

COMMITTEE ON NEWTON'S DECISION AND CONTROL STRUCTURE

Scope of Work

This committee will assess the **decision and control structure** that either facilitates or deters efficient and effective City operations. To this end, we will start by examining four key elements of Newton's decision and control structure:

- **Goals:** To the extent that cities like Newton have explicit goals they give city planners decision criteria or priorities that are useful in the allocation of limited resources. Where cities have no explicit goals, there can be no systematic budget planning or financial decision-making.
- **Decision rights:** How decision rights over the generation and administration of City resources are allocated—both within the executive branch and among the Mayor's Office, the Board of Aldermen and the School Committee—will determine (1) how effectively specific knowledge is mobilized in the making of important decisions, (2) how swiftly and efficiently these decisions can be made and implemented, and (3) who, either individually or jointly, will be held accountable for the stewardship, monitoring, and control of City resources.
- **Management processes:** How operating and capital budgets are drawn up and monitored once ratified, how talent is recruited and developed, and how individual and department performance is reviewed all affect the City's ability to achieve its goals (effectiveness) in an economic manner (efficiency).
- **Information flows:** Both the nature and quality of information that flows to and among the city's key managers directly affect (1) how systematically resources are allocated by the Mayor and municipal department heads and (2) how effectively the performance of these departments are monitored and controlled.

Method

To a great extent, the work of this committee will support and build upon the research of other CAG committees—for example, the current work of the Capital Structure committee related to capital planning and resource allocation, the work of the Revenue Structure committee related to land use planning and commercial development within City limits, or the work of the Innovations committee related to Citistat and other such innovations in municipal planning and control.

In addition, we will explore on our own how the City goes about setting goals, monitoring performance, allocating and coordinating decision rights, and managing the kind of information flows mentioned above.

We expect that the report and recommendations of this committee will be the last to appear. It will address issues that can only be resolved over long-term, rather than over the short- or intermediate term. Our recommendations may, however, carry the greatest promise for the productive reform of city government.