



## BUILDING, SAFETY & ZONING DEPARTMENT

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## MEMO

**To:** City of Watertown Finance Committee

**From:** Brian Zirbes, Zoning Administrator

**Date:** June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**RE:** Options for filling/replacing the Building Inspector Position

The City of Watertown's Building Inspector is retiring at the end of 2024 and I am seeking direction from the committee on the best approach to fill this position. In preparation for this pending retirement, I have prepared two replacement options for consideration. Option A is the replacement of the Building Inspector as an internal City employee and Option B is the replacement of the Building Inspector with contracted building inspection services. Attached to this memo is a listing of pros and cons for both options. Also attached is a building permit fee comparison. The fee comparison shows how the current City fees for a hypothetical new residential home and a commercial building remodel compare to the fees required by contracted inspectors. The comparison also provides information on the existing fees collected by some nearby communities. In addition, attached are some proposed organizational charts for Building, Safety, and Zoning based upon the two Building Inspector replacement options and the staffing needed to cover the additional responsibilities currently performed by the Building Inspector.

Sincerely,  
Brian Zirbes

Zoning and Floodplain Administrator  
Building, Safety and Zoning

Enclosures

Building Inspection Options - 2025															
Option A		Option B													
Internal Staff Building Inspection		Contracted Building Inspection Services													
Pros:		Pros:													
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quick timely inspections.</li><li>• Inspectors are available in office most days.</li><li>• Permit fees do not have to be increased (can be if desired to generate more revenue).</li><li>• Staff available to assist with other office duties.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Code administration assistance, fence, sheds, signs, pools, chickens, etc.</li><li>○ Complaints/violations.</li><li>○ Cover office during absences of other staff.</li></ul></li><li>• Institutional knowledge of the City and it's operations.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No staff expenses.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ salaries, fringe, training, computers etc.</li></ul></li><li>• Reduced vehicle expenses.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ fuel, repairs, replacement vehicles, etc.</li></ul></li><li>• Potential revenue from permit fees.</li><li>• Staff turnover issues eliminated.</li><li>• All building inspection certifications available.</li></ul>													
Cons:		Cons:													
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staffing costs.</li><li>• Vehicle expenses.</li><li>• Extremely difficult to recruit and retain staff with Building Inspection certifications. Pay rates below average (increased fees could help increase pay rates).</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potentially longer waits to get an inspection.</li><li>• Inspectors will have more limited office hours.</li><li>• Higher permit fees. Fees will need to be raised.</li><li>• No staff available to assist with other office duties.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Code administration assistance, fence, sheds, signs, pools, chickens, etc.</li><li>○ Cover office during absences of other staff.</li></ul></li><li>• BS&amp;Z office staffing will be minimal. There <b>will be</b> times no one is in the office.</li></ul>													
Cost Structure:		Cost Structure:													
<table><tr><td><u>Position</u></td><td><u>Salary and Finge 2024 Budgeted</u></td></tr><tr><td>• Building Inspector FT</td><td>\$115,096</td></tr><tr><td>• Assistant Building Inspector PT (Plumbing)</td><td>\$22,858</td></tr><tr><td>• Assistant Building Inspector PT (Electrical)</td><td>\$8,716</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><b><u>Total 2024 Budgeted Inspection Staff Costs</u></b></td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><b>\$146,670</b></td></tr></table>		<u>Position</u>	<u>Salary and Finge 2024 Budgeted</u>	• Building Inspector FT	\$115,096	• Assistant Building Inspector PT (Plumbing)	\$22,858	• Assistant Building Inspector PT (Electrical)	\$8,716	<b><u>Total 2024 Budgeted Inspection Staff Costs</u></b>		<b>\$146,670</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All building inspections are contracted with fees split between contractor and City.</li><li>• No costs to the City.</li></ul>	
<u>Position</u>	<u>Salary and Finge 2024 Budgeted</u>														
• Building Inspector FT	\$115,096														
• Assistant Building Inspector PT (Plumbing)	\$22,858														
• Assistant Building Inspector PT (Electrical)	\$8,716														
<b><u>Total 2024 Budgeted Inspection Staff Costs</u></b>															
<b>\$146,670</b>															
<p>*These figures would be approximate revenue gains for the City due to no longer having Building Inspection staff salary and fringe to pay. % will vary by contractor. Higher fees will result in higher revenues for the City. ➡</p>		EXAMPLE:	EXAMPLE:												
		<u>2023 fees collected:</u>	<u>2022 fees collected:</u>												
		Building \$71,210	Building \$80,730												
		Electric \$29,067	Electric \$34,367												
		HVAC \$30,975	HVAC \$28,784												
		Plumbing \$11,927	Plumbing \$11,552												
		<b>TOTAL \$143,179</b>	<b>TOTAL \$155,403</b>												
<b><u>40% of 2023 fees</u></b>	<b><u>40% of 2022 fees</u></b>														
<b>\$57,272*</b>	<b>\$62,161*</b>														
<b><u>30% of 2023 fees</u></b>	<b><u>30% of 2022 fees</u></b>														
<b>\$42,954*</b>	<b>\$46,621*</b>														
<b><u>20% of 2023 fees</u></b>	<b><u>20% of 2022 fees</u></b>														
<b>\$28,636*</b>	<b>\$31,080*</b>														
<b><u>10% of 2023 fees</u></b>	<b><u>10% of 2022 fees</u></b>														
<b>\$14,318*</b>	<b>\$15,540*</b>														

