



Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Select Board

Date: 2025-01-07

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Agenda:

Purpose: General Business

Meeting Called By: Caitlin Nocella on behalf of the Chair

Notices and agendas are to be posted 48 hours in advance of the meetings excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Legal Holidays. Please keep in mind the Town Clerk's hours of operation and make necessary arrangements to be sure your posting is made in an adequate amount of time. A listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting must be on the agenda.

All Meeting Postings must be submitted in typed format; handwritten notices will not be accepted.

Topics of Discussion:

	Zoom Option:	PAGE #
	Join Zoom Meeting https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82274921683 Meeting ID: 822 7492 1683 Dial by your location • +1 646 558 8656 US (New York) • +1 646 518 9805 US (New York) Find your local number: https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kfnmT3eap	
7:00	Overview of Meeting	
7:05	Public Comment	
7:15	Select Board Liaison Reports and Town Manager's Report	
7:30	Public Hearing - Vote to approve amendments to the FY25 Classification Plan	3
7:45	Eagle Scout Awards	5
8:15	Senior Property Tax Worker Program Presentation and vote on policy amendments	11
8:45	Performance Review of Town Manager Matt Kraunelis	21

This Agenda has been prepared in advance and represents a listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. However the agenda does not necessarily include all matters which may be taken up at this meeting.



Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

9:15	Future Agenda discussion	133
9:30	Approve prior meeting minutes	134
9:45	Executive Session: Discussion of strategy for pending lawsuit by the Town against Delphi Construction, Inc. as discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the town's litigating position. (G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3))	
10:00	Executive Session: Discuss litigation strategy with respect to Davenport v. Town of Reading, as discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the town's litigating position. (G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3))	
10:15	Executive Session: To conduct strategy session in preparation for contract negotiations with nonunion personnel - Town Manager Matthew Kraunelis. (G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2))	

**Legal Notice
(Seal)
Town of Reading**

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Reading:

Please take notice that the Select Board of the Town of Reading will hold a public hearing on January 7, 2025 at 7:00 PM in the Select Board Meeting Room, 16 Lowell Street, Reading, Massachusetts, and remotely via Zoom, to approve amendments to the FY25 Classification Plan.

A copy of the proposed documents regarding this topic will be in the Select Board packet on the website at www.readingma.gov

All interested parties are invited to attend the hearing, or may submit their comments in writing or by email prior to townmanager@readingma.gov

By order of
Matthew A. Kraunelis, Esq.
Town Manager

To the Chronicle: Please publish on December 23, 2024 and December 30, 2024

Send the bill and tear sheet to:

**Caitlin Nocella
Reading Town Hall
Town Manager's Office
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867**

**781-942-9043
Cnocella@readingma.gov**

TOWN OF READING CLASSIFICATION PLAN effective January 7, 2025

Schedule A-1

A									
B	Clerk	Library Associate	Parking Enforcement Officer	Transportation Coordinator					
C	Administrative Assistant	Senior Center Coordinator	Senior Library Associate	Veteran's Service Officer					
D	Administrative Specialist	Assistant Assessor	Benefits Specialist	Coalition Outreach Coordinator	Computer Technician	Librarian I	Library Communications Specialist	Recreation Coordinator	
E	Accounting Specialist	Assistant Collector	Assistant Town Clerk	Financial Analyst	Health Inspector	Permits Coordinator	Senior Case Manager		
F	Executive Assistant	Plumbing/Gas Inspector	Public Safety Clinician	Water Quality Safety Administrator	Wiring Inspector				
G	GIS Administrator	Librarian II	Senior Computer Technician						
H	Conservation Administrator	Payroll Administrator/Assistant Treasurer	Procurement Officer	Public Health Nurse	Recreation Administrator	Senior Planner - Housing/Sustainability	Senior Planner - Economic Development	Treasury Analyst	
I	Assistant Human Resources Director	Assistant Town Accountant	Collector	Elder/Human Services Administrator	Head Public Safety Dispatcher				
J	Assessor	Building Inspector	Coalition Director	Director of Equity and Social Justice	Library Collection Services Division Head	Library Public Services Division Head			
K	Assistant Facilities Director	Assistant Library Director	Building Commissioner	Community Development Director	Community Services Director	Technology Manager	Town Clerk		
L	Assistant Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer	Assistant DPW Director	Director of Operations	Human Resources Director					
M	Assistant Fire Chief	Deputy Police Chief	Health Director	Library Director					
N	Assistant Town Manager	Chief Financial Officer/Town Accountant	Chief Technology Officer	DPW Director	Facilities Director	Fire Chief	Police Chief		



Certificate of Recognition



This Certificate is hereby awarded to

Alexander Manfred Downer

In recognition of his achieving the Eagle Scout Award for his service project of building a raised plant garden for educational purposes, including a protective fencing, at the Mass Audubon Vegetable Garden.

Given this 7th day of January, 2025 By the Reading Select Board



Certificate of Recognition



This Certificate is hereby awarded to

Charles Weld

In recognition of his achieving the Eagle Scout Award for his service project of planting over 150 saplings in the Reading Town Forest as a part of their revitalization project.

Given this 7th day of January, 2025 By the Reading Select Board



Certificate of Recognition



This Certificate is hereby awarded to

Everett Jack Nelson

In recognition of his achieving the Eagle Scout Award for his service project of removing and building a new foot bridge at Bear Meadow Conservation Area.

Given this 7th day of January, 2025 By the Reading Select Board



Certificate of Recognition



This Certificate is hereby awarded to

John Robert House

In recognition of his achieving the Eagle Scout Award for his service project of planting approximately a dozen mature trees on Scrub Hill in the Reading Town Forest as a part of their revitalization project.

Given this 7th day of January, 2025 By the Reading Select Board



Certificate of Recognition



This Certificate is hereby awarded to

Joshua Anthony Boran

In recognition of his achieving the Eagle Scout Award for his service project of building rolling library carts for the Reading Food Pantry to facilitate their customers being able to access their library of books.

Given this 7th day of January, 2025 By the Reading Select Board



Certificate of Recognition



This Certificate is hereby awarded to

Michael Young

In recognition of his achieving the Eagle Scout Award for his service project of installing 12 mini-libraries in the City of Lynn.

Given this 7th day of January, 2025 By the Reading Select Board

Town of Reading Property Tax Work-Off Abatement Program Proposal

1/7/2025

Reading Senior Property Tax Work-Off Abatement Program 2025

Goal

This program encourages senior and veteran taxpayers to volunteer for the Town of Reading, earning a reduction in their property tax bill. Designed to assist seniors over 60 with their annual property taxes, the initiative not only addresses financial needs but also enhances the involvement of local elders and veterans in municipal government, leveraging their valuable skills and knowledge.

Existing Program Details

Current age requirement:

- 62, 65, 70

Current Income cap:

- \$47,150 single person
- \$53,900 married

Wage:

- \$1,000 for 125 hours \$8.00 per hour

Positions Available:

- 30
- For seniors only
- No opportunities for veterans
- Only one position filled

Funding Source:

- Cited from April 2007 documents
- Total program funding: \$15,750
 - \$10,500 contribution from the Town
 - \$5,250 contributed from Burbank Trust Fund

Proposed Program Details

Age requirement:

- 60+

Income guidelines:

- \$75,300 for single individuals
- \$102,000 for married couple filing a joint return

The guidelines were selected following a peer review of surrounding communities and discussions with key town officials. Income guidelines are based on the 500% of the 2024 Federal Poverty levels.

Wage:

- \$15.00 per hour

Number of Volunteer Opportunities:

- 10 positions. Ten at 100 hours for \$1,500 deduction.

Program Timeline:

- Official Program Launch: January 2025
- Accept applications: February 1,2025-March 1,2025
- Notified of position: April 30, 2025
- Service completed: July 1, 2025-June 30,2026

The taxpayer's actual tax bill should only show a credit for the amount earned net of any federal withholdings.

Senior Volunteer Tax-Worker Eligibility

- Be 60 years of age or older at time of application
 - Applicants should be able to verify a household income of no more than \$75,300 for single individual and \$102,000 for married couple filing a joint return. Income guidelines are based on the 500% of the 2024 Federal Poverty levels.
 - Own and occupy the property as his/her principal residence
 - Only one tax credit per family per calendar year is allowed
- Be current with property tax and water/sewer payments
 - Complete the application and provide necessary income verification
 - Possess and identify employable skills
 - Complete a CORI check and/or provide references if required by the worksite
 - Be interviewed for job placement by Senior Center Staff and potential supervisor

Required Documents for Senior Application

Tax Work -Off Information needed to accompany application:

- Completed Application
- Personal Identification (Copy of Driver's License, etc.)
- Copy of Property Tax Bill
- Completed CORI form
- Proof of Income (Copy of 1040 form of Income Tax, etc.)

Compensation

- \$15.00 per hour
- Participants will receive abatement for up to 100 hours of service. Any hours worked beyond the 100 hours cannot be accumulated for the program.
- Participants are entitled to no Town employee benefits.
- Maximum amount of abatement is \$1,500 per person.
- Hours of service include 100 hours of service for \$1,500.
- Payment will be made via an abatement on the tax bills the following year. A paycheck will not be issued to the program participants.
- The Town will issue a W-2 form for federal income tax purposes and a statement of credit to all participants.

Job Placement for Tax Work-Off Abatement Program

- No applicant is guaranteed a position.
- Individuals will be chosen based on the best match between the application's qualification and the skill requirement of each job.
- Applicant will be interviewed by Senior Center Staff and the department supervisor of the position for which they have been placed.
- If there are more applicants than openings a lottery system will be used to fill positions.
- There will be a two-week probationary period to assess the appropriateness of the placement.
- Program participants may not work for relatives who are Town employees.
- Participants must re-apply every year.

Town of Reading Senior Property Tax Work-Off Abatement Program - 2025

Purpose:

The Town of Reading Senior Property Tax Work-Off Abatement Program aims to provide ten eligible seniors with the opportunity to provide services in Town departments in exchange for a property tax abatement, offering mutual benefits for both seniors and the community.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Participants must be 60 years of age or older.
- Income eligibility is based on federal guidelines:
 - \$75,300 for single individuals.
 - \$102,000 for married couples filing jointly.
- Participants must own and occupy their home as their principal residence. If the property is subject to a trust, the volunteer must have legal title, i.e., be one of the trustees on the applicable January 1 assessment date, or at the time the work is performed.
- They must be current on all property taxes and utility payments.

