

TOWN OF ELMORE, VT
Special Information Meeting to Increase Select Board from 3 to 5

Meeting Minutes - prepared by G. Schwartz
Status: Approved

Meeting Date December 9, 2025

Start Time: 6:00 PM **Adjourn:** 7:35 PM

Meeting Attendees: See attached lists

Meeting Recording

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/oN3ReraPaTEZThA6rwgldmhFCXwJTMcyGJzFluVhSt0K9w6i7SHgByl8Kvb_dGyl.L26QN3lenSYhROG9?startTime=1765321103000

Passcode: 9Hx+kNx?

Recording will be available for 30 days from the meeting date.

1. SPECIAL TOPICS

A. Increasing the Elmore Select Board from 3 members to 5

a) Call to Order & Welcome

- Moderator Bruce Olsson opened the meeting, noting it was a special informational session to discuss the petition proposing to increase the Elmore Selectboard from three to five members. He also honored the recent passing of long-time Town Moderator John Gilmore, quoting Gilmore's belief in "virtue," defined as working for the common good and showing respect for differing views.
- Bruce Olsson gave a brief history of the petition:
 - ❖ Three versions were submitted; the first two were rejected on VLCT guidance.
 - ❖ The third petition was submitted in October and accepted with 42 valid signatures, exceeding the required 5% of registered voters.
- The proposed ballot item (to be voted on at a Special Town Meeting on January 7, 2026, at 6:00 PM) reads:

ARTICLE 1

Should the Town of Elmore elect two additional Selectboard members- one for a 1-year term and one for a 2-year term-to expand the Selectboard from 3 to 5 members, with all future terms to be 2 years, in accordance with Title 17 V.S.A. § 2650

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- Meeting Format - The Moderator outlined the following format:
 - ❖ The petitioners will present their reasons for proposing to increase the Elmore Select Board from 3 members to 5. (15 minutes)
 - ❖ The opposition will present their reasons for not increasing the Elmore Select Board from 3 members to 5. (15 minutes)
 - ❖ Public comments and questions with alternating public questions and comments (up to 3 minutes each). No one would be allowed a second question until all who wished to speak had spoken.

b) Presentation - In Favor of the Petition (Nancy Davis)

- Nancy Davis, speaking on behalf of the petitioners, made the following points:
 - ❖ Argued that a 5-member board would improve:
 - Continuity and quorum stability
 - Geographic representation (village, lake, Elmore Mtn. Rd., East Elmore, etc.)
 - Accessibility and accountability
 - Checks and balances
 - Compliance with Open Meeting Law without logistical limitations
 - Opportunity for working subcommittees and outreach
 - ❖ Noted 86% of Vermont towns use 5-member boards.
 - ❖ Estimated annual cost: \$2,000 (two additional stipends).
 - ❖ Emphasized that this was not criticism of current Selectboard, but a push for forward-focused governance capacity.

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c) Presentation - Opposing the Petition (Hans de Boer, Resident)

Hans de Boer speaking on behalf of the opposition, made the following points:

- ❖ Emphasized Elmore's small population and limited governance needs.
- ❖ Cited success with past initiatives (like broadband access) without having to be a member of the Board you can still influence Board decisions.
- ❖ Raised concerns about:
 - Lack of a clear problem the petition solves.
 - Potential voter fatigue and difficulties filling five seats over time.
 - Risk of diluting decision-making with too many voices.
- ❖ Suggested that citizen involvement in committees or task forces is a better solution than increasing the board size.
- ❖ Over the past 16 years, Elmore has held 16 Select Board elections. One each March at Town Meeting and only four of those elections were contested, having more than one person seek an open seat. This implies limited public engagement or competition.
- ❖ Stated that 2/3 of Vermont Towns with populations less than 1000 residents have a 3 member Select Board.
- ❖ Concluded with concerns about "unintended consequences" of expanding the board without actual identified needs for a 5 person Select Board.

d) Public Comment and Q&A

- ❖ Supporters emphasized lack of representation in rural areas, improved communication, and need for broader decision-making in light of rising costs and state mandates.
- ❖ Skeptics questioned whether more members would solve systemic issues or just add redundancy.
- ❖ Others defended existing structures, noting that opportunities for input already exist via meetings and Town Meeting Day.
- ❖ Several speakers emphasized the importance of preparing for future complexity, not just addressing today's needs.

