

STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE POSITIONS OF:

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

VILLAGE TREASURER

VILLAGE CLERK

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Ancillary:

Human Resource Management Assessment

Village of-Fontana-on Geneva Lake, WI

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Village of Fontana-on Geneva Lake, WI is located in southeast Wisconsin on the Western Shore of Geneva Lake. It is home to approximately 1,800 full-time residents and swells to an approximate 8,000 population during the Spring and Summer months.

Being located in a popular recreational area, tourism and weekend get-a-ways abound in the summer months. Demands on local government services increase exponentially as a result, often straining manpower and resources. Managing the administration of operations and the delivery of services to the community becomes a major responsibility requiring strong leadership through direction, control and organizational skills.

The purpose of this study is to assess the former and current needs of the community in terms of day-to-day leadership and to make recommendations as to applicability of current policies and practices going forward and to suggest modifications as may become necessary to continue or hopefully, improve the delivery of services to the community at large.

This study comes at a time when various leadership vacancies exist within Village Staff. The additional assessment of needs in that regard becomes paramount to this endeavor.

As a result, the initial focus of this study will be to determine the leadership needs of each department within the Village.

INTRODUCTION

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The approach to this study rests largely on determining short-term, (Tactical), planning needs and long-term, (Strategic), planning needs. The methods used in this study include; review of all management devices as they currently exist, review of all regulatory requirements both State and local, comparative analysis of communities of similar size and composition in the general geographic area, feedback from Village government officials and current employees and finally; utilization of all generally accepted Human Resource Management theory and practice as they relate to executive level searches.

Once leadership positions have been established, this study will continue with the remaining components of Human Resource Management within Village administration.

This study will conclude with specific recommendations based on the findings uncovered during this process along with accepted best practices as determined by The Society for Human Resource Management, (SHRM.)

ANALYSIS

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The positions to be assessed are:

- Village Manager/Administrator
- Village Treasurer
- Village Clerk
- Director of Public Works

Village Manager/Administrator

The outgoing Administrator served the Village for many years as per Municipal Code Chapter 2, Section 2-121 through 2-129. In addition to general duties performed under Section 2-125; the former Administrator also assumed the duties and responsibilities of the Village Treasurer over time.

The Village Administrator is currently appointed by a two-thirds vote of the entire Village Board and serves for an indefinite term. The Village Administrator is the direct conduit from and answers directly to, the Village Board of Trustees. The Village Administrator oversees all Village Departments and all operations thereof. Each department head answers directly to the Village Administrator.

Generally; the Village Administrator, by direction of the Village Board, provides oversight and direction in the areas of Finance and budget control, Operations, Purchasing, Human Resources, Risk Management, short and long-term planning and the overall delivery of services to the community.

Support to the Village Administrator includes; the Village Clerk, Deputy Clerk and at times; an Administrative Intern, (seasonally.) Job sharing is common due to the relatively small staff and increased seasonal demands.

An Exit Interview was held by this writer with the outgoing Village Administrator, (see attached.)

In researching the history of this position to date, many areas of importance have been identified as requiring heightened concentration and focus by any incoming Administrator, internal or external. The following is a prioritized list of the areas of importance:

Areas of Importance – Village Administrator

- Effective, unbiased, unedited communication top to bottom.
- The consistent and fair application and enforcement of rules and policies.
- Listening to employees, seeking their input on a regular basis.
- Decision making must be timely and consistent.
- Staff meetings must be regularly scheduled and productive.
- Must be willing and able to socially integrate into the culture of the organization and the community, (fit.)
- Must effectively manage political involvement to maintain the proper perspective.
- Must continually educate and engage Trustees as to the operations of each department of the Village and the employees within them.
- Must develop a Performance Management Plan and apply it consistently and fairly to not only measure productivity but also to determine wage increases of non-represented employees in a uniform and non-discriminatory manner.
- Must follow statutory requirements and the municipal code at all times and avoid external influence at all costs.
- Must develop ethics, vision and values statements and mandate full compliance by all employees.
- Must develop a Workplace Health and Safety Manual and conduct regular training in order to minimize workplace injuries.
- Must be approachable and available to staff and the public whenever possible.
- Must have a working knowledge of Village finances and a working budget.
- Must be willing to work closely with the Village Treasurer and the Village Clerk.
- Must be willing to continually educate and grow within the position.
- Must be able to fiscally manage outside expenditures, legal, engineering, purchasing, etc.
- Must be able to work with Trustees and department heads to conduct long-range planning.
- Must be able to work with Trustees and department heads to develop and maintain succession plans.

