

Organizational Culture Assessment

Final Current Environment Assessment Report and
Prioritized List of Key Recommendations

Final



Submitted by:

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Table i: Version History of the Report

Version	Delivered Date	Update Reason
Draft 1	June 14, 2023	Draft 1 delivered to Town Project Sub-Group for review
Draft 2	July 11, 2023	Draft 2 delivered to Town Project Sub-Group for review
Draft 3	July 14, 2023	Draft 3 delivered to Town Project Sub-Group for review
Final	July 18, 2023	Final Report delivered to Town Council for review

1.0 Introduction

This section of the report will describe the background of the project, the format of the report, and key terms and abbreviations used.

1.1 Project Background

The Town of Cromwell (Town) retained Berry Dunn McNeil & Parker (BerryDunn) for an Organizational Culture assessment including:

- An analysis of the work environment
- An analysis of the Town's current function and ability to be a high performing organization
- An analysis of Town and department policies and practices that contribute to the culture, norms, values, or other factors that may drive behavior and performance in the organization
- Recommendations based on best practices to maximize the health of the organization's culture and its alignment to maximize outcomes

As reflected in the Town's Request for Proposals (RFP), "the overarching purpose of this assessment is to assure that the Town's culture, environment, policies, practices, values, norms, and performance are aligned with its mission to be an employer of choice and an organization achieving community excellence."

1.2 Report Format

This report is comprised of five sections, as described below:

1. **Introduction.** This section describes the background of the project, the format of the report, terms and definitions, and work performed in the development of the report.
2. **Work Performed.** This section describes the work performed to date.
3. **Current State Summary.** This section describes the Town's organizational structure and relevant policies, procedures, and regulatory compliance.
4. **Findings and Recommendations.** This section summarizes and categorizes key findings and related recommendations.
5. **Conclusion.** This section contains BerryDunn's conclusions.
6. **Next Steps.** This section contains recommended next steps for the Town's consideration based on the data presented.

1.3 Terms Definitions

For purposes of clarity when discussing this project, the following terms and related definitions may be utilized.

Table 1.1: Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
BerryDunn	Berry Dunn McNeil & Parker, LLC
Town	Town of Cromwell, CT
Issue	A point or matter in question or in dispute, a point or matter that is not settled and is under discussion, or a point or matter over which there are opposing views or disagreements.
PM	Project Manager
PMT	Town's Project Management Team
Survey	Culture assessment survey distributed by BerryDunn
Values	Fundamental beliefs that help organizations determine if they are on the right path toward fulfilling their goals.
SME	Subject Matter Expert
Stakeholders	Any employee, Town leader, elected official who provided input during the process
Town Leaders or Town Leadership	This statement includes council members, the Town Manager, department heads, and supervisory staff

2.0 Work Performed

This section of the report summarizes work performed to date.

2.1 Work Performed

In November 2022 BerryDunn conducted an initial project planning meeting with the Town's Project Management Team (PMT) including the Town Manager Anthony (Tony) Salvatore, Mayor Steve Fortenbach, Executive Assistant Sherry McGuire, and now former Finance Director, Marianne Sylvester, to clarify project goals and objectives, identify known project constraints, and refine dates and tasks.

As inputs to the assessment, BerryDunn:

- Reviewed documents provided by the Town and employees
- Reviewed the Town's public internet site
- Received questions and comments via email, fax, and phone
- Distributed a survey all to employees and council members to be completed voluntarily
- Interviewed all council members and the town manager
- Offered and conducted voluntary interviews with employees.
- Observed town activity and physical spaces
- Reviewed recorded council meetings

These inputs informed BerryDunn's current state summary, key findings, and recommendations.

2.2 Survey Methodology

The survey included 13 questions based on input from the Town's manager, finance director, HR coordinator, and mayor and BerryDunn's experience conducting similar assessments. BerryDunn issued a survey to the Town in which 13 multiple choice questions were asked with the following answer choices: "strongly agree," "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." All survey questions were positively phrased, meaning responses of "strongly agree" or "agree" would indicate positive sentiment about the area; whereas responding "strongly disagree" and "disagree" would indicate negative sentiment. Two open ended questions were included. (See Appendix A for survey questions.) BerryDunn manually reviewed open-ended question responses and identified, analyzed, and interpreted patterns of meaning.

The survey opened on January 17, 2023, and closed February 6, 2023 (the close date was extended once). At the survey's opening, 113 employee emails and seven council members were sent a link to complete the survey. A printable version of the survey and a printable flyer with instructions to access the survey were distributed with the mail. Paper survey forms were also available at the Town's police department and HR office along with postage-paid envelopes.

No demographic information was requested as part of the survey; however, some respondents recorded names on their survey responses. Eighty-four surveys were returned, reflecting a 70% return rate¹.

2.3 Interviews

Interviews were offered to all current employees and council members February 20, 2023 – March 10, 2023. Thirty-nine interviews were conducted in person and by phone. Twenty-eight percent of employees and 100% of council members delivered input in person or by phone. One Union Representative (not counted as an interviewee) was present during an interview with Town employees; however, this representative did not provide input to the assessment.

2.4 Observations and Records Review

During the culture assessment, BerryDunn interacted informally with employees while on-site, reviewed Town records (including documents, public information, and council meeting recordings), and observed interactions and physical spaces.

2.5 Findings and Recommendations Review

BerryDunn's draft findings were delivered to a sub-group for review before recommendations were presented. The sub-group prioritized BerryDunn's recommendations (see Appendix G) based on level of effort.

¹ Due to anonymity, it cannot be determined whether the surveys submitted were from 84 separate individuals.

