



Town of Stoughton

10 Pearl Street
Stoughton, Massachusetts 02072

Stoughton Select Board Town Manager Mid-Year Review September 15, 2020

GOAL 1: General Government Operations

- a. Develop a coordinated plan for facilities use, maintenance, and repair**
- b. Create and adopt job descriptions for all union and non-union positions**

Town Manager Report of Progress:

The Town Manager noted several items indicating substantial progress being made on this goal as of the review (September 15, 2020). Despite only being about 3 months into the 2021 Fiscal Year, the Manager noted that in regards to sub goal a, the Manager and her staff have worked to continue renovations on 15 Pleasant Street (the recently acquired former Randolph Saving Bank site), and have fully realized the repurposing of the site. In addition, the Manager and her staff are overseeing the architectural and structural work on the Train Depot, for which additional funding articles are being presented for the 2021 Special Town Meeting. Generally, the facilities master plan guides the work and the expertise of the Facilities Director, as is evidenced by the budget and requests for facility-related articles at the Annual and upcoming Special Town Meeting.

Regarding sub-goal b, the Manager has created job descriptions for all positions involved in any restructuring efforts. In addition, job descriptions are being created for any hiring initiatives, such as the Town Clerk Program Coordinator positions. The Manager noted that the staffing required to accomplish the creation of all descriptions is a challenge; however, she is utilizing the skills of existing staff to assist in this process (Ex: Procurement Director), and they are making a concerted effort to use the job postings for vacancies and any newly created positions as a methodical way of taking on the task. In addition, descriptions and evaluations continue to be prioritized for union personnel, as negotiations continue with respective bargaining units.

Board Comments:

The Board noted that the Manager has excelled in general government operations on the whole in particular citing the COVID-19 global pandemic as a major hurdle that was overcome and continues to be addressed. Essentially, operations continued smoothly and without pause and in accordance with executive orders, under the direction of the Manager. In large part, reorganization of the Departments also served to be a forward-thinking, effective management strategy that has allowed for proper management of current efforts and in particular addressing the pandemic, through the Health and Human Services Division.

The Board also noted several facility improvements and plans to execute the facilities master plan, in particular, the Train Depot, former Randolph Savings Bank, capital items requests at the Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting, effective use of Town Hall space to create more meeting rooms, and continued work on the Public Safety Building Committee.

In regards to sub-goal b, the Board was encouraged to hear of the plan and method to address the goal of all job descriptions. However, the Board did request to see some evidence in a summary form of descriptions created to date and outstanding descriptions as well as the plan to complete those.



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Overall Status:

The Manager has actively addressed these goals and continues to do so in both every day and longer-term planning efforts, such as through Special Town Meeting capital requests.

In addition, the Manager has plans to achieve progress on the goals throughout the Fiscal Year.

GOAL 2: MUNIS System

- a. Identify the levels of use of the system across town department and implement improved levels of utilization and efficiency**

Town Manager Report of Progress:

The Manager detailed the MUNIS modules that are implemented and actively in use, including:

- Accounting/GL
- Project Accounting
- Accounts Receivable
- Purchase Orders
- Contract Management
- Analytics and Reporting
- Tyler Forms
- Tyler Content Manager
- Budget
- HR Management
- Payroll
- Grant Accounting
- Treasury Management
- Taxes (Personal, Real Estate, Motor Vehicle)

In addition, the Manager noted the following modules are implemented but not in use: Licensing – Dog, Parking, Board of Health, Permitting, and Utility Billing

Of the modules implemented and not in use, several are being worked on with the Town Clerk's Office, such as the licensing. This requires training and a strategy to implement that is in the works. For permitting, the current issues relate to document size, such as large building plans and drawings, so a solution is being consulted with the MUNIS provider. For utility billing, the billing that can be moved to MUNIS for water utilities requires the installation of the new meters, which is being voted on at STM.

Board Comments:

The Board noted that this is a quantifiable, straightforward goal and based on the Manager's update is being addressed. The Board asked primarily about moving the accounting system off of the previous system (KVS) to ensure the cost savings are being realized. This is in process and the Manager is confirming a completion date, if not already fully transferred.

Overall Status:

The goal is actively being addressed and remains a part of the FY21 objectives; however, in light of the



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pandemic has not risen to the same level as other goals which is a reasonable and correct prioritization of goals.

