

2023 PAA Staffing Analysis Review

PAA Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1 – Improve Staff Work-Life Balance to Address Burnout and Bandwidth Issues.

- A. Secure & Confirm Board Support
- B. Adjust Meeting Practices
 - 1. Modify Meeting Times and Continue Hybrid Meeting Options
 - 2. Establish Regular Meeting Schedules and Stack Meetings Where Feasible
- C. Avoid Special Meetings Where Feasible
- D. Reduce Unnecessary Staff Involvement in Meetings
- E. Improve Meeting Efficiency
 - 1. Time Limits
 - 2. Prohibit Back-and-Forth Dialogue
 - 3. Utilize Consent Agendas
- F. Adopt Comp & Flex Time Policies

RECOMMENDATION 2 – Identify Public Expectations, Evaluate Capacity, and Update Priorities to Align.

- A. Align Board Understanding with Staff Capabilities and Limitations
- B. Explore More Flexible Work Hours and Office Closures
- C. Consider Redesign of Front Office to Support Privacy and Focus

RECOMMENDATION 3 – Focus Energy on Employee Support and Development.

- A. Prioritize Employee Sense of Purpose, Autonomy and Trust, Learning and Growth, Belonging and Community, and Culture of Appreciation
- B. Engage Employees in Talent Discussions and Development Reviews
- C. Establish Development Activities for Employees to Choose From
- D. Reinforce the “Why” and Purpose of Work
- E. Celebrate Accomplishments
- F. Update Wage and Compensation with Data from Peer and Surrounding communities
- G. Update the Personnel Manual

RECOMMENDATION 4 – Rebalance Staff / Contracted Services Structure.

- A. Expand Utilization of Zoning Contractor
- B. Change IT Vendor
- C. Contract Services for Website Management

RECOMMENDATION 5 – Analyze and Update Job Responsibilities / Descriptions

- A. Consider Separating the Administrator / Chief of Police Roles
- B. Evaluate Impact of Cascading Tasks / Responsibilities on the Deputy Administrator
- C. Consider Expanding Recreation Director Position to Municipal Services Director or Administrative Services Coordinator
- D. Establish New Administrative Support Positions

Implemented / Implementing
Planned / Planning
Under Consideration / Need Approval
Not Considering

2023 PAA Staffing Analysis Review

RECOMMENDATION 1 – Improve Staff Work-Life Balance to Address Burnout and Bandwidth Issues.

- A. The first sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 1” from PAA to “make providing work-life balance for employees a key component of the Village’s strategic vision” has been a staff priority since 2020. Several incremental improvements have been made to address concerns about the staff’s work-life balance. Examples of these actions include affording staff hybrid options to attend meetings, work from home opportunities (where possible), schedule modification to balance other obligations, and modification to staff office hours, just to name a few. Each adjustment has been adopted only after appropriate communication with Village President and/or the Village Board. Further formalizing a work-life balance priority could be beneficial but should be approached deliberately and thoughtfully as the inflexibility that naturally comes with formal policy could add to our existing administrative labor challenges.
- B. The remaining sub-recommendations under “Recommendation 1” have been ongoing topics of discussion between staff and elected officials for some time. These recommendations include to “review how and when Board and Committee meetings are scheduled”, “[place] more emphasis to stick to regularly scheduled meetings to limit the night meeting impacts on both elected and appointed officials”, “review how Village Hall staff is utilized to cover meetings, provide input, and take minutes”, “Examine ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness of running meetings”, and to “[review] current comp-time policy for Village Hall employees regularly involved in extra night meetings and consider changes offering more work flexibility options”. Several improvements have already been made – including promoting daytime meetings, holding back-to-back meetings, offering hybrid meeting options, avoiding unnecessary meetings, implementation of informal meeting controls (i.e. time limits, prohibition on back-and-forth exchanges, etc.), and allowing staff to flex their time as appropriate – while others are actively being considered – such as regularly scheduled committee meetings, utilization of consent agendas, and additional or more formalized meeting controls to promote efficiency, order, and professionalism.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – Identify Public Expectations, Evaluate Capacity, and Update Priorities to Align.

