

**TOWN OF GUILFORD  
EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE  
MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2010  
7:00 P.M. – GUILFORD TOWN HALL**

**Present:**

Task Force Members: Marti Carlson, Mike Dowley, Chairman Gary Gilbert, Jim Galvin,  
Mark Matlosz

Town Officials: Selectman Charles Havrda

Mr. Gilbert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**7:00 p.m. 1. Approval of minutes.**

**1.1 Approve minutes of the August 17, 2010 meeting**

*Motion: Upon a motion by Ms Carlson, and seconded by Mr. Galvin, the Efficiency Task Force voted to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2010 meeting.*

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

*Oppose: None*

*Abstain: None*

**7:01 p.m. 2. Discussion with Guilford Public Schools Operations and Facilities Director Cliff Gurnham**

Mr. Gilbert asked Mr. Gurnham to provide the ETF with an overview of his duties and responsibilities as Director of Operations and Facilities at the Board of Education, as well as suggestions as to how the Town can improve efficiencies based on his experience.

Mr. Gurnham explained that he handles maintenance, operations, custodial services, and capital projects for the BOE. He has a secretary who helps with paperwork. An HVAC technician, an electrician, a general maintenance carpenter, and a groundskeeper report directly to him and travel between all 7 school buildings. Due to downsizing, the BOE no longer has a plumber on staff. In addition, the Head Custodian at each of the schools reports to him. There are 25 full time custodians, and 1 part time custodian. Mr. Gurnham would eventually like to have an additional part time custodian at each school.

The schools use a work order system to request repairs and maintenance work. Work Orders are funneled through the principal or dean of each school, so that school officials are aware of any problems and know what is going on in their respective buildings. Currently there is a backlog of approximately 150 work orders. When there was a full time plumber on staff the backlog was about 100. It is a challenging process; there is not enough staff to handle the workload. The

BOE has contractors on retainer for major problems. Depending on the problem, contractors generally respond within 1- 2 days.

In the event that a custodian is absent, the head custodian is responsible for finding a replacement, or may have to work overtime themselves to clean the building after the school closes. (Closing times vary due to after school care). Sometimes a custodian from another school is pulled, or one of the maintenance personnel provides coverage. This affects the overtime budget. If an employee is going to be absent, they log on through the AESOP system and Mr. Gurnham is notified via e-mail. This system works well. In the last two years, there have only been two days when they have had a full staff. This is because of vacation/personal time as well sick time. Many of the staff are long term employees and have accumulated a lot of time off.

There are instances when a member of Mr. Gurnham's staff may assist the Town's facilities staff, such as an electrical emergency. They also try to share in the upkeep of the Major Lathrop House (Superintendent's Office).

Mr. Gurnham is also responsible for capital projects, currently there are \$11- \$12 million dollars worth of backlog. He meets with the Superintendent of Schools and the BOE Business Manager to review these projects. He is responsible for getting RFQ's/RFP's and Bids and works in conjunction with the Town Purchasing agent in this regard. The Standing Building Committee reviews the bid documents. He follows the projects from inception through to completion, including fulfilling any requirements necessary to receive State reimbursement. He also performs regular inspections with and without project architects. He tracks invoices through the use of EXCEL spreadsheets in order to provide the Standing Building Committee with up to date spending reports.

Mr. Gurnham's department began tracking energy usage about a year ago. He is responsible for any energy projects, including securing grants. Last year they received energy grants for lighting, refrigeration and a solar energy system at Adams Middle School. Mr. Galvin asked if Mr. Gurnham has worked with any outside energy consultants. Mr. Gurnham responded that he has worked with two firms on lighting projects; Alliance Energy and NEEM (New England Energy Management). Grant money for these projects has come from the CT Clean Energy Fund and ARRA. There is no equivalent position to Mr. Gurnham's on the Town side to facilitate these types of projects.

In response to a question regarding having one Facilities Manager for the Town, perhaps with an assistant, Mr. Gurnham stated that was essentially the format that he worked with in West Hartford, and that it could indeed resolve fragmented facilities management issues in various Town buildings. But the formation of a combined Town and BOE Facilities Department, while feasible, would require merging operations that are 2 different animals. It would be hard to pull from the BOE into the Town side. More resources go to the BOE. A combined department could be done if managed appropriately, but he stressed this would not mean a reduction in staff and might in fact require an assistant. There are also union issues which would have to be addressed. In response to a question from Mr. Dowley, Mr. Gurnham estimated that his department performs approximately 75-100 hours of work per year for the Town.

Mr. Gilbert pointed out recent problems with a leaking roof at the Community Center which took several months to be addressed and on-going HVAC concerns. Mr. Gurnham stated that he had roofing contractors on-call for quick response.

The Facilities Department installed new emergency response systems at three schools. These systems will benefit the police and fire departments in the case of an emergency. A new card access system has also been installed at all the schools except the high school.

Mr. Gurnham handles any emergencies that arise such as fire alarms, gas leaks, flooding, etc.

There is good coordination between the Town and School facilities staff for grass cutting. All fields are mowed by Park & Rec, the BOE does the trimming. Since they are no longer able to use pesticides for weed control, it is a challenge to keep up with the weeding. In the summer, there are 4- 5 students who are hired to help. They also spread 75-100 yards of mulch in the fall zones surrounding each playscape.

Snow plowing is done by the four maintenance personnel. They have four trucks to plow with, and one gator for the sidewalks and smaller areas. One person uses the gator and it is shuttled from location to location. It takes 4-6 hours to clear the high school parking lot. The BOE decided a few years ago to do the plowing in house and purchased an F250 for that purpose. At some point in the near future, the BOE will be reassessing the plowing to determine the costs to do it in house vs. outsourcing to private contractors.

Mr. Galvin asked Mr. Gurnham if he was aware of the high rate of worker's compensation claims the BOE has among the custodians. Mr. Gurnham acknowledged that there have been some large claims. He stresses to his staff that they have the correct equipment to do a job properly, and to get help if they need it. He recently acquired a scissor lift to aid in changing light bulbs in the gymnasiums. When you have licensed, trained professionals it can be difficult to do cross training.

Mr. Gurnham stated that among his goals for his department are the following:

- Perform Asset Assessment
- Perform Needs assessment
- Develop Preventive maintenance plan (Additional staff will be needed.)

The ETF thanked Mr. Gurnham for his time and input.

**8:00 p.m. 3. Review of information received to date and preliminary discussion of items for report to Board of Selectmen.**

Ms Carlson prepared a report outlining preliminary recommendations which was distributed to the members of the ETF. The ETF members complimented her on an outstanding job.

Points of discussion included:

- Report format
- Development of a Mission statement of the Town and individual departments
- The process by which efficiencies will be realized. Mr. Dowley stressed that this process is key.
- Distribution of personnel to realize efficiencies.

It was agreed that the goal would be to have a report ready to present at the October 18, 2010 BOS meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Quercia, Clerk

