

TOWN OF GREENEVILLE
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE STUDY

Introduction

Mayor Darrell Bryan requested MTAS to advise him on organizational structure, roles and responsibilities for the departments of engineering, environment, public works, building codes and planning. The town recently hired a city engineer, and the engineering firm assisting the town with that process recommended restructuring. MTAS thanks Mayor Bryan for selecting us for this project. During the study, MTAS interviewed the department heads listed above, the city recorder, the human resource clerk and aldermen Daniels and Kidwell (Alderwomen King and Webster were not in town during the interviews). Before proceeding further, we want to thank the elected officials and employees of the Town of Greeneville for their cooperation and assistance in the development of this report. We also want to state that this study does not provide information on other city departments such as fire, police, parks and recreation and so forth.

Methodology

The recommendations of this study are the product of a team effort that combined interviews, job description reviews and reviews of departments with similar functions in other municipalities. The recommendations of this report are not based on the qualifications, personalities or management styles of incumbents, but rather based on organizational structure and management principals working successfully in other municipalities.

MTAS Findings

1. The town is very fortunate to be staffed with well-qualified and conscientious employees. Employees have many years of experience in their fields of expertise.
2. In general, there is poor understanding of lines of authority and accountability. One of the standard questions asked during interviews was “Who is your supervisor?” Some department heads answered “mayor”; some answered “mayor and city recorder”; some answered that they were self-directed; and some answered they did not know.
3. Teamwork is lacking, and workflow from one department to another is disjointed. MTAS asked department heads to describe workflow on projects involving other departments. Each department does not see itself as

interacting routinely or smoothly with other departments. Each described his/her functions as self-contained. When questioned about the weekly development meetings though, each described these meetings as helpful. MTAS commends the mayor for beginning these weekly meetings to talk about hot projects.

4. There is a lack of respect between some department heads. Sometimes disagreements spill over in public settings.
5. There appears to be few, if any, rewards for high performance and few, if any, consequences for poor performance. Employees do not get much direction or feedback on how they are doing their jobs. Standard management practices such as performance reviews, goal setting, professional development and communications are lacking.
6. The city planner has an erratic work schedule. It is not clear why the non-traditional work schedule is allowed or necessary, but it has led to resentment from other staff working regular schedules.
7. Some department heads view some of their peers as being politically-connected and benefiting from preferential treatment.
8. Most department heads were reluctant to voice ideas on organizational structure.
9. One-person departments are functioning without needed clerical support.
10. Customer service was not, but should be, the primary focus for all departments.

Organizational Structure and Function of Positions

The current organizational structure for the departments involved in this study is shown in Exhibit A.

In accordance with the town's code (section 1-201), "the mayor shall be the chief executive officer of the town" Currently, approximately eleven city department heads report directly to the mayor – city recorder, fire, police, clerical/building maintenance, public works, planning, engineering, environmentalist, building codes, parks and recreation and senior citizens. There may be other departments that report directly to the mayor as well. At least four of these are one or two person departments (engineering, planning, building codes and environmentalist).

This does not now exist, but even if there were strong department-to-department working relations and a culture of teamwork and open communications, eleven

departments is a large span of control for one person. Whenever disputes arise between departments, the mayor is forced to decide the outcome. Because of the technical issues involved in the jobs of planner, building codes, public works, etc., this makes mediating disputes more difficult. Supervision of staff could become even more difficult if line staff are allowed to by-pass department heads and bring issues directly to the mayor for resolution.

Day-to-day operations must go on, supervisory decisions will always arise, and someone has to make decisions that keep the wheels of government turning. Both leaders and supervisors spend time planning, organizing, directing, controlling and evaluating. Generally, top leaders spend more time on planning and evaluating, and middle management and supervisors spend more time on directing daily operations.

If the mayor spends time on administrative details and supervision of staff, then less time is available to use for setting town policy, planning for the future and providing visionary leadership. In addition, if line staff are allowed to by-pass department heads, disciplinary problems, poor performance and low morale often result.

The organizational structure recommended by MTAS creates a new department of Development Services.

Department of Development Services

The proposed organizational structure recommends that building codes, environmentalist, engineering and planning services be combined into a new Department of Development Services. A director should be designated for this department, and this department should report to the city recorder (Exhibit B) or the mayor (Exhibit C). These organizational structures are recommended without evaluation of the qualifications, experience and credentials of staff occupying existing positions.

There are three fundamental principles of organizational structure, which apply for Greeneville. These principles and their application are:

1. Span of control (i.e. the number of persons reporting to a supervisor) should not be too large. We currently have 11 department heads as well as a number of others who report to the mayor. This results in an extremely “flat” organization, which is difficult for the supervisor (in this case the mayor) to coordinate.
2. Centralized administration (i.e. under one office) of related functions is much more efficient than dispersed administration. In this way inter-related functions can be identified and closely coordinated.
3. Providing for a distinction between policy-making and administration tends to improve service delivery and allows for more effective policy-making. This principle refers to the coordination of administration under the office of a public

administration professional (i.e. the city recorder) and the coordination of policy-making under the office of a democratically elected leader (i.e. the mayor). This generally allows the mayor's office to focus on long-term policy making. If the mayor is constantly pulled into the administrative side of governance, he or she will likely be unable to devote adequate time to policy leadership.

