



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Goals Workshop**  
**September 27, 2014**  
**Boxborough Holiday Inn, Deck Room**  
**242 Adams Place**

1. Call to Order, 8:00 AM
2. Review FY 2014 Goals and Projects
3. FY 2015 Goals
4. Adjourn (no later than 11 AM)





Approved: December 2, 2013

**Town of Boxborough  
Board of Selectmen  
Goals Workshop Minutes  
November 16, 2013**

PRESENT: Vince Amoroso, Chair; Bob Stemple, Clerk; Les Fox, Member; Jim Gorman, Member; Raid Suleiman, Member

ALSO PRESENT: Selina Shaw, Town Administrator

The documents discussed herein have been included with the file copy of the agenda packet for the above-referenced date and are hereby incorporated by reference.

**Call to Order**

Chair Amoroso called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM in the Fern Room of the Boxborough Holiday Inn, 242 Adams Place.

The Board reviewed the items in the packet: the "Goals and Projects List", which is prefaced by the overarching goals and followed by a number of specific projects and the minutes from the goals workshop held on November 3, 2012.

**Goals and Project List**

- **Goals:** The Board agreed that the status of the goals should be reviewed on a quarterly basis at a regular selectmen's meeting.
- **Appreciation Event:** Selectmen were concerned about decreased attendance. After May ATM, Board will review and compare 2013 attendance with that of prior years and will brainstorm ideas for increasing attendance.
- **Website:** Town has contracted with Virtual Town and Schools (VTS) to design and implement a new town website. Board would like representative of VTS to attend December 16 selectmen's meeting to review design mock-up and commit to go live date of no later than April 1, 2014.
- **Information Technology:** BoS discussed status of IT support and need to develop approach to deal with immediate needs as well as long-term strategy for networks (including servers), email, desktops, security, licensing and cable. Long-term plan may be a hybrid approach utilizing services of consultant as well as in-house support.
- **Capital Plan:** Owned by FinCom. Selectmen discussed need for a capital asset management plan to be developed by the Inspector of Buildings (BI), in his role as facilities manager. Plan should include a narrative describing each of the assets, the life cycle and current overall status of the town's infrastructure as well as plans for managing the replacement/repair of those assets. BI should provide BoS with a semi-annual update. Capital management plan should feed into capital plan.
- **5-Year Personnel Plan:** Selectmen commented that an impartial body such as the Personnel Board would likely provide a more objective picture of the town's personnel needs over the next five years than

the department heads. The build out analysis currently being conducted will be a useful tool in the development of the plan. TA noted that Personnel Board is charged with administering the Personnel Plan; tasking the Board with developing a comprehensive integrated plan of personnel resource utilization is not in their current scope. Selectmen plan to take up matter with Personnel Board at December 16<sup>th</sup> BoS meeting.

- **Fire Cistern Replacement:** Selectman Gorman will follow up with the Chief on status of inspections. Cisterns should be included in capital management plan.
- **Town Hall Improvements:** BoS would like the BI to inspect the stage and assess feasibility of making it handicapped accessible. Would also like the BI to inspect the drop ceiling and provide recommendations on replacing.
- **LEPC:** Selectman Gorman will follow up with Fire Chief on emergency management issues. Board discussed use of cooling center this past summer and determined that since it served only a minimal number of residents, it did not seem reasonable to continue opening town facility for this purpose. Fire Chief should confirm availability of Holiday Inn. For other emergency needs, the Blanchard should be available after the generator is installed this winter (by February vacation). For the short-term, Chief should confirm availability of Holiday Inn.
- **Master Plan:** Planning Board has hired consultants to update the town's build-out analysis and the Open Space and Recreation Plan. TA will check with Planner on estimated completion date.
- **Economic Development Committee:** TA brought up establishment of EDC for consideration. (Selectman Fox) will coordinate with Town Planner. Will start to announce at BoS meetings.
- **Collective Bargaining Agreements:** CBA's with Dispatch and Fire in place. Negotiated a mediated settlement with Police, subject to town meeting appropriation. BoS is ready to ratify and execute. Awaiting further input from CBU on incorporation of agreed upon terms; in hands of their counsel. Selectman Fox will follow up with CBU president, now Jeff Landgren.
- **Alternative Health Insurance Providers:** TA and Selectman Stemple updated Board on exploration and evaluation of alternative health care providers. Neither MIIA nor a health care broker could offer a more beneficial plan than that currently offered by MNHG due to the employee demographics and existing claims.
- **Department Head Negotiations:** Selectman Fox moved that the TA send out letters to the Police and Fire Chiefs and DPW Director to notify each of them of the Board's intent to negotiate successor agreements. Seconded by Selectman Gorman. **Approved 5-0**, except for notification to Police Chief, which was approved **4-0-1**, Selectman Suleiman abstaining. Successor agreement with TA was ratified and executed in May 2013. Board will set an executive session for December 2 to discuss parameters for negotiations.
- **Department Head Reviews:** Selectmen set target date of January 15 for completion and assigned reviews to liaisons as follows: DPW Director - Selectmen Amoroso and Fox; Fire Chief – Selectman Gorman; Police Chief – Selectman Fox. Selectmen Fox and Suleiman commented upon TA's review which had been completed over a year ago, but had not been provided to TA.
- **Water Exploration:** Selectmen discussed the disbanding of the Water Resources Committee (WRC) by the Board of Health. Had not been any notification to BoS who indirectly learned of action. Selectmen discussed importance of protecting future water supply and tying this in to economic development. Chair Amoroso will reach out to resident Frank Hubley, who showed an enthusiastic interest in the matter of the emergency generators, and see if he is interested in spearheading the effort and rounding up other interested members for a new WRC.