# Residential Permit Fee Comparison:

## Current City of Watertown Fees:

4,181 SF New Residential Home Construction:

Res. Plan Approval Fee:	\$55.00
Inspection Fee:	\$1,045.25 (4,181 x \$0.25/sf)
State Seal Fee:	\$40.00
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$25.00</u>
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$1,165.25</b>

1 & 2 Family Erosion Control \$0 – No current City fee for this.

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

Electric	\$160.43	(4,181 sf x \$0.03/sf + \$35 Admin. Fee – Min. \$105 Fee)
Plumbing	\$160.43	(4,181 sf x \$0.03/sf + \$35 Admin. Fee – Min. \$105 Fee)
HVAC	<u>\$160.43</u>	(4,181 sf x \$0.03/sf + \$35 Admin. Fee – Min. \$105 Fee)
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$481.29</b>	

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:** **\$1,646.54**

## Proposed General Engineering Fees:

4,181 SF New Residential Home Construction:

Res. Plan Approval Fee:	\$55.00	(Current City Fee carried forward, not a GEC fee)
Inspection Fee:	\$1,170.68	(4,181 x \$0.28/sf – Min. Fee \$770)
State Seal Fee:	\$40.00	
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$25.00</u>	(Current City Fee carried forward, not a GEC fee)
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$1,290.68</b>	

1 & 2 Family Erosion Control \$0 - No current City fee for this.

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

Electric	\$150.00
Plumbing	\$105.00
HVAC	<u>\$105.00</u>
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$360.00</b>

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:** **\$1,650.68 + \$330.14 (20% for City Administrative Fee) = \$1,980.82**

## Fees in the City of Hartford:

4,181 SF New Residential Home Construction:

Res. Plan Approval Fee:	\$ 55.00	
Inspection Fee:	\$1,463.35	(4,181 x \$0.35/sf)
State Seal Fee:	\$ 40.00	
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$ 60.00</u>	
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$ 1,618.35</b>	

1 & 2 Family Erosion Control \$175  
Zoning Permit Fee \$100

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

Electric	\$275.86 (\$0.06/sf + \$25/unit)
Plumbing	\$275.86 (\$0.06/sf + \$25/unit)
HVAC	<u>\$275.86 (\$0.06/sf + \$25/unit)</u>
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$827.58</b>

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:** **\$2,720.93**

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**Fees in the City of Oconomowoc:**

4,181 SF New Residential Home Construction:

Res. Plan Approval Fee:	\$100.00
Inspection Fee:	\$1,254.30 (4,181 x \$0.30/sf)
State Seal Fee:	\$40.00
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$0.00</u>
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$1,394.30</b>

1 & 2 Family Erosion Control \$0 – No current City fee for this.