- A. The first sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 2” from PAA was to “develop a general citizen response philosophy that the Village Board can buy into and begin to prioritize responses and educate the community about staff limitations”. Over the past several months, staff have been proactive in communicating our limitations with the Board, as well as expressing our critical and anticipated needs. These communications are what led to the Boards approval of the funds to contract PAA’s services and initiated preliminary discussion about a 2024 referendum. With the study complete, staff still feel strongly about the need for additional skilled personnel to address our strategic and operational shortfalls. However, somewhat paradoxically, to our knowledge these shortfalls have not generated formal public complaints or even public criticisms of service failures. However, if the existing shortfalls are to persist, we anticipate this would change and staff would require significant Board support to mitigate the potential for a more critical public impression of village staff and the cascading consequences of such criticism.
- B. The second sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 2” advised the village to “explore potential changes in office hours to allow for flexible work hours of ‘focused work’ time for staff”. Over the

2023 PAA Staffing Analysis Review

past few years, schedule adjustments have been made to not only allow for office closure on Friday afternoons, but also to afford individual staff members working hours that enable a better balance and alignment with their personal and professional needs. These individual adjustments include opportunities to off-set their work schedule – allowing hours that improve efficiency and effectiveness – as well as perform some work that can be done outside of the office from home. This flexibility became critical in 2020 as staff weathered the impact of COVID related illness. Although many village staff responsibilities can't be accomplished from home, allowing this option where possible helps reduce the stress and morale impact of key staff working significantly more than the standard 40-hour work week – which has unfortunately become the norm.

- C. The third sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 2” advised the village to “review office layout and design to improve citizen responses”. The recommendation infers that resident “complaints” take up a disproportionate amount of staff time which could be a misrepresentation. Although staff do have a more collaborative approach to problem-solving than was historically the norm, we also utilize the conference room or private offices to handle more sensitive interactions and meetings. Staff members preferring to have greater privacy and less disruption in their roles could be appeased by creating additional offices in the front office. Given the number of other priorities impacting on our operating and capital budgets, this may not be feasible to prioritize but should be considered.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – Focus Energy on Employee Support and Development.

- A. The majority of sub-recommendations to “Recommendation 3” from PAA included ideas to improve our workplace culture, including “work to support enhanced employee experience featuring: sense of purpose, autonomy and trust, learning and growth, belonging and community, culture of appreciation”, “engage employees in talent discussions and development reviews”, “create a ‘menu’ of development activities for employees to choose from”, “consistently talk about the ‘why’ and purpose of work, not just the ‘what’ that needs to be accomplished”, and to “celebrate accomplishments”. These are all great recommendations and have been a priority over the past few years. Actions we have taken to make cultural improvements in alignment with these recommendations include collaboratively establishing staff mission, vision, and values; adoption and promotion of leadership and management philosophies; creation of a village award and recognition program; implementation of a performance evaluation and feedback system; hosting professional development retreats; budgeting for continuing leadership development; and continuing the historic practice of holding a staff holiday party.

Mission – *We passionately deliver exemplary public services and responsible governance to improve the experience and value of our community.*

Core Values – *Integrity, Compassion, Trust, and Dedication.*

Leadership Philosophy – Our leadership philosophy reinforces a unified commitment to our values, priorities, and approach to decision making. All leaders are expected to evaluate information and respond to situations through the guiding principles of authentic leadership, autonomy and feedback, and personal accountability.

2023 PAA Staffing Analysis Review

- i. *Authentic Leadership* – Provide a common vision for the future, demonstrate service to others, have a conviction of values, maintain genuine relationships, and have strong foundations of self-awareness.
- ii. *Autonomy and Feedback* – Autonomous leadership, delegation of responsibility, and proactive approach toward two-way feedback encourages our team to perform freely within set limits, which in turn promotes independence, self-discipline, initiative, and learning among all.
- iii. *Personal Accountability* – Pursue the courage to constantly remain un-wavered by physical danger, moral dilemma, or emotional strain; practice temperance by exercising exemplary self-control in all decisions and actions; seek wisdom and acknowledge that we are accountable for our thoughts, actions, and choices; strive for justice by honoring fairness in all aspects of life.

