designed
 - b. Include a sample ballot
 - c. Be delivered in a more timely fashion

- d. Be expanded to have a one-page explanations of voters' rights and responsibilities at Town Meetings
5. That the fiscal year to changed to a July 1 – June 30 basis;
6. That better communications at Town Meetings be devised. The committee will expand on this item.
7. That all Moderators be encouraged to use standard procedures.

The committee next considered the items that were left for further review.

1. Non-voters at Town Meetings. Because there is a desire to encourage children to become involved, it was agreed that children should be not relegated to a different room. Non-residents, other than the press, should have space made available in a different room or a segregated part of the meeting room. However, the Moderator should be reminded to be sensitive to the presence of non-voters whenever a voice vote is taken.
2. Quorum requirement: The committee discussed ways to require a quorum to prevent reconsideration of a matter after voters had left the meeting room. Karen observed that a motion to limit reconsideration at the start of a Town Meeting would require any motion for reconsideration to come immediately after a vote, and one the next agenda item was taken up, a prior matter could not be reconsidered. This issue will be researched and reported on at the next meeting.
3. More than one polling place: The committee discussed pros and cons of having more than one poling place and decided that the problem underlying the suggestion is the disorganization of the voting process. In particular, unnecessarily long lines and too few check list checkers at rush times should be addressed in recommendations to the Selectmen.
4. Politics free zone: Leon and Gary will review the ordinance and measure space at the community center to see if a greater walkway could be designated so voters do not fee 1 set upon by sign holders.

The committee next reviewed the draft outline for a final report. It was agreed to use the draft to get started, with the understanding that it is subject to restructuring as the document comes together.

There was a discussion on whether to recommend a standing review committee be established to review the Town Charter on an on-going basis. Such a committee would have the power to recommend changes to the voters.

The committee then accepted individual assignments of matters to be prepared for presentation at the next meeting.

- Status quo – Gary Nylen
- Why have a budget committee – Marge
- Change number of Selectmen (and number to recommend 5 or 7) -- Neil
- Official Ballot Town Meeting -- Van
- Standard Town Council -- Karen
- Representative Town Meeting -- Harry

- Town Council with School authority – Gary Light

The committee was reminded that the public meeting will be October 17, 2001, at the Old Town Hall. Discussion was had on how to advertise the meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on October 9, 2001.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Minutes of Meeting on October 9, 2001

The committee met in the heatless Town Hall on October 9, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Gary Nylen, Marge Welch, Karen Wadsworth, and Harry Judd. Alternates present: Neil Ordway, Van Mosher.

Invited Participant: Linda Dianis (NH Center for Public Policy Studies) and Mark Lefebvre.

The meeting was opened by the Chair. The minutes of the September 25, 2001, meetings were adopted with amendments to page two and the recognition that Gary Nylen was at that meeting.

Mark provided a summary of the survey conducted by the school Committee. He mentioned there might be a meeting on December 1, 2001 for public reaction to the survey.

The Committee discussed the challenge of distinguishing what the Committee is doing from what the School District is studying. A number of Committee members expressed concern that citizens are confusing the two Committees. Some members expressed the view that citizens mistakenly believe the school district and the Town need to have the same form of governance.

The Committee then received reviews of different forms of governance from Committee members. These reviews were:

- Status quo – Gary Nylen: In summary, Gary reviewed the current system and expressed the view that there is no need to change the charter, but that some useful adjustments could be made along the line of the improvements the Committee previously identified.
- Why have a budget Committee – Marge: In summary, Marge reported that the budget Committee studies the budget requests of each department as representatives of the voters so each budget does not have to be reviewed at Town Meeting. She opined that the budget Committee has done a good job. There are 7 members on the Committee, including a representative from the Selectmen and the School Board. The Committee agreed to discuss the role of the budget Committee in its report to the selectmen.
- Change number of Selectmen (and number to recommend 5 or 7) – Neil: In summary, Neil reported that 26 towns in NH have 5 selectmen and 6 have town councils and provided a list of the towns with 5 selectmen. Neil urged the Committee to support a recommendation of enlarging the number of selectmen in Bow to 5.