3.0 Current State Summary

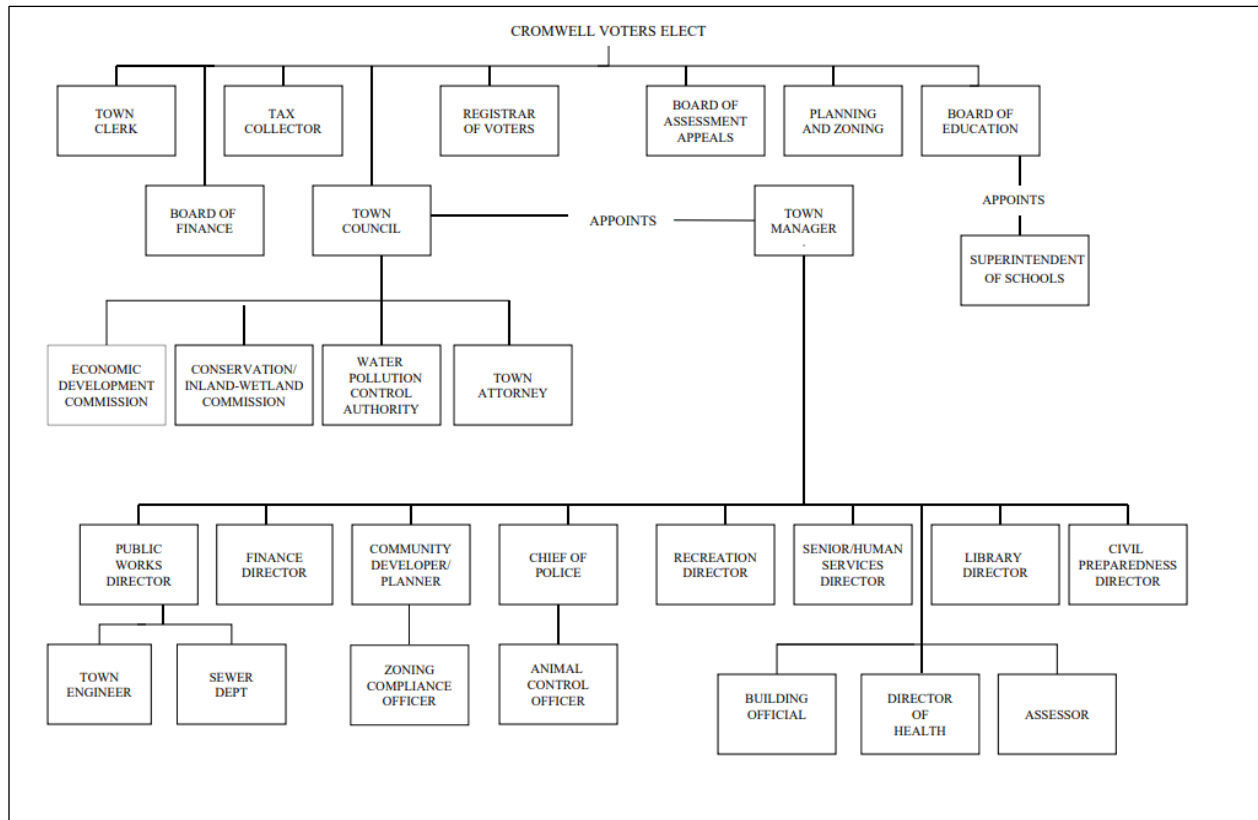
This section describes the Town's organizational structure and relevant policies, procedures, and regulatory compliance.

3.1 Organizational Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities

The Town of Cromwell operates under a Town Charter adopted November 8, 2011. As of November 2013, the Town functions as a council/manager structure. The town council is comprised of six council members and a mayor. The town manager serves the town council and is the chief executive officer of the Town. In that role, the manager is responsible for all day-to-day operations, helps to ensure that the Town complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies, and advises the council on the Town's financial condition and well-being.

The Town provides a wide range of services to the public and has 121 authorized positions at the assessment start date (details of employee numbers by Department in Appendix E). Below is the Town's most recent organizational chart as presented in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Statement for Fiscal Year 2022.

Figure 3.1: Cromwell Town Organizational Chart²



The Town does not have a Human Resources (HR) Director position. The town manager provides HR services along with a part-time HR generalist and support from a full-time executive assistant.

Specific to personnel, the Charter requires the town manager to prepare personnel rules “which shall provide, among other things, for the method of holding competitive examinations, probationary periods of employment, hours of work, vacations, sick leaves and other leaves of absence, removals and such other rules as may be necessary to provide an adequate and systematic procedure for the administration of the personnel affairs of the Town.” The town manager reports the employee handbook serves as personnel rules. The current employee handbook is dated 2007, was last revised in 2009, and predates the current Council/Manager

² The Town Manager indicates the position of “Civil Preparedness Director” is now the “Emergency Management Director.”

form of government. The town manager's office reports the employee handbook is under review and revision, and this effort has been underway for approximately two years.

The Charter also specifies that the town manager shall "periodically review and revise job descriptions of Town officers and employees and make recommendations for improving the organization and staffing of Town departments, offices and agencies." The town manager's office reports it is currently updating all job descriptions with an independent consultant. It appears the last changes to job descriptions may have been in 2002.

The Town does not have internal IT staff. IT services are provided by a contractor³. The Town's public-facing website uses a "dot com" URL.

