

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the June 7, 2022 Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chairperson Roy the meeting of June, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen Meeting Room at Town Hall
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led by Selectman Guessferd
3. ATTENDANCE

Board of Selectmen: Brett Gagnon, Bob Guessferd, Dave Morin, Kara Roy

Excused Absence: Marilyn McGrath

Staff/Others: Steve Malizia, Town Administrator

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Municipal Resources Inc. Report on Town Hall Staffing Needs/Assessment

Chairperson Roy started off by saying, so we're here tonight to go over the Municipal Resources and incorporate town staffing needs assessment that was published in May. So I think what I want to do first is maybe go around the room and get everybody's general feelings about the report. The Town Administrator was recognized and said so maybe just for the public's edification, this was commissioned by the Board of Selectmen, and it's basically a Town Hall staffing study. So it wasn't town-wide, per se. It was mostly the functions that come out of Town Hall, which would be the Clerk, for example, Finance, Administration, Land Use, which includes Planning, Engineering and Zoning, I think Assessing and IT. So basically the intent of the Board was to take a look at our staffing and what we may or may not improve upon, I think with an eye towards potentially looking at next budget cycle to maybe effectuate some of this. As we are all well aware, we are heading into a default budget for the upcoming year and funds are tight. I'm just prefacing that. So the general public knows that this study was basically requested for the Board and I think with an eye, my understanding to look forward to see what we may or may not be able to do to improve the functions at Town Hall. I think someone said we do a lot with a little or we do a lot with less staff than maybe some other communities. That's a good thing. But maybe there's some areas we need to bolster so that we are providing the service and making sure that we're dotting all the t's.... dotting all the l's and crossing all the t's.

The Town Administrator went on to say, just a quick thing. This was Municipal Resources. They are an organization consisting typically of retired municipal officials from police chiefs, fire chiefs, all the way to town administrators, town managers. Carol Grandfield is a retired town administrator, worked in several different towns in New Hampshire over a long career. She was the lead person on the study. I do believe she interviewed at least three of the selectmen, myself and other various staff members for input into this report, along with looking at basically all the job descriptions we have for the jobs here at Town Hall. She received all of those along with just head count numbers. So I think she did a reasonably thorough job of that. She also came toward the building. So she physically came here just to set that scenario. So she's worked for MRI for quite a while. Pretty experienced administrator and probably has done this type of study for other communities. The Board had budgeted \$20,000. We ended up spending a shade under \$14,500. So we basically came in under the \$20,000 budget that they had. So it's a report, it's been posted online for the last probably month at least. So it's accessible if the public wanted to look at it, it's in the agenda packet. So if the public wanted to look at the agenda packet the entire report is there. So with that. Selectman Gagnon then said it's in the packet from May 10th. The Town Administrator replied, along with tonight's packet, if somebody's following along they can look at the report if they want to. I just I just wanted to set the scenario a little bit for the general public.

Chairperson Roy then said so just sort of add to that. It is to look forward, obviously, and I think our job here tonight is to prioritize how we grow staff, to meet the needs of the community and to continue to provide the quality of service they get, the community gets now. So I guess with that, I'll go around the table and ask for general thoughts and comments.

Selectman Morin was recognized and said Looking at the report it pretty much didn't surprise me what it came back to say. It's basically a lot of stuff that we've already talked about. It says basically what the Board has talked about in the past. There is three positions that I saw that I would see as a priority. But we've got to take each of those positions to see what it's going to best benefit the town. But pretty much the report didn't surprise me at all when I read it. I get.

Selectman Gagnon said Dave, to that, since I believe you're kind of the senior here. Are there any positions, you've said that this report highlighted a lot that you've talked about in the past. Are there any watch outs that the rest of us should be aware of that saying this this study called out a certain employee to be added, but you and your past Board has already tried that and failed or anything like that. You think will happen? Selectman Morin replied, we have never tried to add since I've been on the Board. But there's a couple of positions in here that we've had in the past which will make it a little easier for the Board because we can put them in the budget because we already have them like we did with the fire marshal. Got it. But then there's others that are a priority that will probably have to go, will have to go to a warrant article. So it's a, it's a Board needs to decide what's our priority to move forward. Selectman Gagnon replied, Okay. Thanks.

Selectman Gagnon was recognized and said so I had two general topics. One, I'm going to tiptoe here just generally and look at Mr. Malizia. We had a talk in non-public where you were active participant. Is that something that we can talk about in this forum? I know that's very vague. The Town Administrator replied, in general terms, yeah, sure, go ahead if you want to talk about how it relates to this, that's fine. Selectman Gagnon replied, I think so. Is that okay? All right. Yeah. Chairperson Roy added yes, as long as you stay away from specific things. Selectman Gagnon then said so there are two things that I thought are to me strike as high priority. Obviously, we're going into a default budget, so we can't be a lot of these things are certainly necessary, needed and I can see the value. But to prioritize them, the first one would be enforcement. You know, I know the individual associated with enforcing some of the regulations or fines thereof I think is tough. Isn't his position right now currently assessing an enforcement isn't even taking a double roll don't we have a? The Town Administrator replied, so the person that you're talking about is the Zoning Administrator, would write zoning determinations and also does code enforcement if it's the same person. Code enforcement is not building code. It's more like you drive down the street, there's the signage, there's things that are not acceptable from our code perspective, our town code, our zoning code. So that person does and has worn those two hats for their tenure here. Selectman Gagnon replied saying and so I think that was my concern is I would really like to see a separate, I think it does state this too, a zoning or an ordinance enforcer because, you know, once you know, individuals who do whatever in town and figure out that there really isn't much enforcement, you know, a bad habits seem to persist. So getting a couple slaps on the hand here and there may get Hudson known for actually enforcing its ordinance. So to me that seems like a decent priority.

Selectman Gagnon then said the other one, you know, personally speaking as a first time selectman, some of the documentation that we sign, the topics that we see in our meetings, I feel like kind of limit us from looking further into the future and really discussing innovative ideas for the town moving forward and kind of bog us down. So with that, I would like to talk about a town administrator versus a town manager to see if we can remove some of those current requirements that we handle and unfortunately push them off onto someone like yourself or a position thereof so that we can focus as a Board on more innovative discussions like this tonight. So those are the two that boil to the top for me.

Selectman Guessferd was recognized and said Okay. Yeah, I don't disagree at all with what Dave said. We are seeing a lot of this already. It's nothing new. What it comes down to, what we have to really decide, which you've said. I think the word priority came up, is what should we do versus what can we do and where do those kind of intersect? Where we can possibly maybe add to the staff that's needed. I mean, there's a number of these. I looked at a lot of this and I said, yeah, we have to look

at this, but we also need to take a look at and talk to the staff as well ourselves, some of the department heads, and see what their thoughts are on it. Because I'm guessing that there's probably a few areas where when they look at it, they may not see it exactly the same way. So I think to have a complete picture for us, I think we need to kind of maybe get some of the inputs and say, well, what did you think about your department? I'll say I'll just use Planning as an example. So, you know, just kind of another data point, right, for any final decisions we want to make.

Chairperson Roy said I just want to ask a question. So do you think it would be a good tool if we sort of made a list of priorities and then sort of sent it out for the staff review? Selectman Guessferd replied, yeah, I think, I think that's a good idea. Yeah. I mean, I don't think we should move forward, you know, finally with a final move forward until we actually do get some input. I mean, we the thing that people need to understand that department heads, from my perspective is this town is run very well. And as you said, you know, we do a lot with little, but and it's no if we decide that we want to make a change because this comes down to morale, too. If we decide we want to make some changes that we need to consider, I mean, we don't need to kowtow to people, but we do need to consider how that will affect the day to day operations of the town and the people that work in the town and whether or not that would affect them negatively. So they might say, well, I'm going to go somewhere else. You know, we have some really, really good employees in this town and the message can't be, you're doing a lousy job. The message has to be we think this is what it would take to make this a more efficient operation here or there.

Selectman Guessferd continued on saying, you mentioned a couple of specifics. Specifics, I think. I think the tax collector recommendation is probably one of my, would be one of my highest priorities. And I think the other high priority for me well, one of them would be I like the idea of like finance right now we're a one, one stop place right there. And if she's not there, if she's out or something or things need to be done. What I've seen in here is that she's really the only one that can do certain things, certain, certain of these things. The Finance Director. Chairperson Roy asked, are you talking about the cross training? Selectman Guessferd replied, Yeah. Yes. The cross training, I think, is important. I think that we definitely need to take a look at the town administrator position and and what we can do to help. Span of control is too large in my mind, but I think that whoever sits in that position, whatever we want to call it or change it to or we keep it, that some of those tasks you may you made a very good point. I see us doing a lot of things that could could definitely be done just as well at that at the town employee level, at the department head level or the town administrator level. So I think we need to look at span of control and then we need to also look at responsibility and authority. These are kind of my my thoughts.