- **OPEB – GASB 45:** Will be part of budget discussion. The BoS will continue to review liability and funding with FinCom (and Town Treasurer).
- **Regional Transfer Station:** Selectman Amoroso reported that although a Stow selectman had initially approached him regarding the possible use of Boxborough's transfer station, there was never any follow through by Stow in providing potential number of Stow users. No further discussions were held beyond the initial meeting. Selectmen discussed need for civility at Transfer Station and possibility of installing signs to remind residents to wait their turn.
- **Disposition of Tax Title Properties:** TA noted that she needs to revisit matter with the Treasurer.
- **Stow Road Task Force:** Selectman Fox updated BoS. Committee has been working with a consultant, who will be preparing RFP for development of property. A warrant article authorizing BoS to dispose of a certain portion of the property is expected to be brought forward.
- **Code of conduct/values for Board of Selectmen and town committees:** Selectman Suleiman said that he would work with Selectman Stemple over the next couple of months and bring forward to the Board at a January meeting.

Selectman Suleiman asked the Board to consider making the Building Department an autonomous unit. He agreed to provide further information to be discussed at a future BOS meeting.

#### **Adjourn**

At 11:10 AM, it was moved and seconded to adjourn. **Approved 5 – 0.**



FY 2014 BoS Goals and Projects

Status at September 27, 2014

**Goals**

All citizens will be accorded respect, courtesy, and fair due process by Town employees and members of all boards and commissions dealing with the public. Policies will be created for key government functions, based upon generally accepted practices throughout the Commonwealth.

Promote transparency in town government. Continue to provide information about town government, including related documents (e.g. minutes, bylaws, contracts), on town's website.

Expand the communication channels among the BoS, department heads and boards/commissions - by instituting formal quarterly meetings with department heads and meetings at least semi-annually with all boards. Liaisons should meet with department heads on a monthly basis. Expand communication channels among the selectmen, keeping all members informed.

Reinforce a high level of accountability flowing down from the BoS to the departments by creating overall goals for the town government and flowing specific contributing objectives and priorities to the department heads. Performance reviews will be based upon an accounting of actual performance against the agreed-upon objectives and priorities. Refine performance tool.

Formalize a personnel and capital resource planning activity in order to effectively prioritize potential personnel additions, infrastructure requirements, capital equipment purchases, and other large discretionary acquisitions such as land purchases in an environment of limited and possibly shrinking resources. This will require department heads, boards and commissions to carefully forecast personnel, infrastructure, capital, and real property needs and priorities. These individual forecasts will be integrated and prioritized from a town-wide perspective in order to constitute comprehensive five-year and ten-year plans that will form the basis for effective town meeting actions.

Establish several realistic goals and participate in regional and statewide municipal organizations working toward improvements in local revenue distributions, effective development policies, regional management of emergency services, affordable housing policies and other resource management issues. Review potential for consolidation of services within the town.

Goal / Project	BoS Team Leader/Liaison	Team Members	Priority	Start Date	Target Date	Deliverables	Status at September 27, 2014	Date Completed	Notes
Annual Goals Workshop	BoS Chair	BoS/TA			Annually in September; status of goals to be reviewed quarterly		First review 4/14/14; 2nd review 7/21/14		
Appreciation Event	Vince Amoroso	BoS			Annually in September	Fun time for volunteers and staff	Overall, a success!	9/20/14	Good turnout... Several reminders sent... invites with staff paychecks...

