

**Government Review Committee  
Meeting Notes  
3/12/2009**

**Present:** Chandra Coffey, Deborah Kent, Ruth Ayen, Ruth Doyle, Bill Dashnaw, Joanne Sevick, Mark Brouillette, David Patterson and Tedra Cobb.

**Overview of Meeting:** The Committee reviewed each item in the Action Plan, received an update on any activities taken since the last meeting.

| <i>Short Term</i>   |  |   |
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| <b>Action Items</b>   | <b>Team/Completion Date</b>  | <b>Update and Discussion</b>  |
| <p>Analyze various types of contracts, obligations and procedures and explore liability, minimum requirements and accountability standards.</p> | <p>Ruth Ayen, Peter Lekki and Andrew Moses, Keith Zimmerman and Ruth Doyle</p> <p>Completion Date:<br/>September 1, 2008 – draft</p> <p>January 1, 2009 - Completion</p> | <p>There have been improvements towards ensuring the County is protected while engaging in contracts. Bill has found that many of the vendors are inserting into their contracts language that would put the County at risk. We discussed three suggestions from the group.</p> <p>Ruth Doyle reported that the County Attorney is attentive to ensuring that Schedule A is attached by Departments to all contracts and said in some cases the County Attorney sends a reminder to the Board Office with the contract for them to get the Schedule A completed.</p> <p>It was suggested that the County Attorney not sign a contract when the form is not attached, but rather, send it back to the Department, and have them attach Schedule A, and then forward the completed contract and form to the County Attorney. Then he will sign it and send it to the Board Office.</p> <p>The second suggestion was to have the new County Attorney review the file created by Keith that includes the various types of contracts to ensure that the County is protected in each of them.</p> <p>The third suggestion was to conduct training with Department Heads on entering into contracts and the necessary steps. This is particularly timely, as we have several new Department Heads. It was also suggested that we open this training to other municipalities, since they may benefit as well. The topics discussed for the training are: liability requirements, what must be included in contract language, which contracts must be reviewed by the County Attorney, a review of Schedule A and other protection language that must be in contracts.</p> <p>Bill volunteered to work on this with Ruth and Bill, Debbie and Joanne agree to bring it to the Department Heads to get input.</p> |

*Short Term*

| <b>Action Items</b>  | <b>Team/Completion Date</b>  | <b>Update</b>   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Review process of reporting and accounting for Capital Projects in all County departments.</p> <p>Review process for updating the Board on open Capital Projects</p>  | <p>Bill Dashnaw, Bob McNeil, Keith Zimmerman, and Karen St. Hilaire</p>    | <p>We discussed the new GEMS training and how to better use the GEMS System for tracking contracts through budget years. GEMS does provide figures, but not the information that the Board needs regarding the status of each project and all of the financial information across budget years.</p> <p>Bill is putting together an expanded spreadsheet that will include: the project title and number, the budget, the balance, encumbered amount, revenue received, revenue balance, and the status of the project.</p> <p>He will get feedback from other Department Heads, revise it and finalize. It is suggested once done, that this be used in each Department to track Capital Projects.</p>  |
| <p>Staff Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct succession planning and cross training process</li><li>• Conduct staff development training targeting mandatory Continuing Education Units (CEU), training in management and adaptive skills</li><li>• Assessing opportunities for tele-education and on-line training</li><li>• Conduct employee satisfaction survey – on hold</li></ul> | <p>Chris Boulio, Karen St. Hilaire, Ruth Doyle</p> <p>Completion Date:</p> | <p>Ruth reported that since the 2009 Budget eliminated funds for training, the County is working towards conducting more training in house.</p> <p>Workplace Violence training has been conducted this way. She reported that they will continue to seek assistance from the Department of Labor and work with staff to develop a staff leading training program.</p> <p>Ruth and Chris are putting together a training budget so that by mid-year when the Board assesses how the County is doing financially, the Board can then decide if further training should be funded.</p> <p>One of the training priority areas would be to conduct the GEMS training-of-trainers. The Board will need to budget \$5,000 should it decide to proceed.</p> |

