

Cobb County
Citizens Oversight Committee

Progress Report
Cobb County Commission
June 28, 2011

Note

The following Progress Report is based on interviews and review of extensive documentation received from agency and department heads and other Cobb County personnel; but it does not, and is not intended to reflect final judgments or complete accuracy – factors to be incorporated into the Final Report to be submitted prior to the conclusion of this Committee’s mandate.

Opening Comments

Brett McClung
Chair

Agenda

- Opening Comments
- Organizational Structure/Human Resources
- Central Support
- Court Services/Public Safety
- Community Services/Infrastructure
- Questions/Discussion

Goals

- Assess overall management structure
- Review revenues and expenses
- Establish consensus for priorities
- Evaluate 2012/2013 budget options
- Provide list of recommended long term issues

Approach

- Teams
- Interviews and analysis
- Observations
- Recommendations

Status

- **Progress** report
- Not final judgments/recommendations
- Additional investigation, including prioritization
- Future progress reports
- Final report with management response

Common Observations

- Cobb County is a large, extremely complex operation
- Personnel we met were competent and well-prepared
- Organization structure is “tall” and “spread”
- Austerity fatigue is impacting morale
- Furlough program may hurt more than help
- Citizens are enjoying the abundance of services with low or no associated fees
- Strategy and priorities are not well articulated or understood

Common Suggestions for Consideration

- Ensure that a well-articulated strategic plan is used as a framework for decision-making
- “Across-the-board” decisions are generally not recommended or effective
- Consider consolidation or elimination of “like” or unnecessary units of the organization
- Continue to plan for economic difficulties

Team Presentations

- Various stages of completion
- Varying levels of detail
- Different styles
- Reminder – Final report will be comprehensive and include management responses

Organizational Structure

Human Resources

Ford Thigpen

Vance Booker

Robert Plunkett

Approach

- Analyzed each organization using key indicators of organization effectiveness
- Analyzed compensation/benefit programs/policies:
 - Medical costs
 - Compensation
 - Paid time off
 - Overtime
 - Hiring
 - Pensions
- Attempted to consider all aspects of private compensation and benefits; i.e. attempted not to “cherry pick” only those that produce cost savings

Organizational/Management Structure Analysis

- Performed quantitative analysis on each organization to determine the following measures of organization effectiveness:
 - Levels of management
 - Span of control
 - Management ratio (percentage of management)
- Approximation of county statistics
 - Levels – Maximum of 6
 - Span of control – 1 X 5.75* (1 X 8 would be good)
 - Management ratio – 17%
- *Note: If funded vacancies are not counted, span of control and management ratio would likely be worse

Organizational/Management Structure Analysis

- Within specific organizations there are many opportunities to broaden spans of control by eliminating 1 X 1, 1 X 2, and 1 X 3 reporting relationships
- Consider using the elimination of the budget dollars for vacancies in conjunction with the organization analysis to improve organization effectiveness

Vacancies

- Eliminate the budget for the majority of full-time vacancies (\$4.8m) and part-time vacancies (\$2.8m) that are more than 3 months old, as well as seasonal vacancies that are more than 1 year old (\$.5m). Total \$8.1m, fully-loaded over \$10m, although not all in 2011 budget (Finance discounts vacancies)
- Estimated potential savings \$5-6m

Medical Costs

- Premium cost sharing for employees vary widely by plan:
 - Employee only ranges from 9% - 18%
 - Family ranges from 16% -24%
 - Retiree is 25% after 30 years of service
 - Dental, Life, and ADD are provided free
- **Alternative 1: Consider increasing cost sharing as follows:**
 - Employee only - 25%
 - Family -30%
 - Consider having employees with salaries under \$50,000 pay 5% less and increase on a sliding scale to maximum as employee's salary reaches \$75,000

Medical Costs

- Alternative 1 (continued):
 - Retiree medical - 30-35%;
 - Dental insurance – 25%
 - Life insurance – 20%
- Alternative 2:
 - Consider comprehensive medical insurance modifications that could produce savings of \$5+m (unverified). CPP Project proposal attached
- Under either alternative, perform cost analysis to determine savings and phase-in changes over 3 years to soften the impact

Medical Costs

- **Audit/review:**
 - Patient utilization of services
 - 3rd party payment to contractors
 - Services provided by medical coverage that may represent duplication of services
 - Employees having other medical insurance where there may be opportunities to interface coverage
- Educate employees on HMOs

Worker Compensation

Note: Current level of funds: WC = \$3m and General Liability = \$5m

- Internal Audit should conduct periodic reviews of WC and general liability claims
- **Consider obtaining reinsurance** to provide protection for higher level of claim settlements
- **Review risk assessment program** for corrective actions taken as a result of either general liability or worker's comp accidents

Compensation

- Ensure compensation decisions consider where an employee's salary is relative to the market value of his/her job
- Stop giving raises to employees that are more than 10% over market and have good or fully acceptable job performance.
- Approximately 300 employees have a good or lower job performance rating and are paid more than 10% or \$2.56m over market
- Reinstate raises to good employees that are significantly under market

Paid Time Off

Comp Time

- Eliminate the practice of giving “comp time” at 1.5 hours for each hour overtime worked for the select group of exempt employees (approximately 300). Determine transition plan as needed
- Employees use Comp Time and bank vacation leave, which is currently paid out upon retirement
- Significant overtime requirements can be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by management
- Policy is not market-based