Selectman Gagnon then said may I just tweak slightly, maybe not using span of control as we're trying to take control or change control...Selectman Guessferd replied, no, no, no. I'm talking about his (Town Administrator) span of control as she talks about it in the report. Selectman Gagnon replied, I fully understand, I would call it more of just a loosening the responsibility. I feel like it's not taking control back or change control. It's just taking a responsibility off his shoulders. Selectman Guessferd then said well, what it comes down to, let me just try to explain a little bit what it comes down to. And it's a as you know, I mean, it's a it's a basic management term. People, managers need to have a certain level of supervisory responsibility over certain numbers of people when it gets too large, that's what I'm talking about. Too many people that they're supervising. Then then you can end up with some inefficiencies. And and then the person who is in that position can't do their job as well. They're doing a lot of things, but they may not be doing quite as well. And then other people can take on some of the other responsibilities. So that's what I'm talking about. So yeah, I mean, I don't want anybody to think we're trying to I think we should loosen that a little bit, quite frankly, from our perspective, I think we should from the selectmen there are things that the administrator or manager or whatever we decide to to look at can do better. And the HR thing is to me is very important as well. That's another one I think we have to really think about. But again, here we are positions, right? What do we do? Selectman Morin was recognized and said span of controller is 3 to 5 people. Look what he's got. Chairperson Roy replied, exactly. You're absolutely right. Selectman Morin said that tells you right there. Selectman Guessferd then said exactly to be very specific, it's exactly. Selectman Morin then said for some of the stuff that we do, like we did last meeting, we can take some of this as a select Board and vote from now on handle it. We don't want we don't see it. So that could cure that problem. And correct me if I'm wrong and I don't know if the town's ready for this right yet. That's why I'm asking, town manager...The Town Administrator said it's a change in form of government.

Selectman Morin then said they kind of lose some of their input. Yeah. I don't know if we're ready for that in this town right now. The Town Administrator said I do believe you'd have to wait til Town Meeting to change that. Selectman Morin said I think that that may be a problem because they will lose some of their input with a town manager versus and administrator. Selectman Guessferd then said I'm not saying I want to do that...Selectman Morin said Oh, no, no, I understand that. But I'm just saying that we got to understand that it's two different roles. Selectman Guessferd said there's pros and cons. Selectman Morin replied, right, right. Exactly. Chairperson Roy then said and that would take a warrant. We can't we the Board can't can't just do that. I mean, we're prohibited to do that. And but I think to to your point is and to Brett is before we shift more responsibility to to the town administrator, we need to fix the span of control issue. Right? We can't just pile on and pile on and say you're responsible for this in this and this. Right? So so I think that it's important that we look at ways we might be able to to reduce his span of control. And then if we want to shift certain decision making processes to him, then we do that. Selectman Gagnon replied, fabulous point. Great.

Selectman Morin then said and if I just real quick, since everybody's bringing it up, I would thought we were going to discuss positions after but I'll just my three were the assistant administrator, human resources, and then the Treasurer's office. Those were the three that I saw and this afternoon I went home and read it again and all the discussions we've had in the past about human resources and stuff, that's, that's. Chairperson Roy the said but there might be some opportunity that HR person, this is just something for discussion, is the same person as the assistant administrator. You know what I mean? To which Selectman Guessferd replied, that was like one of the recommendations. The Town Administrator added, if you can find the right skill set, that might be...or get the training for the person if they maybe don't have as much training there. You can get trained. But that would be two birds with one stone. For lack of a better word. Selectman Morin replied, exactly. Chairperson Roy added, right, right, right.

The Town Administrator then said and the tax collector as Selectman Morin referred to, that would also require a warrant article. So I mean, things like that you put to the voters, hey, we're running a \$50 million business here. It's gotten more sophisticated through the years. We're the only town other than Merrimack that has the same, that has the dual position. Everybody else has gone to two separate to a clerk, and there's a tax collector because the clerk's responsibilities, as you can tell, with the elections and all the motor vehicles that's gone up incrementally, and then the tax collector, you're running millions of dollars through here. Chairperson Roy said I think it's just an operation of growing with the population of the town, right? The Town Administrator replied, yes and some of it's the sophistication of what's going on in the requirements that are being foisted, that are being put upon the town from outside forces like the state. You know, they require certain things. This isn't the olden days when they did it in somebody's porch. You know what I'm talking about? It was down the road, you know what I mean? It's a much more sophisticated operation.

Chairperson Roy said and sort of to the HR person thing. I also see that as a way to help not only free up the town administrator, but department heads from doing a lot of the stuff that a human resources and it would be uniform and consistent and yeah you know you don't have just different departments doing it their way which may or may not meet some standard. Selectman Morin replied, Right. There'll be every department does it the same way. Absolutely. The Chairperson replied, right. Right. You know, so I think that would be valuable to us in a sort of protectionist thing where if somebody wanted to complain. Right. From a liability perspective, somebody would complain. Well, this guy in this department had this thing and this happened to him. And then I did the same thing and something else happened to me.

Selectman Gagnon then said so, so with that, I think that this seems to be coming to the surface as a good priority because it's going to double take the assistant manager's position manager, secretary administrator, sorry, assistant administrative position as well as HR. So it's two birds with one stone. Do we need or do we legally need to warn article or should we do a one article for a position like this? Chairperson Roy replied, interestingly, I was just having a conversation with somebody about that. The position, actually the assistant town administrator position exists. It is not funded. Right? The Town Administrator replied, so in approximately 2009, the Board of Selectmen took the Community Development Director position, when it existed. Changed that to the assistant town administrator. They still had responsibility over the folks over in the land use, but they're assistant town administrator. That position was put into the budget was funded, that individual was an individual

hired 2009 was here through 2011, left our employ for whatever reason. We never backfilled it. We attempted to go back to the community development model at some point later on. That didn't work out either, but that's for different purposes. That was probably more of an individual purpose, the person we hired. So the theory is we've had the position. We just, like Chairperson Roy said, we didn't fund it. So it's not like we just invented it. You know, if you said just HR director, straight HR director, I might have a different opinion because we've never had, in my knowledge, an HR director that would be a different position. But you've had an assistant town administrator. You've just we've just chosen not to fund it through the years. So depending on how you look at it, if you were to resurrect that position and attempt to put that in the budget next year, you see where it goes.

Selectman Morin added, we just did that with the fire marshal. Chairperson Roy added, right, right. It would just have to be put into next year's budget. The Town Administrator explained, but a tax collector, for example when you're splitting there's statutory requirements there and to split that you'd actually have to have that in a warrant article and people would vote yay or nay. Chairperson Roy then said and I just want to be clear, the tax collector part of that is appointed. The Town Administrator said that would be correct. The town clerk was always is elected. The tax collector would be an appointment, which this Board is the hiring authority would actually hire that individual. Selectman Guessferd said it requires a particular set of skills. Chairperson Roy said Right, right we would look for certain things. The Town Administrator said you would certainly be looking for financial skills, potential possible other experience in the business. But yes, that is that is a yeah, you need training, you need education, you need a financial background. You could have somebody on staff already. I don't know. I'm just saying. But that's the difference. But the clerk, again, is elected will continue to be elected.

Selectman Gagnon then said so if we're taking some notes here, I'm mentally kind of just thinking what we're discussing. It seems like an assistant administrator/HR seems to be a very high priority for an employee re-hire or re-appointment. Are there any other positions that we want to take on during this default budget or is we want to take on one employee and then shift to other material things? Chairperson Roy said I think we need to hold on one second because I think that I know we're talking about it, but with the default budget, I'm not sure how realistic it is to add any of this, you know, I mean, maybe we could. And I think we need to have a little bit more in-depth discussion about the zoning, the code enforcement person. There might be some opportunity, if there's some money, to contract that position out through NRPC or something like that. But I don't know that in FY 2023, adding an HR director to a default budget would be a realistic thing to do.

The Town Administrator said if you recall, we had a conversation I believe at the last meeting about the default budget, specifically some of the activities or things that were going to not be accomplished this next upcoming year based on the default budget. Just a rough estimate. And again, this is very rough somewhere between \$125,000 to \$150,000 with benefits, is probably what you're looking at. I'm not aware that right now we have the capacity to take that on. Selectman Morin added, and I personally think it would be cleaner if we went through the process and the budget put it in the budget. People can see it instead of us just putting somebody in there. Selectman Guessferd added, absolutely. Visibility, transparency. Yeah. And we need to market it. We need to sell it. We need to say this is what benefit you're going to get. Chairperson Roy added, right. I think that would be. And I think that we have to have a good plan in place to do that. Right. And again, look forward to probably FY24.

Selectman Morin then said you know, and speaking of your position, I was talking with Mr. Malizia today and if we put it in the budget temporarily, for a temporary time, get somebody that can help zoning and planning so they can be, you know, working with both of those groups. We can at least move on that way for a while because the person could do the code enforcement stuff, plus help with some planning stuff, which would take the load off the Planner and the Zoning Administrator. But you're still getting one person but doing two positions. So that would be like the human resource and the assistant administrator. Chairperson Roy then said I also think that those having one on one conversations with both the Zoning Administrator and the planning guy, Selectman Guessferd added planner, town planner. Chairperson Roy replied, thank you. I think before we went ahead and sort of went full force, we should probably have a discussion with them. Because I don't I don't know that they would agree that they need a full time, all the time kind of thing. I think they need to help get dug out first and then do an analysis on what's needed after that.