- Official Ballot Town Meeting -- Van: In summary, Van provided a 6 page handout, including a chart he said supports the conclusion that turn-out at meetings reflects interest and the level of controversial issues before the Town in any given year. Van included a sample ballot and the Committee members agreed that the recommendations of the Committee should include urging the Selectmen to provide a sample ballot to voters, possibly in the Town Report.
- Standard Town Council -- Karen: In summary, Karen reported that 7 towns have town council, each with an approximate population of more than 12,000. She expressed the view that it is not practical in Bow today, but should be reconsidered as an option as the Town grows.
- Representative Town Meeting -- Harry: In summary, Harry reported that with a representative town meeting, the Town would elect representatives by districts and those representative would vote on matters at the town meeting. This form is akin to the state legislature.
- Town Council with School authority – Gary Light: Gary sent an email saying there is no reason for Bow to consider the town council approach today.

The Committee agreed that these presentations would be made to the public forum on October 17, 2001, with each author editing materials before the session in order to provide a brief presentation.

The Committee members agreed that drafting of a final report should begin at the November 6, 2001 meeting. At that meeting the Committee members will decide which form of governance the Committee will recommend to the Selectmen.

The Committee will hold a public session to receive comments from citizens on October 17, 2001 at the Old Town Hall starting at 7:00 pm.

The Committee will hold an informational meeting at the Center of NH in Manchester on November 1, 2001 from 2:00 – 3:45 pm to receive comments from government officials from NH communities on their experiences with different forms of governance.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on October 30, 2001 at the Town Hall beginning at 7:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm.

Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Minutes of Meeting on October 30, 2001

The committee met in the Town Hall on October 30, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Marge Welch, Karen Wadsworth, Gary Nylen, and Harry Judd. Alternates present: Neil Ordway, Van Mosher, Rick Hiland, and Pam Urban-Morin.

Invited Participant: Richard Minard (NH Center for Public Policy Studies) and Linda Dianis (NH Municipal Assoc.)

The meeting was opened by the Chair. The minutes of the October 9, 2001, meeting were adopted with the correction of two typographical errors.

HANDOUTS:

Leon two sets of minutes from the Alternative School Government Committee: October 10th and October 25th.

The committee discussed the informational gathering that is to be held on November 1, 2001, at the NH Municipal Assoc. Annual Convention in Manchester. All members were encouraged to attend.

The committee next discussed the drafting of the report of the committee. It is due before the next town meeting, but the agreement of the committee was to get it to the Selectmen in December in order to increase the possibility that recommended changes could be acted upon in the near term. It was agreed that the report should be direct and that discussion of the components of the report and possibly the start of drafting should be addressed at the next meeting.

The committee discussed making a recommendation on the form of governance for the town as part of the report, along with other recommendations. The committee agreed to discuss the different forms of governance and decide on which form to recommend at the meeting on November 13, 2001.

The committee discussed the public informational session held in Bow and agreed to dispense with holding another public session on November 8th because there will not be a report to discuss at that time.

A discussion was held on how motions to restrict reconsideration should be made and actions by the moderator. It was decided that the Town Moderator should be invited to attend a meeting of the committee so there could be direct discussion of moderator rules and to gain his insights on how to improve the Town Meeting process. Secretary Judd is to contact the Moderator and arrange a date for his participation, preferably on November 13, 2001.

The committee discussed whether to recommend the creation of a Charter Commission to consider whether the Town Charter should be amended. The committee agreed that the committee would not recommend creating such a commission.

The next meeting of the committee will be held on November 6, 2001. The following meeting will be held on November 13, 2001.

TOWN ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

STUDY COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting on November 6, 2001

The Committee meeting was conducted in the Selectmen's Office at the Bow Municipal Building, Tuesday November 6, 2001, beginning at 7:00 PM.