Compensation and Work Structure:

- **Hourly Rate:** Volunteers will be compensated at a rate of \$15.00 per hour.
- **Work Hours and Abatement:**
 - Participants may work up to 100 hours per year, resulting in a maximum tax abatement of \$1,500.
 - A partial option of 50 hours of work is available, resulting in a \$750 tax abatement.
- **Tax Abatement:** Compensation will be applied directly to the property tax bill for the fiscal year during which the volunteer hours were performed. No direct paychecks will be issued.
- **Tax Documentation:** A W-2 form will be issued to participants for federal tax purposes.
- The taxpayer's actual tax bill should only show a credit for the amount earned net of any federal withholdings.

Program Overview:

- A total of **10 positions** will be available in town departments of the departments that have chosen to participate.
- Only **one person per household is eligible for the tax credit** for the year.
- Applicants must provide a completed application and documentation verifying income eligibility. These documents include:

- Personal Identification (Copy of Driver's License, etc.)
- Copy of Property Tax Bill
- Completed A Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) form
- Proof of Income (Copy of 1040 form of Income Tax, etc.)
- Selection will be based on a combination of eligibility and a lottery system in the event that more applications are received than positions available.
- An interview with Senior Center staff and potential supervisors to assess employable skills and ensure appropriate job placement.
- Volunteers will be chosen for job placement and assigned positions by the Volunteer Coordinator in Elder Services.
- Every participant in an abatement program will be considered a municipal employee for the purposes of G.L. c. 268A during the time they participate in the abatement program and must comply with the restrictions of G.L. c. 268A.

Administration and Oversight:

The Senior Property Tax Worker Program will be administered by Elder Services, with guidance of the Human Resources and Town Assessor. Key responsibilities include:

- **Volunteer Coordinator (Elder Services):**
 - Create brochures and application packets to promote the program.
 - Organize and run informational sessions to educate seniors about the program's benefits and requirements.
 - Accept applications and review applicants in collaboration with Human Resources and the Assessor's Office to ensure eligibility, particularly financial qualifications.
 - Arrange interviews between applicants and the respective Department Heads to assess skills and job placement suitability.
 - Will select the applicants for the positions with input from Department Heads.
 - Ensure all necessary paperwork is completed, filed, and processed.
- **Department Heads:**

Each Department Head will oversee the Senior Tax Workers assigned to their department, ensuring proper supervision and task assignment. They will also be responsible for tracking the participants' work hours and submitting weekly timesheets to Elder Services for proper documentation and processing of the tax abatement.

Town Manager Evaluation

FY 2025

Date: January 7, 2025

Combined Reports from Select Board Members:

Carlo Bacci, Chair

Karen Herrick, Vice Chair

Christopher Haley, Secretary

Mark Dockser, Member

Melissa Murphy, Member

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Carlo Bacci

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	This is the biggest project in town. Matt was not in the forefront of this project. I understand this was a school project with PBC, KSBC, and the School committee as the sponsoring committee, but it would have been nice for Matt to be more of a leader on this project.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	This project has been going on for years and has been made clear that it is a priority. While RECALC and the COA have been the major advocates, along with the Select Board, it would have been nice to have seen Matt have taken a more active role with communication and working with the stakeholders to guide this project.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	The CPA committee was formed many months ago and I am a member of the committee. Matt has not taken any significant role in this initiative and the committee is on a pause as we determine the best timing to go to the voters.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	Green Communities has been going on for some time with some delays and recently passing town meeting to move forward. I think matt has done a good job advocating for Green communities.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	<p>MBTA Communities was driven by CPDC and town staff. There were many meetings and forums with residents. This mandate from the state recently passed town meeting. While Matt has not been TM for long, he did not seem to be involved at all. This process was long and tedious and Matt did become TM towards the end, but there was still some heavy lifting left to do and Matt seemed indifferent.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	Things seem to running OK at Town hall and projects are moving along at various paces. Matt has a laid-back still and has chosen Jayne Wellman to be the face of many of our projects. Delegating is part of being a TM, but the TM should be a cheerleader as well and communicate and be proactive. We have received many grants and our staff is doing a great job, but it seems like matt is just waiting for things to happen instead of trying to move us forward.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	<p>Choosing Jayne as Assistant TM, was a great choice. Matt does not seem to micro-manage and that is a good thing, but I think our DPW Director should have done a better job with our water rate and 2nd meter discussions. Chris Cole is newer to the position of DPW Director and I feel should consult Matt more and vice versa to have better presentations to the Select board.</p>	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Karen Herrick

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	Served as Vice-Chair of the Killam School Bldg Committee. Matt has fully supported the project and attended most/many of the staff and community meetings. Matt has effectively supported our CFO for financial issues including the MSBA reimbursement system. Matt could take a stronger lead in communications with the MSBA and the Owners Project Manager and Architect. Killam School project website needs work. It still does not have any FAQ's.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	Served as second COA liaison for this period. Matt has fully supported the project teams and been a visible presence.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	<p>Unfortunately - this project has gotten sidelined from the long targeted November 2024 election which was unfortunate - but a casualty of many factors. I would like to see this grant program which will supplement many needs in the community benefit from higher visibility in FY25 - 26. There is still much disinformation circulating about this very popular program and state level tax revenues are down from recent highs and the ARPA grant finds are fully encumbered.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	<p>This program experienced yet another delay due to Town Counsel process concerns not shared by all including the state legal and program resources. Matt did ensure that the Fall 2024 Town Meeting did include another confirmation that included the legal language requested by Town Counsel and now has the task of managing staff resources to ensure the re-application is re-submitted in a timely manner, the CEC Agreement is signed by SB and RMLD, and also laying the groundwork for planning for the 1) initial joining grant award and 2) annual grant applications. It is not unrealistic to expect that the Town of Reading will be extremely successful in receiving the annual grants up to \$250k - but the challenge will be planning for appropriate rejects and seeing they are executed on an annual basis. This grant program should free up room in the capital plan and also serve as a key enabler of the Town's Compliance with MA Climate mandates and the forthcoming Netzero Plan.,</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	Coordinated an enabled a huge community outreach, planning and approval at Town Meeting. "One and done" after much debate and concern within the community.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	As noted above - most key goals have remained on track or have been completed. In addition, during this period many staff changes occurred and hiring & interviewing was a significant task. Most or all positions have been filled successfully.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	Assistant Town Manager has been a strong and very visible performer.	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Christopher Haley

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	From the meetings I've been apart of, I feel that Matt's participation has been overshadowed by others. Not that he has any specific role to be out there on, just other staff members have been more vocal.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	This is more of a question where I would lean on Mark's experience as he has been significantly involved in the process, compared to myself.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	This is more of a question where I would lean on Carlo's experience as he has been significantly involved in the process, compared to myself. I will say that it failing to materialize this year or in the future is no fault of Matt's.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	Green communities has been going on since Bob and Fidel where here. I'm not sure of any participation that Matt had in the most recent RMLD billing process that happened at Town Meeting.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	<p>I believe that town staff was let down during this processes, that Matt should have taken on a significant leadership role in the single biggest issue facing Reading over the next decade. From the dozens if not 100's of emails that I was apart of, it was clear which direction this should have gone. The fact that Town Meeting had to authorize funds to come to the decision that "the majority of town" ultimately resulted with anyways is significant. I remember standing in the hallway (standing room only) during one of the numerous forums on this and hearing a resident complaining about the way things were being handled and communication. I was next to Matt and said that this isn't right and it needs to be corrected. I don't believe anything was done to resolve things.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	<p>Already referenced above regarding existing projects. For new, I would say that Matt made the right call and removed the Haven Street project from the warrant after the board wanted no part of the financial aspect of it. Conversely, the biggest information issue that I've been apart of in my 4 years on the board was with the new field house flooring warrant item. The entire board was caught off guard by a \$1+ million-dollar additional request and the warrant needed to be closed that night. It put fellow board members in a position that I haven't seen happen before and we had to subsequently re-vote.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	I do not want to specifically mention anyone here, but I will say it's clear which employees are meeting or exceeding goals and others that I question.	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Mark Dockser

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	Project seems to be moving ahead quite well. Under leadership of Assistant TM.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	<p>Assistant TM has been in the lead and doing a great job. TM attends many of the meetings.</p> <p>Part of the activity is managing Town team and part is taking stronger leadership position at meetings, with state legislators, with the community. This leadership activity has not been strong enough.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	As this is not being considered at this time, not a timing priority for this year.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	<p>Pushing on state legislators was done mostly by board member Herrick. Ideas for projects that could fit here with grants is very important. RECAL? Others? Looking to TM to lead efforts to identify projects, ideas, connections to administration of Green Communities in conjunction with appropriate town staff.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	Andrew led the effort with strong support from Assistant Town Manager.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	<p>Management seems to be going fine on existing activities.</p> <p>We did not do nearly as many community events as the past few years. Town Manager should at least be the cheer leader for this and get things started even if other town resources not available. Having and sharing a vision is key.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	<p>Assistant TM hire is great. Community Services staff seem very strong.</p> <p>Part of this is not only selection but also training and mentoring. Unclear if these things are happening but they should be top of the list to help grow the new and existing staff.</p>	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Melissa Murphy

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	I don't have enough information to comment on the Town Manager's involvement in this project, as I was not personally involved. I am uncertain whether setting this goal for him was appropriate, considering the project would have proceeded regardless of his input with the MSBA timeline. From what I can see, it does not appear that Matt had a leadership role in this project. I would have liked to see him take a more active and prominent role, especially when interacting with the residents.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	I would have preferred if Matt had taken a more proactive role in discussions about this project. It seemed that Mark led the efforts to complete the necessary tasks, which brought us to our current status.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	I was not involved in the CPA committee or its processes, and I am unaware of Matt's role.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	I would have liked to see Matt more involved and vocal when discussing the Green Communities initiative. This is a topic I wasn't very knowledgeable about. Recently, I learned that Reading had proactively completed many of the changes that would have been covered by grant money under this initiative. Unfortunately, this information was never communicated to the Select Board. Now that we have joined this initiative, Reading will be extremely limited in the grants that will be approved since we have already financed most of these changes on our own.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	I would have liked to see Matt more actively engaged in closing the information gap between CPDC, the Planning Department, and other town departments. For example, it would have been beneficial for residents to receive updates about the impacts on schools, public services, and town infrastructure for the various plans put forth during community meetings.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	I would like to see Matt more engaged in all Town projects. He should act as a liaison to enhance communication between various town departments, ensuring new and existing projects succeed and run smoothly.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	<p>Jayne Wellman, Assistant Town Manager - Jayne was hired as a town employee before Matt became Town Manager, but she has proven to be an excellent choice for the role of Assistant Town Manager. She is engaging, proactive, and extremely accessible.</p> <p>Kevin McCarthy, Senior Planner for Economic Development, appears to be a good fit for Reading. He has established relationships with our downtown business owners, promoting positive growth. I am hopeful his role will continue to improve our downtown area and overall experience.</p>	

Town Manager's Performance Rating for Standard I: Leadership and Professional Culture

Ratings are from 1 (Exemplary) to 5 (Unsatisfactory).
 Check one box for each indicator and circle the overall standard rating.

