

Being an Effective Manager

There have been many factors during the past 20 years that have changed the way of managing the small communities throughout rural Maine. Increased demand for services has created larger budgets and increased the amount of support staff. In addition, there are more State and Federal regulations. For towns that are still being managed by a part-time Board of Selectmen, the demands and pressures can be over-whelming. Whether your town is being managed by a Board of Selectmen, a Town Manager or an Administrative Assistant, the following list of attributes and actions can be important for the effective management of your community:

1. Knowing your job. Learn your responsibilities and be committed to fulfill those responsibilities.
2. Be willing to provide the time to attend training sessions to become a better and more effective manager.
3. Be willing to ask for and accept help, when offered.
4. Be willing to make the hard decisions for the betterment of the town. Remember, you may not be able to please everyone with your decision.
5. Be willing to delegate tasks to others.
6. Make sure you follow through when action items are brought to your attention. Do not procrastinate.
7. Be a Leader and not a Follower. Do not wait for others to remind or tell you that certain things need to be done.
8. Be tolerant and respectful of others. You may not agree with someone else's opinion or recommendation, however, be willing to listen.
9. Be honest and straightforward. Do not say one thing and do another.
10. If you say you are going to do something, then make sure you follow through and do it. Say what you mean, mean what you say, and do what you say you're going to do.
11. Make sure you provide the public with the opportunity to ask questions or provide comments at your weekly Selectmen meetings.
12. Be willing to admit that you were wrong, if you were. We are all human and subject to making mistakes.
13. At the beginning of the Fiscal Year, establish a "Strategic Plan". List the problems facing your community and prepare a plan with actions and a schedule for implementing those actions.
14. At the beginning of the new Fiscal Year, prepare a "Calendar of Events" for all the key events in the coming year. Review it on a weekly basis and add any new events as you become aware of them. This can be a great organizational tool to ensure that things get completed on time.
15. Provide proper oversight of your departments and committees by scheduling periodic meetings with department heads and committee chairpersons.
16. Maintain a "To-Do list". Do not let problems linger.
17. Ensure that all of your employees have up-to-date job descriptions and make sure they are reviewed annually.
18. Make certain you have a comprehensive "Personnel Policy".
19. Ensure that a copy of all ordinances, policies and procedures are readily available to the public. They need to be reviewed annually to make sure they are current.

20. Hold all employees and appointees accountable for their actions and for fulfillment of their responsibilities.
21. Provide recognition for “Exemplary Work or Service”.
22. If your community has a website, make sure it is current and has accurate information.
23. Become knowledgeable of the basics of “Municipal Accounting”. You must be able to read and understand the various financial reports such as Expense Reports, Revenue Reports, General Ledger Trial Balance and Audit Reports.
24. Become fully knowledgeable of the “Budget Process”. This starts with a Budget Schedule, followed by Budget Preparation, Budget Execution and monitoring of the budget to make sure “overdrafts” are kept to an absolute minimum.
25. Make certain the TC/TC and Treasurer provide you with Monthly Financial Reports.
26. Make sure your community has a “Financial Policy and Procedures Manual”.