Management Philosophy – Department leaders share a set of management rules and obligations to instill purpose, provide direction, and reinforce cohesion. Our management approach includes a process of tasking, enabling, and providing feedback with the deliberate purpose of encouraging individual initiative, growth mindset, and example setting.

- i. *Individual Initiative* – Shoot for the stars, act with a purpose, and communicate always.
 - ii. *Growth Mindset* – Embrace extreme ownership, demonstrate unwavering grit, and seek constant learning.
 - iii. *Example Setting* – Inspire through actions, guide others to success, and provide continuous support.
- B. The next sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 3” advised the village to “develop a wage and compensation system that treats employees fairly and equitably utilizing wage data from peer and surrounding communities”. This recommendation is THE FIRST PRIORITY for village staff in 2024 and will require Board and community support through successful referendum to achieve. Staff are compiling the information necessary for Board and community consideration.
- C. The final sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 3” advised the village to “update the personnel manual which would document any new benefits and organizational commitments made to employees by Maple Bluff”. Since January 2023, staff have sought an opportunity to update the employee manual but have not had sufficient time and energy to focus on this as a priority. We performed a trial of Lexipol’s policy for municipal governments, but identified significant issues with cross department incompatibility and were not as satisfied with the product as we are for their public safety policy manuals. Given the number of competing strategic priorities in 2024, staff will not likely have the time to address this until 2025.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – Find the Right Balance Between Utilizing Full-Time Staff and Contracting Out for Municipal Needs. This recommendation is part of THE THIRD PRIORITY for village staff in 2024 – to address a staffing shortfall in technically-specific skilled labor areas – and will require Board and community support through successful referendum to achieve.

2023 PAA Staffing Analysis Review

- A. The first sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 4” from PAA was to “look to work with a firm that provides zoning, planning and design administration duties and remove these tasks from the Administrator/Police Chief”. The village currently contracts services from our Village Planner that can be expanded. This idea has been discussed and considered for some time but has not been fully implemented due to the potential financial implications of doing so. This transition would likely be simple and relatively seamless but will require a modest adjustment in our operating budget.
- B. The second sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 4” from PAA was to “immediately seek to find an IT vendor that will be responsive and proactive so that full-time staff does not have to be involved dealing with complex IT issues including day to day operational issues as well as long term IT planning”. The village currently contracts services from a vendor that does not specialize in municipal government support – we are their only government client. Further, they offer a-la-cart reactive services that potentially expose the village to a complex and evolving IT threat landscape. Staff have interviewed and considered two alternative companies over the past two years and would like to engage in a “pen test” with one of them. This exercise would serve to identify existing vulnerabilities and serve the additional purpose of a trust building experience – the first step in considering a transition to their services. The idea has been discussed and considered for some time but has been delayed due to the potential financial implications of doing so and the significant impact such a transition can have on staff and operations. Moving to a new IT vendor would also likely require a notable adjustment in our operating budget.
- C. The third sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 4” from PAA was to “work with a private company that specializes in web site development and maintenance to explore all the possibilities available for achieving staff efficiencies and citizen engagement”. The village currently utilizes self-trained staff to manage our website. While this is not optimal and likely creates opportunity costs in staff energy prioritization, it has afforded growth and engagement opportunities for the staff involved – who also seem to appreciate their contributions in this area. Staff have considered the alternative option of outsourcing, but the significant costs led to the early abandonment of further research. While staff are open to the idea of contracting these services, this should be considered a subordinate priority to needs more impactful to sustainable staff and operations.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – Create and analyze the current job descriptions for each Village Hall employee to determine if there may be a more efficient division of job responsibilities to accomplish needed tasks. This recommendation is part of THE SECOND PRIORITY for village staff in 2024 – to address understaffing in multiple departments – and will require Board and community support through successful referendum to achieve.