	1	2	3	4	5
I-A. Leadership: Demonstrates strong leadership practices in the exercise of executive functions and personnel management.		KH	CH, MD	CB, MM	
I-B. Communication: Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills.		KH	CB, CH	MD, MM	
I-C. Commitment to High Standards: Fosters a shared commitment to high standards of public service delivery by staff, professional interaction with the public, and professional development, with high expectations for achievement for all.	KH	CH, MM	CB, MD		
I-D. Assessment: Ensures that all department and division heads use a variety of formal and informal methods and assessments to measure employee growth and understanding and make necessary adjustments to their practice when employees are not performing.		CH, KH*	CB, MD		
I-E. Evaluation: Ensures effective and timely supervision and evaluation of all staff in alignment with town policies, state regulations and contract provisions.		CH, KH*	CB, MD		
I-F. Managing Conflict: Employs strategies for responding to disagreement and dissent, constructively resolving conflict and building consensus throughout all Town departments.			MD, KH*	CH, CB	

Overall Rating for Standard I (Circle one.)	The Town Manager demonstrates strong leadership and promotes a strong professional culture.
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1

2 (KH)

3 (CH, MD - 3.5)

4 (CB)

5

Comments and analysis (recommended for all ratings; required for any rating of 4 or 5):

CB - I do not feel has the strong leadership skills that Reading needs to advance our goals. The role out of the parking kiosks was and epic fail and very embarrassing for the Select Board.

I was disappointed that Matt was not able to get Phil Rushworth to come to a meeting to answer questions. I know Phil does not report to Matt, but RCTV is a big part of our community and there have been other minor issues with other departments that did get resolved in the end, but should not have been a problem in the first place.

KH - 1-A Residents have commented that they would like to hear more from the Town Manager in Community meetings. Matt has done an excellent job of supporting the activities required to execute many of his goals and the community communication. Matt has been a very visible presence in the community particularly at evening events and week-end celebrations. Kudos is deserved for getting all of the open positions filled and the the team assimilated and working together well. Not specifically mentioned in the goals - but also worthy of mention is the successful completion of the Mallet Soames Morgan project which has been met with much praise and excitement. Going forward areas for improvement include:

Technology and Communication

Website, town email and public document accessibility. Recommend considering some outside consulting assistance to supplement IT and provide a fresh set of eyes. The documents have been inaccessible or impossible to find many times. Community volunteers including Select Board members have been abruptly removed from meeting notifications after signing up. As noted in my public comments at a prior Select Board meeting rolling out new software - email or electronic parking kiosks or apps requires "beta testing" and active "bug" fixes during the initial periods with lots of community "expectations setting." This is a "growing pains" challenge for the Town of Reading.

Conflicts of Interest Volunteers

We need more clear leadership in this area from Town Hall. I would like to see renewed and clear communications that elected and appointed volunteers need to set boundaries between personal gain related to their lively hood and "public service" for the community. I would like to see all staff empowered to set these clear expectations and resolve to proactively prohibit actual or perceived conflicts of interest. When "businesses" donate goods or services for a Town project - it needs to be carefully managed and fully disclosed. This year we have seen too many residents upset that elected and appointed officials are creating the appearance of a conflict of interest whether during election season or the normal course of business. Reading has had a long standing tradition of attention to ethics which has weakened over the past few years. 1-C, D , E : Limited or no visibility to staff reviews or professional development plans. Would be a great TM Report or future agenda item.

CH - Though not a town department, a situation arose regarding RCTV that was not handled the way that I would have expected it to have been. I don't want to compare Matt to Fidel but I feel as if Fidel would have resolved things immediately.

MD - I believe that the town manager is a leader from out front, setting out a vision, walking the walk, and moving the town forward. Management is part of this, but leadership is also required to move the town and staff forward. Would like to see more on the leadership front. Many of the high profile activities are being led by the Assistant Town Manager. The Town Manager needs to be more out front.

One specific example, the town has 2 key priorities with capital projects that are being brought forward with select board support. Working more with the schools and other community leaders and very importantly the community at large to share this agenda is paramount but not yet happening at least publicly at the town manager level.

Leadership with the board: I would also like to see more engagement with individual select board members to help the board keeps it focus in moving things ahead. Does not have to venture deeply into politics but should be helping with suggestions and understanding board member desires to help discussions come to conclusion. Not a 6th board member, but someone with a clear plan based on long term goals and understanding of what elected members want to see. Could even help find compromise.

MM - I-A - I would like to see Matt take on a stronger leadership role as the Town Manager. I believe it should be standard practice for him to provide more insight on projects, engage in more discussions and town issues, and proactively share information with the Select Board.

I-B - I would appreciate more proactive updates from Matt regarding Town issues, events, initiatives, and projects.

I-D - I do not have information to assess Matt's performance in this area.

I-E - I do not have information to assess Matt's performance in this area.

I-F I do not have information to assess Matt's performance in this area.

Town Manager's Performance Rating for Standard II: Management and Operations

Ratings are from 1 (Exemplary) to 5 (Unsatisfactory).
Check one box for each indicator and circle the overall standard rating.

	1	2	3	4	5
II-A. Environment: Develops and executes effective plans, procedures, routines, and operational systems to address a full range of financial, safety, health, and social needs.	CH	KH, MD	CB		
II-B. Human Resources Management and Development: Implements a cohesive approach to recruiting, hiring, development, and career growth that promotes high-quality and effective organization.		KH, MD	CB, CH		
II-C. Scheduling and Management Information Systems: Uses appropriate systems to ensure optimal use of data and time for staff productivity and collaboration, while minimizing staff disruption and distraction.		CH	CB, KH*, MD		
II-D. Law, Ethics, and Policies: Understands and complies with state and federal laws and mandates, Select Board policies, collective bargaining agreements, and ethical guidelines.	CH, MD	KH	CB	MM	
II-E. Fiscal Systems: Develops a budget that supports the Town's vision, mission, and goals; allocates and manages expenditures to balance goals vs. available resources.		KH, CH, MD	CB	MM	

Overall Rating for Standard II
(Circle one.)

The Town Manager uses resources to implement appropriate staff operations and facility management.

1

2 (KH, CH – 2.5, MD)

3 (CB)

4

5

Comments and analysis (recommended for all ratings; required for any rating of 4 or 5):

CB - As our cash reserves start to decline, the TM should be planning ahead to find cost saving measures to put the town in a better position. The ARPA money is all spent and state aid is not certain. We need to sharpen the pencil and find some cost savings and get creative.

KH - The Select Board has limited visibility to 11-C. Long standing issue with this form.

11D - Excellent job on collective bargaining. 11-E - Excellent job at Town Meeting and the preliminary budget work and supporting the transition of the budget to the CFO. Also the use of the water consultant. Prepare for potential transition in assessing department so that other department employees can provide Tax Classification guidance. Town Manager attended the fiscal policy class as requested. We still need to review long standing Financial policies such as the % level of our permanent reserve funds vs allowing free cash to remain artificially high. Explore new funds to support capital needs within Recreational - Elder Services to maintain parks and facilities. Provide a genuine manner for Select Board members to have input into the annual capital plan based on community needs.

Current process remains too heavily staff based leaving areas persistently underfunded while others are overfunded. Financial Forums should be used to discuss major changes to the capital plan like the field house floor project.

MD - With the town accountant taking on more of the budget activities, I would like to see more emphasis on how to leverage external resources as well as town wide resources (legislators, state funds, federal funds, RMLD, schools) for more cohesive townwide operations.

MM - II-A - I do not have information to assess Matt's performance in this area.

II-B - I do not have information to assess Matt's performance in this area.

II-C - I do not have information to assess Matt's performance in this area.

II-D - I would like Matt to take on a more active role in Select Board matters concerning policies, laws, and mandates

II-E - During our Select Board meeting, I felt that Sharon had created the Town's budget, while I would have preferred to see Matt take on more responsibility in this process.

Town Manager's Performance Rating for Standard III: Community Engagement

Ratings are from 1 (Exemplary) to 5 (Unsatisfactory).
Check one box for each indicator and circle the overall standard rating.

	1	2	3	4	5
III-A. Sharing Responsibility: Collaborates with citizens and community stakeholders to formulate and support the Town's goals.	KH	MD	CB, CH, MM		
III-B. Communication: Engages in regular, two-way, proficient communication with citizens and community stakeholders about Town government performance.		KH	CH	CB, MD, MM	
III-C. Community Concerns: Addresses community problems and concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.		KH, MD	CB, CH, MM		

Overall Rating for Standard III
(Circle one.)

The Town Manager forms effective partnerships among town employees, citizens, community organizations, and other stakeholders that address citizen concerns and build support for the mission of Town.

1

2 (KH)

3 (CH, MD)

4

5

Comments and analysis (recommended for all ratings; required for any rating of 4 or 5):

CB - Communication is never perfect and there have been a few times where communication did not happen at all. Overall, the town has had many forums and meetings for certain projects and does keep the residents informed. I know it is not easy to have 5 people as your boss and all with different personalities. This does make it more challenging and as the current chair, I do appreciate all the things a TM has to navigate and manage. Having said all this, I do feel that a TM should be challenging and encouraging the board to do better.

CH - I've seen Matt at almost every community outing, which is phenomenal, but I believe that oral communication is not Matt's best strong suit. Something that is required to be the forward-facing face of the town.

MD - Managing operations nicely with strong team in place. Look for opportunities to improve performance by talking with more citizens and organizations.