Paid Time Off Vacation

- Cap vacation carry over at 2 weeks and end accruals up to 480 hours. Employees having more than 2 weeks should not be able to add to their amount but not lose accrual
- Vacations are available to keep employees fresh and, in some ways, to serve as an internal control mechanism
- Payment at peak earnings (end of career) is costly and an unnecessary expense
- Re-examine vacation policy—possibly add one week after 25 years

Paid Time Off Sick Time

- Continue to allow accrual of sick time up to 480 hours in lieu of a short-term disability program, but **stop the practice of paying out upon retirement in cash or adding to pension**
- **Payment at peak earnings is costly** and an unnecessary expense
- Payout is not market-based, especially in private sector
- Phase out practice over the next 3 years

Overtime/Hiring

- Overtime year-to-date:
 - Public safety = \$1,386,889
 - Non-public safety = \$461,904
 - Does OT policy need to be restated? **Are policy provisions clear?**
- **Use of furloughs is damaging morale and allows management to escape tough decisions on services provided and performance. Recommend their use be eliminated**
- Hiring freeze
 - County manager should **report monthly on new-hires** to justify external hires versus reallocation of internal resources

Pensions

- **Eliminate Rule of 80** (full pension if age + years of service = 80). It's one of the **most expensive** pension plans and, from a policy perspective, it **incentivizes good people to leave** early resulting in a loss of expertise to the County
- Work with Actuary to determine appropriate replacement that retains talent, manages cost, and does not incentivize good people to leave early

Practice of Rehiring Retirees

- **Reconsider cost-effectiveness of rehiring retirees** part-time, considering cost of salary, pension, benefits, and any early retirement incentive.
- Some employees and taxpayers view this as “double-dipping”
- Our cost analysis shows **little, if any, benefit when all costs are considered as well as the loss of productive hours**
- Future use of retirement incentives should be accompanied with accountability of eliminating jobs or otherwise they should not be used

Organization/Management Structure Analysis

- **Corporate Boards are recruited with specific expertise in mind** (e.g. financial, business, compensation, industry, etc.) whereas Commissioners are elected
- To improve County governance, **consider adding the following permanent committees** with outside expertise reporting to the BOC:
 - **Audit**
 - **Compensation**
- Specific responsibilities would need to be delineated, along with determining whether the committees would be advisory or have set accountability (liability would be a consideration)
- Consider having external selection committee to de-politicize

Summary

- Organization has many opportunities to streamline and improve efficiency
- Compensation and benefit policies can be made more competitive and improved
- Large savings can be attained over the next few years
- External committees on Audit and Compensation could make a huge difference

Next Steps

- Immediately address to impact 2012 budget:
 - Vacancies
 - Medical costs (insurance is being rebid in July)
- Quantify impact of proposals

Central Support

Darhyl Watkins

Laurie Dyke

**Robert Plunkett (Building
Maint and Internal Audit)**

Central Support Budget Overview

Target 1	\$ 88,444,232	80.31%
Target 2	19,072,767	17.32%
Target 3	2,616,148	2.38%
Total Central Support	110,133,147	100.00%
Total County Budget	328,006,479	33.58%

Central Support Target 1

- General Fund Admin
- General Operations
- Information Services
- Property Management
- Tax Commissioner
- Tax Assessor
- Fleet Management
- Finance

Central Support Status – Target 1

- Met with representatives:
 - Information Services
 - Fleet Management
 - Property Management
 - Tax Commissioner
 - Tax Assessor
 - Finance
- Received and reviewed written information provided by all
- Site visits
- Budget, web sites, other information

Central Support Status

Additional Reviews to Date – Dr. Plunkett

- Building Maintenance
- Internal Audit

Building Maintenance

- Last energy audit was conducted a few years ago
- Rapid technology advancement, equipment and methodology changes.
- Conduct meetings with Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) Department of Engineering who has now developed an Engineering Technology Center to explore energy opportunities, shared resources

Building Maintenance Possible Energy Opportunities

- Geo-thermal
- Recouping released hot or cool air from a facility and recycling it to either aid in heating or cooling other devices or systems.
- Using smaller pump handlers for air exchanges in certain facilities depending on how many air exchanges are required in a given facility either during each day or at a reduced rate on weekends.
- Photo-voltaic solar cells.
- Use of electronic sensors to control On an Off of lighting systems as people move thru given areas

Internal Audit

- Reviewed with County Manager and the Internal Audit Department Manager.
- Office Manager reports to the County Manager and is staffed by one CPA and one additional auditor.
- Department Manager is also a CPA.
- Methodology and areas for internal audits are conducted by meeting with Division Heads who assist in selection.

