

Select Board Size: Information for Georgetown

This summary outlines practical considerations as voters consider whether the Georgetown Select Board should remain at 3 members or expand to 5. In weighing the question, residents may wish to consider representation, efficiency, continuity, accountability, quorum needs, the availability of qualified candidates, and how the town's current form of government functions in practice.

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TEXT OF THE CITIZEN PETITION APPEARING ON TOWN WARRANT

To see if the Town shall vote to expand the number of current elected Select Board members from 3 to a total of 5 with the election of the additional 2 members to occur as soon as is legally possible.

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Possible advantages of 5

- Range of viewpoints and more people to represent the town
- Absences are less likely to halt business because a quorum may be easier to maintain
- Liaison committee duties can be shared more widely
- Some voters may prefer a larger board as the town plans for the future

Possible advantages of 3

- Often more efficient, easier to schedule, and faster to assemble when action is needed
- No increased costs to the Town
- No increased workload for the Town Administrator or other town employees
- Better meets the needs of a small town where filling seats with engaged, qualified candidates can be difficult
- Retains the current structure and continuity of the town's present governance model
- Can provide clearer accountability to voters because responsibility is concentrated

Possible drawbacks of 5

- More candidates are needed over time, and vacancies or write-ins can create complications or attract candidates that lack serious interest
- Increased costs for the town in stipends and salary adjustments at least for Town Administrator
- A 5-member board requires 3 for a quorum, so two disengaged or absent members can make decision-making harder
- Meetings involve more coordination, longer discussion, and greater administrative burden
- A larger board may be more unwieldy and may not improve outcomes in a small town
- Potential for longer Board meetings
- Possibility of losing engaged committee members to run for the Select Board, with some Committees already having vacancies.
- May need to convert to a Town Manager form of governance to address daily town needs

Possible drawbacks of 3

- An absence can slow action or make it harder to conduct business
- Fewer members may mean less representation of different viewpoints
- Liaison committee duties are shared by fewer officials
- Some residents may prefer a larger board over time for broader participation

Sagadahoc City / Town	Charter?	Size of Governing Body	Population (2020 Census)
Arrowsic	No	3	480
Bath	Yes	9	8,765
Bowdoin	No	3	3,139
Bowdoinham	No	5	3,062
Georgetown	No	3	1,057
Phippsburg	No	3	2,156
Richmond	No	5	3,523
Topsham	No	5	9,565
West Bath	No	3	1,911
Woolwich	No	5	3,072
Non-Sagadahoc City / Town	Charter?	Size of Governing Body	Population (2020 Census)
Boothbay Harbor	Yes	5	2,027
Brunswick	Yes	9	21,756
Edgecomb	No	3	1,188
Harpwell	No	3	5,031
Southport	No	3	622
Westport	No	3	719
Wiscasset	Yes	5	3,742

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The Town of Georgetown has a three person Select Board. The Town Office is served by a Town Administrator, Finance Director, Town Clerk / Tax Collector, and Deputy Town Clerk. The Town shares a Code Enforcement Officer with Arrowsic and Woolwich. There are three permanent Transfer Station Staff Members and some substitutes. The Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department has its own Board of Directors and is overseen by the Fire Chief.

Georgetown has various Boards and Committees. These include the Cemetery District Trustees (3), Town Owned Property Management Board (3), School Committee (3), Board of Appeals (5 members, 2 alternates), Conservation Commission (5 members, associate members), Financial Advisory Committee (5 members, 2 alternates), Harbor Committee (5 members, 3 alternates), Planning Board (5 members, two alternates), Recreation Committee (5 or more members), Shellfish Committee (5 or more members), and Solid Waste Management Committee (5 or more members). There are currently several vacancies.

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Since 2011, Georgetown has had 10 contested Select Board Elections and 7 uncontested Select Board Elections.