

**Board of Selectmen Meeting
September 23, 2011**

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am on September 23, 2011.

Present: Selectmen: Mark Gilmore, Carolyn Shores-Ness, Elizabeth Clarke

Employee Evaluation Procedure: Present: Donald Jacobs

Mr. Jacobs was present to assist the Board of Selectmen in the development of a system to improve the communication between department heads and their employees with regard to understanding what a position is and how well the employee in that position meets the expectations. This evaluation approach is an important part of determining compensation. Its purpose is to insure that through this process everyone understands the importance of his/her role and is able to experience success through measureable goals. The intent is to be positive, giving employees a sense of having some input, while at the same time removing the concept of wage increases based upon longevity or steps.

There is some urgency in implementing this process, as a key employee is retiring soon, creating an employment opportunity.

Chain of command/ Organizational Chart: Ms. Clarke asked about how positions are arranged, who reports to whom. Mr. Gilmore said that ultimately all employees report to the BOS, with the Administrator serving as conduit. In practice and for accountability purposes the Police Chief, Highway Superintendent, and Town Clerk/Treasurer/ Collector report to the BOS. He broke that down further: The Town Administrator and the Police Chief report to him as the BOS Chair. Ms. Ness serves as the Board of Health head with the Emergency Manager and the Treasurer/ Collector reporting to her. Ms. Clarke is the person the Highway Superintendent reports to. He noted that no one on the BOS oversees the Recreation Department, which is a paid town department. He thought this should be looked into further. Mr. Kubiak will be asked to prepare an organizational chart that reflects the chain of command, as it is used currently.

Mr. Jacobs said that evaluating employees can be a time consuming process. He thought that dividing the responsibilities amongst Board members was wise. Mr. Gilmore commented that the Open Meeting regulations made it difficult to conduct evaluations with a full Board.

Performance management: Mr. Jacobs divided positions into two types: exempt and non-exempt.

Exempt Positions – Generally those held by department heads. Essential Functions, the primary duties for these positions would include planning and budgeting. Planning involves determining what types projects would be undertaken in a fiscal year and developing the financial plan to go with it. The overall plan is broken into Goals that are on-going but are further broken into specific projects that have measureable objectives, including time frames for accomplishing (a beginning and an end). Also included is an awareness of the skills and resources required for objectives to be met. This might mean assistance from an outside source.

Non-Exempt Positions – Generally those employees working under a department head. The job description should provide an accurate list of the essential functions of each position. Again, there are goals and objectives which may be set by the department head. At each step along the way there needs to be communication to be sure that everyone understands what actions need to be taken, and what supplies, equipment, or other information needs to be available for the project to proceed.

An important part of every project is following its status. There should be evaluation of progress, including changes that may be necessary, or even better ways to accomplish the project.

Mr. Gilmore said the Board of Selectmen set the goals and objectives for the Town. Key items are finances, public safety, and public health. These goals and objectives are communicated to the Town Administrator, who in turn, communicates them to the department heads. Mr. Jacobs said the plan he proposes will be new to department heads, as they are not used to telling the Town Administrator what they want to do. Finally, the employees within the departments are included. They, too, will find discussing plans with the department head a new experience.

Change of Budget Format: Ms. Ness commented about preparing a narrative stating the Board's mission and goals for the upcoming year. Mr. Jacobs suggested this could include a change in the budget format to better demonstrate the goals. Mr. Gilmore thought such a change would give the Finance Committee a better understanding of what the goals are and what it needed to accomplish them. It would be easier to show how the goals would be affected if a crucial item should be eliminated. An example was given of a public safety goal with the objective of enforcement of speeding regulations.

Change in department head/employee relationship: Using this system, department heads would ask employees for a reaction to the goals and objectives set. This is something new which the department heads need to be comfortable doing. Ms. Clarke asked about independent contractors, such as the Building Inspector. Would they be included in the evaluation process and who do they report to? Note was made that many have to meet state certifications (plumber, electricians). Ms. Ness asked if they had written contracts.

