



TOWN OF MILLIS, MASSACHUSETTS
MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL WORKSHEET
For
Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator
Covering the Period December 16, 2019 –January 31, 2021

This worksheet collects professional assessments of Michael Guzinski as Town Administrator of Millis for purposes of a retrospective performance appraisal to be conducted by the Select Board. This will also inform future goal setting, with his input. This review correlates to the skills, requirements and job expectations as defined in the Town Administrator Job Description (dated 1991) as the basis for his contract, as well as those responsibilities identified in the Millis Charter and General Bylaws. Note: day-to-day oversight of the DPW was removed from this position in 2018. The *Summary comments will be collected by Town Counsel and incorporated into a Key Findings & Recommendations Report for public record and the employee's Personnel File.

The areas to be evaluated follow in these six sections:

- A. General Duties
- B. Support to Select Board
- C. Financial & Resource Management
- D. Economic Development & Planning
- E. Leadership & Communications
- F. Personnel Director
- G. Miscellaneous

FEEDBACK →

A. GENERAL DUTIES: The section evaluates the quality and efficiency of day-to-day municipal operations, inclusive of: all town hall departments, public safety, DPW, emergency response and cost-effective delivery of all constituent services to meet current and forecast demand.

*** SUMMARY:**

The key finding is that the TA performed well throughout the COVID 19 emergency which has run for most of the period covered by this performance review.

Once the emergency comes to an end, there should be a formal debrief to determine overall effectiveness of response and adoption of any new more efficient ways of “doing the Town’s business.

Mike continues to work well with both subordinates and the SB to achieve goals. However, he needs to make a greater effort to both motivate employees and to encourage feedback and openness. This is especially important for the lower level employees.

He continues to be overcommitted and has problems prioritizing and then following up on outstanding issues. Some issues tend to fall by the wayside due to lack of having listed them as action items to be accomplished in a specific timeframe. When reminded, he quickly addresses the outstanding issue, but he should establish a process to ensure that he is self-reminded regarding these issues.

As noted last year, Mike has become a well-accepted leader within the Millis Town Hall. I’m restating it here because it’s important that he understands that this area of strength is to a large degree why the Town has continued to work so well throughout the COVID crisis.

He has established himself as both caring and knowledgeable of the needs of the community, his staff and the State regulations. He has provided excellent guidance to the Boards on which he serves with recommendations that are readily accepted as a result of his thorough understanding of the issues being presented. Mike’s willingness to work with anyone sometimes results in what appears to be a lack of willingness to make quick decisions. However, his decision-making process does provide for a thorough vetting of ideas.

Mike does an excellent job managing the day to day operations of the town and is a thoughtful leader who makes sound decisions. Due to a lack of necessary staffing levels, Mike must prioritize constantly which means that sometimes certain tasks just won’t be done. The example noted is the yearly evaluations for department heads. Mike recognizes this and continues to strive to include this important piece in his workflow.

- All Town Administrator's Comments in Red

I agree with most of the comments expressed here. As I've stated in prior reviews, the limitations placed upon me and my office due to limited administrative staffing and an extraordinary number of projects, tasks, and other matters often needing urgent attention (human resources, etc.) has caused me to constantly prioritize and triage items, so that certain items/issues have been pushed off indefinitely in order to tackle "must do" priority items. Having said that, the staff that work in this office is extraordinary. Unfortunately the work load is simply more than the current staffing level can reasonably be expected to manage. I'm hopeful that the proposed addition of 17 more staffing hours in this office will greatly assist us in managing some of the outstanding issues mentioned here.

FEEDBACK →

B. SELECT BOARD SUPPORT: The section evaluates the basis by which the Town Administrator generally assists the Select Board in the performance of its duties, particularly with respect to meeting preparation and organization, informational advising in order to ensure productive meetings and informed decisions to best meet the needs of the town.

* SUMMARY:

The Board was able to continue regular business through the Emergency period, utilizing technology support, with the active participation and encouragement of the staff in the Board's office. This support provided was competent, and enabled the Board to meet many of its stated goals and objectives.

There remains the opportunity to improve the deliberations of the Board through more a bit more analysis provided by our staff as part of meeting preparation.