Areas of Importance – Village Administrator cont.

- Must work with Trustees to develop and train a Public Information Designee and create a media policy.
- Must work closely with the Human Resources Committee in developing policies and to update the Personnel Policies Manual every 5 years.
- Must demonstrate competence in grant research and application.
- Must be willing to take a team approach to cross-training, decision making and job sharing.

Village Administrator cont.

The next step in this process was to examine the duties and responsibilities of the out-going Administrator, the level of support and organization of those duties and responsibilities and lastly; how they can be reconfigured for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. A brief comparative analysis of other area communities of similar size and their leadership structure was also conducted.

360 degree Feed-back interviews were individually held with the Village President, all available Trustees, the Acting Village Treasurer, the Village Clerk and Deputy Clerk and all department heads and supervisory personnel regarding the position of Village Administrator.

Lastly; an assessment of the possibility of internal candidates for this position was conducted over time.

Village Treasurer

As previously discussed; the position of Village Treasurer became a function of the former Village Administrator over time when historically; the Treasurer position had been a separate position within Village administration.

I conducted several meetings with the former Village Administrator and current Acting Village Treasurer, Scott Vilona, in this regard. The Village Treasurer Employment Agreement was reviewed. Although a difference of opinion exists regarding the necessity for or appropriateness of combining the positions; a consensus was formed that Village Treasurer in Fontana is not nor should be a full-time position.

The busiest periods of the year for the Treasurer are; the quarterly and year-ends, the annual audit in January, the budget and to what extent the Treasurer is involved with real estate tax issues. The Deputy Clerk, Julie Olsen, is quite experienced and very competent in handling the clerical aspects of the Treasurer. Both Scott Vilona and I concur that this position is a half-time position at best; no more than 20 hours per week on average.

The matter of the Village Administrator wearing both hats, if only for ethical reasons, cannot be recommended.

Village Clerk and Deputy Clerk

Two in-depth interviews each were held with both Village Clerk Dennis Martin and Deputy Clerk Julie Olsen. The employment agreements for both positions were reviewed. A comparative analysis with like and/or similar positions in area communities of similar size and composition was conducted. Lastly; I was able to observe the activities of both individuals over several days and weeks including but not limited to; general duties and responsibilities, telephone skills, interaction with leadership, other departments and the general public, organizational skills and knowledge of the position.

An important side note is that among all Village Hall staff, much cross-over support exists between departments including the Building Department. Not only does it exist but it occurs naturally. This is a credit to the employees involved but more so, a valuable attribute especially with a small staff and therefor; should be continued and encouraged moving forward.

Director of Public Works

The position of Director of Public Works has been vacant for one year; December 2012. Unable to find a suitable replacement, a decision was made at that time not to fill the position on an interim basis. Instead; two lead positions were created; one for water/sewer and one for the street side of the operation.

All positions currently within the Public Works Department are bound by a collective bargaining agreement. The former Director of Public Works enjoyed non-represented full-time exempt manager status.

In-depth discussions were held with department leads, Ron Adams and Dennis Barr as well as the other department heads and several Trustees along with the former Village Administrator regarding the current operations of the Public Works department and their individual assessments of how the department is functioning under the present leadership configuration.

Much valuable insight was gained from all perspectives. The response as to whether or not the respondents believed that a Director of Public Works was needed was mixed but predominantly in favor of filling the position. Many felt strongly in favor.

I conducted a comparative analysis of general department operations, duties and responsibilities and leadership structure in area communities of similar size and composition, although, due to the population surge and greatly increased tourist activities in the summer months and increased demands on delivery of services, an accurate side-by-side comparison cannot be guaranteed.