Communicate with board more about discussions that you are having this way and with outside organizations including MMA, MIAA, leaders from other communities including both neighbors and those with lots of municipal experience. More active and open communication would be great. Also share more with town manager update at SB meetings, especially how issues are being addressed that board members brought up and those that are hot in the community.

The Town Manager is attending many community events which is great. Need to bring more events forward as well.

MM - Matt should be more open to direct communication with residents. On several occasions, residents have contacted me because they did not receive a response from Matt regarding their concerns on various topics.

Additionally, I would like to see a strengthened partnership between Matt and other departments. There seems to be a lack of communication and a failure to share information, which makes it difficult for projects to proceed smoothly. It would facilitate better collaboration if all departments were more aware of each other's activities.

General/Overall Comments/Feedback:

CB - Matt was hired at a challenging time for the SB. He was our Assistant TM for a short time under Fidel and has been here for many years. I choose stability for the town and town staff when he was hired back in March. I did not have many interactions with Matt when he was assistant TM and I wish I did. It is a very demanding job with a learning curve that takes time. If Matt was an outsider, then more time would be needed, but Matt has been here for a while. As a volunteer, and town meeting. It Would have been nice to see a more proactive approach and more involved in our major projects.

KH - Matt has demonstrated an admirable work ethic this year and meet or exceeded my expectations for visibility within the community. He has done an excellent job of keeping the Select Board updated on a host of issues - large and small. I applaud the excellent work done to keep so many complicated and critical projects moving forward. I recognize that 2024 has been a very challenging year for the Town Manager's office and I am happy to congratulate Matt on his excellent performance in many areas and his calm and respectful approach to the more challenging times.

Select Board "management"

I would like to see a more balanced approach to priorities and Select Board requests for resources. The Select Board Chair does not have any special authority or power beyond setting the agenda and being charged with running an effective public meeting. I would also like to see Select Board members consistently introduced and recognized at public events particularly community events, in the proper hierarchy - after state officials and before staff. If the Chair - is not available - another SB member should be recruited to assume the needed duty as has been our tradition. State officials do not always understand that the Select Board directs the actions of the Town Manager and fall into the understandable trap of acting of ignoring or minimizing their unpaid contributions and leadership. Some staff feel free to directly and publicly contradict, ignore or interrupt Select Board members. Respect discourse and courtesy should be prioritized.

CH - I feel as if I went to bat for Matt, supporting him vigorously during the Town Manager process and beyond. Unfortunately, I believe Matt squandered the opportunity that he rightfully earned, and my advocacy was greater than his own.

General/Overall Comments/Feedback:

MD - My vision for the town manager is as a leader who shares a 5+ year vision (longer than a board members term) that is developed by/approved by the Select Board and then uses this to manage operations. I would like to see and hear more along these lines.

This means taking a more active role working across the town with citizens, community leaders and others to move ahead on our key priorities. Proposals should be brought before the board with a recommendation for the board to consider rather than just putting issues on the table. The board may not agree which is fine, but it will help by creating a starting point for us. Also, working with board members to understand their goals and working to find the best ways to move things ahead without being in the political crosshairs but with a goal to move things ahead.

Generally, I would like to see more communication and more leadership to move the community ahead with new ideas, activities, and opportunities.

MM - Matt's contract with the Town is only for one year, so I understand his hesitation to "rock the boat" or assert himself. However, I believe it is essential for him to adopt a more proactive approach rather than a reactive one. It would benefit him to communicate more frequently with the Select Board about town matters, possibly by providing weekly updates on all Town happenings.

I don't think it is appropriate for Select Board members to learn about significant developments in the town through residents or other boards. For example, the Conservation Committee recently discussed the construction of a second MBTA track in the town, and such important topics should be communicated directly by the Town Manager.

In the future, Matt must establish better communication between himself, the Select Board, and the various department heads. I would also like to see him come to meetings more prepared, with answers regarding the topics on the agenda. On several occasions, I've felt that he was unprepared. Additionally, I would like the Town Manager to be more proactive and forward-thinking regarding all town projects and initiatives.

Suggestions/Ideas for the Future:

CH - I've seen Matt try to be more involved over the last 30-60 days in various meetings, it should have started sooner.

Town Manager Comments on Review:

360-Degree Town Manager Evaluation

FY 2025

Date: January 7, 2025

Anonymous Feedback from 7 Town Employees chosen by the Select Board and Contract.

Employees names will be referred to as "I-VII" in no particular order.

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Employee I

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	There has been extended help to the school committee and Superintendent from the Town Manager that includes but not limited to executive meetings, night meetings, communications and financial elements. The Town Manager has been clear that this is a priority in the community.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	Now that the OPM has been hired, the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager have been extremely involved in meetings during the day and at night and have prioritized communications on the project to move it forward. In addition, the Town Manager manages several intricate legal details behind the scenes in relation to this project.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	I know there has been a subcommittee added for this effort. I cannot speak to the Town Manager's involvement as I have little involvement in this particular committee.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	Again, I know very little about the level of involvement but I do know that this initiative was passed at Town Meeting.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	I know there has been extensive support from Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager to relay the urgency of this passing at the Annual Town Meeting. There has been high level support on this initiative.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	The Town Manager has led in new and existing projects. He does a great job at delegating and trusting his staff on these projects and helps to strategize.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	Jayne Wellman, the Assistant Town Manager, has been a great selection and has been instrumental in helping move projects forward.	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Employee II

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	<p>The Town Manager has taken a very active lead on this project. He has been attending the meetings and working with all the groups, departments, and stakeholders in this project and the community. He is seeking feedback from all these stakeholders.</p> <p>This project is proceeding forward at the perfect pace.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	The Town Manager has taken a very active lead on this project. He seeks feedback from all the stakeholders involved in this project. He has kept the community apprised as the project moves forward. This project is proceeding forward as a result.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	The Town Manager has been very active on this project. He has been working with all the departments and the community on this. He has kept the community apprised as the project moves forward.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	<p>The Town Manager has been very active on this project and has worked with all the departments on this. He regularly gives updates to the community and staff on this topic.</p> <p>This project continues to progress because of his work and dedication.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	<p>This has been the most controversial of all the projects that are happening in town. The community is very passionate about the MBTA Communities Act and opinions vary and this has become a very divisive issue in Town.</p> <p>The Town Manager has done a tremendous job of understanding all sides of this issue, communicating with staff and residents, and clearly outlining the effects of what would happen if this was voted a certain way.</p> <p>He has worked diligently to get this ready for the November Town Meeting and ready for the members to have all the facts needed to make an educated decision on this hot-button topic. As a result of his leadership, an agenda item that was predicted to take up several nights of the town meeting only took one. This is a testament to his leadership.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	As the former Ombudsman and Assistant Town Manager, he has a great knowledge of the existing projects and has been involved in the new projects since their inception. He has continued to work on these projects, prioritizing what needs to be prioritized, hitting all deadlines, and keeping the projects moving forward.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	The Town Manager has done an excellent job of hiring and appointing people for their positions. As a result, the town staff are in a very strong position to serve the community.	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Employee III

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	<p>Matt attends all the Killiam leadership meetings and the Killiam Building Committee meetings. All bills related to the Killam project go to Matt, the CFO, and the Procurement Officer for approval before being paid. The CFO makes the Killam MSBA reporting/reimbursement requests on the Town side. Many public meetings have provided updates on this project, and things are following the general timeline set forth in the beginning.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	<p>An OPM has been hired for the Community Center project. Several meetings have been held to identify the community's needs for this project. A lot of time and effort went into determining the ideal location for this project. It appears that this project may fall on the same timeline for a debt exclusion vote as the Killam School this spring.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	<p>There is a CPA committee working to bring a CPA ballot question to the voters. The timeline of such a vote is unclear as there are a lot of other things going on. There are two debt exclusions planned to go to the voters for Killam and the Community Center. In addition, the Town is close to needing an override as the last override was expected to last for 5 years and FY26 will be the 7th year since the override. Timing will be key to the passing of the CPA.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	Green Communities has been a work in process for years now. The final step to add a small fee to the electric bills of the Reading residents recently passed the Town Meeting. I would expect the Town of Reading to get its Green Communities designation in the very near future.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	<p>MBTA Communities was a big hurdle to get over. Andrew MacNichol was assigned to this initiative, and he worked closely with the community and consultants to come up with two options that went to the Town Meeting in November 2024. One of the options was approved by the Town Meeting, which will bring Reading into compliance with the regulations.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	Reading has strong department heads that collaborate together to move projects forward. Issues are identified and solutions are discussed openly among the key players. The Maillet Sommes project is a good example of this, as there was both grants and local funding involved. There were many meetings to identify the best path forward in terms of spending and matching requirements. A lot of work goes into every project taken on in Reading.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	<p>Matt hired Jayne as his Assistant Town Manager, and she has proven to be very effective in the role. She listens to the constituents and identifies solutions through collaboration with Town Department Heads and staff. He also hired Katie Gabriello as the Director of Operations. Katie has transitioned well into the role and fits in well with the rest of the management staff.</p>	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Employee IV

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	Satisfactory progress in supporting town-side needs	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	Satisfactory progress in managing and supporting town resources for the project.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	Cannot speak to this	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	Satisfactory progress in managing and supporting town resources for the project. Completed Maillett Sommes Morgan project.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	Completed and managed town resources to finalize this project.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	Cannot speak to this – not enough time to assess.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	Satisfactory work to date, ongoing goal.	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Employee V