- A. The first sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 5” from PAA identified that the village’s dual-role Administrator / Chief of Police is a unique and potentially suboptimal situation. PAA recommended the village “explore separating these positions to free up more focus on Village Administration by the Admin/Police Chief”. This change would have a significant and possibly quite beneficial impact on village operations. Given the wide-reaching changes that would likely come with a decision to split these two positions, this consideration should likely occur before evaluating other staff additions or modifications. Moving to a new staffing structure that separated the

2023 PAA Staffing Analysis Review

Administrator and Chief of Police roles would likely require a significant adjustment in our operating budget.

- B. The second sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 5” from PAA identified the cascading impacts or “WATERFALL AFFECT” placed on the Deputy Administrator. Given that the Deputy Administrator is also the Clerk / Treasurer, and the Administrator is also the Chief of Police, PAA cautioned about how the current structure “push[s] pressures and tasks downward to other employees” creating a systemic issue. This is an issue that has been identified and discussed at length among staff. All staff in the front office, as well as leadership roles in each department, fulfill a wide range of diverse duties. Day-to-day operations under these conditions prevent staff, including frontline and administrative personnel, from effective mid-to-long-range planning and create an accumulation of strategic consequences. Addressing this issue requires a restructuring of responsibilities and roles within the organization to ensure that tasks are distributed appropriately, allowing for better focus on both immediate tasks and long-term planning. Additionally, given the current staffing deficit it is necessary to add administrative staff who can alleviate the workload burden on existing employees and enable them to dedicate more time to strategic planning and higher-level tasks. Clear delegation of responsibilities can help in effectively integrating new staff members and ensuring a smoother workflow across the organization, ultimately fostering a more efficient and sustainable work environment. Clearly, adding to the existing staffing would require a significant adjustment in our operating budget.

- C. The third sub-recommendation to “Recommendation 5” from PAA identified the opportunity to expand the “current Parks Director/Dep. Treasurer position... to a Municipal Services Director or Administrative Services Coordinator as utilized in some communities”. PAA’s recommendation was accompanied with acknowledgment that the move would require a “change in philosophy to include adding support staff to the Parks Department”. This expansion of the role presents an opportunity to address the workload imbalance and streamline operations within our Administration, Public Works, and Recreation departments. By transitioning to a more comprehensive leadership position such as a Municipal Services Director or Administrative Services Coordinator, the village could better align its resources with the demands of the role. Additionally, the acknowledgment of the need for additional support staff underscores the importance of properly resourcing departments to effectively carry out their functions. It's essential to recognize that simply expanding roles without adequate staffing can lead to further strain on existing employees and hinder the overall effectiveness of the department. Therefore, along with restructuring the position, careful consideration must be given to the allocation of resources and the addition of support staff to ensure the successful implementation of this recommendation.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS: Staff have also identified the following matters for consideration when analyzing the recommendations from PAA.

- A. Additional Public Works Staff
 - 1. As a vital component of our municipality's infrastructure and service delivery, the Public Works department plays a crucial role in maintaining our community's functionality and aesthetic appeal. However, in recent times, we have encountered challenges in adequately covering the

2023 PAA Staffing Analysis Review

wide range of responsibilities encompassed by the department, especially concerning staffing coverage needs for various situations such as vacations, sick leaves, emergencies, and other unforeseen circumstances. To address these gaps in essential coverage, the Public Works department requires additional manpower to ensure seamless operations and efficient service delivery. To address these challenges effectively, we propose the addition of an additional full-time public works laborer. This addition would not only enhance our capacity to manage daily operations but also provide crucial coverage for instances where staffing shortages may occur due to various factors. Adding staff would require a significant adjustment in our operating budget.

