

# Town of Royalston Goal Setting & Performance Review Program

## 2007 Goal Setting & Performance Review Implementation Guide

The Town of Royalston Goal Setting & Performance Review Program will uniformly & measurably identify and respond to the Town personnel needs

1. By supportively, fairly, and objectively assisting all elected and appointed individuals, each supervisor, department head, and each member & chairman of committees in their goal setting and job performance.
2. The overall goal is improving customer service, job satisfaction, employee retention, job performance, and communication; as well as the effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of every individual, department head, committee members – and all appointed or elected officials.

### The Five Phases Of Goal Setting & Performance Review

The implementation guidelines provided here are intended to assist you in the goal setting & evaluation process. **Before attempting to complete any individual rating or evaluation, it is recommended that you read the following information thoroughly.** It should be referred to as needed for future appraisals.

**A performance review is a periodic evaluation of an individual's performance of assigned, appointed or elected duties and responsibilities against jointly set measurable goals.** Performance evaluation is a difficult but important task. Only with time will it become easier. However, the results and rewards from properly performed employee appraisals should produce improved employee retention, satisfaction, better employee relations, and improved job performance.

**A word of warning should be given at the start.** A poorly performed evaluation can produce the opposite results. The purpose of the training sessions and this manual is to assist in making performance evaluations **a positive experience for both supervisors and employees**, resulting in positive performance outcomes.

The development of a goal setting & performance review program has five distinct and important phases. Each includes you, and/or and each of your employees or committee members working together.

### Five Phases of Goal Setting & Performance Review

1. Performance Planning, 2. Monitoring, 3. Counseling, 4. Appraisal, 5. Follow-up.

## ☀ Phase One – Goal Setting & Performance Planning

**The process begins with goal setting & performance planning that is jointly conducted by the employee and his/her supervisor or manager.** The plan should be tailored to the individual employee's assignment, and should establish the basis for performance evaluation at the end of the period. During this period, the plan may be discussed and modified as appropriate and either the supervisor or employee may take the initiative for the discussion modification.

When implemented successfully, the program will be both a goal setting, communication & counseling tool, and as a basis for performance evaluation.

### Goal Setting & Performance Planning Steps

**At the beginning of the performance-planning period, the supervisor and subordinate should meet to discuss the employee's responsibilities, and record the results he/she will be working to achieve during the coming period. During this meeting, the employee should actively participate in goal setting and in the performance planning process.** There is no one right way to do effective performance planning, but here is one approach that has proven to be useful.

**Step One** The first step is for the employee and his/her supervisor to make a list of the **major basic responsibilities** of the employee; the things he/she is responsible for doing. This is called a **job analysis**. The job analysis should not be confused with the job description furnished by the Personnel Office. The job analysis you want to develop with your employee should be in writing and consists of the specific duties and responsibilities for the specific position to which he/she is assigned in your unit. **You and your employees should work together to keep position descriptions current, realistic and understandable.**

**Step Two** For each responsibility of the employee, write a brief statement of **pre-determined ultimate objectives**; that is, what is the measurable result desired for each objective. Example: if an employee has the responsibility of "accounts receivable," the end result desired could be "collect all the money on time".

**Step Three** This step involves the development of **job performance standards**. For each responsibility and end result sought, the supervisor and the employee must decide what time-based and measurable results or conditions are to be used to determine whether or not a responsibility has been fulfilled.

**The question, "How will we both know that a responsibility has actually been measurably carried out as agreed upon?" needs to be determined and agreed upon at the very beginning. A performance standard is a statement of measurable conditions that will exist when a job is performed satisfactorily.**

**Job performance standards are best identified together, with a specific job responsibility in the job description.** Standards should be stated in measurable & precise terms expressing quantity, quality, manner of performance and time.

Performance standards are most appropriate when used to describe results you want to obtain. You give an assignment, make a request, or set an objective to be accomplished. Each Task has a unique result measurable result. Each task is different. Developing and communicating these tasks is called goal setting.

The better you and your employee understand what is to be done, the better the chance that it will be done, and the better your evaluation of how well it was done. Your employees should know in advance what is going to be measured and what level of quantity, quality, time and cost will indicate satisfactory performance on the job. Effective goals and job standards are:

- Specific, time-based and measurable.
- Realistic and attainable.
- Consistent with the organization's overall objectives and policies.
- Flexible and responsive to change.
- Developed through discussions between you and the employee.
- Written in complete and concise terms.
- Reviewed for progress at specific incremental times before the work is to be completed.

Ideally, the goals & job standards agreed upon should be so clear - that employees can & will appraise themselves - before you get the around to it!

**Step Four** The manager must communicate a clear understanding of the relative importance of each of the employee's responsibilities. Even though all responsibilities are important, the employee should know what the relative importance of each is. One effective way is to prioritize: to use the A, B, C, D priority approach; write an "A" for items that are the most important; a "B" for those that are secondary in importance; a "C" for those that are the third in importance; and a "D" for the least important items. You can also break them down further so that A-items become A-1, A-2, A-3.

At the conclusion of the goal setting & performance planning session, the employee should be informed that the major responsibilities of the job will be the primary basis for performance evaluation. There should be no surprises!

