



## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Dave Ramsay, City Manager

**From:** Marilynne Beard, Assistant City Manager

**Date:** October 5, 2006

**Subject:** ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

One of our organizational goals for 2005-2006 was the development of a system for making ongoing improvements to our organization and work processes. The notion of “continuous improvement” is one that we embrace as a matter of course at Kirkland. We often don’t take the opportunity to report out the results of our efforts to the City Council and public. With that in mind, the City Manager asked each department to identify process improvements that they plan to undertake in the current biennium. Specifically, departments were given the following guidelines for developing their planned improvements:

*The types of improvements that are to be included would have one or more of the following outcomes or results:*

- *Increased efficiency – higher productivity, cost savings, and cost avoidance*
- *Improved customer service – external or internal customers*
- *Revenue generation – entrepreneurial ideas, cost of service and rate review*
- *Improved fiscal management – accountability/audit trails, revenue receipts, and expenditure controls*
- *Positive workplace environment – employee relations and team building*

*The types of strategies that would be used to achieve these outcomes include the following.*

- *A review of current organizational structure with the possibility of reorganization*
- *A review of current work processes looking for ways to improve, streamline, make more productive*
- *Developing new or improved ideas for a current or new service*
- *A review of current ordinances, rules and procedures for clarification, improvement or elimination*

While each department was asked to identify one improvement project, most departments proposed at least two. This memo summarizes the organizational improvements proposed by the departments and their current status.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

### ***Status Report***

#### **Finance and Administration**

- **Implement a Document Management System** – This is a joint project between Finance and Administration and Information Technology. The Document Management system is expected to address a variety of needs including managing document versions, locating and storing documents, managing document retention and destruction, and documenting and streamlining workflows. Potential benefits of implementing the system include more effective management of paper and electronic documents and records, improving the ability to respond to public records requests, reducing offsite storage needs, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, and ensuring that backup copies of key documents are available for disaster recovery purposes. As part of the 2005-06 budget process, a one-time service package was approved to fund a full-time project manager for the Document Management system's phased implementation.

The project is expected to be done in phases and a vendor, Hummingbird, was selected in 2005 for the pilot phase. As contract documents were reaching final approval in mid 2006, Hummingbird was acquired by OpenText as part of on-going consolidations in the industry. City staff evaluated whether to proceed with the pilot and is recommending that the pilot project continue with Hummingbird and assess moving ahead with full implementation upon successful completion. Final contract documents for the pilot should be completed by the end of October and the pilot should be well underway by the end of the year.

- **False Alarm Reporting Program** – This was a joint project between Finance and Administration and Police which was implemented in July 2006. It is estimated that over 99% of alarms for police are false alarms which consume officer time and detract from other on-duty responsibilities. The goal is to decrease false alarms by 30% in the first year, thereby freeing-up on-duty police officers for other policing activities. The program is expected to decrease the number of false alarms for police assistance through a system of alarm registration, false alarm tracking and progressively-higher penalties.

Council approved an ordinance requiring businesses and residences to register burglar alarms and imposing progressive fines for repeated false alarms. The false alarm program is administered by the Department of Finance and Administration using the Police Department's New World CAD/RMS system. In the first three months of the program 1,598 alarms have been registered with another 98 pending the receipt of additional information or fees. Of those registered, 540 are businesses and 1,058 are residential which includes 306 seniors. There have been 343 false alarms. There are 47 locations on permanent suspension. Staff continues to distribute False Alarm Program brochures with business license renewals and mail information to alarm locations which are not registered.

- **Realign utility accounts to their correct billing cycles.** There are currently about 1,200 utility accounts that are billed out of sequence to their reading dates. Because of the lag between the meter read and the billing, a bill received in March reflects water usage from November and December of the previous year. We have received complaints from utility customers about the lag

especially when the resulting bill reveals a leak that could have been repaired earlier. As far as we can tell, this mismatch between read and billing cycles for these accounts has been in place since the City first assumed the Rose Hill Water District in 1994. Correcting the problem is difficult (which is why it hasn't been pursued prior to this point). However, once it is corrected, all utility customers will be billed on the most recent meter reads available. It will also reduce the possibility of errors in the billing process.