Committee Members present: Leon Kenison (Chair), Gary Nylen and Marge Welch. Alternates present were Rick Hiland and Van Mosher. Invited participant: Linda Dianis of the NH Municipal Association.

The Minutes of the October 30, 2001 meeting were approved as presented.

Town Moderator Peter Imse offered to meet with the Committee but cannot during Tuesday nights. Other options were considered and it was agreed to reschedule the November 13 meeting to Thursday, November 15 thereby enabling Peter's attendance.

A brief discussion of the NHMA Forum, "A Town In Transition" was conducted and will be subject to more in depth discussion during the next meeting when other members will be present. General agreement was expressed that the Forum was a success (30± participants). Linda advised NHMA feels a similar session should be part of future convention programming.

The Committee focused on drafting recommendations previously receiving tentative endorsement.

1. Increase the number of Selectmen to five (5).
 - a. Will enable realistic workload distribution, committee liaison
 - b. Will reduce the probability of deadlock positions should one person not participate and the conflict of interest perception when but two Selectmen meet or communicate in any form or forum.
 - c. The increased Town population warrants increased representation at the Board level.
 - d. Increased representation should enhance the effectiveness of Board decisions and actions.
 - e. The Committee recommends this proposal be framed in a Town Warrant Article for the 2002 Town Meeting.
 - f. Re: RSA 41-8b

2. Change the municipal fiscal year from that of the calendar year to a July 1/June 30 period.
 - a. Will eliminate nearly 3-month speculative period between January 1 and Town Meeting action when no new budget exists.
 - b. Will coincide with School District and State Government fiscal year.
 - c. Should assist in eliminating expense of borrowing in anticipation.
 - d. RE: RSA 31:94-a, RSA 39:1-a.
3. Change the date of Town Meeting.
 - a. Will better correlate with fiscal year change recommended in 2.
 - b. More favorable weather is likely with a meeting of either the second Tuesday of April or May and should enhance citizen participation.
 - c. Suggest favorable consideration of April to minimize conflicts with outdoor and family activities and to allow sufficient time for processing follow-up action at the Town and State levels.
 - d. Recommend #2 and #3 as concurrent changes.
 - e. Re: RSA 31:94-a
4. Recommend one-week minimum separation between the Town Meeting and the School District Meeting.
 - a. Allows voters to better assess the impact of actions taken and needed.
 - b. May promote greater citizen participation.
 - c. Re: RSA 40:13
(Note) School district currently must hold its meeting between March 1 and March 25 (RSA 197:1) unless the official ballot referendum system (SB2) is adopted.
5. Town Report Modifications
 - a. Be more user friendly and informative about workings of municipal and school government.
 - b. Be completed and delivered in a more timely manner (eg. A minimum of three weeks prior to Town/School meetings). Include hard copy and electronic deliveries.
 - c. Include a current sample ballot.
 - d. Include Moderator's proposed rules.

- e. Include brief explanation of absentee ballot option.
- f. Explain in brief the citizen right to generate/author petition for warrant article(s).
- g. Re: RSA 41:13, 14

6. Improved Town Meeting Communications.

- a. Provide visual aid projections of articles and proposed amendments. Consider overhead projector, Power Point display with redundant backup options.
- b. Provide effective audio system with redundancy.
- c. Identify alternative locations with effective communication systems in the event voter turnout exceeds initial expectations.

7. Moderator Procedures.

- a. Make available prepublished rules minimizing time needed to articulate them. Suggest Town and School Meeting rules be similar.
- b. Review logistics of voter lines to better identify alphabetical separations and possible queuing balance.
- c. Increasing voting booths and/or a more efficient process could minimize waiting and increase voter participation. Consider additional voting locations as warranted.
- d. Increase the area of the "politics free" zone outside of the polling place. Will provide increased voter comfort and participation when "gauntlet running" perception is allayed.