## ☛ Phase Two - Monitoring (Tracking)

Research has shown that most people are able to recall only a small portion of their experiences, observations and thoughts, even a few hours after they have occurred. Performance evaluations, however, require managers to summarize the work of an employee for as long as a year.

Keeping a record of significant events affecting your employees and, then scheduling a brief informal meeting with them, *at least each quarter, or as necessary*, will help you summarize and review together progress toward their incremental goals, and their work in an accurate and just manner.

This incremental review ensures a proactive and supportive process, and that there will be no year-end surprises. This gives the employee an early opportunity to make mid-course corrections. You should make note of specific occurrences that are both favorable and unfavorable. This file should contain records which describe who, what, when and where, and the consequences of the incident.

These rules are critical in maintaining a performance file:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Keep a separate file on each employee.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Do not make the file secret.</b> Let the employee examine his/her own file on request, or regular quarterly review.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Before placing any incident in the file, <b>always</b> discuss it with the employee. This process must be transparent.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Keep the file completely confidential.</b> This is not a public record. No one should see it except the employee, the supervisor, & those in the chain of command.

## ☛ Phase Three - Performance Counseling

During the year, the employee and the manager should meet whenever appropriate - **at least quarterly** - to review progress toward goals & discuss ways to improve, and agree on changes in direction, procedure or responsibilities.

During each performance review session, the manager should inform the employee that "If I were evaluating you today, your evaluation would be-----". As stated previously, **one of the primary objectives of the Goal Setting & Performance Review program is to achieve an understanding and agreement with the employee and how he/she is meeting the expectations.**

This does **not** mean only once a year, at evaluation time.

In order to achieve this proactive and supportive objective of the program, the employee should be apprised of their progress during the performance period where he/she stands, so that they will have a full opportunity to make any necessary incremental changes in job performance toward their goals.

#### ☀ Phase Four - Review (Bi-Directional Appraisal)

**Purpose** The performance appraisal interview is the heart of the appraisal program. Its purpose is to help both the employee and the manager or supervisor to function more effectively. While there is no pattern or formula which is applicable in every case, there are certain guidelines to be followed.

■	A formal performance review will be conducted at the end of the employees first 90 days, at the end of the probation and on an annual basis thereafter.
■	All regular employees, department heads, and elected or appointed officials (50% time or more for a period of over four and one-half months or more) will be reviewed. This means it will not be mandatory for seasonal or temporary employees. However, they should be reviewed so that the goal setting experience is a valuable structured experience.
■	<b>The annual review should be considered a summary of other less formal, or quarterly, reviews that should have taken place throughout the year.</b> The frequency of these discussions will differ with each individual and is dependent on skill level, type of work performed, work environment, etc. <b>Managers should create an atmosphere which encourages an ongoing exchange of ideas and feelings about the job. It has to be safe to talk about ones job.</b> For a probationary employee, formal appraisal interviews should be conducted more frequently during the probationary period.

The employee's immediate supervisor fills out the appraisal form. The immediate supervisor is that individual who assigns and directs the employee's work, checks or inspects his work for proper methods and results, is responsible for discipline, and is immediately responsible for the work of the employee. The next higher supervisor is primarily a reviewing rater. He/she should be the immediate supervisor of the first rater. His/her main function in the rating process is to review the ratings made by the first line supervisor and to officially approve the rating.

In the case of individual appointed or elected department heads, the immediate supervisor will be the Board of Selectmen. In the case of the Board of selectmen, and other elected officials, it will be the personnel committee in a supportive goal setting advisory role; ultimately town voters at Town Meeting

Employees who have been under more than one supervisor during the rating period shall be rated by the rating official having supervision of the employee at the time the rating is to be prepared. In this case, the present supervisor is encouraged to consult with previous supervisors in arriving at a rating.

**Preparation** Establishing a proper environment for the appraisal interview is of critical importance, and it begins **at least one week** in advance of the session. Schedule a definite time for the interview far enough in advance to allow you and the employee to prepare for the meeting.

**Give close attention to the setting and climate for the meeting. Of primary importance is holding the interview in a private area with no distractions or interruptions, where conversation cannot be overheard.**

It is best to tell the employee that you will be discussing together, goals for the position, job performance, and content of the job (if the job description has changed). Suggest that the employee prepare for the interview by completing a draft or work copy of the Performance Review Form, which should be returned to the supervisor before the interview. (Self evaluation is always an excellent tool to facilitate discussion and should be taken very seriously by the supervisor.

Supervisors should complete the Performance Review Form in advance of the interview. (The actual appraisal forms will be described later in this manual.)

**Completing the Performance Review Form** *It is difficult to make objective judgments in evaluating job performance.* Supervisors completing the Performance Review Form must take into consideration the significant possibilities for error. For example:

- A. **"Halo Effect" or "Carry-Over Effect"** A tendency to rate a person either high or low in all based on a view one has of the person being rated.
- B. **Consistent Leniency** A tendency to "go easy on people because the supervisor believes in being generous towards others. Rates almost everybody high in almost every area.
- C. **Consistent Severity** A tendency to be "too tough" on people because the supervisor believes in upholding high standards. Rates people low and feels that few can ever reach the correct standards.

