

Ann Arbor City Council

Annual Performance Evaluation
Howard Lazarus, City Administrator
March 2018

Ann Arbor City Administrator Annual Evaluation

1. Background

a. Under the City Charter, the City Administrator is the administrative agent of the Council and performs the duties of office under its authority and is responsible solely to the Council. The City Administrator's Office is responsible for the executive management of the highly diverse operations of the City of Ann Arbor. The City Administrator provides leadership, vision, and direction to City Departments, implements City Council policy, and works with City Council and administrative staff to craft strategic and financial planning objectives. The City Administrator also serves in a highly visible capacity as an ambassador for the community and to other governmental agencies.

b. As part of the City's contract with the Mr. Howard Lazarus, the Ann Arbor City Administrator, the Ann Arbor City Council is to conduct an annual review of the City Administrator's performance. Mr. Lazarus began his role as the City Administrator in July 2016. This evaluation covers an 18 month period and is his first formal annual review.

2. Evaluation Procedure: The evaluation consisted a self evaluation from Mr. Lazarus; a 360 survey with written comments from past and current direct reports; and an evaluation survey with written comments by past and current City Council members. The evaluation survey for both the Council and direct reports consisted of questions that were scored on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) with only whole number scores possible for each respondent. Final scores for each survey was then averaged. The surveys were conducted electronically. New this year was the ability to provide written comments after each survey question in addition to the space provided at the end. Data from the surveys was analyzed and provided one aspect of input for the final written evaluation. This year there was 100% response rates from Council members and from Mr. Lazarus's direct reports.

3. Evaluation Overview

a. Self-Evaluation

i. As part of Mr. Lazarus's self-evaluation, he provided a cover memo and supporting documentation consisting of a self-evaluation and work plan. In his memo Mr. Lazarus provided a detail written analysis and overview of his performance as a City Administrator and concerns over the past 1 1/2 years. His analysis provided a strategic analysis of key issues, potential problems, and if alternative courses of action.

ii. Mr. Lazarus provided a scored self-evaluation matrix utilizing the same criteria and scoring used by Council members. He scored both by question (except for questions 24 and 25) and then also by criterion category. The criterion categories scored in the self-evaluation are as follows:

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- Professional skills and status
- Relations with council
- Policy execution
- Staffing
- Citizen and community relations, and
- Fiscal management

Mr. Lazarus self-scored himself with excellent and above average ratings in all 23 of the evaluation questions with an overall average of by question/category being a 4.70 on a 5.0 scale. Justification was provided for each of the self-scored questions.

iii. Mr. Lazarus's work plan provided an overview of the significant initiatives, scope, metrics and status of work and issues. Overall, significant progress has been made on ~73% of the individual items, with 1/3 completed. He noted that work indicated as "not progressing as planned," will need to be reviewed in order to determine reasons for the delay or if there is still a requirement for the task.

b. 360 Evaluation Survey

i. Overview: Mr. Lazarus is viewed as a supportive and engaged administrator, manager, and leader in moving the organization forward. Staff recognizes that he has brought many new initiatives forward, but indicated that they want the organization to focus next on implementation. Overall, Mr. Lazarus's direct reports provided constructive comments and rated him in all areas of the evaluation with an overall average score of 3.29 out of 5.0. It should be noted, however, that this figure reflects substantial variation in staff's evaluation. Nevertheless, Mr. Lazarus has indicated that he appreciates the value of all input received and will focus on the areas of greatest concerns to his staff in the coming year.

ii. Summary of General Direct Reports Suggested Areas for Improvement

- To continue to focus on succession planning and transferring work/knowledge from experienced workers to new hires.
- Continue moving forward with developing and implementing performance evaluation measures and clarifying roles and responsibilities for all staff across the organization.
- To better staff and circulate new initiatives internally to ensure requirements and trade-offs are understood before moving forward.
- Continue efforts to improve and implement new strategies for improved internal communications and feedback to help ensure a better connected and engaged staff.

