

01-27-10

**TOWN OF GUILFORD  
EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE  
MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2010  
7:00 P.M. – MENUNCATUCK ROOM  
COMMUNITY CENTER**

**Present:** Marti Carlson, Mike Dowley, Jim Galvin, Gary Gilbert, Mark Matlosz

Selectman Charles Havrda, Selectman Gary MacElhiney, Ken Wilson  
Clerk Karen Quercia

Youth and Family Services Board members Kathy MacElhiney, Stephanie Erb & Paul Kenefick, present from 7:40- 8:25

- **7:00 p.m. Call to order**

Mr. Gilbert called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

- **7:01 – 7:05 p.m. Approval of minutes of the January 19, 2010 meeting.**

*Motion: Upon a motion by Mr. Dowley and seconded by Ms Carlson, the Efficiency Task Force voted to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2010 meeting.*

*Approve: Carlson, Dowley, Galvin, Gilbert, Matlosz*

*Oppose: None*

*Abstain: None*

- **7:05 – 7:30 p.m. Discuss and take possible action on methodology, priorities, timeline, and action plan**

The Task Force discussed the schedule for their upcoming meetings. Youth and Family Services Director Lyne Landry will be invited to the next meeting at 7:30 p.m., and Dr. Fusco and Dave Roberts will be invited to speak at 8:00 p.m. the same night. At the suggestion of Ms Carlson, the Task Force agreed that it would be best to meet with the larger departments first (with the exception of Police and Fire, both of which have undergone recent studies). The Library Director and Assistant Director will be invited to the February 16, 2010 meeting, followed by the Public Works Commission March 2, and then the Superintendent of Highways March 16. The Parks and Recreation Commission and Department Head will be invited next.

Ms Carlson informed the Task Force that members of Guilford PACT are interested in addressing the Task Force. The members agreed that any citizen group with constructive suggestions should be engaged. Mr. Gilbert will contact the PACT President to coordinate a meeting date.

After reviewing the Scope, Methods and Process prepared by Mr. Dowley, the Task Force agreed by consensus via e-mail to adopt them as presented.

Mr. Dowley reported on the job descriptions which Mr. Goldblatt had provided. There are 153 descriptions, of which 16 are duplicates. (Fire and Police are not included as those descriptions are included in their respective contracts). There are 32 job descriptions which do not appear on any of the organization charts provided by the departments, and there are 5 positions on the organization charts for which there are no job descriptions. Some descriptions date back to 1983, some have no date at all, and some are unsigned. The Selectman's Office Chart does not clearly state which department heads report directly to the First Selectman. The organization chart from the Engineering Department differs from the job descriptions, and in some cases the supervisory function is unclear.

There are jobs for which there are several classifications (such as Maintainer I, II and III) with a disproportionate number of employees in each classification. Some job descriptions appear to be duplications, such as Maintainer I Office Clerk v. Office Clerk in the Public Works Department. Having an organization chart would help to insure that there are not too many people at the same level.

Ms. Carlson noted that it is often the case in the public sector that there is no vertical mobility, so the only way to reward experience is to move an employee up one level.

The Task Force decided that in order to move forward with their mission, it was necessary to have the job descriptions reviewed, standardized and corrected to accurately reflect current positions. They asked Mr. Havrda if he would discuss this with First Selectman Mazza and ask his support in accomplishing this goal. Mr. Dowley would be willing to meet with Mr. Goldblatt to edit and standardize the job descriptions and organization charts. It would be helpful to have a standardized format for all job descriptions, including steps and labor grade, author & approval signatures, and an overall organization chart. This is not a criticism but an attempt at pointing out problem areas. Ms Carlson noted that Mr. Goldblatt is the first full time Human Resources Director the Town has had.

• **7:40 – 8:00 p.m. Discussion with representatives from the Youth and Family Services Board.**

Kathy MacElhiney, Chairman of the Youth and Family Services Board, and members Stephanie Erb and Paul Kenefick addressed the Task Force. Mr. Gilbert stressed that this was an attempt by the Task Force to gain a better understanding of the function of Youth and Family Services within the Town in a friendly and relaxed scenario. He asked if the Board members had any questions or concerns.

Ms. MacElhiney explained that the Youth and Family Services mission is two fold, to keep a balance between prevention based programs and to provide a safety net for those in need through clinical programs. It is their hope that through prevention based programs they can turn some of the issues of those in need around.

Throughout their history, they have provided clinical programs, but had never billed for those services until about 2004-05. At that time they were approached by the Board of Selectman and asked to provide some revenue for their programs by billing insurance. They have never been self sustaining, nor do they expect to be, but they try to cover some of their costs through billing. A consultant was brought in to help set up a billing program, which has been evolving in sophistication over time.

In response to a question from Mr. Gilbert, Ms MacElhiney responded that the department consistently brings in approximately \$80,000 a year in revenue. However, since their programs are need blind and no child is excluded if they cannot pay, or do not have insurance, revenue is a difficult number to predict. Approximately 90% of their budget goes to salaries, and about \$20,000 goes toward programs.