GOAL 3: Communication with Staff / Residents / Boards and Committees

- a. Improve the routine flow of information among Town staff, residents, and the volunteer Boards and Committees**

Town Manager Report of Progress:

The Manager reported on much progress made in this area, specifically providing statistics on social media outreach (Facebook outreach 1359 page likes, 1499 followers, 3407 post reaches in a week). The Manager has been leading oversight of the new web design as well to enhance electronic communication and user experience. In particular, with the social media page, many constituents have had overwhelmingly positive feedback in regards to storm-related power outage updates. The Manager is working with a constituent on a local social media news page as well to improve communication. The Manager maintains strong visibility in the community through participation in parades and on news programs.

Prior to COVID, the Manager held office hours and visited with constituents one-on-one to address issues such as on roadways near their homes. Since the closures due to COVID, the Manager has still maintained communication efforts through Zoom meetings with Town Meeting Representatives to present on articles for ATM, Zoom interviews for Board/Committee appointments, and continued department head meetings through Google Meets. In addition, the Manager has frequent email communication with staff, volunteers, and constituents. The Manager did make note of areas of improvement, particularly the town website and communication alternatives to social media, such as an email listserv.

Board Comments:

The Board unanimously made note that one of the Manager's strongest areas is communication. The Manager is noted as always being prepared, clear, and thorough when responding to or reporting on an issue. In addition, the Manager knows how to appropriately delegate to a staff person when issue-specific expertise is required. The Board noted the improved communication with constituents via social media, also noting the positive response to storm-related updates. In addition, the Board made note of the transparent and frequent communication related to the COVID-19 pandemic which allowed for executing a proper response plan. The Board is looking forward to website improvements as it is challenging to navigate and find items such as Board/Committee agendas and minutes as well as Town Manager quarterly reports.

Overall Status:

This continues to be a strong asset of the Manager. Communication is consistent and thoroughly provided and many platforms are utilized to effectively provide information, such as at meetings, via email, and via social media. The Board looks forward to more progress being made on website improvements to allow for more transparency of not only government activities but also Board/Committee work.

GOAL 4: Financial Management and Budgeting

- a. Create and present integrated 3-5 Year Operating Budget and 3-5 Year Capital Improvement Plan**
- b. In these plans, show reduction of reliance on free cash for operating expenses c. In these plans, show how funding for capital projects affects debt service and annual debt service expense**



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Town Manager Report of Progress:

The Manager made note of the budgetary restrictions and measures implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to respond to potential revenue shortfalls and begin preparing for future impacts to the budgets. Such measures included a hiring freeze and spending freeze where possible as well as pulling several FY21 spending articles from the Annual Town Meeting to be monitored and deemed necessary/unnecessary at a Special Town Meeting when the revenue picture was clearer. In terms of sub goal, a, the Manager noted the auditor has created several 3-5 year budget outlook measures such as for OPEB and the health insurance liability. The Manager is working with the internal auditor to present a complete 3-5 year budget outlook to the Department of Revenue. In regards to the capital plan, there is a 3-5 year Capital Plan that was presented to the Board that will need to be updated based on ATM and upcoming STM. Overall, these plans that were started in the previous fiscal year, pre-COVID, will need to be adjusted as the Manager noted the true impact of COVID may not be realized until FY22 or FY23.

In regards to sub goal b, the Manager is adhering to the reduction in reliance on free cash, specifically the policy as adopted by the Finance Committee. Some of these measures are being accomplished through strategic use of the health insurance reserve account, reducing the subsidy to the Cedar Hill Golf Course, and re-negotiating union contracts to remove members from the grid, resulting in long-term savings to the Town. In addition, as debt expires, the policy to not borrow more than is retired is being applied.

Board Comments:

The Board noted the strong budget performance of the Manager in particular the efforts during the COVID pandemic. The Manager worked with her budget team to use an approach that was the correct balance between conservative and continuation of level service for residents. This relied on internal controls and clear communication with staff, beyond line by line item changes that were approved by Town Meeting. The Board would like to see the revised or adjusted 3-5 year plans completed as part of the FY21 goals. The Board also made note of the strong budget team the Manager has formed and how that has helped lead to success through a proper harnessing of skills and talents to ensure a seamless budget process.