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e) **Closing Remarks**

- ❖ The Moderator thanked all presenters and attendees for their respectful engagement.

f) **Next Steps:**

- ❖ Special Town Vote Scheduled: **January 7, 2026, at 6:00 PM**

Minutes Respectfully Created and Submitted by:

Glenn Schwartz

12/12/25

Town Of Elmore
Meeting Attendance Record

ENTER MEETING DATE:	12/9/2025
ENTER MEETING NAME:	Special Select Board Meeting Informational meeting to Increase The Select Board

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY
REASON FOR ATTENDING

Reason for Attendance

YOUR NAME (printed)	Observer	Interested Party	Principal Party	Expert or Consultant	WHY ARE YOU ATTENDING?
Shorty					
Veronica Juarez					
Nancy Davis					
Michelle Lacasse					
Sandra Lacasse					
Glen Schwartz					
Cheryl Schwartz					
Warren West	✓				
Sharon Fortune					SB Member
Dave Perre >	✓				
Denise Krohn		✓			
Caroline DeVore			✓		
Jon Valentin	✓		✓		
Sarah Dunn					
Neil Clark			✓		
COLIN REYNOLDS	✓				

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ENTER MEETING NAME: Special Select Board Meeting
Informational meeting to Increase
The Select Board

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY
REASON FOR ATTENDING

Reason for Attendance

YOUR NAME (printed)	Observer	Interested Party	Principal Party	Expert or Consultant	WHY ARE YOU ATTENDING?
Stephen N. Hugg		✓			
MARK BROWN		✓			
George Keess		✓			
Brent Hosking		✓			
Bruce Olson		✓			
JOE CICCARO		✓			
Hans de Boer		✓			
DAVE DiDOMENICO		✓			
Christina KOZA		✓			
Fidel J. Bondreau		✓			
Alan Cass		✓			