The department can see between 60-65 clients at any given time. Clinical staff have to be paneled by insurance companies, therefore it can be six months before their services can be billed. They try to match the maximum number of children with the most effective staff. The department utilizes interns as well as licensed staff. They can afford a psychiatrist for just one day to manage clients on medication. Mr. Kenefick stated that the process has grown and evolved, and along with staffing changes make it hard to compare year to year.

Ms MacElhiney presented a graph comparing revenue. Last year's revenue was \$83,399 and they are on track to bring in about the same amount this year. Ms MacElhiney stated that the number of clients has increased since they started billing, and if a client does not have insurance they try to get them on the HUSKY plan.

Ms Carlson asked if they try to match insured clients with credentialed staff. She also inquired about the aggregate salaries of the staff that see clients. Are there any demographics of the department's client base?

Most of the clients come through school or police department referrals. There is no walk in ability. The department is good about getting clients appointments ASAP. Many are in crisis and cannot get timely appointments with private clinicians. The Board members all agreed that if Youth & Family Services did not provide these services, there would be nowhere for these clients to go other than a hospital ER. Ms MacElhiney stated that they provide a helpful service, and other towns have called looking to model their programs after Guilford. A client does not have to be a Guilford resident, but at this time they are not aware of any clients that are not from Guilford.

There is always someone from the department on call with a beeper, and often times they will go out with the Police Department if there is a situation in a home with children. The department has an excellent rapport with the police department, and Officer Brooks is a member of the

Youth and Family Services Board. As a former law enforcement officer in Guilford, Mr. Kenefick stated that he wished this program had been in place when he was an officer. Due to the sensitive nature of their work, a lot of what the department does is not publicized. Ms Carlson stated that she has heard wonderful things about the programs and services they provide.

In addition to client services, the department puts on a musical for and by children, they have a "Family Fun Day, provide a summer camp for children and they have a part time Youth Prevention Specialist at the High School. Ms Erb commented that the director of the department has worked hard to foster a positive presence in the community through joint outreach programs. She devotes time to finding grant money to fund many of these programs.

Since Youth and Family Services targets children at risk, they do not have much overlap with departments such as Parks and Recreation. Social Services provides for adults, so their relationship with Youth and Family Services would be in terms of making referrals.

Mr. Gilbert asked the board members to address the perception that the department's billing procedure is very time consuming. The Task Force would like to have a better understanding of the billing system, especially as it compares to the Ambulance billing system. Currently the Fire Department has an employee who spends approximately 75% of their time billing approximately \$800,000 annually at 100% collection. Y&FS has a part time employee who devotes 21 hours per week to billing \$80,000 annually.

Ms MacElhiney stated that a major time consuming piece of their billing is charting and coding, which has to be done in house. Given that their client base is children, and that they provide mental health service, she is not sure those records could be given over to another department. Ms Carlson stated that comparing ambulance billing to Y&FS billing is like comparing apples to oranges.

Due to the hiring freeze, when the previous billing coordinator left, the department was not able to immediately fill the position, and they are now in the process of training a shared part time employee with no prior billing experience. (this employee also works part time for the Purchasing Agent). The Director has also made it her prerogative to learn the billing system so in the event of another staffing change, she would be able to provide back up for that position. The new billing system is quicker and more efficient, but training and records transfer takes time. They are getting closer to 100% collection. When they first started billing, the department did explore hiring on outside service, but it was found to be more cost effective to do in house billing. Mr. Galvin asked if they could provide information as to what percentage was written off in the past.

Mr Gilbert asked if they felt they had adequate space, and if there was room for the department to grow. Mr. Kenefick stated that the department deeply appreciated their recently renovated space, but if he could he would address a more private waiting area. Having one entrance and exit makes it awkward for clients when members of the Board or the public walk in. Currently all the space in the building is utilized.

Ms Erb stated that her wish list would include a full time presence at the High School and at Adams.

In response to a question from Mr. Dowley, the Board stated that if the Police Chief and Superintendent of Schools were asked, they would say that the service that Youth and Family Services provides the Town would be invaluable.

The Task Force thanked the members of the Youth and Family Services Board for taking time to meet with them.

- **8:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m. Discuss organizational charts, evaluation forms and job descriptions.**

These items were discussed earlier in the meeting.

#### **6. 8:45 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. New Business**

Mr. Galvin stated that he would like to review the Town's Worker's Compensation and LAP insurance policies to compare benefits vs. costs. The Task Force discussed how this issue relates to their mission statement. The consensus was that Mr. Galvin would investigate this area and report back to the T2/1/2010ask Force with his findings.

Mr. Havrda stated that members of the Board of Selectman attended a recent Safety Committee meeting. He suggested Mr. Galvin might like to attend the next Safety Committee meeting to see what areas that committee is focusing on in terms of training and changing the culture of the employees to be more safety oriented. Mr. Galvin sated he would be happy to do so. Mr. Dowley suggested that important committees

such as the Safety Committee be included on the Town's organization chart.

The next meeting of the Efficiency Task Force will be Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall. Discussions will be held with the Youth and Family Services Director at 7:30, and Dr. Fusco at 8:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p. m.

Respectfully Submitted by