City of Stoughton

Additional Staffing Request Form

General Information

Date:	08/17/2023
Director:	Candee Christen
City Department:	City Clerk
Requested Position Title:	Adminstirative Assistant- Front Desk
Status:	☐ 40 Hours ☐ 30 Hours ☐ 24 Hours ☐ 22.5 Hours ☒ Other _____

Directions:

Before adding a new position to our budget, we need to justify the significant additional expense. Increasing headcount is an important and expensive decision that can only be funded with anticipated increased productivity, expense reduction, and/or additional revenues.

The Employee Cost Summary will be completed by the Director of Human Resources & Risk Management once this form is received.

Justification

Give a specific explanation regarding why the proposed position is critical to the operation of your department: Attach proposed or existing position description and organizational chart.

Hours: 8:00-4:00 M-F

Coverage at the front desk sets the tone and experience for constituents and visitors to the City of Stoughton when they enter the City of Stoughton City Hall. This experience sets their impression of the City of Stoughton. If a person walks into City Hall and no one greets them and they have to start wandering or are greeted with a monitor, the impression for the majority of visitors is that we are not welcoming. We need someone at the desk to greet and assist visitors. The current coverage is disruptive to employees if the front desk person is out or has to take a break. Basic front desk services have been shifted to other staff members, such as covering the front desk, processing postage, etc. This moves the administrative task to other employees who are not hired to cover the front desk. This is a costly way to cover the front desk and creates a morale issue for those who are pulled from their normal duties.

Coverage at the front desk is a constant challenge. There needs to be either two employees at 20 hours per person splitting the day or one full-time employee. The full-time person or two 20-hour employees would be the primary coverage. I would propose that there be a secondary pool of backup support which would consist of Sue Strandlie, Jeremy, and Tammy. In the event one of the primary Admin is off or unavailable, the secondary group or 2nd 20-hour employee would be responsible for covering the front desk.

The additional twenty hours for primary coverage at the front desk would be used to provide customer service to walk-in traffic, main phone line coverage, and administrative support to the Clerk's Office that provides ongoing admin. support to the Mayor. The front desk has taken on the following responsibilities: additional election needs- assisting residents with voting needs such as voter registrations, absentee voting needs, etc. and requirements, mailings (absentee ballots), other department support, records help, postings to the paper, the additional committees we provide support for, handling large mailings for other departments. This is currently managed by our one admin at 20 hours per week.

During the election cycles, Deb (20 hours per week) assists with elections with duties at the front desk. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk are both unavailable as this can last over 45 days before an election and 20+ after an election at a time.

Impact

If position is not approved, give specific departmental impact as well as impact to City services and other departments:

Customer Experience: The customer experience at City Hall is subpar. A visitor should be welcomed when entering the building and their questions answered. If they need assistance with the Kiosk, there should be a person there to support them. The call-in experience is also subpar, the new phones and associated phone tree may improve the phone experience. We are doing our best to create an inviting experience however it is increasingly difficult with the increasing demands of an increasing population.

Employee Morale and Workload: It is often difficult to get a front desk person to help if you do not know who you are calling. The employee morale is a major concern in regards to front desk coverage. Employees that should not be primary front desk coverage (Tony, Dan, Mayor etc.) are having to drop what they are doing to cover the front desk as there is no one around or the primary person is busy with another task. Covering the front desk negatively affects the employee's ability to do their primary job. Tony and Dan have been extremely vocal about this.

Deputy Clerk: When Tammy was moved to full-time, she agreed to continue with the front desk duties. Based on workload, she does not have the capacity. In 2024 we are facing 4 elections. As we have discussed, at length, the elections take not only election day work but all of their prep work before, the actual election and then all of the closing tasks. I know that we make it look easy, but there are MANY days and hours spent on this process to ensure we are meeting all of the safety, laws, and regulation requirements. Pushing the Deputy Clerk to cover the front desk and to get her primary work completed is not realistic and is going to cause continuous turnover.

Alternatives

List alternatives to filling this position: Give specific alternatives, i.e., restructure – attach additional documents, if necessary.

1) Continue as is providing subpar service and creating job dissatisfaction for those who are covering on a regular basis who are already at capacity and shouldn't be covering the front desk on a regular basis.

2) Re-design the front desk administrative position. Have Sue Strandlie (the other admin in the building) work at the front desk 8-12 (work hours will be changed) and Deb W 12-4. Sue would only handle calls and walk-in traffic. She would not handle any of the other administrative tasks for the front desk. She would work on Planning admin. work and would be permanently located at the front desk, where Martin is located, or one of the other spaces. This option would need to be discussed with Director Scheel if it becomes a viable option.

3) The Parks and Rec. admin has been a valuable addition to the front desk area, the potential loss of Jeremy at that postion will affect all the departments at City Hall, he has been a great assest at that desk.

4) At 20 hours per week, we would not be likely to near the benefits concern (WRS)?

It would be potentially beneficial to have an additional admin work 22 hours, the overlap would allow for front desk coverage by one admin while the other is handling task that need attention away from the desk such as during the election cycle.

5) Another consideration is that the Departments at City Hall spread out their coverage during the 8 - 4 hours. As staffed currently, those covering the front desk are often trying to provide service for departments not staffed during this time, often leading to a frustrated person not able to complete their business they arrived for. (Department tally sheets kept provide some detail)

4) ANY OTHER CREATIVE OPTIONS?

Submitted By

Director:	
Candee J. Christen	
Signature: ***Candee J. Christen, City Clerk***	**Date:** ***9/14/2023***