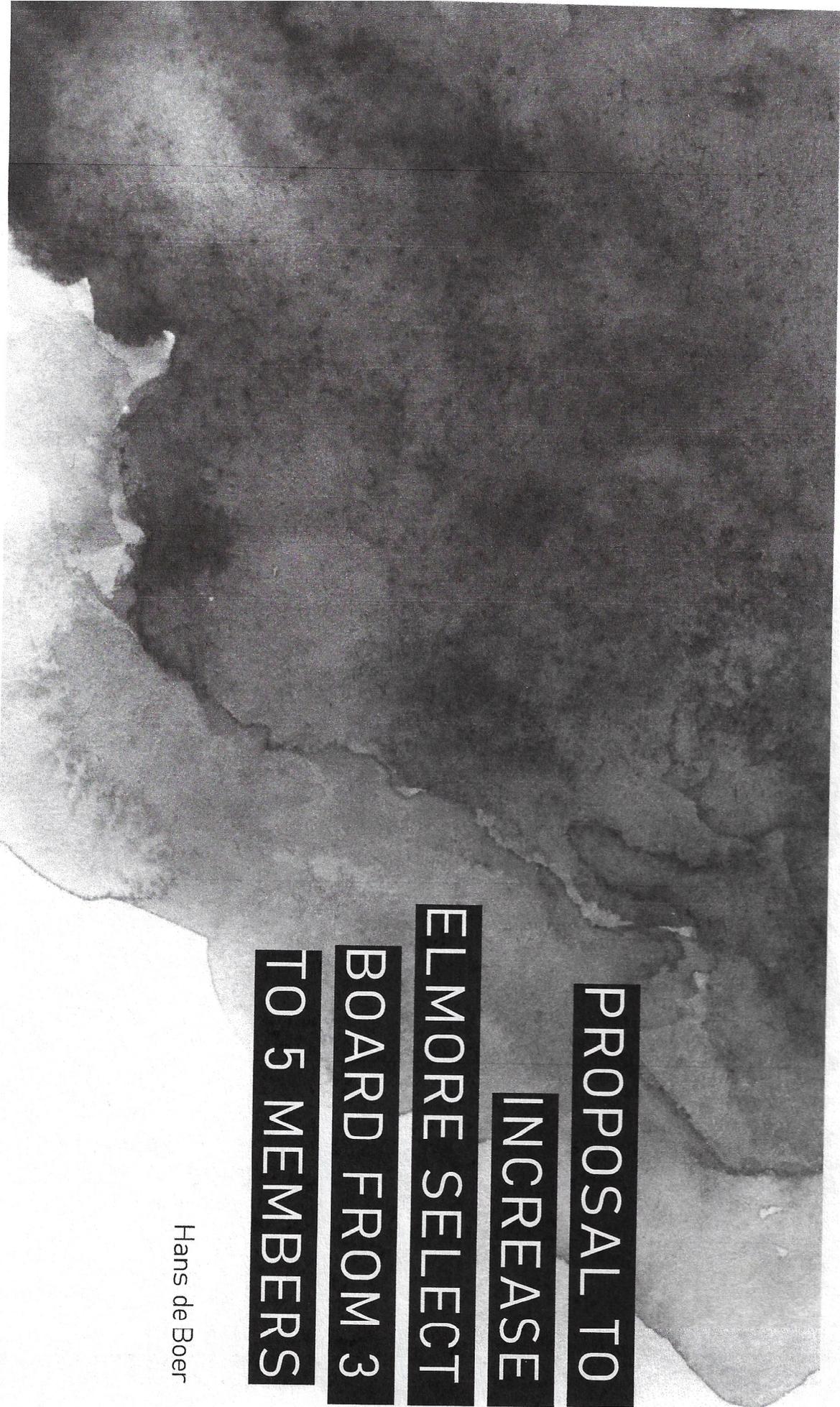
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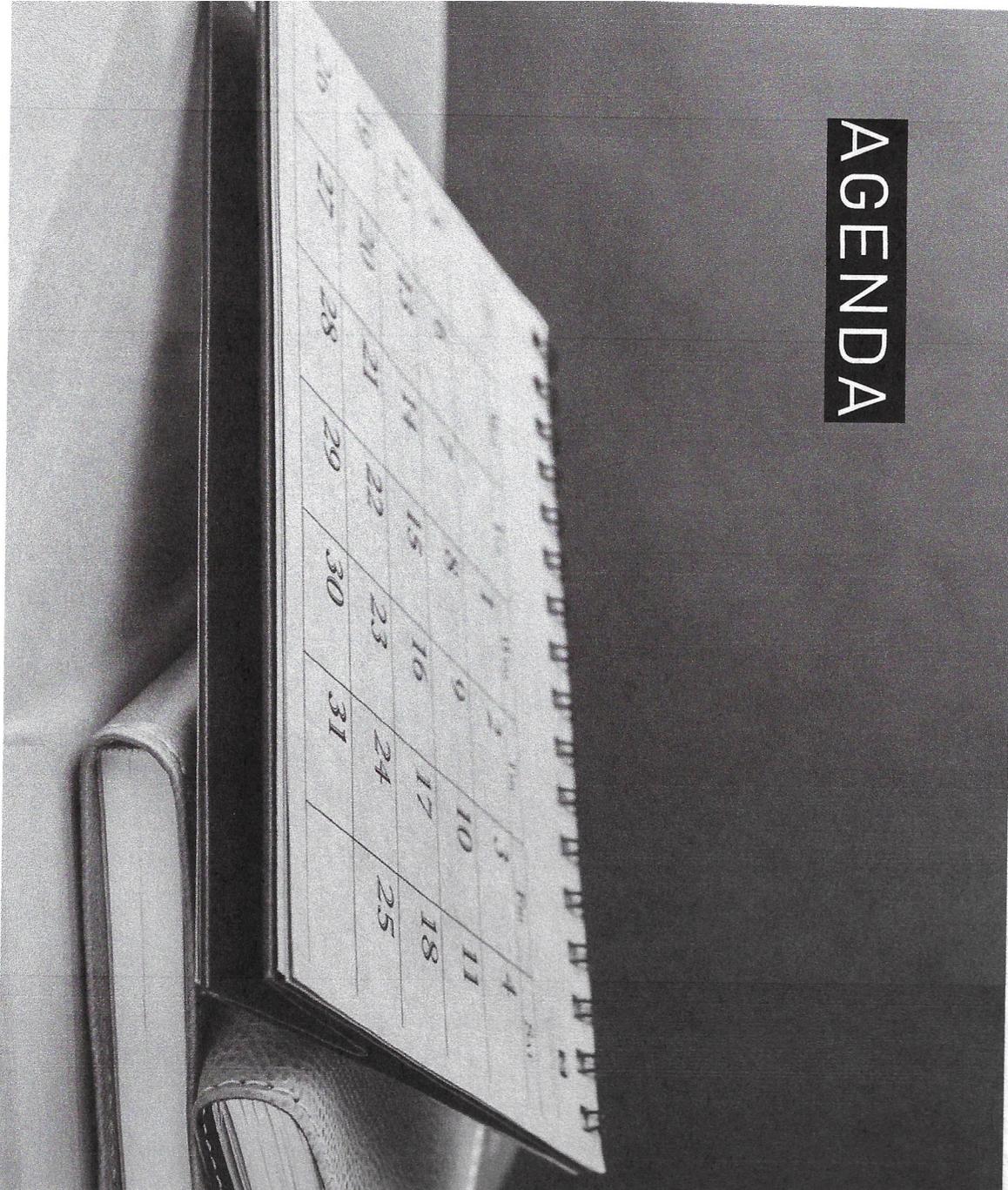
YOUR NAME (printed)	REASON FOR ATTENDING				WHY ARE YOU ATTENDING?
	Observer	Interested Party	Principal Party	Expert or Consultant	
Zoom Dolan Patrick	I.T.				
- Molly Brewer					
Leslie					
Rosemarie West					
Dawn Kress					
Elsie Brennan					
Liz Dickson					
Susan Zukwert					
Michelle Greeson					
Adam Audeit					
Sharon Drepper					
Trevor Braun					
Barb Lacasse					
Mary Letourneau					