*Short Term*

| <b>Action Items</b>  | <b>Team/Completion Date</b>  | <b>Update</b>   |
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| Review and update current code of ethics and local ethics law- including responding to FOIL requests   | Chandra Wirtz, Jane Powers, Tedra Cobb, Mike Cunningham, Peter Lekki, and Andrew Moses<br><br>Completion Date: | Tedra met with Jane, Nicole Duve, Peter Lekki, Alex MacKinnon and Pat Turbett to revise the draft law.<br><br>Edits have been made creating a clean draft. This was forwarded to the Board and will be on the April Services agenda. The BOL will need to take the last draft off the table, vote it down, and then accept the new draft. The BOL will need to then pass a resolution to hold the public hearing.   |
| Assess current process for appointing advisory and governing boards and explore ways to increase communication with and public access to minutes, by-laws and actions taken by boards. | Tedra Cobb and Jane Powers<br><br>Completion Date:   | There was discussion that the Advisory Boards are better about sending minutes to the Board office. However, there are some Advisory Boards that are supposed to report to the Board of Legislators. Chandra is reviewing by-laws to see which Board are responsible for regular reports to the BOL and when their last report was conducted.<br><br>Also, she will reach out again to each Advisory Board to remind them about forwarding minutes of meetings.   |
| Conduct assessment of County policies to explore cost saving and efficiencies.   | Bob McNeil, Bill Dashnaw, Debbie Kent and Ruth Doyle, Chris Boulio<br><br>Completion Date:                     | Ruth has been working with Debby Kent, Bill Dashnaw, and Chris Boulio on the cell phone policy. There are now two draft policies, one for personal use of cell phones during work hours and once for use of County owned cell phones.<br><br>Ruth will bring these to the Department Heads for final feedback and Karen will present to the Board for adoption. Once adopted, it will be implemented going forward as well as retroactive for Department Heads to review with staff within one month giving the staff opportunity to sign the policies.   |
| Review current resource allocation and funding process and exploring further partnering opportunities with "outside" agencies  | Judy Wendt, Joan Narrow, Joanne Sevick, Ruth Doyle, Bob McNeil<br><br>Completion Date:                         | Ruth reported that it appears we have completed the work on this action item. Two things have been accomplished and will continue going forward; A form was created and completed by "outside agency" that receive and/or request funding. This was utilized for the 2009 Budget process so that the Board of Legislators was able to review financial and programmatic information on each agency and how they intend to use County funds. The Budget Team will continue to use this form in the future for tracking purposes. As pertinent information is sought, the form will be updated and utilized as a tool to track use of St. Lawrence County funding and the other success is that the Board of Legislators has improved tracking contracts and was successful in ensuring the completion of each existing contract by the end of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2009. |

*Short Term*

| <b>Action Items</b>  | <b>Team/Completion Date</b>   | <b>Update</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Explore ways to be more customer driven:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct a community satisfaction survey/suggestion box</li><li>• Explore and identify ways to better communicate with public</li><li>• Design and conduct a marketing/public relations campaign</li><li>• Increase community outreach and education on county services</li><li>• Create and distribute a County Newsletter</li><li>• Increase opportunities for creating an entrepreneurial culture within County government<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Create a process for employee suggestion box</li><li>○ Create a meaningful incentive program</li></ul></li></ul> | <p>Joanne Sevick and Jane Powers, Connie Martin</p> <p>Completion Date:</p> | <p>Chandra reported that a plan has been created with the Departments to do media press releases on County Department services to increase public awareness on County Services.</p> <p>Joanne reported that the County is re-invigorating the Customer Service Award and there have been suggestions for recipients.</p> <p>There was discussion on the Customer Service Training that Joanne and Connie conducted in the past. It was suggested that the Department Heads re-visit this training in their training discussions. There are many new Department Heads who may not be aware that this was a successful program in the past.</p> <p>Joanne will call a meeting to create a customer satisfaction survey to be conducted as soon as possible as a baseline survey.</p> |

*Long Term*

| Action Items  | Team  | Update   |
|---|---|--|
| Explore opportunities for consolidation and municipal sharing of services   | Gary Edwards, Bill Serafin, Bill Dashnaw, Jim Smith, Pat Turbett, Lowell Kelsey, Joan Narrow, Jane Powers | The County has applied for and received several SMSI grants.<br><br>Please find attached a listing of the grants applied for and received and their status at this time. |
| Conduct Strategic Planning with the Board of Legislators and County Departments<br><br>Explore opportunities for shared services, cost savings and potential consolidation between County departments | Chair, Tedra Cobb, Administrator, Joanne Sevick, Ruth Doyle, Bill Dashnaw                                 | Ruth Doyle has discussed this with the County Administrator and Chair Paquin and is awaiting direction for the coming year.  |
| Explore reaction to and opportunity for Community Wide Standards and procedures   | Jane Powers and town officials  | No report was given as Jane was unable to attend the meeting.  |

**Other:**

- Tedra attended training on informed hiring and the impact on reducing worker's compensation. She brought back materials for Chris Boulio to share with the County Attorney.
- We discussed Youth Bureau funding cuts within the context of all of the funding we receive for youth. Joanne and Bill Serafin developed a matrix for the Children in Our Care Committee. We discussed the impact of the State cuts on services to each of the Leg. Districts at the local level. See attached.
- We discussed the future direction of the committee, as many of our Action Items have been accomplished. It was decided that the next meeting focus on brainstorming to bring forward new ideas and set new direction for the Committee. Legislators, Department Heads and Deputies and other municipal officials are invited to participate.
- **Next meeting: May 14<sup>th</sup> at 9am in the Human Services Conference Room.**