



Legislation Text

File #: 23-2100, **Version:** 1

AGENDA REQUEST GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEM

Subject:

Discuss adding a new Administrative Assistant position to support the Public Works Director/Town Engineer

Background:

Over the course of thirty years, the Public Works Department has functioned without an administrative assistant for the Director and other management staff. As the present Director looks toward retirement, there is a more pressing need to fill this gap for several reasons.

First, there are many tasks that would most suitably be covered by an administrative assistant for efficiency and continuity of operations. That these functions have been undertaken for many years by the Director and now also in a number of areas by the Highway Superintendent does not imply that this has been or will continue to be a suitable arrangement. In addition to tasks that have been directly associated with the Director's job, the Director has also assumed a fuller burden of specific duties that were formerly handled by the Service Manager, a position that was eliminated several years ago.

Second, the management of the knowledge and information related to all of the areas of the Director's oversight is confined to memory and a multitude of mostly Microsoft Office-based tools that are tailored to the essential details and needs of these areas. These are semi-organized in a vast network of computer folders encumbered by hundreds of obsolete files. There has simply been inadequate time to streamline all of the saved data/information and have it available at this point in a ready fashion for an efficient turnover.

Third, the next Director will thus be unable to simply pick up and move forward from where things are and may understandably be unwilling to bear this administrative load in the volume and way in which it presently exists.

Fourth, though the next Director will undoubtedly carve out their own approach and priorities, there is the real risk of loss of stability and momentum in critical areas if a transition does not at least include ready access to vital information and management/planning data.

A notional list of tasking areas is attached. Also, the position descriptions of the Director and Highway Superintendent to see the breadth of overall administrative load exists up to the highest levels apart from the multitude of routine needs that are presently demanding attention away from these things.

Department Comment/Recommendation:

The purpose of this agenda item at this point is to simply engage in a conversation about the value of adding an administrative assistant well enough in advance of the transition to a new Public Works Director.

I personally loathe bureaucratic sprawl, which explains my reticence to this point to have sought adding this position. However, that doesn't mean that this position hasn't been needed up to this point and it should certainly be considered for smoothness of transition and stability and efficiency of operations going forward.