Internal Audit

Suggestions for Consideration

- Greatly underutilized
- Expanded reach and report functionally to a BOC Audit Committee
- Use an outside oversight committee to assist in identifying and selecting opportunities for internal audit
- Conduct follow-up audits to ensure that cases cited are adjusted or adequate explanation offered to justify continued operation without change

Internal Audit Opportunities

- Periodic review of medical and comp claims that are processed by Third Party Pay contractors
- Review of general liability claims as processed by Risk Assessment to verify process and proper settlement of claims based on legal agreements
- Review frequency of transfers between Funds to determine reason for transfers
- Cross check effectiveness of computer generated reports to verify if reports are needed and utilized
- Review of media through to determine utilization and various costs for maintaining programs and equipment
- Review of inventory controls to ensure accountability

Fleet Management

Mark Kohntopp, Terry Fulton, Al Curtis

- Observations
 - Cost-conscious/recycle and re-use
 - Budget cuts implemented appropriately, some OK long-term
 - Some repairs not made, deferred purchases and maintenance not sustainable, impacting productivity of other departments
- Identified possible opportunities
 - Technicians more mobile
 - Capture mileage electronically
 - Eliminate duplicate perpetual inventory systems
 - Additional module for Fuel Management system
 - Evaluate whether all vehicles are really needed, consider more shared vehicles
 - Fix vehicles that are needed and sitting

Finance

Jim Pehrson, Bill Volkman, Roxanne Rush, John Bergey

- Observations
 - Down to 33 people from 41, budget cuts \$500K
 - Implementation of technology
 - Forecasting/analysis model is impressive
 - Furloughs are a “nightmare”
- Identified possible opportunities
 - Combine purchasing with finance
 - Continue cross training/consolidation, technology
 - **Eliminate furloughs**
 - Consider all costs of small grants
 - Consider operational costs of SPLOST projects

Tax Commissioner

Gail Downing

- Observations
 - Have implemented budget cuts, not furloughs
 - Implementation of technology is a priority
 - Constitutional mandate/responsive to constituents
 - Excellent integration with Tax Assessor
- Identified possible opportunities
 - Continue analysis of consolidation of motor vehicle tag offices with property tax collections
 - More involvement/communication with Commissioners and budgeting process
 - **Document cost/benefit; implement tax exemption audits – homestead and conservancy**
 - Strategic technology implementation/support

Tax Assessor

Phil Hogsed, Stephen White, Joe Groover

- Observations
 - Most functions are contracted/privatized in 1998
 - Budget cuts impacted audits of residential
 - Excellent integration with Tax Commissioner
 - Excellent relationship with contractor
- Identified possible opportunities
 - Review bid for contract services – more than one qualified vendor
 - **Document cost/benefit; re-start residential audits – fully fund property tax audits**
 - Evaluate cost/benefit of expanded modeling
 - Strategic technology implementation

Department: Property Management

Key Facts

- Manages 93 sites, including approximately 1.8 million square feet of space
- The sites and space managed does not include the following departments: Parks, Sheriff, Fire and Water.
- Addresses approximately 6,000 work orders annually. Most work orders come in via phone or via the web. Usually assigned and distributed manually by the work order coordinator. Work orders supported via the Corrigo software.
- Services include operations maintenance, custodial , event setup, renovations, construction design, construction & renovation management , energy management , parking attendants, and cabinetry
- The Department consists of 93 resources that are supported by inmate labour for such functions as cabinetry and facilities projects
- Supplies are purchased centrally. Approximately \$120,000 spent on cleaning supplies annually. Approximately \$500,000 spent on maintenance supplies annually.
- New buildings and renovations have brought the advent of new technologies (i.e., HVAC, toilets, etc....)
- All future approved projects are funded via SPLOST or stimulus funds

Key Observations

- The Property Management department has taken steps to reduce budget via: reducing preventative maintenance contracts (i.e., auto doors, HVAC doing in house), setting office temps at 75 degrees, reducing event setups by pushing out to the other departments, shutting off irrigation, and utilizing furloughs
- The department does not have a mechanism to understand the work order trends. For instance, limited capability exists to be able to categorize work orders, understand root causes and take preventative measures (i.e., replace items, train departments, etc...). Hard to understand if there is an opportunity to “refuse” or push out certain work orders to the departments (i.e., called to remove a roach)
- For the most part, work orders are dispatched thru a single point manually. May become a single point of failure. Also may affect getting right resources to job or efficiently .
- Difficult to understand the utilization of staff based upon the work orders and projects. For instance, is a given group 110% utilized on work orders and another group 60% utilized on projects?
- Staff has limited training on the new technologies being deployed
- Potential redundant functions exist with the Sheriff, Parks, Fire and Water departments that may be leveraged

Property Management Recommendations

Recommendation	Potential Benefits
<p>Conduct a detailed review of the property management, sheriff, parks, fire and water departments to consolidate redundant functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce staff count by leveraging resources and capacity across departments • Facilitates the growth of county services without growing infrastructure
<p>Investigate the deployment automation and technology to assist in analyzing work order trends, driving more preventive maintenance, and higher staff utilization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase staff utilization • Reduce work orders • Reduce maintenance and repair costs
<p>Increase staff and user training and communication on facilities and usage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase staff capabilities • Reduce user errors work orders
<p>Deploy a work order rationalization policy. Certain work orders would not qualify for services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce work orders • Reduce staff count

Next Steps

- Quantify benefits and costs
- Study staff utilization
- Review overlaps of services

Department: Information Services

Key Facts

The Cobb County Information Services department:

