

CITY OF RHINELANDER

CITY ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION

Outline of Key Points:

1. What is City Administrator Evaluation?
2. What is the role of the Board in City Administrator Evaluation?
3. Methods and Processes for City Administrator Evaluation
4. Problems to Avoid
5. Content Areas Generally Included
6. Recommended Process
7. Sample Evaluation Form

This briefing was prepared for the in-service education of not-for-profit Boards that must update or formalize their process for evaluating the City Administrator.

These materials can be used as a pre-reading document provided to Board members in advance of an active discussion at a regular meeting.

While the presentation has been designed to focus rapidly on the most relevant points, it is likely that Board members will have questions or comments or modifications to suggest on specific issues pertinent to the particular Board in question.

What is City Administrator Evaluation?

- ◆ The process of planning and reviewing the performance of senior management
- ◆ A means of demonstrating organizational stewardship and accountability to stakeholders.
- ◆ A means of maintaining alignment between goals set and achievements reached.
- ◆ An element of decisions about compensation.
- ◆ A means of determining the need for further professional development, education or training.

Other names for this process are “performance management” or “performance appraisal”.

Ideally, the performance review of executives fits with an overall management philosophy of an organization. In particular, the evaluation of a City Administrator works best if the organization is disciplined about setting goals, reviewing progress, and making improvements at all levels, from Board actions through staff management.

Good performance review processes are helpful in making appropriate compensation decisions, and they should also be useful in guiding the priorities set for professional development activities.

Methods and Processes for City Administrator Evaluation:

- ◆ A “book-end” process — performance assessed VERSUS objectives or expectations set earlier.
- ◆ Matters of style: how formal versus informal; how much driven by formula versus Board discretion.
- ◆ Multi-source feedback increases validity (Board members, subordinate staff, external contacts).
- ◆ Combination of written and verbal communication.

A good rule of thumb for performance evaluation is “no surprises”. The end-of-period appraisal should reflect the tone and direction of feedback provided at earlier junctures. The best assurance of such coherence is that the evaluation be conducted versus known and established expectations.

Each organization has its own culture and degree of structure or formality in the processes by which it is managed. In particular, it is important to decide whether the performance will be “by the numbers” or whether it will include variables that are based on subjective assessment. Both are legitimate, especially with respect to the most senior leader of an organization.

While not essential, some form of feedback from more than one angle of vision increases the validity of the performance assessment. However, care must be taken with assessments done by subordinates. Personal interviews by Board members with selected staff regarding City Administrator strengths and weaknesses will minimize the possibility of retaliatory negative input, but may also limit the candor that is sometimes available from surveys.

Performance feedback should be provided to the City Administrator in written and verbal form, through the authorized representative of the Board (Board Chair or Chair of Compensation Committee, etc.).

Problems to Avoid:

- ◆ Don't evaluate unless you have set standards against which to measure performance.
- ◆ Don't use ratings that only measure popularity or personality rather than results.
- ◆ Don't deliver an evaluation of raw numbers or scores; provide context and narrative commentary.
- ◆ Don't politicize the process—be aware if performance evaluation is being used as a platform for working out strategy differences or power issues requiring attention from the Board or Director.

These advisories are intended to ensure that the process has INTEGRITY, OBJECTIVITY and CONSTRUCTIVE VALUE.

Further, it is important to realize that almost any Board or staff activity such as City Administrator evaluation can be “hijacked” in the service of an unacknowledged conflict that may need to be addressed. Such an issue may be one that is completely unrelated to the problem of City Administrator evaluation, such as which constituency has established the greatest level of influence on the Board, or how will the Board signal its values to outside observers.

