

OTSEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATION FEEDBACK SUMMARY

County Admin/Manager Position (Rep Gary Koutnik)

- Not elected (Mgr or Admin)
- No referendum
- No powers transformed from Board to Admin/Mgr
- Work with Penney to do the preliminary work for hire/fire of DHs, and then advises Board
- Single point of contact for purchasing - all DHs go through him (or use him as support and advice if they prefer to connect with Onondaga themselves) and Onondaga goes through him in the other direction
- Budget officer
- Does not have sole authority/responsibility for performance evals; advises Committees when they fill theirs out for their DHs
- Takes on day-to-day approval of all routine expenditures, filling vacant-funded positions, transfers and modifications. Advises Committees of all these monthly. Written report to Admin of all of these monthly.
- Fleet manager
- Moderates DH meetings
- Overall, takes on a variety of day-to-day management and executive functions, and serves as a two-way conduit for ideas and information between Board and DHs.

County Administrator Position - Duties and Responsibilities (Rep Michele Farwell)

The Chief Administrative Officer could -

- Serve as county budget officer and prepare a draft county budget for submission to the county board. Monitor expenditures and establish budgetary controls. Keep the Board updated on the county's financial status and advise the Board on the impact of its legislation on the budget and tax base.
- Attend all board meetings, board committee meetings and conduct regular meetings with department heads and other agencies as appropriate.
- Recommend to the legislature the appointment and dismissal of all non-elected department heads and supervise all departments.
- Assist in grant preparation and administration.

- Act as Public Information Officer for the County and also as liason to and spokesperson for the board in intergovernmental affairs.
- Implement administrative policies adopted by the legislature, coordinate administrative activities and unify the overall management of county affairs.
- Participate in collective bargaining negotiations. Resolve Personnel grievances.
- Report to the board on the performance of county departments on an annual basis.
- Execute contracts in the name of the county as authorized by resolution of the legislature.
- Prepare long and short term capital plans,
- Act as purchasing agent for the county.
- Provide adequate insurance to protect the county.
- Approving budget transfers, not to exceed ???? within the budget.

The administrator should also have a role in selecting staff, and authorizing the filling of vacant funded positions, and transfer of personnel.

CENTRALIZED AUTHORITY VISION (Rep Liz Shannon)

My vision for improved Otsego County government efficiency calls for creating a position of centralized authority to assume management of day-to-day departmental operations and assist with long-range planning; the duties of this individual will not diminish the authority of the Board of Representatives. Creating this position will allow the Board of Representatives to focus on legislative, rather than administrative, responsibilities. Ideally, the Board of Representatives will make goal-setting policies for departments to carry out under the direction of the individual with centralized authority.

Issues to Address:

- Management by committee rather than by an individual
- Monthly meetings with no day-to-day oversight to resolve issues as they arise
- Part-time Board members with 2-year terms hinders consistent departmental management
- Lack of cross-pollination of ideas/issues among committees and departments
- Projects that involve multiple committees or departments stall
- Legislators spend meeting time discussing administrative details rather than real issues
- No long-range financial or capital assets planning

Otsego County needs a non-partisan leader who will:

- become familiar with all departments
- see the big picture of the entire County government organization and be able to prioritize and respond to daily concerns and long-range goals
- identify and address common issues among departments and potential interdepartmental efficiencies
- help to standardize policies/procedures among departments
- make recommendations (for full board approval) for department head hiring/firing
- work with Board to establish long-range goals/plans
- study, analyze and recommend project action plans to Board
- assist departments with identifying and applying for grants
- be Budget Officer, working with Treasurer's Dept/Budget Analyst to develop budgets
- develop long-range financial and capital assets plans

County Manager/Administrator (Rep Andrew Marietta)

Vision (here is some feedback I shared last year during our evaluation of Department Heads, which is one example for me of why we need a County Manager/Administrator): I have outlined the many challenges we face with our current County government operation. The status quo is not working, and there is consensus that change must occur. This discussion comes at a critical time as the County faces continual operating challenges. Take for example the recent disconnect that arose in carrying evaluations for three Department Heads (also known as Management and Confidential or M&C). The County system involves evaluations for Department Heads every other year. The idea of an every other year approach is that the first year a committee is gauging how things are going and working on goals and the relationship. The second year is when the evaluation occurs. Another factor is capacity and the real difficulty in being able to evaluate annually. The overall evaluation process is coordinated by the Performance Review and Goal Setting (PRGS) Committee. The PRGS Committee collects a self-evaluation from the Department Head, any evaluations from subordinates, and finally an evaluation completed by the home committee supervising the Department Head. This information is used to facilitate the evaluation discussion with the Department Head at a PRGS Committee meeting also attended by the chair of the home committee and any other committee members who want to participate. These meetings are scheduled in advance to best coordinate the multiple parties involved. Yet relying on part-time legislators to carry out an evaluation process is extremely limited and has clear shortfalls. This issue became more than apparent with the most recently scheduled evaluation meeting for three department heads when their evaluations were not submitted and the chair of the home committee could not attend the meeting. Thus, multiple County Reps and Department Heads lost work time and now will need to dedicate more time for a rescheduled evaluation meeting. Overall, the value of only being evaluated every other year is problematic enough, but being evaluated by two

committees (PRGS and the home committee) trying to coordinate the schedules of their part-time members is even more of an issue. And although this is the system that has been used in the past and maybe is what can best be supported now, the impact and value are highly questionable. Why continue to implement a system that doesn't work? Now is the time for change and to stop wasting time and resources. We need to improve our government operations to build a better future for Otsego County.

Our Challenges:

- No annual evaluations of management
- Problematic evaluation process
- Supervision by committee (no continuity or follow through)
- No real supervision or management occurring (no one is onsite or at the county every day)
- Change of County Board of Representatives every two years
- Change of Committee structure every two years (and sometimes annually)
- Maintaining 14 committees
- No capacity or time for developing policy
- Silos amongst departments and committees
- No follow through on projects (no project management system in place)
- No one looking for funding for all departments (big picture), and instead handled by individuals (really just one person- Karen)
- Committees focus on putting out fires and reactionary to issues and problems
- No real working partnership between County Reps and Department Heads
- No shared vision between County Reps and Department Heads

Position Vision:

- Appointed (create law- no referendum) County leader (County Manager/Admin)
- Seek funding that ties departments together (big picture)
- Follow up on committee priorities (coordinate and hold people accountable)
- Connector and convener between the County Reps and Department Heads
- Assess County operations and priority needs (new hire will be in a perfect position coming from the outside to review what's going on and gather feedback and make recommendations)
- Assist and carry out evaluation process of M&C staff
- Help develop committee work plans and carry them out
- Look for efficiencies amongst departments
- No hiring/firing authority (recommendations at first, and we can always add authority in the future)
- Plan and implement with capital projects (project manager)
- Work as the Treasurer's office (most likely serve as Budget Officer)
- Develop shared vision for the County (gather feedback from both Reps and Department Heads)