

Readfield Select Board and Town Manager Retreat – *approved report*
August 8, 2014; 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Facilitated by Dana Lee, Lee Facilitation Services

Attending: Chair Sue Reay, V. Chair Val Pomerleau, Selectmen Allen Curtis, Greg Durgin and Tom Dunham, Town Manager Stefan Pakulski

- *Parts of the meeting were dedicated to a Q and A with state representatives running for election and with RSU Supt. Donna Wolfrom, Finance Director Brigette Williams and School Board Member David Greenham*

Past Year Successes

Many policies have been updated and approved by the Select Board (SB).

The SB appointed Ad Hoc Committees as needed to help review policies; three ad hoc committees are still currently working: Public Works Reporting Committee, Roles of Liaisons Committee, and Road Bond Reporting Committee.

Had discussions attempting to better determine Town Manager workload, SB expectations and how they affect workload. Had discussions with Town Manager regarding time management.

Focused on the proper roles of SB Members, how we communicate and function has been discussed and is improving.

The SB achieved some improvements in participation and transparency using the Town's website, the Messenger, taking more comments at meetings, and use of ad hoc committees.

The Town received another good audit report.

SB members attended all the Budget Committee and RSU budget meetings.

The Town Manager actively managed the use of the Enterprise Funds.

The Ballfield Committee achieved the creation of a ballfield with local and business support.

There was good progress made on trails development by the Trails Committee.

Frustrating Issues / Concerns

The roles, responsibilities, communication and expectations among and between Select Board Members and the Town Manager needs improvement. "Surprises" are still occurring to both the TM and to the SB members; evidence of communication improvement needs.

The Board stressed the need for Board members and staff to be very clear, thorough and accountable to Readfield citizens. This will allow for greater trust and respect among and between residents, the Select Board and Town Manager.

The Chair is still having occasional issues with Board following proper communication policies, including when complaints are made regarding the Town Manager. More understanding needed about SB roles, functioning and protocols.

The SB needs to "speak with one voice," referring agenda issues to SB Chair, accept democratically made decisions, even if an SB Member disagreed.

The rise of unionization of employees has put strains on the SB and Town Manager; unsure of what direction this will take, but will likely require a lot of Town Manager and SB time and ultimately, a lot of "fence-mending."

Goal Prioritization

Numbers in parentheses indicate number of responses.

(6) SB and Town Manager communication / trust / functioning needs improvement.

- Every six weeks, the Chair plans to hold an executive session of just SB members to perform intra-board performance toward better following policies, chain of communication, proper roles, etc. These discussions will periodically involve the Town Manager to share in how he fits into their SB improved functioning progress.

(6) Holding the mil rate / tax burden down.

- Can overtime be better managed? Would part-time employees be more cost-effective?

(4) Advance a public discussion regarding voting in the Town budget by secret ballot.

- Needs research on how to change to that adoption method, advance public information on the topic, establish hearing date(s), SB to take time / take comments and input.

(3) Improve the timing and SB time allowed to understand the proposed budget.

- Speak to Budget Committee about an earlier Budget Calendar, working more closely together (speaking at their meetings?). There is a September joint workshop with BC to discuss priorities and process.

(2) Thoughtfully and effectively managing the union issues.

- Noted for the SB to take this slowly and thoughtfully. If the unions do not form, there will be more work needed on Personnel Policies.

(2) Town Manager accountability / time management improvements.

(2) Library report / use of bank report to be issued and advanced

(2) Further develop and utilize format for Town Manager Evaluation (Workshop already scheduled).

(1) Long-term road plan must be maintained.

(1) Long-term solid waste and recycling plan to be developed.

(1) Advance the installation of needed security cameras

Other Goal Items

Did not receive any priority responses during scoring.

Investigate the staffing of Transfer Station Manager and Road Commissioner duties / Town Manager workload.

Better understand the audit, terminology, cash flow, Tax Anticipation Notes, fund balance and options (Workshop already scheduled for 8/27).

Hold an “all-committees” workshop to discuss adherence to policies and guidelines (Workshop already scheduled)

Advance a successful Fire Station addition plan.

Advance the repair of Old Woolen Bridge.

Conduct research on cost and functionality of a GIS system for the Town / website.

Restore town boundary markers; include in CIP (Some progress).

- Involve abutting towns to cost-share.

Hold tabletop Emergency Operations Planning exercise with the RSU (Already scheduled)

Chairman Sue Reay's Review of Progress Spreadsheets with The Select Board

Ordinances:

- The Town Manager will work with Town Clerk to obtain and distribute all of the most recently adopted Ordinances and update the web with same (by 8/16). SB will take up spreadsheet again on 8/24. SB Members asked to give input (by 8/19) on which policies are their priority to get reviewed.

Policies:

- SB Members asked for feedback on their priorities to Chair (by 8/19). The first policy to be considered will be the Appointment Procedure Policy, along with review of roles of SB and Town Manager.

Workshops:

- The first four workshops have been identified and are confirmed. The Chair is seeking SB feedback on which other workshops should be prioritized (by 8/19)

Budget Schedule:

- The Chair is seeking feedback on revising the budget schedule from SB Members, Budget Committee Members and Administration.