The first step in realigning the accounts was to map the specific accounts with GIS to obtain a picture of the problem. This picture revealed a number of accounts which should be in different routes. The first step in the alignment process has been to move the accounts to the correct meter reading route. Accounts which changed routes but stayed in the same billing cycle have been moved. Accounts which need to be in a different route and different billing cycle will be moved next. Once these changes are accomplished we will begin the process of changing the billing cycle for those 1,200 accounts which are billed in the wrong cycle. These changes should begin in early spring of 2007 and be completed by June of 2007.

## **Human Resources**

- **Update and Standardize Employee Orientations** – New employees receive an orientation that covers an overview of the organization, employee benefits, personnel policies and other programs of interest. Human Resources staff met individually with new employees and a group orientation to the organization was done periodically. This project involved standardizing the employee orientation process to enhance efficiency and to provide more regular orientation session. The Human Resources Department implemented the new program in April 2006:
  - Revised the benefits orientation process for both regular and seasonal hires;
  - Established a standardized weekly orientation for employees providing consistency in scheduling for HR Staff as well as departments;
  - Initiated the Washington State Patrol Check process for all employees;
  - Developed a standard monthly policy orientation encompassing city policies and practices, legal compliance and an overview of the city organization. This also includes presentations to new employees from the Wellness, Diversity, and the Transportation Committees.
  
- **Medical Benefits Strategy** – The medical benefits strategy will address the concern of medical benefit coverage and rising costs. The project involves a study of medical benefit options available through AWC and others and the attendant costs. Additional strategies, such as Health Savings Accounts, retiree medical programs and Health Reserve Accounts will also be examined. Activities to date and planned for 2007 include:
  - The core strategy of converting from AWC Plan A into AWC Plan B was carried forward in union negotiations together with language that agrees to future discussion of options;
  - Staff met with AWC on two occasions to discuss benefit strategies and City needs;

- A due diligence review of benefit programs will be conducted in 2007 as the new programs available under AWC are made available – these options will be compared to other alternatives;
  - A white paper has been prepared and submitted to City Council outlining the medical benefit strategies.
- **Personnel Policy Revision Process** – This is a major project involving bringing all personnel rules to legal compliance and contemporary best-employment practices. The current personnel policies were developed by various staff over the years and most are in need of update. Without a consistent, contemporary policy there is often confusion about implementation and applicability. The department has set the foundation for this initiative during the past year with a major re-organization and redefinition of our customer service model. Additionally, an interactive process has been charted for the process which includes the establishment of topical workgroups to assure management and employee input in policy recommendations. Goal recommendations will include a revised and consolidated personnel policy that is capable of ongoing maintenance and ease of access to all employees.

Initial work has included research and review of other jurisdictions policies, recommendations of human resources and public entities associations and assessment of impacts of recent legislation/court ruling. Analysis has also been made and is continuing of current KMC, APM and other COK policy to ascertain what we have, don't have and opportunities and needs for revision. Collective bargaining language is also being revised in negotiations proposals to reflect this effort. A service package has been submitted for a temporary position to assure movement forward of this and other critical projects in a timely fashion.

- **Employee Training Program** – The goal is to increase in-house and Kirkland unique trainings to ensure communication and consistency. Tuition reimbursement programs and external trainings such as Rocky Mountain and Leadership eastside will also be retained, together with a regional Human Resources initiative to explore economies of scale. A “competency-based “ model of training will be developed to assure appropriate level of training offerings for employees, supervisors, Manager and Director levels. Some training will need to be sequenced to follow the personnel policy revision process, whereas others may be initiated earlier. While legal requirements and best employment practices will be emphasized, training offerings will also be directed at career development, cross-training and succession planning.

