

Major Goals for the Town Administrator

1. Communication and Community Relations

- Regularly prepare a column and/or press release for local media.
- Write a TA report to the Selectboard biweekly, on average. Each report to include a quantitative measure of the achievement of at least one of the Major Goals. Normally a different goal will be addressed in each report, so that over a period of time, progress in all of the goal areas will be demonstrated.
- Be in attendance and participate in major local meetings as well as regional/state meetings.
- Regularly speak to or meet with service clubs/civic organizations.
- Maintain open communication with committees, boards, volunteers, and the public, including school department.

Rating:

5 [Always exceeds goals] 4 [Often exceeds] 3 [Meets goals] 2 [Sometimes meets] 1 [Rarely meets]

Comments:

Mike's TA biweekly reports are thorough and appreciated. He is a frequent attendee at local meetings, and guest speaker at community organizations. He maintains an "open door" policy, and responds to phone and email communication promptly. Am eager to see press releases generated by the Town Administrator. Would also recommend that communication that goes outside of Town Hall be proofread and/or edited by a good proofreader.

The TA is generally meeting or exceeding all of the above with the exception of "regularly prepare a column". The TA and SB should find a way to regularly communicate with the general public on specific topics/categories. A monthly newsletter to be posted on the town website and sent to all media might accomplish this. Areas where the TA has excelled include public appearances, communication with other boards and organizations, and the consistent publication of a report to the SB.

The TA report has been quite helpful and consistently delivered to the SB prior to each meeting. I have two concerns that could be easily addressed. First, I would like to see the topics covered in the report also listed on the agenda. For instance, if the TA provides an update on the Texon building then that should be listed on the agenda under TA report. Second, the way the goal for the TA report is written does not comport with the actual report as it has been written. I do not have a problem with our current process, however if the status quo is to continue, we should modify the language to match the practice.

If the issue regarding regular preparation of an article/newsletter can be addressed, my rating would improve to a 4 or 5.

To the best of my knowledge we receive monthly TA reports which is fine w/ me.

Have not been many columns, press releases. While TA reports are produced on a regular basis, there is not typically a quantitative measure of achievement towards a major goal. Attendance at and participation in local/regional/state meetings, speaking/meeting with service clubs/civic organizations, open communication with other committees, boards etc. has been outstanding.

The TA reports could be turned into reports/columns for the Town Reminder – say a monthly report.

2. Projects and Initiatives

- Introduce at least one major innovation, project, or initiative per quarter.
- Regularly report to the Selectboard about ongoing projects/initiatives, including Selectboard/TA responsibilities regarding implementation of the Master Plan. Demonstrate progress toward implementing these Master Plan goals.
- Image building, with a concentration on South Hadley Falls.
- Employee professional development.

Rating:

5 [Always exceeds goals] 4 [Often exceeds] 3 [Meets goals] 2 [Sometimes meets] 1 [Rarely meets]

Comments:

There have been several major innovations and initiatives (Facilities Dude, Harper's payroll, office/meeting room upgrades, HCHIT assessment). Regular reporting on Master Plan goals has been lacking. Efforts regarding the Falls and employee professional development have been outstanding.

We probably should review the Master Plan goals more often to keep them in mind. The TA should take a more active role in this area.

I am constantly in awe of Mike's suggestions and exploration of innovative projects - pyrolysis, forming an LLC with Falls businesses in order to more effectively market property, establishing a Redevelopment Authority, creating an ice skating rink during the winter, having a rotating art show in Town Hall, etc. Appropriately, much of Mike's attention has been devoted to building the image of South Hadley Falls. Mike introduced quarterly professional development days for all staff. I have attended several of these days, and they have all been well-attended, and employees seem to enjoy the opportunity to get together, enjoy lunch together, and benefit from the training.

Lots of new projects.

The TA excelled in this area. Economic development, identification of excess property, encouragement to potential new business, and image building are all strong points. The TA has remained very aware of the Master Plan and how new ideas and initiatives do or do not comport with the Plan. MPIC has been instrumental in guiding this process. Perhaps a quarterly update from MPIC and the TA would help to ensure that the Plan continues to be implemented and tweaked.

3. Management

- Meet regularly with department heads; maintain a record of the dates and general purposes of significant meetings with department heads.
- Hold at least one staff meeting per quarter.
- Provide opportunities for professional development and/or advancement for staff.

Quantitative evidence of:

- Successful streamlining of departmental interactions.
- Improved workload assignments.
- Increased information sharing.
- Maintaining a positive labor-management climate.

Rating:

5 [Always exceeds goals] 4 [Often exceeds] 3 [Meets goals] 2 [Sometimes meets] 1 [Rarely meets]

Comments:

The FY15 budget process and proposal are good examples of improvements in management style and efficiencies being gained in the workplace. Reductions in FTE's, coupled with increases in average hours worked per FTE should be a good strategy to improve staff productivity, competency and moral. I have not seen evidence of a "record of the dates and general purposes of significant meetings with department heads", but I assume one exists.

Can we have an example or two of increased information sharing?

Mike's leadership is providing a positive workplace environment for all employees, including giving many employees the opportunity to work more hours/earn more money/take on additional responsibilities.

