

**COMPOSITE EVALUATION
MELISSA NOE, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**

Period February 2023 through November 2023

Rating Scale (1-5)

- Outstanding (5)
- Highly Effective (4)
- Proficient (3)
- Improvement Needed (2)
- Unsatisfactory (1)

The composite score is shown in red.

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Performance Categories Scoring and Narrative

1. Individual Characteristics

- 3.7 Diligent and thorough in the discharge of duties, “self-starter”
- 2.7 Exercises good judgment
- 2.7 Displays enthusiasm, cooperation, and will to adapt
- 3.7 Mental and physical stamina appropriate for the position
- 2.3 Exhibits composure, appearance and attitude appropriate for executive position

Melissa is described generally as persistent in performing her work and supportive of her subordinates. She was praised for identifying the need for an open space and recreation plan and following through on it. There are mixed reviews on the quality of her judgment. She has not shown the best judgment when bringing before the Board at open sessions complaints about other employees, complaints that were not justified or for which the employee was not given an opportunity to respond before brought up in public. Overall, this was her lowest scored category.

2. Professional Skills and Status

- 3.7 Maintains knowledge of current developments affecting the practice of local government management
- 3.3 Demonstrates a capacity for innovation and creativity
- 3 Anticipates and analyzes problems to develop effective approaches for solving them
- 2.8 Willing to try new ideas proposed by Select Board members and/or staff
- 2.7 Sets a professional example by handling affairs of the public office in a fair and impartial manner

Melissa is praised for her 18+ years of service and the depth of knowledge that that tenure brings to benefit the Town. The Board members appreciate her understanding of the law. She showed creativity in using staff members' available hours to do work that saved the Town money. She has, however, been resistant to accept suggestions on new approaches. She initially resisted the implementation of a new fiscal dashboard but has since engaged in the process. She was dismissive when a committee member suggested that the Town might benefit from the Complete Streets Program, responding only that it had been looked at in the past, rather than considering whether circumstances may have changed such that it was worth reconsidering.

3. Relations with Elected Members of the Select Board

3.3 Carries out directives of the body as a whole as opposed to those of any one member

3.7 Sets meeting agendas that reflect the guidance of the Select Board

3.5 Disseminates complete and accurate information equally to all members in a timely manner

3 Assists by facilitating decision making without usurping authority

2.7 Responds well to requests, advice, and constructive criticism

An important aspect of the Town Administrator's work is to provide reliable, accurate documents and information to the Select Board. Melissa provides accurate agendas and meeting minutes. She is responsive to Board requests for information, often providing the requested information at the next meeting. Her attention to detail needs improvement, as the Board caught errors that, while not always Melissa's responsibility, should have been caught by her before the erroneous documentation was given to the Board or to the Town. Examples are an employment contract that had substantive changes when she represented that it did not, errors in the MPL sheet, erroneous information to explain the fuel overage, and an error in a proposed bylaw included in a recent warrant.

There was one example of Melissa overstepping her authority, when she and the former HR Director intended to terminate an employee when they lacked the authority to do so. It took several communications by email and in person with a Board member before the proper steps were put into place to comply with the law.

Melissa's relationships with the Board members are positive. While there may be items of disagreement, the members reported generally they are able to discuss the issue with her in a professional manner. On the other hand, Melissa herself acknowledges that she does not always respond well to constructive criticism.

4. Policy Execution

3 Implements actions in accordance with the intent of the Select Board

3.3 Supports the actions of the Select Board after a decision has been reached, both inside and outside the organization

3.3 Understands, supports, and enforces local government's laws, policies, and ordinances

4 Reviews ordinance and policy procedures periodically to suggest improvements to their effectiveness

3.5 Offers workable alternatives to the Select Board for changes in law or policy when an existing policy or ordinance is no longer practical

This is Melissa's highest rated category. Melissa is strong in implementing Board directives. She worked with the former HR Director to update several Town policies. She has proven to be an excellent grant writer, securing significant grants for important infrastructure improvements at little cost to the Town, such as the grant to replace a culvert on Sandisfield Road. She is working effectively on plans for the Fox Hill Road property and the Monterey School House. She ensures that the Town Report is completed in a timely manner.

5. Reporting

3 Provides regular information and reports to the Select Board concerning matters of importance to the local government

3.3 Responds in a timely manner to requests from the Select Board for special reports

2.7 Takes the initiative to provide information, advice, and recommendations to the Select Board on matters that are non-routine and not administrative in nature

3.3 Reports produced by the Administrator are accurate, comprehensive, concise and written to their intended audience

3 Produces and handles reports in a way to convey the message that affairs of the organization are open to public scrutiny

As mentioned above, Melissa is responsive and effective in supporting the requests of the Board. She was particularly effective in finding new HR support upon the resignation of the former director. One member proposed that perhaps Melissa could send a quick email update on the tasks of the week so that the Board knows what she is working on.

