

Proposal for Reorganization of Staff

Background

It has become clear that workloads in the Planning and Zoning office need adjustment. The Zoning Administrator position seems to be under-utilized and the Selectboard Assistant/Town Planner is having difficulty keeping up with workload. The Selectboard, therefore, assigned Ellie Russell and Heather Manning as a Selectboard sub-committee to investigate the situation and make a proposal for any changes that might seem appropriate. The timing was judged appropriate in that the Zoning Administrator has submitted his resignation as of December 31 of this year.

Process

1. The Zoning Administrator, Selectboard Assistant/Town Planner and Administrative Assistant were each asked to list on paper the job duties that they routinely perform and to estimate the amount of time required for each duty. Each was interviewed separately and asked to make suggestions for change.
2. The duties were then rearranged appropriately for the job titles of Selectboard Assistant, Town Planner, Zoning Administrator and Administrative Assistant. In doing this it became clear that some adjustments were in order. The Zoning Administrator acknowledged that his zoning responsibilities required about 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent). There currently is some cross-over in the duties of the Zoning Administrator who is assisting the Planner. The Selectboard Assistant/ Town Planner reported up to 80% of his time were spent supporting the Selectboard and that his Planning responsibilities were being neglected. This was confirmed by observation and by input from the Chair of the Planning Commission.
3. Looking at the nature of the job responsibilities and the time required to fulfill them, the committee of two then agreed that a full-time Town Administrator, a full-time Town Planner/Zoning Administrator and a full-time Administrative Assistant would provide an improved mix of staff support to meet the needs of the Selectboard and Planning and Zoning. This concept was shared individually with staff, all of whom agreed, although the concept of a half-time Planner and a half-time Zoning Administrator was also suggested.

Proposal

1. Replace the current Zoning Administrator who now works 30 hours per week with a full-time Zoning Administrator/Planner.
2. Upgrade the Selectboard Assistant position to a full-time Town Administrator.
3. At an appropriate time increase the Administrative Assistant position to 40 hours per week from 35 hours per week.

Cost

These changes result in an immediate increase of paid hours of 10 hours per week and an eventual increase of another 5 hours per week at the time the Administrative Assistant becomes a 40 hour per week position. The 10 hrs per week cost will be approximately

\$6000 to \$8000 per year depending upon actual salaries. The cost to increase the current Administrative Assistant hours by 5 hours per week would be approximately \$5000 per year.

Discussion

The Selectboard Assistant/Planner participated in the process, but not in individual interviews, save for his own, of course. However, this proposal was generated by the Selectboard sub-committee.

The decision to upgrade the Selectboard Assistant to Town Administrator was based on the duties now being performed by the Selectboard Assistant and the need for additional responsibilities that are not currently being addressed, including responsibility for personnel management and acknowledgment of administrative responsibilities now over-burdening the Selectboard or being neglected.

The Town Planner/Zoning Administrator position is recommended in order to provide more support for the Planning Commission which is not receiving the level of support necessary to perform their planning responsibilities, the best example being the slow progress in updating the Town Plan. The fact that the current Zoning Administrator is now assisting in a small amount of the Planner's work and whose zoning duties require 20 hours per week at the most led to the decision to combine those two positions with the intent of finding increased efficiency. There is some down-side to this because of variable work loads, and perhaps the need to find an applicant who has the personal qualities to combine the detail work of the Zoning Administrator with the broader conceptual thinking of a Planner, however the gains in efficiency were thought to outweigh these potential problems.

The committee believes that a 40 hr. per week Administrative Assistant would be beneficial to support the Planning and Zoning office and the Town Administrator. However it might be wise to wait before taking this step to evaluate how other changes evolve.

Proposed job duties for the four functions (Town Administrator, Planner, Zoning Administrator and Administrative Assistant) will be available by Monday. Upon approval of the proposal, specific job descriptions will be written and salary levels and/or ranges will be recommended.

Prepared by Ellie Russell
7/18/2013