

**Norwell Board of Selectmen  
Town Administrator Annual Review DRAFT  
BOS meeting - 8/28/19**

**Town Administrator Annual Review**

The board will use the same procedure as in prior years. Each board member will share his or her comments and Ellen M will take notes. Ms. Allen and Ellen will work together on the draft document and send it to the board for review.

**Bruce Graham**

Mr. Graham stated that he has only been a part of the board since the middle of May and therefore has short term knowledge to contribute to Mr. Morin's review. He finds Mr. Morin to be thoughtful and intelligent and he stated that he is very "pro-Peter".

**Jason Brown**

Mr. Brown began by stating that the Town Administrator's job has provided ample opportunity for Mr. Morin to come up with creative solutions to problems both independently and with the board. Mr. Morin is intelligent and caring. Mr. Brown added that it's easy to find good things to say for his review, and he does not like doing criticisms. His comments will be directed at the Town Administrator position and are not specific to Mr. Morin. This job has 3 aspects; daily operations, executing the agenda of the executive board (BOS), and resident outreach, interaction and response.

"It's often said that government should run like a business. However, having served now for a lot of years as a Town board member, I know that it doesn't work that way in a lot of respects. Customer service is important, and the Town's taxpayers are our customers. Their demands take priority, which interrupts the operations functions and agendas and is often a juggling act. Mr. Morin is only one person with a small staff. Time management is often an issue because of this conflict with the large amount of work. It is an unfortunate structural issue of a small town's Town Administrator and no Assistant Town Administrator. There is no succession planning or second in command. It's hard to take care of everything. Mr. Morin has 5 bosses who have equal say in what gets done and who are not always on the same page. This creates the need for Mr. Morin to do a juggling act with priorities. It's a lot to deal with. There has been some input from this board about hiring an assistant Town Administrator, which would be expensive. This question about expanding the role of government and the work force hasn't been thoroughly vetted by the board. There are now two consultants currently working with Mr. Morin to lighten his load, particularly with the whole Jacobs Farm issue. This has freed him up to work on other areas that the board would like to address. Again, the time management issue has a lot to do with the position and not the person. Everyone on this board has strengths and weaknesses, as does Mr. Morin. The board needs to continue to encourage him to continue in his strengths and help him along with whatever we think are weaknesses. Mr. Brown is confident that Mr. Morin is open to the criticism and open to doing things differently as needed. Thank you for your dedication and hard work for our Town."

**Alison Demong**

Very similar to Mr. Brown's comments, Ms. Demong stated that she is very grateful that the Town was able to keep Mr. Morin over the past year. He is a true asset to the Town, and she is very grateful to be able to work with him.

"It is a pleasure to work with you. He brings so much experience in so many different aspects of municipal government, and gives great advice. He is a wealth of knowledge and his legal background is extremely helpful. The Town is very fortunate to have Mr. Morin as its Town

Administrator. We are in a solid position going forward. I am very appreciative of the fact that Mr. Morin makes time for board members even when they interrupt his schedule. However, he is only one person and there are so many demands on his time. When looking at the breakdown percentages of his primary responsibilities, the selectmen initiative is 25%, and could easily take 80%. The board is very active and wants to do a lot, which means that staff assistance is needed, as he is just one person. This has been a topic for discussion every year that Peter has been on board. This was a time management issue that has morphed into a reality check.” Ms. Demong believes that the board should begin taking steps to start thinking about a full time Assistant Town Administrator position, but she is thrilled that two part -time consultants have been hired to work with Mr. Morin on various tasks such as procurement and various Selectmen initiatives. She would like to get more clarity on how the board could work directly with the consultants on initiatives while still prioritizing Mr. Morin’s projects. Ms. Demong gave a few examples of possible tasks that could be handed off to consultants working with a board member to take items off Mr. Morin’s To Do list. How can the board help make this process more efficient? She is very pro-Peter and is thrilled that he works here. Thank you!

