



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

Committee of the Personnel and City Organization Meeting October 30, 2023

The Committee convened at 5:30 pm on Monday, October 30, 2023 in the Council Chambers

Present were Caroline Bays, Chair; John Gannon, Vice Chair; and Nicole Gardner, Secretary. Also present were City Manager George Proakis, Assistant City Manager Emily Monea, and joining by zoom, Micheal Albano.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the qualities for the role of City Clerk with the City Manager.

Chair Bays called the meeting to order at 5:33pm,

The meeting began with a discussion of the many varied responsibilities embedded in the role, including all election matters, city census, vital records, claims, licensing, appropriation orders, and maintaining city records in perpetuity. The job description is appended to these minutes.

Chair Bays asked the committee for their thoughts on important skills and experiences for this role.

Councilor Gannon said he would value

- Familiarity with relevant Massachusetts laws (e.g. permitting, record keeping, duties of recording, etc.)
- Prior experience in a clerk's office
- Customer service skills and orientation
- Ability to work with diverse community members

Councilor Gardner said that in addition to those already noted, she would value

- Integrity and courage of convictions
- Attention to detail / quality
- Process management
- Grace under pressure
- Team management
- Communications

Chair Bays said that in addition, she would value

- Familiarity with Watertown
- Team player
- Collaborative working style since many stakeholders are in different City departments

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made

1. Under Clerk Murphy, enormous progress was made in digitizing, organizing, and making available to the public an overwhelming number of records, It is important that the department not lose momentum (however the short staffing will make this challenging).
2. The department is down two people right now, and it is very difficult to hire for the positions. This may be alleviated somewhat when the compensation and classification study is implemented. The work of this department is very broad, and carries high impact of failure. Watertown is not at market in current compensation.
3. One major work item outstanding is to index the City's records from 1978 forward.

At 5:52 p.m. Councilor Gardner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Gannon. Approved unanimously.

Report prepared by Nicole Gardner

Attachments:

Job Description for City Clerk

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Caroline Bays,
Chair

John G. Gannon,
Vice Chair

Nicole Gardner,
Secretary

TOWN CLERK

Definition

The Town Clerk is responsible for the direction of election activities, maintenance and preservation of official town records and official documents, as defined by Massachusetts General Laws and the Home Rule Charter; other related work, as required.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position.

Responsible for ensuring the accuracy, filing, and issuing of the town's vital records, including birth, death and marriage records; ensures the accurate recording of Uniform Commercial Code filings and business certificates; responsible for records management and providing a legal and accurate records of town actions.

Ensures compliance with the Commonwealth's Public Records Law and the disposition schedule; ensures compliance with the Open Meeting Law; ensures compliance with rules and regulations of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission and the State Fire Marshal's office.

Ensures the accessibility of all municipal polling places; responsible for managing all details and procedures for elections, including final tabulations and reporting of results; supervises the processing of voter affidavits and maintenance of permanent voter records.

Serves as the town's burial agent; serves as secretary of the municipal corporation and official keeper of the records.

Administers the oath of office to elected and appointed town officials.

Performs similar or related work as required, or as situation dictates.

Supervision

Works under the administrative direction of the Town Manager and the policy direction of the Board of Election Commissioners, in conformance with applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws and relevant municipal policies; statutory duties and responsibilities are defined by applicable state laws; duties require the exercise of considerable judgment and discretion.

Supervisory Responsibilities

Supervises four full-time administrative employees, one part-time employee and election workers.

Work Environment

Work is performed in typical office conditions; the workload changes according to scheduled events, including elections and Town Meetings; may be required to work additional hours.

The employee operates standard office equipment and voting machines.

The employee has regular contact with the public, other municipal departments, and state agencies to provide information in person, by telephone, fax, e-mail and in writing.

*Watertown, Massachusetts
Town Clerk*

The employee has access to personnel files, collective bargaining negotiations, legal proceedings and impounded records.

Failure to comply with statutes could result in monetary loss or legal repercussions.

Recommended Minimum Qualifications

Education and Experience

Bachelor's Degree; three years of municipal administrative experience, including records management; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Knowledge, Ability and Skill

Knowledge of state, local and federal statutes and regulations applicable to the duties and responsibilities of a Town Clerk's office; knowledge of office procedures and records management; familiarity with budget process and implementation.

Ability to interact tactfully and appropriately with the general public and the press; ability to establish and maintain working relationships with town departments and state agencies; ability to establish and maintain record keeping systems; ability to handle multiple tasks and meet deadlines; ability to manage details accurately.

Public relations and customer service skills; organization skills; oral and written communication skills.

Physical Requirements

Minimal physical effort is generally required. The employee is required to stand, walk, sit, speak and hear, and use hands to operate equipment and move ballot boxes. Vision requirements include the ability to read and analyze documents and use a computer.