FY 2014 BoS Goals and Projects

Status at September 27, 2014

Goal / Project	BoS Team Leader/Liaison	Team Members	Priority	Start Date	Target Date	Deliverables	Status at September 27, 2014	Date Completed	Notes
Information Technology (IT (incl WAN), VoIP, Cable)	Les Fox	Les Fox/Dept. heads		ongoing		Immediate needs and long-term strategy for networks (including servers), email, desktops, security, licensing and cable	<i>Contracted service with Guardian Info Systems. Migration of users onto new server complete. XP desktops and laptops replacement complete. Old servers to be re-deployed to provide redundant domain controllers at Police and Town Hall. PD server will also provide back-up for Cisco VoIP New email domain.</i>		<i>For at least the short term, have hired consultant on time and materials basis. Long-term plan may be a hybrid approach utilizing services of consultant as well as in-house support.</i>
Information Technology (IT (incl WAN), VoIP, Cable)		Les Fox/TA				VoIP maintenance and support	<i>See above.</i>		<i>May be considered as part of complete IT support</i>
						Upgrading of cable system	<i>Working with Littleton Cable on possible contract-for-services</i>		<i>In-house or consultant?</i>
		Les Fox, Town Clerk, Town Assessor and TA			04/01/14	Design and implementation of new improved website	<i>New site rolled out on March 31. Work-in-progress.</i>	3/31/14	<i>VTS hired in October 2013. BoS want commitment on April 1 go-live date</i>
Capital Plan	FinCom	Dilip Subramanyam, Gary Kushner, Treasurer, Accountant, TA		ongoing		Excel linked spreadsheet by years and departments in detail, including annual debt service	<i>Ongoing</i>		<i>Plan is a living document, continually updated.</i>
Capital Asset Management Plan		Inspector of Buildings		now		Narrative describing each of the assets, the life cycle and current overall status of the town's infrastructure as well as plans for managing the replacement/repair of those assets.	<i>Ongoing. Building Inspector provided draft to BoS on 6/30. Will talk to FinCom about including in Cap Plan</i>		<i>Should feed into Capital Plan. To be updated by BI and reviewed semi-annually with BoS</i>
5-Year Personnel Plan	BoS liaisons to dept. heads	Primary dept heads				Comprehensive town-wide integrated plan of personnel resource utilization	<i>Ongoing as part of budgeting process</i>		<i>This should be a fluid document to be reviewed annually.</i>
Fire Cistern replacement	Jim Gorman	Fire Chief				Master cistern plan to be included in capital asset management plan			<i>Cisterns are noted in capital plan, but have not been "scheduled" for any particular years. J. Gorman will follow up with Chief on status of inspections.</i>

FY 2014 BoS Goals and Projects

Status at September 27, 2014

Goal / Project	BoS Team Leader/Liaison	Team Members	Priority	Start Date	Target Date	Deliverables	Status at September 27, 2014	Date Completed	Notes
Town Hall Improvements	Susan Bak (formerly Raid Suleiman)	BI/DPW Director/TA				Replace Grange Meeting Room floor	To be completed with rest of GMR improvement.		
						Drop ceiling - replace	If CPA is approved at ballot, will present to CPC for recommendation & funding request to Town Mtg.		Examine and recommend repair/replacement
						Grange meeting room stage			Determine feasibility of making ADA compliant
						Foundation and paving improvements (T Hall, DPW and Hist museum)	Bids opened 9/25. Contract awarded to Brox Industries. Work to be completed by 11/28/14.		Funding appropriated at May 2014 ATM for paving and re-grading (T Hall, DPW and Hist museum)
LEPC/Emergency Mgt	Jim Gorman				Ongoing	Updated CEMP, meetings on standard basis	Chief has verbal agreement on cooling center.		July 2009 - received preliminary LEPC certification. Still awaiting final approval. J. Gorman will follow up with Chief White. Chief should confirm use of HI as cooling center.
						Blanchard to serve as emergency shelter	Generator installation complete. Project close-out meeting with FEMA & MEMA on 5/7. Reimbursement received in September.	5/11/14	DPW contacted about dying shrubbery. Tom to pursue with nursery when he returns from vacation on 9/29.
						Emergency preparedness guide for residents			Seek input from Elect. Inspector and LELWD on responsibilities of residents vs. utility co... Work with LEPC to put info brochure together for distro and posting on website.

FY 2014 BoS Goals and Projects

Status at September 27, 2014

Goal / Project	BoS Team Leader/Liaison	Team Members	Priority	Start Date	Target Date	Deliverables	Status at September 27, 2014	Date Completed	Notes
Master Plan Update	BoS			Spring 2014 (OSRP & build-out)		Revised Master Plan, including Open Space and Rec Plan and updated build-out analysis	Consultant hired to complete open space & rec plan. Final draft expected by the end of October, and will then be submitted for state approval... Planner will follow up with MAPC on build out analysis, which he believes has been completed. ATM supported funding for MP. Contract awarded to MAPC. BoS to appoint Update Comm on Oct 20. Public forum on Nov 19.		Public workshops held in Oct 2013 on Open Space & Rec Plan and updated build-out analysis.
Economic Development	Les Fox	Les Fox/TA/Planner					Three meetings have been held with Littleton and Westford to discuss local initiatives. Next mtg likely in late summer/early fall		Need to determine town's appetite for development... Expect input during Master Plan process.
Collective Bargaining Agreements Dispatch, Fire and Police CBU's	Vince Amoroso/Les Fox					Executed CBAs	Dispatch, Fire and Police bargaining units notified of BoS intent to negotiate successor agreements (7/1/15 - 6/30/18)		CBA's for 7/1/12 - 6/30/15 approved by ATM 2013 for Dispatch & Fire and in 2014 for Police. Successor agreements (7/1/15 - 6/30/18) to be negotiated
Department Head Negotiations	Amoroso & Fox (PC) Amoroso & Gorman (FC) Fox & Stemple (DPW)			January 2014	Various	Negotiated contract and salary	Negotiations completed; contracts executed.	Spring 2014	TA contract negotiated in 2013 through Sept. 2016; Police Chief & DPW Director through June 2017; Fire Chief through August 2018.
Department Head Reviews	BoS				January 15, 2014				
Water Exploration	Susan Bak (formerly Raid Suleiman) /Vince Amoroso					Protection of potential water sources			BoH disbanded WRC in 2013. Vince to reach out to Frank Hubley to determine interest in spearheading effort.
OPEB - GASB 45	BoS	BoS, FinCom, Treasurer		ongoing		Plan to fund future benefits	2014 ATM appr funding for updated study (required ev 3 yrs), as well as transfer of 100k to OPEB Trust		Actuarial Study was updated in FY 2012. Token amounts appropriated in May 2012 (\$75k) and May 2013 (\$100k) to start funding the liability.

