

Sub Committee recommendations -

Our interviews have not found evidence of workplace harassment on the part of the Treasurer towards the Clerk. There is evidence of low employee morale and personality conflicts which should be resolved. Comments from those interviewed align that this has been going on since August/September of last year. In conversations there was a consistent theme that staff would like to return to acting as one cohesive unit which they were operating as before August.

To bring cohesiveness back to the office staff we have the following recommendations.

Treasurer Jonathan Hohenstein is known for his very direct, black, and white communication. The feedback received was that this very direct, black, and white approach could be perceived by some as negative. We encourage Treasurer Hohenstein to seek professional training/coaching to help him develop his skillset in this area and soften his approach.

The feedback received was that Clerk Jean Graham tends to lash out to staff as well as residents when she is stressed. Relieving stress and ~~not lashing out~~ focusing on positive interactions with staff and residents would be very beneficial in improving morale within the Township Hall. We encourage Clerk Graham to see professional training/coaching to help her develop this skillset, reduce her stress, and ~~not lash out~~ bring a more positive attitude to interactions with staff and residents.

Supervisor Mike Coddington will take a more hands on presence at the Township Hall, acting as an Office Manager. We believe a more active role by the Supervisor will help drive a more aligned and cohesive office environment. Supervisor Coddington will also take the lead on personnel and human resource concerns. If he is unable to do so, then we recommend an alternative source or person should be sought to fill this void. Along with this thought, we suggest that the Clerk and Treasurer work with the Supervisor freely regarding the day-to-day oversight and personnel decisions of their departments.

Staff have expressed their desire for a better work environment with structure and good workplace practices. Employees of the Township should be given proper breaks throughout the day including a lunch break. Current Labor Law and Workplace Practices should be reviewed with department heads. If something is missing, it should be instituted immediately. A new seating arrangement was suggested by some of the interviewees and might be in order in which the Supervisor could orchestrate.

All three internal department heads are strongly advised to participate in professional motivational, uplifting, common work environment ethical training. Our law firm has suggested one source and we defer to the Supervisor to vet this for the board and bring back some suggested training facilitators.

Final Question to Clerk, Supervisor, and the Treasurer - Do you intend to work together with the other Howell Township elected officials and staff? And in good faith perform your statutory responsibilities for Howell Township?

April 2023