

Managing Your Senior Administrative Officer or Band Manager

A Checklist for Mayors and Councils

There is no one way for a Mayors or Chiefs and their Councils to manage the Senior Administrative Officer (SAO) or Band Manager (BM). Individual management styles and personalities are different—both for the leaders and for the SAO/BMs.

This Checklist provides tips and tools to help keep the relationship efficient and effective, and to promote a good relationship with the Senior Administrative Officer or Band Manager.

This Checklist is a guide, and is not intended to replace legal advice or the services of a human resources professional

Probation

The Offer of Employment letter to the SAO should have set out the terms of probation. Probation is the municipality's opportunity to reverse a hiring decision while avoiding liability for dismissal compensation.

Probation is the period for assessing:

- the suitability of the new employee
- how effectively he or she can work with the Council
- the management of staff and service to the public.

During probation and before it is completed:

- Follow the community government Probation Policy, or put one in place if there isn't one. See the sample [Probation Policy](#) in this Checklist.

- Ensure the new manager is informed of and has studied the by-laws and policies of the community government
- Establish expectations for accomplishments during the probationary period
- The Mayor or Band Manager should meet regularly with the new SAO/BM to discuss progress and identify issues
- Performance discussions should take place in camera

Well before the end of probation, Council should meet in-camera without the SAO/BM to:

- Review the suitability of the new employee
- Confirm direction for correcting any issues or concerns
- Decide whether there is reason to reject the new employee on probation

Three possible outcomes of probation:

- Extension of the probationary period
- Successful completion of probation
- Unsuccessful probation, leading to rejection (dismissal)

A legal opinion is required if the employee is being terminated after unsuccessful completion of the probationary period. If termination is a possibility, allow enough time before the end of probation to get a legal opinion. If probation is being extended, Council should:

- Clearly state the issues and concerns that need to be resolved during the extended probation
- Meet regularly with the SAO/BM to monitor progress on resolving issues.

Wrongful dismissal insurance will not cover damages if a legal opinion is not obtained and followed.

Managing Your SAO or Band Manager

To foster and maintain a good relationship between the Council and SAO or Band Manager:

- **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate**
 - Find out what works best for your Council
 - Deal with issues and concerns when they arise—don't let them stew
- **Base your relationship on respect:**
 - Respect goes in both directions
 - Deal with all performance issues or conflicts in private

- **Reward success:** recognize and celebrate strong performance
- **Build the SAO-Council team:** motivate success by treating progress as a joint Council-management achievement
- **Create clear expectations:**
 - When assigning tasks, clearly state expected outputs and deadlines

Performance Review

- **Follow your Performance Review Policy**, or create one if it doesn't exist. See the [Performance Evaluation Policy](#) example in the Checklist.
 - There should be no surprises if you are communicating well and dealing with issues as they arise
 - Include progress on Plans and reports: e.g. Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (Finance, Administration, Human Resources, etc.), MACA Accountability Framework Asset Management, other assigned goals
 - Review needs for training and professional development
 - Review pay increments
 - Consider succession planning, and opportunities for successor training (e.g. Advancing Local Government Administrators Program)
- Adapt the [Performance Review Form](#) example included in this Checklist

Probation Policy Example

Section/Number: Human Resources – 012	Approval Date: (DD/MM/YY)
Subject: Probation	Amendment Dates:
Policy All new employees and employees transferring or being promoted to a new position will be subject to a probationary period as outlined in this policy.	
Definitions N/A	
Guidelines <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The probationary period is an opportunity for the Community Government to determine if the employee is qualified and suitable for the position.2. Employees will be advised of the length of their probationary period in their Letter of Offer.3. The probationary period for all employees is as follows:<ol style="list-style-type: none">3.1. Twelve (12) months for all new employees in Management, Supervisory and Officer level positions.3.2. Six (6) months for all employees transferring or being promoted to all positions.3.3. Six (6) months for all new employees in all other positions.4. The Senior Administrative Officer (SAO) or his/her delegate is responsible for advising employees on probation of the standard of performance that is expected and the rules of the work place within the first week of employment.5. The SAO or his/her delegate is responsible for monitoring the performance of an employee on probation:<ol style="list-style-type: none">5.1. The SAO/delegate is responsible for identifying problem areas and developing ways in which to assist the employee5.2. The SAO/delegate is also responsible for identifying areas where the employee is performing well.5.3. The SAO/delegate will meet with the employee prior to the end of the probationary period to advise the employee of his/her status.6. Employees who are on probation are not entitled to salary increments.	

7. Employees who are on probation will not be considered on other Community Government positions without the consent of the SAO.
8. Probationary periods may be extended for employees whose performance does not meet specified standards but who may perform at a satisfactory level with further training, development and/or experience.
9. An employee on probation who is not suitable for the position will be rejected during the probationary period and his/her employment with the Community Government will be terminated (see Policy HR – 024 Termination of Employment) or, he/she will be assigned to a position more suited to his/her abilities at the rate of pay of the new position.
10. Employees can only be rejected on probation if the employee has been advised of problems of performance and/or suitability.

