

CHAPTER 10 ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL PLAN

STRATEGIC GOAL: Create a park and recreation agency that is a model of excellence and efficiency by providing quality, user-friendly customer service that consistently supplies complete and accurate information and assistance.

OVERVIEW

Chapter 3 outlined the existing management structure for how Township parks and recreation services are provided. Under home rule charter, the Township operates with Township Council as the governing body and a Township Manager as the chief administrator that insures that Township business and affairs are properly conducted. The business of providing parks and recreation services is assigned to the P&R Department, which is one of five administrative departments and is headed by the Park and Recreation Director. The Park and Recreation Board is a seven-member volunteer board that offers advice regarding parks and recreation to the Director and other Township staff and officials. Figure 52 is an organizational chart showing the position of parks and recreation within the governmental framework of the Township.

If all or even some of the key recommendations of this plan are to be implemented, additional staff should be hired. Despite the commitment and dedication of the current staff of seven, there is only so much work that they can and should be expected to do. Logically, any significant increase in parkland and facilities might necessitate additional maintenance personnel. Major expansion of the program inventory might warrant personnel to organize and lead the activities. Extra paperwork and administrative duties that accompany the provision of more services might mean the need for more office help.

This chapter recommends actions that the Township should take to achieve the above-referenced strategic goal. The actions are focused on managerial matters and the human resources that will be needed to provide and sustain the recommended parks, facilities, programs, and services.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Strive to carry out the mission of the P&R Department.

Recommendations

1. The ultimate decision of what recommendations of this plan will be carried out and in what order will be made by the Township Council, but P&R Department staff will need quality management to foster municipal support for such implementation. The Director of the P&R Department will have to delegate responsibility to other paid municipal staff and volunteers from advisory boards

Figure 52
Organizational Chart

to not only carry out the recommendations, but also to facilitate endorsement of the long-range vision from decision-makers.

- The key to success will be teamwork. The P&R Department should be comprised of competent professionals dedicated to the park and recreation field and who are committed to the initiatives proposed in this plan. Achievement of the mission statement should be the guiding principle of all personnel responsibilities.
 - For the plan to be successful in meeting the park and recreation needs of the community, a local group will need to assume a leadership role. The Park and Recreation Board logically should be charged with this responsibility. The Board should work with the Director to advocate the plan as an appropriate guide for future action and gain broad-based public support.
2. Again, it is important to emphasize the need to harness the collective resources of all providers of recreation to meet the needs of customers. The Director should be responsible for engaging collaborative ventures with partners from within and outside the township.
 3. It is imperative that the Township understand the needs and preferences of customers. An on-going public participation process to bring customers into the parks and recreation system should be maintained and enhanced.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Achieve an effective organizational structure comprised of professional P&R Department staff, the Park and Recreation Board, and working relationships with community leaders and managers.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the current, basic organizational structure presented in Figure 52 be maintained. The P&R Department should remain as a cabinet level entity working in conjunction with the advisory Park and Recreation Board.
5. Annual goals and performance objectives should be determined as a collaborative effort between P&R Department staff and the Board.
6. The Board should continue as an advisory body, recommending policy and priorities compatible with the broader Departmental and municipal goals and philosophies.
 - Members should be appointed for their knowledge and interest in the field of parks and recreation. Consideration should be given to trying to appoint members from each of the Township's five customer service areas to achieve a geographical balance in representation, if possible. Furthermore, each member should serve as a liaison between Council and the residents of their respective area.
 - Recruit persons with expertise needed by the Board as new members are needed and vacant terms of office are filled. Provide orientation for new members.

- Consider establishing issue-oriented Board committees to address key issues, such as partnerships, sports, trails, the dog park, the indoor gymnasium, and the swimming pool/aquatic center. Working meetings independent of the monthly meetings should be held by the committees for them to be successful.
 - The Board should also serve as a limited administrative body. Members might need to actively and regularly commit time and work towards helping to formulate and present detailed proposals for Council review and approval.
 - The Park and Recreation Board should continue to meet on a monthly basis, and more frequently as needed. The Chairman of the Board should make sure that the Board's views are presented during Council meetings. Special meetings should be held at times when important issues affecting the Board arise.
 - Joint meetings between the Park and Recreation Board, Planning Commission, Environmental Advisory Board, and Township Council should be held as issues arise and on an annual basis to review what has been accomplished, and to establish a working program for reaching future goals in the months ahead.
 - Someone from the Park and Recreation Board should go to the regularly scheduled Council meetings to maintain an effective working dialogue. Additionally, a member from the Board should go to the Planning Commission meetings to review plan submissions for compliance with park and recreation policies.
 - An agenda should be prepared and distributed to Board members prior to each meeting, and should be used to provide structure to the meeting's order of business. The Board should follow parliamentary procedure to ensure timely progress toward discussing subjects and accomplishing the goals of its meetings.
 - Cooperative working relationships between the Board and municipal staff and other officials should be improved by opening lines of communication. More effective communication should be facilitated by exchanging copies of minutes from municipal body meetings, personal interaction, and regular coordinative meetings. Plan submissions from the Planning Commission should be consistently routed to the Parks and Recreation Board for comment.
7. The P&R Department should attend regular working meetings to team with other Township departments to maximize resources and agree to interrelationships. For example, collaboration with the Public Works department might be necessary for major maintenance and capital improvement projects being undertaken in-house, and Police Department coordination on park watch/ambassador programs.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Maintain an adequate staffing level with personnel that work together as a team and yet have defined job descriptions.