The Town Administrator then said so as you're aware, we've pivoted money from the default in the default budget to at least accomplish some of the planning activity within NRPC's assistance. Perhaps as the year goes on, we may have identified other opportunities, depending on how the year goes, to maybe get some assistance with the code side from an NRPC, for example, or maybe some part time retiree who wants to keep his hand in the game or her hand in the game for maybe a few hours a week. You know, go out and go out and do this and speak to that person and, you know, go look at this, you know, report to the code enforcement/zoning administrator. But, you know, another set of boots on the ground or eyes or whatever you want to call it.

Selectman Gagnon said yeah. And just to reinforce that, I mean, I've actually talked to a few design engineers in the region and they're very interesting people. They know the towns, they know the towns, the town officials very well, and they know which towns they can get away with a lot at and they make jokes about it. It's actually quite funny to listen to them. So I don't want Hudson to be known as that town where that's not a bad town. You can you can wiggle that. You can wiggle this. You know, I want to make sure that if we have ordinances the town people have voted on and want enforced, they are enforced. And it only takes, again, one or two hand slaps before the community knows okay, we can't wiggle on that, you know, whether it's wetlands or anything else in our ordinances. That's kind of what I'm I really want to hit home about.

The Town Administrator then said what's interesting, when you look at some of the litigation that we've been involved in, when you get to code enforcement, if somebody doesn't want to play ball, you've got to go to court and you really have to look at that like what's it worth to go to court? I mean, I'm not trying to say make examples of people, but there are things that are egregious enough that, yeah, we need to we need to do something to mean what we say, do what we say. I mean, it's sort of like when you look at tax dealing for years, we'd resist taking maybe manufactured housing as tax deeds because they're really not worth it. But every once in a while you've got to do it. So everybody goes, yeah, they're going to do it. Yeah, and I'm not trying to single anybody out, but code enforcement can be a long road because people who don't want to play or go along, they're not going to go along unless you take them to court. Chairperson Roy said even those tend to be long cases. The Town Administrator continued saying, most people comply. Most people some people don't know any better. They didn't know what they did. And you refresh it, you let them know. Others are kind of like, Yeah, it's my property, you know? But in the end, sometimes you end up in court and depending on what kind of money we want to spend in court, again, it depends on the violation. How egregious is it? Certainly, if it's an environmental issue or something like that, you know, we'll go.

Selectman Gagnon then said just I think from some example that I've seen in surrounding towns, you know, it's may not be a court issue, but if the individual doing it may know. But if no one's watching them, you know, and it covers it up, no one will ever know. But if they do get caught in the act, it takes one call to it, to a state agency like the EPA or so forth. And then there's no need to go to court. It's it will be handled properly. You know, those are the kind of issues, without getting too much detail that I'm curious about seeing how many of those get away.

Selectman Morin then said I just want to say, make it clear out there to the public, too, that I talked to the Zoning Administrator today and as a case he's working on right near here. So it is getting taken care of when it comes in. So it's not like....Chairperson Roy said I know of at least two active cases that I know of. The Town Administrator added, there's varying levels of activity. Some is certainly a more advanced, but the Zoning Administrator does keep a log and keeps track of the complaint what he did about it when he investigated. And sometimes it's just neighbors like, yeah, and we're not going to get in the middle of a neighbor or private property type of dispute. We're mostly looking at, you know, you look at the corridors in town, are they in compliance? That's really key because if you see it you need to do something, you get complaints. If I don't know, something's going on this street in the back woods, I don't typically drive over there. But if I get a report, I need to go investigate it. But I can't just go trample in your backyard and see what you're doing. It's never quite that simple. But I do think that just so people know, we do do stuff. We do go out. We do. We are not passive about it. We do, and I think our Zoning Administrator is an experienced individual that does take it serious and does the best he can with the amount of time that he has. Selectman Gagnon replied, no disagreeing with that. The Town Administrator then said there's a lot that goes on in the Town of Hudson. You've got 25,000 residents. You got probably almost just under 10,000 properties. We're a bedroom

community. We're in a great location. There's a lot that goes on here, you know, and for what you get here, I think I think if you've looked at if you have a chance to look at maybe other towns and see what they have. Selectman Morin replied, we're behind. The Town Administrator added we're not as fully staffed as maybe our, our contemporaries in Londonderry or Derry. But then again, we don't pay the same tax rate that they do in Derry.

Selectman Guessferd then said our taxes probably aren't exactly the same. People do complain about them, obviously, but I got to believe we pay a little bit less. The Town Administrator said on the municipal side we're in the lower tier of property tax. On the municipal side. I'm not commenting on the schools. Selectman Guessferd replied, okay, that's what I thought. I mean. The Town Administrator continued saying, and that goes through the organization highway. I mean, I think we added two people in the 25 years I've been here. We've got a lot more roads. Selectman Morin said and that's the problem. We do a lot and get things done with very little. You've got to look at the employees because that's how it gets done, because we do do that. Chairperson Roy then said but eventually there's there's a cost for that. There's a cost where we can no, we can't maintain that. And services are lost regardless of the quality of the employee. They just can't do what needs to be done. Selectman Guessferd then said and I see that from people I know in other towns you drive through Hudson and especially in the winter, you know, it's like, Wow. You guys do a great job with the roads. I mean, they do. I mean, I'm proud about those kind of things for my town that these that we take care of the people pretty well and at a pretty decent tax rate.

At this point Selectman Gagnon said any other positions we want to discuss or employee type topics? Selectman Morin replied, I really think we need to be careful. Two default budgets. We can't try to throw a lot on the...Chairperson Roy said no, butt, but I think there's some, so...Selectman Morin said I mean, we can put a five year plan together. Selectman Gagnon replied, I think that's more. Chairperson Roy then said yeah, yeah, yeah, cuz honestly, as I was saying, I don't see anything before 2024. FY 2024. Right now, we're not going to kind of add anything.

Selectman Guessferd said the next budget that we're going through. We should probably have something in there. Chairperson Roy replied, right. Right. But there's also sort of suggestion in here about the Town Engineer and where he sort of belongs. Selectman Guessferd said I was gonna have that conversation. Chairperson Roy laughed and replied, yeah, I guess what to be clear, what they recommend is that typically they work with the public works department is. Selectman Morin added that's that's very common. Chairperson Roy replied saying, right. So I guess the question is, is that something that we want to consider is moving the Town Engineer over to the DPW?

Selectman Morin said you've got to get Jess in here, see if they got room, first of all. But that's a very common thing. Chairperson Roy replied, right. Right. Selectman Guessferd said not only organizationally, but physically. Chairperson Roy replied, right, Right. Selectman Gagnon said a reporting structure. Chairperson Roy then said yeah. And so that that would well it'll. Selectman Guessferd said where he actually sits. Selectman Gagnon replied, that too. Chairperson Roy then said it would do I think it do a couple of things if I'm reading this right, one free up some physical space and two free up a little bit of a span of control issue. Selectman Morin then said span of control, my only problem with that is moving him up there where we've moved everybody together to make it easier for the resident to get everything done in one spot with everybody that's going to take away from that. And that's why they did that in the past. The Town Administrator then said I do think you have to make that a consideration. You know, we were always careful that if you come in as a resident, you don't always necessarily know who you need until you start talking. And they said, oh, you need the engineer you got to go over there now. And they go and then they go over and he says, No, not really. You really should talk to this guy and then you come back here. I'm not saying you shouldn't do anything. I'm just saying that's a consideration. Selectman Morin then said the public works thing t that's why we did what they did.

Chairperson Roy said so I mean, we could do it that way too. We could just do it organizationally. And he continues to. Selectman Guessferd said so they would report to the Public Works Director. Selectman Morin said and they work close together now anyway all the time. So it's not like it would be real big of a change. Selectman Gagnon then said and right now, he currently, the Town Engineer currently reports to you, Mr. Malizia, is that correct? The Town Administrator replied, yes. Selectman Gagnon then said so he'll be reporting to Mr. Forrence instead. Selectman Guessferd said it's

another way to reduce the span of control. Chairperson Roy added, right. It reduces a span of control. Selectman Morin asked the Town Administrator, is that something that? The Town Administrator replied, I would I would just recommend maybe we have a conversation just because you said something earlier about morale. I'm not saying it would affect positively or negatively, but I do think you need to maybe get some at least input. Listen.

Selectman Guessferd replied saying sure. I mean, you can't be afraid of how somebody's going to react, but at the same time, he deserves....the Town Administrator said are we missing something? Are we missing? Did we not think of something Chairperson Roy then said well, I think I think there's there's two players in here that we need to talk to. There's the Town Engineer and then there's DPW. You know? Yeah, because it is. And I know it's not a long ways, but now he's going to essentially be supervising somebody that's remote from him. Right? He's here and everybody else is over there. You know, so just a discussion. Selectman Gagnon then said and the DPW Director may then ask for soundproofing of his cubicle walls. Chairperson Roy said yeah. What's the chances of that happening in Town Hall? Selectman Gagnon said joking, joking. Chairperson Roy said not the first time I've heard that comment. The Town Administrator then said but I mean, in theory, like, you know, I have people reporting through me to you like that, not sitting here. Rec Director, Police Chief. I mean, you know, they report through me to I mean, you are in charge of everybody, but in reality, they're not sitting here.

