Town of Burlington Government Review Committee
Minutes of March 21, 2018

Members in attendance: Steve Marchese, Kelly Pappas, Roger Riggs, (Charles Murphy)

Members absent: Gary Gianino, Michael Runyan, Paul Sheehan, Sally Willard, Robert Hogan

Also present: Fire Chief Steven Yetman, DPW Director John Sanchez, COA Director Marge McDonald

Chairman Kelly Pappas called the Government Review Committee to order at 4:30 pm in the Burlington Town Hall, main hearing room.

Department Head Discussion:

• Fire Department

  Mr. Yetman explained that all firemen positions are civil service except the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief. To be promoted the fireman must pass a promotional exam. The administrative positions are promoted based on rank. There are three unions within the Fire Department: Firefighters union; Survey and Dispatch, and Clerical union; and Civil Mechanic DPW union. He thinks the department is well organized with checks and balances.

  Charles Murphy arrived to the meeting at 4:34pm

• DPW

  Mr. Sanchez explained that he reports to the Town Administrator, and that the DPW is the largest department under the town’s purview outside the school department. He has 64 employees and 12 seasonal employees. It has been a struggle getting summer employees lately.

  The DPW is a very lean department. For instance, some communities have three employees doing the water billing, but in Burlington there is only one. Burlington doesn’t have a duty manager, assistant administrator, assistant director, operations manager, or business manager. Without an operations manager, Mr. Sanchez is responsible for responding to all alarms at all hours. Mr. Sanchez noted due to the lean department, it takes longer to do some projects, and sometimes Burlington misses opportunities for improvements.
He noted that Burlington does not have a tree department. This is an expensive investment, because of the equipment, and the employee certification requirements. Unless the branch or tree has fallen to the ground, Burlington contracts this work out.

Mr. Sanchez is able to hire the most qualified individual for a position, because his department is not civil service. Also, when someone is hired there is a six-month review period to ensure that they are what Burlington expected them to be, and if they are not, they can be let go.

Mr. Sanchez contracts jobs out when it is more efficient. If the department falls behind on catch basin cleaning, or street cleaning, it is contracted out. This has not been the case lately.

Mr. Sanchez does not support merging the central maintenance and recreation maintenance, because their job tasks are different. The only overlap is lawn mowing; Central Maintenance does cemetery, whereas Recreation does park and schools.

Mr. Sanchez noted that all changes to the maps are not done until the summer, when an intern is hired to do the work. The engineers cannot do this, because it takes away from doing projects. If an engineer were taken off a project, then it would need to be contracted out at a much higher cost. He supports getting a maps person for the town.

Charles Murphy left the meeting at 5:27 pm

Council on Aging

Ms. McDonald also supports getting map person because they can put the locations of elderly/disabled people in case there is an emergency.

Ms. McDonald noted there are 6,000 Senior Citizens in town. Her department does advocacy, social services, and activities to keep that population socially engaged with the community. The COA gets $350K from the municipal budget, $50K from the state, and $35-50K from Lahey Clinic. Also, the COA has a 4 years grant from the Cummings Foundation at $25K per year for outreach.

Ms. McDonald has 11 employees in the COA, and 5 of those are full time. She reports to the Town Administrator. There is also a volunteer board that is appointed by the Town Administrator that sets the policies.

Ms. McDonald does not have a programming coordinator so doing that portion of the job is difficult. She cannot legally do fund raising without a friends group, and the amount of volunteers are shrinking.

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Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:56 pm was made by Kelly Pappas.

**PASSED: 3-0-0**
Next meeting:
Monday, April 2 at 6:30pm
Burlington Town Hall, Main Hearing Room.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Noelle Judd, Recording Clerk