- Supports approximately 270 individual applications
- Applications primarily support 6 different areas: Judicial, Tax, Public Security, Sheriff, Community Services and Mgmt & Admin (i.e., fleet, finance)
- Approximately 10% of the applications require 7x24x365 support. Mostly sheriff and public security. The remaining applications require support during normal business hours.
- Approximately 5 funded projects are underway that have a remaining balance of \$2.8mm
 - Community Dev Application (\$28k left on \$5mm budget)
 - Police & Sheriff RMS (\$560k left on \$5.7mm budget)
 - Superior Court clerk technology (\$7k left on \$980k budget)
 - PC, Server & Printer replacement to run on later version o/s (\$1.6mm on \$18mm budget)
 - Cobb Addressing Repository (\$390k left on \$900k budget)
- Approximately 90 staffed resources, 4 funded vacancies and 7 unfunded vacancies

Key Observations

- The Information Services department has postponed and defunded 3 projects (i.e., digital orthophoto base map, 311 Call Center and Phase II & Phase III of the Web Portal)
- The department has extremely large list of diverse applications and technologies to support. Some systems are candidates for release upgrades or may be out-of-support
- Some support groups seem to redundant. Public Security and Sheriff support may be combined.
- System administration resources exist in multiple groups. Synergies may be gained in creating a single pool of sys admin resources.
- Due to large and diverse set of applications, a large set of interfaces are maintained therefore increasing maintenance costs
- Difficult to discern a formal project business case process. Some cases are made by the departments.

Difficult to tell the utilization of the department resources based upon projects and support requirement

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Information Services Recommendations

Recommendation	Potential Benefits
Conduct review of the historical application support requirements and ongoing projects to the staffing model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff “right sizing” and increased staff utilization
Conduct applications and technology rationalization process based upon the county strategic needs. Build an application architecture and improvement portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced staff requirements • Reduce maintenance and repair costs
Conduct application and technology outsourcing feasibility study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced maintenance costs
Combine the Public Security and Sheriff application support groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced staff requirements
Establish a central system administration group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced staff requirements • Leverage system admins across multiple domains
Institute a business case process for new projects that is reviewed and approved by a newly formed IS Steering Committee (comprised of key dept. heads)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater alignment with the county strategic direction

Next Steps

- Quantify benefits and costs
- Understand staff utilization against projects and support requirements

Central Support

Next Steps

- Review Opportunities with Target 1 Department Heads
 - Determine accuracy and feasibility
 - Evaluate cost-benefit
 - Establish priorities
- Additional Investigation
 - Purchasing Department
 - CBDG
 - Cobb Collaborative

Court Services Public Safety

Bob Barr

Brett McClung

Acknowledgements

In preparing this presentation, the following public safety and judicial department and office heads were interviewed; written materials as requested were provided and reviewed also. The Subcommittee members wish to thank these individuals and their staffs for their extensive and timely cooperation in this effort:

- Cobb County Police Department
- Cobb County Sheriff's Department
- Cobb County E-911
- Cobb County Fire Department
- Cobb County Department of Public Safety
- Cobb County District Attorney
- Cobb County Solicitor General
- Cobb County Superior Court
- Cobb County Superior Court Administrator
- Cobb County Superior Court Clerk
- Cobb County State Court
- Cobb County State Court Administrator
- Cobb County State Court Clerk
- Cobb County Magistrate Court
- Cobb County Juvenile Court
- Cobb County Probate Court
- Cobb County Circuit Defender
- Cobb County Medical Examiner

Major areas identified for further inquiry by the Subcommittee, and which are proposed also for further study by the Board of Commissioners, include the following:

Cobb County Police Department

- “COPS” grants – Determine whether such grants, which are made attractive on the front-end, are cost-effective and efficient insofar as only basic salaries are covered; and considering that over the longer term, once the initial federal monies run dry, the County must pick up the full costs.
- DHS Grants – Similar concerns
- Use of Police-owned vehicles
 - No major problems revealed, but BOC should carefully monitor program
 - Top management personnel and those truly needing official vehicles 24-7 should have them; but it is noted that officers in certain other units having such vehicles may not all require them (e.g., PIO, motorcycle, STEP, DUI-TF, Crime Prevention, Internal Affairs)
 - Given tightness of vehicle maintenance budgets, cost-per-mile increases and use of vehicles while not on duty can lead to increased maintenance costs

Cobb County Police Department

- Overtime
 - Overtime in police work is essential, including in the normal course of routine shift changes
 - **Arbitrary, across-the-board overtime restrictions or limitations are not compatible with all police work**
 - Undercover officers, for example, must be able to overlap with others and other shifts absent counterproductive overtime limitations that could endanger continued operations
 - **Overtime in some respects has become the “tail wagging the dog,” and this is not appropriate prioritization for law enforcement activities**
- Furloughs
 - Reduces morale and can adversely affect pro-active nature of police work
 - Reduces pride
 - **BOC urged to carefully review such policy as regards law enforcement activities and personnel**
 - **“4/10” Schedule – furlough does not seem a good fit** with such scheduling

Cobb County Police Department

- Uniforms
 - The Department has cut back on the need for store-front for uniforms and equipment, and streamlined the process
 - However, process may need further review to identify areas in which further savings can be realized
 - E.g., are 10 positions in Department of Public Safety Admin. (Supply Unit) truly necessary?
 - **Review overall warehouse costs and administration**
- Firearms and Ammunition
 - No concerns revealed
- Lack of sniper range and in-house firearms training facility in County
 - Use other county facilities – seems to serve purposes adequately