- 8. Provide community access television to broadcast all town and school meetings including those of boards, committees, commissions, etc.
- 9. Promote updated voter checklist process providing more accurate number of potential voters and minimizing incidence of improper voting. Re: RSA 40:4-f.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leon Kenison, Sec. Pro Temp

Town Alternative Forms of Government Committee

Minutes November 15, 2001

Chairman Leon Kenison called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm in the Selectmen's Office at the Bow Municipal Building.. Members present were Chairman Kenison, Gary Nylen, Karen Wadsworth and Marge Welch. (Member Harry Judd entered later in the meeting.) Alternates present were Gary Light and Van Mosher. The Chairman asked Karen Wadsworth to take minutes for this meeting.

The minutes of the November 6, 2001 meeting were approved as presented.

The committee reviewed correspondence from Durham Town Administrator Todd Selig expressing his thanks for being invited to the Committee's forum at the NHMA Conference.

The Chairman distributed copies of a memo from Linda Dianis, NHMA, answering questions posed at the meeting on November 6th.

Noting that the information may be moot and/or obsolete, the Chair distributed, for informational purposes, a draft opinion ballot regarding the school district which he received from Mark Lefebvre, Chairman of the School Alternative Gov't. Committee.

Discussion then focused on the "forum" at the NHMA Conference. The municipal association was very happy with it, and participants there indicated they enjoyed the peer interaction. Gary Nylen thought it was enlightening – a good cross section of people and good discussion. He's glad he attended, and thinks it's obvious that having 5 selectmen would solve any "perceived" conflict situations. The Chairman was pleased that everyone was so candid. He said the Epsom participants were looking for answers to some of the same questions we are dealing with in this committee. He sent out approximately 30 letters to conference attendees to assure a good cross section of ideas. Van Mosher noted that one novel comment he heard at the forum was that one town has approximately 30 members on its budget committee! Apparently, including a better cross section of town residents helps to ensure passage of the budget. He noted that community access television is a very powerful tool in many towns. The Chairman noted that there were a couple of comments made to the effect that some feel that the budget committee is superfluous in SB2 towns. Van Mosher said that could be tied in with conflicts a town may have with selectmen and the budget committee. Karen Wadsworth noted that it had been an extremely interactive meeting. All committee members who were able to attend agreed it had been time well spent!

Gary Nylen passed out a draft format for the committee's report which he prepared for the committee to consider as an idea.

The Chairman requested that the committee make a decision to recommend or not recommend the various forms of government that we have studied. He asked if there was consensus that we recommend the status quo. The sense of the committee was that there was not. The Chairman then reiterated the requirement that only the 5 voting members of the committee were entitled to a vote. He indicated that he would only vote to break a tie. A majority vote is needed for any recommendation. This process is not new – it has been in place since the committee was created. With no consensus, we must vote.

Harry Judd entered the meeting at 8:05 pm.

The Chairman reiterated that the committee will vote since there is no consensus on recommending the status quo.

Gary Light said he recognized from the beginning of the committee's work that as an alternate he could share his opinions but might not be able to vote.

The Chairman put the governmental forms to a vote as follows:

<u>Form</u>	<u>Recommend</u>	<u>Not Recommend</u>	
Status Quo (Selectmen/Town Meeting)	3	1	
Representative Town Meeting	0	4	
"Senate Bill 2"	1	2	(1 abstention)
Town Council	0	4	
City Council with School Authority	0	4	

It was pointed out that the committee discussed recommending that this study process be redone in approximately 5 years. There was no objection to including that recommendation in our final report.

Town Moderator Peter Imse joined the committee for a discussion of election day/town meeting issues that fall within the statutory authority of the moderator.

Regarding the "gauntlet" that voters must endure when they come to cast their ballots on election day, he said he is sensitive to the issue. The "polling place" could extend to the whole piece of property, including the parking lot. It was suggested that the line which candidates stand behind be moved to allow greater ease of access for voters.