## **Public Works**

- **Goal setting and performance management system** – The Public Works management team held a retreat to identify short-term objectives for the department. The team identified 15 objectives including reducing the number of position vacancies by creating a pool of qualified temporary full-time employees that can be transitioned into regular vacancies when they occur and conducting a training inventory for operational staff and developing a training plan to provide more consistent training opportunities for field crews.

- **Meter reading function** – The Public Works Department is responsible for reading and maintaining water meters. Efficient and accurate meter reading is essential to the utility billing process and maintenance of revenue. Over the past few years, reading errors or missed readings led to poor customer service and caused unnecessary work for Utility Billing and Public Works staff. To improve the meter reading function, the department upgraded the classification of the position to attract and retain more experienced staff and moved the Itron meter-reading apparatus to City Hall from the Maintenance Center to enhance coordination with Utility Billing staff in Finance.
- **Billing system for fill dirt and aggregate** – The Street Division is now using Load-Rite technology to provide for accurate billings to City of Kirkland Departments using fill, dirt and aggregate. The primary benefit is not so much a savings as it is a much more accurate accounting of which fund is to pay the costs of various loads of aggregate and material. Under the current system, the Street Operating Fund was paying in some cases for loads that should have been billed to parks (General Fund) or to one of the three utilities (storm, sewer, water). In addition to the cost accounting improvements, there are small labor savings as the data is transmitted directly to our administrative staff at their desk rather than the current method of estimating loads, calculating the costs, recording that information, and sending it hard copy to the staff completing the billing.
- **Intelligent Transportation System for Traffic management** – The Transportation Commission is looking at ways Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) can be incorporated into our traffic management programs. An ITS briefing will be presented to the City Council on October 17.

## Information Technology

- **Multimedia Services (MMS)** – A customer satisfaction survey was conducted regarding the Multimedia Services division products and services. Information Technology staff is working with the IT Steering Committee (composed of representatives from each department) regarding ways to enhance the services of the MMS group. The functions of the group were realigned to provide more clear lines of communication and supervision and a Service Level Agreement was developed that defines standards and accountabilities for the group and its customers.

## Police

- **Domestic Violence Response Team (DART)** – The Domestic Abuse Response Team provides intervention and assistance to victims of domestic violence. DART is composed of trained volunteers who conduct telephone follow-up and assist the Domestic Violence Advocate in guiding victims through the court process. Beginning June 1, the DART volunteers were called out on family conflict situations where no violence has occurred but where chronic family issues are present. The volunteers work with the family to diffuse the conflict and relieve officers on calls that have not escalated to the point of requiring officer assistance. The DART team can also respond to chronic runaway calls and obtain information needed for Police Department staff to follow-up. It is estimated that by appropriately diverting case follow-up to DART volunteers, uncommitted officer time can be increased from 15% to 19% making them available for high priority calls.

During 2005 there appears to have been only two instances of DART callouts. Our current project with

DART started in June 2006 and all patrol squads have participated in this new emphasis and with the following results:

- June 2006 5 Callouts
- July 2006 4 Callouts
- August 2006 3 Callouts

Total 12 Callouts in 3 months (*versus 2 call outs for entire year of 2005*)

Patrol Officers and Corrections Officers have received training from the Family Violence Unit. Detective McGuire and Advocate Reynolds participated in attending meetings, creating new procedures, and preparing the training material. The training covered our new DART Call Out procedures under Standard Operating Procedure INV-026, Section (IV) – “On-Scene Assistance to Victim and Dependents.” This training was approximately fifteen (15) minutes in length and held at each squad’s briefing in the Squad Room.

There has been positive feedback from the officers about the training and they have commended the work of DART members. On at least two separate occasions, there were e-mails sent to the Family Violence Unit by patrol officers on the good work done by the DART members.