**PROPOSAL TO
INCREASE
ELMORE SELECT
BOARD FROM 3
TO 5 MEMBERS**

Hans de Boer

AGENDA



- Brief intro
- What is the problem?
- Counterpoint
- Competition
- Conclusion

WHO AM I?

Born and raised on VT family dairy farm

- Community was key to survival

Moved to Elmore in 2017

- Immediate was able to join the Planning Commission along with my wife, Michelle
- Stepped down during home construction in 2020
- Michelle still on EPC, also Town Health Officer

Decided Elmore needed better access to modern communication capabilities.

- Was able to help the town switch from CV Fiber CUD to Lamolite Valley CUD. Result was fiber internet access for the town years sooner than initially proposed by CV Fiber.

Have 5-year-old and a core community here.

- Motivated to assist in the long-term success of this town.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?



Several members of the town felt strongly that the current 3 member Select Board is not serving the needs of the town.



Elmore is a "bedroom" community.

Population of 886 in 2020. Ranks 182 out of 247 towns in VT
No major industry/business



Any significant changes happening in the next several years?



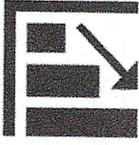
Are there actual scenarios that have occurred that a three-person board was not sufficient?

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? TAXES?

- The town reappraisal has to happen every ten years and the process is not something that the Select Board can have any influence for.
- Education tax: the Select Board does not have any say on this. This is something that the School Board is responsible for.
 - That budget is voted on.
- All major expenses in the town are voted on.
 - Even smaller expenses can be brought up at town meeting and discussed.
 - There are budget meetings that are open to the community.
 - Budgets are balanced and traditionally the budgets have had extra that was applied to the following year.