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	<p>Matt is a servant leader, and as such, works daily to understand the issues before the many subcommittees and the Killam School Building Committee as a whole, keeping a variety of stakeholders and public bodies informed on topics, approving invoices, guiding messaging, and talking with staff and vendors to answer questions in a timely fashion. His support of staff allows them to focus on their areas of expertise and provide information and guidance to the design and OPM teams.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	<p>With a demanding schedule, particularly of night meetings, Matt has made it a priority to attend ReCAL meetings and permanent building committee meetings. He works closely with staff and stakeholders to guide the project scope and impacts, all currently on an accelerated pace since the hiring of an OPM. He has been a resource for staff and vendors as the project timeline evolves. Particularly during the site selection process he helped ensure the town could fund the soil testing in an accelerated fashion so that the process could be eased and policymakers would have all the information needed to make such an important decision – entirely enabling the project to stay on time and under budget. He has weighed in on communications, design, and more importantly, made space for key staff members and resident stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to the project.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	<p>Matt has been instrumental in convening the CPA committee, guiding them through the initial stages, until the committee – looking at the project landscape – decided to wait to bring the initiative forward at a later date. Matt marshalled legal and financial guidance, ensuring that the team was furnished with the necessary in order to make the decision.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	<p>Green Communities has remained a top priority for Matt throughout his brief tenure as Manager. He has been consistently pursuing the state process and working with staff to provide the resources to get us over the finish line – through Town Meeting and now being submitted to the state prior to the year end deadline. He has already conducted several conversations with stakeholders about worthy projects for the grant once the application is accepted. With so many competing programs on his plate, Matt has been consistent in his advocacy, involvement, and support for this program and bringing it over the finish line so the community can now make good use of a new grant program.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	<p>MBTA Communities was another major initiative that consumed most of the summer and the fall. Matt began by ensuring that the Planning Department was fully staffed, having lost a key employee. Its important to understand that the community mood, like many others across the state, often led to verbal abuse of staff in meetings. Not unique to Reading – but it has had a toll on planning positions in affected communities. For Community Development it meant hiring two new planners, one specifically focused on economic development. His hiring choices were excellent and a great complement to our existing staff. He worked with finance, town meeting, and various boards to ensure that our planners had the resources needed to do the heavy lift for this zoning, as well as supporting a heavy series of community outreach meetings. One of two compliant articles passed at Town Meeting, which protects Reading’s access to grant dollars (and we compete for and use those funds across a number of town departments). Further, there still remains questions that non-compliance with 3A could endanger MSBA funding, which could have a tremendously detrimental affect on the Killam School project.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	<p>Matt has done a great job of assembling teams and task forces to take on initiatives, providing a stable environment allowing staff to do their jobs and navigate new opportunities. A few examples of projects on the table NOT listed above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous personnel and labor related issues, including collective bargaining units • Managing ongoing litigation with favorable conclusions • The solid waste and recycling cart roll out (from vote in August 2024 to distribution in April 2025) • Second Water Meters for irrigation • Water rates analysis • Continued work on the Bylaw Committee • Mixed use and multi-unit equitable water billing • Arts and Culture initiatives • DEI assessment and training for staff • DEI work within the community • Pickleball at Symonds Way • Onboarding a new ReCAL OPM and site selection • FY2026 Budget development process – ontime and withing FINCOM guidelines • NetZero MasterPlan • Eastern Gateway, including multiple meetings with RMLD leadership and renewable energy initiatives • Consistent evaluation of opportunities as they arise within the community for events, facilities, and community groups • Continued progress on the Birch Meadow Phase II plan • Replacement of AV systems at the Library and the Pleasant Street Center <p>With all of these initiatives, the 2024 Presidential election went off without a hitch, summer construction projects continued, procurements, technology, professional development, and the business of government remains running smoothly. He has a gift for lifting up staff and trusting them to do their work, tackle the unexpected, and provide resources when needed to sort out challenges. He is trusted by his staff and community members I see regularly.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	<p>In my role, I've been fortunate to see Matt managing employee hiring for several years. His managerial sense for good hiring is one of his strengths. Following his appointment as Town Manager, he assembled strategic groups to conduct interviews for several high profile positions including for the Assistant Town Manager, the Director of Operations, and the Economic Development Director. These rigorous processes provided a transparent process with fidelity to the goal of hiring the best people for the Town. The searches brought forward many competitive candidates. Further, he didn't compromise on hiring- willing to repost a position when the right candidates were not forthcoming. His practices have redefined the hiring paradigm in town, raised expectations, and contributed to a more harmonious, efficient, and effective workplace returning better services to our residents and businesses.</p>	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Employee VI

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	I have not worked with Matt on this project; however, Matt has kept me up to date. In talking with all the key players, Matt has been very involved and helpful with pushing the project along.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	I have not worked directly on this project. Again, Matt has kept me up to date. I do know he has been very involved with the project and leading the team in the right direction.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	Again, I have not worked with Matt on the Community Preservation Act. Matt has kept me up to date of the status and the plan – this is a pattern. Matt does a great job with the communication with the team for success	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	All I can say is everyone worked hard for Reading, including Matt. One of the best aspects of a manager is to create Teamwork, something at which Matt works hard at.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	It passed, it's done, and everyone is happy. That says a lot about the teamwork of Reading staff and Matts leadership.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	I don't directly work with Matt on any particular project, but I am kept in the loop of all the happenings. I do see a lot happening for Reading. I see Matt at a lot of meetings, both during the work day and night meetings as well.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	<p>Aspects of a good leader – in this case, a Town Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a good team... Know weaknesses and strengths Hire to your weaknesses, which leads to building a strong team Communication Important for building a team <p>Matt has proven my theory and built a strong team. I can say with all the Town Managers, the environment in Town Hall is at the best that I have seen.</p> <p>I would like to point out that anytime there is change in management there generally is turn over, did not see that happen when Matt took over, says a lot to me.</p>	

Town Manager's FY'2025 Goals

Reviewer: Employee VII

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#1	<u>Killam School project and MSBA lead</u>	
Comments:	<p>Matt has been an active member of the Killam project. He attends all of our bi-weekly XLT meetings and also all of the community facing meetings. Our project is on time and on budget. Throughout this process, I have found Matt to be invested in the success of the project, supportive in leveraging his team to help lead the project, and collaborative in working through various challenges we've encountered. Matt's leadership will continue to be instrumental as we work towards the upcoming key phases of the project, particularly securing the vote of approval for funding from the town in the spring of 2025.</p>	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#2	<u>Senior Center/Community Center – Town Lead</u>	
Comments:	I don't work with Matt on this, so I don't have any feedback	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#3	<u>Community Preservation Act</u>	
Comments:	I don't work with Matt on this so I don't have any feedback	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#4	<u>Green Communities</u>	
Comments:	I don't work with Matt on this so I don't have any feedback	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#5	<u>MBTA Communities</u>	
Comments:	I don't work with Matt on this so I don't have any feedback	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#6	<u>Management of new and existing projects</u>	
Comments:	Matt has been very collaborative as we prepare for the start of the FY26 budget process. We've had many productive conversations with his team about how to approach the FY26 budget, what potential issues we may face, and how we can work together as effectively as possible.	

Provide comments for each goal. (Refer to attachments)

Area / Goal(s)	Description	Comments
#7	<u>Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions</u>	
Comments:	I don't have any feedback on this, as I work closely with the most established members of the team – Sharon, Joe, Jayne – I don't think any of these were new hires	

Town Manager's Performance Rating for Standard I: Leadership and Professional Culture

Ratings are from 1 (Exemplary) to 5 (Unsatisfactory).
Check one box for each indicator and circle the overall standard rating.

	1	2	3	4	5
I-A. Leadership: Demonstrates strong leadership practices in the exercise of executive functions and personnel management.	II, V	I, IV, VI	III		
I-B. Communication: Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills.	II, V	I, VI	III, IV		
I-C. Commitment to High Standards: Fosters a shared commitment to high standards of public service delivery by staff, professional interaction with the public, and professional development, with high expectations for achievement for all.	II, V	I, IV	III, VI		
I-D. Assessment: Ensures that all department and division heads use a variety of formal and informal methods and assessments to measure employee growth and understanding and make necessary adjustments to their practice when employees are not performing.	II	I, IV, V, VI	III		
I-E. Evaluation: Ensures effective and timely supervision and evaluation of all staff in alignment with town policies, state regulations and contract provisions.	II, IV	I, V	III, VI		
I-F. Managing Conflict: Employs strategies for responding to disagreement and dissent, constructively resolving conflict and building consensus throughout all Town departments.	II, V	I	III, IV, VI		

Overall Rating for Standard I
(Circle one.)

The Town Manager demonstrates strong leadership and promotes a strong professional culture.

1 (II, V)

2 (I, IV, VI)

3

4

5

Comments and analysis (recommended for all ratings; required for any rating of 4 or 5):

I - The Town Manager is extremely good at delegating and trusting staff in their particular initiatives/projects. There is a collaborative team that oftentimes even spans over multiple divisions/departments. The Town Manager encourages staff to take the lead in their perspective areas and is there with his support and knowledge when needed. He is always available to staff and very approachable

II – I-A. The Town Manager has demonstrated strong leadership practices regularly leading the town through multiple town projects, town meetings, and preparation for the next fiscal budget. He can manage his schedule to ensure that all timelines are met.

I-B. His communication skills are excellent, he communicates with department heads, staff, and the public regularly. Whether this communication is in person, over the phone, or in emails, he is always clear, and concise and delivers the message effectively.

I-C. The Town Manager has always been a professional and provides that example daily with how he interacts with his staff and as a result staff follow this example when dealing with other staff and the public.

I-D. With a leadership style that allows department heads to have the lead on their employee's performance, he has encouraged us to make the needed adjustments as necessary for us to run our departments.

I-E. The Town Manager provides feedback regularly to the department heads and this timely and effective regular feedback ensures that we and our staff are in alignment with policies and regulations.

I-F. The Town staff does not have issues of disagreement and dissent as other towns do, when it does happen, the Town Manager quickly gets those having conflict together to resolve the issues.

IV - Overall above average. Although a good listener, some room for improvement in proactive communications and dealing with conflict.

V - _Matt does an excellent job engendering a collaborative, consensus-building approach to all decisions. He works hard to ensure that stakeholders always know what factors affect their working environment, and how their work may impact others. He fosters an environment where staff can take the initiative, take some risks, and try new things in a supportive environment.

Town Manager's Performance Rating for Standard II: Management and Operations

Ratings are from 1 (Exemplary) to 5 (Unsatisfactory).
 Check one box for each indicator and circle the overall standard rating.

	1	2	3	4	5
II-A. Environment: Develops and executes effective plans, procedures, routines, and operational systems to address a full range of financial, safety, health, and social needs.	II, V	I, IV, VI	III		
II-B. Human Resources Management and Development: Implements a cohesive approach to recruiting, hiring, development, and career growth that promotes high-quality and effective organization.	II, V	I, VI	III, IV		
II-C. Scheduling and Management Information Systems: Uses appropriate systems to ensure optimal use of data and time for staff productivity and collaboration, while minimizing staff disruption and distraction.	II, V	I, IV	III, VI		
II-D. Law, Ethics, and Policies: Understands and complies with state and federal laws and mandates, Select Board policies, collective bargaining agreements, and ethical guidelines.	I, II, IV, V, VI		III		
II-E. Fiscal Systems: Develops a budget that supports the Town's vision, mission, and goals; allocates and manages expenditures to balance goals vs. available resources.	II, V	I, IV, VI	III		

Overall Rating for Standard II <i>(Circle one.)</i>	The Town Manager uses resources to implement appropriate staff operations and facility management.
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1 (II, V)

2 (I, IV, VI)

3

4

5

Comments and analysis (recommended for all ratings; required for any rating of 4 or 5):

I - I appreciate the Town Manager's transparency and diligence to follow the process regarding policies and ethics.

