

Town of Guilford, Connecticut

31 Park Street, Guilford, CT 06437

01-06-10

**TOWN OF GUILFORD  
EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE  
MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2010  
7:30 P.M. – GUILFORD TOWN HALL**

Present: Task Force Members: Marti Carlson, Michael Dowley, James Galvin,  
Gary Gilbert, Mark Matlosz

Selectman Joseph Mazza, Cindy Cartier, Charles Havrda, Gary MacElhiney, Veronica Wallace, Karen Quercia, Clerk

**1. Call to Order**

First Selectman Mazza called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**2. Introduction by First Selectman Joseph Mazza**

Mr. Mazza thanked the members of the Task Force for volunteering their time to take on the large task that is before them. His second day in office he met with the Guilford Employees Association, (GEA), and the Task Force was the first item that was discussed. Employees are willing and ready to participate in this process.

He met with the department heads this past Monday and they will give the Task Force their complete cooperation.

Mr. Mazza reviewed the mission statement of the Task Force, and distributed an Annual Report of the Town to each member. He assured the Task Force that their review would be taken seriously and put into action.

He also distributed information provided to him by the Guilford Property Owner's Association. The majority of the points that the GPOA discussed with Mr. Mazza are areas that the Task Force will be focusing on.

The Task Force discussed working with the BOE to maximize efficiencies. Mr. Mazza stated that Dr. Forcella is happy the Task Force has been formed.

Both Ms Cartier and Ms Wallace expressed their gratitude to the members of the task force for their willingness to serve.

**• Election of Chair**

*Motion: Upon a motion by Marti Carlson, and seconded by Mike Dowley, the*  
*voted to elect Gary Gilbert Chairman.*

*Efficiency Task Force*

*Vote: In Favor: Carlson, Dowley, Galvin, Gilbert, Matlosz*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Abstain: None*

- **Election of Vice-Chair**

*Motion: Upon a motion by Jim Galvin, and seconded by Marti Carlson, the Task Force voted to elect Mike Dowley Vice Chairman.*

*Force voted to elect*

*Vote: In Favor: Carlson, Dowley, Galvin, Gilbert, Matlosz  
Opposed: None  
Abstain: None*

Mr. Gilbert requested that Ms Quercia be the clerk for the task force.

- **Public Forum**

None

- **Discuss Action Plan**

Mr. Gilbert asked if anyone had prepared any outlines they would like to share. He suggested if anyone had any thoughts regarding methodology or timeline after the meeting that they be shared via e-mail.

Some of the members explained their backgrounds and the type of experience they had. Mr. Galvin introduced himself and explained that he worked in the private sector as a turn around CFO. In his business he looks at “fast nickels v. slow dollars”. He recognized that the public environment is different than private business.

Mr. Gilbert felt that having members with a range of different experiences would make the task force especially effective.

Ms Carlson introduced herself and explained that she has spent 15 years working in the public sector. She explained for the benefit of those coming from the private sector that there are areas of town government which are governed by state statute.

She asked to review the specific charge of the task force, and recommended a “30,000 feet approach”, look at things from a “reverse pyramid perspective”, look at the big picture first. He expressed the opinion that the Task Force should not second guess the department heads, and the employees should understand that this not a witch hunt, and the task force is not an audit committee.

She recommended that the task force look into best business practices from the private sector that could be implemented. An area to investigate would be the MUNIS (municipal accounting software) system which currently is not being fully utilized.

Mr. Gilbert felt the Task Force should stick with its original charge and act as an advisory group. This would help relax employee’s fears. Questions should be asked tactfully, and not in a challenging way.

The Task Force discussed their meeting schedule and decided to meet the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

Mr. Gilbert suggested the following items for discussion:

- Methods of soliciting input

- Defining clear objectives toward the end result
- Format of the report
- Establish working objectives and methodology
- Defining the relationship between the Boards and Commissions, Departments and the Task Force.

The Task Force discussed some of the tools they would need to accomplish their objectives. These included:

- Copies of the Town budget,
- History of revenue and expenses for the past ten years.
- Organizational chart by department
- Job descriptions for all employees
- Information on five area towns with similar demographics for comparison purposes.
- Copy of performance evaluation form
- Copies of the Union contracts
- Departmental Budget Workshop schedule

Mr. MacElhiney suggested a publication by the State OPM which provides financial data and rankings for all 169 towns in the State.

Mr. Mazza suggested that CCM could also provide information the Task Force was looking for.

Mr. Dowley stated that the Task Force needed to be on the same page as far as what their mission was in order to get to the final product.

Ms Carlson asked if their approach should be department by department, or more town-wide. She suggested looking to the IT departments at the Town and BOE for savings and streamlining suggestions.

Mr. Galvin stated that since 2007 the private sector has reduced employees by 7.3 million people. The government has had no such reductions. The Task Force is not here to target people, but people should be nervous. Taxpayers are tired of funding bills. Ms Carlson stated the Task Force is not looking for fraud, and Mr. Galvin stated if it is there it will hit them in the face.

Mr. Gilbert stated that the Task Force should not display an attitude of looking for fraud and mismanagement. They are looking for ways to do a good job and develop better service for the taxpayers.

The Task Force discussed the role of Boards and Commissions in overseeing various departments, what information they can provide, and how they should be utilized.

Mr. Dowley explained that he has a large corporate background in Human Resources. He understands that the Town is a budget driven rather than a profit driven organization, but sometimes in that environment the hard questions don't get asked. If government relies on personal income tax for their revenue, budgets will be turned down.

He stated that the Task Force provides an opportunity to convince voters that the Town is working efficiently and is demonstrating a wise use of funds. It is important to start planning now to take control of spending. This is a chance to go on the offense and make a difference. The employees have to be behind the Task Force and offer good ideas.

Mr. Galvin agreed with Mr. Dowley.

Mr. Mazza stated that the employees are anxious to be part of the process.

Ms Wallace stated that the job of government is to serve the people and to find the best level of service in the most cost effective way. Mr. Gilbert stated that it is not their intention to cut services, but rather to improve them. In some cases that may mean an initial increase in spending to realize long term savings.

Ms Cartier stated that long range planning is very important on both the Town and BOE sides.

Mr. Havrda asked if the Task Force had a specific plan for their next meeting. He suggested inviting the Finance Director and/or the IT Specialist to the next meeting to provide background information.

The Task Force discussed the need for a procedure and a plan. They discussed the following points:

- Speak to the Boards and Commissions, particularly the ones that oversee the largest budgets
- Get input from the Department Heads first to get them on board
- Don't preempt the individual employees, often they have some of the best perspectives and suggestions
- Assure employees there should be no fear of retaliation from their supervisors
- Provide everyone who wishes to speak an opportunity to do so, and
- What is the best method to accomplish that, i.e. face to face interviews, online surveys, questionnaires.

Mr. Dowley suggested that the Task Force members submit a list of information they would like to have to Mr. Gilbert so that it can be provided at the next meeting.

Mr. Mazza offered that if the Task Force felt at some point that they needed two additional members to accomplish their goals, they should feel free to approach the Board of Selectmen.

- **New Business**

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Karen Quercia  
Clerk