



TOWN OF HAWLEY
MASSACHUSETTS 01339

Position Description

Title: Town Clerk
Department: Town Clerk
Job Committee Review: June 18, 2013
Select Board Acceptance: June 18, 2013
Elected or Appointed: Elected
Appointing Authority: Massachusetts General Laws - Chapter 41, Section 19

Summary of Duties

The position of Town Clerk in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is an ancient and honorable one. Originally modeled after a similar position in England, incumbents enjoyed substantial prestige, exercised wide authority and were held accountable for extensive responsibilities in local governmental operations.

The office of Town Clerk traditionally, and to a large degree presently, can be compared to a hub around which the wheel of local government revolves. The spokes of the wheel represent the various boards, departments and committees within the government to which the Town Clerk relates in a direct way. The rim of the wheel represents the many segments of State and County Government from which many of the Town Clerk's official duties and responsibilities stem. The Town Clerk relates to nearly every Town official in some way, as well as to the boards and committees.

Paid by the Town, the Clerk is nevertheless responsible in critical areas not only to the Town, but to the State or County.

Supervision Received

The Town Clerk works independently, performing the tasks and following the statutory policies and procedures authorized for Town Clerks by the General Laws of Massachusetts.

Supervision Exercised

The Town Clerk of Hawley has no employee(s) to supervise unless an assistant has been appointed. The Town Clerk may in writing appoint an Assistant Town Clerk. The Town Clerk functionally acts as a supervisor at all elections, supervising election officials at the polls, and all Registrars.

Job Environment

A majority of work is performed under typical municipal office conditions, with frequent interruptions; noise level is moderate. Scheduled hours may include evening meetings and extended workdays during the last voter registration days and when elections are conducted. The Town Clerk is also required to attend all annual and special town meetings. Occasionally the Town Clerk may be expected to work outside of normal business hours. The Town Clerk regularly operates computers, telephones, copiers, scanners, facsimile machines and other standard office equipment.

The Town Clerk may have frequent interaction with the general public, town employees, state agencies, clerks in other communities, and vendors. Contacts are in person, in writing, by email and by telephone.

Contacts generally involve providing information of a technical or factual nature or certified documents to the public or interested parties.

The Town Clerk has access to department-level confidential information such as restricted vital statistics; the application of appropriate judgment, discretion and professional office protocols is required. Errors could result in significant confusion and delay, result in improper disclosure of confidential information, and cause adverse public relations.

Essential Functions

(The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.)

#1 – Elections

The Town Clerk serves as Chief Election Officer for the Town with full responsibility for the total administration of fair and impartial local, state and federal elections and activities. The Town Clerk shall:

- Serve as ex-officio member and clerk of the Board of Registrars supervising all aspects of voter registration; hires, trains and supervises part-time election personnel.
- Manage voter list and related functions using automated state voter registration information system.
- Prepare, receive, and certify names on nomination papers of candidates for town elections and post lists of candidates duly nominated.
- Certify initiative petitions.
- Prepare and arrange for the printing of ballots and other necessary forms for local elections.
- Order/receive the ballots and other necessary forms for state and federal elections.
- Make arrangements for application, mailing and return of absentee ballots at all elections.
- Be responsible for the maintenance, testing, and set up of all voting equipment for each election.
- Prepare, record, and report official results to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
- Transmit a complete list of Town officers elected and qualified, and report any changes in such offices as they occur to the Secretary of State after every annual election.
- Maintain and ensure accuracy of election systems.
- Be responsible for campaign finance law administration, including explanation of laws and requirements and filings, serving as a reference and a resource.
- Administer oaths as necessary to all elected officials.

#2 – Town Meetings

The Town Clerk shall:

- Record Town Meeting votes and send accepted bylaws to the Attorney General's office for approval.
- Prepare the calendar for annual and special Town Meetings.
- Notify the Secretary of State of the acceptance by the Town of Chapters and Sections of General Laws and of any Special Acts.
- Assist the Moderator in preparing for and carrying out the Town Meeting(s).
- In the absence of the duly-elected Town Moderator, the Town Clerk shall call the Town Meeting to order and then as the first order of business shall conduct an election of a Temporary Town Moderator.

#3 – Vital Statistics

The Town Clerk serves as Registrar of Vital Statistics and is required to:

- Register all vital events occurring within the community and those events occurring elsewhere to local residents.
- Create, record and preserve original birth, marriage and death records providing the basis for the Commonwealth's central vital registration system.
- Serve as custodian of town vital statistics records.
- Record and issues certified copies of births, deaths and marriages.
- Submit reports to state and other authorities as required.
- Assist the public in conducting genealogical research, using such records.

#4 – Town Reports, Meeting Notices and Minutes

The Town Clerk shall:

- Prepare the Town Clerk Report and Board of Registrars Reports for the Annual Town Report.
- Receive and file meeting notices and minutes of all town boards and committees.

