

TO: Board of Selectmen
FR: Town Administrator
DT: 15 December 2020
RE: Staffing Plan – CAS replacement

Pursuant to the charge given on November 17th at your Selectmen’s meeting, I have been working on plans to fill the positions that are coming vacant due to Chuck Hodgkinson’s retirement on March 1, 2021.

The town would like to have any new staff undertake two weeks of training with Mr. Hodgkinson during February 2021. This would require the town to advertise and interview applicants in January. I propose to post & advertise January 1st 2021 in the Vineyard Gazette, set a deadline of January 14th at 5:00 PM for applications to be submitted, and to hold interviews on January 15th starting at 1:00 PM.

The interview committee could be composed of the following five people: 1. Chairman (or their designee) of the Conservation Commission & 2. Zoning Board of Appeals, 3.a Selectman, 4. Town Administrator & 5. HRB or at-large committee member.

The Committee would recommend appointments to the Board of Selectmen on January 29th or sooner, for the February 2nd Selectmen’s meeting. Training would commence on February 15th for ten work days, ending with March 1st, 2020.

The positions filled by Mr. Hodgkinson had been conglomerated into a Grade 11 “Coordinator of Administrative Support” a number of years ago. The current rate is at \$50.38/hr.

Titles	Funding
• Coordinator of Administrative Support – Special Projects	2 ½ hours/week
• Zoning Board of Appeals – Administrative Assistant	17 hours/week
• Site Review Committee – Administrative Assistant	-
• Conservation Commission – Administrative Assistant	15 hours/week
• Conservation Officer	\$5,000 stipend
• Historical Commission – Administrative Assistant	-
• Park & Recreation Committee – Administrative Assistant	-
• Community Preservation Committee – Administrative Assistant	5 hours/week

I have met with members of the boards supported by Chuck Hodgkinson, spoken to island engineers in the environmental and zoning areas, I have conversed with the other island town administrators, I have solicited staff input, and reviewed the position descriptions used in other towns.

It is clear that Mr. Hodgkinson brought a wide array of high level skills to his various assignments at the town offices. It is unlikely we will find a “rock-star” to replace Chuck as our CAS.

Oak Bluffs is currently advertising a full-time Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent position at \$70 – 80,000/year (\$33-38/hr.). Edgartown and Tisbury are sharing a full-time Conservation Agent that may retire in three years, as well as administrative support in Edgartown. West Tisbury has a half-

time Conservation agent, that said they would not be able to add on our job. Aquinnah does not employ Conservation staff.

The previous staff to provide support to the Chilmark Conservation Commission and the ZBA were at the Administrative Assistant Grade. Grade 6 currently starts at \$23.85 and ends at \$30.35/hr. The basis of placing the Coordinator of Administrative Support at Grade 11 was partly: the importance of his work on special projects, supervision of staff, and his unique skill set.

During our research it has become clear that the Conservation Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals are seeing an increased work load of more complex applications as land use becomes more intensive. Both positions appear to warrant a more professional position than a Grade 6 Administrative Assistant.

In particular, the combination of the Conservation Commission Administrative Assistant and Conservation Officer require specialized training. I would propose making the designation of Conservation Officer, and its \$5,000 annual stipend, contingent on completion of appropriate MACC training and successful completion of the preliminary six months of probation, unless the applicant brings those skills to the position on hiring.

- ❖ In consultation with others I propose that both positions be upgraded to:
 - Zoning Board of Appeals Administrator at Grade 8 (\$29-37/hr.). A.
 - Conservation Commission Administrator at Grade 8 (\$29-37/hr.). B.

These would be two separate year-round part-time benefitted positions with additional duties assigned to them (administrative support of other committees – see below).

The Town Clerk position has been at 21 hours a week for two decades. In that time the duties and responsibilities have expanded, as well as an increase in registered voters, residents, and town staff requiring Town Clerk interaction. Similar to the CAS, the Town Clerk also fills a number of other assignments.