The out-going Director was a certified Public Engineer, the necessity of which came into question and resulted in much review and discussion. Research revealed that this is a rarity, particularly among communities the size of Fontana. Area engineering firms have been consulted with in the past including several large projects with generally good to very good success. Therefore; it is my opinion that a requirement that a Director of Public Works for the Village of Fontana hold an engineering degree is unnecessary.

In discussion; both department leads expressed concern about administrative responsibilities somewhat inhibiting their ability to perform their normal duties. Along with seasonal requirements and being shorthanded, often overtime becomes necessary according to both men.

The matter of represented employees assuming leadership roles in a union environment, (shop), is certainly not an ideal scenario for many reasons. That issue alone does not suggest that it cannot work nor am I calling the character of either person into question however, from a human resource management perspective, I cannot recommend that structure moving forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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Village Manager/Administrator

After five (5) weeks of research, interviews and on-site observation, I have come to the conclusion that an internal candidate for this position does exist. Village Clerk Dennis Martin possesses the skills, knowledge and abilities to assume the duties of Village Administrator on a probationary basis in my opinion.

Dennis has served the Village for more than ten (10) years, most recently as a Certified Municipal Clerk. Further; Dennis has consistently performed many of the functions of the Administrator's position and has overseen many of the functions of the other Village departments as well.

Dennis' strengths lie in his "take charge" attitude, his organizational skills, his ability to perform his duties with little or no supervision, his willingness to take on new assignments and the reputation and trust that he has established among fellow employees and Village leadership.

An unconfirmed weakness may be in regards to the financial side of Village operations, however, with the continued support of the Village Treasurer, Clerk and Deputy Clerk; I do not foresee a significant "learning curve" in this area.

It is my opinion that the overriding benefit to the Village in appointing Dennis Martin to the position of Village Administrator are Dennis' social attributes. That is to say his communication and social skills, particularly his ability to work well with the employees of all of the other departments, his stated team building philosophy through collaboration, negotiation, judgment and his operational awareness. Finally; Dennis possesses good cognitive skills, i.e., critical thinking skills, the ability to absorb information quickly and good problem solving ability as well as adaptability and the acceptance of change.

The value of on-the-job experience is incontrovertible and research has demonstrated that internal candidates for executive level positions have consistently performed better than newly integrated external candidates, in addition to the fact that the learning process tends to be much shorter and the risk of social integration, (fit), within the organization are mitigated to a large extent. Therefore; I present the following:

Option 1

Upon approval; offer Dennis Martin a one year employment agreement as Village Administrator, the first six (6) months to be served in a probationary capacity with the usual benefit package benefitting the position and at a salary equal to ninety (90) percent of the mean average salary for communities in the region of similar size and composition. Performance Assessment during the probationary period should be the direct responsibility of, and successful completion should be determined by, the Human Resources Committee. The Administrator's competencies must be linked to his ability to learn, adapt and respond to organizational demands and leadership direction. Upon successful completion of the probationary period, the salary level shall increase by ten (10) percent. It is further recommended that subsequent employment agreements for this position be annual, not indefinite.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Village Manager/Administrator cont.

Option 2

Open the executive search for this position to all qualified candidates to include at a minimum;

- Define position requirements and expectations.
- Define desired qualifications.
- Promulgate the position opening to desired pools of possible candidates.
- Develop a selection committee and further refine targeted attributes.
- Begin the screening and interview process.
- Make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees as to the most desirable candidate.

I would like to further suggest that qualified internal candidates be provided additional recognition in the form of "Service Points", for years of service with the Village.

I would estimate this process to take 90 – 120 days start to finish. The cost of this process can be kept at a minimum if conducted in-house.

RECOMMENDATION

Village Treasurer

As previously discussed; research has demonstrated and the Acting Village Treasurer, Scott Vilona, has concurred, that this position should, at average, consist of no more than twenty (20) hours per week.

Therefore; I would recommend that the Village either hire a qualified part-time individual to perform these duties or outsource them.

Mr. Vilona has offered to discuss the assumption of these duties with the Village Board of Trustees or their designee. I would endorse this option.

Village Clerk and Deputy Clerk

Obviously; any recommendation regarding the Clerk's position will be held in abeyance until a determination has been made regarding the Village Administrators position.

