

Performance Evaluation for City Attorney Stephen Postema

Compiled by the Council Administration
Committee

10/20/2014

Summary: Stephen Postema is performing above average according to feedback from Council Members and is recognized as an outstanding leader among his direct reports. The Council Administration Committee values the City Attorney's efforts to hold the office to high standards in order to protect City's interests, while retaining talented attorneys. Stephen excels at litigation and offering sound legal advice, and performs municipal and administrative work with a high level of achievement.

Review from Direct Reports: Stephen's staff has given him excellent scores on nearly every item in the Leadership Effectiveness assessment. They view him as an inspiring leader, an effective listener, and someone who resists political pressure, promotes a collaborative, professional work environment, provides sound legal advice and encourages independence among staff members. Stephen received the highest ratings on the following categories (4.5 or above):

1. Gains employee input and agreement on performance goals and objectives. (4.7)
2. Manages daily performance based upon goals and objectives. (4.6)
3. Tracks, reviews, and takes appropriate action based on City of Ann Arbor procedures, rules and regulations. (4.6)
4. Listens and responds to employee issues and problems in a considerate and timely manner. (4.9)
5. Demonstrates support of the City's affirmative action programs. (4.8)
6. Consistently demonstrates behavior that creates a supportive environment. (4.8)
7. Provides support, including training to ensure safety standards are enforced. (4.9)
8. Implements change management initiatives to provide new or improved services. (4.6)

Council Member Feedback: Overall, City Council Members gave Stephen above average scores on most items. His strength is litigation, and he is recognized for protecting the city's interests on a multitude of cases. Stephen's strong administration skills results in effectively balancing the office's workload and retaining staff. Stephen is fervent in helping Council Members understand how some behaviors could undermine the protection of the City. Stephen requests more frequent meetings with the Council Administration Committee. These meetings could help resolve issues stemming from inconsistent expectations for the City Attorney's office among different Council Members.

Stephen received above average scores (4.0 or higher) in the following categories:

1. Legal Representation Q. 12: Estimates of legal impacts are reasonably accurate on a regular basis. (4.0)
2. Staff Work Q. 16: Displays a positive attitude in carrying out his responsibilities and responding to requests. (4.0)
3. Responsiveness and Timeliness of Actions Q. 26: Is accessible when needed to respond to requests for legal information and assistance. (4.3)

4. Communications Q. 33: Maintains confidentiality with regard to all matters discussed with Mayor, City Council Members, City Administrator, and staff. (4.4)
5. Accountability, Judgment and Responsibility Q. 37: Demonstrates appropriate behaviors to safeguard the city assets and protects customer information. (4.0)
6. Dignity and Respect Q. 40: Uses language appropriate to a [ace of governance at all times. (4.4)
7. Dignity and Respect Q. 41: Actions and language create a comfortable working environment. (4.0)

Stephen received average scores on the following categories which reflect an opportunity to define more realistic time frames for work promised as well as broadening engagement of communication with City Council Members:

1. Financial Accountability and Control Q. 23: Displays the ability and knowledge to research issues in a minimum amount of time. (3.3)
2. Responsiveness and Timeliness of Actions Q. 25: Requested legal work and assignments completed in a timely manner within established time frames. (3.0)
3. Responsiveness and Timeliness of Actions Q. 27: Legal review and requests for information are completed in time to avoid delays to City projects, programs and other tasks. (3.1)
4. Communications Q. 30: Communicates effectively with the City Council, staff, and the community. (3.0)

Recommended Areas for Improvement:

1. Look for opportunities to educate the public about legal issues without comprising risk for the City.
2. Educate Council on what they can disclose publicly such as administrative information.
3. Give more realistic expectations for when work is promised. Consider improvements to workflow to enhance efficiency without undermining quality.

Next Steps:

1. Meet with Council Admin Committee to gain consensus on mutually agreed upon performance criteria. Areas of evaluation include litigation, municipal work (service areas and City Council), and administrative work.
2. Work with Council Administration Committee to establish mutually agreed upon goals and priorities and meet quarterly to review progress toward them.
3. Meet with new Council Members on relevant legal issues including operational issues and provide refresher meetings for more seasoned Council Members as needed.