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| • Town Clerk | 21 hours/week |
| • Planning Board – Administrative Assistant | 14 hours/week |
| • Human Resources Board – Administrative Assistant | 2 hours/week |
| • Cemetery Commission – Administrative Assistant | 2 hours/week |
| • Website Manager | \$10,300/annual stipend |

This combination allowed the town to have Town Clerk and Planning Board functions available to the public all day each work day. The hours of the Planning Board have been reduced a number of times over the last 10 years as subdivision applications have slowed.

The current Town Clerk and I have spent the last two years reviewing these hours. The new public record access laws, new open meeting law, requirement for biennial conflict of interest testing for all town staff, boards, and volunteers, and the imposition of Early Voting have all added to the duties of the Town Clerk.

❖ The Town Clerk and I propose, in consultation with the Planning Board chairman, that we adjust the combination position to be:

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| ➤ Town Clerk | 30 hours/week |
| ➤ Planning Board – Administrative Assistant | 10 hours/week |
| ➤ Website Manager | \$10,300 stipend |

❖ I propose that the two new part-time positions be assigned additional duties as follows:

A. Zoning Board of Appeals Administrator – 24 hours/week

- a. Site Review Committee – Administrative Assistant
- b. Housing Committee – Administrative Assistant
- c. Human Resources Board – Administrative Assistant
- d. Historical Commission – Administrative Assistant

B. Conservation Commission Administrator – 22 hours/week*

- a. Conservation Officer/Agent – (pending completion of training & probation) *
- b. Community Preservation Committee – Administrative Assistant
- c. Cemetery Commission – Administrative Assistant
- d. Park & Recreation Committee – Administrative Assistant

This configuration should allow the town to

- attract qualified applicants to positions that require special skills,
- fill existing administrative needs, and
- allow for flexibility for future needs of the employees and town.

December 1, 2020

I think I would like to advocate for raising the Clerk position to 26 hours per week and to keep the 14 hour Planning Board position, if possible.

An increase in the Clerk position of 5 hours would mean eliminating the Cemetery duties in the Clerk position (2 hours/week) and eliminating the HR admin duties (2 hours/week) and adding one hour. This would make the hybrid position 40 hours/week as opposed to 39/wk.

An increase in 5 hours/wk is a total of 260 additional hours per week in a year.

In a busy election year with the increased EV days (26 in person days this year) means 156 extra in-person election duty hours (if one assumes approximately 6 hours of Clerk work per election day).

There are also new time-consuming duties related to EV by mail which was greatly expanded this year (but, it is unclear whether that will be something that continues) and this required multiple hours a day on many days from mid-May until late October. However, this is now not occurring until possibly the spring of 2021 if the option is allowed again for the ATE. If I spent an average of 1.5 hours on processing mailed ballots each day from late May until late October (190 days) that would be approximately 285 hours total for that particular duty.

$156 + 285 = 441$ EV related hours

Regarding RAO (Records Access Officer) work:

You had inquired what the particular steps are for each record request. They are:

- 1.) Receive email/call/inquiry, request clarification if necessary, determine destination and calculate deadlines.
- 2.) Forward request to dept./depts. with emailed directions/deadlines. Respond to need for direction, clarification and process requirements.
- 3.) Make copy of request and place in pending file and add to calendar to alert prior to deadline.
- 4.) Communicate with dept. regarding the request.
- 5.) Send reminder email to dept. re upcoming deadline.
- 6.) Obtain confirmation that requested record was provided or other response was provided to requestor, make copy and file.

The time needed for each record request varies greatly.

It is difficult to say what this new Public Records law requirement represents in terms of hours per week, but it is a regular and steady duty that requires timely information and response.

If there is approximately 1 hour a week needed for RAO work, that would mean about 50 hours per year.

Now, if I were to take these extra RAO and EV hours and imagine the increase over a 4 year period ($441 \times 2, 50 \times 4$) that would be a total of 1082 additional hours over a four year period. This sifts out to 270 extra hours per year which is very close to the 260 number which represents 5 extra hours per week.

I would very much like to keep the stipended website work. I enjoy it and I think that it is a very good fit for the Town's posting requirements and need for sometimes very timely fixes/adjustments to the info on our webpage.

I also will certainly continue to provide Town Clerk services during Planning Board "hours" as is the arrangement with the current hybrid position. I think this arrangement has served the townspeople well.