Attachments

N/A

References

HR – 024 Termination of Employment

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Performance Review Policy Example

Section/Number: Human Resources – 014	Approval Date: (DD/MM/YY)
Subject: Performance Evaluation	Amendment Dates:
Policy A performance evaluation will be conducted for each employee prior to the completion of his/her probationary period and on each subsequent anniversary of the date of hire or promotion.	
Definitions N/A	
Guidelines <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Performance Evaluations are a method to ensure that employees are receiving effective feedback on how they are performing in their jobs, particularly those areas in which they are performing well and areas where improvement may be required.2. Performance Evaluations are designed as a positive approach to help employees develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes.3. Performance Evaluations will be completed on each employee at least once each fiscal year.4. The Supervisor must complete the prescribed performance evaluation form.<ol style="list-style-type: none">4.1. The Performance Evaluation will form the basis for training and development throughout the year.5. The employee will be given an opportunity to review and discuss the evaluation and to state his/her career development goals.6. In cases of unsatisfactory performance, the employee will be informed of the areas that are unsatisfactory and measures will be developed to assist the employee to improve.<ol style="list-style-type: none">6.1. A further evaluation will be completed within two months of the unsatisfactory performance appraisal or more frequently if necessary.7. Continued unsatisfactory performance will be identified and may lead to corrective action.8. The Supervisor and employee will discuss training and development needs for both current and future positions.9. The employee will have an opportunity to comment on the evaluation including any areas where he/she disagrees with the evaluation.	

10. The performance evaluation form will be presented to the Senior Administrative Officer for final approval.

11. A copy of the evaluation will be placed on the Employee's Personnel File and a copy will be provided to the employee for his/her records.

Attachments

References

N/A

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SAO Performance Appraisal Form *Example*



NWT Association of Communities
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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FOR SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

SAO Name: _____

Date of Hire: _____

Current Evaluation Period: _____

1.0 Mission, Policy and Planning

1.1 Ensures that the Community achieves its Mandate:

Based Upon:

- Strategic Plan or ICSP
- Accountability Framework
- Etc
-

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

1.2 Provides leadership in developing program and organizational plans with the Council

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

1.3 Develops programs and services that are produced in a cost-effective manner, employing economy while maintaining quality.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

1.4 Evaluates program relevancy, quality and effectiveness.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

2.0 Management and Administration

2.1 Maintains a climate that attracts, keeps and motivates a diverse group of top quality staff

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

2.2 Ensures that job descriptions for staff are developed and that regular performance evaluations are conducted and evaluated

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

2.3 Divides and assigns work effectively to staff by delegating appropriate levels of freedom and authority while maintaining adequate supervision and support

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

2.4 Ensures compliance with personnel policies and Territorial/Federal regulations on workplaces and employment

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

2.5 Provides a learning environment. Guides staff development and education.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

2.6 Tactfully handles people-oriented situations with staff and peers. Encourages co-operative spirit and teamwork. Works well with others.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

3.0 Governance

3.1 Works effectively with the Council, Councilors and Committees.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

3.2 Provides appropriate, adequate and timely information to the Council, committees and task forces

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

3.3 Recommends and drafts policies for the Council for review and action. Assures compliance

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

3.4 Effectively frames significant questions and complex issues in ways that facilitate effective Council dialogue and action.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

3.5 Effectively enables Council members to provide their best thinking and involvement in support of the communities goals.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

4.0 Finance and Legal Compliance

4.1 Ensures adequate control and accounting of all funds, including developing and maintaining sound financial practices, maintenance of records and compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

4.2 Provides leadership in development of and adherence to short and long-range financial plans and cash flow management.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

4.3 Ensures that funds are disbursed in accordance with contract/contribution agreement requirements

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

5.0 Member Relations, Marketing and Communications

5.1 Serves as an effective spokesperson for the community. Represents the communities point of view to government agencies and other groups

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

5.2 Assures that sound working relationships are established and maintained with the communities' diverse stakeholders and partners

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

5.3 Effectively communicates – orally and in writing.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

6.0 Leadership

6.1 Demonstrates initiative and creativity in identifying and addressing strategic issues facing the Community. Effectively manages continuity, change and transition.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

6.2 Makes quality decisions in a timely manner and accepts responsibility for outcomes. Effectively solves problems.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

6.3 Assures high quality in all areas of operations including customer service

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

6.4 Deals effectively with demanding situations and designs and implements interventions.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

6.5 Consistently displays integrity and models the Community's values.

Need Much Improvement	Need Slight Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceed Expectations

Specific examples to support rating:

7.0 Recommended Goals for Upcoming Year

8.0 Recommended Training/Professional Development for Upcoming Year

9.0 Any Other comments?

It is recommended that the SAO move to the next step of the salary grid.

Mayor/Chief: _____ Date: _____

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