Selectman Guessferd replied, right, true. Selectman Gagnon then said so with that, a fair point, I'm asking you, I should be asking the Town Engineer. But for your point of view, how much interaction does he have with residents? So to your point...The Town Administrator asked, the Town Engineer? Chairperson Roy and Selectman Gagnon both replied, yeah. The Town Administrator then said I would say some with residents, more with like the business community, like the like the engineering peers on projects and stuff. Some, because we all have it with residents, depending, you know. Typically I would think that Planning and Zoning, you know, they tend to have more of the residential contact, but the engineers go out and deal with all the like the builders and developers and people coming in and the engineering firms are coming with their plans. They inspect septic's. They go out and, you know, I'm not digging my own septic. So they usually they're dealing with the guy that somebody hired to deal with their septic.

Selectman Gagnon then said so to me, you know, I think if you told me the Town Engineer was dealing with a lot of residents, I would lean to keeping them here as this is the resident headquarter. But, you know, if he's if he's majority dealing with professionals and commercial, I would feel more apt to put them at the DPW. The Town Administrator then said I mean, obviously, after we talk to him, from my knowledge, again, it seems more like the engineering peer community and then the development community is certainly more of who they seem to deal with on a day to day basis. But they deal with residents, as we all do, and certainly deals with all the traffic issues, which is a Public Works working in tandem with that, the traffic lights and all that goes with that. Selectman Gagnon said Okay. Thank you. The Town Administrator added, there's a natural or there should be a natural relationship synergy there, whatever, because it's basically infrastructure.

Chairperson Roy then said so then so that would depending on how the conversation worked out that would be one less person. The span of control actually. The Town Administrator replied, actually three. Three technically. Because the other people, you know, they report they report through him to me, too. Chairperson Roy replied, but he's not a department head. The Town Administrator replied, no, but I have people that aren't department as a report to me. Selectman Morin added, right now does right now. Yes. The Town Administrator then said he reports, he gets his day to day from the Engineer and he gets his evaluation from the Engineer. But theoretically, in our organization, they all tear up through me, all the land use people do. Chairperson Roy said but there's no, there's no department head. Selectman Morin replied, no.

The Town Administrator then explained, so years ago, we had a community development director that was in charge of all that, those functions. We pivoted to the assistant town administrator who still maintained those functions. When that person left the employee it all came to me. We tried to resurrect the community development director. That didn't work out. Came back to me. Selectman Guessferd said but she said that was probably as much of a personality issue as it was anything else. The Town Administrator replied, it was more of a personality issue than it was a bad idea. The

original community development director also served as a zoning administrator. So not only did he have the responsibility of supervising that function, he was the zoning administrator writing the zoning determinations and the zoning decisions and supporting the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The latest iteration of that was actually somebody that did planning, so he was serving as the town planner as well as the community development director. Selectman Morin added, yeah, at one time we had a planner and an assistant planner whatever the title was. Had two of them and that's what this town, we do it and then we get somebody leaves and we never do it again. You know, it makes no sense. Selectman Guessferd replied, I agree.

Chairperson Roy said but again, I think we have to do some work. 18 direct reporting people is right is a lot. Right. Plus whatever else. All the other stuff he does. So. So I guess how do we...Selectman Guessferd said that gets to the assistant. That gets the assistant administrator is what you know. Selectman Gagnon replied, well, yes and no. Selectman Guessferd then said not all of it, but a good portion, I think. I think your largest chunk of span of control would probably be through an assistant town administrator/HR person. Selectman Morin added, and I think that's the first step to start getting this stuff split up and moved and under control would be that, you know, he takes, the administrator takes this group, you know, because like Londonderry, the assistant administrator over there, does all the negotiations, not the town administrator, you know. So you got to think of all that stuff, too, you know what I mean? There's a lot of other duties that he has that could get split up, too.

Selectman Gagnon said I think I'm tend to follow Mrs. Roy's thoughts that anyone who's not a department head, at least for the time being, for the sake of conversation, department heads report to the town administrator. Anyone who's not a department head, we should have a discussion about what department head they should report to. That seems simple enough and potentially the less impact on financials. And then... Selectman Morin said absolutely. Oh, know I agree with you, but...Selectman Gagnon continued saying, I think, I think those changes and you should happen first. We should have that discussion first and then the assistant administrator to focus on HR and then taking additional roles or responsibilities off of your shoulders as well.

Selectman Morin asked, what do you got? Police, Fire, Public Works, Land Use, Rec Department, Finance. Just trying to see how many we got, that's all. Yeah, you know, and then we can take. Selectman Gagnon asked, where does 18 come from? I mean, you named maybe 8, 9 people. 18! The Town Administrator said I've got the administrative staff in my office, I got the janitor, Town Hall Janitor. I got that. Theoretically, I'm the boss of the folks in Community Development. So there's six more. That's what it is. Selectman Morin then said Zoning used to be under the Fire Department and that got changed. So there's another one if and I don't know the whole background to that, but. Chairperson Roy asked, should we move that back over to Inspectional Services? Selectman Morin replied, that's what I'm saying, because it's kind of like that. But that's something we got to look at. The Town Administrator replied, but we moved it for a reason. And I got to think, I'm trying to remember the rationale because it was there and then it wasn't there. Selectman Guessferd said what makes sense. Selectman Morin replied, I don't remember what the reason what they were under the Fire Department at one time and because that kind of all goes together too, you know. The Town Administrator added, but then Planning and Zoning kind of work together, too. So if you got one over here and one over there, it's...

Chairperson Roy then said you know, we have to cross staffs all the time, you know? You know what I mean? That has to be...Selectman Guessferd said dotted lines? Yeah. Chairperson Roy replied, yeah. I just kind of look at it as, you know, you have your staff and they're going to one always coordinate with the four, right. Like, you know, so so I don't know. Is that something that we want to consider moving Zoning over to to to the Inspectional Services? Selectman Gagnon replied, I think so. I'm I'm going to say I'm a visual person, so I'm actually just trying to make an actual tree here of of communication. Steve, can you can you just do me the favor of staying those? Start with the department heads. What department heads? Report to you? The Town Administrator replied, Police, Fire, DPW, Finance, I.T., Recreation, Assessing. I think that's everybody. Selectman Gagnon responded, okay, so one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. That would be incredible if you only had seven people reporting to you other than 18.

Selectman Gagnon then said so now let's talk about the non-department heads that report to you. The Town Administrator replied saying so the next tier of people would be the Engineer, the Planner

and the Zoning Administrator. They each have administrative staff that work with them. But theoretically I sign all their timesheets and all that goes with that. So there's three more of those. Selectman Gagnon said so if you stop there for a minute, for a moment. So what I'm trying to say is if all the Department Heads report to you and these are not departments, but they report to you, where and we've already had the discussions, can we put these individuals and their associated staff. Engineering, we just had that discussion could maybe go under DPW. The Planning do we want to...The Town Administrator interjected saying there's really nowhere else it goes under. The Chairperson agreed saying, right. Selectman Gagnon asked, but there is no department head for land use, right? The Chairperson responded, right. The Town Administrator then said we've had the model where we had somebody in charge of the whole shebang....Chairperson Roy interjected saying but right now there's not. The Town Administrator continued saying, but right now, we don't have that. Selectman Gagnon replied, so maybe I'll put in parentheses a Land Use Director. These are scribbles here. And then Zoning would go under... no, I'm sorry, Engineering. I'm sorry. Engineering would go under that individual planning. What am I confusing myself in? I'm sorry. Forgive me. Engineering under DPW, if we had a Land Use Director it would be Planning and then Zoning Administrator. You were thinking preliminary, maybe back to Fire.

Selectman Morin said yeah. But if you if you're doing Engineering and Zoning, you don't need a Land Use Director. Chairperson Roy replied, right. If you split those out to because the only person left at this point is the town planner plus plus his administrative assistant, which I just have to ask the question. I understand they're not department heads, but why wouldn't the Town Engineer the Town Planning and Zoning Administrator take care of their own support staff? As far as payroll and things like that? The Town Administrator replied, they generally take care of that on a day to day basis. I'm just saying, absent anybody else, they all report through me to you because before they all reported to...Selectman Guessferd interrupted saying you said you sign off on their time cards though. To which the Town Administrator replied, yeah. Selectman Guessferd then said I don't know why that would not be something we might look at. I mean, do you need do you need to sign up on their time cards? The Town Administrator replied, I don't necessarily need to. They could do it. Selectman Guessferd replied, yeah, that's the kind of thing I'm talking about. Chairperson Roy then said right. I know, it's only three people, but it's three less people that I guess would be in that span of control as they, as this report defines it.

The Town Administrator went on to say and then there's the two administrative people in our office and the custodian. Chairperson Roy said I could see those very easily falling into an assistant Town Administrator. But that's sort of like. Selectman Guessferd said like the next. Selectman Gagnon then said the assistant would take all of the non-department heads. Chairperson Roy then said I have a, I don't know what else to call it all because it all sounds bad to me when I say it in my head. But yeah, just people like that are off on their own, like the Janitor, the Town Planner. That doesn't have, that doesn't have a whole department there. Right?

The Town Administrator replied saying in a perfect model, I would, the position I hold would probably have like Police Chief, Fire Chief, DPW director. I don't want to use wrong term, but like a senior type department head. Those are the non-union, those are the non-union folks. You know, some of the other folks are down in the Association. They're important jobs. They have responsibilities. They're maybe not the same level as the Fire Chief. That could be the tier of people from that tier down. You work with someone else, someone else supervises your day to day. And then I would supervise, this position would supervise the assistant position and then you get away from all those other people. Selectman Guessferd said and they supervise all of that.

