

TOWN OF CHELMSFORD
Annual Non-Union Employee Performance Review

Employee name: Darlene Lussier

Current Level and Step: Grade 9 Step 7

Department: Accounting Department

Proposed Level and Step: Grade 9 Step 8

Position: Town Accountant

Review Period: FY22

SECTION 1: FY22 GOALS & OBJECTIVES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Assess the employee's performance based upon objectives previously set for this review period. Describe below each major objective and accomplishments against each objective.

1. Investigate alternatives or improvements in management of administration/accounting and information flows.

- Work with Town Departments, Town Boards and Town Manager in implementing, and maintaining controls within the town.
- Develop and streamline procedures to improve quality of performance.
- To assure accuracy and conformance with established policies and procedures.

Employee Input:

- I continue to work with all department and boards to automate payment processing and invoice submission to the accounting office. Giving MUNIS access to the individual departments to enter and manage their own accounts.

Select Board Comments:

- ♦ (PW) Darlene continues to improve the process for department submissions with clearly stated criteria.
- ♦ (KL) The Town Accountant has demonstrated close working relationships with both Town Department and the Town Manager. The reports run smoothly and look to be accurate.
- ♦ (GD) Darlene is on top of all aspects of her duties. I have been very impressed the way she has her staff understanding all responsibilities of other jobs as well as their own. She does not want to be cut short on a report because one person is absent!
- ♦ (VT) Darlene continually looks for ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our accounting and financial oversight processes.
- ♦ (MC) Darlene works closely with the Finance Director and Town Manager to discuss progress on budget development, performance, and issues as they arise.

2. Participate in professional finance management programs and organizations to stay current on developments in public finance administration.

- Maintain knowledge of Town Bylaws, town policies and procedures.
- Keep abreast of current legislation, federal, state, and local policies.
- Thorough understanding and knowledge of all UMAS and GASB updated regulations.

Employee Input:

- I am constantly staying current on all the policies and regulations that are being released. I register for all Webinars and receive information from the DOR and other agencies on any current changes.

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Select Board Comments:

- ◆ (PW) It is clear that Darlene keeps up-to-date on legislation and regulations that affect municipal finance.
- ◆ (KL) Input regarding Town policies and the Charter have been helpful in constructive and the TA demonstrates a willingness to listen and work with the SB. One example was changing the Auditor- though not easy to do, it was understood the change was required by the Charter and she then worked with the SB to develop more appropriate Charter language.
- ◆ (GD) Always current with new laws and procedures in her department!
- ◆ (VT) Darlene takes the initiative to remain current and knowledgeable about relevant local, state, and federal regulations and how they apply to the Town of Chelmsford. She stays ahead of the curve and is our reliable “go to” person for questions and recommendations.
- ◆ (MC) Darlene works diligently to comply with accepted accounting practices and town policies. Her performance in this area has been audited, validated and had very positive comments on her and her departments performance by the external auditors.

3. Enhance Staff Training.

- Bring Assistant Town Accountant to state association school in March.
- Continue training Assistant Town Accountant.
- Assistant Town Accountant will assist in end of year closing.
- Send staff to additional training as needed and as funding permits.

Employee Input:

- Because of COVID this year most of the class trainings were done through Zoom or Webinars. I did have my staff members attend these classes. The Assistant Town Accounting did attend the state association but is not ready to take the state test to get certified. I will continue to work with my Assistant and have him get additional training.

Select Board Comments:

- ◆ (PW) Darlene is following her established plan to bring the Assistant Town Accountant to a high level of confidence in his abilities to step into her role as needed.
- ◆ (KL) Did not discuss in review.
- ◆ (GD) Darlene has always thought and managed “out of the box” so to speak. Always helping others know their jobs and responsibilities well as well as others’ responsibilities.
- ◆ (VT) Darlene continues to develop her staff through formal training, on-the-job training, and mentorship. She is invested in their success and their ability to cover the accounting office operations when Darlene is not there.
- ◆ (MC) The staff attended on-line (Zoom) training pertinent to their job responsibilities. The assistant Town Accountant is not yet ready to take state certification but is on a plan that could lead to it.

4. Continue to review and upgrade financial software.

- Will implement new upgrades when available.
- Streamline process by automation.

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Employee Input:

- I will be upgrading the MUNIS system to a completely new version this Fall. This is going to be a big upgrade and will require some employee training and consulting work. The new version has better reporting and more functionality.