Overall Status:

The Manager has excelled in her management during the time of COVID. The Board is looking forward to continued adoption of formal policies for what is being practiced as a management directive as well as the 3-5-year budget and Capital Plan.

GOAL 5: Development Services

- a. Develop strategies and implement the Board's Target New Growth Plan**
- b. Advance redevelopment of Stoughton Center by completion of the downtown zoning bylaw rewrite for Fall Special Town Meeting, encouraging redevelopment of the Malcolm and Parsons site, and advancing development of the Town Green and Theater/Cultural activities as identified in the Master Plan and Stoughton Center Economic Development Plan component of the Master Plan**

Town Manager Report of Progress:

The Manager made note of several areas in which this goal is being addressed, primarily through the adoption of a developer friendly approach and the desire to improve growth in town in a manner consistent with the views and goals of the Board. Initially noted was the recent approval of the Park Street sewer project and the immediate positive response for development expansion in the Campanelli Industrial Park. The Manager also



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made note of other pro-development approaches such as solar PILOT agreements and bringing in more similar and consistent uses that achieve development goals and revenue generation goals while addressing green, clean energy. The Manager also made note of several initiatives for the Downtown area, one of the Board's economic development areas, that has been underway in FY21. Of note was the advancement of the Malcolm and Parsons project for which the manager has been working closely with the developer, planning director, Planning Board, and development services staff. The manager has also been involved in the Downtown Zoning rewrite, working on the request for proposal process, providing input to the consultant and assisting in the success of the town survey which received nearly 800 responses.

In addition to the area-specific work, the Manager has reorganized work of the development services department by combining the building/zoning/code enforcement department to make a more business friendly environment.

Board Comments:

The Board commented that the Manager has excelled in this area. In particular, the Board noted the Manager's unique and special ability to appropriately delegate many development-related tasks to staff who have been able to excel in this area, along with the general reorganization and subsequent establishment of the Development Services Department. The Board did ask clarifying questions about the new growth revenue being allocated to the 4 economic development areas identified in January of 2018 and the Manager noted that the new growth has not yet been realized and that the prospects are still a few years out; however, the growth in Campanelli Industrial Park and potential downtown development will be part of that process. In addition, the Board made note of the Manager's ability to continue progress in spite of the pandemic which is above and beyond expectations.

Overall Status:

Overall it is apparent much progress is being made on this goal and the Manager is excelling. In particular, was the energy and skills used to achieve the goal, as well as the innate ability to manage the staff tasked with fulfilling this object, harnessing the best skill sets and expertise on the issues, from a hiring, reorganization and team building approach.

GOAL 6: Volunteer Boards and Committees

- a. Improve level of functioning by assigning a member of town staff as liaison and, when appropriate, to support the Board and Committee work**

Town Manager Report of Progress:

The Manager noted a few areas of progress regarding this goal. Specifically, the Manager underwent or is currently conducting one-on-one or personal interviews with Board/Committee appointments. Through this, the Manager has identified other volunteer skill sets that can be utilized in other capacities beyond existing Boards and Committees to improve volunteerism and involvement. The Manager continues to work with the Stoughton Redevelopment Authority, Charter Review Committee, Community Preservation Commission, Conservation Commission, and many other Committees/Boards. The Manager made note that essentially every Board/Committee has a staff liaison or staff person who works closely with the group and she will compile a list of these liaisons. The Manager did note, of the goals for FY21, this one so far has not taken highest priority due to the need to respond to the other goals as well as manage the operations daily along with the pandemic. Finally, the Manager made note of some of the work of the social services that are often overlooked such as recreation, youth commission, council on aging, counseling services, etc. These services take high priority and that should be noted.



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Board Comments:

The Board concurred with the Town Manager's prioritization of this goal. In addition, it was noted that often observed were immediate and thorough, staff responses to Board/Committee needs as well as staff participation on Boards and Committees, from standing Committees such as Finance Committee, to task-specific Committees such as Glen Echo.

Overall Status:

Overall the Board concurs with the Manager's approach on this goal and also made note of progress made on staff responsiveness and looks forward to a listing of current liaisons.

Approved by the Town of Stoughton Select Board: September 15, 2020

Christine D. Howe, Chair

Dr. Robin Grimm, Town Manager

Stephen M. Cavey, Vice Chair

Robert J. O'Regan

Joseph M. Mokrisky

Debra C. Roberts