Selectman Gagnon then said so if we can play this game here. Bear with me here. You said so.... I had the Town Administrator, the Police, Fire, DPW, Finance, I.T., Rec and Assessing report to you. Sub level to those Department Heads would be Zoning under Fire, potentially Engineering under DPW, potentially. And then you said the individuals or positions that are not town department heads that report to you. Are the administrative support in for the Selectman as well as the janitor? Those would be something that maybe the assistant town admin could take because that what we're all agreeing with this is just scratches here. Chairperson Roy replied, Yeah. Yeah, but...Selectman Gagnon asked, am I going off course? Chairperson Roy replied, well, no, I just think we need to maybe focus on what we can do right now to reduce. Selectman Gagnon replied, I agree, but I'm thinking if we can draw a big picture, then we can circle the motions that should take priority. So if we

can see a big picture about where everything should go, whether it's myself or new selectman, in the future, we can say, okay, this group of individuals, this group of five selectmen will make this motion, you know, that move and that move. The next Board will have to make that move that move and that move just playing out the whole Board.

Selectman Morin then said got a pretty good idea what we're looking at. Do we want to bring the Department Heads in all together and hash this out? I mean, we kind of got a direction we want to go. We got some feelers. We know the ins and outs. Do we want to bring them in? And that's what that's what Selectman Guessferd had started with anyway, let's talk with them first before we do anything, before. Selectman Guessferd then said so unless there's a decision we can make, that's not going to necessarily affect somebody negatively or possibly negatively....Selectman Morin then said and they'll know better than we do. I mean, we can think Elvis is good to go DPW, but what are we missing? Chairperson Roy then said so maybe what we do is we do an initial proposal of what we came up with and yeah, we have. And then because I think we before we bring, we need to have a framework there before we bring in the Department Heads right? Like it can't just be can't be a...Selectman Guessferd said can't be a fee for all. To which Chairperson Roy replied, right. Selectman Gagnon added, my thoughts exactly. Chairperson Roy said you know, so maybe we put together again an initial proposal. We get it out to them. So they have some time to digest it, get their thoughts together. Right. And, and then have a discussion about it.

Selectman Guessferd then said yeah and I think, I think we need to keep it with a mind to the next budget season. Right. So that we know what we're going to put in for next year. You know I guess I'll say it might be step two, but you know, the next step that's going to require, you know, the approval of the voters, you know, whether it's as part of the budget or whether it's as a new position or whatever. Chairperson Roy said adding a new position. Selectman Morin then said well, in that case, I think we can do both. We really can. We've already got a position in the budget it's just got to be funded and then we need to add a position. Selectman Guessferd replied, right, right and yeah.

Chairperson Roy said and then I think its incumbent on us to sort of however we do that, we put together, for lack of a better phrase, a marketing plan so that we, we, citizens understand what we're trying to do and in, you know, hopefully get their support to do it, to make and make the service of the Town just a little bit better without wearing down good employees. You know?

Selectman Guessferd asked the Town Clerk reports to? The Town Administrator replied, the voters. Chairperson Roy said yeah, he's and elected person. Selectman Guessferd said he's just an elected position. The Town Administrator said elected official. Selectman Guessferd then said I won't say just, he's in charge. Chairperson Roy said I mean, informally, he goes to you for some guidance. The Town Administrator responded, yeah but he does not report. The reporting structure is...Selectman Guessferd said but the reality is...the the evaluation is the vote. Right? Chairperson Roy then said but his staff, do they report to him? The Town Administrator replied, he directs their day to day work. So yes, in essence, they report to him. But like all employees, they ultimately report to you. Chairperson replied, no, and I understand that but...The Town Administrator replied, yes, they don't report to me. He does their evaluations. He's appointed with your blessing, one of them is the Deputy. The rest are called assistant. They're all trained. But there's one that's a deputy which he made the appointment. With your blessing, you had to verify. You remember doing that, you just recently did that. So he has that authority, that ability to do. But again, he's an elected official. They're all appointed, hired. Chairperson Roy said so they're town employees. To which the Town Administrator replied, they're town employees. Yep.

The Town Administrator went on to say, and again, if you looked at the Tax Collector separating that out, I'm not sure that would report. I don't believe that would report to the Town Clerk. That would just be another position that you may have to consider putting it under...Selectman Guessferd said the assistant. The Town Administrator replied, yeah, I guess we could look at, I'm not sure it could go on to the Finance Director. We'd have to look at that specifically statutorily where that because it's appointed. But where does it go? Chairperson Roy asked, the tax collector? To which the Town Administrator replied, if it was a separate tax collector because that typically is usually separation of just...Chairperson Roy said Assessing? The Town Administrator replied, no, no, no, no, no, no. Because now you've got to keep certain things separate because of the conflicts that may be inherent in that. So I'm not sure it goes under finance either because, you know, they're a check and

balance. If you're working for me I can't be checking and balancing you. Chairperson Roy replied maybe it's kind of like Planning. It's just a one person show if you would. The Town Administrator replied, it may be, but I don't believe they'd report to the Clerk again. That would be if you separate it that's separate. The Chair said I would think if there were an employee they would report to another an appointed employee they would.

Selectman Gagnon then said so if I have a decent understanding of how this all lays out, who reports to who in a perfect situation, what other non-employee related tasks, well I shouldn't say, what other tasks do you do that isn't supporting a Department Head or an individual? So we have contracts as one example that you said, can you rattle off a few others that we can differentiate between keeping with the Town Administrator role and potentially....The Town Administrator replied, sort of running things day to day and making sure everybody else is doing what they're supposed to be doing day to day. That's probably the biggest thing. I mean, I deal with everything that walks in the door and either have to figure out how to appropriately handle it. I mean, I'm certainly the person that because of my seniority, I guess my tenure, you hire somebody new and through the department, I'm pretty much it to make sure that they get up to speed. That'd be anywhere from Finance to Rec. I certainly spent a lot of time getting those folks at least, and don't get me wrong, they're very intelligent people. They know what to do, but there's just certain things they needed to get up to speed on because they hadn't been exposed to it. A lot of it tends to be with the budget. That's that's a pretty key component right there. Obviously HR.... Chairperson Roy asked, is there training for that? The Town Administrator replied, so you can get training through NHMA. They put on budget workshops, they put them on they typically did a big one every year and then they've done other ones through the year. So you can get training there. DRA has had training but that was on their specific system. That's, that's, I think if you reached out to them, there's tutorials online. But frankly a lot of it's just...you know the training I got was good luck, buddy. Here you go! My predecessor was gone three months when I got here as finance director. So you basically, I had to figure it out. Yeah, I learned a lot from our Auditors. I will say our Auditors are another good resource because they will certainly assist you with making sure that you're complying with all the rules and regulations. So I reach out to them a lot.

Chairperson Roy replied, that might be another benefit of having somebody that's. Like an HR Director that can have in-house training on certain things, you know? Selectman Guessferd replied, because you probably shouldn't have to do that. Chairperson Roy replied, Right. Right. Yeah. The Town Administrator replied, for whatever reason, I'm the person that's been here and kind of seen it all to some degree. Maybe not all of it, but certainly some. I mean, you know, the HR would be good for uniformity of certain things. You know, as we're explaining, not explaining benefits, Ms. Wilson does a great job with all of that side of the house. So I don't want people to think that we're not consistent there. But it's just when you're going through the whole process of bringing somebody on board, you're interviewing them, offer letters, background checks, police does a certain thing. I think fire does a certain thing. But the rest of us, we could benefit from more uniformity. Chairperson Roy and we had a we had a Department Head not too long ago explaining he meant he spent an enormous number of hours trying to research an issue about disability and things like that that I think an HR Director could probably answer a lot quicker than that. Again, leaving the Department Head to do the work of the department. The Town Administrator then said and typically if we don't know the answer, we'll go get the answer typically from our labor attorney, because again, that's a wealth of knowledge from that side of the house. But I mean, as Selectman Morin knows, I've sat in on every contract negotiation for the last 25 years. I mean, good or bad, that takes a lot of time. We're going to be doing two this year. It can take time to go through that process.

Selectman Morin then said you've got bid openings, you take care of all that stuff. I mean there's...Chairperson Roy replied, I thought the Town Clerk did that. The Town Administrator replied, they open the bid but I have to review everything and. Selectman Morin then said there's a lot of other stuff that we don't even see, you know what I mean? The Town Administrator replied, it's just hard to...I just do it. I'm not, you know, like, again, I try to keep them going in the right direction. Hey, did we do this? Did we do that? You know, it's constantly checking things. Chairperson Roy then said so I think that that that's something you might want to consider as you start sort of tracking that stuff. Cuz if we can if if this happens, then what are you going to shift over to to to an assistant? Right? Like.

Selectman Guessferd said an assistant administrator and it's all kind of in my mind, it goes down, it kind of comes downhill a bit. And that and that there are things that we can probably delegate to you and then there are things that you could delegate because I wouldn't want to delegate things to you without you being having to delegate to somebody mean because now we're just piling more on you. But I mean, this has to be, again, a systematic kind of thought process. You know, the things that you can delegate, that you can now get off your shoulders and then things we can we can provide to you that are things that that we probably don't need to be doing.