Select Board Comments:

- ◆ (PW) Darlene is confident that the upcoming MUNIS upgrade will be implemented in a successful, smooth manner, and has a plan to assure its functionality meets the needs of the Town, including the School Department.
- ◆ (KL) New upgrades were implemented.
- ◆ (GD) Always keeps the software and applications very current.
- ◆ (VT) Automation was implemented to improve the benefits management systems. The MUNIS system has been kept current through patch upgrade installation and integration throughout the last year. Darlene has established plans for a full MUNIS upgrade in FY23 beginning with the payroll segment in the Fall of CY22.
- ◆ (MC) The MUNIS system will be going through a significant upgrade from a Windows based to a web based system. Some of the capability has been reviewed by Darlene where she has been able to work with it in a sandbox setting. This upgrade will happen during the FY2023 timeframe.

SECTION 2: OTHER KEY PERFORMANCE FACTORS

Comment upon strengths, effectiveness in dealing with people/teamwork, creativity, problem solving, leadership, communication, initiative and productivity. Outline areas requiring improvement which will be addressed in the Training and Development section.

Select Board Comments:

- ◆ (PW) Darlene is a critical member of the Town's Finance Team. Her participation and input help the Town maintain an excellent bond rating.
Her reports and presentations to the Select Board are comprehensive. She is quick to alert the Board, and the community, of potential areas of concern.
The Accounting staff handles all transactions accurately and in a timely manner.
She has undertaken the responsibility of managing and monitoring ARPA funds, which was an unexpected addition to her other responsibilities as Town Accountant.
- ◆ (KL) Feedback was that there is an open and collaborative approach with the TA.
- ◆ (GD) This is something that Darlene has done consistently over the years.
- ◆ (VT) Darlene has provided excellent service to the town through application of her expertise, growing the strength of the accounting office and staff, her breadth and depth of knowledge, and working across the organization with the Town departments. She is forward leaning, anticipating what needs to be done and reaching out to experts in the field including other municipalities, consultants, professional organizations, and government representatives. She is relied on for questions and recommendations. She presents information and recommendations with clarity and professionalism. Darlene worked effectively with the Finance Director and Town Manager on the process for changing auditors as required by the Town Charter and on

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developing recommended Charter language changes for auditing to bring our Charter in line with modern practices. Darlene provided sound perspective to the Town Manager and the Board regarding ARPA proposed projects and priorities. It will be important going forward for Darlene to help watch for financial indicators regarding ARPA project health or progress to help mitigate situations such as the procurement initiation delays or projected overruns on initial estimates that recently surfaced.

- ◆ (MC) Again, Darlene works well with other staff members and her interaction with me and the Board has been positive.

SECTION 3: OVERALL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (CHECK ONE)

Taking into account all areas of the employee’s performance described above, please mark (X) in the appropriate place on the continuum below:

Does not meet requirements Requires improvement Meets expected level of performance
 Consistently exceeds expected level of performance Exceptional performance

Individual Board Member Ratings:

- ◆ Pat Wojtas: Consistently exceeds expected level of performance
- ◆ Ken Lefebvre: Consistently exceeds expected level of performance
- ◆ George Dixon: Exceptional performance
- ◆ Virginia Crocker Timmins Consistently exceeds expected level of performance
- ◆ Mark Carota: Meets expected level of performance

Select Board Final Rating: _____

SECTION 4: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – FY23

List and clearly define each goal and objective for the next performance cycle. Target a total of 3-5 goals. Add additional pages as needed.

Goal: How will it be achieved? How and when will progress be measured? Expected completion date?

EMPLOYEE INPUT ON RECOMMENDED FY23 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. Financial controls and reporting of all ARPA Funding.
 - Manage all the ARPA approved projects.
 - Financial track all the expenditures
 - Report quarterly the budget and status of the ARPA projects to the Selectboard
 - Submit budget reports to the Federal Government.

2. As part of the Town’s finance team, continue to provide guidance with respects to financial matters of the Town.
 - Review of all purchases under department purview
 - Reduction in overall expenditures through constant management
 - Analyze receipts verses revenue estimates on a regular basis
 - Anticipate possible revenue shortfalls and make decisions on how to deal with them

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3. Working with the new audit firm and addressing items that may be contained in the FY22 Financial Management Audit on the General Government side.
 - Preparing end of year reports for the Audit firm
 - Address any issues or concerns that may arise during the audit
 - Report the end of year audit to the Selectboard

4. Continued enhancements of reporting to the Selectboard and Town Manager, especially of in-depth information on the budget vs. actuals spending in the quarterly updates.
 - Specifically highlight any areas where significant projections of spending are expected to exceed budget, or savings may be available.
 - Responsiveness to the Selectboard requests for information.