Cobb County Police Department

- **Specialized Units**
 - **Encourage Chief to continue effort underway to look at the number of specialized units that proliferated in earlier, flush economic times, to determine those truly necessary**
 - High levels of supervisory positions
 - **There are 11 teams under Special Ops**
 - Are all necessary?
- **Training – KEY CONCERN**
 - **Clearly there is an imperative to re-visit decision made more than a decade ago to development and maintain two separate law enforcement training facilities in Cobb County**
 - Cost
 - Efficiency
 - Communication and camaraderie between departments and agencies suffers
 - Consistent standards
 - Different agencies (e.g., CCSO AND CCPD) can and should be able to set their own training requirements and standards, which may differ in some particulars, but these obviously can be accommodated in a single facility
 - May require some costs to expand and modify the NCGLEA, for example, but overall and in the long-term, such a decision would pay positive and significant dividends as noted above
- **Crime Scene Investigations Units**
 - **Is it necessary for both CCSO and CCPD to maintain separate units?**

Cobb County Sheriff's Department

- **Number One Problem – Requiring other jurisdictions to pay \$55 per day actual cost to house and inmate, as opposed to current \$22**
 - Encourage Cobb County **legislative delegation** to make this a priority
 - Encourage Gov. Deal to incorporate this matter in the work currently commencing through the recently-created criminal justice reform commission
- **Overtime concerns** same as noted above for CCPD
 - Awaiting further data from CCSO
 - Part-time positions should be reviewed as well
- Training
 - Sheriff's Office favors **joint training facility**
 - See specific notes above under CCPD

Cobb County Sheriff's Department

- Medical requirements for inmates and detainees
 - **Consider a secure facility at appropriate Cobb County medical center such as Kennestone** to drop off those inmates/detainees requiring medical attention
 - This is needed because the CCSO cannot take custody of a person needing medical attention from CCPD or other jurisdictions until released by medical personnel
 - Having a single, secure drop-off medical facility would save considerable officers' time and expense because the delivering officer(s) would no longer have to personally wait (sometimes for hours)
 - Study long-term cost/benefit
- Inmate Labor
 - Limited by need to ensure appropriate monitoring/guarding
 - They do wash cars

Cobb County Sheriff's Department

- Protective Gear
 - To the extent joint procurement with other law enforcement agencies can be effected, this should continue and be encouraged
 - Recognizing, however, that there will be some specialized needs for certain units
 - E.g., jail personnel have greater need for puncture protection than “street units”
 - **Crime Scene Investigations Units**
 - **Consider consolidating with CCPD**

Cobb County E-911

- E-911 receives its funding from subscriber fees
 - Legislation sets maximum rate of \$1.50 per subscriber's bill
 - County then determines exact rate
 - Cobb sets \$1.25
 - Telecommunications carrier receives 3% administrative fee *plus* up to \$0.45 each subscriber fee
 - Ultimately, Cobb E-911 receives approx. \$0.90 per subscriber
 - Obviously, there is considerable **flexibility in these rates** and structures, and **may be ripe for approaches to legislators**
- EMA receives general funds from County, plus grants
 - Currently, E-911 director is acting EMA director
 - **BOC should address whether County needs a separate director**, rather than simply deferring decision (see also, discussion regarding Public Safety Director position)

Cobb County E-911

- 800 mhz is funded by costs pro-rated among participating jurisdictions
- HB 256 established that funds coming in for pre-paid phone cards and disposable phones, will be dispensed from the state to counties based on population – Good
- Note: Cobb County E-911 was first E-911 center in Georgia to be nationally accredited
- Still, problems with **high turnover of personnel**
 - Is being addressed
 - **Needs monitoring**

Cobb County Fire Department

- **ISO Rating**

- Since 1992, Cobb County has been rated ISO 3 (on a scale of 1 to 10, with the lower score being the best)
 - Chief is concerned we are “bumping” at dropping to ISO 4
 - Affects insurance costs, etc.

- **Basic Consideration of Priorities**

- Number One Priority is **RESPONSE**

- Response based on
 - Personnel
 - Training
 - Equipment
 - Facilities
- Based on review of Response as Number One priority, certain questions or concerns for further consideration flowed; including, for example:
 - **Do we need 29 or 30 stations throughout the County?**
 - **Any room for consolidation?**
 - **Can fire departments for municipalities be consolidated under a single Cobb County Fire Department?**
 - **Decrease and consolidate number of Special Operations units** in order to reduce supervisory positions and expand span of control?
 - **Fire Education/Safety Village (see below)**

Cobb County Fire Department

- It has been suggested also, to assist both the Fire Department and the BOC in determining the very best allocation of resources and setting of priorities, that a review of the overall operations and facilities be conducted by an independent consulting entity specializing in such evaluations
- **Personnel**
 - Battalion Commanders
 - Concerns expressed by others regarding span of control and fire personnel accompanying commanders
 - **Current T/O structure appears well-justified**
 - **Training structure, as well, appears well-justified**
 - In light of already-mandated budget decreases, **further cuts** would require personnel cuts
 - **Should be considered further only with extremely careful analysis of ramifications**
 - Keep in mind it takes approximately a year for application and training requirements for a new recruit to result in new personnel being qualified to begin work
 - **Similarly, consideration of furloughs**