Chairperson Roy said, little off topic. But I also think that there's things that we we should explore, like electronically signing of manifests and things like that, that that would just be a little more efficient than what we do right now. Selectman Morin said what is wrong with you bringing us into the modern age? Selectman Gagnon said Dave comes out of left field with jokes. Chairperson Roy laughed and replied, I know. It's crazy, right? Selectman Guessferd said 20th century. So 20th century.

Selectman Gagnon asked, do we want to do we want to pivot then and move away from employee and structure and talk about a software, technology and that kind of stuff? Chairperson Roy replied, I think we should keep on topic with this. That was just my little note. Selectman Gagnon said no, I mean, there are there are some you know, some notes in here, recommendations for that type of stuff. Chairperson Roy replied, yeah. I mean, if we're all set with what we want to do going forward, I don't know that we've sort of resolved any of the span of control issues. Selectman Morin replied, well, I think now that we've got an idea, we can take it, think about it and either talk at one of our regular meetings and put something together and then move forward with it. Because we've got a pretty good idea where....Selectman Guessferd replied, and I think we're all in pretty close proximity here on what where we want to go. Selectman Gagnon said yeah. I've drawn out a picture that I think I like the looks of it. And I think as we stated, if we can draft this up into like a one page document, this is we've we've just had preliminary discussions based on this feedback. This is what we think logically makes sense. So we go in to discussions with the Department Heads, which is completely valid to get their input obviously. But at least we go in with a plan. We don't just say, what do you think? We say, this is what we think....Chairperson Roy interjected saying again, there has to be a structure

Selectman Guessferd said report our recommendations here. Here's what we think we can do with this. Selectman Gagnon said I definitely see it being a free for all. If you just ask, what do you think? I want to have a structure that we base it on. Selectman Guessferd replied cuz I guarantee you there'll be a few that that have differing opinions and we need to get those out and understand whether it's valid or not. Chairperson Roy said part of it is change is hard and I think there are people.... like we need....it's obviously easier if everybody is on board with it just you know. Selectman Guessferd replied saying that's Pollyanna, you know? Chairperson Roy replied, yeah, I know. But at least give them the opportunity. Selectman Guessferd replied, at least they understand what we're where we're heading or what what we're asking them. And we have a specific agenda for that. So.

The Town Administrator then said you may also wish to solicit comments from Selectman McGrath, who couldn't be here today, just saying she may, as a senior person in the town, I mean, senior and service, she may have some insight or maybe have some suggestions or just take her thoughts into consideration too. Unfortunately, she couldn't be here tonight, but I mean, great discussion, but she may or may not have some thoughts being a senior member of the group. Selectman Morin added yeah, she was there when the zoning got changed. She may have the background on that. The Town Administrator said she spent many years in Planning, many years in that whole area. So just I just throw that out there.

Chairperson Roy asked, so did you want did you want to? To which Selectman Gagnon replied, transition into other stuff, into more non-employee based assets. So you started the conversation with kind of joking, but I think seriously, technology. Efficiency. Technology, for efficiency purposes, which may cost money up front, but will efficiency in itself should save money in the long run. And not only money, but time of both this Board and paid professionals that can be doing other things, maybe more beneficial. Do you want to continue with that thought? Some examples....Chairperson Roy said well, so so again, things like just having electronic manifests as opposed to them printing those out

and every time. Selectman Guessferd said coming to Town Hall. Chairperson Roy then said and us coming to Town Hall and those kinds of things. I don't know what else. I'm not a tech person. So.

One question to Mr. Malizia if your position stays as a Town Administrator, can we designate power for you to sign payroll? Do we have to sign payroll? Is that legally required? The Town Administrator replied, I believe in the law it articulates that you're responsible for the affairs of the Town. And my understanding, through the law, is you have to sign off on the manifest. I'm not aware that you can designate that authority to me as Town Administrator. I believe it's articulated in law. Selectman Gagnon asked, but a town manager could just for clarity? The Town Administrator replied, I'll cautiously say yes. But town manager has a lot more authority. So perhaps that is one of the authorities, but it's one of your main responsibilities. You are responsible ultimately for the the prudent financial affairs of the town and other language. Selectman Gagnon then said and I think I'll speak for myself personally. I if we trust in our Department Heads as trained professionals, they should be able to do that seemingly day to day activity. And we trust in their choices unless it comes to the surface as a problem. Just how I look at it. Selectman Guessferd said and that's how when I when those things come before us, I mean, looking at the other side of this, when they come before us, if we have to sign something, I, I have the confidence that, that it's been reviewed that and it's. Then what value add do you have if you already trust what you're seeing, sign off on it respectfully, blindly. What value add do we have? Selectman Guessferd replied, I agree. But if it's, if it's mandated by law.

The Town Administrator added, that you have to sign. Doesn't mean you have to...you could sit there and say, I don't agree with this. I'd like to pull it off our conversation. So you have that you always have that ability. I'm not sure anybody has ever exercised it. Believe me, it gets reviewed by the Finance Director, it gets reviewed. I'm talking the weekly, the manifest. It gets reviewed by the Finance Director, it gets reviewed by myself. I've pulled things out and said, Hey, what's this? What are we doing? You know, what did I miss here? You know what I'm saying doesn't happen often because I think we have a good system because things get preapproved. But when I sign it, you can look at it. That's why it's there. But right. I know you're putting trust in us. Selectman Morin said and I think if you try to change a government that may change. But but again, if you go to a manager, it's different. The power of this Board. Chairperson Roy said we don't hire and fire. We we, we don't...The Town Administrator added, you hire and fire the manager. That's it. Chairperson Roy said that's it, yeah.

Selectman Gagnon said I mean I guess I don't think it's for tonight, but I would like to have that discussion. I would like to see a pro and con list is it's worth it. Chairperson Roy said but to your point, we may want to look at certain policies and see if there's there's adjustments that can be made that do give some Department Heads a little more authority. Selectman Guessferd said within their authority of the Administrator. Chairperson Roy replied, Right, right. Right. The Town Administrator said so if you gave us a list of five or six things you say, can we look at this, this and this we can confer with the Attorney, look at statute and say, yes, you can or no, you can't. And at least kind of get more like down the...

Selectman Gagnon said I think the only thing that comes to the surface for me would, would be payroll, which seems to be weekly or would be hiring and firing those. Those are two things that seem so mundane that department, you know, I don't see why we would have to do that. I don't know what else there would be, but those always seem to be...Chairperson Roy interjected saying well there's contracts. There's contracts there's and I think we resolved this cuz I don't think we ever did it. This like given the Department Heads the authority to use credit cards. Town cards. The Town Administrator said we during the pandemic we enabled a policy that allowed credit cards. But you still have to follow purchasing rules. That's not carte blanche. But they just have another mechanism as opposed to, you know, doing a PO, cutting the checks and the check that they can be more expedient. Chairperson Roy said right. The Town Administrator continued saying there's been latitude with that. I mean, and governments are slow governments, you know, we're glacial. We are not moving at lightning speed. We are this is the people's money. This is this is a democracy. This isn't a dictatorship. This isn't the business. Hey, go do that. It doesn't work quite like that. This is a very different model. You try to adopt some of the practices, but you don't always get that.

Selectman Guessferd asked, do we have the ability to reduce the dollar amounts that we have to sign off on? In other words, I think there's delegation of authority...Chairperson Roy said you mean increase, right? Selectman Guessferd replied, right. To increase the delegation. Increase the delegation, because you know, where I work, we have a delegation of authority and it's based on usually like for PO's would be like dollar amounts, anything below above this level we have to sign. But anything below this and you have tiers, you know. The Town Administrator replied, we have tiers now for the full Board or for majority of the Board, its \$10,000 and over. Chairperson Roy said so I mean, maybe that is something that we we look at again for efficiency or whatever. Selectman Guessferd asked how long has, how long has it been \$10,000. The Town Administrator replied, somewhere in the 00's. I'm trying to think what year. '03, '04. I think we adopted a, I think I gave you a copy of the policy. So we used to be like a lot lower. Selectman Guessferd replied, I'm sure. Signing off on a \$500.

The Town Administrator said so when you look at a manifest like you sign this manifest in the old days we had a separate manifest of the water, a separate manifest for the sewer, a separate manifest for the general fund. And then if we had agency funds, now you have one manifest. Surprisingly, I know it doesn't seem it, but it's gotten more efficient through the years. Chairperson Roy replied, yeah. you know, I also think as much as I understand your point about it being people's money and all that, that we also have to have some trust in the people that we employ, that they're going to do the right thing right until they prove us wrong. Selectman Guessferd echoed, until they prove us wrong. Chairperson Roy then said You know. So, I mean, maybe it's it's a little bit worthwhile to take a dive into some policies and see if there's some stuff that we can make a little more efficient. Selectman Guessferd said maybe delegations or whatever. Chairperson Roy the said Yeah. It could be, you know, as far as like hiring and firing, it could be no different than what we did for the Rec Department and what we did for DPW. Maybe we'd do that for all part time employees. We give that authority to, coordination between that department head and and the Town Administrator. Right. Selectman Guessferd replied, yeah. As long as as long as by law we have some flexibility and latitude. Yeah, we should, we should look at those things. Okay.

