

MINUTES PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE

April 4, 2011

Present: Valerie Haynes, Anton Lahnston, Carol Golden, Alice K. Small. CGR: John Fry, Joe Stefko (on phone).

Staffing Recommendation: The subcommittee agreed that CGR's proposed staffing option 3/4 appears to offer the most benefits as a shared or consolidated model, and therefore the subcommittee recommends focus on this option going forward. Option 3/4 is as follows:

Option #3/4 Proposes a reduction in headcount of 2 positions, a superintendent and a foreman, resulting in savings of \$218,862, which yields net savings of \$105,096 (about 2 percent of total costs) after removing the estimated increase in costs due to leveling up. Some restructuring is proposed, removing the role of an Assistant Superintendent for Parking Operations and creating the broader role of **Assistant Superintendent for the Business Downtown**, which will continue to have oversight over parking operations and also will manage the services to the business downtown and municipal buildings. The role of a second assistant superintendent is continued in the **Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Administration**, a role that manages Grounds & Open Space and Roads. A dotted line relationship between the two assistant superintendents formalizes the current practices of temporarily assigning staff to meet changing needs in these service areas.

Option 3/4 also combines all asset maintenance functions under Public Works. It proposes an administrative structure that includes the maintenance (not the programmatic) functions currently housed in the Recreation Commission and the sewer maintenance operations currently under the Princeton Sewer Operations Commission (without changing the oversight responsibilities of the Commission). A **Foreman of Grounds and Open Space** under the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Administration would supervise all Recreation maintenance in collaboration with the Recreation Department staff. A new **Assistant Superintendent of Infrastructure and Technology** would supplant the role of Control Supervisor/PSOC Manager, with broadened responsibilities for technical aspects of all infrastructure maintenance.

In the event that the municipalities fully consolidate, further opportunities are available as a result of consolidation of the Engineering Departments. One clerical position currently allocated to Engineering could be made available to Public Works. In addition, certain inspection services required by the PSOC could be performed in house by Engineering staff, rather than contracted out as is the current practice. Performance of this work in house is estimated to save up to \$160,000/year.

The subcommittee agreed to schedule further meetings with the Recreation Management Committee and Recreation and DPW staff to further explore the suggestion of including recreation maintenance activities within a merged public works department.

Facilities

John Fry reported on several suggestions from Bob Bruschi regarding repurposed uses for the John Street site, and Bob's concern that any additional public works activity at Harrison Street would be objectionable to its residential neighbors. Similarly, at a meeting with the Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood on April 2, residents advised that while the current level of activity at the John Street site is manageable, they would oppose any intensification of use, and would find use of the site for refueling totally unacceptable. Residents also objected to construction of a cold storage structure on this site. A realtor present indicated that the current salt and sand domes on the site are unattractive to buyers looking for homes in the neighborhood. There was unanimous approval of the adjacent community garden, which is always oversubscribed.

The subcommittee agreed that although both the John and Harrison Street sites have the advantage of being centrally located, they are limited due to their locations within residential neighborhoods. In addition, the John Street site is small and unimproved. While current activities at these sites can continue for the near term, the subcommittee concurred that efforts to address the longer term needs of the public works department(s) should be focused elsewhere.

Because the cost to address all of the facilities needs of the DPWs at one time is prohibitive, a step by step process will be necessary. There needs to be a Day 1 plan and then a process for upgrades over time. The subcommittee concurred that on Day 1 operations would continue from the current four facilities - Valley Rd., John St., Harrison Rd & River Rd.

However, if the consolidated/shared police operation is based at the current Township Municipal site, there will be a need for additional parking adjacent to the building, so it will be necessary to discontinue most public works activities from Valley Rd within a relatively short time after consolidation/sharing occurs.

One possible scenario could be -

- continue use of Valley Road for fueling of both public works and police vehicles and for additional parking to serve the municipal complex
- continue use of Harrison Road for maintenance of lighter vehicles and to provide a "quick strike" site to service the downtown
- move the salt and sand domes to River Road as John Street is phased out and made available for another community purpose or sold
- construct a cold storage facility at River Road - possibly used primarily for out-of-season equipment (for example, plows in summer, mowers in winter)

All concurred that at present we have no firm recommendations, but John will schedule a meeting with the engineers and DPW staff so that we can explore the possibilities further. We need to be prepared to make a recommendation on facilities at the April 27 Commission meeting.

Equipment

John is gathering more data on anticipated equipment purchases and will also get information on the equipment used for recreation maintenance. This topic will be discussed further with municipal staff.

Next Meeting

April 15, 10 am., 223 Mt. Lucas Rd.