3.2 Policies, Procedures, and Regulatory Compliance

Memoranda (memos) signed by the town manager are distributed to employees to advise staff on policies, updates, and procedures. Below is a list of documents received from the town manager's office and reviewed by BerryDunn⁴:

1. Confidentiality Agreement (undated)
2. Affirmative Action Policy (3/2/23)
3. Pregnancy Accommodation Policy (undated)
4. Cromwell Retirement Plan (3/22/2002)
5. Dispatcher Contract (7/1/20 – 6/30/2023)
6. Economic Development Guidelines (2/13/2019)
7. Emergency Evacuation Plan (revised 8/2019)
8. Employee Handbook (revised 5/13/2009)
9. Memorandum of Agreement Use of Concurrent Paid Sick Time for FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) Caregiver Leave (11/14/22)
10. Police Union Contract (7/1/20 – 6/30/2023)
11. Town of Cromwell Elected and Appointed Officials Ethics Statement (undated)
12. United Public Service Employees Union Contract (7/1/2022 – 7/30/2025)
13. Liability-Auto-Property Incident Reporting Guidelines (9/2016)
14. Purchasing Policy (undated)
15. Dental Plan Contribution Reduction (2/17/2023)

³ Per the Town Manager's office, the IT consultant is on-site Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays of every week.

⁴ The Town Manager reported that certain items BerryDunn had requested could not be located due to a turnover from the previous Senior Executive Assistant to the new Executive Assistant. The Town is working to rectify this by saving all memos on the Employee Resources Shared Drive.

16. Face Mask Mandate in All Town Buildings (12/29/2021)
17. Mask Mandate Lifted for all Municipal Facilities (2/4/2022)
18. Premium Pay For Town Employees (9/1/21)

The following are additional documents received through other sources and reviewed by BerryDunn:

1. Inclement Weather Policy (1/23/15)⁵
2. Protocol for Medical Appointments (12/15/20)
3. Restriction of Authority for Leave Requests (12/7/20)

⁵ Although this document was provided as a current policy by staff, the Town Manager's office indicates this policy is no longer in effect.

Disclaimer

Please be advised that examples included in the Key Findings and Recommendations have not been confirmed nor validated by BerryDunn, except as noted.

4.0 Key Findings and Recommendations

This section contains key assessment findings and related recommendations; however, specific examples that were provided are not referenced. Although the PMT agreed all feedback provided would be anonymous, many stakeholders expressed reluctance to speak freely during the process for fear that specific examples would identify them personally and might be used against them. Examples provided in this report have been generalized to preserve anonymity for stakeholders. Except as noted, a minimum of two individuals provided separate and unique examples for each finding included.

4.1 Key Findings and Recommendations by Category

Findings and recommendations have been categorized and are reported here in alphabetical order by category.

- **Fiscal Transparency and Collaboration** includes areas where the Town could improve its internal communication and collaboration.
- **Human Resources** includes findings and recommendations related to aligning the workforce with the Town's strategic objectives and creating a positive work environment.
- **Leadership Development** includes specific findings and recommendations related to the Town leadership.
- **Organizational Development** includes findings and recommendations related to overall effectiveness of the Town.
- **Regulatory Risk** includes findings governed by federal regulations. Failure to adhere to these regulations could result in a risk of physical injury, financial impacts on the Town, and diminish the Town's credibility.

Table 4.1.1: Findings and Recommendations by Category: Fiscal Transparency and Collaboration

Fiscal Transparency and Collaboration⁶

⁶ Please refer to the disclaimer above Section 4.0 regarding the provided references and examples.

Findings	Recommendations
<p>A. There were concerns related to budget processes reported including perceptions of budget planning and decision-making is not an open, collaborative process, and that ideas or process improvements carrying financial implication will not be supported.⁷</p> <p>B. Some leaders reported money being moved out of their department budgets without discussion or notification.</p> <p>C. There is widespread perception that Town leadership will not support ideas carrying financial implication. This has influenced stakeholder perceptions that ideas and opinions are not valued generally.</p> <p>D. Stakeholders shared examples of attempts to introduce ideas or process improvements that were dismissed by the Town leadership for “budgetary reasons.”</p> <p>E. Council reported having to make requests for regular updates from the town manager about specific topics with financial impact, when such updates would be expected per Charter language: “Keep the Town Council fully advised as to the financial condition and all other matters affecting the welfare and future needs of the Town.”</p>	<p>1. Develop a standard departmental budgeting process that provides department supervisors and managers an opportunity to review and provide feedback about the department budget before it is submitted to Town Council.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure all levels of staff have an input in the annual budget process and to ensure their concerns are heard. Supervisors and managers must seek input from staff in adherence to this recommendation.</p>
<p>F. Invitation to participate in budget presentations to council has historically been limited to three Town leaders: the finance director, public works director, and police chief.</p>	<p>2. Establish and implement an annual budgeting process that requires all Town department heads’ to be invited to the Town’s public budget meetings.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to support a culture of transparency and collaboration.</p>

⁷ The Town Manager reported the Town has a standard budget process as outlined in the Town Charter, Article VIII, Annual Budget and Financial Procedures, Sections 8.02 and 8.03.