COUNTERPOINT



Better Representation

Elmore has 6 "districts". 3 most populous zones are represented. Other three have minimal population. Everyone is allowed to show up to meetings, typically only a handful are there.

Town Meeting Day is great, but not everyone is able to make it and be there to vote in person. With 5 people on the board, this issue will still exist.

- 14 November 2023 there was a special meeting to have an Australian Ballot.



Improved Checks and Balances

Everyone is allowed to join the meetings. This petition is a prime example of checks and balances.

All Select Board decisions can be reviewed by the town and reelection is the ultimate check and balance.

Are we solving a problem of representation or are we solving a problem of a lack of participation?



Improved decision making

Unless we have a significantly higher number of folks running for these positions, the lack of competition for who is on the board could result in the opposite being true.

Everything is voted on, and everything can be reviewed after the fact and questioned.

Broader Expertise

- Currently the board consists of three individuals with uniquely different backgrounds.
- Terms are only three years, if the town is able to move forward due to a lack of expertise of three select board members, having five members with less competition may not be the answer.

Less Risk of Deadlock

- 3 and 5 are both odd numbers which will prevent deadlock.

Easier Workload

- Has any board member raised concerns over their workload serving the town?
 - The efforts over the past several years to build the new town garage were an exceptional circumstance and the three-person board was able to move it forwards in a productive manner.

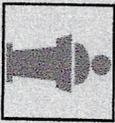
Do we even have enough folks interested to have a five-person board?

- 2/3rds of towns with a population less than 1000 people have 3 person Select Boards
- Is the need for more Select Board members due to not having enough folks for normal town business?



Elections & Participation (2009-2025):

Over the past 16 years, Elmore has held 16 Selectboard elections, one each March at Town Meeting. Only four of those elections were contested, having more than 1 person seek an open seat.



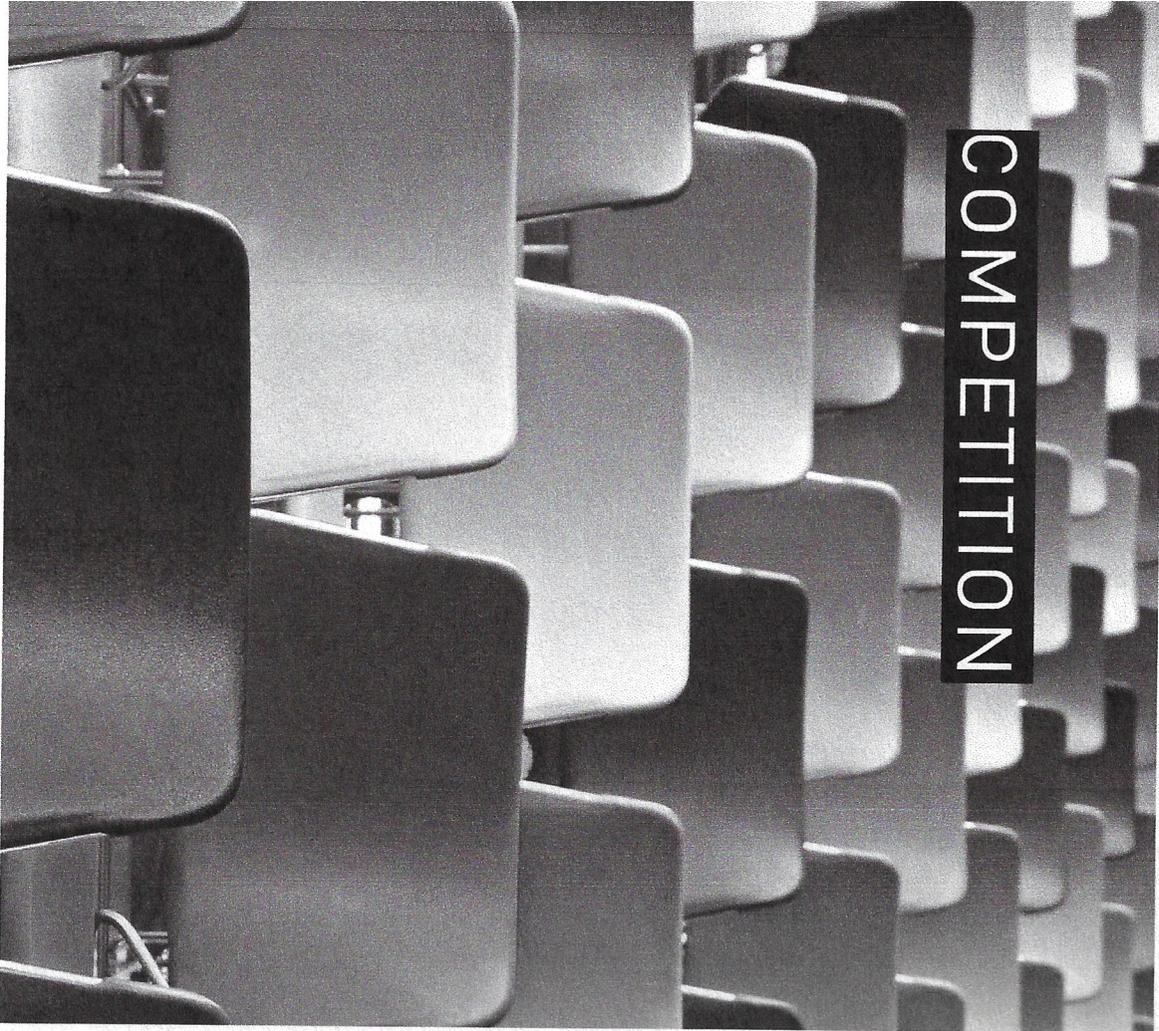
In every one of those four, the incumbent chose not to run again. No seated board member has been challenged at the ballot box for nearly 20 years. Is there a lack of interest in participation? Is there general satisfaction with the board members in office?