Progress on all items has been significant.

4. Efficiencies and Planning

Quantitative evidence of:

- Attrition-based staff reductions.
- Increased efficiency in TA-administered programs/programs.
- Successful realignment(s) in staffing/programs.
- Successful cost cutting or planning innovation(s).
- Improved delivery of services.
- Policy development.
- Increase focus on capital planning for physical plants.

Rating:

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Comments:

Successfully completing the transition of the Clerk, Treasurer and Collector positions from elected to appointed, and realigning responsibilities was a tremendous accomplishment. Increasing the work schedule to 40 hours was another major accomplishment. Shifting the responsibilities of the Youth Director to the Asst. Recreation Director, and the Emergency Management Director to the Health Director was yet another innovative and significant improvement.

This is certainly a work in progress. The first 4 bullets are being achieved, in part, as described in the prior section. Realignment of the Collector, Treasurer and Clerk was a major accomplishment and should reap rewards.

As staff/department realignment continues, increased savings and improvement in delivery of services should become more apparent.

Policy development is an area where I would like to see the SB and TA improve. As the SB continues to move away from “hands on” management, review and updating of policy and bylaws becomes more important. This will help to better guide management in day to day decision-making.

The TA immediately recognized the need for improved property management/maintenance and has recently begun to focus on more specific proposals to better address long-term needs.

Mike has excelled in this area. He has reduced the number of employees by not filling vacant positions; has increased the number of hours worked from 35-40 for many employees, resulting in more work hours but not more employees; has brought in appropriate people to closely examine town spending on health insurance, which will likely result in a very large decrease in our cost; has recommended a cut in our contribution to the HCOG, since we are not able to get the benefit of many of the programs they offer; introduced Facility Dude to track repairs and maintenance on town facilities; and is leading the way in the focus on capital planning and facilities management.

There has been significant progress in all of these areas.

5. Finance and Economics

- Develop a common financial vision and goals.
- Build multi-year town-wide financial strategies.
- Meet regularly with the CEDC to discuss/present progress on redevelopment in South Hadley Falls and in other areas of town.
- Regularly meet with local businesses.

- Meet regularly with appropriate financial boards and individuals, school department financial officers, and others, and provide updates to the Selectboard.
- Evidence of improvement in financial planning and operations.

Rating:

5 [Always exceeds goals] 4 [Often exceeds] 3 [Meets goals] 2 [Sometimes meets] 1 [Rarely meets]

Comments:

We have had general discussions with TA about long-range financial goals and strategies, and have taken specific action in the FY 14 and (proposed) FY15 budgets to work in this direction. Several examples are articulated above, including realignment/reduction of some departments to improve efficiency, save money and improve service. In addition, the TA has executed on some bonding strategies that should help to improve the town's long-term debt picture.

Understandably, we have yet to create a cohesive document or roadmap that articulates a multi-year, town-wide strategy. As FY15 unfolds, more comprehensive longer-range financial planning and documentation should be a major goal. A refined 5 year capital plan should be just one component to an overall 5 year financial plan. This would be a natural progression from the excellent work that has been done so far.

Love the shorter TM.

Implementing a new bonding strategy that increased the length of the primary bonds to 25 years, that utilized bank qualified loans lowering the coupon rate, and that took advantage of the Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds granted by the Department of Energy Resources resulted in significantly lower costs and reduced the immediate impact of the debt exclusion borrowing. Has been an integral part of the CEDC and the creation of the Redevelopment Authority.

This area is a work in progress, with significant strides currently being made. Mike's initiative to present South Hadley's budget as one warrant item at Town Meeting in May is one of the first steps to achieving several of these goals. He is working with department heads to include them in the budgeting process, and meets regularly with the CEDC, local businesses, and appropriate boards and individuals -- and then provides updates to the Selectboard.

There has been lots of progress in this area.

** It is recommended that the TA maintain a log of all of his major activities that are directed at the fulfillment of the Major Goals.

Summary:

The TA has had a productive first year. I am generally very well pleased with his performance.

Rating total: 21

Comments:

There has been a tremendous amount of positive change and improvement in virtually all areas of municipal government over the past year, especially when compared with the previous 5-6 years. With several initiatives still unfolding (e.g. health insurance), it is expected that this rate of change and improvement will continue.

My only concern is the need for the TA to assure that we communicate more effectively with the citizens. One effective way is through the Town Reminder. Meeting minutes of committees with related goals/activities should be shared among those groups. I note that the minutes of past Town Meetings are not up to date on the Town web site.

Mike's leadership has been crucial over the past year. He is providing our employees with the opportunity to rise to the occasion and excel. He is guiding us financially to a more stable and forward-looking budget and plan. And he is fostering a team environment that I have truly enjoyed being a part of.

The TA has done an excellent job in his first year on the job. He took over a position that had been a revolving door of administrators for 4 years and has quickly established proper direction for the town.

After taking time in the first 3 months to carefully assess our situation, he has been a hands-on leader. The legislation passed by the town prior to the TA's arrival has been instrumental in providing the tools necessary for the TA to more fully utilize his talents.

Thanks in large part to the TA's leadership, South Hadley is quickly moving in a more positive direction.