

Changing Times Demand a New Approach

There's a big difference between "getting by" and getting things done in the most cost efficient manner possible.

In today's ever changing and complex world, it's time to bring professionalism to the administration of town affairs.

Our supervisor and council persons are elected based on their vision for Yorktown; not their managerial expertise or knowledge of local government.

It's time to take a fresh look at our 200-year old system of town government.

A New Approach: A Professional Town Administrator

A town administrator strengthens our existing government by teaming the strong political leadership of an elected, policy making town board with the fiscal and managerial experience and expertise of an appointed professional administrator.

The basic structure of Yorktown's government remains unchanged:

- Voters continue to elect a town board consisting of a supervisor elected for a two year term and four council members, each for four year terms.
- The town board continues to enact all laws, establish policies, develop long range plans, adopt the annual budget and set the tax rate.
- The town board appoints a professional administrator who replaces the supervisor as the person in charge of implementing all laws and policies and overseeing the smooth and efficient delivery of town services on a day-to-day basis.
- The supervisor remains the political leader of the town, presiding over the town board, focusing on legislation and long term planning, and working closely with the administrator on a daily basis. Like the council members, the supervisor would serve part-time.

Compare and Contrast

	A Professional Town Administrator	Our Current Government
Stability and Continuity	Administrators who have earned the confidence of their boards remain in the same community over an extended period of time. Their institutional knowledge base provides stability and continuity as new elected officials come into office.	Supervisors, elected for two year terms, come and go, leaving the day-to-day operation of town affairs vulnerable to instability and a lack of continuity. By the time they learn the job, many supervisors leave and return to their former careers.
Professionalism	At a time when government has become increasingly complex, administering a town with a \$50M budget, 23 departments and a staff of 250 requires specialized training and experience in a host of technical areas: labor relations; federal, state and county laws governing land use and environmental issues; fiscal management; risk management; law enforcement; grants, etc.	The only requirement to run for supervisor is to be a resident of Yorktown. Because supervisors typically come to the job from other careers, they spend their first term as interns working their way through an on-the-job training program. But, while they're still learning, they must make major financial decisions that affect our daily lives and property values.
Cost Efficiency	With prior experience in government, administrators know where to look for potential savings beginning on day one. They're trained to resolve problems <i>before</i> a costly crisis erupts.	New supervisors first have to learn how the town functions before they can even begin to think about what could possibly be improved and how. They can't evaluate what they don't know.
Accountability	The buck stops at the administrator's desk. Job performance is evaluated each and every day by the administrator's boss, our elected officials, and an administrator can be dismissed at any time.	When accountability is diffused between the supervisor and the town board, it's difficult to know who's responsible when things go wrong. And elected officials can only be removed after two or four years.

Additional Benefits of a Professional Town Administrator

Expands the candidate pool for the position of supervisor

Once the position of supervisor becomes part-time, the potential pool of candidates for the position is likely to increase as more residents will be able to combine their primary livelihood with a part-time job, much as council members currently do.

Reduces the influence of politics in day-to-day administrative decisions

Politics should influence what laws are adopted, not how they're implemented. A non-partisan administrator carries out the policies of the majority of the town board based on fairness and equity, not political expediency.

Strengthens the functioning of the town board

A non-partisan administrator provides all board members with the same impartial data and information needed to consider new policies and legislation.

Some Questions About a Town Administrator

1. Is an administrator a new idea for Yorktown?

No. This is the **third** time a town administrator has been proposed: In 1977 by a citizens committee; in 1995 by an outside management consultant; and in 2008 by a second citizens committee. But it's the first time there's been an organized effort to inform the voters about the idea.

2. If it's not broken, why fix it?

Whether or not Yorktown has problems is in the eye of the beholder. Do we really know what's happening inside town hall? Elected officials don't publicize their mistakes.

3. Aren't there other ways to improve our town government besides hiring an administrator?

Yes. But putting a trained, experienced professional in charge of the day-to-day operations of the town is the **only** comprehensive change that will have a positive impact across all town functions.

4. Why do we need a professional administrator if we already have experienced department heads who are doing a good job?

An efficiently run town needs an experienced administrator to coordinate the functions of different departments and supervise and evaluate the work of department heads.

5. Would an administrator put a barrier between us and our elected officials?

No. In fact, an administrator would leave elected officials with **more** time to meet with residents, get feedback from them on pending policy issues and listen to their concerns. Residents would be free to contact their elected officials AND/OR the administrator; the choice would be up to them.

6. Would an administrator be subject to political pressure from individual town board members?

An administrator is a non-partisan town employee who works for the *entire* town board, not individual board members.

7. Why not leave accountability with the voters?

With an administrator, accountability **remains** in the hands of the voters — and is actually strengthened. Under our current system, if a supervisor proves to be ineffective, voters have to wait two years to turn the person out of office (and four years for an ineffective council person). An administrator is accountable on a **daily basis** to our elected officials; the town board can fire an ineffective administrator at any time.

8. How much money would a town administrator cost?

The initial *added* expense of hiring a town administrator would be \$50,000 to \$80,000. While the administrator's salary is likely to be in the \$125-\$150,000 range, that cost would be offset by a reduction in the supervisor's salary when the position becomes part-time.

When an administrator replaces the supervisor as the town's chief administrative officer, the same staff that currently assists the full-time supervisor would work for the administrator. No additional staff would be needed.

9. Could the town board become a rubber stamp for a strong administrator?

It's up to the voters to elect strong and committed board members who retain control of the town government. Administrators don't make laws or set policy; their job is to implement the laws and policies enacted by our elected town board.

10. What other Westchester communities have professional administrators?

A majority of Westchester municipalities employ a professional manager or administrator, some dating back as far as the 1930s. The list includes 19 villages, three cities and two towns, New Castle and Mamaroneck.

11. How is a town administrator government established?

Once there's broad community support for employing an administrator, the town board adopts a resolution establishing the position.

For more information

Visit www.yorktownadministrator.org
Contact Susan Siegel at (914) 245-2661

A Town Administrator for Yorktown

*Because changing times demand a new
approach to local government*

A town administrator brings

Stability

Continuity

Cost Efficiency

Professionalism

Accountability

**to the day-to-day operations of
our town government**

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