



# **Town of Somers, CT**

## **Performance Management Planning System**

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### **PURPOSE OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING SYSTEM**

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The purpose of the Performance Management Planning System (PMPS) is to:

- facilitate joint planning between an exempt-level employee and director/supervising manager on what the employee is expected to accomplish.
- establish clear, achievable, measurable, results-oriented performance objectives, consistent with the Town's priorities and mission, and considered fair by both the exempt level employee and the director/supervising manager.
- promote ongoing communication between the exempt-level employee and the director/supervising manager concerning expectations, how well the employee is meeting these expectations, and what steps must be taken to ensure that objectives are met.
- guide regular evaluations of progress and promotion of the exempt-level employee's professional development. Identify corrective action needed when an employee has not accomplished a performance objective.
- provide a basis for differentiating among levels of performance and thus serve as a basis for an exempt-level employee's annual salary increase or bonus payment (applies to non collective bargaining employees only).
- improve individual job performance and thereby increase the effectiveness of services provided by the Town.

These actions should encourage job satisfaction through promoting a sense of common mission and recognition of the individual's contribution to it.



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### **THE PROCESS: DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES**

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#### **WHY OBJECTIVES?**

An objective is a statement of specific results to be achieved within constraints such as time and cost. Objectives should include performance measures that make possible an evaluation of whether the objective was satisfactorily achieved, and what is expected in a job well done. One of the advantages of setting objectives rather than rating skills is that results achieved are more definable than skill levels. The more specific objectives are, the more objective the appraisal can be.

#### **SCOPE**

The scope of PMPS is the exempt-level employee's entire job. Therefore, objectives should cover all basic duties and responsibilities of the position as well as important special projects.

#### **TYPES**

Types of objectives for PMPS purposes are:

- ❑ Maintenance-- objectives concerned with fulfilling normal duties
- ❑ Problem Solving- objectives aimed at reducing problems
- ❑ Innovative- objectives for new directions.

Exempt-level employees will not have equal opportunities to set innovative or-problem solving objectives each year. However, objectives can be set to define normal work responsibilities even when special projects or objectives are not realistic.

#### **BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S (BOS) VISION & MISSION**

Each exempt-level employee's objectives should interface with those of other department staff, as well as other departments, to support the BOS vision and mission. To facilitate this, directors/supervising managers should review the BOS vision and mission statement and communicate to managers any new or revised directions for town government services at the beginning of the objective setting process, at the start of each fiscal year. Basic organizational functions will vary little from year to year. Other innovations, improvements and projects will be one-time objectives. This top-down approach enables directors/supervising managers to convey priorities to exempt-level employees at the beginning of the yearly planning process.



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### STEPS

To formulate objectives, the exempt-level employee should group basic functions and projects into a workable number of categories (3-8 is recommended). Those functions will be stated as desired outcomes.

An objective:

- begins with an action verb (e.g. to increase, reduce, install, implement, develop, submit...);
- states a desired result which will define the achievement of the objective (e.g. a 10 percent reduction in cost, a report acceptable to the committee...)
- is as specific and measurable as possible (in terms of cost, time, percentage)
- relates to the BOS vision and mission.

Sometimes it is helpful to break down complex objectives into smaller and more specific achievement milestones. An action plan is an excellent organizing tool.

### PRIORITIES

Each objective should have a priority number assigned to it based upon its **relative importance**. Exempt-level employees may also indicate relative weights (in percentages) for their objectives, based on time involved, or importance of results, to help determine the yearly composite rating. For example, a very high rating on a first priority objective will carry considerable weight toward a high final rating. However, the same high rating on a low priority objective would carry less weight. The exempt-level employee and director/supervising manager should discuss the amount of difference between the priorities. Is priority two nearly the same level of importance as priority one, or only half as important?

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The more concrete and specific the objective is, the easier it will be to identify performance measures. To do this, ask "How can I tell the difference between a good job and a poor job on this objective?" Quantity, accuracy, efficiency and timeliness are typical considerations. A performance measure defines quality on the objective, which may have many aspects. For example, in a major report, performance measures might include: completeness, timeliness, style and format, input from others, and how its users receive it. Performance measures can refer to both the product and the process.