Deputy Clerk Julie Olsen has been performing many of the Clerk's tasks for years and has performed her duties very efficiently and effectively while "crossing over" in several support roles. This position has become a hybrid of sorts involving several organizational competencies.

Due to these factors; I would strongly encourage a salary review be conducted for this position by the incoming Village Administrator.

Director of Public Works

I have reviewed at length in the Analysis section of this study, the general operations of the Public Works Department. The workforce is stable, tenured and productive. In-house training of junior employees is on-going and level of service to the public is high.

Given the fact that the Public Works Department is a Union Shop among other issues previously identified; I would highly recommend that a search for a Public Works Director commence shortly after or commensurate with the appointment of Village Administrator. I further recommend that this position be non-represented and of exempt management status. Lastly; I recommend that the search be conducted in-house under the leadership of the Village Administrator with recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Again; I would recommend annual employment agreements rather than an "indefinite" term.

CONCLUSION

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I am of the professional opinion that the Village of Fontana enjoys and is fortunate to employ a solid workforce of competent, loyal and hardworking individuals. The foundation of Village operations is solid.

Leadership must be re-established. Relationships among leadership positions within Village operations and Village government must be re-cemented and solidified. This is a unique and timely opportunity to re-evaluate individual responsibilities to each other and to the community, to refresh our individual perspectives and finally; to get back to the business of running this Village. There is work to be done.

I have outlined for you what I believe to be the best and most effective process of re-establishing leadership positions within the Village of Fontana-on-Geneva Lake. Take from that what you will.

Once leadership is in place; the business of updating Human Resource Management policies and practices can take place as I have discussed in the body of this study. I will continue to research and make recommendations as to all management devices and current practices.

I look forward to working with all of you in this endeavor in the hope for a very successful 2014 and beyond!

Respectfully submitted,



Allan J. Kaminski, PHR

EXIT INTERVIEW:

KELLY HAYDEN

1/27/2013

VILLAGE OF FONTANA EXIT INTERVIEW FORM

Location _____

Hire Date _____

Term. Date _____

Employee Name: Kelly Hayl

Job Title: Administrator

Supervisor Name: Interviewer: Allen Kaminski *AK*

EMPLOYEE INITIALED REASON FOR LEAVING (Check one, most appropriate reason)

- Lack of Sufficient Career Opportunities/Promotion
- Dissatisfaction with Management of Village
- General Dissatisfaction with Work Environment
- Dissatisfaction with Immediate Supervisor
- Lack of Latitude of Autonomy
- Lack of Training & Development Opportunities
- Lack of Performance/Career Feedback
- Better Compensation Elsewhere
- Insufficient Management Support of Family Life
- Lack of Flexible Work Arrangements
- Too Many Hours
- Desire/Need to Relocate
- Desire/Need to Care for Children/Elderly Relative
- Desire/Need for Less Travel
- Return to School
- Retirement
- Voluntary Sign-Up in Downsizing
- Medical/Health Reasons
- Leaving Labor Market

What did you think of your supervision in regard to the following?

Item	Almost Always	Sometimes	Never
Demonstrated fair and equal treatment		✓	
Provided recognition on the job			✓
Developed cooperation and teamwork		✓	
Encouraged/listened to suggestions		✓	
Resolved complaints and problems		✓	
Followed policies and procedures		✓	

How would you rate the following in relation to your job?

Item	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Cooperation within your department		✓		
Cooperation with other departments		✓		
Communications in your department		✓		
Communications within the entire Village			✓	
Communications between you and leadership			✓	
The training you received			✓	
Potential for career growth				✓
Pay/Benefits			✓	

What did you like most about your employment with the company? _____
the community

What did you like least about your employment with the company? _____
The lack of communication @ bd level.

What does your new job offer you that your job and Fontana did not?
Room to grow & move up in my career, additional family time, room for additional compensation, dynamic team (administration & city council)

Would you recommend Fontana to a friend as a place to work?
Not at this time.

Additional Employee Comments (feel free to continue on the back side): _____

AD - I enjoyed our meetings and I think you received all my comments during that time.