



GOODHUE COUNTY MINNESOTA
TO EFFECTIVELY PROMOTE THE SAFETY, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING OF OUR RESIDENTS

GOODHUE COUNTY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE ROOM
GOVERNMENT CENTER, RED WING

AUGUST 17, 2021
7:30 A.M.

1. Personnel Committee Structure.

Documents:

[8.17.21 REPORT.PDF](#)

2. Public Works Succession Planning.

Documents:

[PUBLIC WORKS SUCCESSION PLANNING.PDF](#)



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Goodhue County

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TO: Goodhue County Commissioners
FROM: Melissa Cushing, Human Resource Director
DATE: August 17, 2021
RE: Personnel Committee Structure

BACKGROUND:

After researching and reviewing several historical documents, the Personnel Committee was formed sometime around 1999 when Steve Bloom was the County Administrator. The information we found stated the Personnel Committee is a standing committee of the County Board so notice is required to comply with the open meeting laws.

At that time, the committee consisted of the Board Chair, Vice Chair, Administrator and Special Projects Coordinator with voting privileges held by the Commissioner members only. (note: The Special Projects Coordinator position was dropped when the Human Resource Director position was created in 2002).

Another report we found stated the meetings will be held at the discretion of the County Administrator. The purpose of the meetings was to evaluate and recommend staffing levels, restructuring of departments and revisions to pay grade levels. All recommendations would be forwarded to the County Board meeting.

Sometime around 2006-2007, Springsted was contracted by the County to put together a 5-year workout plan due to budget constraints. Through that process, the Personnel Committee was evaluating every position because of the budget concerns but those evaluations were only meant to last for two years.

In 2017, we were asked to review the hiring policy and update our background process. In addition, the Board approved a list of jobs that could be replaced without Personnel Committee or Board approval. Part of the review process included an evaluation of background check process for each job to determine, for example, which positions should require a financial background check. We operate using this same job list today.

CURRENT ISSUE:

Several Department Heads and some Commissioners have asked us to review the Personnel Committee as it functions today and provide options for how the committee could function going forward.

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The Goodhue County website describes the Personnel Committee as follows:

This committee addresses issues relating to staffing levels, tuition reimbursement, and personnel policies. Recommendations from this committee are forwarded to the County Board for final approval.

Currently the Personnel Committee reviews hiring for certain positions as listed on the job title list. The Personnel Committee also discusses grade placement and new employee step placement. In addition, the committee has been involved in law suit settlement proposals, policy creation and re-writes, and adding unbudgeted positions.

OPTIONS:

The options to change the Personnel Committee are as follows:

1. Do nothing. Doing nothing is always an option but often not the best route to choose.
2. Shorten the hiring process. The hiring process for budgeted positions has been extensive and often takes several weeks to complete. The process that is followed has to comply with the personnel policy, merit system, union contracts, background requirements, notice to current employers and other obligations. One way to shorten the hiring process is to change the basic functions of the Personnel Committee thereby decreasing the time it takes to bring new employees onboard. The Committee structure could be changed to the following:

This committee may address and study issues relating to staffing levels, departmental structure studies, labor lawsuit settlements, non-budgeted new positions, non-traditional hiring approvals, succession planning, conflicted investigations/allegations, and personnel policies. Recommendations from this committee may be forwarded to the County Board for final approval or may just provide staff feedback.

3. Disband the Personnel Committee. We would like to discuss with the Personnel Committee the necessity of having this type of committee. We believe this committee is still necessary to assist the Board with the items listed in option #2 and we do not believe the Committee should permanently be disbanded.

RECOMMENDATION:

We believe the Board should allow the Personnel Committee to continue to function in a different way than it currently functions. We recommend option #2 above for the new make-up of the Personnel Committee.