B. Additional Police Staff

1. Staffing for Administrative Support Needs – A police department is a complex organization that requires a diverse range of skills and expertise to carry out its duties effectively and efficiently. Most police department staffing models include approximately 30% non-sworn employees who are essential to offset the administrative burden on sworn staff and manage the increasingly important support services that departments rely on to succeed. Despite this fact, the MBPD has never employed full-time administrative support and historically relied on minimal part-time staffing to assist department leadership in fulfilling associated duties and responsibilities. To complicate matters, administrative and support requirements for police departments continue to increase each year. The under prioritization of administrative support despite the increased need has led to deficiencies and inefficiencies in our department functions that must be addressed. Currently, the Records Administrator splits their time between the Administration and the Police Department, with most of their time spent in the PD due to a historic accumulation of operational support needs. Assigning 100% of the Records Administrator’s time to the PD and hiring a new full-time administrative support staff member for the front office (as discussed in RECOMMENDATION 5 B.) would likely be the most optimal and efficient solution to both staffing challenges. As stated previously, adding staff would require a significant adjustment in our operating budget.
2. Staffing for Two Officers on Duty – Over the past few years, we have received an increasing number of comments and questions from residents about our police staffing and the limits of our operational capabilities. Our staffing is sufficient to always maintain one full-time officer on duty, but this does not necessarily mean the officer is actively patrolling. We have historically relied on our part-time officers to cover critical gaps and enable limited opportunities for two-officer staffing. While we have maintained quality police services with minimal staffing in the past, it is necessary now to address why we do not enable two officer staffing, widely considered a best practice in modern policing. Two-officer staffing has several benefits to include: increased officer safety, enhanced response capability, additional police presence, improved collaboration and decision-making, ability to manage complex and/or multiple incidents, greater investigative and administrative support, and expanded community engagement. While adding two full-time patrol officers to our current staffing would still fall short of 100% two full-time officer coverage, it would be sufficient to meet our needs due to our existing utilization of part-time officers. Again, adding staff would require a significant adjustment in our operating budget.

2023 PAA Staffing Analysis Review

3. Current Staffing Comparison to Like Community – As an independent and distinguished lakeside community of less than 1,500 residents on the City of Madison’s north side, finding a direct comparison to our community can be a challenge. Often, we are discussed in the same context as the Village of Shorewood Hills and, although there are important and impactful differences between our communities and police operations, a police staffing comparison with the Shorewood Hills Police Department (SHPD) can provide some contextual value.

As of January 2024, the SHPD operates with a staffing model of 9.5 personnel. They have 8 full-time sworn officers to include a Chief of Police, Lieutenant, Sergeant, Detective, and 4 patrol officers. In addition, they staff two non-sworn positions that cover a 1.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) – a full-time administrative support member and a part-time community support member. Conversely, the MBPD operates with a staffing model of 7 personnel. We have a dual role Administrator and Chief of Police (.5 FTE), an Administration Sergeant, an Operations Detective Sergeant, and 4 patrol officers. In addition, we have a non-sworn position that covers a .5 FTE – our Records Administrator and Administrative Support Specialist splits their time between the front office and the police department.

While MBPD operates with 2.5 less personnel, it is worthwhile to note that we have similar community expectations for service and requirements. To complement our operations, the MBPD seeks to leverage technology and environmental controls, enhance resident awareness and understanding, and anticipate challenges that come with anticipated growth and development around our community. Ultimately, our department prides itself on exemplary services and strives to be a model for small municipal law enforcement agencies operating inside greater metropolitan environments.

CONCLUSION: In conclusion, the recommendations put forth by PAA underscore the critical need for strategic improvements across various facets of our village operations. Addressing issues related to staff work-life balance, public expectations, employee support and development, harmonious utilization of full-time staff and contractors, and job description optimization are paramount to ensuring the effective and sustainable functioning of our municipality. At the core of these insights lie root factors that have been vigorously emphasized – *we need more staff to shoulder the demanding workload of daily operations, and the financial resources to recruit, equip, and retain competent employees who possess the capacity to meet the ever-evolving needs of our work environment.*

Staff acknowledge and embrace our need to enhance work-life balance, refine citizen response strategies, and reinforce our positive workplace culture, however without the resources necessary to address the deficit in our staffing structure these efforts will fall short in efficiency, responsiveness, and overall well-being. The identification of additional staffing needs in the Administration, Public Works, and Police departments highlights the urgency of addressing workforce shortages to meet service demands effectively. While these enhancements necessitate adjustments to our operating budget, the long-term benefits of improved service delivery, employee morale, and community satisfaction are necessary to ensure that Maple Bluff remains a vibrant and thriving community for years to come.