

5-Why does the Charter recommend a DPW? Will this help fix the water problem?

For years, residents have been voicing concerns with the quality of water in town, and that has been heard throughout the Charter Commission process. While the Commission cannot directly address the causes of these problems, we have recommended a number of changes that we believe will make the problem easier to solve, including:

1. Recommending the formation of a Department of Public Works (DPW), which would centralize all responsibility for public works.
2. Granting the Town Council the authority to set policy and rates for water services, which would eliminate a separate Water and Sewer Commission.

We expect that a centralized DPW will operate more efficiently and effectively than the separate departments do today. Consolidating into one department will also allow a Director to assign staff and resources where it is most needed to address challenges that we are facing.

The elected Water and Sewer Commission has struggled for years to attract candidates at the ballot and retain members— two of its three seats will be vacant in April. By eliminating the Water and Sewer Commission we will be able to streamline decisions about how we solve our water challenges and build a more consistent set of solutions through the Town Council.

Both of these decisions were the subject of much discussion within the Charter Commission, and universally recommended by the body, consistent with other recommendations focused on building efficiency and accountability.