There are currently nine (9) DART volunteers on the DART team. These volunteers have been dedicated to this project and they have been provided additional equipment to respond to these callouts. This additional equipment includes:

- Care bags for victims
- Uniform jackets for visibility
- Call-out bag for procedural work
- Car seats for victims with children
- Flashlight charger in the DART van for night work
- Cell phone and portable radio for communication needs
- Bins in the DART van to store supplies

The Family Violence Unit has also provided additional support to the DART volunteers. The volunteers are directed to call Detective McGuire or Advocate Reynolds for procedural questions they may have. Advocate Reynolds stated that the unit now receives at least one phone call a week from volunteers. This is double the number of calls from the time prior to this project.

Detective McGuire and Advocate Reynolds have provided the DART volunteers with additional training. They have put in at least forty (40) additional hours of training towards the development of the current DART volunteers since this project started. In addition, the duties of the DART volunteers have been expanded. They are now trained to assist juveniles and/or parents by providing them information on available services such as Youth Eastside Services, Family Reconciliation Services, Catholic Youth Services, Youth At-Risk Petitions and other services.

Overall, the utilization of DART has been positive and encouraging. In reviewing our current status here are the current needs:

- Nine (9) additional volunteers are needed
- Continued emphasis by patrol officers on DART use
- Documentation on utilization of DART in police reports
- Training for Communications Technicians

## City Attorney's Office

- **Department customer service survey** – An internal survey was conducted to measure the level of satisfaction with the provision of legal services by the City Attorney's Office and to identify areas for improvement. The survey specifically addressed the level of satisfaction with the way questions/projects are currently assigned to the attorney's in the CAO. Overall, staff and the City Council expressed a high level of satisfaction with the CAO staff and services with an average rating of 4.3 out of a five-point scale. The City Attorney will be conducting follow-up on specific comments to determine how services can be further improved.
- **Brief bank** – Currently, each of the attorneys maintains and is able to retrieve briefs or memoranda that he or she wrote or received from some other source. By developing a brief bank with an electronic index, everyone in the CAO will be able to search by subject matter for briefs or opinions previously prepared on a given topic. This project will be incorporated into the Document Management System Implementation once the pilot phase of the system is completed.

## Fire/Development Services

- **Development Review Committee (DRC) Manual** – The DRC Manual documents the procedures for permit processing that cross departmental lines. It is a place for Development Services staff to look and see how to handle a permit or issue. It documents the details of permit review and helps the staff to be consistent and efficient. Since the DRC Manual is the on-going record of all processes associated with Development Review, its updating is a continuous (and never ending) process of documenting each process change. To accomplish this in an orderly manner, the Building Division e-mails any DRC decisions which affect the review process to all of development review services staff. The Planning Department (who is the gatekeeper of the manual) receives this and periodically incorporates a batch of changes into the appropriate section of the manual. This project was designed to update the manual and to make it more accessible and user-friendly by creating it in a web-based format. The project is underway and we have a target completion date of December, 2006.
- **Pre-submittal meetings** – Pre-submittal meetings are widely used by applicants to understand rules and requirements in advance of submitting development applications. We have found it extremely helpful to put in the time on the front end in order to have a better end product. A committee was formed to analyze the pre-submittal meeting process and develop recommendations to improve it for customers and staff. The most beneficial improvement to the pre-submittal process has been the implementation of the Permit Coordinator process which has resulted in smoother-running pre-submittal meetings. The Permit Coordinator process requires that the most appropriate department reviewer acts as a coordinator throughout the permit process including chairing the pre-submittal meeting and remaining as the single point of contact. The flow of pre-submittal cases is monitored weekly by DRC to discuss any issues or concerns ahead of the actual meeting.



## Planning

- **Zoning code amendments** – The Planning Department maintains a list of desired amendments that correct identified problems on a variety of topics. The proposed amendments are presented to the Planning Commission who then holds a public hearing and makes a recommendation to the City Council. Staff anticipated bringing the zoning code amendments to the City Council on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- **Web page review** – The City recently updated its web site. Once this was accomplished, the Planning and Community Development Department wanted to systematically review the content of our web page using a series of evaluation criteria. The criteria addresses issues such as:
  - Do the web pages address the topics of most interest to the public?
  - Is the format visually appealing and well-organized?
  - Is the information kept current? Do we have a process for doing so?
  - Are we using appropriate technologies?
  - Do we have appropriate methods to proactively notify the public of new events and issues (i.e. listserv)?