For our purposes here we can see that option B achieves all three of these principles. It reduces span of control through the Director of Development Services; it centralizes administration of related development functions; and it makes a distinction between the administrative and policy-making components of governance.

Option C achieves two of these. It also reduces span of control under the Director of Development Services office. In addition it also centralizes the administration of related development functions under one office. However it does not provide for a distinction between policy-making and administrative functions. Instead it continues to operate these through what is primarily a policy-making office. For this reason option B is preferable, but option C is also a viable and important alternative.

A Department of Development Services has the following characteristics:

- ✓ It reduces the span-of-control to the mayor (or recorder) from 4 development-related positions to 1;
- ✓ It coordinates the efforts of the various departments;
- ✓ It provides the opportunity to develop a coordinated, service-oriented department, which is responsive to development related challenges;
- ✓ It provides the opportunity to help shape the development-related future of the community, because no longer will each unit be operating alone, with a "tunneled" approach to service-delivery. Much additional capacity will emerge from within this new department;
- ✓ It elevates the enforcement of property maintenance standards; and
- ✓ It will allow for accountability of results within each division.

MTAS recommends that the Department of Development Services have a professional who is an experienced manager as department director. It could be a new position or a professional currently employed by the town. MTAS did not conduct job audits, and cannot make a definitive judgment on weather the volume of work would justify hiring another person. Nor did MTAS evaluate whether the town's budget could afford a new position.

MTAS recommends that a more cohesive workspace be created within city hall for the new Department of Development Services. Currently most personnel are on the

second floor, but building codes staff are in the basement. Workflow and communications could be enhanced if offices were not physically separated. More importantly, customer service could be enhanced if offices were more accessible to the public. This department should work toward a goal of a “one-stop shop” for customer service.

Job Description Elements for the Director of Development Services

- A professional with extensive management experience preferably in a municipal environment;
- The director should take personal responsibility for coordinating, partnering and working with other development agencies and professionals in the region to enhance development benefiting the Town of Greeneville;
- Supervise staff of the department following the chain of command outlined in either Exhibit B or C;
- Make friendly, efficient customer service the primary function of the department;
- Create a workplace where teamwork and open communication are valued and rewarded;
- Require normal work hours for all staff;
- Deal with disciplinary issues in accordance with town policies;
- Professionalize the department with formal, required staff meetings, annual performance reviews, goals for work performance, and rewards based on performance;
- Require staff to attend professional development training on a continuous basis;
- Develop workflow checklists and feedback systems that track work progress in order to respond quickly to public inquires and save the technical experts time; and
- Use technology to increase productivity. This may include use of a geographic information system (GIS), laptops or personal data accessories (PDAs) to take into the field to record findings and/or software for tracking customer service requests.

Following is a summary of job functions for the other positions shown in Exhibits B and C.

Mayor

As specified in the Town of Greeneville code, the mayor shall be the chief executive officer of the town. This does not preclude the mayor from delegating certain responsibilities, and that is the direction MTAS recommends in the structure shown in Exhibit B. MTAS recommends that the mayor delegate to the city recorder the responsibility for day-to-day operational decisions and general supervision for the departments that are the subjects of this study. Delegation is defined as “one person who is *ultimately responsible* for a task *entrusting* that task or parts of the task to another person.” Delegation means getting things done through others. The advantage of this organizational structure is that it reduces the number of departments reporting directly to the mayor, and allows supervisory matters to be handled at the city recorder level by a full time professional administrator.

An alternative is shown in Exhibit C. That structure has the new Department of Development Services reporting directly to the mayor. The advantage of this structure is that it also reduces the number of departments reporting directly to the mayor.

City Recorder

The city recorder’s duties are assigned by the town’s code. Section 1-304 allows the governing body to assign general duties. MTAS recommends that the city recorder be assigned as supervisor for the departments shown in Exhibit B. For many mayors, there may be something inherently scary about relinquishing the hands-on control that goes with delegating authority while still being held ultimately responsible for the outcome. For that reason, if this arrangement is used there needs to be a high level of trust between the mayor and city recorder. The mayor and city recorder will need to communicate frequently; they need to agree on decisions that impact the departments and employees; and both parties need to remember that final decisions are the mayor’s responsibility.

Public Works Director

The departments of public works and development services will have many projects in common and need to work closely together on those projects. This working relationship will be enhanced if both directors report to the same supervisor. In the organizational structure recommended in Exhibit B, the Director of Public Works reports to the city recorder as does the Director of Development Services. In the organizational structure recommended in Exhibit C, both directors report directly to the mayor.