Content Areas Generally Included:

- ◆ Evaluate the “What” and the “How” (Results that should be accomplished, behaviors through which leadership is demonstrated)

- ◆ Examples of “What” -
 - Fulfillment of Mission/Vision/Strategy
 - Achievement of Specific Annual Priorities or Goals
 - Strategic Leadership and Resource Development
 - Operational or Program Effectiveness
 - Fiscal and Staff Management
 - Public Relations and Advocacy

- ◆ Examples of “How” -
 - Personal Qualities (Integrity, Flexibility, Commitment)
 - Interpersonal Skills (Communications, Influence)
 - Leadership Skills (Trust, Vision, Team Development)

Recommended Process:

- ◆ Establish which committee or persons shall have ongoing director evaluation responsibility. (Do the bylaws stipulate this already?)
- ◆ Establish an annual cycle with calendar dates—Approval of coming year objectives by X date; Review of previous year’s performance by Y date; Compensation actions by Z date.
- ◆ Use a written evaluation form. Start with a relatively simple form; get more detailed in the future, as needed.
- ◆ Invite feedback from broader group than those who have responsibility for conducting the assessment. For example, ask all Board members for their written input and seek input from selected members of staff, external contacts or client representatives.
- ◆ Compile feedback into a performance evaluation that contains:
 - A) Overall assessment
 - B) Affirmation of strengths and achievements
 - C) Discussion of any gaps that are of concern
 - D) Suggestions for future professional development
- ◆ While compensation actions may be independent of the evaluation, pay decisions should not be in contradiction of the “message” of the evaluation.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Part A: Organizational Responsibilities

1. Vision, Mission & Strategy:

How satisfied are you that the City Administrator has a clear understanding of the mission and strategy of the organization and plays a key role in translating that mission into realistic action?

Exceptionally Satisfied Satisfied Very Unsatisfied Cannot Assess

COMMENTS: FOR THE SHORT TIME KRISTINA HAS BEEN HERE, I THINK SHE IS DOING A FINE JOB. SHE IS LEADING THE CITY IN THE DIRECTION I THINK IT NEEDS TO GO.

2. Achievement of Results:

How satisfied are you that the City Administrator has accomplished the objectives and priorities set by the Board for the performance period?

Exceptionally Satisfied Satisfied Very Unsatisfied Cannot Assess

COMMENTS: LAST YEAR KRISTINA CAME IN RIGHT AROUND BUDGET TIME. SHE WAS TOLD WHAT OUR EXPECTATIONS WERE FOR YEAR 2016, AND SHE CAME THROUGH JUST FINE.

3. People Management:

How satisfied are you that the City Administrator has selected and developed qualified staff and built morale among staff, volunteers and consumers?

Exceptionally Satisfied Satisfied Very Unsatisfied Cannot Assess

COMMENTS: SHE HASN'T "PICKED" STAFF HERSELF, BUT THE STAFF THAT WAS HERE WHEN SHE CAME HERE, AS FAR AS I KNOW ALL LIKE WORKING WITH HER.

4. Program Management:

How satisfied are you that the City Administrator has appropriate knowledge of the organization programs and services; and provides suitable oversight for the provision of high quality programs and services?

Exceptionally Satisfied Satisfied Very Unsatisfied Cannot Assess

COMMENTS: I'M SURE SOME OF THE PROGRAMS HERE IN THE CITY WERE "NEW" TO HER, BUT I THINK SHE HAS EDUCATED HERSELF TO THE BEST OF HER ABILITY. IT'S UP TO US (THE COUNCIL) TO MAKE SURE SHE'S TRAINED IN THESE FIELDS.

5. Fiscal Management:

How satisfied are you that the City Administrator is knowledgeable regarding financial matters, and has established a system that allows for accurate accounting and informed financial decision-making?

Exceptionally Satisfied **Satisfied** **Very Unsatisfied** **Cannot Assess**

COMMENTS: I THINK SHE'S DOING A FINE JOB, LIKE I SAID, SHE CAME IN DURING BUDGET TIME IN 2015 AND SO FAR HAS SHOWN ME SHE IS VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THESE MATTERS.

6. Operations Management:

How satisfied are you that the City Administrator has assured that the organization has suitable systems, policies and processes for: accounting and fund management, personnel management, office space, information technology and risk management?

Exceptionally Satisfied **Satisfied** **Very Unsatisfied** **Cannot Assess**

COMMENTS: ALTHOUGH WE AS COUNCIL MEMBERS DON'T SEE THE DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES AT CITY HALL, I HAVE NOT HEARD ANY NEGATIVE TALK.