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

Electric	\$300.86	(4,181 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$50 Base Fee – Min. \$70 Fee)
Plumbing	\$300.86	(4,181 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$50 Base Fee – Min. \$70 Fee)
HVAC	<u>\$300.86</u>	(4,181 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$50 Base. Fee – Min.\$70 Fee)
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$902.58</b>	

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:     \$2,296.88**

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**Fees in the Town of Lake Mills:**

4,181 SF New Residential Home Construction:

Res. Plan Approval Fee:	\$250.00
Inspection Fee:	\$1,546.97 (4,181 x \$0.37/sf) \$100 minimum)
State Seal Fee:	\$40.00 (Current City Fee carried forward, not a Town of Lake Mills fee)
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$55.00 (per dwelling unit)</u>
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$1,891.97</b>

1 & 2 Family Erosion Control \$0 – No current City fee for this.

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

Electric	\$320.86	(4,181 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$70 Base Fee)
Plumbing	\$320.86	(4,181 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$70 Base Fee)
HVAC	<u>\$320.86</u>	(4,181 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$70 Base Fee)
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$962.58</b>	

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:     \$2,854.55**

# Commercial Permit Fee Comparison:

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## Current City of Watertown Fees:

976 SF Commercial Remodel – NO state approval (plan approval completed in-house):

Comm. Plan Approval Fee:	\$250.00**
Inspection Fee:	\$244.00 (976 x \$0.25/sf)
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$0</u>
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$494.00</b>

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

Electric	\$105	(976 x \$0.03/sf + \$35 Admin. Fee – Min. \$105 Fee)
Plumbing	\$105	(976 sf x \$0.03/sf + \$35 Admin. Fee – Min. \$105 Fee)
HVAC	<u>\$105</u>	(976 sf x \$0.03/sf + \$35 Admin. Fee – Min. \$105 Fee)
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$315</b>	

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:     \$809.00**

**\*\* = City of Watertown currently can review projects up to 50,000 square feet total. Above that square footage, plans must be reviewed at state level. For any plans reviewed at the state level, the City of Watertown plan review fee is \$105.**

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## Proposed General Engineering Fees:

976 SF Commercial Remodel – NO state approval (plan approval completed in-house):

Comm. Plan Approval Fee:	\$250.00 (Current City Fee carried forward, not a GEC fee)**
Inspection Fee:	\$250.00 (\$0.12/sf – min. fee of \$250)
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$0</u>
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

Electric	\$200.00	(976 x \$0.07/sf – Min. \$200 Fee)
Plumbing	\$150.00	(976 x \$0.07/sf – Min. \$150 Fee)
HVAC	<u>\$150.00</u>	(976 x \$0.07/sf – Min. \$150 Fee)
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$500</b>	

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:     \$1,000.00 + \$200.00 (20% for City Administrative Fee) = \$1,200.00**

**\*\* = GEC is able to review all plans regardless of square footage.**

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## Fees in the City of Hartford:

976 SF Commercial Remodel - NO state approval (plan approval completed in-house):

Comm. Plan Approval Fee:	\$200.00 (if less than 50,000 square feet)**
Inspection Fee:	\$341.60 (\$0.35/sf – min. fee of \$55)
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$180/unit</u>
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$721.60</b>

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

Electric	\$83.56	(976 x \$0.06/sf + \$25/unit)
Plumbing	\$83.56	(976 x \$0.06/sf + \$25/unit)
HVAC	<u>\$83.56</u>	(976 x \$0.06/sf + \$25/unit)
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$250.68</b>	

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:     \$972.28**

**\*\*=City of Hartford currently can review projects up to 50,000 square feet total. Above that square footage, plans must be reviewed at state level.**

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**Fees in the City of Oconomowoc:**

976 SF Commercial Remodel – NO state approval (plan approval completed in-house):

Comm. Plan Approval Fee:	\$250.00	(Current City of Watertwn Fee carried forward, not a City of Oconomoooc fee)**
Inspection Fee:	\$3,600	(\$8/\$1,000 in valuation, \$75 minimum) *The estimated value for this example was \$450,000
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$0</u>	
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$3,850</b>	

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

Electric	\$108.56	(976 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$50 Base Fee – Min. \$70 Fee)
Plumbing	\$108.56	(976 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$50 Base Fee – Min. \$70 Fee)
HVAC	<u>\$108.56</u>	(976 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$50 Base Fee – Min. \$70 Fee)
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$325.68</b>	

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:     \$4,175.68**

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**Fees in the Town of Lake Mills:**