Table 4.1.2: Findings and Recommendations by Category: Human Resources

Human Resources ⁶	
Finding	Recommendation
<p>A. BerryDunn observed Town-issued equipment returned to the Town destroyed without explanation indicating a lack of respect for both tax dollars and town leadership.</p> <p>B. BerryDunn also witnessed firsthand how stakeholders in various departments and levels were excluded from relevant gatherings.</p>	<p>3. Develop and implement a standard performance evaluation process for all employees.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to support personal and professional growth, enable employees to reach their full potential, establish a culture of productivity and achievement, and foster a collaborative work environment.</p>
<p>C. Stakeholders perceive the town manager has violated a Town policy regarding nepotism. BerryDunn asserts no legal opinion about this issue; however, the town manager provided legal documentation dated April 18, 2016, which he has relied on, that asserts no employee handbook violation has occurred⁸.</p>	<p>4. Develop and distribute a statement regarding the Town's support of family member employment and clarify the exceptions.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to clarify the Town's hiring policies regarding the employment of family members.</p>
<p>D. Some employees described having felt pressure from Town leaders to treat certain members of the public favorably even when it did not seem appropriate.</p>	<p>5. Assign all Town employees and Town Councilmembers the State of Connecticut's Ethics online course, or similar, as required training with disciplinary implications if not completed by the due date. It is strongly recommended council members also each complete the same training that employees complete.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to guide the council and employees in making choices that align with the</p>

⁸ The Town Manager stated a new and more detailed nepotism disclaimer has been included in the new Town Employee Handbook. However, this handbook is currently in the process of being printed and has not been disseminated to Town employees.

	organization's principles and are in the best interest of the residents.
E. Job descriptions, which have been prepared and delivered by an external consultant, have not been distributed by the town manager's office.	<p>6. Distribute finalized job descriptions to current employees and establish a distribution process for new employees.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure all stakeholders understand job roles and descriptions and have access to the same information.</p>
<p>F. Stakeholders noted that policies are not easy to keep track of because some are distributed as memos from the town manager, others come from department heads, and others are in the employee handbook, in addition to what appears in the Charter.</p> <p>G. Memos, signed by the town manager, are distributed to employees to convey policies, updates, and procedures. The memos provided by the town manager's office in response to BerryDunn's request for "all memos distributed by the Town Manager to all employees" were not representative of the volume of memos known by BerryDunn to exist.</p>	<p>7. Standardize a definition and process for setting policy (obtaining council input when appropriate), procedures, and establish a consistent method for sharing updates and accessing.</p> <p>8. Explore whether all existing policies and procedures are immediately available to all employees and have been updated within the last twelve months.</p> <p>a. The purpose of these recommendations is to streamline a procedure and processes for establishing policy, requiring council input, and disseminating policies in a consistent format for access and accountability.</p>
H. Some staff report needing more technical support than is currently available.	<p>9. Review and explore a staff IT position.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure the Town has access to the support, tools, and equipment they require to do their jobs.</p>
I. The town manager's office reports staff development funding is at the discretion of department heads. Stakeholders report inconsistent availability of development funds and approval for time away from regular duties to participate in development activities.	<p>10. Establish process for equitable staff development of employees across departments and job types.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure all staff have access to continuing professional education opportunities and development</p>

	opportunities to allow growth and progress.
J. Some staff reported desiring more training and certifications.	<p>11. Clarify required and preferred training and certifications by position. Include required training and certifications in job descriptions. Work with department heads to confirm certifications and trainings that would be beneficial to the position.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure staff understand the required trainings and certifications they can receive for their position.</p>
K. Two organizational charts are currently in distribution at the Town.	<p>12. Establish and distribute an accurate organizational chart to all employees that includes employee names and titles. Establish a process to distribute the organizational chart to new employees. (Police Department names and roles may be omitted.)</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure staff know their organization structure and to ensure a proper and known escalation and reporting process.</p>

Table 4.1.3: Findings and Recommendations by Category: Leadership Development

Leadership Development ⁶	
Finding	Recommendations
A. The Town does not have a leadership development plan in place to prepare current and future leaders at the Town.	<p>1. Explore, develop, and implement a plan for Town leadership succession, including a leadership development curriculum.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure staff know leadership and position succession, to ensure a consistent process for succession, and to ensure new leaders have the skills and knowledge necessary to properly</p>

	execute their assigned duties and responsibilities.
<p>B. Examples were provided of the town manager's style and behavior negatively impacting perceptions of his openness to feedback and ideas.</p> <p>C. Stakeholders almost exclusively referred to the town manager when describing challenges, obstacles, and issues versus their own department head or supervisor.</p> <p>D. Examples were provided of the town manager raising his voice, pounding his fists on tables, and standing up while others were seated during discussions. Stakeholders provided both firsthand experience of this behavior and other times when it was witnessed, such as at Council meetings, board and commission meetings, or during the workday.</p> <p>E. BerryDunn observed two monitors with closed-circuit live feeds from Town buildings and parking areas are continuously displayed in the town manager's office. Locations around Town have been referred to by employees as "safe" to mean not visible from cameras. Some cameras around Town facilities have been adjusted by employees. Stakeholders report the town manager has acted on what he observes on the feeds, sometimes while an activity is still in progress, such as calling employees to ask who they are speaking to or why they did something a certain way.</p> <p>F. The town manager has reportedly acted on what he is observing which contributes to perceived low trust. Stakeholders reported feeling they do not have the freedom to do their jobs without objection or involvement from the town manager.</p> <p>G. A Town memo dated December 7, 2020, restricts authority to approve employee requests for more than 10 days of earned time off to department heads and requires the town Manager's approval to use more than 10 days of earned time. The Town Manager's office reports this requirement</p>	<p>2. Explore the Town Manager's affiliations to organizations, such as the ICMA, whose purpose is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to give the Town Manager access to benefits such as 1-on-1 coaching with ICMA CoachConnect and to improve understanding of management.</p>