Based on this evaluation, staff prepared a prioritized “to do” list. The web page was updated earlier this year.

## Parks and Community Service

- **Business services review** – In 2006, the Parks and Community Services Department established a Business Services Division. The purpose of this division is to advance the City’s opportunities in developing partnerships, philanthropy opportunities, endowments and other markets for new revenue. This position provides the opportunity to dedicate existing resources to:
  - Centralize the administration of all concessions and rentals;
  - Develop and implement a marketing partnership policy to obtain new sponsorships opportunities;
  - Centralize the management of all the revenue functions at Marina to one work unit, down from three divisions;
  - Develop and lead service teams to maximize the expertise that are within the department in the delivery of special events, sponsorships, concessions and rentals.

Accomplishments in the first six months include: implemented seasonal food and beverage concessions at Houghton Beach, Marina Park, Waverly Beach, Peter Kirk Pool and Juanita Beach, renewed the Parasail contract to operate out of Marina Park, implemented a Dock Master” to handle daily moorage collections and enforcement at Marina Park, renewed lease with The Slip Restaurant for one year, implemented new marketing strategies to increase advertising in the Recreation Brochure and resolved a back payment owed to the City from the right-of-way lease agreement for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South Dock in the amount of \$20,022. As of August revenues from concessions, moorage, and advertising have exceed 2005 revenues for the same time period by \$20,000. A memo is from the department was provided under separate cover that describes in

greater detail the accomplishments for the first six months and planning activities for the coming year.

### **City Manager's Office**

- **Grant Strategy** – Kirkland had typically pursued grants on an ad hoc basis that was not coordinated amongst Departments. Application submittals were dependent upon the initiative of the individual Department Directors and managers. As a result, Kirkland had not been getting its share of State grant dollars in recent years. In addition, Kirkland did not have any track record of advocating for State and Federal appropriations.

In response, the City Manager's Office has convened a grants team that includes representatives from the Finance, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation Departments. The Team meets bimonthly to review the status of pending grant applications and to discuss upcoming grant opportunities. The focus on grants has led to successes. Our increased awareness of state funding opportunities led directly to a successful \$3 million application for Jobs Development Fund (JDF) monies. This funding was awarded to Kirkland in the first year of competitive grant funding for the JDF program.

In upcoming meetings, the scope of the grants will be expanded to include representatives from Police and Fire. In addition, a portion of each meeting will be devoted to generating funding leads for a selected multi-disciplinary project. We are also planning to review the history of Kirkland's grants funding – How many applications we have typically submitted in a year, success rates in obtaining grants, and the level of annual funding.

The City Manager's Office also has hired a State and Federal lobbyist to assist with advocacy for State and Federal appropriations. Our focused advocacy for State capital appropriations has garnered \$700,000 in earmarks for transportation and stream restoration. We have requests in for approximately \$2.5 million in Federal funding this year as well.

- **Contract with the King County Superior Court for juror notification** – This is currently the responsibility of a Kirkland court staff person and involves on average about 27 hours per month to prepare mailings for juror notification (about 500 per month) and handle returned mail and questions from potential jurors. In addition to staff time, an estimated \$3,000 per year is spent in postage and printing. As an alternative, we can contract with the King County Superior Court for jury notification services. They are already sending out notifications for Superior, District Court and some municipal courts and have a website established for juror check in. Court staff estimates that we can reduce the number of jury summonses from 500 to 300. The cost for contracting for the service is estimated at \$2,340 per year. The Kirkland Court will also save maintenance costs for our jury management software.

The City of Kent recently implemented the system with good results. We are in the process of updating forms and executing an agreement with King County to begin transfer this responsibility.