

SCOPE OF WORK – TOWN GOVERNANCE CONSULTING SERVICES
November 23, 2022

A. Introduction

The Town of Natick seeks a qualified consulting partner (“Consultant”) to assist the Town with an evaluation and recommendation of its form of government, which is currently under review by the Town Governance Study Committee (“TGSC” or “Committee”).

1. Cover letter
2. Description of firm and services provided
3. Description of work to be delivered
4. Examples of similar projects
5. 3 to 5 references
6. Pricing structure
7. Required Quote Form

B. Required Quoting Party Background and Qualifications

Successful Quoting Party shall have a minimum of five (5) years' experience in contracts with cities and towns of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

C. Natick’s Current Form of Government

The Town of Natick is governed by its Town Charter, which was adopted in 1980 and has had minor revisions in the ensuing 40+ years. Natick operates under a Representative Town Meeting-Select Board-Town Administrator form of government. Town Meeting currently has 180 elected members, and is advised by a 15-member Finance Committee appointed by the Moderator. The 5-member Select Board, elected for 3-year terms, hires and supervises the Town Administrator. The Select Board also hires the Town Counsel, Fire Chief, Police Chief, Emergency Management Director, Comptroller, Parking Clerk, and Director of Veterans’ Services/Veteran’s Burial Officer, and appoints members of numerous committees. The Town Administrator is responsible for appointing all other Town personnel (excluding the Town Clerk, who is currently elected to a 3-year term, and School employees, who fall under the authority of the School Superintendent and the School Committee), with 15-day notice given to the Select Board, who has the right to affirm or reject such appointments.

D. Charge of the Town Governance Study Committee

The Natick Select Board has charged the Committee as follows. For purposes of this solicitation, Proposers should consider the timeline described below to be extended.

Purpose is to review the efficacy of the town’s current organizational structure, including the form of government and by-laws and provide recommendations to the Select Board. The committee shall:

- *Study the town’s form of government and governance*
- *Examine models of government in comparable communities*

- *Identify strengths and weaknesses in Natick's current government, and recommend any amendments to the charter, bylaws, and governing practices so as to improve the town's form of government and governance*
- *Facilitate public engagement on, and the public's discussion of the committee's work.*

Quarterly updates shall be provided to the Select Board throughout the work of the committee to ensure an iterative process with the community.

An interim report shall be submitted to the Select Board within 6 months from the organization of the committee.

A final report of the committee's findings and any recommended amendments to the charter, bylaws and governing practices will be due to the Select Board by the end of the calendar year (2022).

Committee will consist of nine members at large appointed by the Select Board. The committee shall have professional support including but not limited to a municipal government consultant, to advise and support its work.

Upon submittal of the final report to the Select Board the committee shall be considered discharged.

E. Committee Work Undertaken to Date

The TGSC began its work in April 2022. Following organization, the Committee decided to undertake research to better understand the benefits and drawbacks of Natick's current form of government. It began this research by interviewing key stakeholders who were expected to be very familiar with Town government. 61 key stakeholders were identified, including department heads and elected or appointed leaders of boards and committees. The TGSC developed 8 open-ended questions to be asked of these individuals. Each interviewee was asked the same questions, to avoid influencing responses, although follow-up questions were permitted.

The TGSC conducted interviews with 48 stakeholders; 13 did not participate for various reasons. A Stakeholder Interview Report is available at <https://sites.google.com/natickma.org/tgsc/resources>.

Subsequently, the Committee fielded a survey of current and recent former Town Meeting members and Town committee members, as well as current Town and School employees. The survey included multiple choice questions about participation in Town Meeting and Town government, and satisfaction with the structure and performance of Town government, and open-ended questions for respondents to elaborate on their opinions. Approximately 250 individuals responded by the October 3 deadline. A report of these results is available at: <https://sites.google.com/natickma.org/tgsc/resources>.

A report of the Committee's activities during its first 3 months is available at the following link: <https://sites.google.com/natickma.org/tgsc/resources>.

Additional materials about the work of the TGSC, including meeting agendas and minutes, may be found on the Committee web site at <https://sites.google.com/natickma.org/tgsc>.

F. Project Description and Desired Consulting Services

The Committee was charged to identify opportunities to improve local government in Natick through recommending changes, if any, to our form of government. As the Successful Quoting Party, the Consultant is expected to contribute as follows to this project by completing the following objectives.

- The Consultant is expected to use the work products of the Committee, meetings with Committee members and other stakeholders, review of Natick's current Charter and relevant by-laws, and the Consultant's knowledge and examination of similar processes in comparable communities to:
 - identify the relevant options to improve the form of local government in Natick,
 - address the desired outcomes that are identified by Natick stakeholders, and
 - describe the means by which these alternatives may be implemented.
- The Consultant will consider and document the following for each of the possible changes and alternative models of government under consideration:
 - advantages and disadvantages,
 - short- and long-term costs, and
 - benefits and deficiencies.
- The Consultant is expected to provide their well-documented research in writing suitable for inclusion in the final report.
- The Consultant should be prepared to facilitate meetings with the Committee and with other stakeholders as necessary.
- The Consultant will facilitate at least one (1) public forum.
- The Consultant will review up to two (2) versions of the final report and provide their input and review. The Committee will write the final report. Documents provided by the Consultant, e.g., memos may become part of the final report.

In the course of the engagement, the Committee and Consultant may agree to modify the scope of work within the general public objectives of this solicitation, to the extent permitted by law, subject to agreement on terms.

G. Consultant Selection

The Committee will recommend the award of a contract, if at all, to the responsible and responsive Quoting Party submitting the lowest price.

I. Anticipated Project Process and Timeline

The anticipated process for this project will include:

- Consultant participation in up to twelve (12) meetings. Meetings may be with the Committee, key stakeholders, (at least) one (1) public forum, or some other group or individuals. Meetings may be held in person or via remote participation (e.g., Zoom). Phone conversations with the Committee Chair or other Committee members are not considered to constitute meetings.
- An introductory meeting, considered Meeting 1 (of up to 12 meetings), with the Committee to discuss the project, review issues and desired outcomes identified to date, and assign next step tasks.
- Review of feedback obtained in interviews and surveys performed to date (this review would ideally take place prior to the introductory meeting).
- Further research regarding issues as warranted; this could include follow up interviews or written interactions with stakeholders, etc.
- Consideration, documentation, and discussion of other forms of municipal government in Massachusetts that could address the issues raised in the course of the Committee's work.
- At least one (1) public forum.
- Preparation of the draft final report by the Committee, review by the Consultant, and finalization by the Committee. This may involve review of up to two (2) versions of the full final report by the Consultant.

The final report of the Committee's findings will include:

- any recommended amendments to Natick's current Charter, by-laws and governing practices, and/or
- other actions or changes to Natick's form of government to consider.

The following timeline is planned:

Early January 2023: Introductory meeting.

Q1 Calendar 2023: Research issues identified and options to lessen or eliminate those issues. Document findings and options. Begin preparing background sections of Committee report.

Late Q1/early Q2 2023: Public forum(s)

Q2 Calendar 2023: Complete draft of Committee report, review, finalize.

A timeline that requires substantial extension into or beyond Q3 Calendar 2023 will not meet the needs of the Natick community.