Greg Isakson, P.E.
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TO: Honorable County Commissioners
Scott Arneson, County Administrator

FROM: Greg Isakson, Public Works Director

RE: **17 Aug 21 Personnel Committee**
Approve and Implement Succession Planning for the Replacement of the
County Engineer/ Public Works Director Upon his Retirement

Date: 11 Aug 21

Public Works gave a presentation to the Personnel Committee and County Board on 15 Jun 21 concerning 'Changes to Job Descriptions'. This was a follow up to a Committee of the Whole meeting on 04 Aug 20 concerning the Department's work load and succession planning, and was based on the interview of all the applicants for the new Project Engineer position (one internal and one external).

The result of the 15 Jun 21 discussion with the Board was to create a new 'Project Manager' in lieu of a 'Project Engineer' position, and to create a new 'Graduate Engineer' that would use a FTE from an unfilled Engineering Technician position, and would eliminate that Engineering Technician position.

Based on many hours of brainstorming and discussion, the recommended Engineering Staff configuration is shown in the Organization Chart in Attachment 1; with a Public Works Director/County Engineer, a Deputy Public Works Director/Assistant County Engineer (D.P./A.C.E.), a Project Manager, and four Engineering Technicians. A remaining question was how to get to this Engineering Staffing configuration as we work through a sound succession plan.

Also discovered in those hours of brainstorming and discussion was a fatal flaw in the concept of hiring a Graduate Engineer as discussed and approved on 15 Jun 21. The D.P./A.C.E. position requires licensure as a Professional Engineer. A Graduate Engineer needs to work under a Professional Engineer for four years before taking the licensure exam. The current County Engineer will be retiring before a Graduate Engineer would be eligible to take the licensing exam. Also, if the County hires a Graduate Engineer who is not capable of becoming licensed, the County would need to add another FTE and hire a licensed engineer as the

D.P./A.C.E. Under this scenario, the department would end up with one less Engineering Technician than today's staffing level and would have one more (potentially unnecessary) engineer position.

In light of this fatal flaw, staff has developed the following options to implement succession planning to replace the County Engineer due to his retirement.

- a. The four-year appointment for the current County Engineer expires in May of 2023. This could be the time to name a new County Engineer with the Public Works Director remaining on staff for six months to a year providing guidance, direction, and giving the staff time to adjust to the new organization, while wrapping up current projects and issues. This option would require an additional FTE (as shown in attachment 2) for the period between the authorization of this succession plan and the date of the Public Works Director's retirement. The Board could decide to retain or eliminate that FTE once this process is finished.

The Board could:

- Approve and implement the Succession Plan,
- Approve an internal posting for the County Engineer position, interview applicants (if more than one) and offer the position of the County Engineer (effective in May of 2023) to the best candidate.
- Approve the external posting for a licensed engineer with the potential of that person being promoted to the D.P./A.C.E. in May of 2023 if the current D.P./A.C.E. is promoted to the County Engineer.

If the Board were to take action today, there is a succession planning window of about to two years (depending on the time lost in the hiring process). If the Board were to wait and go through this process at a later date, the time available to implement the succession plan will be reduced.

- b. Take no action until the Public Works Director/County Engineer retires and then begin the process of changing the configuration of the engineering staff and begin filling and/or backfilling open positions. There would be no succession planning what-so-ever under this option resulting in a disruption of services as changes are made, the hiring process is completed, and personnel becomes familiar with their new duties.