FY 2014 BoS Goals and Projects

Status at September 27, 2014

Goal / Project	BoS Team Leader/Liaison	Team Members	Priority	Start Date	Target Date	Deliverables	Status at September 27, 2014	Date Completed	Notes
Regional Transfer Station	Vince Amorose	TA, DPW Director				Access to some number of residents from Stow if feasible			<i>V. Amorose will meet with DPW Dir. to examine feasibility and costs/benefits....Although originally proposed by Stow selectma, no further discussion held after initial</i>
Disposition of Tax Title Properties	<i>Susan Bak (formerly Raid Suleiman)</i>	TA, Town Treasurer		Fall 2011		Possible revenue to town			<i>Continue to review properties and determine next steps (auction... transfer to another town entity)</i>
Stow Road Task Force	Les Fox			Fall 2011	2014	Develop a plan for moving forward with aff housing project	<i>Draft RFP has been prepared. Still in revision phase. RFP team will review equity trade-off concept with Counsel on 9/29.</i>		RFP developed with MHP
Outreach to Public on Town Services	Bob Stemple & ?					Comprehensive plan for communication to residents on town matters, including how to sign up for Code Red and Nixle and expansion of website.			
Establishment of code of conduct/ values amd statement of ethics	Bob Stemple & <i>Susan Bak (formerly Raid Suleiman)</i>				January 2014	Code of conduct, ethics for BoS and town boards (and employees)			<i>To be discussed on 9/27</i>

FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES

TOWN OF BOXBOROUGH  
Statement of Ethics of the Board of Selectmen

1. **A member of the Board of Selectmen, in relation to his or her community should:**
  - a. Realize that his or her basic function is to make policy, with administration delegated to the Town Administrator.
  - b. Realize that in creating and enforcing town policy, the Board of Selectmen may direct the Town Administrator in setting priorities that affect policy, but that the day-to-day operations of the town are left to appropriate department heads.
  - c. Realize that he or she is one of a team and should abide by, and carry out, all Board decisions once they are made.
  - d. Be well informed concerning the duties of a Board member on both local and state levels.
  - e. Remember that he or she represents the entire community at all times.
  - f. Realize that service on the Board is service to the community and not service for personal or political benefit.
  - g. Abide by the ethics guidelines established by the State.
2. **A member of the Board of Selectmen, in his or her relations with the Town Administrator and other primary Department Heads, should:**
  - a. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies that will direct and support the administration of or the benefit of the staff and residents of the community.
  - b. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refer complaints to appropriate members of the administration.
  - c. Give the Town Administrator and primary Department Heads full responsibility for discharging his or her duties.
  - d. Refrain from instructing or requesting assistance from Town staff; instead all such activities should be handled through proper administrative channels through the full Board and the Town Administrator or primary Department Heads.
3. **A member of the Board of Selectmen, in his or her relations with fellow Board members, should:**
  - a. Recognize that action at official legal meetings is binding and that he or she alone cannot bind the Board outside of such meetings.
  - b. Refrain from making statements or promises regarding the outcome of matters that will come before the Board until after having a full and fair opportunity to weigh the merits of an issue during a Board meeting.
  - c. Uphold the intent of executive session and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive session.
  - d. Make informed decisions.
  - e. Refrain from communicating the position of the Board of Selectmen to reporters or state officials without prior board approval.
  - f. Be respectful of other Board members and their opinions.
4. **A member of the Board of Selectmen, in his or her relations with Town staff, should:**
  - a. Treat all staff as professionals, with clear, honest communication that respects the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual.
  - b. Limit contact to specific Town staff. Questions of Town staff and/or requests for additional background information should be directed only to the Town Administrator, or the primary Department Heads. The office of the Town Administrator should be copied on all requests or correspondence.