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### **CONSTRAINTS**

The constraints section of the form provides room for a safety valve. Constraints are **anticipated obstacles**, outside the control of the exempt-level employee, which may affect progress toward achieving the objective. Examples of constraints are- budget cuts, cooperation of other departments, approval by other entities, etc.

### **TARGET DATE**

The target date reflects the date **when an objective should be completed**. For an ongoing objective, the date will be the point at the end of the fiscal year when the evaluation will occur.

### **ACCEPTANCE**

Once agreement is reached with the director/supervising manager on an exempt-level employee's objectives, signatures and dates should be placed on the front of the PMPS form to indicate acceptance.



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### THE PROCESS: PROGRESS REVIEWS

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Periodic progress reviews ensure continuing feedback to exempt-level employees during the year. It facilitates communication between employees and directors/supervising managers, and allows the system to be responsive to emerging problems, new opportunities, and changing priorities.

Formal quarterly progress reviews are strongly recommended. Results of these reviews should be noted on the PMPS form with the date of the meeting and the initials of manager and supervising manager.

Face-to-face progress meetings between the individual employee and the director/supervising manager are essential to make the PMPS process effective. Employees benefit from the opportunity to review their progress on each objective, to plan any revisions that will be needed to reach their goals, and to seek the advice and counsel of directors/supervising managers. Quarterly progress reviews are also an opportunity for directors/supervisors to deal with areas in which the employee's work is not meeting the supervisor's expectations, or to reprioritize the work.

Any or all of the following topics could be on the agenda of a progress review meeting:

- update on progress toward established objectives
- removal of obstacles to progress
- identification of performance problems and proposed solutions
- revision or deletion of an objective
- addition of a new objective
- discussion of overall performance to date

Any variance between expected and actual progress should be discussed and reconciled. Any major new development may signal the need to hold a progress review.



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### **THE PROCESS: ANNUAL REVIEW**

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The annual review concludes the PMPS cycle for the fiscal year. In this step the exempt-level employee and director/supervising manager meet to discuss, summarize and document the results achieved during the year.

#### **MEASURING RESULTS**

PMPS measures results achieved on objectives rather than an individual's technical or management skills to reduce the subjectivity inherent in any performance appraisal system. By using mutually agreed upon performance criteria, both parties use the same yardstick for measuring the employee's performance. If the criteria have been made clear, and the communication of expectations has been open, no surprise should occur at the annual review.

Determining an exempt-level employee's annual rating requires care and skill. The annual review is an occasion for communication, motivation, and learning. Although the evaluation is primarily the responsibility of the director/supervising manager, the annual review should be structured to enable the employee to participate in the assessment of his/her job performance.

#### **RATING ONLY ON ASSIGNED WORK**

It is important to remember that each exempt-level employee can only be rated on his or her assigned responsibilities and objectives. This precludes comparison of the worth or importance to the Town of one employee's job over another's. A high-ranking employee should already be compensated for heavy responsibilities by the level of his/her position and salary. The PMPS rating should be based on how well the tasks assigned to the employee for this year were performed, not on how important those tasks were relative to those of other employees.

#### **VALUE OF ANNUAL REVIEW**

The real value of the annual rating lies in communication between employee and director/supervising manager concerning what has been done well, and where further growth should be directed. Summarizing the year's performance, providing constructive feedback on strengths and weaknesses, identifying accomplishments, and specifying corrective, action and avenues for professional growth are key managerial appraisal tasks.



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### **RATING CATEGORIES**

#### **in the PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING SYSTEM**

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❑ **Exceeds Expectations**

Reserved for those exempt-level employees whose achievements substantially exceed acceptable performance levels. Objectives and job requirements are met in all areas. Quality of results is superior.

❑ **Meets All Expectations**

Achieves all objectives and job requirements. Is competent in all responsibilities of the position. Requires minimal direction.

❑ **Needs Improvement**

Objectives and job requirements are not fully achieved. Requires substantial direction. Employee may be developing in the position.

❑ **Unsatisfactory**

Objectives and job requirements are not achieved. Requires continuous direction. Overall performance is unacceptable.