<p>was upheld through the CBA grievance process.</p> <p>H. A Town memo dated December 15, 2020, requires all employees to complete a form upon returning to work after medical or dental appointments “anytime more than three hours is needed.” The form requires a signature following the statements: “I submit the above information knowing that it may be used against me for disciplinary reasons if found to be false. I also understand that making a false statement is a violation under Sec. 53a-157 of the Conn. Federal Statutes.” The Town Manager’s office reports this requirement was upheld through the CBA grievance process.</p> <p>I. During BerryDunn’s review of council meeting recordings, the town manager was heard contradicting a department head on two occasions. In one instance, the town manager apologized during the meeting for being incorrect.</p>	
<p>J. The Town has not collaboratively established a mission statement or values that would have the effect of establishing expectations for leadership behavior. Examples were provided of unprofessional treatment by leaders of employees.</p> <p>K. Stakeholders provided numerous personal examples of hearing comments made by leaders directly to them about their professional worth. Stakeholders described feeling their opinions and ideas were often dismissed based on their belonging to in-groups or out-groups.</p> <p>L. Multiple examples were provided of some Town leaders talking and laughing about employees “behind their backs” and creating derogatory names to call employees.</p> <p>M. Some stakeholders described feeling Town leadership plays favorites. Many employees described feeling their opinions and ideas were often dismissed based on their status at the Town.</p>	<p>3. Publish and distribute the Town’s current mission to all employees. Develop the town’s core values collaboratively with all employees.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to establish a shared framework and a common understanding of what the organization stands for and how it operates.</p>

<p>N. The term “blue collar” and “white collar” is used regularly by employees and Town leaders and both terms appear in collective bargaining agreements.</p> <p>O. The town manager is referred to as “Chief” by some elected officials and department heads.</p>	
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Table 4.1: Findings and Recommendations by Category: Organizational Excellence

Organizational Excellence ⁶	
Finding	Recommendation
<p>A. The Town does not have published values and does not have a strategic plan. The Town’s annual budget book appears to be the only location of department mission statements, goals, and accomplishments.</p>	<p>1. Create a Town strategic plan involving employees, council members, and external stakeholders including Town boards, committees, and commissions.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to develop a plan prioritizing the Town’s strategic objectives to enable employees at all levels to align their efforts and make informed decisions that support the organization’s overall direction.</p>
<p>B. There are few sources of consistent information for employees to access. BerryDunn observed the Town bulletin board and message boards at various work sites do not appear to be consistently maintained.</p>	<p>2. Establish a consistent and available online location for Town employee resources, including policies, procedures, memos, and announcements.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure necessary and important information is accessible to all Town employees at any time and for public record purposes.</p>
<p>C. Stakeholders reported the desire to collaborate with external agencies, such as Cromwell Public School, to meet constituent needs.</p>	<p>3. Explore, at least once annually, the collaboration of the Town and Town management, incorporating feedback of key stakeholders, such as impacted commissions, boards, and the public.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure collaborative efforts regarding</p>

	municipal operations are collectively understood by Town stakeholders/constituents.
<p>D. Agreed-upon communication channels for both leadership and employees are sometimes circumvented. During the culture assessment, emails regarding the assessment process were sent directly from Town leaders to council members.⁹</p> <p>E. BerryDunn discovered employees had access to communications sent only to the council in spite of Charter language “Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigations under Section 2.08, the Council and its members shall deal with the Town officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the Town Manager solely through the Town Manager, and neither the Council nor its members shall give orders to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately.”</p> <p>F. Additionally, during the assessment time frame, some council members publicly questioned this culture assessment’s methodology via a local news outlet, and without notifying all council members. Establish communication guidelines collaboratively by and for council members and Town employees.</p>	<p>4. Establish communication guidelines collaboratively by and for council members and Town employees.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to collaboratively establish and clarify formal communication etiquette for all Town employees to adhere to.</p>
<p>G. The Town does not currently collect feedback or input about the quality of Town service levels.</p> <p>H. Stakeholders described receiving voluminous and costly responses to public records requests from the Town that did not provide requested information.</p> <p>I. A Council meeting agenda dated August 21, 2021, included the following description of the town manager’s performance and contract renewal</p>	<p>K. Explore methods to collect resident and business feedback about Town service levels.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to establish a quantifiable benchmark by which the Town can measure performance improvement.</p>

⁹ Please find these emails under Appendices H and I.

<p>discussion as “To discuss the performance of a public officer.”</p> <p>J. The town manager’s response to a council member on May 25, 2022, about a specific, high-profile, pending lawsuit: “Not that I’m aware of at this time.” Shortly thereafter, he stated: “Let me take that back. We have the one. I believe we do have one. I can’t talk about it publicly. I think I know the one you’re alluding to.”</p> <p>Explore methods to collect resident and business feedback about Town service levels.</p>	
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Table 4.1.5: Findings and Recommendations by Category: Regulatory Risk

Regulatory Risk ⁶	
Findings	Recommendation
<p>A. Regulatory compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards was identified as an area of concern; specifically, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were reported as inconsistent and sometimes non-existent when they would be expected. Stakeholders reported there are areas at Town facilities that are not maintained properly and may be hazardous.</p>	<p>1. Review and maintain a continuous review process for the current Safety Program for regulatory compliance.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure the safety of all employees.</p>
<p>B. Stakeholders raised concerns with Town adherence to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which safeguards sensitive patient information; specifically, the sharing of personal health information inappropriately by Town leaders.</p> <p>C. HR support at the Town was frequently cited as not meeting employee needs.</p> <p>D. The combination of the town manager and HR director roles inhibits employee comfort in bringing sensitive issues to HR.</p>	<p>2. Explore the opportunity for a full-time Human Resources Manager position separate from the Town Manager.</p> <p>a. The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure staff have private access to an available, knowledgeable HR professional who can answer questions, address employee issues, and to escalate any issues to the Town Manager.</p>

5.0 Conclusion

Each finding presented in this report presents an opportunity for the Town; however, it is acknowledged that some findings are based solely on perception, and perception is subjective.