c. City Council Survey

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i. Overview: Council as a whole had favorable comments in regards to Mr. Lazarus's performance. He makes himself accessible to residents, staff, and Council members and has been able to quickly assess and understand the critical issues facing Ann Arbor. His background and experience has brought a new perspective to the City in anticipating, influencing, and solving organizational and municipal problems. Mr. Lazarus has at every opportunity worked to engage with the community and/or persons from Ann Arbor with general feedback received from external sources being positive. Concerns were raised by some Council members that there was a perceived difference in the information provided and response times to requests depending the requestor and issue. Overall Council as a whole gave Mr. Lazarus above average to excellent ratings in 23 of the 25 evaluation questions. He received an average rating of 4.29 out of 5 when converted to a numerical scale and averaged for his overall performance rating by Council for the evaluation period.

ii. Summary of General City Council Suggested Areas for Improvement

- Continue the development of succession planning for all staff sections and departments.
- When requested, advise on possible policy alternatives and associated trade-offs and risks in setting policy and in meeting City/Council goals and objects.
- Continue to take a proactive role in reviewing past resolutions to determine relevance and whether they should continue or be retired.
- It will be important to continue efforts to improve communications with Council members by providing clarity and understanding on programs and issues of interest to Council, especially in areas where there are conflicting views.

4. Performance Summary

a. The Council recognizes that Mr. Lazarus has a challenging task of delivering quality services to residents while also making the needed structural and operational changes necessary to best position the City for continue success in the future. During his tenure, he has continually demonstrated his leadership, management and administrative skills in dealing with the issues of the day while also identifying and implementing solutions designed to improve operations, provide optimal service delivery to the public, enhance the quality-of-life, while also setting the conditions for continued and future success.

b. Mr. Lazarus has worked diligently to build and improve community and external relationships. He has and continues to meet with residents and prominent stakeholders throughout the community while also engaging with our partners at the federal, state, county, and surrounding jurisdictions. His participation and membership on several

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local housing, business, and development organizations has provided a visible presence for the City. This has been essential in strengthening relationships and building trust with residents, neighborhoods, public schools, business, and civic organizations.

c. As noted in the sections above, some concerns were raised by staff and Council. Staff recognizes the need for change and that many new initiatives have started over the past year, but would like to slow the pace of new initiatives to focus on implementation. In addition, staff indicated there is a need for an internal performance review process that improves both communications and feedback. A few Council members raised a concern that not all requests appear to be handled in the same timely and equitable manner. Mr. Lazarus has stated that he takes seriously all the input received and will continue to focus on and work on areas of greatest concern to both staff and Council in the coming year.

d. Council as a whole is appreciative of Mr. Lazarus's work and that of the City staff on behalf the residents of Ann Arbor in sustaining and enhancing a vibrant, safe, and diverse community. His ability to deal with the multiple immediate daily issues while keeping the longer term strategic goals on track has been impressive. In addition, his ability to identify, process, articulate, develop and implement solutions for a wide array of complex problems and issues has been noteworthy. Mr. Lazarus's leadership, professionalism and commitment has been integral in the process to achieving the City's vision, mission, and goals and in keeping the work of local government moving forward.

5. Recommended Goals

a. The most significant challenge facing Mr. Lazarus and the City is the actual and potential retirements and turnover of many skilled and experienced staff members from across all departments and sections. It will be critical to continue succession planning to ensure smooth transitions and the continuity of operations in the eventual retirements of staff.

b. Provide the appropriate resources, management assistance, and professional advice for the establishment and continued operations of a policing commission based on the policy guidance provided by Council.

c. Mr. Lazarus will need to continue to critically evaluate the organization to determine if it is structurally optimized to the delivery of services to the community while also ensuring the city is well positioned to meet the future needs of it's residents. In conjunction with this he will need to develop a strategic staffing model to identify key positions and shortfalls across all departments and staff sections that is integrated with the City's strategic plan and long term budget.

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d. In order to strengthen and improve the relationship between the Council and the City Administrator, continue working to enhance overall communications with Council. This will help in providing greater clarity in setting expectations and improved understanding of the workload and management challenges faced by the City given resource and policy constraints. This will especially important on issues where there are conflicting views among Council members.

e. Continue working with Council members and the City Attorney in developing an improved process in reviewing past resolutions and ordinances to determine requirements, relevance, and whether they should continue or be retired.

f. Continue efforts to implement a review process for staff and new strategies for improved overall internal communications and feedback to ensure a better connected and engaged staff.