976 SF Commercial Remodel – NO state approval (plan approval completed in-house):


Comm. Plan Approval Fee:	\$250.00	
Inspection Fee:	\$361.12	(\$.37/sf min. \$175)
Occupancy Permit:	<u>\$215.00</u>	
<b>Total Bldg. Permit Fees</b>	<b>\$826.12</b>	

Plus mechanical fees as listed below:

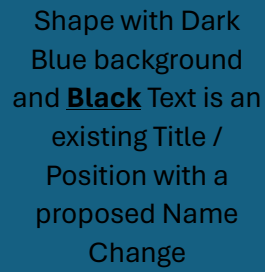
Electric	\$128.56	(976 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$70 Base Fee)
Plumbing	\$128.56	(976 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$70 Base Fee)
HVAC	<u>\$128.56</u>	(976 sf x \$0.06/sf + \$70 Base Fee)
<b>Total Mech.</b>	<b>\$385.68</b>	

**Total Bldg. & Mechanical Fees:     \$1,211.80**

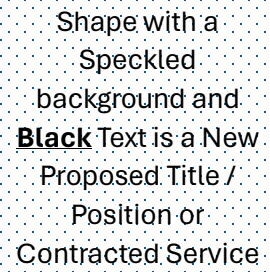
## Organizational Chart Key

A dark blue rounded square with a thin black border.

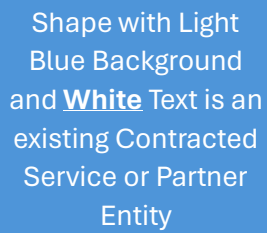
Shape with Dark Blue Background and **White** Text is an existing Title / Position

A dark blue rounded square with a thin black border.

Shape with Dark Blue background and **Black** Text is an existing Title / Position with a proposed Name Change

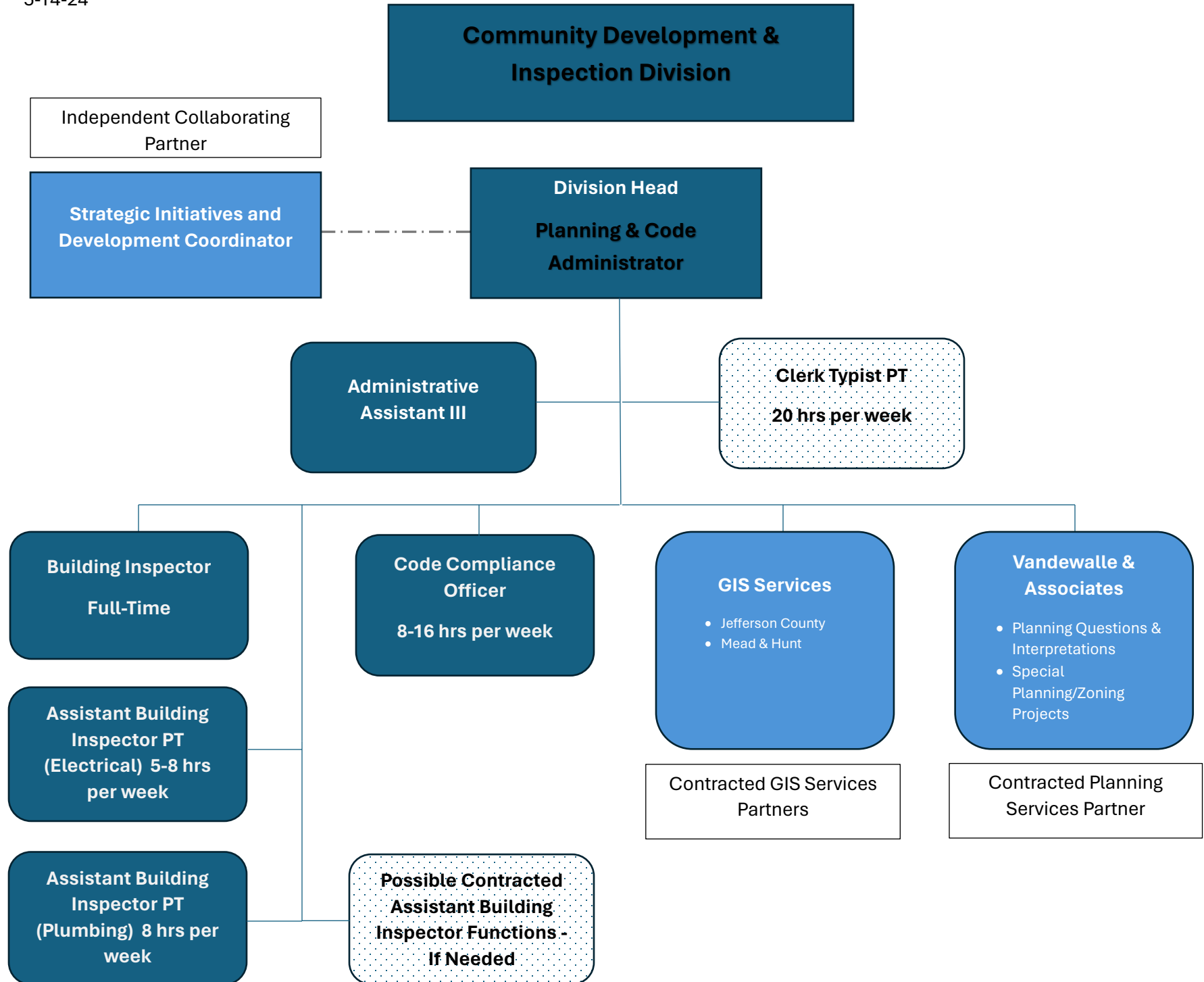
A white rounded square with a thin black border and a light blue speckled pattern.