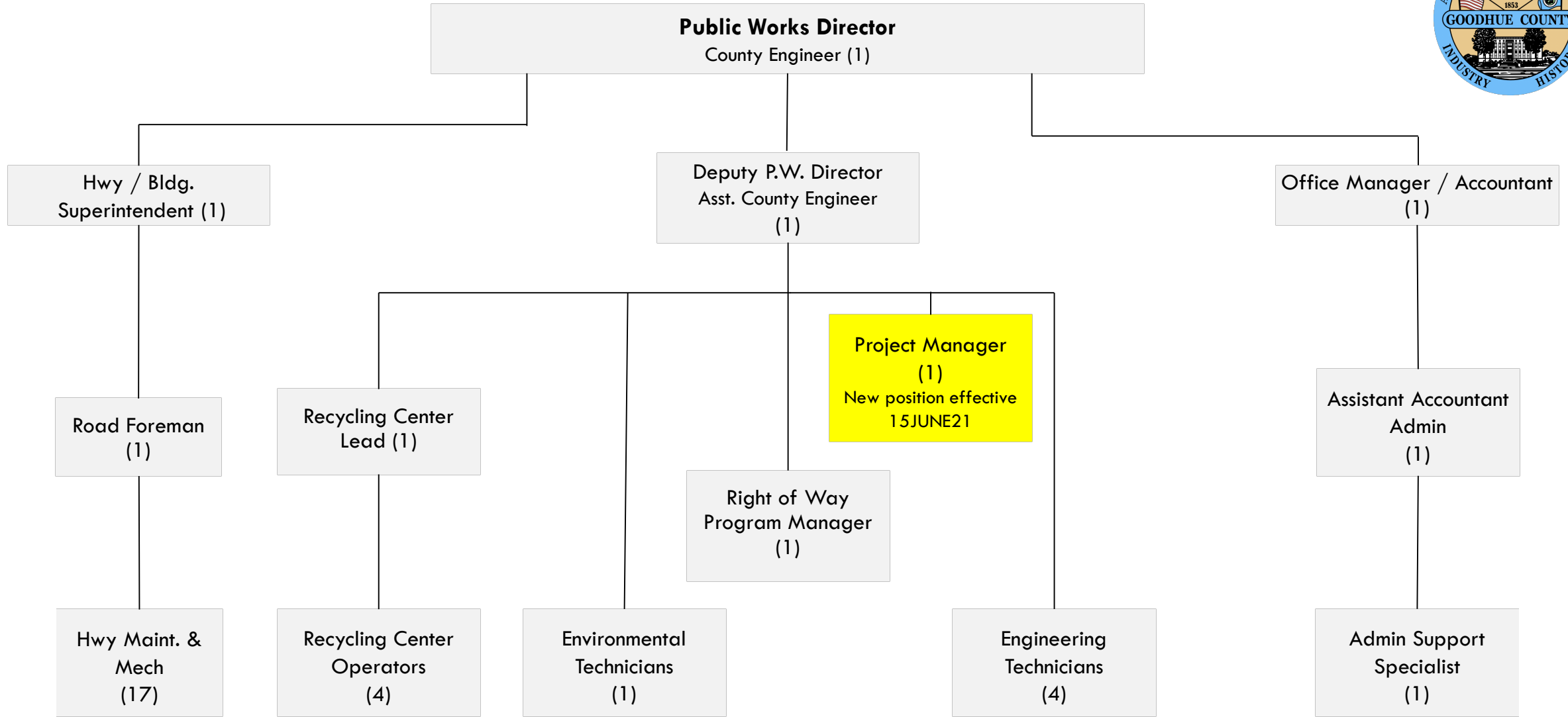
Recommendations:

- That the Board adopt the Public Works Department Organization Chart as shown on Attachment 2 during the succession planning phase, and adopt the Public Works Department Organization Chart as shown on Attachment 1 as the final configuration that will remain in place once the Public Works Director retires.
- Approve and implement the Succession Plan,
- Approve the internal posting for the replacement of the County Engineer, interview applicants and offer the position of the County Engineer effective in May of 2023 to the best candidate.
- Approve the external posting for a licensed engineer with the potential of that person being promoted to the D.P./A.C.E. in May of 2023 if the current D.P./A.C.E. is promoted to the County Engineer.

It is further recommended that the Board approve this succession plan as soon as possible so there is a succession planning window of about two years, depending on the time lost in the hiring process, and viable candidates for the potential licensed engineer position will realize there is a great opportunity to become not just an Assistant County Engineer, but the Deputy Director of Goodhue County Public Works

The sooner the Board approves and implements the Succession Plan, the more certainty there will be of what the Department will look like in the future, where existing staff will fit in the future organization, and more time is available for successful implementation.

Attachment 1



Attachment 2