D. **Central Tendency** A tendency to rate nearly everyone as average on every factor instead of being more critical in judgment.

E. **Prejudice** The appraiser has a strong personal feeling toward the person being rated and allows this to influence judgment.

At this point, "putting yourself in the other person's shoes" will help you. **Your appraisal must be realistic.** Have you been fair to the employee? Your appraisal must be realistic to your employee and should always avoid any discriminatory slant or emotionally undesirable wording. **Remembering that the goal is employee improvement, objective specific comments are more effective.**

As you complete the Performance Review Form, consider these guidelines:

➡	Review the personal history of the employee (education, training and experience).
➡	Review the employee's job description.
➡	Review any records indicating degrees of performance. Do your best to eliminate personal prejudice, bias or favoritism from your reasoning.
➡	Review any records or reports which might give you insight into the employee's career aspirations.
➡	Consider seniority separate and apart from performance.
➡	Consider how the employee meets the requirements of his/her position as established in the written position description.
➡	Be generous in rating the best of the employee's qualities and be realistic in rating weaknesses. It is unfair to build false overconfidence in an employee.
➡	Ask yourself. "Does the employee's present position permit the best use of his/her capabilities?" "Is he/she ready for a bigger or a different job?"
➡	Consider unusual circumstances, such as employees who have done poorly as a result of temporary ill health or other unavoidable conditions.
➡	Make an analysis of what you know that you might share, thus adding to the employee's ability to do his/her work better.

## Conducting the Interview

The interviewing process has many important elements: preparation, time, privacy, etc. However, beginning the interview on the right track determines the ultimate outcome to a great degree. General suggestions to follow when you begin the performance review interview are:

1. Be friendly and courteous. Most folks are wary of reviews. **LISTEN**
2. Put the employee at ease. This can be done by a friendly greeting and a friendly statement that is of interest to the employee and requires a reply.
3. Explain the purpose of the interview, but remember that the employee expects to discuss their measurable performance.
4. Establish, at the outset, your belief that this interview is **important**.
5. **Emphasize bi-directional open communication, and respect.**

## Employee's Self Evaluation

Ideally, the employee will have completed the Performance Review Form earlier. It will be helpful to ask the employee to discuss, clarify or elaborate on any of the information given on the form. **This will be especially helpful if the employee's self evaluation is dramatically different from the supervisor's evaluation.** The self evaluation form provides an opportunity for the employee to appraise himself/herself at the outset of the interview.

## Supervisor's Evaluation

Following the Town of Royalston Goal Setting Performance Review Form categories, move to a discussion of the various ratings and the overall score.

- ✦ Give praise for work well done.
- ✦ Do not give praise for performance factors which you consider below standard.
- ✦ Begin with highest ratings and end with lowest ratings. It may be helpful to talk about over all performance to provide balance.

## Discussion of Positive Factors

After discussing those areas with the highest ratings, move to the factors in which the employee is meeting expectations. **Make an effort to involve the employee in this discussion.** (by talking with - not at them) For example:

Open-end Questions	
➤	"What can be done to help improve the performance in this area?"
➤	"What can I do to help you improve performance in this area?"
➤	"What can we do to improve performance in this area?"
State the Problem Questions	
➤	"Suppose you were-----how would you handle this situation?"
➤	"How would you do it if you were me?"
Choice Questions	
➤	"Did you?"
➤	"Will you?"
➤	"Have you?"

When the employee responds with suggestions, listen and try to restate the employee's statement and show acceptance, even though there may not be agreement. For example: "As I understand from what you have said ...

➤	"You feel..."
➤	"You don't feel..."
➤	"It would help you if I would..."
➤	"What you would like to see happen is ..."

## Discussion of Negative Factors

(Below Expectations and Consistently Below Expectations)

**The positive goal of the Performance Appraisal is to inform the employee about performance so that improvement can be seen.** While it may be unpleasant to discuss negative ratings, it is a disservice to the employee to refuse to do so and ultimately counter-productive to both parties. Some guidelines are:

1. Base any criticism on fact, backed by specific illustrations.
2. Convey criticism in a helpful and supportive manner. The goal is to help the employee succeed.
3. Focus on specific objectives to be met within a specified time.
4. Discuss the acceptable standard in comparison with the negative rating.
5. Involve the employee in the discussion of negative performance.

## Concluding the Interview

The appraisal interview should be concluded when:

- You have made clear the points you wanted to cover.
- The employee has thoroughly expressed his/her personal ambitions and special interests.
- The employee has had a chance to review his/her problems.
- The employee has released emotional tensions that may exist.
- The employee knows in definite terms how and why you have appraised his/her overall performance.
- A positive plan of action has been cooperatively developed**

## 🌟 Phase Five - Follow-Up (Realization)

The follow-up phase involves your making sure that your mutually understood and agreed upon plan of action is carried out. It also critical that it involves creating a open climate of communication that is so the employee will find it easy and desirable to approach you for further help or discussion at a later date.