Inside the polling place, the lines have occasionally been slow to check in when they are very busy. The last presidential election was the only time he thought it was too tight. Could have four check in lines at peak hours. Better signage is needed for lines.

Moderator Imse distributed copies of the rules he uses at Town Meeting. He usually reads from these in summary format. Some or all could be printed in the Town Report. Key points could be those which have caused problems in the past. Harry Judd suggested a "rights and responsibilities of voters" reference page. Karen Wadsworth suggested including statutory authority. There was general discussion of reconsideration. It was noted that #12 of the Moderator's rules should state that a motion to reconsider can only be made after the vote on the Article is *announced*.

The Chairman said the committee is hoping to see consolidation/conformity of the town and school moderators' rules. Mr. Imse said they are using very similar rules now. Regarding the need for additional polling places, it was noted that it is up to the Selectmen to establish these.

Harry Judd asked if the Moderator would consider putting signs in the voting booths with instructions for people who need help or who spoil a ballot and need a new one. The idea will be considered.

Van Mosher suggested having an overhead projector available at Town Meeting so that amendments and Articles as amended can be displayed.

The Moderator indicated three methods of balloting at town meetings that he has seen or heard of: using the checklist for each vote; using the checklist upon entering the meeting and receiving a packet of ballots; "passing the ballot box".

The committee thanked the Moderator for his willingness to spend some time in discussion of issues that have been subjects of committee discussion.

Future meetings of the committee were set as follows:

Nov. 27 th	7:00 pm	Work on Report
Dec. 6 th	7:00 pm	Finalize Report

The goal will be to meet with the Selectmen to present our report on December 20th.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Wadsworth

**Town Alternative Forms of Government Study Committee
Minutes of Meeting on November 27, 2001**

The committee was scheduled to meet in the Town Hall on November 27, 2001 beginning at 7 PM.

After waiting 30 minutes, a quorum was not present and the meeting was cancelled.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on December 6, 2001.

Town Alternative Forms of Government Committee
Minutes
December 6, 2001

Chairman Leon Kenison called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in the Selectmen's Office at the Bow Municipal Building. Members present were Chairman Kenison, Karen Wadsworth and Marge Welch. (Member Harry Judd entered the meeting shortly after it convened.) Alternate Neil Ordway was also present. The Chairman asked Karen Wadsworth to take minutes for this meeting.

The minutes of the November 15, 2001 meeting were approved as presented. The meeting scheduled for November 27, 2001 was not held due to lack of a quorum.

The committee reviewed correspondence which consisted of a letter to the Bow Times from Mark Lefebvre, Chairman of the School Alternative Government Committee.

Neil Ordway inquired as to why local moderators do not use Robert's Rules of Order. The Chairman explained the complexity of Robert's. He referred to Town Moderator Peter Imse's rules and reiterated that the committee has asked Imse to meet with the School District Moderator with the hope of coordinating their rules.

The draft report prepared by Harry Judd and Karen Wadsworth was distributed for review. It was pointed out that material submitted for consideration by member Gary Nylen at an earlier committee meeting had been incorporated into the report.

Harry Judd entered the meeting.

Chairman Kenison read a proposal that he had drafted.

During discussion, it was pointed out that several items, including all committee minutes, would be appended and made part of the official report. The committee decided that Judd and Wadsworth would redraft the report incorporating Kenison's review of the governmental forms studied by the committee. This will be circulated to the committee for signature prior to December 13th.

It was noted that by signing the report members of the committee are not indicating agreement with all recommendations, but are acknowledging that this report describes the committee's work.

Wadsworth asked that the record indicate her concern that alternate member Van Mosher has once again been quoted in the print media in a manner that suggests he is speaking for the committee. This despite the fact that the committee has made it clear that only the Chairman is to speak for the Committee at this point in our work.

The Chairman thanked all committee members for their contributions to the committee's work. The committee is scheduled to meet with the Selectmen to discuss the report on December 20th at 7:00 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Wadsworth