Select Board Comments:

- ◆ (PW) Achievement of these goals will enhance the Accounting Department's level of service to the community, as well as maintaining confidence that management and reporting are carefully and accurately tracked.
- ◆ (KL) **The TA additionally expressed** -The goal for the accounting department this year is a complete conversion/implementation upgrade to MUNIS. I have decided to go to the latest and greatest version. I have spoken to other towns who have completed the implementation and they love it. I have been doing small upgrades patches to the software every year, this has only kept us compliant. This upgrade is going to be a task and I will need my whole staff to be involved and help from the MUNIS conversion team. The new version will give the finance/payroll/accounting department much more functionality, ease of use and a improved reporting.
- ◆ (GD) None
- ◆ (VT) I suggest changing #1 to:
 1. Financial controls and reporting of all ARPA Funding.
 - Manage financial aspects of all the ARPA approved projects. Watch financial metrics for any indicators related to project progress or health.
 - Perform financial tracking of all expenditures
 - Report the budget and status of the ARPA projects to the Selectboard. Reporting will be done quarterly, at minimum, with monthly reporting expected during the first part of the fiscal year.
 - Submit budget reports to the Federal Government.Correct typos #2 and #3
- ◆ (MC) These appear to be well thought out goals. I would add a goal(s) that align specifically with the MUNIS system upgrade and implementation.

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FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY23 GOALS for SELECT BOARD AND TOWN ACCOUNTANT REVIEW:

2. Financial controls and reporting of all ARPA Funding.
 - Manage financial aspects of all the ARPA approved projects. Watch financial metrics for any indicators related to project progress or health.
 - Perform financial tracking of all expenditures
 - Report the budget and status of the ARPA projects to the Selectboard. Reporting will be done quarterly, at minimum, with monthly reporting expected during the first part of the fiscal year.
 - Submit budget reports to the Federal Government.
3. As part of the Town's finance team, continue to provide guidance with respect to financial matters of the Town.
 - Review of all purchases under department purview
 - Reduction in overall expenditures through constant management
 - Analyze receipts verses revenue estimates on a regular basis
 - Anticipate possible revenue shortfalls and make decisions on how to deal with them
4. Working with the new audit firm and addressing items that may be contained in the FY22 Financial Management Audit on the General Government side.
 - Preparing end of year reports for the Audit firm
 - Address any issues or concerns that may arise during the audit
 - Report the end of year audit to the Selectboard
5. Continued enhancements of reporting to the Selectboard and Town Manager, especially of in-depth information on the budget vs. actuals spending in the quarterly updates.
 - Specifically highlight any areas where significant projections of spending are expected to exceed budget, or savings may be available.
 - Responsiveness to the Selectboard requests for information.
6. Conversion implementation upgrade to MUNIS.
 - Test environment will be installed with the new version of MUNIS
 - Working with Munis conversion team to extract data from old system to new.
 - Will be testing and installing the payroll module first, other modules will follow
 - Running parallel data to make sure system is processing correctly
 - Go live date is planned for April 2023

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SECTION V: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Please list specific development objectives and activities which may improve performance, help accomplish company/department objectives, broaden skills in the current role, or develop a skills/ability essential for assuming additional responsibilities.

Employee Input:

- I will continue attendance at MMAA conferences and GFOA training workshops to grow knowledge of and stay abreast of federal, state, and local regulations. By attending these conferences annually, I can maintain my certification as a Government Accountant.
- I will continue to improve and implement best practices of municipal accounting. I will network with other City and Town Accountants to determine improvements that may be beneficial.

Select Board Comments:

- ◆ (PW) Darlene continues to take advantage of conferences and training opportunities that will improve her department.
- ◆ (KL) None
- ◆ (GD) Darlene has been ahead of the curve. She wants all her personnel to know responsibilities of all positions. She implemented this years ago.
- ◆ (VT) I agree with the employee inputs on Training and Development and would add any special considerations regarding the planned MUNIS upgrade if applicable.
- ◆ (MC) Only MUNIS training with the software consultant was discussed.

SECTION VI: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL APPROVALS

_____ / ____ / ____ _____ / ____ / ____
First Level Management Date Second Level Management Date

_____ / ____ / ____ _____ / ____ / ____
Other Signature (If Needed) Date Human Resources Date

I have reviewed this appraisal and discussed its contents personally with my manager. I accept the objectives and development plans we have agreed upon.

_____ / ____ / ____
Employee Date

SECTION VII: EMPLOYEE COMMENTS (OPTIONAL)