

**Town of Chester
Town Administrator Working Group Meeting
Monday, August 20th, 2018
Municipal Complex Meeting Room
Approved Minutes**

Attendees:

Heather Bowen
Andrew Hadik
Rhonda Lamphere
Erin Newnan
Jeremy Owens, Selectman

I. Open Meeting

This second meeting of the Town of Chester Town Administrator Working Group commenced at approximately 6:06pm.

II. Continued Discussion: Areas of Need

Mr. Hadik distributed copies of the draft job description spreadsheet he created. Ms. Newnan had also emailed the group a job description she found, believed to be part of a proposal at Town Meeting sometime in recent years.

Ms. Lamphere cited an audit document from June of 2007, "Significant Deficiencies and Material Weakness Report". The report recommended adding a Town Administrator in 2007, when the Town had a nine-million-dollar annual (Town and School) budget; which is roughly half of what it is currently.

It was thought that adding a Town Administrator had been put before voters at Town Meeting at least three or four times: twice as a petition warrant article, and once or twice as a BOS recommendation.

Selectman Owens felt that residents really want more information; including but not limited to how much overlap there would be with Finance. Ms. Lamphere felt that with an eighteen-million-dollar (Town and School) budget, there should be both a full-time Finance Director and Town Administrator. Currently, the Finance Director (contracted for ~12 office hours plus working remotely) focuses heavily on journal entries and reconciliations.

The following are the group's suggestions of potential areas of focus / responsibilities for a TA:

- Procurement of Equipment
- Hiring Oversight
- Centralized HR
- Continuity (as BOS lineup changes)
- Town Facilities Oversight
- Liaison: Department Heads / Joint Loss / Highway Safety, etc.
- Review and Vetting of Legislative Updates, State Regulations, Election Law, Labor Law, etc.
- Budgeting Oversight
- Impact Fee Expenditures
- Attending BOS / Budget Committee Meetings
- Public Information Officer
- Uniform Cash Policies for Departments
- Update Organizational Chart

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- Delegate Authority for Signatures
- Collaborate with Road Agent for Possible Transition to Public Works Director

The following are the group's suggestions on vetting the role further & educating the Public:

- Meet with other Towns' Administrators / the folks from NHMA to see how in-line this working Job Description is with the reality of the role. (Whether another Town's Administrator would be allowed to speak at Town Meeting is at the discretion of the Moderator)
- Create simple PowerPoint presentation for Town Meeting; with the detailed spreadsheet as a handout
- Bring the finalized job description to a Department Heads meeting for feedback
- Group members should explain (to those that ask) that every year, there is a change in BOS membership. Objectivity across committees in the interest of continuity and what is best for the Town is critical.
- The date, time, and place of the next Town Administrator Working Group meeting will be posted on the Town's Website

III. Closing Thoughts & Goals for Next Meeting

Ms. Lamphere felt that, due to the size of the Town and the fact that this is its first shot at adding a TA, the initial salary should be in the modest range. Careful vetting will be essential. Ms. Lamphere added that some past Town employees did not favor the idea of having a TA because they thought they'd be micromanaged. Ms. Bowen cautioned that, as it stands, the spreadsheet makes it *look* like the role would be to micromanage. It was agreed that some rewording and editing will clarify that this is not the aim. It was further clarified that some roles (i.e. Planning & ZBA staff, Town Clerk / Tax Collector) are not subject to certain supervision per RSA.

Ms. Bowen thought that, if the TA were expected to do everything on the spreadsheet, it would amount to a 60-hour per week job. It was clarified that many items on the spreadsheet are seasonal, intermittent, etc. As someone with experience in HR, Ms. Bowen cautioned the group to carefully consider how much of the TA role would involve HR versus management. Ms. Bowen suggested that expectations to attend many evening meetings be clearly advertised with the role. Additionally, it should be very clear that the compensation advertised includes salary and benefits.

Selectman Owens stressed that the issue of adding a TA has not only been revisited many times; but that it's been a bottom-up process, not top-down.

Mr. Hadik felt that, if the right person were hired, this individual would want to help the Town, and would quickly determine shortfalls, and who does and doesn't need help.

Mr. Hadik asked for the group to continue to review the spreadsheet and send him suggestions throughout the next week.

IV. Adjournment

The next scheduled meeting of the Town Administrator Working Group is Tuesday, September 4th, 2018 at 6:00pm in the Planning Department office. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend and participate.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caroline R. Wilson, Recording Secretary