6. Citizen Relations

3 Responsive to requests and questions from citizens

3.2 Demonstrates a dedication to service to the community and its citizens

N/A Maintains a nonpartisan approach in dealing with the news media

2.3 Meets with and listens to all members of the community to discuss their concerns and strives to understand their interests

2.7 Gives an appropriate effort to maintain citizen satisfaction with Town services

While Melissa is described as responding competently to citizen requests, she is generally described as needing improvement in communications and customer relations. There is a sense that she "takes names" when she hears from a Board member that a citizen expresses discomfort with their interaction with her, when she would be better served by a modicum of self-reflection.

7. Staffing

3.7 Recruits and retains competent personnel for staff positions

3.5 Applies an appropriate level of supervision to improve any areas of substandard performance

3 Stays accurately informed and appropriately concerned about employee relations

3 Professionally manages the compensation and benefits plan

3.3 Promotes training and development opportunities for employees at all levels of the organization

Melissa gets high marks for her work in hiring and managing staff. She is lauded for her quick work in finding a replacement for the HR Director and managing the transition from an interim Town Clerk to a new permanent Town Clerk. She has filled several other positions with the assistance of other department heads, such as two police officers, and staff for the Highway Department and transfer station. She has worked effectively with department heads to address underperforming employees. She developed training and development sessions for staff. She has canvassed comparable communities regarding employment pay and benefits. The new time clock and benefits system has proven frustrating for some employees and Melissa was perceived as being not as supportive of their frustrations as she could have been.

8. Supervision

3 Encourages heads of departments to make decisions within their jurisdictions with minimal Town Administrator involvement yet maintains general control of operations by providing the right amount of communication to the staff

3 Instills confidence and promotes initiative in subordinates through supportive rather than restrictive controls for their programs while still monitoring operations at the department level

3 Develops and maintains a friendly and informal relationship with the staff and work force in general yet maintains the professional dignity of the Town Administrator's office

3 Sustains or improves staff performance by evaluating the performance of staff members at least annually, setting goals and objectives for them, periodically assessing their progress, and providing appropriate feedback

3 Encourages teamwork, innovation, and effective problem-solving among the staff members

Melissa is viewed as having a mixed relationship with department heads, some excellent and some not. The tensions and lack of trust in some of her relationships have caused the Select Board to get involved in issues that should be settled among staff. Her relationship with the Assessors' Office was described by more than one Board member as poor, marked by unprofessional rhetoric that is damaging to the Town. Her relationship with the Police, Fire, and Operations departments and the Town Clerk's office are described as positive.

Melissa requires some departments to complete reporting forms that are not required of all. While Melissa responded that she requires reporting in some form from all departments, the forms that some are required to complete while others aren't support an inference that not all are being treated equally. The reporting forms require what appear to be unnecessarily detailed data, such as tracking the weekly number of emails and phone calls, the utility of which is not apparent.

9. Fiscal Management

3 Prepares a balanced budget to provide services at a level directed by the Select Board

3.3 Makes the best possible use of available funds, conscious of the need to operate the local government efficiently and effectively

3 Prepares a budget and budgetary recommendations in an intelligent and accessible format. Uses historical data to help determine budget numbers.

3 Ensures actions and decisions reflect an appropriate level of responsibility for financial planning and accountability

2.3 Appropriately monitors and manages fiscal activities of the organization

Melissa does a good job of meeting with department heads and preparing the annual budget. She has a good working relationship with the Finance Committee. She demonstrates a good grasp of the Town's finances and expenditures.

10. Community

3.5 Shares responsibility for addressing the difficult issues facing the Town

2.3 Avoids unnecessary controversy

3.7 Cooperates with neighboring communities and the county

2.7 Helps the Select Board address future needs and develop adequate plans to address long-term trends

3.7 Cooperates with other regional, state and federal government agencies

Melissa works well with the surrounding communities, the BRPC, the state agencies, and National Grid. This working relationship has benefited the Town through the successful application for several grants, work with BRPC on the Open Space Plan, and improvements to the lighting at the Community Center. She is working with Otis on a grant opportunity for a shared Fire Department employee. She was criticized for not communicating better with the MCC Director and Board regarding the lighting and for not communicating better with the public over the road closure by National Grid at Route 23 and Tyringham Rd.