



To: Town of Poolesville (TOP) Leadership  
From: Antisha Walley, HR Consultant, MMC  
Date: October 7, 2021  
Subject: Town of Poolesville Capacity Study-Initial

### **Background**

MMC Consulting was asked to conduct a capacity study to help determine if the Town of Poolesville has sufficient staffing for its current needs or if additional staffing should be considered. The Town of Poolesville is a small, rural town in Maryland with a population of approximately 5,742 residents as of 2020 and as of 2021 has 19 employees. Its administrative department includes a Town Manager, Town Clerk/Treasurer, Deputy Town Clerk, and Event Specialist. Poolesville also employs a Superintendent of Water/Sewer, Superintendent of WWTP, Director of Parks and Recreation, a Code Enforcement Officer, Plumbing Inspector, and Town Auditor. The town receives oversight from five Commissioners.

### **Research and Analysis**

Five local Maryland municipalities, all similar in size with less than 7,000 residents and 25 employees or less, were compared to Poolesville: Hampstead, Middletown, Sykesville, Berwyn Heights, and Oakland.

- Hampstead is a small town in Maryland with a population of approximately 6,390 residents and as of 2021 has 23 employees. Its administrative department is composed of a Town Manager/Zoning Administrator, Asst Zoning Administrator, Finance Administrator, Administrative Assistant and Project Manager/Human Resources Specialist. Hampstead also employs a Public Works Superintendent, Assistant PW Superintendent, Foremen, and Water Operators. The town receives oversight from a Mayor and five Council members.
- Middletown is a small town in Maryland with a population in 2018 of approximately 4,680 residents and as of 2021, 13 employees. Its administrative department is composed of a Town Administrator, Office Manager, Zoning Administrator, Financial Officer, Receptionist, Planner and Project Manager. Middletown also employs a Public Works Director, Assistant Director of Public Works, Wastewater Operators, a Streets and Utilities Superintendent, a Meter Technician, and Maintenance staff. The town receives oversight from a Burgess and five Commissioners.
- Sykesville is a small town in Maryland with a population in 2018 of approximately 3,960 residents and as of 2021, 24 employees. Its administrative department is composed of a Town Manager, Executive Assistant, Treasurer, and



Town Clerk. Sykesville has a Public Works department, Economic Development Department, and Police Department. The town receives oversight from a Mayor and 6 Council members.

- Berwyn Heights is a small town in Maryland with a population in 2018 of approximately 3,100 residents and as of 2021, 27 employees. Its administrative department is composed of a Town Manager, Town Treasurer and Town Clerk. Berwyn also employs a Code Director and two Code Officers. Berwyn has its own Police Department and receives oversight from a Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and three Council members.
- Oakland is a small town in Maryland with a population in 2018 of approximately 1800 residents and as of 2021, 24 employees. Its administrative department is composed of an Executive Coordinator, Director of Administration and Finance, and a Business Coordinator. Oakland also employs a Chief of Police, Director of Streets Department, Water Superintendent, and Waste Water Superintendent. The town receives oversight from a Mayor and six Council members.

MMC was provided with a list of responsibilities that have been prioritized recently by Poolesville's leadership. Among these include, human resource policies and procedures, benefits package amendments, succession planning, technology initiatives (security and administrative), social media management, operations transparency initiatives, economic development initiatives, grant writing and administration, sustainability initiatives, diversity and inclusion initiatives, intergovernmental policy/lobbying and consortium work, and support work related to Boards and Commissions. For operational efficiency, the additional duties require either 1) restructuring of current roles, 2) an increase in staff, or 3) restructuring of current roles and an increase in staff.

Poolesville's Town Clerk is responsible for human resources duties such as onboarding and benefits administration with manual processes and no back-up support for those duties. When considering possible areas to shift responsibilities, it is important to note the Events Coordinator has seen a drastic decline in work since the COVID-19 pandemic. The Events Coordinator could possibly assume some of the additional duties temporarily, however as Town of Poolesville activities resume and demands increase, maintaining the additional responsibilities would most likely become overwhelming for one person. The best permanent course of action is to hire one additional support staff member, automate HR processes, and redistribute work among existing administrative staff.

### **Findings**

Comparing the six towns revealed marked differences in municipal structure. Three out of four towns smaller in size than Poolesville have on average seven more employees



than Poolesville. In three out of six of those towns this difference is in the number of staff directly supporting the Town Manager and Administrative department.

This capacity study found a current staffing shortage resulting from refocused priorities within the Town of Poolesville. These priorities are necessary for Poolesville's growth and development and should be pursued, however, with existing inefficiencies there is more work than staff to adequately fulfill those duties without experiencing burnout.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

MMC's recommendation for the next 12 months is for Poolesville to 1) automate its HR processes with an HRIS system and 2) hire a Project Manager or Town Manager Assistant to directly support the Town Manager and assist with those new priorities. Additionally, MMC was made aware that the Town of Poolesville staff do not have email accounts. MMC's 3rd recommendation is to secure municipal email accounts for all staff.

Automating HR processes with a cost effective HRIS (human resource information system) would reduce the amount of manual and paper processing of numerous HR tasks, reducing the amount of time the Town Clerk must commit to these tasks and freeing up time for other tasks. Electronic file storage and operations transparency are also benefits of using an HRIS. Additionally, it is easier to train assigned staff on HR procedures when there is a system in place as opposed to manual processes. Zenefits and Paychex are among low-cost options that would work well for a small town like Poolesville.

Hiring a Project Manager or Assistant to the Town Manager will help ensure additional duties and priorities are addressed. The incumbent should be able to directly assist the Town Manager with most of the priorities listed. Some tasks may be delegated elsewhere, such as social media management being delegated to the Events Coordinator or the website management team. A thorough and accurate job description should be written to clarify the position's duties and responsibilities. Salary should be between \$52k and \$70k, depending on experience and qualifications.

Poolesville employees should have a municipal email address. Communication between staff, management, and the Commissioners would be timelier and would allow for easier more consistent dissemination of information. Employees would need to be trained on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and given acceptable use policies for email usage.

In conclusion, the Town of Poolesville has experienced growth in recent years requiring a shift in priorities and the need for additional support staff. Also, outdated processes in technology and human resources suggest a need for improvements across functional areas. An HRIS system, email accounts for all staff, and a Project Manager or Assistant to the Town Manager are all critical immediate needs for the Town of Poolesville. MMC recommends prioritizing these items for implementation within the next 12 months for maximum benefit.