



Municipal Hiring Panel Scoring Packet

Structured criteria, rubrics, conflict disclosures, and a selection justification that survives protest, records requests, and small-town politics.

WHAT THIS HELPS YOU DO

Use this packet to run municipal hiring panels on published criteria and scored rubrics — producing a selection record that holds up when the losing candidate knows a council member.

WHEN TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- For any posted municipal position with competitive applicants
- When internal candidates and external candidates compete
- When a hire is likely to be protested, requested, or politicized
- When panelists have social ties to applicants (small towns — always)
- Before promotional processes in police, fire, or public works

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT HELPS PREVENT

- Selection decisions that can't explain themselves under PIA production
- Panels scoring on 'fit' — the word that means nothing and alleges everything
- Undisclosed conflicts surfacing after the offer
- Score sheets that contradict the stated selection
- Grievances and discrimination charges built on process holes

Faulkner HR Solutions focuses on the system behind the people problem. This tool is designed to help employers slow down the decision, identify the risk, and create proof before the issue becomes a claim, complaint, turnover event, or credibility problem.

BEFORE YOU START: READINESS CHECKLIST

Gather the following before working through this document. Incomplete inputs are one of the most common reasons employer decisions fail under later scrutiny.

Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Employee name and role	
☐	Date of incident, request, or separation	
☐	Supervisor involved	



Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Policy or handbook section that applies	
☐	Prior documentation on file	
☐	Pay records, if applicable	
☐	Relevant emails, texts, notes, or complaints	
☐	Decision-maker name	
☐	Deadline, if applicable	



PANEL SCORING PACKET

The defense of any contested hire is a boring file: criteria set before interviews, identical questions, independent scores, disclosed conflicts, and a justification that matches the math.

Part 1 — Position and Criteria (set BEFORE reviewing applicants)

Position, posting number, closing date	
Selection criteria (from the job description — 5-8, weighted)	
Minimum qualifications (pass/fail screen)	
Preferred qualifications (scored, not silently required)	
Panel members and roles	

Part 2 — Conflict of Interest Disclosure (every panelist)

Cleared	Disclosure item	Details / mitigation
☐	Family or household relationship with any applicant	
☐	Close friendship, business, or financial relationship	
☐	Prior supervisory relationship or documented conflict	
☐	Social media / community ties that would embarrass if surfaced later	
☐	Mitigation: recusal, replacement, or documented no-conflict determination	

Part 3 — Scoring Rubric

Score each criterion 1-5 using the anchors. Every score of 1 or 5 requires a written note.

Score	Anchor
5	Evidence clearly exceeds the criterion — specific examples, directly relevant, at higher scale/complexity
4	Fully meets with strong, specific evidence
3	Meets adequately; evidence general but credible
2	Partially meets; gaps in evidence or relevance
1	Does not demonstrate the criterion

**Part 4 — Interview Questions (identical for every candidate)**

#	Question (tied to a criterion)	Criterion	Legal check (no protected-class probes)

Part 5 — Score Summary

Candidate	Panelist 1	Panelist 2	Panelist 3	Weighted total	Rank

Part 6 — Panel Notes Discipline

Followed	Notes rule	Notes
☐	Notes record answers and evidence, never demographics, appearance, family, or health	
☐	Scores completed independently before any panel discussion	
☐	Score changes after discussion initialed with a reason	
☐	All sheets collected by HR — nothing leaves in pockets	
☐	Assume every page is producible under the PIA, because it is	

Part 7 — Selection Justification

Selected candidate and final ranking basis	
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If selection differs from top score: documented, legitimate reason (reference results, license verification, etc.)

Reference and background verification completed (dates)

Internal candidates not selected: feedback plan

Records retained (posting, applications, sheets, this packet) per schedule

Role	Name / signature	Date
Panel chair		
HR review		
Appointing authority		

STOP AND REVIEW BEFORE ACTING

If any statement below is true, pause. Get the decision reviewed by HR, counsel, or Faulkner HR Solutions before you act.

- ☐ A panelist realized mid-interview they coach the applicant's kid — and said nothing.
- ☐ The selection differs from the scores and the justification line is blank.
- ☐ Interview notes mention age, pregnancy, church, or accent.
- ☐ An internal favorite got different (easier or harder) questions.
- ☐ A council member has called anyone on the panel about the hire.
- ☐ 'Fit' appears anywhere a criterion should be.

MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION STANDARD

Before this file is closed, the employer should be able to answer every question below and point to where the proof lives.

Question	Your answer / where the proof is stored
What happened?	
When did it happen?	



Question	Your answer / where the proof is stored
Who observed or reported it?	
What policy, standard, deadline, or expectation applies?	
What decision was made?	
Who had authority to make the decision?	
What alternatives were considered?	
What risk was reviewed?	
What follow-up is required?	
Where is the proof stored?	

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Building criteria after meeting the candidates.
2. Letting panelists compare impressions before scoring independently.
3. Writing notes as if no one will ever read them — in the public sector, someone will.
4. Skipping conflict disclosures because 'everyone knows everyone anyway' (that's the reason FOR them).
5. Choosing below the top score with no documented reason, converting a defensible judgment into an apparent fix.
6. Shredding score sheets after the offer — retention rules apply.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

File the complete packet with HR, deliver internal-candidate feedback within a week, and retain everything on schedule. If the selection is protested, the packet is the response — which is exactly why it's completed before anyone knows the outcome.

Before you terminate, deduct, discipline, classify, or respond, get the decision reviewed.

Call 210.446.8730 or email thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info.



Public-sector HR decisions have to survive more than internal disagreement. They have to survive records requests, council questions, budget scrutiny, and public trust.

Need help applying this to a real workplace decision?

Faulkner HR Solutions helps Texas employers, nonprofits, municipalities, and growing businesses fix the people systems behind recurring workplace problems.

If this document raised a risk flag, do not guess your way through the next step.

Call: 210.446.8730

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Website: faulknerhrsolutions.info

DISCLAIMER

This resource is provided for general employer education and planning purposes. It is not legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. Employment laws, agency guidance, and local requirements may change. Employers should review the facts of each situation before acting and consult appropriate HR or legal counsel when needed.