Selectman Guessferd then said so you wanted to look at more of the technologies? Selectman Gagnon replied, yeah. Forgive me. I think I derailed that conversation because we started with assets you know and software, things of that nature, non-employee related for efficiency purposes. Your example was payroll software. Are there any other examples of either software, hardware, technology, that we can do better on? Selectman Morin replied, I agree with you, but I guess we should give our new IT Director a little time first. You know what I mean? He just got in there. Where we've gone to and where we're going to. I agree. I agree with you because we're way behind in a lot of areas. Chairperson Roy said although it brings up a good point. And that is before the former IR Director left, there was a big thing about Munismart not supporting that. And we have we have to they do all of the um...the Town Administrator said the financial suite is basically a Munismart product which we've also tailored to some of the other utilities Planning and Zoning I believe have some input into that. So it would be a major it's going to be a major undertaking to evaluate and look at what's the next iteration look like. Chairperson Roy said because Munismart is not going to, my understanding, is going to stop supporting that software.

Selectman Gagnon said aren't we aren't we already taking I thought I had a conversation with the IT Director or the Finance Director that we actually are we're like the multiple step process right now where we change that one software, then the base structural software is going to change soon. Steve can you...The Town Administrator replied, so we change the Assessing software, which is not related to that conversation, but the actual financial suite is not changed yet. And I believe with the new people that have more recently been in place, they'll have to get on top of that at some point in the next year or so, so they can determine where we're going. Software is a funny thing, you know, you think you got it down and then the next thing you know, you get you got to pivot and go over here. We pick Munismart because we used to be on a home grown program. We had a programmer here, you might remember her, that we were dependent on, you know, updating our software on the fax, and that's what we used. And we went to this suite of products, which through the years is I used the word customized, but it's been very well adapted to us. And now to replace all of that with one software might be difficult because some of this has been very adapted, very not to use the word customized. I'm trying to be careful, but very, very adapted to our range of service that we do here. When we do utilities, not everybody does utilities. We have some I believe some of the planning and

zoning is track through some of these some of this software, different elements of it. But you have to think of all of that and it's an expense.

The Chairperson said yeah. And as I said, the former IT Director had had done some work towards that. It kind of for whatever reason stopped. The Town Administrator replied, but we hadn't settled on a particular a particular product. I mean, you'll find a range of product out there. Chairperson Roy said I think we were sort of looking for something that does everything and I'm not sure that that actually exists. So then what, what can interface with each other? Right. So I think that's probably a huge thing for the IT Department and it might solve some of just some of the efficiency issues that are there. The Town Administrator added, yeah, there may be enhancements there that hey, yeah, you can just hit this button, you could all just review it online. Somebody's always going to look at something. Somebody's going to look at it.

Selectman Gagnon then said so I guess that's that's what this conversation comes down to is Selectman Roy you said you're not an expert, so you don't know what to upgrade. But why don't you think about we all think about processes. What processes do we think are inefficient? We talked about payroll. What other processes, Steve and we look to you, do you feel like a really inefficient and need innovation, whether that is new software or something else, but what process is inefficient?

Chairperson Roy then said I just have a question and it is sort of. I guess to me it's rudimentary, but it might go hand in hand with the online manifests is like automatic bill, so we know we're going to pay. Instead of cutting a check for everything we know, we're going to pay an electric bill. You know, is there a way that we can legally and anything else? Like I do at home. The Town Administrator replied, I wouldn't say that's not possible, but again, would have to research it.

Selectman Gagnon then said so maybe it sounds like we this one, we actually have the Department Head to lead us. We asked them that question of specifically what processes are outdated, inefficient, and what do you think is necessary to make them more efficient. And see what we get back is that and ask them to carry this question? Chairperson Roy said that's something that maybe Brian can help us is do like an employee survey of what stuff like that. You know?

The Town Administrator replied, one small microcosm so many years. For years we printed out employee paychecks. So you either got a live check or you got a check that was not live, but it was still printed on check stock and all that. Nowadays you get a piece of paper emailed to you, unless you're one of the last holdouts that still demands a check. And there are a couple of people that still do. But other than that, my weekly check on Tuesday morning, here's my piece of paper that gets emailed to me. They don't print it out, it gets emailed to me. So as un-innovative as we see, we do make some innovative. Selectman Gagnon said that's a great example. The Town Administrator said that is totally different than when I got here. That's totally different than it was ten years ago, probably even five years ago. And just to put it in perspective, payroll is usually tightened and done by Monday at noon. So it's input. I get my direct deposit slip typically Tuesday morning, which is why we have a person that does payroll and can also do accounts payable. And it's a shared function. It's not just payroll.

Selectman Morin said speaking of payroll, correct me, because it was like that's when I retired. They actually have to walk it over from the admin building of the fire department to Town Hall. Selectman Gagnon asked, right now? Chairperson Roy replied, yes. Today, yes. 2022. The Town Administrator said I think Helen drops something off. Chairperson Roy said it's 2022. The Town Administrator said but she puts it all in. That's just for the record that you just physically just to keep it for the auditors it's all input online.

Selectman Gagnon then said you brought up another topic I'm just spinning off on that records. We currently keep a paper file copy of a lot of stuff, right? Is it I mean, again, I know it costs money, though, is it possible to have a new process where you say, okay, you keep the paper copy for six months a year, and then after that, every year we take that one year stash, we pay someone to scan it, digitize it and trash it. Chairperson Roy said so that actually brings up a couple of things that we might want to think about. One, usually RSA's cover that I know like on the federal side does. Selectman Guessferd said records retention. Selectman Gagnon said do you need paper records or can you have digital? Chairperson Roy said without seeing the RSA, however, and I also understand

this cost money. So it's something that we would have to think about. Is there an opportunity for us to free up some town building space if we had things digitized and destroyed. Yeah. And, and destroyed some after they're digitized obviously. Selectman Morin said but they are in the process of doing that. The building up on Oakwood. Yeah, they are in process of scanning stuff and making it, I don't know if it's microfilm or whatever. The Town Administrator said not microfilm. No. It's basically goes it goes into something (laughter, inaudible). Selectman Morin reiterated, I know they are doing that. Chairperson Roy asked, and is that a contract or like? The Town Administrator said staff does it. Selectman Morin said because they moved, we were paying for storage and they moved everything up there. And then they started going through everything and scanning it and putting it wherever they're putting it. The Town Administrator said and not adding to the pile as much to things get scanned as they're more alive. But you know, accounts payable to your point, you know, you have a few drawers of accounts payable. I guess you could pay somebody some money to go scan all that or just put it in a box. You wait six years and you throw it out because that's the law. You have to hold it for six years. So does it make sense to scan it? And I don't know. You know.

Chairperson Roy said I would presume that that that becomes less and less. Right. Like what I mean is more and more stuff is just electronic anyways. So there's no physical paper copies. Because when Selectman Luszey was here, his big thing was to try to put everything on the cloud. And that was another slow process. The Town Administrator then said but there's also security issues is also other issues. And once they get you, then they start, you know, there's a maintenance cost and all of that that goes with that. Chairperson Roy said I have a thing about this big that's that holds three terabytes of of of files for me. Right. So, you know, if we can go down from a banker's box to still progress, I guess.

Chairperson Roy then said and so then I think maybe the last thing she talked about was something we just sort of started talking about in that's space. Space. So I don't think any of us surprised that this is a overused building. Overpopulated, overused. So I know and I know I've talked to a couple of folks about this, and I'll throw it out there for discussion. But we may want to consider a plan like buying the old Santander Bank that's three doors down. Moving some of our operation over there and then obviously reconfiguring the Town Hall. So it's more efficient for everybody.

Selectman Morin said we've talked about that before. Selectman Guessferd said like what operations could you see? Chairperson Roy said I can see the Finance and the Town Clerk's office moving over there. And possibly if at that point there's a tax collector, I don't know if that would be the proper place to put. The Town Administrator said as long as you know that there'll still be movement between the buildings because say somebody comes in and they have a question about their tax bill, sometimes they're directed to Assessing across the hall. Not just saying now they may have to go to that building over there. I'm not saying that's not the reason to do it. I'm just saying you'd be surprised.

Chairperson Roy replied, right. And I think I might be a little more. First of all, I. I think it might be a cost efficient way for us to do it, because I don't know things like where we would add on here or things like that. The Town Administrator added, I think your options are limited. People talk up but up requires....Selectman Guessferd interjected saying one of our options is renovating Town Hall or whatever, you know, and that's going to be a less expensive option than doing that, I would think, in the long run. Selectman Morin added, especially right now. And they're close enough where if there was an issue, you can go right over there. You know, it's just on Campbell Avenue, right in. Is that for rent or for sale? Chairperson Roy replied, it hasn't been on the market for a while and it's still owned by the same person. I looked it up. So it's never sold. It's never rented. And I think that if we wanted to go forward with that, that would be us approaching them saying, hey, you know, I know that it was a reasonable price when it was on the market like two or three years ago.