**Comment [LRF1]:** Many of the statements below are not matters of ethics, but rather of operations and practice.

**Comment [LRF2]:** This is not quite consistent with the current operating model where the BOS, through designated liaisons is directly involved in operational issues and management, not just policy setting.

**Comment [LRF3]:** See above. In the current model, the BOS sets policy and therefore prioritizes for departments, not the TA. This statement as well as above needs to be rationalized.

**Comment [LRF4]:** This needs some clarification given the role the Selectmen have adopted in managing departments and their operations, especially in regard to the role of the liaisons in working with Department heads in carrying out policy.

**Comment [LRF5]:** Suggest we cite most relevant statutes or guidelines.

**Comment [LRF6]:** In the current model, the administrative chain of command is directly from BOS to Department Head(s). In that context, who are the "appropriate members of the administration" other than BOS and departmental liaisons? Need to clarify.

**Comment [LRF7]:** This needs clarification, given the direct management role currently being assumed by the BOS. What specific process issues need to be addressed?

**Comment [LRF8]:** Do we need to state this? It is embodied in statute governing Town Meeting form of government/

**Comment [LRF9]:** I think there is already an agreed principle or guideline that the board defers to the Chair to make public comments "on the record", or may delegate this role to the TA from time to time.

**Comment [LRF10]:** This is already statute. Why do we need a separate statement?

**Comment [LRF11]:** This needs to be rationalized against the current model where the BOS directly manages the departments. If the Selectmen want primary rights and responsibility to directly manage departments, they need primary and unrestricted access to supporting staff. This may be in conflict with an operations management model for rationing and allocating access to support staff.

FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES

- c. Never publicly criticize an individual employee. Concerns about staff performance should only be made to the Town Administrator or appropriate primary Department Head through private conversation.
- d. Limit requests for staff support, and ensure that all requests go through the office of the Town Administrator or the Primary Department Head.
- e. Ensure that any materials or information provided to a Selectmen from a staff member be made available to all Selectmen.

**Comment [LRF12]:** Is this not covered elsewhere in statute?

**Comment [LRF13]:** See above comments. Not consistent with hands-on BOS management model.

# TOWN OF BOXBOROUGH

## Statement of Values of the Board of Selectmen

*All citizens will be accorded respect, courtesy, and fair due process by Town employees and members of all boards and commissions dealing with the public. Policies will be created for key government functions, based upon generally accepted practices throughout the Commonwealth.*

*Promote transparency in town government. Continue to provide information about town government, including related documents (e.g. minutes, bylaws, contracts), on town's website.*

*Expand the communication channels among the BoS, department heads and boards/commissions - by instituting formal quarterly meetings with department heads and meetings at least semi-annually with all boards. Liaisons should meet with department heads on a monthly basis. Expand communication channels among the selectmen, keeping all members informed.*

*Reinforce a high level of accountability flowing down from the BoS to the departments by creating overall goals for the town government and flowing specific contributing objectives and priorities to the department heads. Performance reviews will be based upon an accounting of actual performance against the agreed-upon objectives and priorities. Refine performance tool.*

*Formalize a personnel and capital resource planning activity in order to effectively prioritize potential personnel additions, infrastructure requirements, capital equipment purchases, and other large discretionary acquisitions such as land purchases in an environment of limited and possibly shrinking resources. This will require department heads, boards and commissions to carefully forecast personnel, infrastructure, capital, and real property needs and priorities. These individual forecasts will be integrated and prioritized from a town-wide perspective in order to constitute comprehensive five-year and ten-year plans that will form the basis for effective town meeting actions.*

*Establish several realistic goals and participate in regional and statewide municipal organizations working toward improvements in local revenue distributions, effective development policies, regional management of emergency services, affordable housing policies and other resource management issues. Review potential for consolidation of services within the town.*



# Code of Conduct: Can't We All Just Get Along?

January 20, 2012  
MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show

Applying the Code of Conduct to Conflicts  
among and between Elected Officials,  
Supervisors, Employees, and the Public

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## **"Can't We Get All Just Get Along"**

Focus on:

- understanding conflict sources, including dynamics and attitudes,
- steps to resolve conflict,
- preventive measures to keep it from reoccurring,

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## **Elected Officials are more than Politicians**

Elected Officials are:

- Leaders
- Department Heads
- Administrators
- Supervisors
- Managers

Elected Officials are considered supervisors under the law with respect to harassment and discrimination

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## What is workplace conflict?

A sharp disagreement or opposition of interests or ideas.

What are the costs of workplace conflict?

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## What are the Costs of Workplace Conflict?