Shape with a Speckled background and **Black** Text is a New Proposed Title / Position or Contracted Service

A light blue rounded square with a thin black border.

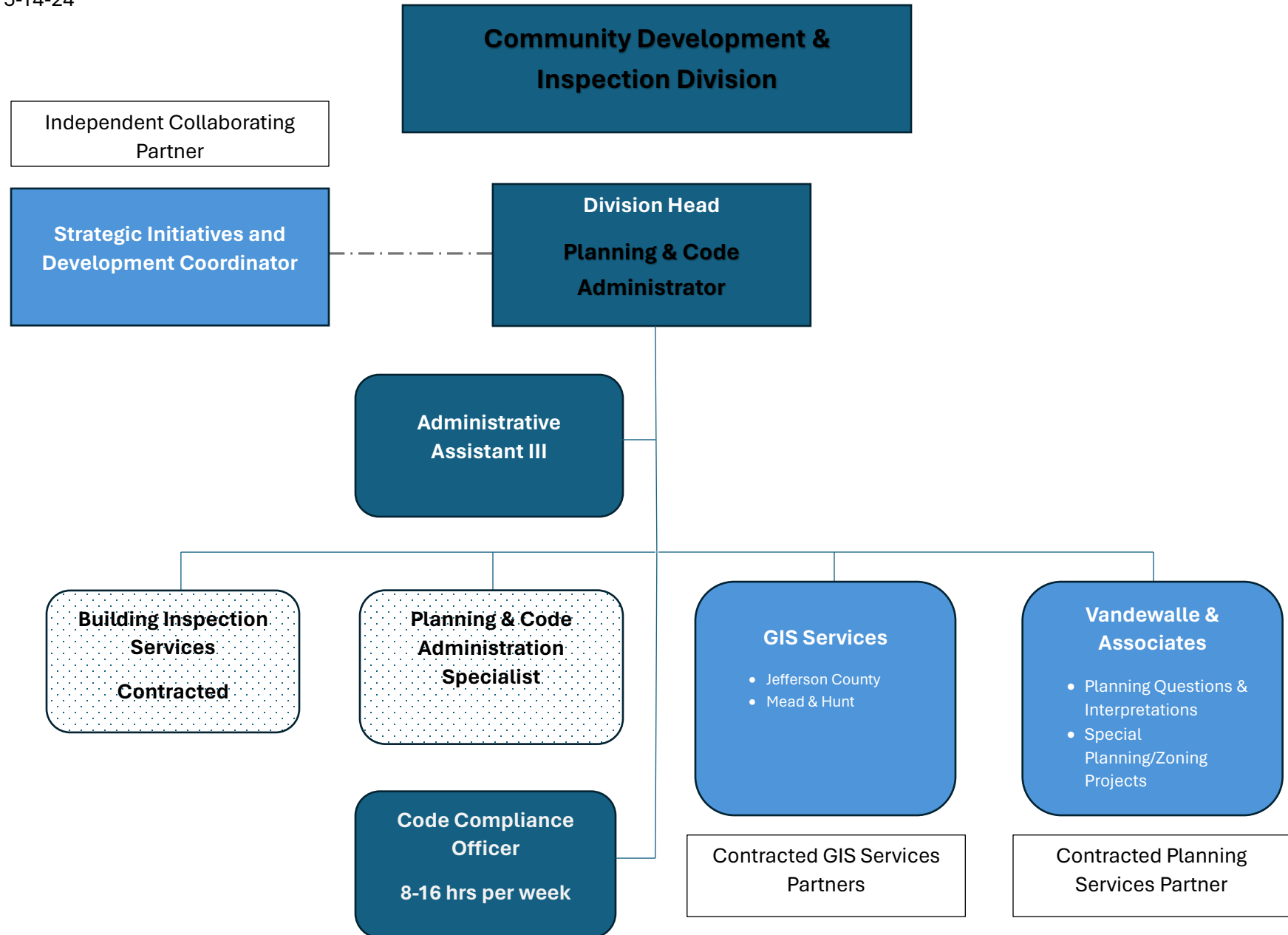
Shape with Light Blue Background and **White** Text is an existing Contracted Service or Partner Entity