II - II-A. The Town Manager fosters an environment where staff wants to work hard, with that he ensures that plans are effectively implemented, and all needs are met across all departments and the community.

II-B. The Town Manager through his leadership has implemented a cohesive approach to higher a very qualified and diverse staff of high-quality people.

II-C. The Town Manager does not waste time with useless meetings, the meetings are well planned with clear objectives and goals and are run timely to ensure that staff can keep working without unneeded distractions.

II-D. To be honest, having a lawyer as a Town Manager, you cannot have a more qualified person who understands and complies with state and federal mandates, understands collective bargaining agreements, and knows how to look at the bigger picture when working on implementing policies.

II-E. The Town Manager has already demonstrated this in how he communicated to all staff on keeping within budgetary guidelines with next year's fiscal budget. To be completely honest, he was saddled with several large expenses that his predecessor was aware of but did not budget for. He worked with department heads on this, and the budget will be balanced.

IV - Overall above average. Exemplary ethics standards.

V - Management and Operations are particular strengths for Matt. He does an exceptional job on each of these items and acts as a role model for staff across departments. His legal skills are tremendously valuable to the community.

Town Manager’s Performance Rating for Standard III: Community Engagement

Ratings are from 1 (Exemplary) to 5 (Unsatisfactory).
Check one box for each indicator and circle the overall standard rating.

	1	2	3	4	5
III-A. Sharing Responsibility: Collaborates with citizens and community stakeholders to formulate and support the Town’s goals.	II, V	I, IV, VI	III		
III-B. Communication: Engages in regular, two-way, proficient communication with citizens and community stakeholders about Town government performance.	II, V	I, VI	III, IV		
III-C. Community Concerns: Addresses community problems and concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.	II, V	I, IV, VI	III		

Overall Rating for Standard III (Circle one.)	The Town Manager forms effective partnerships among town employees, citizens, community organizations, and other stakeholders that address citizen concerns and build support for the mission of Town.
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1 (II, V)

2 (I, IV, VI)

3

4

5

Comments and analysis (recommended for all ratings; required for any rating of 4 or 5):

I - Again, I find the Town Manager to be very approachable and willing to have open dialogue with anyone in the community or staff if problems should arise. He attends community events to show his support and creates new relationships.

II - III-A. The Town Manager does a great job of working with citizens, community stakeholders, and staff to support town goals. He knows who has expertise in certain areas and allows them to use their expert knowledge to help the town achieve these goals.

III-B. The Town Manager attends as many community events as humanly possible; he is always seen walking around these events, introducing himself to people and listening to their concerns. He isn’t afraid to “put himself out there” and make himself available to anyone. He takes any criticism and will follow up with who he needs to for any issues to be resolved and ensures follow up with the person who had the concern.

III-C. Starting with his position as Ombudsman, he has built up a great communication skill that he already had; he has only improved on this skill set and addresses community concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.

IV - Listens well and is responsive to community needs.

V - I see Matt enjoy his opportunities to meet with the public and community stakeholders. He is deft at working with residents who are happy, and those not-so-happy. He brings good humor, kindness, and gravitas to challenging situations apropos to the situation. He truly cares about the community and the success of the Town – its businesses, its residents, and its visitors. He is also a natural communicator and, while very business, is responsive and offers an open-door policy to staff, elected and appointed officials and the public at large.

General/Overall Comments/Feedback:

I - The Town Manager came in at a very challenging and divisive time. The staff feels settled again and ready to continue to tackle important projects in the town with his assistance.

II - The Town Manager already had the respect of staff and department heads based on his time here in Reading. We were already aware of his excellent leadership abilities. He has only continued in that respect.

This Town Manager is a quiet, unassuming leader, he does not need his picture on the front page of the paper to show off his leadership, even though some think you need this to be a leader, a great leader builds up his staff and allows them to take the lead and get the press that they deserve and does not steal the spotlight from them, that is what we have with this Town Manager and his staff appreciates that.

He is at every town event and puts himself out there but does feel the need to ensure that his picture is the lead story, but that the event itself is.

This Town Manager is going to have some challenges ahead with the budget, at no fault of his own, his predecessor left the town to deal with a few budget issues, however, I am confident that with his proven history of leadership, he will guide the town through this.

III - Matt had a lot to accomplish in a short period of time. He was able to address each one of the key goals. The CPA goal for a November ballot question was not met, but the CPA committee was established. Having two debt exclusion votes and a CPA question all within 6 months of each other seemed to be too much especially since the Town is close to needing an override. Matt took on the goals laid out in his contract immediately and delegated staff to each initiative.

Matt had a very productive first year as the Town Manager. He is friendly and easy to work with and I look forward to working with him for years to come.

IV - Matt is a quiet leader with strong listening skills. He demonstrates strong knowledge and expertise; and commitment to meeting community objectives. He is highly ethical and clearly dedicated to public service.

While a good listener, occasional "under communicating" can leave team members uncertain about priorities or feeling undervalued.

V - Matt has done an exceptional job thoroughly managing a wide variety of initiatives, supporting staff, preparing for public meetings, informing boards, and bringing the town through a variety of contentious and not-so-contentious policies, procedures and events.

VI - Overall, as an employee and direct report, I am very comfortable with the direction we, as a team, are going. As always, there is room for improvement which I feel Matt acknowledges this.

Suggestions/Ideas for the Future:

I - Continue to create a more vocal imprint in public meetings and presentations to highlight advocacy and valuable expertise.

V - As all the major projects settle into more regular rhythms, I would like to see a renewed effort on personal professional development for staff at all levels. We have tremendous training resources Matt can leverage to help make municipal employment a fulfilling career across all departments. In this way he will build on the leaps and bounds he has already achieved by bringing departments together in collaboration and an improved esprit de corps.

Town Manager Comments on Review:

- B. Within 90 days of the close of Town Meeting, the Town Manager and the Select Board agree to meet to review the onboarding process and experience and to discuss priorities and any resources needed to facilitate full immersion into the position of Town Manager.
- C. The Board shall review and evaluate the Town Manager no later than January 8, 2025. This review and evaluation shall include a "360 degree assessment" with solicited subjective feedback from the Superintendent of Schools, the Library Director, and at least five direct reports to be designated by the Select Board, at least three of whom are Department Heads. The Select Board members shall also submit evaluations, which evaluations may include comments from members of the public as outlined in Section V.D. Completed evaluation forms shall be submitted to a staff member, designated by the Select Board, or, if approved by the Select Board, to the Chair, and compiled into a composite evaluation. The composite evaluation shall be subject to the provisions of the Public Records Act. The Town Manager shall have an opportunity to discuss the composite evaluation and the results of the assessment with the Select Board. The Town Manager shall provide a written self-assessment as part of this process.
- D. Select Board members may individually elect to solicit feedback from members of the Killam School Building Committee and any committee tasked with bringing the Senior Center Project forward. Select Board members may use the feedback collected to inform their evaluations of the Town Manager.
- E. In addition to any goals and objectives established pursuant to Section V.A, the Town Manager shall function as either the lead or a lead, or otherwise actively assist, in the following projects during the term of this Contract:
1. Town side of the Killam School Project and the lead to MSBA;
 2. Senior Center/Community Center—Town Lead (parallel role to that of the School Superintendent in leading the new school effort, in partnership with Select Board and community leaders);
 3. Upon Select Board creation of a Community Preservation Act study committee, Community Preservation Act education process and presentation to community in time for Special Town Meeting and November ballot;
 4. Green Communities development of reapplication and subsequent grant application activities upon State approval;
 5. Support for MBTA Communities program, approval, and eventually implementation on approval;
 6. Management of new and existing projects; and
 7. Selection of strong employees for Town Manager appointed positions, including a search that involves both external and internal candidates.

The Select Board acknowledges that, to the degree that the foregoing goals and objectives require Town Meeting or ballot approval, the Town Manager shall not be accountable for voter non-approval.

Section VI, Hours of Work.

- A. The Town Manager will devote full-time and attention to the business of the Town and will not engage in any other business or occupation, except with the written approval of the Board. It is understood that the Town Manager shall regularly participate in all Select Board meetings and other meetings where his attendance would be beneficial to the orderly conduct of the Town's business and operations. The Town Manager shall attend all Town Meetings.
- B. Except as expressly authorized in the Charter, the Town Manager shall not hold any other public elective or appointive office in the Town; provided, however, that, with the approval of the Board, the Town Manager may serve as the Town's representative to regional boards, commissions, or similar entities, but shall not receive any additional salary from the Town for such services.
- C. It is recognized that the Town Manager must devote a great deal of time outside of normal office hours to the business of the Town, and that, as a result, the Town Manager may adjust his normal office hours accordingly as he deems appropriate.

Section VII, Health Insurance, Vacation, Holidays, Sick Leave, Funeral Leave, Jury Duty and Disability Insurance.

- A. The Town shall provide the Town Manager a health insurance policy identical to other Town employees. The Town's contribution toward such health insurance policy shall be the same as that made to other non-union Town employees in a similar plan.
- B. The Town will provide to the Town Manager the same disability and life insurance policies as it does to other non-union Town employees.
- C. As a prior employee of the Town, the Town Manager shall be permitted to carry over accrued and unused vacation time from calendar year 2023. The Town Manager shall be permitted to use this accrued and unused vacation time in accordance with the Town's personnel policies. The Town Manager shall be permitted to carry over any accrued but unused sick leave from his prior service to the Town. Use of sick leave shall follow the Town's personnel policy. The Town shall not pay the Town Manager for any accrued but unused sick leave at the end of his employment, in accordance with the personnel policy.
- D. The Town shall provide the Town Manager with sixteen (16) days of vacation time per calendar year. For calendar year 2025, he shall be permitted to carry



Town of Reading
16 Lowell Street
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Matthew A. Kraunelis, Esq.
Town Manager
Office: (781) 942-9043
mkraunelis@readingma.gov

To: Select Board
From: Matt Kraunelis
Date: January 7, 2025
RE: Town Manager Self-Assessment Report

As outlined in my contract, I am submitting a written self-assessment following my three months as Acting Town Manager and nine months as Town Manager. This has been a rewarding and challenging year. Following the unexpected departure of Town Manager Maltez, I was excited to be asked to serve as Acting Town Manager and proud to prevail in a competitive search process to become Reading's fourth permanent Town Manager. Since my appointment, I have worked tirelessly to move Reading forward. I promised both stability and progress and have delivered on both. I have enjoyed building on the relationships that I have developed in my nearly ten years in Reading Town Government, and look forward to an even brighter future built upon a shared vision for success.