Recommendations

8. The P&R Department should continue to be headed by a well-qualified Director. The Director should advise Board members in the formation of proposed policy for Council consideration and should oversee all Department business and affairs to insure that they are conducted consistent with the Board's priorities and guidelines and to comply with applicable State and Federal laws pertaining to the provision of public park and recreation services. The Director also should manage and supervise other departmental staff.
9. The P&R Department should be ever cognizant of the extensive planned expansion of parks and recreation services to be offered by the Township in the future. The Director should closely monitor the rate at which new land is acquired, additional facilities are developed, and programs are expanded to effectively gauge the time when the staffing level should be increased. Proposals for additional staff should be presented during the annual budget process, which is a logical opportunity to assess the workload capacities of existing staff relative to the services to be rendered in the upcoming year.

It is difficult to forecast precisely how many additional staff will be needed and at what times hiring should take place. Those decisions will be largely governed by the rate at which the recommendations of this plan will be implemented. The final chapter of this plan (Chapter 11) will offer guidelines presented in a 5-Year Operating Budget.

Another matter that will affect personnel decisions is the extent to which the P&R Department can rely on contracting work to the private sector. Presently, the Department contracts grass maintenance at select open space sites (i.e., basins) and contracts with companies to provide instructors and counselors for various recreation programs that are offered. This practice reduces the cost of service delivery by lowering staffing levels and equipment/supplies budgets.

- Procedures for contracting out certain elements of service delivery should be established.

Despite making a general assumption that work will be contracted out, as appropriate, it appears that the following additional personnel (eventually brought onto the P&R Department's payroll) would greatly facilitate achieving various key goals of this plan over the next 10 years:

- Parks Superintendent – This person would be responsible for design, construction, and maintenance of recreation and park areas and facilities. He or she would direct the work of other employees and contracted labor engaged in the planning, design, construction, landscaping, and maintenance. The person would also assist the Director in details of

- administration, as appropriate.
- Program Personnel – A part-time Recreation Program Coordinator would help the full-time coordinator organize, plan, schedule, and run programs. Instructors for specialized programs would be hired on a temporary and as-needed basis to direct and supervise short-term activities.
 - Clerical Help – Another clerical staff person would initially be hired on a part-time basis, but would eventually become full-time as demand warrants.
 - Facility Attendants – These persons would perform routine work involving a variety of manual, clerical, and leadership tasks at the Community Center. More than one person would be needed to cover all hours of operation of the center.
 - Custodian – As the Department becomes the owner of additional buildings, particularly those that may be opened to customers (i.e., restrooms, the Community Center, environmental education center), persons would be needed to keep them clean and orderly.
10. Volunteerism should serve as a means for the Township to provide services more cost efficiently. Persons willing to donate their assistance to help carry out the mission of the P&R Department should be welcomed. The energies and contributions from individual citizens and members of special interest groups, civic associations, and youth organizations can be used to carry out functions including park planning and design, development, programming, and administration/office tasks. In some instances, college faculty and students from parks and recreation, landscape architecture, planning, and engineering programs offer their specialized skills on a project basis for practical classroom training or in a working capacity as consultants or interns.
 11. Increase communication and the flow of information between staff. Hold regular departmental coordination meetings to discuss workloads and assign tasks.
 12. Manage staff so that they are motivated and technically skilled to provide the level of service expected from customers. Staff should be held accountable for achieving departmental goals and performance objectives.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Operate the P&R Department using business-like practices with emphasis on good management, fiscal responsibility and serving customers efficiently.

Recommendations

13. The Department should insure the provision of a high degree of customer-friendly service:
 - Develop a model customer service philosophy and program that commits to real service orientation.
 - Provide customer service training for staff.
 - Provide all staff, particularly employees who are the first point of contact for customer service (i.e., administrative/clerical personnel) with ongoing,

current information about park projects, programs, and events to be better able to answer customers' questions.

- Create a tracking system to monitor customer service that includes post-contact evaluation and surveys.
14. Annual performance appraisals should be conducted within a positive framework to help employees grow through experience, develop new skills, and enhance their expertise.
 15. Internal and external training should be provided for employees to fit their needs and professional career goals.
 16. Modern business practices, including computer technology for scheduling activities, reservations, tracking program participation, budgeting, and financial management should be utilized to maximize efficiency.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Build the local park and recreation constituency by expanding public outreach and announcing available services and benefits.

