

Memorandum

December 16, 2019

To: Town Councilors

From: Thomas D. Mercer, Chair, Franklin Town Council

Re: 2019 Administrator Annual Review

As part of the contract the Council signed with the Administrator a year ago, we are required to do an annual review and provide a written summary statement of that review. Our contract with Jamie states:

“The Council shall establish mutually agreed upon goals for the Town Council and Hellen to achieve during any two-year legislative session. The Council shall review Hellen’s progress toward meeting the Council’s goals on an annual basis. Said annual review and evaluation shall be in accordance with the goals developed jointly between the Council and Hellen. Said goals may be added to or deleted from as the Council and Hellen determine from time to time. Further, the Council shall provide Hellen with a written summary statement of the findings of the Council and provide adequate opportunity for Hellen to discuss his evaluation with the Council.”

“Goals shall generally be attainable within the time limitations as specified in Section 7, within the annual operating budget and capital budgets and appropriations provided by the Council.”

To fulfill our obligation of the contract, I am submitting to you a draft written summary statement that meets these criteria to be discussed on Wednesday evening. I have also included the list of Town Council Goals accomplishments from our two-year session that was distributed at the September 4th Council meeting as a reference guide to the progress Jamie has made on our mutually agreed upon goals. I realize Jamie has only formally been the Administrator since May, however, I think it is not a secret that he has actively worked on all our goals over the past two years, even while Jeff was the Administrator. I feel this is an excellent point in this transition to fulfill the contract obligation we signed with him by discussing the accomplishments as well as areas of improvement or focus that folks may have.

Looking forward, we the Council and Town Administrator will have a goal setting session for the next two years at our first meeting in January. Given the myriad of issues that need to be addressed or that we want addressed in this community, we will all need to prioritize in 2020-2021 to ensure realistic expectations are set of what we can put on our collective plates. At a minimum, the town’s operating budget and ancillary financial issues will be a heavy focus throughout the two-year term and will require a significant amount of time from all of us.

Written Summary Statement

Town Council & Town Administrator Goals

The attached goals update indicates that Jamie has done a great job in fulfilling the goals the Town Council put forth in 2018-2019. Every item has received attention, and where applicable, the job has gotten done. In other areas, such as the Recycling Center or the Old South Church, progress was achieved even though there are other external entities or factors that make completion of a goal very difficult to achieve, or impossible to achieve within a two-year session. Jamie had a large influence in achieving many of these goals, if not all of them, along with Jeff. Given the resources and tools at his disposal, he has shown the ability to be an effective project leader, a successful departmental manager and steward for the community.

We should be proud as a community that the transition in town leadership was very smooth. Much of this has been due to Jamie's commitment to excellence, responsiveness, creativity and passion. His positive attitude, spirit and work ethic have allowed us all to accomplish a tremendous amount of work together in town.

After seven full months, we have complete confidence that we made the correct decision in hiring Jamie as the Administrator. Furthermore, we should be proud as a Council that we helped pave the way for this type of succession planning, which unfortunately is not always the norm in the public sector.

Additional Points

Additionally, as this is Jamie's first review, I think we want to also highlight some other aspects of his job performance not on our list of goals that should be noted because they depict his successful transition into the Administrator's position:

1. Jamie has provided exemplary customer service and effective responsiveness to the Town Council, town stakeholders, businesses and residents;
2. Jamie has developed great working relationships with the town department heads, town staff and the school department. We believe there is a strong trust between the Town's staff and Jamie, which is a great hallmark;
3. Jamie has established many positive relationships with town stakeholders, e.g. the S.A.F.E. Coalition, Dean College and their staff, the YMCA, Downtown Partnership, various arts organizations, downtown events sponsors, local business owners, residents and so on. Jamie is always available and is very present in the community;
4. Jamie completed a flawless process in hiring a new Fire Chief to get the best candidate we could for the job and to help set the department up for future success;
5. Jamie has also overseen successful staff succession planning transitions, including Human Resources Director, Treasurer-Collector's Office, Finance Director, Conservation Agent, Fire Chief, Health Director, and (soon) the Senior Center Director, in addition to many other leaders within town departments. Jamie has hired dozens of new town employees in every department to fill enormous shoes at every level of our organization and we have great confidence in our staff to deliver great services for our citizens;
6. Finally, he has successfully navigated some extremely unique and challenging unforeseen circumstances in the past year, most notably in the personnel and legal departments. We are grateful for his investment and compassion on behalf of our employees, as well as assembling a team around him who share those values. We compliment him on his creative strategies to protect the community.