The first few months of my term was a very turbulent time for the Select Board. I have worked with three different Select Board chairs during my first year, some with differing priorities. During my first week as permanent Town Manager, we had a bomb threat at the library and town hall. I helped to manage the situation over that weekend and during the days that followed. This was understandably upsetting to the community and staff. Still without fear, we all forged ahead, and brighter days followed.

Below is a listing of some of the accomplishments that have been made since I became Town Manager. This is a list of highlights focusing on goals outlined in my contract and does not include everything achieved by our dedicated staff and volunteers.

Accomplishments:

Killam School Building Process: When I began as Acting Town Manager, the Killam School Building process was just starting to begin in earnest. An Executive Leadership Team was just formed. I am a key member of that team, and we meet frequently to keep the project on track and deal with the daily needs of a project this size. We also formed a Communications Team of which I am a lead member. Decisions are made regarding how best to present the project to the public and other constituencies. We have also developed informative videos and a project website.

I have attended all the Killam Building Committee Meetings and most of the public outreach events where I speak broadly, meet with residents individually, and answer questions. I work closely with the Owner's Project Manager (OPM), architects and building committee members. I have dealt directly with the MSBA and approve all bills and expenditures. Together we have met all of our milestones, decided on a construction process, and the half geothermal HVAC system. We are now in a place where we are planning the important steps of placing the project on a Town Meeting Warrant and then finally on the ballot. I have helped to lead this project to a critical juncture and look forward to guiding it to its completion.

Development of A New Center for Active Living: Knowing this was a top priority for the town, I began marshaling staff and resources for project as soon as I took office. I attend and participate in planning and design meetings, permanent building committee meetings and public forums. Site selection was a major part of this process, and I ensured that funding for environmental testing was in place so that the building could be safely situated on the selected property. When it came time to add an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) to the project, I worked with our Facilities Director and Permanent Building Committee on the use of capital funds to pay the OPM. I recently worked to onboard our OPM and am now participating in stakeholder meetings with an eye toward a Town Meeting vote this spring.

Community Preservation Act: A Community Preservation Act Study Committee was established by the Select Board and began meeting this year. I participated in some of their meetings. After studying the timeframe for passage and consulting with experts, it was decided that the question would be put on the ballot for the November 2026 election. I look forward to continuing to support the committee in the coming years.

Green Communities: Having Reading become a Green Community has been a goal for many years. Because Reading is served by RMLD, special legislation had to be passed for us to move forward. A vote of Town Meeting also needed to be taken. I added this to the November Town Meeting Warrant and worked on the background with Community Development staff and members of the Select Board. The measure successfully passed Town Meeting, and we recently submitted the required information to the State. I am confident that Reading will receive its Green Communities designation in 2025. I am having discussions with stakeholders to help decide which projects may be eligible for Green Communities funding.

MBTA Communities: The passage of MBTA Communities 3A Zoning, was an intensive two-year process. I announced at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting that passage was imperative, since Reading would lose thousands of dollars in grant money if we did not comply with state law. Our Community Development Director, Andrew MacNichol, worked tirelessly on zoning drafts, maps and public outreach. In the middle of the process, our Town Planner left Reading to relocate to another state, and our Economic Development Director left for another municipality. That left only me and Andrew to staff the Community Development Division. We stepped up our recruitment efforts and we were able to hire two planners in a time when qualified planners were hard to come by. One of the planners, Olivia, became Andrew's main lead on the project. I also assigned the Assistant Town Manager to help with the process. As a team, we brought two

articles to November Town Meeting. One Article passed and has been submitted to the state putting us in provisional compliance. We should receive final approval from the state in early 2025.

Team Building, Selection of Strong Employees: For the first six months of my tenure, I was doing two jobs. I was tackling my new Town Manager responsibilities but also was still filling the role of Assistant Town Manager/Ombudsman. I had first hired Jayne Wellman to come to Reading nearly nine years ago. She and I have worked closely together ever since. Based on her stellar work performance, I then promoted her to Director of Operations, and last June she was my choice for Assistant Town Manager/Ombudsman, replacing me in that role. I was pleased that the Select Board unanimously supported me in making that crucial promotion, and Jayne remains a dedicated and valuable Reading employee, and a key member of my team.

With Jayne's promotion, I was able to promote Katie Gabriello to the role of Director of Operations. Katie recently received her MPA and has a strong communications background. She is now MCPPO certified and has quickly become an asset to the team. She has been recently joined by Joshua Delaune, who relocated from Texas for a position in our Operations Division.

With the Assistant DPW Director, Chris Cole, being promoted to DPW Director by the prior Town Manager, I felt it was important to fill his assistant role with a highly qualified candidate. We recruited and hired Michael Kessman for the role. He is a strong manager who has performed well. He is also interested in participating in more public events. He has fast become an important part of our DPW team.

Other key roles that we have filled in the past year with strong, qualified employees are that of Economic Development Planner (I was familiar with Kevin McCarthy's work in the Merrimack Valley and thought he would be a valuable asset to our team) Town Collector, Civil Engineer and Reading's first shared public health/elder services nurse.

I work very well with our existing Department Heads and Management team. I provide them with advice, guidance and resources, but do not micromanage. They are an exceptionally talented and experienced group, and Reading is fortunate to have them, as am I.

Other Projects & Initiatives:

In addition to the goals outlined in my contract, I was able to work on these other important matters, some with the help of our dedicated staff and volunteers:

- Finalizing and/or adjusting collective bargaining agreements with several unions.
- Second water meters for irrigation pilot program.
- Equitable water billing for multi-unit dwellings.
- The Arts & Culture Action Plan and survey.

- Conducted successful Annual and Subsequent Town Meetings highlighted by budget development and passage.
- Juneteenth Celebration & Beer Garden.
- Completion of the Maillet, Sommes Morgan conservation/recreation area, opening and ribbon cutting.
- Several grants including a \$500K MassWorks Grant for Walkers Brook Drive.
- Completion of the Town Forest (Lot 5) parking lot and ribbon cutting.
- Reading's first "Climate Week" outreach campaign.
- Progress on Birch Meadow Master Plan Phase II.
- Litigation oversight and settlement.
- Planning the trash and recycling cart roll out including purchasing the new carts.
- Planning and attending the "Connected Reading" event to meet new residents.
- Continued staffing, advice and support to the Bylaw Committee.
- Continued staffing, advice and support to the Charter Review Committee.
- Planning and funding for new Pickleball courts on Symonds Way.
- Reading's first Boston 25 Zip Trip in several years was a success, bringing us statewide attention.
- FY-2026 budget development.
- Support of the NetZero Masterplan.
- Collaboration with RMLD on the Eastern Gateway and other projects.
- Professional Development: This year I was welcomed as a member of the Massachusetts Municipal Managers Association (MMMA) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). I remain a member in good standing of the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association (MMLA). I also completed the five-week Suffolk University/MMA Municipal Finance Management Seminar.

Challenges:

Paid Downtown Parking: After several years of study, Reading decided to implement paid parking in the downtown area. Town Meeting funded the initial cost, and the prior Town Manager and Economic Development Director purchased the parking kiosks and entered into a service agreement. Full implementation has been delayed by the Covid pandemic and the unexpected departure of the prior Town Manager. Earlier this year, the decision was made to install the kiosks and begin the program.

Reading's downtown business community stated that they immediately noticed a drastic drop in sales. The new kiosks and software had some bugs that, coupled with the challenge of people learning how to use the new devices, added to the confusion. In the end, the program was paused after a few weeks. This pause will be revisited in early 2025 and the decision will need to be made as to whether to start the program again or try a different approach.

Service Interruptions from the Solid Waste Contractor: This year, Reading again experienced periodic service interruptions from Republic Services. This is especially frustrating given that many residents experienced a three-week interruption in 2022, and things had improved since then. Town staff and I responded to this issue with meetings, phone calls, and by bringing Republic executives to a Select Board meeting. We also threatened to fine Republic for missed pick-ups as is within our rights under the contract. Since then, things have again improved, but it is something we continue to keep a close eye on.

Tightening Budgets: Now that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds have been fully spent, Reading, like other communities, continues to deal with increasing demands on the municipal budget. Inflation has played a big role in this as well as labor contracts, health care costs and declining revenue sources. The FY-2026 budget is balanced thanks to good planning and an influx of free cash, but our CFO has warned us that the next few years will be leaner. We will need to be proactive in our planning and forecasting.

Fire Chief Retirement: Our Fire Chief, Greg Burns, has announced that he is retiring in May after almost forty years of service to the town, nearly twenty-five of them as chief. Surely, he leaves big shoes to fill. I plan to post the job in January and am assembling a screening committee to review applications, interview applicants and choose candidates to participate in an assessment center. From there, a final candidate will be selected by me, and presented to the Select Board for confirmation. I am dedicated to hiring a candidate of high quality and vast experience to fill this important position.

Opportunities: Many of our future opportunities are also listed in the Projects & Initiatives section above, but a few are also worth mentioning here.

The roll-out of the new **Trash and Recycling Carts** will begin this spring and is the first step in implementing measures that will result in new solid waste and recycling contracts.

I look forward to the results of the **Arts & Culture Action Plan Process**. Reading has the opportunity to increase its cultural assets and engage in more public art and creative placemaking activities which will have a positive effect on our creative economy and tourism efforts.

The Town's contract with **Reading Community Television** (RCTV) expires in 2025 and we have the opportunity to examine which meetings and events are covered and possibly assist with RCTV's recent need for studio space.

We are currently working on the design for **Reading's New Pickleball Courts**. This will put our Symonds Way town land to good use and provide much needed outdoor courts to our pickleball community and residents at large.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is clear from the above that much work has been done, but much work remains. I look forward to working more closely with the Select Board on the significant opportunities that lie ahead. I also want to credit our dedicated volunteers and town staff. Together we are all partners in government and will ultimately be the ones to move Reading forward in the months and years to come.