The process being described is designed to help the employee manage his time and effort. His duties should be found in the job description. The goals and objectives of his position are included on a form that is used in the evaluation process. Skills should be tied to the duties and should be reviewed as they may need to be updated or recertified. After review, signing of the form by the employee indicates he/she has seen it.

Performance Standards: Four standards that can be used when determining performance: Does the employee: 1) Exceed goals (expectations), 2) Meet expectations (does a good job), 3) Need improvement (some expectations not met), and 4) Unsatisfactory. Performance evaluation is a tool that can be used to weed out a non-performing employee; however the underperforming employee will usually leave on his own. Whatever policy is set, it must be consistent.

Salary range: Mr. Jacobs said that it is important, when creating a position, to provide a wide salary range to allow greater flexibility in hiring. The wider the range, the easier it is to manage.

A range provides room to allow for qualifications and experience, as well as evidence of room for growth. He said a chart showing ranges was useful, it should not, however, imply a step gradation, nor should it be tied to a cost-of-living index. The general understanding of steps is that they are related to time on the job, as opposed to quality of performance. Something to consider is merit or even years in a particular position. Another element of compensation might be use of bonuses which could be awarded during the year for exemplary performance.

Some positive items: In conversation with a potential new employee there is the opportunity to explain how the starting salary was derived. With a generous salary range, the employee will know how things will go moving forward. It should show the Town has high expectations, or that thought has gone into the value of the position. The intent is to help the employee feel good about his position. As an employee, it should be nice to know that if he's done something exceptional there's a way to be rewarded during the year.

Suggestion: Trial Run – “What do you want to accomplish by January 1?”

Mr. Jacobs cautioned that since this process is new, there is likely to be a credibility issue. He suggested providing a practice period to give everyone a chance to see how the process works. It would give department heads an opportunity to practice the procedure by using a short time period. He also recommended having other chairmen such as Assessors, Library, do a practice run.

Since budgets are established for this fiscal year (FY 2012), the emphasis would be on what would be accomplished by the beginning of a new calendar year. Department heads should be able to determine goals for that period. If any are uncomfortable help should be requested and provided. As part of this practice, department heads should do an evaluation of themselves. They should ask what their plan is for this fiscal year. Is it on target? Do adjustments/changes need to be made?

Preliminary actions to take: First prepare the Organizational chart. The Classification/Compensation Chart needs to be changed to remove any step descriptions. Job descriptions should be distributed to department heads for review/approval within a week. Within the next week comments on job descriptions are expected back along with the compensation plan. Exempt people (department heads) should take a first shot at self-evaluation.

Mr. Jacobs said getting department heads on board with the process is crucial, as they are the ones who will make the process work. He said he has had a couple of meetings with department heads, but has not talked to employees. He would like Mr. Kubiak to set up a meeting with them so that he can present the process.

Gift Account/Revolving EDS account: Ms. Ness reported that there are people who would like to donate funds to be used for things such as replacing needles. There was discussion about the need for a gift account, as the DPH can accept donations. Ms. Ness said there was thought of using donated funds for providing Safe-serve certification classes. Restaurants would be charged a \$100 fee. She said this would be a regional process. Janet needs to be consulted on how the

account could be established. The suggestion was to make it generic to allow a variety of uses. A motion was made, seconded, and voted to establish such an account.

Mutual Aid Agreement: Ms. Ness gave a brief presentation of a discussion about a mutual aid agreement for an animal disease response plan. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

Payment of Bill for Building Commissioner: An email from the Town Accountant for clarification of a request for payment for a training class which the Building Inspector attended was discussed. As an independent contractor for the Town the appropriateness of this request was questioned. Ms. Clarke wanted to know if there was a written contract for his services. Mr. Gilmore suggested checking BOS minutes, but felt it would be prudent to prepare a formal written contract should none be in place.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Priscilla Phelps