Cobb County Fire Department

- **Training**

- Incorporate into overall discussion of a **single, county-wide training facility**
 - Currently, Fire Dept. trains at the DPSTC facility on Valor Drive, not at NCGLEA
 - Fire Chief expressed view that Fire Dept. could train at either facility so long as expanded to accommodate needs
 - **Consider also a joint, multi-county fire training facility**

- **Public Safety Education/Safety Village**

- Cost should be a major concern for BOC
 - Significant overtime required
 - Appears nearly 50 overtime personnel required (see, Chart 3.20)
- **FY 2011 costs to Fire Dept. appears significant as well** -- \$843,942 “Total Salary/Fringe for all Safety Village Positions” [not including +/- \$284K general operations budget or \$250,012 Fire Educ. Overtime salaries]
- Add to those figures whatever the Foundation raises (+/- \$140K ?), and one is looking at a cost of at least nearly \$1.4 million.
- **Careful study by the BOC and County Attorney should be undertaken in order to determine exactly what jurisdiction and entity is responsible – or should be responsible – for conducting and paying for public safety education**
 - Preliminary review of O.C.G.A provisions, Georgia Department of Education Performance Standards for Health Education, and Core Curriculum standards, conducted by this subcommittee indicates this is unclear at best
 - **Consider shifting responsibility for costs of Safety Village and public safety education training to Board of Education**

Director of Public Safety

- Administrative budget appears to be **+/- \$1.5 million**
 - **Heavy with management**
 - Does **Animal Control** need to be included under DPS as a separate organization and line item?
 - More appropriate **under CCPD?**
 - **Internal Affairs?**
 - Police and Fire internal affairs needs appear very different
 - Why not simply have each department control and manage its own internal affairs matters?
- **Public Safety Director reports to County Administrator**
 - **Should be to BOC?**
 - Overall purpose?
 - If primary purpose is to consolidate help resolve disputes between police and fire departments, should not occupant be independent of both?
 - Currently, incumbent is Fire Chief as acting PSD

Cobb County District Attorney

- Office has made significant cuts already, as have virtually all other departments and agencies interviewed
 - Office includes funding received from state
- No major concerns evident at this preliminary juncture
 - Note: Area identified for further study is to **explore ways to reduce \$525,000 law enforcement court costs**

Cobb County Superior Court Clerk

- Office has **been a leader in modernizing records with electronic filings**, etc.
 - Resulting in significant personnel savings and reductions in filing times and retrieval times for documents (e.g., real estate records)
 - **Overtime has been reduced** from +/- \$138,000 in 2007 to virtually nothing today (+/- \$2,200 in FY 2010)
 - **BOC should focus on cost savings if other courts within the county move more quickly to electronic filings**
 - Use of same information management systems?
 - Cost-benefit study over long-term
- Problem for Superior Court Clerk's office as well as State Court, is that both are required to **stay open after-hours** and keep at least some personnel present, in order to meet needs of judges holding court after normal business hours
 - **Explore any ways to make process more predictable or less-costly**
- Personnel matters flagged for further consideration by this Subcommittee
 - Need for 5-1/2 full-time clerks
 - **24 bailiffs** plus three "inactive"
 - **Essential?**
 - **Consider reduction**

Cobb Superior Court (Judges and Court Administrator)

- **Ratio** of Superior Court and State Court judges to population appears disparate
 - **Superior Court is 1:68,000 pop.**
 - **State Court is 1:57,000 pop.**
 - BOC and state legislative delegation should inquire
- **Cheaper to use State Court judges** to assist Superior Court, than \$450/day senior judges
 - Difficulty “working out schedules” with State Court
 - Can **BOC encourage?**
 - Substantial increase developed in 2009 as result of the state no longer paying the \$350/day of the \$450/day fee for senior judges
 - Costs continue to increase (e.g., figures as of March 2011 indicated an increase in senior judges’ professional fees from \$80,000 “as adopted” to \$103,400 adjusted

Cobb Superior Court (Judges and Court Administrator)

- Superior Court Administrator encouraging two-week jury summonses rather than four-week, to reduce costs
 - Query: **Can Superior Court and State Court jury pools be combined?**
- **Consider pooling court reporters** rather than assigning individual reporters to specific judges, to reduce costs (wait time?)
 - **Three judges currently use pooled reporters**
- **Bailiffs – truly necessary?**
- Court Reporter costs
 - Working to reduce court reporter fees/costs
 - BOC should work with both Superior and State Courts to **explore cost-benefits of salaried court reporters versus contract**
 - Two basic components -- fees for services *and* fees for transcripts
 - As explained by Superior Court Administrator, four court reporter positions were unfilled
 - **Salaries may drop in short term, but where costs resulting therefrom are not within the control of the county office or department absorbing the cuts (as are many court-related costs, which are mandated by law or constitutional requirements), the costs will simply have to be made up elsewhere**
 - In this example, by paying for contract court reporters and transcripts rather than salaried positions
 - **In other words, across-the-board cuts not necessarily the most appropriate remedy and may wind up costing more in the final analysis**

Cobb County Solicitor General

- As with District Attorney's office, appears to be running **extremely lean**
- **Concern is high cost of law enforcement court pay**
 - FY 2008 -- \$727,811
 - FY 2009 -- \$823,189
 - FY 2010 – \$838,226
 - FY 2011 – Likely similar to previous two fiscal years
- See note above regarding court reporters