January 21, 2025			
	Overview of Meeting		7:00
	Public Comment		7:05
	Select Board Liaison and Town Manager Reports		7:15
	Safety Amendments? TBD		
	Mandarin Restaurant Recognition		
	DPW Cart and General Updates		
	Discuss options for future of PSC Building		
	Downtown Parking Update		
February 4, 2025			
	Overview of Meeting		7:00
	Public Comment		7:05
	Select Board Liaison and Town Manager Reports		7:15
	ReCal design update		
February 18, 2025			
	Overview of Meeting		7:00
	Public Comment		7:05
	Select Board Liaison and Town Manager Reports		7:15
	Close Town Meeting Warrant		
	Pickleball design update/presentation		
March 4, 2025			
	Overview of Meeting		7:00
	Public Comment		7:05
	Select Board Liaison and Town Manager Reports		7:15
March 18, 2025			
	Overview of Meeting		7:00
	Public Comment		7:05
	Select Board Liaison and Town Manager Reports		7:15
April 1, 2025			

Select Board Draft Minutes

October 29, 2024

Public Comment

Phil Pacino commented about the high water rates since the tiers went into effect.

Angela Binda would like to see a 1.2 shift in the split tax rate.

David Zeek, Kathy Zeek and John Sullivan expressed their concerns about the water rates in multi-unit buildings.

Tara Gregory asked why Bacci and Haley are allowed to participate in setting the tax rate because they both own businesses in town.

Linda Snow Dockser would like to see a town-wide religious holiday policy.

Liaison Reports

Haley reported on the Killam School Building Committee and Charter Review Committee.

Murphy noted she attended the new resident open house.

Dockser reported on ReCalc.

Herrick reported on a Climate seminar she attended and the Killam School Building Committee.

Bacci reported on the CPA Committee.

Town Manager Report

Kraunelis reported the Connected Reading event at the library went well. He spoke about some upcoming town events. He explained a new MassWorks grant we received. He mentioned the incident over the weekend about the Police Officer that was hit while doing a traffic stop. Lastly, he explained that downtown tick or treat was cancelled due to the poor air quality because of the wildfires in surrounding towns.

Tax Classification Hearing

Haley read the hearing notice opening the hearing on setting the tax rate.

The board went through and gave their opinions on what they would be comfortable voting for tonight.

Tara Gregory again asked what the State Ethics Committee said about Bacci and Haley participating in this agenda item.

Haley moved that the Select Board close the hearing establishing the FY2025 tax rate. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Haley moved that the Select Board not grant an open space discount for Fiscal Year 2025. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Haley moved that the Select Board not adopt a residential exemption for Fiscal Year 2025. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Haley moved that the Select Board adopt a residential factor of 0.992605 for Fiscal Year 2025. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 3-2 vote with Herrick and Dockser opposing.

Haley moved that the Select Board not grant a small commercial exemption for Fiscal Year 2025. The motion was seconded by Murphy and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Hearing - Safety Amendments

Haley removed himself as a board member and sat in the audience as a resident for this agenda item.

Dockser read the hearing notice opening the public hearing. Lt. Jones was present to answer any questions the board had.

The proposed amendments will amend Article 12.1 of the regulations by imposing the four-hour parking restriction established in Article 5.4.9 of the regulations, to the Brande Court Municipal Parking Lot (Amendment no. 2024-8) and the Reading Upper Municipal Parking Lot (Amendment no. 2024-9). If adopted, parking will be limited to a maximum of four hours between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in one or both of these locations.

The board discussed if going back to four hours is the right move. They discussed potentially doing two hours, but it was noted that would be extremely difficult for our enforcement officer to deal with as she has other places in town to enforce and not just that one lot. The board is disappointed that parking behavior has gone back to what it was before the kiosks went in and they are seeing a lot of employees back to parking there all day.

Dockser moved that the Select Board close the hearing on Safety Amendments 2024-8 and 2024-9. The motion was seconded by Murphy and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Dockser moved to approve Safety Amendment 2024 - 8 to the Traffic and Parking Regulations as presented. The motion was seconded by Murphy and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Dockser moved to approve Safety Amendment 2024 - 9 to the Traffic and Parking Regulations as presented. The motion was seconded by Herrick and approved with a 4-0 vote.

MNRHSO Inter-Municipal Agreement

Assistant Town Manager Jayne Wellman explained that the only changes to the contract this year is the addition of two towns that will be participating in the agreement as well.

Haley moved to approve the Metro North Regional Housing Services Office Inter-Municipal Agreement as presented. The motion was seconded by Herrick and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Multi-Unit Tiered Water Rates

Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom explained to the board the proposed solution she has to water rates for multi-unit buildings. She explained the Postmark Building is a bit of an exception, but they can adjust the bills manually after getting readings from the HOA for each unit.

Second Water Meter Discussion

DPW Director Chris Cole and Matt Abrahams of The Abrahams Group gave the board a presentation for a second water meter pilot program. The board was also given a draft policy to look at. The presentation and draft policy can be found in the Select Board meeting packet on the Town website.

ARPA Funds

Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom discussed with the board any remaining funds that have not been encumbered from the ARPA funds yet. These must be encumbered by the end of the year or they will be turned back to the State.

Haley moved to reallocate \$87,348.34 from various line items with surplus to pickleball court design. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 4-1 vote.

The board has asked for more clarification on the Health Department request.

Future Agendas

The board discussed future agenda items.

Minutes

The board edited previous meeting minutes.

Herrick moved to approve the meeting minutes from September 10, 2024 as amended. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Haley moved to approve the meeting minutes from September 24, 2024 as amended. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 5-0 vote.

At 11:03 PM, Haley moved to enter in Executive Session under Purpose 3: To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Facilities Union, as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Select Board; and to invite into the Executive Session, Town Manager Matt Kraunelis, Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom, Human Resources Director Sean Donahue, Facilities

Director Joe Huggins, and Executive Assistant Caitlin Nocella and not to return to open session. The motion was approved with a unanimous roll call vote.

Select Board

December 10, 2024, 7:00 PM

Town Hall Select Board Meeting Room

Members Present: Chair Carlo Bacci, Vice Chair Karen Gately Herrick, Secretary Chris Haley, Mark Dockser, Melissa Murphy

Others Present: Town Manager Matt Kraunelis, Library Director Amy Lannon, Director of Equity Albert Pless (remote), Assistant Library Director Michelle Filleul, Facilities Director Joe Huggins, Assistant Facilities Director Kevin Cabuzzi, Chief Technology Officer Kevin Furilla, Technology Manager Jenn Iosua, Chief Financial Officer Sharon Angstrom, Ed Ross (remote), Marianne McLaughlin-Downing (remote), Joe McDonagh (remote), Emily Sisson (remote), Mike (remote), Jack (remote 8:17pm)

Chair Carlo Bacci called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The sole item on the agenda this evening is to continue hearing town department FY 2026 budget presentations.

Library

Library Director Amy Lannon provided an overview of Library services and the proposed FY26 budget. At their November meeting, the Board of Library Trustees approved a 3.6% budget increase for FY26. The budget request is \$2,260,050, which includes \$1,810,050 for salaries, a 3.2% increase over FY25 driven by step increase and cost of living adjustments (COLA), and \$450,000 for expenses, a 5.4% increase over FY25 driven by expanding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives. Director of Diversity Equity and Inclusion Albert Pless provided an overview of the work he does, plans for staff training and development, and overall professional services.

Facilities

Facilities Director Joe Huggins reviewed the requested Core Facilities and Town Facilities budgets. The Facilities department maintains all eighteen schools and municipal buildings. The requested Core Facilities budget is \$780,600 for wages, an increase of 4% due to step increases plus COLA per collective bargaining agreements, and \$3,296,831 for expenses, an overall 3% increase, which includes energy, maintenance and repairs, HVAC,

elevator maintenance, alarm maintenance, and pest management. For Town Facilities, wages increase 2% for steps and COLA per collective bargaining agreements to \$271,800, and expenses increase 6% overall to \$118,136 due to an estimated 8% increase to the outsourced cleaning services which will be going out to bid. The overall increase for both Core and Town Facilities is approximately \$150,000. Assistant Facilities Director Kevin Cabuzzi outlined the past year's workorders by location, preventative maintenance program, and projects completed.

Technology

Chief Technology Officer Kevin Furilla presented the Technology department team members, responsibilities, and comparison of the FY25 and proposed FY26 budget. Salaries increase 3.3% to \$539,100, expenses increase 11.7% to \$759,300. The total Technology budget increases 8.1% overall to \$1,298,400. The big difference in expenses is due to a \$54,000 increase in the security system software, as the first three years of software support that was included expires in FY26, and a \$5,000 increase for a new printer contract that covers both services and supplies. Mr. Furilla outlined other expenses, fiber network updates, and grants received.

Finance

Chief Financial Officer Sharon Angstrom shared the Finance Budget. She reviewed the organizational chart, including the new Treasury Analyst supporting the work in the Finance Department, and the key responsibilities of each division. The overall Finance budget is increasing 2.99% to \$1,295,700. All finance staff is non-union and will receive step increases and COLA. Finance salaries total increase is 5.5% to \$1,123,600. There is an 18.39% decrease in Assessing expenses, as the regional Assessor salary will be split between three communities: Wakefield, Reading, and Lynnfield.

Shared Costs

Shared costs are increasing 2.8% overall to \$32.43 million. Ms. Angstrom provided an overview of each accommodated cost budget including: Benefits increase 9.2% to \$24.41 million, Capital spending decreases 20.5% to \$3,010,000, Debt Service decreases 14.9% overall to \$3,496,142 due to the final library payment being made in FY25, though debt within the levy is increasing 24.1%, and Vocational schools increase 18.6% to \$1,306,251 which includes the Town's share of the capital charge for the new school.

Budget Summary

Ms. Angstrom reviewed the Spending Scorecard and explained that she worked with each department to balance the proposed budget.

Town Manager Matt Kraunelis stated that he would reach out to each Board member to address their budget questions and feedback in the coming weeks.

Karen Gately Herrick requested increases to the Board/Committee fund and the Town Manager reserve fund to keep pace with inflation.

On a motion by Chris Haley, seconded by Mark Dockser, the Select Board voted unanimously 5-0-0 to adjourn at 9:31 pm.