We also continue to face challenges in filling other civic roles. The new EMS Advisory Board took eight weeks of outreach and personal calls to form — despite being open to any resident. The Public Works/Water Board has had an open seat since July, and so far, no one has stepped forward.

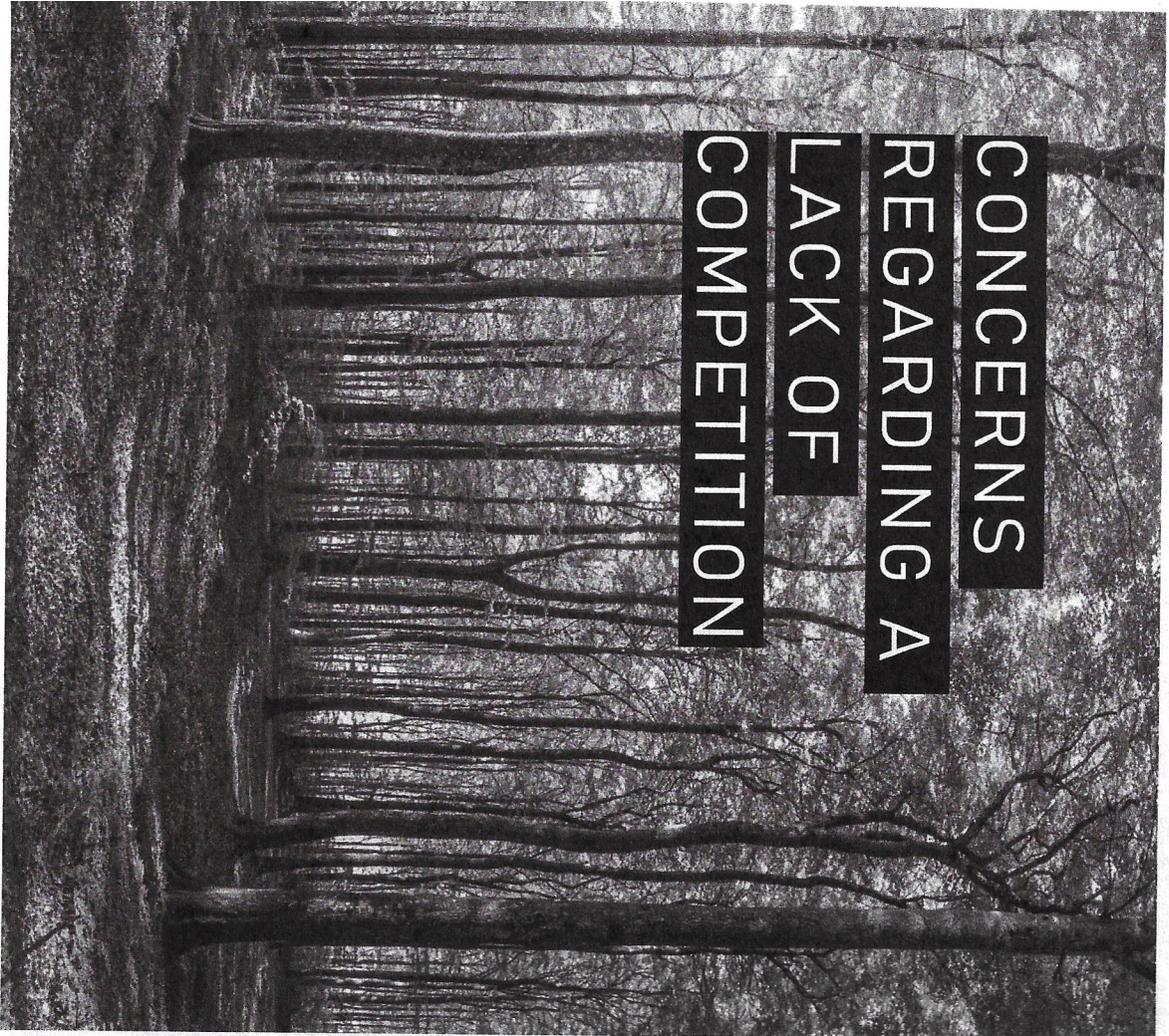


None of this is unusual in a small town. People are busy. Life is full. But it does raise questions about how many active volunteers and potential candidates we realistically have to draw from