Cobb State Court (Judges and Court Administrator)

- Reported “26% cuts” since 2009
- Concerns regarding **number of State Court judges** (12 total)
 - 7 Division I (trials and misdemeanor cases)
 - 5 Division II (traffic cases)
- **Still working on electronic filing system(s) pilot program**
 - **BOC should encourage**
 - **Coordinate with Superior Court’s system?**
- Overtime for trials and after-hours court proceedings
 - Encourage judges to improve planning

Cobb State Court (Judges and Court Administrator)

- **HB 1055** increased filing fees for certain proceedings in State Court
 - Dramatically **shifted filings to Magistrate Court**
- Consider reducing use of and number of bailiffs
 - **FY 2011 through April 30th, bailiff costs for State Court totaled more than \$225,000**
 - Currently, appears to be 28 plus 57 part-time
 - Court Administrator is currently reviewing and implementing cost-saving measures in this area
- Court Reporters
 - **Each Division I judge has an assigned court reporter**
 - **Consider using pooled court reporters**
 - Requires good scheduling/planning, and having adequate reporters available for unforeseen occurrences
 - Division II has less need for court reporters, and if needed, use court reporters in afternoon (savings -- \$30K)

Cobb State Court Clerk

- State Court Clerk has met mandated budget cuts
 - This was partially the result of the lifting this year of local legislation doing away with the requirement that the court print all civil calendars in the *Marietta Daily Journal* (which duplicated printing of individual notices)
- **HR 1055** shifted significant filings from State Court to Magistrate Court
- **Electronic filings** should be encourage, accelerated and implemented
 - Cost-benefit analysis
 - See discussion above in Superior Court Clerk section
- Consider **joint case management system** with other Cobb courts

Cobb Magistrate Court

- Doing an awful lot with very little in resources
- **HR 1055** increased filing fees for certain proceedings in State Court
 - Dramatically shifted filings to Magistrate Court
 - Civil case filings increased to 33,492 in 2010, up from 18,634 the previous year
 - **Projected total for 2011 is nearly 42,000**
 - **No corresponding staff increase** – need is great
 - Returned one full-time magistrate in 2009; then HR 1055 hit last year
- **Must remain open 24/7**
- **EWI (Electronic Warrant Interchange)**
 - Fixed cost; annual maintenance contract
- **Bailiffs** – same questions as with other courts
 - **Necessary?**

Cobb Probate Court

- Extremely small budget
 - Meeting mandated cuts
 - Significant **licensing** requirements (e.g., firearms and marriage)
 - **Collect fees but these go to County**, not the Probate Court
- **Changes to firearms license fees in 2012 likely to increase costs to Probate Court by as much as \$60,000**
 - Court's entire operating budget is only approx. \$75,000
- Another problem – problem administrators and conservators must be brought into the Court to be removed
 - If from any county other than Cobb, such process requires payment of \$50 to serve the person
 - Necessary to protect estates, but even these small fees are difficult to find under current budget and other constraints
- County will pay Cobb Bar dues but not state Bar dues (since latter is required membership)

Cobb Juvenile Court

- **Probation officers are key** component to the responsibilities and desired success of Juvenile Court
 - **Yet, five probation officers and one probation supervisor have been lost**
 - Vehicles in budget are primarily for probation officers
- Bailiffs
 - Paid for by Sheriff's Office
- Four full-time judges work five days a week hearing cases
 - Normally, one judge assisting Superior Court (scheduled through Superior Court Administrator)
 - "Professional Services" includes Pro Temp judges who assist
- Noted matter for BOC and Court Administrator to consider
 - **consolidate drug screenings for all Cobb courts**

Cobb Circuit Defender

- Payments to lawyers discrepancy between Grand Jury findings (\$8.1 million) and figures provided by the Circuit Defender's office (\$5.2 million)
 - **Figures from Circuit Defender's office appear accurate**
- Encourage Circuit Defender to implement information services systems to improve tracking of financial information
- Implementing a system to **require attorneys to submit everything electronically**, would improve tracking, verification and approvals; and follow through with similar system between Circuit Defender and County disbursement office
- According to the Circuit Defender, the office has greatly increased the timeliness and results of ensuring only qualified defendants are provided public defenders
 - Currently denying some 40% of cases, as opposed to only 8% disqualifying in earlier years

Cobb Circuit Defender

- **Defendants who enter pleas can be required as a condition of the plea, to reimburse attorney fees**
 - Currently, recouping close to \$1.0 million in this manner
 - Imposing fines, on the other hand, results in funds going to the state, with Cobb County only receiving back a percentage

