

MINUTES

Blue Ribbon Committee Regarding Operational Efficiencies

Thursday, July 22, 2010

Municipal Complex, Conference Room A – 7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Jerry Hejtmanek, Chair, Kenneth Smith, Rebecca Emerson, Kent LaPage, Carol Chellman and Steve Marchand.

Members Absent: Robert Lister and Dana Levenson

Staff Members Present: John Bohenko, City Manager; Ed McDonough, School Superintendent; Steve Bartlett, School Business Administrator; Steve Parkinson, Public Work Director; Dave Allen, Deputy Public Works Director; David Moore, Community Development Director; Ken Linchey, School Dept. Maintenance Supervisor; and Valerie French, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order - Jerry Hejtmanek, Chair

Chairman Hejtmanek called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and stated that Mr. Lister is out of the State at this time.

II. Approval of Minutes from June 24, 2010

Mr. Lapage moved to approve minutes from June 24, 2010. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smith and passed unanimously.

Chairman Hejtmanek stated that as this is the first meeting for Mr. Marchand and Ms. Chellman he would like to give them the opportunity to give their ideas pertaining to the scope of the committee.

Ms. Chellman discussed changes in attitude towards change in general, education of children being the main focus for the school department, and the rising costs of health insurance and personnel costs as being some areas to look at.

Mr. Marchand discussed the fact that all levels of government are dealing with long-term structural deficits and personnel costs drive overall costs. He stated that there are 2 goals, one short-term to gain public understanding and support by identifying thoughtful and real efficiencies and savings even if at a modest level; and secondly, the bigger picture looking at the place where the most money is being spent i.e. personnel.

Chairman Hejtmanek stated that this committee will only be meeting for 6-8 months and may not be able to accomplish the big picture, but feels we should at least be able to provide some concepts and guidelines.

City Manager Bohenko stated that he feels it is also important to add to the discussion how these decisions will affect the quality of life and the ability to deliver services for the residents. He cited the recent proposed pool closing as an example of how the residents wanted that to stay open regardless of the savings to the taxpayer.

III. Presentation by City Staff

A. Outside Maintenance

1. Definition
2. Examples of Maintenance Responsibilities - Schools and DPW
3. Department Responsibilities by Parcel
4. Data on Acreage Maintained
5. Resources to Perform Maintenance Responsibilities

David Moore, Community Development Director stated that the purpose of the presentation is to provide information about responsibilities and resources of the School and Public Works Departments in the areas of outside maintenance and snow removal operations. He explained that outside maintenance is defined as all work completed on municipally-owned property; including outside maintenance work on parks, ball fields, and grounds of public facilities. It does not include snow removal. He reviewed the typical outside maintenance responsibilities performed by the schools and DPW as well as maps of the various municipally-owned parcels of land, parcels of land maintained by the DPW (73 parcels with a total of 326 acres), and parcels maintained by the School Department (6 sites with a total of 127 acres).

Deputy Public Works Director Dave Allen reviewed the duties and responsibilities of the public works department in relation to outside maintenance and outlined some other categories of DPW responsibilities.

School Business Administrator Steve Bartlett reviewed the resources that the Schools have to perform their maintenance responsibilities, which consist of 5 maintenance personnel who perform many different job functions outside – and inside – the school buildings. He stated there are some responsibilities that are contracted out including major pavement repairs, electrical repairs, large tree removal, equipment maintenance and repair of trucks, small engines, and building trash removal.

B. Snow Removal Operations

1. Departmental Approaches to Snow Removal
2. Data on Acreage Impervious of Surfaces by Department
3. Description of Staff Duties During Storm Events by Department
4. Description of Contracted Services by Department

School Business Administrator Steve Bartlett explained that the School Department's goals and priorities during snow events are to insure the 6 school facilities are accessible and clear by the time school starts and during school operational hours. He stated that all Maintenance Division employees are utilized during snow events and the building custodians

clear and treat the sidewalks and passageways. Finally, he stated that a plowing contractor is hired on an hourly basis for storms 6 inches or more and that the Maintenance Division reserves the right to work along with the contractor.

Deputy Public Works Director Dave Allen explained the DPW's goals and priorities are to insure access to critical facilities and to clear roadways, sidewalks and parking lots and then remove snow from the downtown area. He stated that all DPW employees are available for snow events, including water/sewer employees. Building custodians clear and treat sidewalks and passageways. Finally, he stated that contracted equipment including loaders, graders and ten-wheelers who are hired on an hourly basis and utilized for removal operations and during downtown snow removal.

IV. Discussion/Next Steps

Discussion ensued regarding the various services and potential areas of combining/sharing resources and the importance of tracking these services to identify cost centers. It was discussed there are areas that can be combined/shared but workload, staffing levels and skill level need to be kept in mind as well to ensure that it is cost-effective in the long run. Some of the areas that will be looked at include exterior lighting maintenance, fence and tree work, small engine repair, turf management and fertilization, etc.

City Manager Bohenko stated that the staff will make a list of some of the areas including equipment, bidding and services that are already or can possibly be coordinated between the school and city, including the Police and Fire departments where applicable i.e. vehicle maintenance.

V. Other Business

Chairman Hejtmanek discussed adding a public comment session to the meeting agenda and whether it should be at the beginning or the end of each meeting. The consensus was to have the public comment session at 8:45 a.m. for the remaining 15 minutes of each meeting. Other ideas for public participation included posting some FAQ's (frequently asked questions) to the website and holding an evening session.

City Manager Bohenko stated the Chairman has invited City Negotiator Tom Flygare to discuss impacts on bargaining units and clarified that this will be a general discussion of State laws etc. and not specifics.

VI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

The next meeting will be held August 26, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie A. French
Recording Secretary