COMPETITION

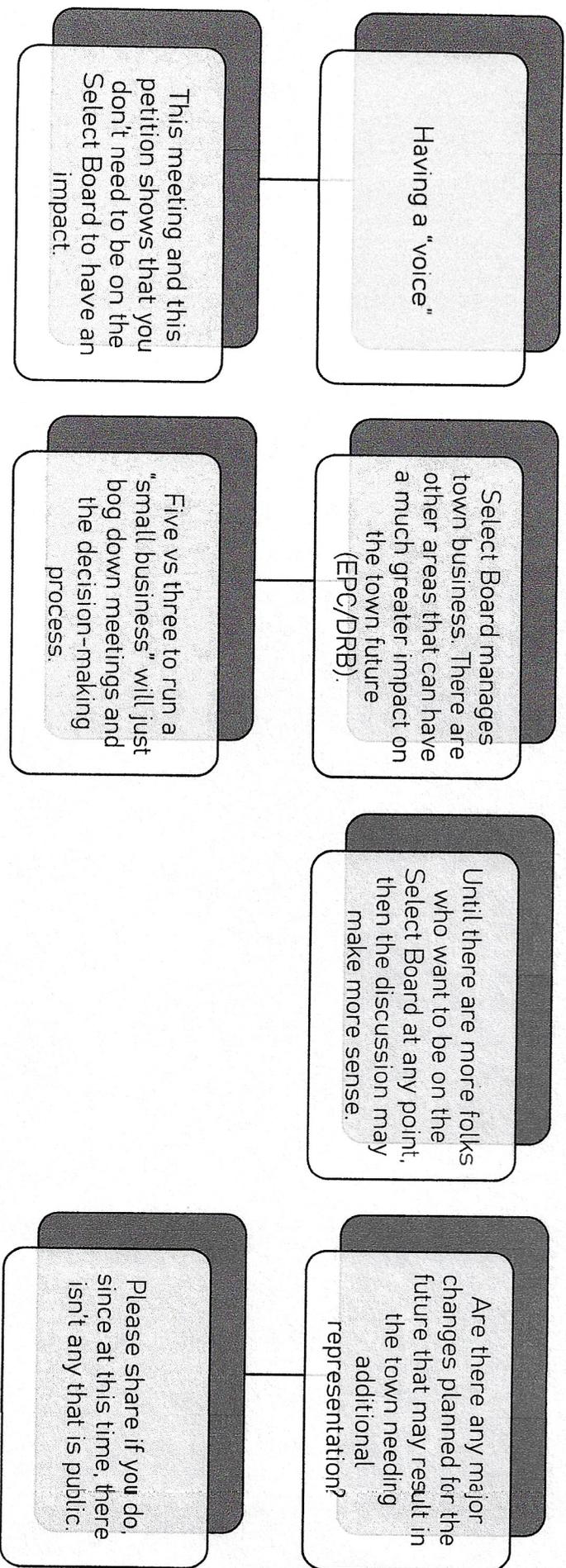
- Most significant advantage of a three-person Select Board is competition.
 - More options for fewer seats ensures we get the right people in the right position.
 - If there are folks who are interested in helping the town, but did not win the Select Board seat, or are not interested in being on the Select Board, there are many other opportunities/positions within the town to help improve the town.
- “Running” for the seat would allow the town to better understand the complex issues.
 - Incumbent would have to defend their position, contender would have to build a valid stance on those complex issues.
- No competition in the past other than when an incumbent decided not to run again.

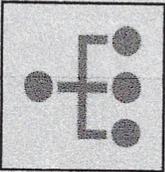


CONCERNS REGARDING A LACK OF COMPETITION

- Unfilled seats allows for the potential of unwanted consequences.
 - 4 member board
 - Special interests have an easier avenue for influencing/shaping town decisions.
- Even with a lack of competition, Elmore has a very diverse board currently:
 - The Selectboard includes members from Forest Reserve-West, Shoreline, and Rural East — the broadest geographic representation in over three decades.
 - In 2018, a board member from the Shoreline district was elected for the first time in approximately 20 years. An evolution echoing the growth of full-time residents calling the Lake home. This district now represents about 25% of Elmore's total residences.
- Could having more seats disrupt this measured balance?

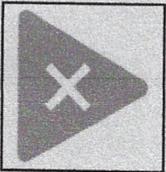
CONCLUSION





Will we actually have more involvement from individuals?

We have many positions within the town that are not easy to fill.
Select Board meetings only have about 10 people coming to the meetings.



Does it make sense to just let anyone interested to be on the Select Board or should the town be more critical of who should be our representatives (competition)?

Has there been any issues of gridlock?
Situation where the expertise of the board has been lacking? A situation where a SB member did something that wasn't held accountable?
Has anyone experienced a situation where their concerns were not heard by the SB?



What is happening right now that isn't acceptable? Is this a political situation or a business situation? What kind of improvements can we expect in the town with additional board members?

If we are having issues with the current three-person Select Board configuration, shouldn't we try to fix what those issues are, prior to expanding?

- Wouldn't the systemic issues continue to exist?

This is a small town, if there are relevant issues, there are some great resources to raise awareness (FPF or public meetings) and ensure that the Select Board understands what decisions to make.

- Anyone can add to the meeting agendas ahead of time and/or even at the meetings.
- This process is a perfect example of this. This is a great town, and most folks are engaged and willing to get involved if the need arises.

If the current Select Board doesn't feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities, "sharing the workload" might make it more difficult and time consuming to come to a decision.

- "Divide and Conquer" is not currently needed given the workload at this time.
- Size of the town does not warrant five members. Have Town Clerk, Treasurer, sub-committees (such as the EMS board), road commissioner, DRB, EPC, etc...