- **increased absenteeism**
- **increased turnover**
- **increased stress**
- **increased costs for employee assistance programs (EAPs)**
- **Increased workers' compensation claims**
- **increased risk for accidents / incidents**
- **decreased productivity and motivation**
- **lower morale**
- **reduced image and customer confidence**
- **poorer customer service**
- **Increase in complaints, grievances, and lawsuits**

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## Sources of Conflict

- Poor Communication
- Different Values
- Differing Interests
- Scarce Resources
- Personality Clashes
- Poor Performance

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## 7 Steps to Avoid Conflicts

1. Gain Knowledge
2. Avoid Ignorance
3. Be an Effective Administrator and Supervisor
4. Build Positive Meaningful Relationships with Employees
5. Adopt, Implement, and Enforce a Code of conduct Policy
6. Effectively Address Performance Issues
7. Be A Real Leader

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# Steps to Avoid Conflicts

## Step One: Gain Knowledge!

- What are your duties and responsibilities?
  - In many cases, an Elected Official's authority is very limited – Do not Abuse!!!!
  - Members of Boards and Committees have no independent authority or power
- Find out what is going on.
- Obtain the 3D's: data, details and documents.
- Don't make assumptions!
- Don't make comments or pronouncements without the facts to back them up!

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# Steps to Avoid Conflicts

## Step Two: Avoid Ignorance!

- Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.  
Martin Luther King, Jr.
- There is no darkness but ignorance.  
William Shakespeare
- The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is a knowledge of our own ignorance.  
Benjamin Franklin
- Ignorance, the root and stem of all evil.  
Plato
- People always fear change. People feared electricity when it was invented, didn't they? People feared coal, they feared gas-powered engines... There will always be ignorance, and ignorance leads to fear.  
Bill Gates
- All I know is just what I read in the papers, and that's an alibi for my ignorance.  
Will Rogers
- Blinding ignorance does mislead us. O! Wretched mortals, open your eyes!  
Leonardo da Vinci

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## Steps to Avoid Conflicts

### Step Three: Be an Effective Administrator and Supervisor

- Appoint, hire, and promote the best qualified people for the job. Avoid hiring friends, relatives, political supporters
- Set clear and reasonable expectations.
- Hold yourself and employees accountable.

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## Steps to Avoid Conflicts

### Step Four: Build Positive Meaningful Relationships with Employees

Key: Knowing what employees want!

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## What do Employees Want?

- Feeling In On Things
- Full Appreciation for Work Done
- Good Wages
- Good Working Conditions
- Interesting Work
- Job Security
- Promotions/Growth Opportunities
- Personal Loyalty to Workers
- Tactful Disciplining
- Sympathetic Help with Personal Problems

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## What Supervisors Thought Employees Wanted Most

1. Good Wages
2. Job Security
3. Promotions/Growth Opportunities
4. Good Working Conditions
5. Interesting Work
6. Personal Loyalty to Workers
7. Tactful Disciplining
8. Full Appreciation for Work Done
9. Sympathetic Help with Personal Problems
10. Feeling In On Things

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## What Employees Actually Wanted Most

1. Interesting Work
2. Full Appreciation for Work Done
3. Feeling In On Things
4. Job Security
5. Good Wages
6. Promotions/Growth Opportunities
7. Good Working Conditions
8. Personal Loyalty to Workers
9. Tactful Disciplining
10. Sympathetic Help with Personal Problems

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## What can Elected Officials, Department Heads, and Supervisors control?

- 1. Interesting Work**
- 2. Full Appreciation for Work Done**
- 3. Feeling In On Things**

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## Steps to Avoid Conflict

### Step 5: Adopt, Implement, and Enforce a Code of Conduct Policy

**Eliminate workplace conflict by implementing a policy of mutual respect**

**Prohibits conduct that would be construed as:**

- Inappropriate
- Offensive
- Rude
- Disrespectful
- Bullying
- Intimidating

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## Steps to Avoid Conflict

### Step 5: Adopt, Implement, and Enforce a Code of Conduct Policy

- Covers any inappropriate and offensive conduct that may not amount to Harassment and Discrimination
- Strictly Enforce in a Consistent Manner
- **Applicable to All Personnel: Elected Officials, Supervisors and Employees**
- **Distribute Annually to Everyone – Sign Acknowledgement Form**

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Step 5: Adopt, Implement, and Enforce a Code of Conduct Policy

Examples of "offensive" conduct that may violate the "Code of Conduct" policy:

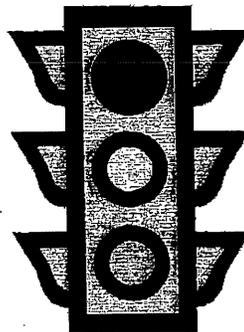
- Unwarranted or invalid criticism
- Gossiping or spreading rumors
- Blaming without factual justification
- Treating an employee differently than the rest of the work group
- Use of profanity
- Exclusion or social isolation
- Shouting or humiliating
- Playing practical jokes or making the employee the butt of jokes
- Off-premises conduct
- No feedback on work performance
- Ostracizing
- Excessive monitoring

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## Effectively Implementing and Enforcing a

### Code of Conduct Policy:

**First: Use the TRAFFIC LIGHT!**



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## Effectively Implementing and Enforcing a Code of Conduct Policy:

### Second: Apply the "Reasonable Person Perspective!"

- The Intentions of the Alleged Wrongdoer do not Count!
- Look at from the perspective of the message receiver!