For instance, some Town leaders:

- Feel included and respected
- Appear innovative and open to suggestion
- Feel empowered to make decisions
- Appear trusting, approachable, and supportive
- Share information proactively

The town manager provided three letters written to the Town Council in May 2022 that characterize him as committed to the Town with its best interests in mind. Two of the letters were written by department heads and indicate that he encourages discourse with department heads, values input from others, listens to employees and considers their opinions and ideas, and is supporting and fair.

BerryDunn had received two letters written to the Town Council in February 2023 that characterize the culture assessment as unnecessary and a targeted attack against management. The letters also states that there is an issue with employees who are not in management positions and that these employees do not like being managed or being held accountable.

Other examples were provided and directly observed that suggest some Town leaders:

- Desire more inclusion and collaboration
- Appear resistant to ideas and change
- Feel restricted
- Appear distrusting, distant, and sometimes judgmental
- Wait to be asked for information

Rather than dismissing “perceptions,” the town manager and his office have already taken positive steps to address findings and implement recommendations. The office of the manager has presented a draft new employee handbook to council, made the decision to have human resources help monitor equitable access to training, plans to invite all department heads to attend public budget meetings, and committed to finalizing and distributing revised job descriptions. Each of these actions can positively impact the Town’s culture. For example:

- Regularly updated job descriptions convey respect of individual employee contributions.
- Feeling respected is highly correlated with positive ratings of culture.
- Positive ratings of culture are correlated with high engagement, increased discretionary effort, and more productivity.

In conclusion, a positive culture has far-reaching benefits for organizations. By focusing on fostering a culture aligned with an established mission and values, the Town can enhance its ability to be an employer of choice and an organization achieving community excellence.

6.0 Next Steps in the Project

This section of the report will summarize the next steps in the project.

Next Steps	
1	The Town will consider findings to determine which recommendations, if any, to implement.

Appendix A

Employees responded to the following 13 survey questions using a 1 – 5 Likert scale and two open-ended questions.

Table A.1: Survey Questions

Survey Questions	
No.	Question
1	I feel comfortable voicing my thoughts and opinions freely.
2	I feel appreciated by the Town Manager.
3	I feel appreciated by my Director or Department Head.
4	I feel appreciated by my supervisor.
5	I know what is expected of me at work.
6	I know how my work contributes to goals.
7	My supervisor can be counted on to do what they say they will do.
8	The person I report to holds me accountable for results.
9	The person I report to is held accountable for results.
10	I know what is important to the Town Manager.
11	In this organization, it is important to do the right thing.
12	Individuals and departments are encouraged to work together towards goals.
13	This organization encourages helping others, even if it isn't my job.
14	If you disagreed with any of the previous statements, please provide information that might help explain your rating.
15	Is there is anything else you would like to share?

Appendix B

Table B.1: Survey Questions and Answer Raw Data

Survey Questions and Answer Raw Data				
Question	Strongly Agree and Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Total Respondents
The person I report to is held responsible for results.	66	11	0	77
I know what is expected of me at work.	64	10	5	79
I know how my work contributes to goals.	54	20	4	78
In this organization, it is important to do the right thing.	47	13	19	79
I feel appreciated by my supervisor.	44	18	13	75
I know what is important to the Town Manager.	43	21	4	68
The person I report to holds me responsible for results.	41	19	17	77
I feel appreciated by my Director or Department Head.	36	21	21	78
This organization encourages helping others, even if it isn't my job.	34	19	26	79
Individuals and departments are encouraged to work together toward goals.	34	18	26	78
My supervisor can be counted on to do what they say they will do.	31	16	32	79

I feel comfortable voicing my thoughts and opinions freely.	27	14	41	82
I feel appreciated by the Town Manager.	21	12	49	82

Appendix C

Survey Analysis

The following table shows data for each rated question. Survey responses were consolidated to provide a simpler distribution of data for presentation purposes, with strongly agree and agree combined and strongly disagree and disagree combined. Responses to questions were calculated and analyzed for significance.

The data shows a percentage of respondents who did not have an opinion about the item (neutral), and those who did not respond to all questions on the survey. The percentage reflected as did not answer includes employees who did not answer that specific question combined with those who received, but did not complete, the survey.

Chart C.2: Town Culture Assessment Survey: Sentiment by Question, All Stakeholders