7. The Board—Staff Relationship:

How satisfied are you that the City Administrator works effectively with the Board, maintaining good communications and a collegial, professional environment?

Exceptionally Satisfied **Satisfied** **Very Unsatisfied** **Cannot Assess**

COMMENTS: KRISTINA IS A VERY OPEN PERSON WHO HAS GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS WHEN DEALING WITH COUNCIL AND KEEPS IT VERY PROFESSIONAL.

8. External Liaisons and Public Image:

How satisfied are you that the City Administrator maintains a positive professional reputation in the local community and cultivates effective relationships with public officials, constituents, consumers and other relevant community organizations?

Exceptionally Satisfied **Satisfied** Very Unsatisfied Cannot Assess

COMMENTS: KRISTINA HAS JOINED A SERVICE ORGANIZATION. SHE WORKS VERY WELL WITH THE COUNTY BOARD, I'VE NOT HEARD OF ANYONE DIS-SATISFIED W/ KRISTINA.

9. Other Expectations:

How satisfied are you that the City Administrator has responded appropriately to unanticipated or difficult situations; and to those specific challenges associated with the unique mission of this organization?

Exceptionally Satisfied **Satisfied** Very Unsatisfied Cannot Assess

COMMENTS: WE (THE COUNCIL) ARE NOTICED WHEN AN ISSUE COMES UP, KRISTINA BRINGS IDEAS, GOOD AND NOT SO GOOD, AS TO HOW THESE SITUATIONS COULD OR SHOULD BE HANDLED. SHE ALWAYS HAS A RECOMINATION FOR THE COUNCIL TO CHOOSE FROM.

Part B: Personal Leadership Qualities

1. What are three (or more) major strengths of the City Administrator as a leader?

Comments: EXCELENT FINANCIAL SKILLS. EXCELENT RESEARCH SKILLS WHEN NEEDED. POSITIVE PUBLIC IMAGE.

2. What are the areas in which the City Administrator would most benefit from additional development of skills or knowledge?

Comments: MAINTAIN TRAINING THROUGH CIVMC OR THE LEAGUE TO BETTER THE SKILLS SHE ALREADY HAS.

3. In what way does this City Administrator make a unique contribution to the organization because of the person he/she is?

Comments: KRISTINA IS A VERY EASY PERSON TO TALK TO THEREFORE HAS GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS.

Part C: Overall Assessment

Narrative Summary of Performance:

I THINK OVERAL KRISTINA IS DOING A GREAT JOB FOR THE SHORT TIME SHE'S BEEN HERE.

Affirmation of Strengths and Achievements:

CONTINUE WITH THE DOWNTOWN PROJECT, AND KEEP US POST ON NEW INFO FOR THE PRAT ISSUE.

Discussion of Gaps:

TRY TO MAKE SURE ALL THE INFO FOR OUR COUNCIL PACKETS IS THERE PRIOR TO COUNCIL MEETINGS. I KNOW THAT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE.

Suggestions for Professional Development:

CONTINUE WITH TRAINING AND EDUKATING HERSELF TO DO THE BEST JOB SHE CAN.

Narrative Evaluation:

What would you identify as the City Administrator's strength (s), expressed in terms of the principle results achieved during the rating period?

I THINK OVERALL KRISTINA IS DOING WELL
FOR THE SHORT TIME SHE'S BEEN HERE AND
FOR NOT HAVING ANY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE.

What performance area (s) would you identify as most critical for improvement? _____

CONTINUE TO GET TRAINING AND
EXPERIENCE FOR THIS JOB.

What constructive suggestions or assistance can you offer the City Administrator to enhance performance?

CONTINUE TRAINING + EDUCATION FOR THIS POSITION.

What other comments do you have for the City Administrator e.g., priorities, expectations, goals or objectives for the new rating period?

KEEP UP ON DOWNTOWN PROJECT COSTS, WORK TO BALANCE BUDGET, AND WORK WITH DEPT. HEADS TO FURTHER THEIR AREAS.

Name of Board Member: Tom Gherson Dist. 8

Evaluation year: 8/29/16