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## Steps to Avoid Conflict

### Step 6: Effectively Address Performance Issues

#### **Positive/Effective**

• **Collaboration:** working together to find a mutually beneficial solution.

• **Compromise:** finding a middle ground.

#### Negative/Harmful

• Avoidance

• Competing

• Accommodating:

Surrendering our own needs and wishes to please the other person.

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## Steps to Avoid Conflict

### Step 6 Effectively Address Performance Issues

If Conflict related to an **Employee's Performance**, use SMART Guidelines:

**Specific**, clear, and observable facts regarding the employee's failure to meet job standards should be discussed and documented.

**Mutual** goals should be developed and agreed to by the manager and the employee to address performance deficiencies and to help the employee meet and/or exceed job expectations.

**Actions** that will need to be taken if the employee continues to fail to meet job expectations should be established.

**Review** and discuss any concerns and suggestions made by the employee regarding the ability and resources needed to improve performance and meet job expectations.

**Time frames** should be established for improved performance and status checks.

## Steps to Avoid Conflict

### Step 7: Be A Real Leader

**Walk the Walk!**

**Talk the Talk!**

**Lead by Example!**

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# CREATING A CIVIL



# DIALOGUE:

## WITH EMPLOYEES, DEPARTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC

By JANE DE COLGYLL



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ou are a town manager, and over the last two years you have worked with your board of selectmen as well as town departments, committees and commissions to come up with recommendations to save money in the municipal budget. You used an exhaustive and fair process to decide where appropriate cuts should be made. As a result, your town's finance department has been scaled back from five employees to three.

While the affected employees were all part of the process, it comes as no surprise that the surviving employees are having some difficulty. Overwhelmed by the amount of work that now must be done by fewer people, the remaining employees are exhibiting symptoms of disengagement and anxiety. You find them complaining about how much work they have to do, gossiping, and comparing their situations with other departments that have remained fully staffed. You notice more absenteeism, abuse of sick leave, and low morale. Their negativity is spilling over to their interactions with other departments and the public, as evidenced by curt answers to questions posed by other staff and less-than-stellar customer service. More formal complaints are filed over issues that years ago would have been settled directly between the conflicted parties.

Other departments continue to make demands on the finance department, but the other employees feel unwelcome in the negative environment and seek answers to their questions through other means in order to avoid contact with the finance employees. There is a risk of all town departments developing a "silo" mentality, thereby weakening communication among departments. It has become hard for all teams to see and understand the bigger picture.

Residents, meanwhile, find that it takes longer for the finance department to do its job, and they have witnessed poor customer service or uncivil behavior. As we know, it only takes one bad experience in town hall for negative public opinion to be formed and generalized to all departments.

As a town leader, what can be done to turn this situation around? There is a tendency to want to throw up your hands, say, "It is what it is!" and go on with the important work of managing the budget process, putting aside the frustrating human drama around you. To do so, however, is to neglect an important leadership opportunity. You have the ability to set the tone of civility for your entire organizational structure. You can help employees move through their disengagement and anxiety to engagement and civility. You can encourage departments to create collaborative relationships with other departments, boards, committees and commissions, and help your residents appreciate the excellent work your town employees are doing for the community.

Local officials have the ability to set the tone for community discourse by effectively communicating up, down and across—up to residents, down to each employee, and across to departments, boards, committees and commissions.

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*Jane de Colgyll is an employee assistance program consultant with AllOne Health EAP ([www.allonehealth.com](http://www.allonehealth.com)), which works with more than 270 municipalities in Massachusetts.*

## CREATING A CIVIL DIALOGUE



### Communicating Down

Let's look at that theoretical finance department employee: disengaged, anxious, worried about losing his or her job, fretting about the amount of work he or she has to do, poorly motivated, and complaining about others. No community can afford to have unhappy, unproductive workers. So what can be done to turn this situation around? As a community leader, you have an opportunity, through communication, to create an atmosphere where employees feel important and motivated.

The following are some strategies you may use to keep employees engaged, reassured and productive:

- No matter what your position within the organization, get to know every employee by name and talents. They will feel valued and connected.
- Make sure you keep the "big picture" in view for all employees, establishing board, town hall, departmental and employee objectives that support the larger goals of the town.
- Honestly explain how the decisions in city or town hall affect every employee's work and life.
- Maintain regular all-staff meetings and departmental huddles.
- Share information, and repeat it when necessary. When they are feeling overwhelmed, it's hard for employees to take in information; repeating the message is vital for understanding.
- Be sure to clear up misinformation quickly.
- Invite a collaborative process with employees that values input from all.
- Promote an "open door" policy and be there to listen. Some town leaders have identified certain hours during which they will be fully available for one-on-one discussions.
- Publicly recognize individual employee contributions to the work of the city or town. This may be done in a public meeting, a news article in the local paper, or in your remarks on cable TV.
- Encourage a culture of creativity from bottom to top. Seek ideas from employees on projects you have in mind. Make sure all stakeholders have the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise before final decisions are made.
- Build morale with employee-driven, low-cost or no-cost fun activities. While these creative opportunities for social interaction may appear to be time-consuming fluff, they can actually be productive in fostering a feeling of well-being and trust among employees that is hard to measure in dollars and cents.
- Promote employee career development by encouraging cross-training among under-resourced departments.
- Model fairness and equity in your words and deeds.