Town Culture Assessment Survey: Sentiment by Question, All Stakeholders

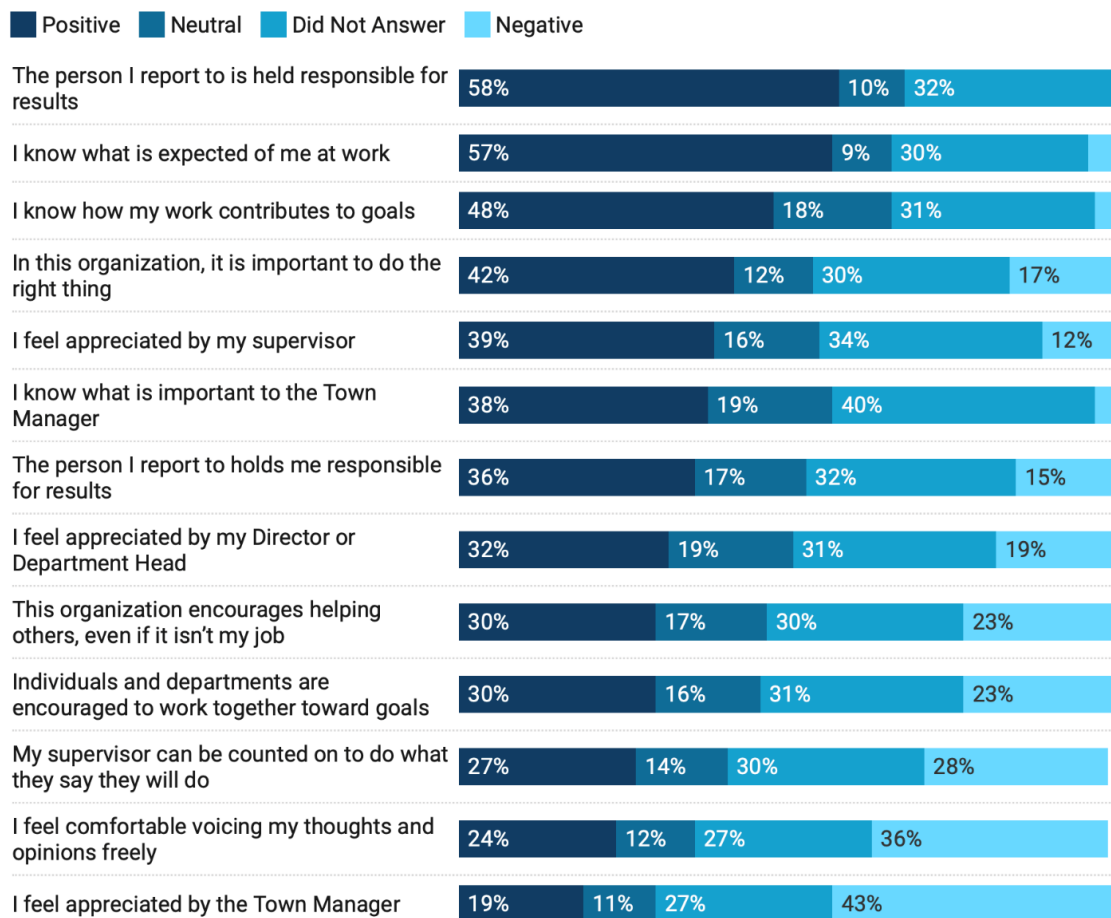
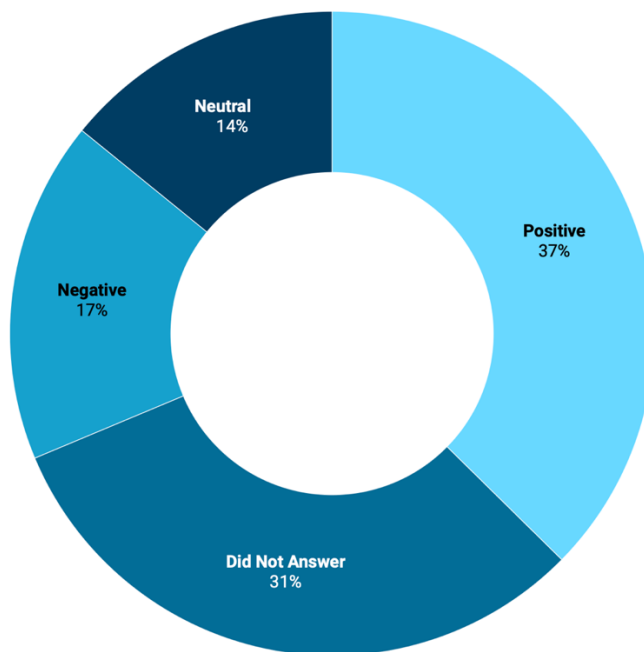


Chart C.2: Town Cultural Assessment Survey: Sentiment Across All Questions

Town Cultural Assessment Survey: Sentiment Across All Questions

Positive Did Not Answer Negative Neutral



Overall, survey responses reflect an average 37% positive sentiment, 14% neutral, and 17% negative sentiment. An average of 31% of employees did not respond to some or all questions.

Appendix D

Table D.1: Town Departments

Town Departments			
No.	Town Department	No.	Town Department
1	Assessor	8	Public Health
2	Finance	9	Public Works
3	Human Resources	10	Recreation
4	Human Services	11	Senior Services
5	Library	12	Tax
6	Planning and Development	13	Town Clerk
7	Police	14	Town Manager's Office

Appendix E

The Town reported the number of full-time equivalent positions in each department.

Table E.1: Town Staffing by Department

Town Staffing by Department	
Department	Number of Employees
Development Services	2
Vehicle Maintenance	2
Engineering	2
Public Works Admin	2
Transfer Station	2
Human Services	2
Public Health	2
Clerk	3
Tax	3
Assessor	3
Inspections	3
Finance	4
Parks	4
Town Manager Office including HR	4.5
Senior Services	5
Recreation	5
Sewer	6
Building Maintenance	6

Highway	11
Library	12.5
Police	37
Total Town Staffing	121

Appendix F

The following questions were received during the assessment period about the methodology.

Table F.1: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers		
No.	Question	Answer
1	Why weren't former employees included?	The following answer was provided by email to all employees and council members on January 17, 2023: "At the decision of BerryDunn, former employees will not be contacted to provide input. This process is to assess the current state of the Town. Current employees are in the best position to provide input. In your survey, or interview, you are welcome to provide examples for your responses, past or present, even if you were not directly involved."
2	Why was a former employee on the project team?	The following answer was provided by email to all employees and council members on February 14, 2023: "Marianne Sylvester, former Finance Director, was a member of the project team. As a part-time Cromwell employee after her retirement she attended the Culture Assessment project kickoff; however, she has not served on the project team since her retirement in 2022."
3	Why was the Town Manager allowed to have input on the survey questions?	The following paraphrased answer was provided verbally during project kickoffs: The Town Manager is the sponsor of this culture assessment project. The Town Manager, and other project team members including Mayor Steve Fortenbach, HR Specialist Sherry McGuire, and (former) Finance Director Marianne Sylvester provided feedback about the questions to be rated. The project team also approved two open-ended questions for respondents to provide any input they deemed valuable.