Mike's management style with respect to the SB is one of openness and ease. He keeps us informed and ensures that he is available for discussion at almost any time.

December 16, 2019 – January 31, 2021

Submitted by: Select Board Summary

I have dwelt specifically on forcefulness and decisiveness in this section. I see a marked improvement from the prior year and hope to see more in the coming year. Partly, this is due to the differing cultures of the business world with which I'm acquainted and the public sector area in which local government operates. Regardless, Mike's knowledge of the laws and issues encompassing local government is impressive. I just look for him to become more assertive when discussing issues and not be reluctant to counter arguments when he believes that they are inappropriate with respect to the situation under discussion.

As with my views last year, it is a pleasure to work with Mike. He is open, easy to work with and admired by his staff. Without question, he is a valuable asset to the Town of Millis.

Mike does a great job supporting the select board. He makes himself available in order to ensure all questions are addressed. Mike advises the board and gives educated and fair recommendations. There aren't many specific areas to note for improvement, but communication can always be refined so that would be the recommendation moving forward.

I greatly appreciate the comments of the Board. I will work to be more vocal and assertive in my recommendations to the Select Board and will provide more analysis of meeting materials prior to each Select Board Meeting.

FEEDBACK →

C. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: Prepares responsible FY town budgets to support services and contracts, sustains long-range capital planning, properly forecasts for future years with emphasis on cost savings, streamlining and efficiency. Delivers success at grant writing. Demonstrates accountability and oversight of enterprise, general or revolving funds and taxation, Clear.Gov and MUNIS, with oversight of finance staff and demonstrable ROI from professional consultants. Informs Select Board, town officials and departments fully and timely as to these measures.

* SUMMARY:

With the active collaboration of the Finance function and all Town departments, the TA has effectively managed the Town's financial resources through the uncertain period of a state of emergency throughout 2020. As of year-end, the full operating budget has been restored and the Town's finances are in line with the requirements of Town services.

I would reinforce what I said in my evaluation last year.

Mike's understanding of the budget, budget process and intricacies associated with planning for all of the departments is excellent. He is very familiar with many of the departments within the State and keeps in constant contact with individuals from other Towns to exchange ideas. As a result, he has a good understanding of the operating budget for Millis in comparison with other towns and is in a position to make recommendations for allocating the budget to meet the needs of each department while being aware of the implications or inconsistencies that might have an adverse impact on Town operations. He is open to new ideas and is readily willing to discuss all options.

I look forward to Mike driving the process of changing the 65/35 split with the schools.

Mike presented a well thought out and complete budget presentation and advised the board well in terms of future planning. In the future, it would be great to have a regular review/evaluation of professional consultants that are contracted by the town.

I thank the Board members for their comments. I must attribute a great deal of the financial success of the Town to our very highly skilled Finance Director and her professional staff. I will continue to work closely with them in striving to make continued improvements to the financial operations of the Town.

FEEDBACK →

D. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING: The section evaluates the TA's oversight of all housing (e.g., 55+ and 40B housing, Open Space planning) and commercial growth, energy and sustainability initiatives, water and sewer infrastructure, commercial development permitting, public transportation, developer compliance, roadway/bridge construction with knowledge of all prevailing State and Federal laws as govern these areas.

* SUMMARY:

The TA has led our successful efforts to promote economic development and an expanding revenue base. These efforts, along with strategies to manage growth, preserve open space, develop resiliency plans have been supported by grant-funded studies. The future will involve implementing these ideas into long term planning.

The COVID-19 pandemic may provide new opportunities to attract new biotech businesses to Millis. It's rural location yet proximity to Boston should be conducive to attracting highly educated and trained individuals to live and work in Millis. The next year should be used to seek companies to open labs and small satellite offices in Millis.

Mike's prior experience working with other towns makes him a great asset to Millis. He is very knowledgeable in many areas. In the future, revisiting the master plan would be helpful.

I appreciate and agree with the Board's comments. There is certainly a need to develop more long term planning in the area of economic development, and I will be working with our talented Planner/Economic Development Director to further the Town's progress in this area.