#5 – Public Notice Filings

The Town Clerk shall:

- Handle Public Notice Filings.
- Record telephone pole locations.
- Bill for pole locations and collect fees.
- Record, file and index business certificates, and other documents.
- Search for records for the public and furnish certified copies when requested.
- Record and file applications, maps and decisions of the Planning Board.
- Record and maintain files on preliminary and definitive subdivision plans; receive and record decisions of Zoning Board of Appeals and all appeals to such decisions.

#6 – Licenses and Permits

The Town Clerk issues a variety of *State and Town Licenses, Permits and Certificates*, including:

- Burial permits
- Dog licenses, ensuring that vaccination against rabies is current. The Town Clerk is responsible for the notifications, issuance of citations to dog owners, and the collection of all related fees related to late licensing.
- Marriage licenses.
- Business Licenses, as well as informs businesses in the event of license revocation.

And the Town Clerk shall further:

- Provide for adequate maintenance of associated records and the collection of fees
- Maintain cash record book with accounting to the Treasurer (and Accountant) on all fees collected by the office; the cash is turned over to the Treasurer monthly or as frequently as needed along with a monthly report to the Treasurer.

#7 – Information Source

The Town Clerk shall act as the Information Source to the Town departments and to the general public regarding all federal, state, and local regulations and Town bylaws, rules and regulations. The Town Clerk shall serve as Custodian of all Town Records. He/she shall go to court on behalf of the Town when served. He/she has custody of books, reports, and laws received from the Commonwealth.

#8 - Miscellaneous

The Town Clerk shall:

- Administer the Annual Town Census and the Decennial State Census.
- Be responsible for the updating, printing, and mailing of the census and conducts follow-up calls for unreturned census forms.
- Prepare the annual street list.
- Serve as Keeper of the Official Seal of the Town.
- Swear in Election Officials at Town and State elections.
- Administer oaths as necessary to all appointed members of boards and committees, police and fire department personnel, or in the event of appointing an assistant to the Town Clerk, shall also swear in the Assistant Town Clerk. The Town Clerk shall cause a record to be made of the appointments and sworn oaths.
- Ensure that all officials are informed in writing of the state's Ethics, Open Meeting, and Conflict of Interest Laws and track their completion.
- Prepare and oversee the budget for the Town Clerk's office.
- Handle the requisition of all departmental office supplies and equipment, as needed; processes all departmental bills for payment.
- Review and implement new legislation concerning the functions of the office.
- Maintain a professional association with the Massachusetts Town Clerk's Association and other Clerk's organizations.
- Attend Clerk's conferences, meetings and seminars to keep abreast on all activities and responsibilities of the Town Clerk.
- Be responsible for the maintenance and codification of bylaws.
- Inventory and preserve town records.
- Act as a liaison for the public.
- Assist people with filing of necessary forms and documents.
- Respond to a variety of inquiries and questions.
- Perform similar or related work as required.

Recommended Minimum Qualifications:

Education, training and experience:

- Bachelor's Degree is desirable.
- Previous experience as a town clerk or as an assistant town clerk.
- Three to five years' experience in an office setting to acquire familiarity with standard office procedures and records management.
- Equivalent of education and experience may be considered.
- Computer efficiency is a must.

Special Requirements:

- Ability to become bonded
- Ability to become commissioned as a Notary Public
- Valid driver's license

Knowledge, Ability and Skills

Knowledge:

- Willingness/ability to become knowledgeable about state, local and federal statutes and regulations applicable to the duties and responsibilities of a Town Clerk's Office.

- Willingness/ability to become knowledgeable about Town operations.
- Working knowledge of office equipment and the operation of computer software and Internet applications.

Ability:

- Ability to establish and maintain effective and harmonious working relationships with subordinates, town officials, state agencies and the general public.
- Ability to communicate effectively in written and oral form.
- Ability to supervise, delegate and lead subordinates effectively.
- Ability to establish and maintain complex record keeping systems.
- Ability to prioritize multiple tasks and deal effectively with interruptions, often under considerable time pressure.
- Ability to prepare and administer budgets and to prepare financial reports.
- Ability to operate standard office equipment.
- Ability to exercise independent judgment in conducting duties and responsibilities.

Skills:

- Excellent customer service, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Skill in operating computers and utilizing appropriate software applications.
- Excellent organizational skills.
- Skill in all of the above listed tools and equipment.

Physical Requirements

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Regularly required to walk, stand, sit, talk, and hear
- Operate objects, tools, or controls
- Pick up paper, files, and other common office objects.
- Lifts/moves objects weighing up to 30 pounds.
- Ability to view computer screens and work with details for extended periods of time.
- Ability to operate a keyboard and calculator at an efficient speed.

(This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.)

See Appendix I for a complete list of Town Clerk duties required under Massachusetts General Laws.