5-14-24

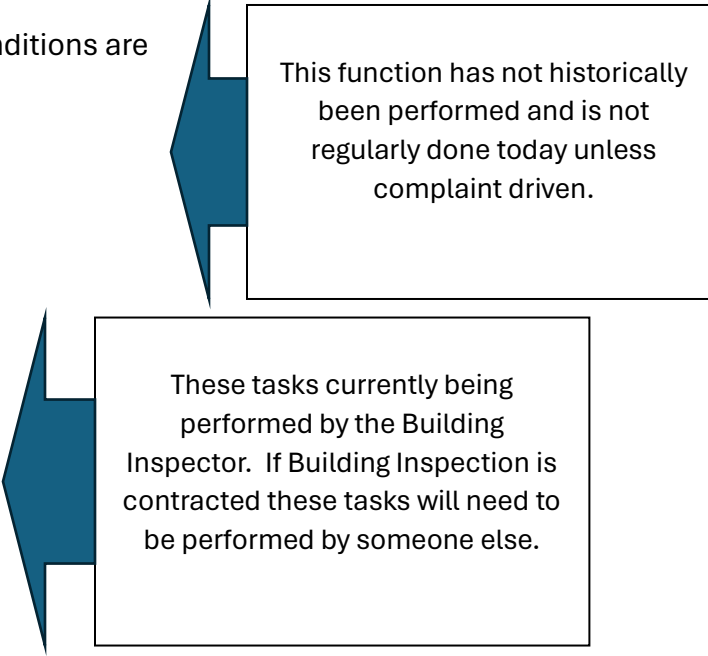




5-14-24



## Planning and Code Administration Specialist Roles

- Assist with Development Inquiries
    - Counter/Phone/Email
  - Assist with Code Administration/Enforcement
    - Field verifies Rezoning/CUP Conditions are being met.
      - Landscaping
      - Lighting
      - Etc.
    - Fence/Retaining Wall Permits
    - Sign Permits
    - Accessory Structure Permits
    - Chickens/ Coop Permits
    - Pool Permits
    - Others
  - Assists Code Enforcement Officer with complaints and compliance.
- 
- Assist with Planning Projects (some contracted projects could be done in-house).
    - Recent Examples: Multi/Unknown Zoning and Overlay Zoning correction projects contracted out to Vandewalle (project costs \$7,000 and \$9,500 respectively).
  - Assist with CUPs, Successor CUPs, rezonings – freed up administrative assistant time.
    - Assist with drafting and review of documents for recording at ROD after approval by the Plan Commission.
  - Building Address Administration – freed up administrative assistant time.
  - CRS Coordinator Duties – freed up administrative assistant time.
  - Alternate for Site Plan and Plan Commission.
  - Provides office presence when others are out.