### **Joe Rull**

At this point, there is not much to say that hasn’t already been said. He still considers himself the new guy even after a year and a half, and “there is a lot more experience than he came on board with to his right at the table.” Mr. Morin has been a constant in helping Mr. Rull to learn and grow into the job. He added that he would be the first person to admit that sometimes he can’t be the easiest person to deal with, and Mr. Morin has always taken Mr. Rull’s comments with a grain of salt and tried to lead him in the right direction. As someone who has been in operations for much of his career, Mr. Rull knows that it is impossible to get into a flow, particularly in a small town, and unexpected events make the job unpredictable almost on a daily basis. It can appear that not much is being done, but folks don’t often see the large amount of hard work being done behind closed doors. From what he sees, particularly in Mr. Morin’s case and echoing the sentiments of his colleagues, he would like to try to help lessen the load. “This is an active board who likes to get things done, which is what our constituents want and deserve.” It is a pleasure to work with Mr. Morin and he looks forward to collaborating for another year.

### **Ellen Allen**

Ms. Allen reviewed Mr. Morin’s list of his accomplishments during FY19 along with his list of primary responsibilities and percentage of his time spent on each one. One of the things that struck her is that the time spent on Human Resource issues is underestimated, particularly because of the confidential nature of these topics. Most of the board is probably not aware of how much time Mr. Morin devotes to these issues. In the problem solving area, Mr. Morin mentioned helping to resolve some employment issues in terms that were favorable to the Town. Ms. Allen thinks that Mr. Morin spends a lot of time dealing with issues in ways that protect the Town from litigation and its associated costs. This year has seen times when there has been way too much on Mr. Morin’s plate; for example - during the January to April budgeting period he was negotiating 3 union contracts at the same time while also preparing for Town Meeting. Realistically, this is a busy time of year every year. Ms. Allen’s hope now that the 2 consultants are present is that he can delegate tasks to them or others who already work for him. Mr. Morin spends a lot of time here at Town Hall during the winter months, often three nights a week in meetings, which is over the top. A lot is the nature of the job, but she encouraged Mr. Morin to continue to explore ways to delegate. “We are very lucky to have you and all the wisdom you bring to this job. Overall, we all feel very positive about your work. Thank you!”

Ms. Allen asked Mr. Morin for his comments.

**Peter Morin**

Mr. Morin thanked the board for their comments and expressed his appreciation for the manner in which they were provided. He also wanted to share his sentiments; that he feels fortunate to work for this board. When comparing notes with other Town Administrators, "they are not as fortunate as he is to work with people who are in it for the right reasons and that are doing what they believe is in the best interest of the Town, even with different interpretations. Not everyone has the good fortune to have a board who is so well motivated."

Mr. Morin also thanked the board for their assistance and for understanding his position on hiring an assistant Town Administrator. He is incredibly reluctant to "add a body" to the payroll at that cost with an unknown return. He thanked the board for their persistence and creativity in pursuing an alternate option to hire 2 part-time consultants, which is economically viable and makes budgetary sense. "The improvement in the work flow is already visible. The hope is that this arrangement will work well during budget season when the time commitment is 3-4 nights a week." He is grateful for the opportunity to work here with such a talented and good board. He has enjoyed the last four years and getting to know Norwell, and really feels like a part of the community.

"All of the easy stuff is done. We are on the edge of dealing with problems that the Town hasn't been able to resolve, for well over a decade in some cases. We have worked really hard budget-wise over the last four years to put a plan together and set the resources aside to address some of these issues, without having to deal with debt exclusions. In the coming weeks we will be talking about viable plans that will make big improvements to the Town's facilities in an affordable way, not jeopardize its future and not forfeit opportunities to continue to invest in other ongoing capital plans in the future. I am excited to work on these issues, but I know it won't be easy. We have the resources to get things done. Thank you for your words and your support. I look forward to working on the goals and having a good year going forward."

Ms. Allen added the discussion of the Town Administrator's FY20 Goals to the agendas for the next two meetings and asked the board to give these some thought. It would be helpful if the list intersected with the BOS goals and didn't add more work for Mr. Morin.