FEEDBACK →

E. LEADERSHIP & COMMUNICATIONS: The section evaluates the TA's problem solving, application of management solutions from professional conferences, active legislative relations, sound and fair situational judgement and success at advancing progress on strategic initiatives for the town.

* SUMMARY:

The tenure of the TA has been marked by some systematic reviews of processes such as budgeting and budget documentation, Town Clerk and DPW operations, Building Department management and Finance function consolidation. This functional review process should continue by looking at shared services opportunities and TA office operations.

I perceive that Mike has become more confident with respect to his management style and decision-making process over the last year. He still needs to make more time to consider operational changes and take the opportunity to spend time in other departments.

Mike might try delegating more of the mundane tasks to his staff and open time on his calendar to reflect on regulatory, legal, operational and personnel issues within the Town.

Mike needs to install some sort of issues management board that is readily available to him, his staff and the SB to view and quickly identify the status of all outstanding tasks and requests.

Mike keeps the board updated and informed of issues requiring our attention. He is fair and a great problem solver and handles stressful situations with ease. Moving forward, engaging the department heads in a review process would be great.

I agree with the comments of the Board in regards to the importance of spending more time in the various offices communicating directly with staff, as well as examining more macro level aspects of municipal government in Millis. I'm hopeful that the possible addition of staff hours in my office will allow me to delegate some of my current tasks and focus more time in these other very important areas.

FEEDBACK →

F. PERSONNEL DIRECTOR: The section evaluates the TA's ability to manage and support staff, employees, as well as members of committees, commissions, and boards. Demonstrates proficiency in managing labor and employee issues to maximize efficiency, maintain worker satisfaction, and remain compliant with law. Develops plans, policies and procedures for employee relations for review and approval by the Select Board. Implements and ensures compliance of said policies. Competently represents the Select Board in labor negotiations.

* SUMMARY:

Overall personnel relationships and personnel management is effective. More formal, regular performance feedback and review should be explored.

Mike is a very solid manager and Town Administrator. He works hard and has the support of his staff. He keeps the staff informed and is prepared to work with them at all times.

Mike has to spend more time thinking about future opportunities for the staff and perhaps new ideas with respect to opening communications within the staff structure. He has a very open management style, but sometimes a little more direction would help department managers to know what is expected of them at any given time.

Mike conducts fair and effective labor negotiations and manages employee relations well. He should continue in this manner and remain up to date in regards to related labor laws, policies and procedures.

I agree with the Board's comments and will seek to utilize more time in providing guidance to department managers.

FEEDBACK	G. MISCELLANEOUS: Additional comments to frame a discussion about past performance as opportunities for future goal setting.
<p>* SUMMARY:</p> <p>Each of the above should be included in the summary report.</p> <p>As noted earlier, Mike is an excellent and generous people manager. He is liked and he likes people and enjoys talking with them. However, he needs to better prioritize his personnel interactions with respect to his available time. To this end, it might be useful to review the tasks he is managing with the SB and determine if there are some better ways to consider addressing the outstanding issues.</p> <p>Mike needs a better tracking system for time management. He needs to set schedules that are visible to all the key individuals who work with him and he needs to focus on what he is seeking for a resolution to the issues he is confronting in advance of the meetings.</p> <p>Mike does an excellent job as Town Administrator. His knowledge, past experience and calm demeanor make him very effective at his job. Acknowledging that his office is severely understaffed, he still is able to accomplish an impressive level of work to keep the town running well. Mike always makes himself available to assist the board whenever needed and continues to ensure effective town operations.</p> <p>I greatly appreciate all of the positive constructive comments and insightful recommendations that I have received from the Board. As has been noted several times in this evaluation, the greatest obstacle that I have faced in Millis is that of limited staffing and an ever increasing workload. The Town staff does a remarkable job in providing a very high level of services and they deserve most of the credit for the accomplishments of the Town. I believe that many of the proposed improvement noted here will be attainable over time and with some increased staff support.</p> <p>I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support of the Board, which has made it possible to overcome the unexpected challenges of the past year.</p>	

Respectfully submitted by: Millis Select Board, compiled by Town Counsel