

# Perspectives on Office of the Chief

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# Positions in the Office of the Chief:

- ▶ Chief Engineer - 1/organization
- ▶ Assistant Chief Engineer - 1 needed per owned site with significant operations and size, in my case I have one GS13 at the 900,000 sf site and one GS12 at the 650,000 sf site.
- ▶ ~~Work order clerk~~/Maintenance Controller - Need 1 per organization.
- ▶ Energy Engineer - Need 1 per organization.
- ▶ Secretary/PSA - Secretary/PSA/Admin Officer ratio will vary, I believe 1 secretary/PSA/Admin Officer is required per 65 employees.
- ▶ Budget Technician - Need 1 per organization. Admin Officer - I lump this with the Secretary/PSA, however every Chief Engineer should have an AO who can assist with technical administrative work such as management of the SCIP database, etc.
- ▶ Fleet Manager - Every service should have one to manage the fleet and complete the significant reporting required for fleets in the VA.

# Questions, Cont. -

- ▶ O&M Engineer - Called the maintenance controller position in Canandaigua. I feel it is 100% necessary that this person be an engineer or have significant engineering background.
- ▶ Budget Technician - fiscal requirements that don't exist in the real world -
  - ▶ Purchasing anything of great value (>2500 for services, >10,000 for supplies) has to go through our contracting system.
  - ▶ Anything below the values stated above does not go through contracting, but goes through logistics.
    - ▶ Even for critical items, it is rare we get it same day. Emergency items that are local we can usually get by the next day. We are limited to a maximum of \$250 for shipping charges.
  - ▶ Anything that is over \$300 and pilferable and not attached to the building is categorized as equipment and goes through our equipment committee (think tools/ice machines/backhoe etc).
  - ▶ Some staff have credit cards (our budget tech has a credit card with a \$3,500 limit) - and can purchase up to the limits above and within their credit card limit.
  - ▶ Delinquent Obligations result when purchases are made outside of this process and the path to get payment is long and painful, so asking forgiveness later is not an option.
  - ▶ For emergencies we can get services up to 24 hours before a PO is cut (weekends, last minute problems on Fridays).
- ▶ We currently use total work orders deficient and work orders not completed within timelines as justification of need for additional staff. In an ideal world, our data would not be so coarse. Changes that we need to make to improve our data would include:
  - ▶ A new work order system or staff that are trained/able to use AEMS/MERS system.
  - ▶ We would require the minimum admin staff (PSA/Secretary/Work Order Clerk) discussed above.
  - ▶ Enforce maintenance staff not to do work without a work order (no phone call requests or discussions in the hallway).
  - ▶ Implement work order process more fully in operations areas (boiler plant, etc.)
  - ▶ Better documentation of time spent and materials used/money spent for work order completion.

# Questions, Cont.

- ▶ Federal requirements for an energy engineer include:
  - ▶ Executive Order 13834 - Efficient Federal Operations
  - ▶ Energy Policy Act of 2005
  - ▶ Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA)
  - ▶ We are relatively compliant, however in some areas we lag (production of renewable energy, the biggest one). Our major project and biomass project will bring us into full compliance.
- ▶ Clerical Staff needed:
  - ▶ Per 65 engineering employees, I would say that a minimum of (1) PSA/Secretary is required.
- ▶ Training available:
  - ▶ VA provides a multitude of training opportunities to staff. There are a number of online training opportunities through the VA and other parts of the Federal Government. Records requirements:
  - ▶ Different types of records must be maintained for different periods of time, then they may be destroyed. This varies per record. We are supposed to get rid of records once the timeline has elapsed. Very exhaustive paperwork on this.
- ▶ Reports generated by the office of the Chief:
  - ▶ There are many varied reports that have to be done by engineering to support VA and Federal requirements -In my opinion, these reports often are duplicative, and it is hard to understand why VA does not have a central reporting system so that we do not have to do reporting on things that others have reported on (CAPRES a good example).