Recommendations

17. Since the likelihood of garnering public support for ongoing and enhanced services is greatest when customers know and understand the reasons behind them, the Township should improve communication and public information distribution.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Respond efficiently to customer inquiries, complaints, and suggestions.

Recommendations

18. In order to direct customers to the proper persons for various types of assistance, a list of staff members and contact information (i.e., phone number, e-mail address) for specific needs should be publicized on the website and in select printed materials from the department.
19. An efficient response system to customers should be developed.
 - The system should incorporate a means of tracking the nature of the inquiry, complaint, or suggestion.
 - The system should also provide a way to monitor the follow-up on each communication and to collect customer satisfaction feedback.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Demonstrate effective use of resources by leveraging Township funds with outside funding strategies.

Recommendations

20. The P&R Department should consider alternative funding sources to offset the municipal cost of delivering services.
- Assess creative financing approaches and pursue them, as appropriate, to rely less on the Township's general funds for everything from planning, design engineering, land acquisition, park/facility development, programming, to administrative activities.
 - Aggressively seek grants.
 - Appeal to the philanthropic community for gifts and donations. Create a gift catalog that lists needed park improvements, facilities, and recreation equipment with prices so that donors can help out (and be recognized for financially supporting) the Department.
 - Create an earned income strategy to augment the operating budget through sponsorships and partnerships that are sensitive to community values and in conformance with departmental policies.
 - Consider leveraging the income potential of facilities, especially those that can be self-sustaining through user fees and memberships.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Evaluate the effectiveness of services and programs on a regular basis by measuring customer satisfaction and benefits compared to costs.

Recommendations

21. The Department should develop a cost tracking system that analyzes the cost per participant for programs and per user for other services:
- Acquire and use innovative computer programs for tracking revenue, expenditures, and all related costs, including staffing.
 - Ensure that staff is informed and accountable for revenue and expenditures.
22. Compare costs to the benefits provided to the customer and community.
- Utilize customer responses obtained from satisfaction surveys to gauge the success of programs in conjunction with cost data.
23. Evaluate fees and adjust where appropriate:
- Review program fees with respect to market rate (i.e., fees charge by other governments, non-profits, and private entities).
 - Review resident versus non-resident fees and use.
 - Strive to establish fee formulas that are based on true costs. Class fees should include a percentage to cover the indirect cost (i.e., utilities, administrative expenses, promotion, custodial fees, etc.) of providing the program.
 - Charge adequate fees to all organizations that use a facility for cost of rental and cleanup.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Evaluate management of services and facilities that are not cost-effective and explore whether partners can be used to improve efficiencies.

Recommendations

24. Use data from the cost tracking system and cost-benefit analysis to determine which programs will be supported as a basic service even if revenues are insufficient:
- Consider undertaking a special planning study that investigates potential opportunities to achieve better management and cost control.
 - Consider the benefits of supplementing or replacing maintenance tasks to outside contractors, particularly elements of the work program that require technical training and skill, such as tree care and turf maintenance.
 - Consider adopt-a-park and adopt-a-facility programs as ways to augment P&R Department resources.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Welcome partnerships and sponsorships.

Recommendations

25. The P&R Department should meet with community groups and organizations to build relationships and establish supportive partnerships:
- Host forums to encourage partnerships between the Township and the community in order to get projects done on time and on budget.
 - Apply consistent criteria and the highest standard of quality to P&R Department selection of partners.
 - Give preference to non-profits with the capacity to perform services.
 - Conduct ongoing evaluation of partners.
26. Enter into sponsorship agreements whereby the Township accepts monetary contributions in exchange for advertisements announcing that the cost of the park, facility, or program is subsidized by the sponsor.
27. Utilize neighborhood support for fundraising projects.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Encourage volunteerism as a way to extend the programmatic efforts of the Township.

Recommendations

28. Educate staff about the value of volunteers, ways to encourage them, and the role of staff in facilitating their work.

29. The use of volunteers should be carefully managed by the Township, perhaps by a coordinator from the P&R Department or the Board:
- Education and supervision are also key to a successful program. Volunteers should be adequately trained to perform their assigned responsibilities and duties.
 - Compile a roster of skilled specialists who are willing to volunteer to support P&R Department services.
 - Establish an awards and public recognition program for supporters of P&R Department efforts.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY: Invite all customers to participate in planning, designing, and advocating parks and recreation services.

Recommendations

30. Have an “open door policy” to encourage all interested persons to offer suggestions, complaints, and compliments.
- Provide a mechanism for customers to present their thoughts and ideas.
 - Establish specific steps for follow-up and evaluation.
31. Involve the community in developing strategic work plans for parks and spell out specific tasks or projects that volunteers can undertake:
- Encourage the formation and participation of a “Friends” group(s) as a supplement to limited staff personnel and resources.