

Town does not need micro-managing

The Winsted Charter establishes the governmental structure of the town and sets forth the duties of the legislators (town meeting/selectmen) and the chief executive (town manager).

Selectmen are supposed to set policy. For example, the selectmen should decide the goals and objectives for the coming year. It is then the responsibility of the town manager to implement the policy and develop a budget. The result of this process should be a budget to further these goals.

Without bothering to look at the reason, some say that the town manager model is unsuccessful in Winsted. The revolving door of town managers over the past 25 years is because selectmen do not understand their roles or the role of the town manager.

Management and administration of town departments is the job of the town manager and department heads. Instead of focusing on policy goals, selectmen interfere and try to administer and manage. Every Board of Selectmen in the past 25 years has engaged in this bad habit — some more than others. This constant interference is how the former finance director pulled the wheel over so many eyes. Hearty contributed to the

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instability of the town manager and manipulated the revolving door to cover his crimes.

That certain selectmen micro-manage the town's business and prevent the manager from acting as the executive is unprofessional and bad for the town.

In the 1960s Winsted adopted the town manager form of government to remove partisan politics from the day-to-day management of town operations by insulating the town manager as an independent executive. Richard S. Childs, the founder of the manager form of government, said:

"The mayoral form of government has not consistently provided good government. It has tended to produce poor executives and has furthered the spoils system. Why? Because it attempts to elect administrators to manage the city's business in denial of the principle to choose qualified administrators, appoint to find representative policy-makers, elect. This supports the sound principle that there can, and

should, be a separation of politics and administration."

Nationwide, nearly 4,000 local governments operate under the manager form of government. It continues to be the most popular form of municipal government in the United States. The National Civic League's Model City Charter (Defining Good Government in a New Millennium) continues to endorse the manager form of municipal government. The primary standard of the Model Charter is that power be vested in a legislative body that appoints a professional manager.

There are many towns in Connecticut where the town manager does not change when a different party is voted into office. This is because the day-to-day management of the town is not, and should not be, a political issue.

Winsted doesn't need to be micro-managed. It needs to be properly managed by a professional manager insulated from partisan politics. This insures consistent services to everyone in the community, not just insiders.

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