



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, ARLINGTON, MA 02476
PHONE (781) 316-3120 FAX: (781) 316-3129

CARYN COVE MALLOY
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Memorandum

To: Select Board Chair Steve DeCoursey
From: Director of Human Resources Caryn Malloy
Re: Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine Annual Performance Review
Date: July 9, 2021

Pursuant to the evaluation forms completed by each member of the Select Board I am providing you with the consensus document for your consideration.

1. Personal Characteristics – Average Score 4.67

The Town Manager is described as “always hard at work making the town a better place to live and truly cares about the success of the town, town employees and residents”. He has earned a “widespread reputation for fairness, creativity and transparency in his problem solving and decision making” and his work ethic is described as “second to none”. The need for the Town Manager to develop resiliency in the face of criticism was noted, “we live in a town where there is always going to be negative reactions to policy” which can sometimes get personal. Even in the face of this there remains the need to work in the collective “best interest of the town”. The Town Manager was complimented for his self-awareness in the need to improve in this area.

2. Professionalism – Average Score 5

Adam was described as being “widely viewed by his professional peers as being among the very best and brightest in his field” evidenced by his Presidency of the Massachusetts Municipal Association and involvement in the Metropolitan Mayors’ Coalition. Board members appreciate Adam’s collaboration with other municipal leaders and bringing best practices from other Massachusetts’ cities and towns to Arlington. The Town Manager is seen to be supportive of professional development for staff and senior managers under Adam regularly participate in their professional associations and related trainings.

3. Public Relations/Communication – Average Score 4.93

The Town Manager is described as a “top notch communicator” with a well-deserved reputation for high accessibility and responsiveness to members of the public and media. Adam’s weekly updates on cable TV are seen as informative and a crucial source of information during the Pandemic. Constructive criticism in this area revolved around being “too accessible” to

residents which at times put him in a position to deal with politically charged issues that may be more appropriately be dealt with by the Select Board. The idea of having systems in place to buffer access to the Town Manager, with email e.g., had been discussed but as of yet have not been put into place; if successfully implemented it was seen as a step to free the Town Manager to deal with his “critical duties” and less with the political issues that can dominate his time and energy.

4. Board Support/Relations – Average Score 4.76

Board members were very complimentary of the Town Manager’s availability and responsiveness. He received high marks for keeping the Board “promptly informed” and as sharing his perspective to help solve problems. Criticism in this area revolved around the need to support the Board in the development of their own “cohesive policy direction”. Adam was evaluated as consistent and professional in his follow-through on Board initiatives and requests.

5. Community Leadership – Average Score 4.71

Adam was described as “effective” in championing the contributions of Arlington’s volunteers and the community at large. He was described as approaching each of his “many citizen appointment responsibilities with diligence, respect and professionalism”. When there are successes, Adam is seen as quick to share credit with community volunteers.

6. Organizational Leadership/Personnel Management – Average Score 4.51

Board members are impressed by the productivity the Town Manager within the average work day. It is hoped that the return of the Deputy Town Manager – Operations from the Facilities Department will help alleviate some of his workload. Adam was seen as “having a great team around him” and he while he has shown progress in delegating work he is seen as still needing to make improvements in this area. It was suggested that time gained by the delegation of tasks would make it possible to do a “systematic performance review of top-level staff” which would warrant an even higher rating in the area in the future.

7. Financial Management – Average Score 4.90

The Town Manager received high marks for his financial management. He was complimented for having a great team around him and for having an exceptional command and knowledge of the fine points of the Town’s budget and financial structure. He was credited as being “essential” to the success of debt and exclusions and override campaigns to maintain crucial services. He consistently meets short and long term deadlines in the financial life cycle of the Town.

8. Planning and Organization – Average Score 4.98

Adam was described as exceling in all categories of this section “constantly thinking of both the short-term and long-term goals for the town”.

9. Overall – Average Score 4.76

Board members describe Arlington as “very fortunate” to have Adam serving as Town Manager. The Town Manager was complimented for his accessibility and communication skills (which include being a “very good listener”) and those skills were seen as particularly valuable during the Pandemic. His recognized strengths include his command of the Town’s finances, hiring and development of management staff, an outstanding work ethic, personal integrity and dedication to doing the very best work possible. He is also seen as helpful and respectful to residents.

Areas for improvement include governing for all residents with a balanced approach and considering and respecting a wide range of opinions. Board members also would like to see improvement in the Town’s Manager’s ability to deal with the inevitable criticism that comes with even the most straightforward decisions; there is a confidence in Adam from Board members that he will be able to do this. The Board would like to see Adam lean more heavily on his management team and to delegate more day to day tasks.

Collectively, the Board would like to support Adam in giving himself the best chance to effectively and sustainably serve as Arlington’s Town Manager.

Thank you for the opportunity to prepare this document. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.