# What impact does each of the below programs have on office of the Chief Positions?.

- ▶ A note - at one of my sites the PSA does all timekeeping...therefore the PSA is very involved in support of all engineering sections and has daily work as part of their support.
- ▶ A second note - All discipline initiates in the office of the chief engineer.
  - ▶ Projects - The Assistant Chief supervises projects section at my sites. The Projects section has great impact on the budget technician, the PSA, the assistant Chief, and the Chief Engineer in the management and support of projects. Projects also impact the maintenance manager when new equipment requiring PM is installed during a project.
  - ▶ M&O (Carpentry/Masonry/Plumbing/Electrical/HVAC/Etc) - At my sites, the Assistant Chief manages these shop supervisors. These sections impact the PSA (timekeeping, work order entry, PM entry), the budget clerk for purchasing and budgeting, and the maintenance manager the most in terms of support required.
  - ▶ Biomed - Biomed requires support by the PSA (timekeeping/work order and PM) and the maintenance manager, and the budget clerk for purchasing and budgeting.
  - ▶ Safety - Safety does not report to engineering at my sites.
  - ▶ Grounds - During winter, there is significant interaction with grounds when inclement weather threatens operations or requires support beyond our resources. Otherwise they require some support from the PSA and the Budget Clerk, but very little in general.
  - ▶ Transportation - Transportation department requires some support of the PSA, and of course the fleet manager, and to some extent the budget tech.
  - ▶ Fire Department - Fire department requires some PSA support and some budget tech support.
  - ▶ Boiler Plant - Boiler Plant oversight and management requirements in VA have drastically increased in recent years. While my boiler plant staff are very strong at operating a boiler plant, setting procedure and following code requirements is not their strength, and has resulted in significant amounts of my time being required. Otherwise, Boiler plant impacts the budget tech occasionally, and the PSA for timekeeping.
  - ▶ Wastewater Treatment - The DEC has monthly monitoring requirements that must be signed by facility leadership (which ends up being me).....so I must remain relatively involved.
  - ▶ Housekeeping - Housekeeping requires lots of time from the Chief Engineer (lots of production concerns, hiring, and discipline). Housekeeping is very timekeeping heavy, requiring significant work by the PSA's, and requires support from the budget tech.

- Inspections are exhaustive, and come with more and more frequency. Keeping track of the different requirements, timelines, and providing necessary reporting for all of these disparate organizations is a heavy load. I would say this is one of the areas that my Admin Officer staffing could be increased to accommodate.
- Project workload - Project workload is usually at the limit of my staff to support. I become very involved in helping to move decision making along, provide final review, and review project completion. The devil is in the details, and there are many, many details.
- Service Quality - I expect that the phone will be answered 24/7. I don't want a nurse unable to provide care because they are worrying about an overflowing toilet somewhere. Daytime engineering, evening the dispatch and fire department or AOD.

## Committees (all monthly unless noted otherwise).

### ▶ Chief Engineer Co-Chairs with Associate Director:

- ▶ Space Committee - 8 hrs/month - meeting/verification/planning
- ▶ Construction Safety and Project Committee - 3 hrs/month
- ▶ Water Safety Committee (quarterly, however requires more frequent meetings nearly every quarter) - 2 hours/month.
- ▶ Environment of Care Committee (Safety committee) - 4 hours/month.

### ▶ Chief Engineer Chairs

- ▶ Engineering Staff Meeting - 3 hours a month
- ▶ Relocations Committee Meeting - 6 hours a month.

▶ Note: All meetings that I chair or co-chair are supported administratively by the secretary or the admin assistant. Minutes/agenda's/follow up/etc.

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Information Collection and Evaluation Committee - Does not exist?

Union Management Committee (Bargaining committee is not one CE is on)

Human Resource Review Board - Does not exist?

## ► Chief Engineer is a Member of

- Strategic Planning Committee - 1 hr/month
  - GEMS Committee - 1 hr/month
  - Emergency Preparedness Committee - 1 hr/month
  - Readiness Committee (JC/QA committee) - 2 hr/month
  - Resource Committee - 4 hr/month
  - Infection Control Committee (usually delegated) - 1 hr/month
  - VISN Chief Engineer Committee - 3 hr/month
  - Service Line Committee (Associate Director Council) - 1 hr/month
  - Director Staff Meeting - 1 hr/month
  - Daily Morning Report - 15 hr/month
  - EOC Rounds (Administrative Rounds) (often delegated) - 5 hr/month
  - Equipment Committee - 2 hr/month
- Chief Engineer attends as needed:
- AE Meetings for projects - Varies, est. 3 hrs/month
  - Fact finding/Administrative Boards of Investigation - Varies, est. 2 hrs/month
  - Escorts Inspectors - Varies.....
- Provides all disciplinary actions and hears grievances...Varies, est. 6 hrs/month