December 3, 2020:

There are approximately 256 people I am required to contact twice per year in order to deliver the OML and the summary of the Ethics Law. This same number of people need to respond with a confirmation of receipt for each item that must be kept on file for 7 years. This communication is done "by hand" due to the fact that the Town does not have appointment software to organize the appointment process. Elected personnel must be communicated with as well.

The Clerk maintains a spreadsheet of the numerous positions in Town in order to assist with keeping track of "employees".

The number of "employees" has increased over the last ten to fifteen years in concert with the increase in numbers of residents/voters.

Continual increases/changes in residents/voters who are "employees" translates into additional time needed to accurately track all "new" requirements (OML, Ethics) and "old" requirements such as appointment dates, oaths, resignations, disclosures, campaign finance.

The COI online hour long training required of all "employees" biennially is particularly time consuming to manage due to the variety of platforms used by "employees", familiarity with electronic training formats, familiarity with COI law and requirements and the broad spectrum of commitment to the importance maintaining COI training. These elements sometimes necessitate multiple communications with an employee and assistance with accessing the module.

Maintaining a pool of trained and capable election workers is also a significant increase in the last 10-15 years. In the last decade, particularly, the need for a larger election workforce that is regularly trained and has depth has been needed. The Town's election process requires a very hands-on approach and our ever-increasing number of registered voters exponentially increases the time need for each discrete task within the election process for each election.

Particularly in this past year, but also in years leading up to 2020, the number of voters utilizing vote by mail has increased and this has required a great amount of time to manage.

And, the increase in voters/residents over the last 10-15 years coupled with an expansion of a fast and easy mode of communication (email) has led to much more communication requirements. 15 -20 years ago, email was not a large part of the Town Clerk's daily work. Today, communication via email is a constant and regular part of the day requiring multiple hours each week, especially in heavy election years.

I will follow up on this email with an attempt to frame these increases in terms of hours.

December 4, 2020:

As a follow up to yesterday's email, I would like to reiterate the difficulty in estimating the number of hours that would accurately represent the increase in Town Clerk work due to increased duties that revolve primarily around communication with large groups of employees regarding sometimes very complex topics.

Questions/Guidance regarding compliance with the OML and COI law employee requirements can require multiple instances of communication and regularly requires in-person assistance. For example, due to the biennial nature of the COI requirement, it is often necessary to reacquaint employees with the importance of completing the training as well as with the nuts and bolts of actually accomplishing the task. Some employees require just one to three emails regarding the COI requirements, others require 4-9 or sometimes more depending on many factors—status, platform, access, information need, availability.

Likewise, the communications needed regarding availability and training for the various types of Election work are numerous. For example, for one election worker who served only one or two shifts during the in-person Early voting period prior to the Sept. 1st Primary and prior to the Nov. 3rd Election and as a tally clerk on the night of Nov. 3rd, 29 emails were sent (the majority of these were emails to the entire group of workers and were about scheduling, duties, remote training opportunities). These emails were content-heavy and required accuracy regarding dates/times of multiple shifts. A case could be made that the number and frequency of emails to Election workers could be decreased without impacting the success of Elections. However, I think that things have changed in the last 10-15 years where lives are very full and the expectation of reminders and clear and regular guidance is a reality to which the Town must adapt.

Since the Town Clerk position was changed to a full-time hybrid position (in 2012) that included Admin. Asst. duties, I have been able to provide Clerk services on a full-time basis to the Town. This has been a needed arrangement with many people accessing Clerk related services throughout the day. With the increasing service needs to a steadily growing number of active voters and residents in addition to the expanded duties in OML, COI law and the 2017 Public Records law and Early/Mail voting, the portion of time in each day that is needed to perform the Clerk tasks has grown.

Considering the expansion, in the last 20 years, of duties, voters, residents, and communication, I believe the Clerk position work realistically represents approximately 30-35 hrs./week.

I hope this information is helpful in determining what needs to change in the make-up of positions this coming spring. Trying to ascertain the amount of hours it requires to perform work can be difficult and I hope I have presented the issue somewhat clearly.

In any case, I continue to be fully committed to serve in a hybrid full-time position that provides full day Clerk services to our Town while also providing service for other Boards/Committees/Depts.