### Communicating Across

Collectively, city and town departments need to know what is happening on all levels of local government. The open sharing of information helps to build a sense of connectedness throughout the organization, which promotes collaboration among departments and creative problem-solving.

The following are some ideas that may help to keep information moving across departments, boards, committees and commissions:

- Make it a priority to meet monthly with department heads, no matter how disparate their locations, in order to keep everyone "in the loop." Hold these meetings in various department settings and provide food to encourage attendance.
- Offer a clear agenda, allowing time in each meeting for discussing the future.
- Share examples of challenges that departments have overcome.
- Applaud individual department and intradepartmental successes.
- Expect conflict, but move quickly to find common ground and resolution when conflict occurs.
- Demonstrate your willingness to be open to ideas from all department heads.
- Offer incentives to departments for finding creative, low-cost or no-cost ways to work together.
- Create intradepartmental electronic tools for clear communication on a weekly basis.
- Visit each department for a few hours at least twice per year, working side-by-side with employees to learn what they do.
- Plan an annual department-head retreat to focus on the best ways to build teamwork and collaborate effectively across departments.

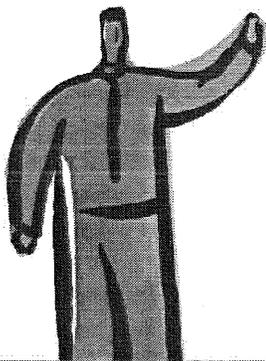


## Communicating Up

In his article "Community Building: How to Do It, Why It Matters," published by ICMA Press, Ed Everett points out that people need to feel that they belong to something bigger than themselves. This is not a new concept, but Everett shines a spotlight on ideas that help to move us toward civility and the civilizing force of true community. He discusses the evolution of local government and public involvement, pointing out that town halls in early history were viewed as the center of the community. At that time, citizens were active in their own governance. Since about 1970, however, citizens have been more likely to treat town hall like a vending machine, Everett says, expecting services for their tax dollars just as we expect a product when we put money in a vending machine. What do we do when the vending machine is out of candy? We shake it, and maybe kick it! How can we change this view back to that of vitally interested citizenry engaged in the life of their community, proud of its city or town hall, invested in making their hometown a safe and fun place to live?

The following are a number of strategies for addressing this issue and improving the city or town's image in the eyes of the public. (Many of these ideas were offered by local officials during the workshop "Best Practices for Top Recurring Municipal Problems," which AllOne Health presented during the MMA's Annual Meeting in January.)

- Make sure the public is not only informed about the positive contributions of municipal employees to the operations of the city or town, but also that their opinions are heard and respectfully considered.
- Make the city or town website accessible and interactive 24/7 for local residents to communicate with municipal offices, voice concerns, learn what each department is doing, find forms, etc.
- Collect email addresses of residents and use them periodically to send important news items touting municipal successes and challenges.
- Institute an "open door" policy for residents, with specific times that department heads will be available.
- Make sure every department responds directly and quickly to resident complaints.
- Conduct sit-down interviews highlighting a variety of municipal employees on a regular basis for viewing on cable and/or print follow-up articles in the local paper.
- Create and promote special events unique to your city or town (e.g., a farmers market or holiday parade).
- Erect a highly visible electronic community bulletin board, near the city or town entrance or on main intersections, reminding residents and the visiting public of important local events.
- Share some aspect of local history at key municipal meetings, publish historic notes in the local newspaper, or set aside a special section of the city or town website for historic notes.
- Include local history in the grade-school curriculum.
- Plan an open house where department heads describe what each department is doing.
- Promote good-natured competitive community involvement in a "clean-up day."
- Confer annual volunteer awards for community service/civic involvement.
- Hold a student artwork contest on the theme "What I like best about my city or town," and use the winning submissions to produce a city or town calendar.
- Plan a historic house and garden tour in your city or town.



## Meeting Human Needs

In the last few years, AllOne Health has worked with municipal leaders on the human challenges they face as they trim local budgets and attempt to meet the growing expectations and challenges from residents, governing bodies and employees. The list of top recurring problems cited by municipal leaders is daunting, but on closer inspection, some human themes emerge.

Municipal officials can take the lead to model the voice of reason and civility at every level of human interaction—with employees, in departments and with the public—by effectively communicating up, down and across. Once the basic human need to feel valued has been met, employees, departments and the public can become increasingly civil and engaged in the work of the city or town. ■