MTAS also recommends that sign-making and street marking personnel be assigned to and supervised by the public works director. This recommendation places

staff in the department where the functions are performed and funded, and reduces the number of one or two persons departments.

Planner

The city planner is responsible for a comprehensive approach for land use development within the town. This position develops recommendations on planning and development issues; advises the town's planning commission; maintains records and documentation; interprets and communicates regulations for developers; reviews site plans and subdivision proposals to insure compliance with codes and land use plans; and makes presentations at public meetings. This position must work cooperatively with the city engineer and building official.

Engineer

The city engineer is responsible for construction projects, environmental compliance issues, including stormwater phase II, and infrastructure maintenance within the town. This position identifies projects, develops budgets and specifications for projects and equipment, issues bid requests, reviews submittals, and administers engineering and construction contracts and monitors fieldwork. This position works closely with the Planner, Building Official and (current) Environmentalist.

Building Official

The building official is responsible for assuring compliance with applicable codes for building, gas, mechanical and plumbing construction within the town. This position reviews plans, interprets and enforces codes; performs property inspections and communicates findings to property owners, developers and contractors. Currently, this position is responsible for enforcement of the town's sign ordinance. This position must work closely with the city engineer and planner.

Administrative Assistant

The administrative assistant performs the duties of the current environmentalist i.e., this position is responsible for insuring compliance with the town's health, sanitation, property maintenance and animal nuisance regulations. Currently, this is largely a reactive function. MTAS recommends that more proactive measures be taken on enforcement of property maintenance standards by using the building inspectors and police, fire and public works personnel to be the "eyes and ears" in the field to report property maintenance problems.

This position also works with the development district to secure grants for various city projects; serves as secretary for the airport authority and solid waste board; and develops information brochures and press releases for the department of public works.

In addition, this position provides administrative assistance to the new department of Development Services. This includes being the first point of contact for customer

service, tracking requests for service, handling routine correspondence, organization of files, etc. This position would allow the professionals and technical experts to spend more time in the field and on matters requiring their technical skills and less time on routine paperwork.

Responsibilities for violations of the Town's sign ordinance should be moved from building codes to the administrative assistant (because it can be considered a codes enforcement responsibility). Or, at a minimum building inspection staff should work closely with the administrative assistant to coordinate notification and follow-up of these violations.

Personnel duties such as drug and alcohol testing and hepatitis B shots will be transferred to the clerk who handles other personnel responsibilities for the town.

Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations of this report are:

1. Create a Department of Development Services with a professional with management experience as director. Place planning, building codes, engineering and environmental functions in this department.

Establish the new department of Development Services within the organizational structure shown in either Exhibit B or C. The structure shown in Exhibit B is preferred. If B is chosen this should include the reporting of the Public Works Director to the City Recorder.

2. Change the current Environmentalist to an Administrative Assistant for the Department of Development Services. Adjust the duties of this position as explained above. The position should be the first point of contact for all development-related services.
3. The Town should reimburse the Administrative Assistant (Environmentalist) for gas used when responding in the field to codes enforcement calls.
4. Place all drug/alcohol testing and hepatitis B duties in the office of the Personnel Clerk.
5. Fix the hours of the Town Planner at 40 per week and coincide these with the regular office hours of city hall.
6. Place sign making and street marking personnel within the public works department.

7. The director of Development Services should hold weekly staff meetings. The public works director should be included. The director of Development Services should be responsible for coordinating these meetings. He/she must ensure that a tight agenda is developed and used for each meeting.
8. The staff within Development Services should work amongst themselves to develop a standard “process flow” for plans review and coordination of inspections. The longer-term goal should be the implementation of a “one-stop-shop” concept for service to developers. In general a new, “customer service” emphasis should emerge within the department. In addition, a coordinated effort must be made to define, as closely as possible, where the duties and responsibilities of each division (within Development Services) begins and ends.
9. The codes enforcement program should become more proactive within the office of the Administrative Assistant. Responsibilities for violations of the town’s sign ordinance should be moved from building codes to the administrative assistant.
10. The Town should strongly consider utilizing a comprehensive supervisory training program such as the MTAS “Municipal Management Academy.” The fundamental supervisory skills of essential employees must be developed.
11. City hall should be remodeled to accommodate the Department of Development Services. This should be done in a manner, which utilizes a customer friendly front desk or counter and includes easy access to the building inspectors, planner, administrative assistant, engineer and director.
12. Technology in all development-related offices should be improved. A “complaint tracking” system should be utilized. The Town should begin to develop a GIS capability.

Conclusion

The mayor requested MTAS to evaluate several city departments and provide recommendations for improving structure and functions. This report is the result of that assignment. MTAS believes the recommendations listed here, if implemented, will lead to improved customer service, and a more cohesive and productive work force. We envision a professionally run department of Development Services that truly focuses on development related issues that best serve the town’s interests.