Appendix G

The following table includes all recommendations, in order of ease to implement (from easiest to most difficult according to the Town's sub-group). Ratings are an average of 1 to 10 across voting sub-group members.

Table G.1: Prioritized Recommendations

Rating	Recommendation
4	<p>Establish and implement an annual budgeting process that requires all Town department heads' to be invited to the Town's public budget meetings.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to support a culture of transparency and collaboration.</p>
4.2	<p>Assign all Town employees and Town Councilmembers the State of Connecticut's Ethics online course, or similar, as required training with disciplinary implications if not completed by the due date. It is strongly recommended council members also each complete the same training that employees complete.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to guide the council and employees in making choices that align with the organization's principles and are in the best interest of the residents.</p>
4.2	<p>Clarify required and preferred training and certifications by position. Include required training and certifications in job descriptions. Work with department heads to confirm certifications and trainings that would be beneficial to the position.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure staff understand the required trainings and certifications they can receive for their position.</p>
4.2	<p>Develop a standard departmental budgeting process that provides department supervisors and managers an opportunity to review and provide feedback about the department budget before it is submitted to Town Council.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure all levels of staff have an input in the annual budget process and to ensure their concerns are heard.</p>

4.2	<p>Develop and distribute a statement regarding the Town's support of family member employment and clarify the exceptions.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to clarify the Town's hiring policies regarding the employment of family members.</p>
4.2	<p>Establish and distribute an accurate organizational chart to all employees that includes employee names and titles. Establish a process to distribute the organizational chart to new employees. (Police Department names and roles may be omitted.)</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure staff know their organization structure and to ensure a proper and known escalation and reporting process.</p>
4.2	<p>Publish and distribute the Town's current mission to all employees. Develop the town's core values collaboratively with all employees.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to establish a shared framework and a common understanding of what the organization stands for and how it operates.</p>
4.2	<p>Standardize a definition and process for setting policy (obtaining council input when appropriate), procedures, and establish a consistent method for sharing updates and accessing.</p> <p>Explore whether all existing policies and procedures are immediately available to all employees and have been updated within the last twelve months.</p> <p>The purpose of these recommendations is to streamline a procedure and processes for establishing policy, requiring council input, and disseminating policies in a consistent format for access and accountability.</p>
8.4	<p>Establish a consistent and available online location for Town employee resources, including policies, procedures, memos, and announcements.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure necessary and important information is accessible to all Town employees at any time and for public record purposes.</p>
8.4	<p>Establish process for equitable staff development of employees across departments and job types.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure all staff have access to continuing professional education opportunities and development opportunities to allow growth and progress.</p>

8.4	<p>Explore whether all existing policies and procedures are immediately available to all employees and have been updated within the last twelve months.</p> <p>This is in-line with the recommendation of the Society for Human Resource Management.</p>
8.4	<p>Review and maintain a continuous review process for the current Safety Program for regulatory compliance.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure the safety of all employees.</p>
12.6	<p>Distribute finalized job descriptions to current employees and establish a distribution process for new employees.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure all stakeholders understand job roles and descriptions and have access to the same information.</p>
12.6	<p>Explore the Town Manager's affiliations to organizations, such as the ICMA, whose purpose is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to give the Town Manager access to benefits such as 1-on-1 coaching with ICMA CoachConnect and to improve understanding of management.</p>
12.6	<p>Finalize the initiative to develop and distribute an employee handbook. Establish a process to distribute the employee handbook to new employees. Maintain an annual employee handbook revision date. Require all current and future employees to sign-off on receipt of employee handbook.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure all employees have received, read, and understood the Town's policies and to ensure there is a consistent review and revision of the handbook to remain up to date.</p>
25.2	<p>Explore the opportunity for a full-time Human Resources Manager position separate from the Town Manager.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure staff have private access to an available, knowledgeable HR professional who can answer questions, address employee issues, and to escalate any issues to the Town Manager.</p>

26.9	<p>Explore methods to collect resident and business feedback about Town service levels.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to establish a quantifiable benchmark by which the Town can measure performance improvement.</p>
33.6	<p>Review and explore a staff IT position.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure the Town has access to the support, tools, and equipment they require to do their jobs.</p>
38	<p>Create a Town strategic plan involving employees, council members, and external stakeholders including Town boards, committees, and commissions.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to develop a plan prioritizing the Town's strategic objectives to enable employees at all levels to align their efforts and make informed decisions that support the organization's overall direction.</p>
42	<p>Establish communication guidelines collaboratively by and for council members and Town employees.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to collaboratively establish and clarify formal communication etiquette for all Town employees to adhere to.</p>
Not Rated	<p>Explore, at least once annually, the collaboration of the Town and Town management, incorporating feedback of key stakeholders, such as impacted commissions, boards, and the public.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure collaborative efforts regarding municipal operations are collectively understood by Town stakeholders/constituents.</p>
Not rated	<p>Explore, develop, and implement a plan for Town leadership succession, including a leadership development curriculum.</p> <p>The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure staff know leadership and position succession, to ensure a consistent process for succession, and to ensure new leaders have the skills and knowledge necessary to properly execute their assigned duties and responsibilities.</p>

