



Office of the Town Manager
Christopher E. Martino

STAFF REPORT

Warrenton Town Council
Carter Nevill, Mayor
Roy Francis, Ward 1
William Semple, Ward 2
Larry Kovalik, Ward 3
Michele O'Halloran, Ward 4
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5
Paul Mooney, At Large
David McGuire, At Large

Council Meeting Date:	February 10, 2026
Agenda Title:	Town Attorney & Town Manager Staffing Status
Requested Action:	Town Attorney & Town Manager Staffing Way Forward
Department / Agency Lead:	Human Capital & Risk
Staff Lead:	Kasey Braun, Director of Human Capital & Risk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This staff report provides an overview of the Town's current progress and next steps in the hiring processes for the Town Attorney and Town Manager positions.

BACKGROUND

The previous Town Manager, Mr. Frank Cassidy, was separated from employment on October 14, 2025. Subsequently, Town Attorney Mr. Peterson submitted notice of his departure, effective December 31, 2025. These vacancies created an immediate need to fill both positions.

Since October 14, 2025, the following staffing actions have occurred:

- Stephanie Miller was appointed Acting Town Manager, effective November 16, 2025.
- Christopher Martino was appointed Interim Town Manager at the January 13, 2026 Town Council meeting and began on January 15, 2026, under a 90-day agreement, with the option to extend by mutual agreement.
- Mr. Dycio was appointed Interim Town Attorney on December 9, 2026; however, he withdrew his candidacy for personal reasons.
- Mr. Philip Strother was appointed Interim Town Attorney by Town Council on January 13, 2026, under a 90-day agreement and began serving during the evening session of that meeting.

The Town's priority remains the recruitment of a permanent Town Manager and Town Attorney. At the January 13, 2026 Town Council meeting, Council approved engaging the Berkley Group to conduct the permanent Town Manager recruitment. The Berkley Group will meet with Town Council in a Special Session to initiate the search process. In addition, Human Capital will continue to provide Town Council with any new Town Attorney options for consideration as firms are identified or express interest.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for informational purposes only.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

Establishing a clear staffing plan for the Town Attorney and Town Manager is necessary to ensure continuity of operations, maintain legal compliance, and provide stable leadership. This action supports the Town Council's priorities and promotes transparent, effective governance during the transition period.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

Ability to meet the plan directives.

Fiscal Impact

1. **Town Attorney Transition & Hiring Costs.** These costs include interim legal coverage during the transition.
 - > Chap Petersen & Associates will continue to bill until the full transition is complete. Additionally, any ongoing cases being handled by Mr. Petersen or Mr. Corish will continue to incur costs until those matters conclude.

2. **Town Manager Transition & Hiring Costs.** These costs will represent a significant budget increase. They include:
 - > The severance package for Frank Cassidy
 - > Headhunter fees for the recruitment of permanent Town Manager
 - > Compensation for the interim Town Manager during the search period

Additionally, the Budget Manager has put forth a resolution requesting the following: *that the Warrenton Town Council Hereby amends the Fiscal Year 2026 Adopted Budget to appropriate a total of \$153,064 from the General Fund unassigned fund balance and the Water & Sewer Fund unrestricted cash balance. \$25,000 will fund the executive search, \$88,800 to fund the Interim Town Manager position, and \$39,264 to fund the leave pay out of the former Town Manager.*

Legal Impact

Unknown, but specifically not having a permanent Town Attorney, the Town may be exposed to, but not limited to:

- > Legal noncompliance and litigation exposure
- > Slower and less informed decision-making
- > Weakened governance and policy integrity
- > Higher financial and reputational costs

ATTACHMENTS