The Town Administrator said who knows what today market is. Selectman Morin added, even if we did a lease or something for now, too. But that is a practical thing. Selectman Guessferd said right. And, you know, to do that, I think about how can we sell that, right? Because we because we're going to have to we have to do something. Selectman Morin said well, you can pay 8 million to build a new Town Hall or you can...Chairperson Roy laughed and said, or? Selectman Guessferd said this is you know, we've talked you know, we've done a study or whatever. It would cost this much to move town, to build a new Town Hall. Instead, we're going to do this and it's only this much. And this is what you

get. Chairperson Roy said I mean, there's infrastructure there, right? Like there's a there's parking, there's a vault, there's, you know, all those kinds of things. And I don't know what there is underneath. Selectman Gagnon said a soundproof vaults, right? Selectman Guessferd laughing said, he keeps going back to that, to which Chairperson Roy replied, I know, right.

Selectman Gagnon said so two things. I feel like there's Pandora's box kind of floating in front of us here about building a new Town Hall. We don't want to go down that road tonight. One thing, if that was a real option, a viable option, I don't think there's great commuter access in and out potentially. So if that is assumed correct, I'd put people over there that aren't, again, residential face and keep Town Hall as the headquarters for anything that residents generally need. Maybe HR or I.T., Finance put people over there that don't interact with residents as much because of the location. Selectman Morin said that is easy access. you just go down this side street right here and you can come in and out without any issues. Chairperson Roy said or you can go on one 111. Selectman Guessferd said you just go right down to School Street. Selectman Morin said it's real easy to get in over here. (lots of talking among each other regarding location of Santander Bank). The Town Administrator then said behind Dominos Pizza. Selectman Gagnon replied Oh, okay. Selectman Guessferd said yeah, yeah, it's a good location. Selectman Morin added, it's easy in and out. Selectman Gagnon then said so then if I step a little closer to that Pandora's Box of a new Town Hall for the sake of discussion, the Police Station past, they have \$6 million to build a police station. If we were ever going to have a discussion, would it be valid? And the discussion now about do we throw a little money on top of that to say, hey, build us a wing for Town Hall to know that too? Selectman Morin said no room. Selectman Gagnon said I mean, their 6 million, they build their facility and we have to add to that pot. But essentially, if you build the same building at the same time, it'd be cost effective. The Town Administrator replied, you don't have the authority to do that. Chairperson Roy said you can't. Selectman Morin said to tell you the truth, the police station may turn into an issue. So you got to remember that. The Town Administrator reiterated, you don't have the authority to do it. Selectman Morin then said the high school is possibly on the agenda again this year, too.

Chairperson Roy replied, Right. And I my personal feeling is they supported us for the Police Station and we should reciprocate that. Selectman Guessferd said oh, yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. Chairperson Roy said yeah, but the other problem we have is the one article was to build a police station. We can't, there's not a lot of wiggle room then you. Selectman Gagnon said well if you build a town square, a police station and a Town Hall. The Town Administrator asked, where's all the money coming from? Chairperson Roy said okay, Plainville, Massachusetts from Plainville, Massachusetts just did that. And they're half the size of us. It was \$35 million. Selectman Morin said, good luck with that. The Chairperson said it's a beautiful comp complex, mind you, but it was 35 million dollars. The Town Administrator said think about it. We can't get the budget passed. My concern would if you put a Town Hall on there you probably wouldn't be successful right in this environment.

Selectman Gagnon replied, oh, don't get me wrong. I absolutely. That's why I said this is a Pandora's Box. I mean, it's going to be a, a shit show. But I figured the professionalism to have the conversation in five years maybe. Chairperson Roy then said I think that all of the reasonable options, that's one of them, the Santander Bank thing. Selectman Guessferd replied saying well, and I think that, you know, like if we're talking about these sorts of things and hopefully we're not going too far out there. But yeah, I mean, again, this is part of our plan, right? You know, we support the school and then the following year, right, we do this, you know, that's our capital project because we know we need something, we need to do something. And that seems to me to be the most cost effective option.

Chairperson Roy replied saying right, because and you can correct me if I'm wrong, but if we want to go down the road of a brand new Town Hall, we'd have to look at land and those I mean, we don't own a piece of property that we could. The Town Administrator said so you'd have to either temporarily house everybody here somewhere else and knock this down and start again because you're not going to. That's one. Or two, you'd have to find a piece of land. And I'm not trying to put Town Hall by the Police Station, which is already in the of nowhere. Selectman Morin and Chairperson Roy also said, nowhere. Selectman Guessferd said on the outsides of Town.

Selectman Gagnon then said and again, this conversation will die after tonight's meeting. But for the sake of asking it, what if the Police Station, we obviously know will have trouble even with their 6 million, to build something new. And we don't have anything even on the docket, per se. What if both

of us were to buy an existing building and we renovate the building to be Police Station and a Town Hall? I mean, I'm thinking of the place on Lowell Road there. Chairperson Roy said, Teledyne. The Town Administrator said, I've been in there. I think it would be a lot more renovation than you think. It's set up to be a factory, some minimal offices...Selectman Gagnon said wouldn't it be easier than building new, though, still? The Town Administrator replied, I bet you not. I think you'd have to really take I mean, I've been in there and again....Selectman Guessferd said depending upon the configuration it's a...Chairperson Roy said it's always already the movement forward for the Police Station. I'd have a hard time supporting like, oh, we just built this new police station. Now come move over here. Selectman Gagnon replied saying Well, no, what I'm saying is I don't I don't know, there's any possibility of this, but we wouldn't build a new Police Station. We'd take that money, and we'd renovate a new building for police station. And, again, would would add more money to the plot to do a police, say, half police, half Town Hall.

The Town Administrator replied, I suspect the voters would probably throw you all out of office. You'd be violating you'd be violating what they what they voted for. Chairperson Roy agreed. Selectman Gagnon then said and that's that's the feedback I was looking for. The Town Administrator said I guess if you wanted to not do it at all and then go put another warrant article down next year, you could do that, but I wouldn't. Selectman Gagnon said and that's the feedback I want. I just want to ask the question to see what the possibility is. I'm just trying to be, you know. The Town Administrator then said the idea would have been 20, 30, 40, whatever the year was...Chairperson Roy said buy the Friary? Yeah, for less than a million dollars. The Town Administrator said yeah, that would have been a great that would have been great. It didn't happen. So we, we can't cry over spilt milk that did not happen. But that would have been a great.

Selectman Morin said I believe five or six years ago they actually looked at buying the Teledyne building, making it the Rec Center, Town Hall, basketball courts in it. But it was, what, \$6 Million to buy...The Town Administrator replied, they're not even sure if they're selling yet. They've gone, they vacillated, the owners of that have vacillated between leasing it to somebody and they've had inquiries from companies or selling it. They haven't made a decision what they're doing. They sort of had to be a willing seller. And I don't think they've calculated what they want to do yet with it. Again, you don't know what's going to. I'm just saying you don't know what these folks want to do either. Selectman Guessferd replied saying right. But that sounds like that sounds like a viable. The Town Administrator said it's more of a viable option. When you think because it's set up to be sort of a customer service center, for lack of a better word. You mean that you might you might get synergy with a town clerk's office there because, hey, you're going to drive up. Chairperson Roy said and that doesn't mean we don't have to tweak something to make it ours. The Town Administrator said you'd more than likely have to do something, but it would probably be a lot less something there than somewhere else.

Selectman Morin said good point there! There is a drive up window. Chairperson Roy said yeah, there is one. Laugher. The Town Administrator then said I'm just thinking about it. It's set up as a bank. So, you know, you come in or you can handle transactions out the door. It's just a thought. If you were to put that group and maybe someone else with them, you know, maybe it's Assessing, maybe it's Finance. I'm not sure. Chairperson Roy said I mean, that's things we're figure out but yeah. yeah. The Town Administrator added, and to your point, it's right there.

Selectman Guessferd said if we do decide that that's something that we want to pursue in the next couple of years, we started feeding that a little bit, now. I mean we start... I mean, I think anybody who's watching this can will probably agree with us that there's a need for doing something with this this building, and to make sure that we let people know, especially the people that aren't active, that, hey, this is an option here. The other option is this. And just start kind of getting those optics so that when we do get to that point that it'll be in people's minds that, yeah, this is a good idea, you know, I mean, it's yes, it's going to cost us money, but it's gonna cost us hell of a lot less than something else.

Chairperson Roy replied, right, right. Anybody else have anything? Selectman Gagnon replied, not at the moment, that that was a lot of topics and I think good discussion. I think active discussion. Chairperson Roy replied, okay. So we'll put together we'll put together some stuff to talk about at the... I don't...how heavy is? The Town Administrator replied, I think next meeting is going to start to

get towards the end of the year so that's to get busy with bids and stuff. It might be a little too soon. It's next week.

Selectman Guessferd said couple meetings away. Chairperson Roy said maybe the 28th we throw it on. The Town Administrator replied, possibly. The Chairperson then said okay, so at least the 28th would be the earliest date. So I'll entertain a motion to adjourn, unless somebody has something else.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:29 p.m. by Selectman Gagnon seconded by Selectman Guessferd. Carried 4-0.

Recorded by HCTV and transcribed by Jill Laffin, Executive Assistant.

Kara Roy, Chairperson

Bob Guessferd, Vice Chairman

David Morin, Selectman

ABSENT
Marilyn McGrath, Selectman

Brett Gagnon, Selectmen