Cobb Circuit Defender

- Questions have been raised concerning **“contract” lawyers versus “appointed” lawyers**
 - The Circuit Defender uses both types, and has used these for several years in some of the courts within its jurisdiction (which include Superior, State, Magistrate, and Juvenile)
 - **The cost savings**, while real, are, to be fair, **somewhat speculative**; but are based on analyzing average and sampling of time devoted to defendants by attorneys working under contract and those working appointed
 - Briefly, the **contract attorneys** (nine for Superior Court, five with State Court, six with Juvenile Court [including one for Magistrate Court?]) are under contract to handle initial appearances and other “priority matters” such as probation revocations for the Circuit Defender (they may maintain private practices at other times)
 - **This reduces the need for continuances**
 - Essentially, the plan is to enable contract attorneys to focus exclusively on these appointed cases early on, and attempt to resolve them
 - Based on sampling and averaging, and comparing contract attorneys and appointed attorneys who would handle these cases if not resolved early, the Circuit Defender calculates the savings for the various courts
 - **This analysis is subject to question regarding the precise savings, as being somewhat speculative, but the Circuit Defender bases his analysis on extensive experience and analysis, concluding the savings currently as follows:**
 - Past 13 months for Superior Court -- \$1,101,773
 - Past 13 months for State Court -- \$263,348
 - Past 13 months for Juvenile Court -- \$416,121
 - Concerns have been raised also about the “quality” of representation performed by contract attorneys (e.g., rush to enter pleas quickly, too close with prosecutors and judges), but these should be addressed with the Circuit Defender’s oversight committee, and with prosecutors, court administrators and judges

Cobb Circuit Defender

- **Hourly fees for appointed lawyers are not out of line**
 - \$60/hr. in-court for felonies and misdemeanors; \$55/hr. out-of-court for Superior Court and \$45/hr. for out-of-court time on misdemeanor cases
 - 214 lawyers on the appointed list
 - Attorneys who exceed averages are required to justify fees
- Court Reporters -- the Circuit Defender indicated that consideration should be given to creating a single and separate budget for court reporters for all court systems in the county
 - Also, consider for interpreters

Cobb Medical Examiner

- Cobb is one of only four counties in Georgia that provides for a medical examiner to perform essential and required services
 - Other counties use GBI
- Cobb's Medical Examiner is an MD, who contracts with Cobb County for his services; he is appointed by the County
 - Pays his own retirement, insurance, associate Medical Examiners, etc.
 - Employees of the office are county employees
 - Cobb County provides the building in which they operate and have offices
- **Must have overtime available for weekends**
 - **Obviously, deaths are not predictable**, especially those requiring investigation of the M.E.
- M.E. has **excellent working relationship with CCPD and CCSO**
 - Not necessarily the case in other jurisdictions, which leads to much greater cost through additional staff, etc.
- Cost per investigation by Cobb M.E. continues to come in far under costs for other counties, even though Cobb handles more cases on average than other area jurisdictions

Community Services Infrastructure

David Welden
Beverly Collins
Jim Rhoden

Scope of Assignment

2010 Budget

• UGA Extension Service	0.481mm
• Cobblestone Golf Course	2.039mm
• Solid Waste & KCB	3.767mm
• Senior Services	4.429mm
• Community Development	7.226mm
• Library system	11.219mm
• DOT	17.727mm
• CCT	18.489mm
• Parks, Rec & Cultural Affairs	19.580mm
• Water	189.270mm

UGA Extension Information Gathering

- Meeting with Greg Price and Hope Warren
- Review of Budget materials
- General familiarity with subject

UGA Extension Observations

- Knowledgeable personnel – underutilized
- Budget is ~ \$450K; \$157K by Cobb BOE; \$119K by UGA
- Patronage has declined as Cobb has urbanized
- Service should be offered at regional level

UGA Extension

Suggestions for Consideration

- Consider divestiture of the function
- Regional service would be more effective

Parks – Cobblestone Golf Course Information Gathering

- Meeting with E Cannon, Affiniti & staff
- Tour of course
- Review of Budget and Parks materials
- Input from citizens and county personnel
- General familiarity with subject matter

Parks - Cobblestone Golf Course

Observations

- Course condition has improved significantly
- Revenues are improving
- \$1.4mm rev bond will be paid off in 2014
- Annual debt service is approximately \$650K
- Golf cart fleet needs replacement soon (net \$177K)
- Maintenance equipment deteriorating (\$300K)
- Parking lot needs resurfacing (\$130K in SPLOST)
- Using greywater for irrigation

Parks - Cobblestone Golf Course Suggestions for Consideration

- Consider sale of the facility
- Be sure to coordinate with ACE
- Affiniti may be prospective buyer

Solid Waste and KCB Information Gathering

- Meeting with Jon Jenkins and Judy Skeel
- Review of Budget and Division materials
- General familiarity with subject matter

Solid Waste and KCB Observations

- Liable for over \$2.0 million annual debt service through 2015 for revenue bond
- Recently privatized operation of Transfer Station, Recycling and Vegetative Recovery operations
- Now consists primarily of KCB plus Landfill post-closure maintenance, including:
 - Ground cover maintenance and remediation
 - Groundwater monitoring and intrusion prevention
 - Methane gas monitoring and release control
 - Landfill cap maintenance and remediation

Solid Waste and KCB

Suggestions for Consideration

- Transfer Division to Parks organization

Senior Services Information Gathering

- Meeting with Director Breedon
- Input from citizens and county personnel
- Review of Budget and web materials

Senior Services Observations

- Receives funding from ARC – 25% of annual budget
- Closure of Senior Daycare also reduced buses and drivers
- Many partnerships with care-giving NGO's
- Staffing down 30% since 2008
- Cutback on CCT routes will reduce tethered para-transit ridership by ~ 500
- Out of county patrons pay premium fees
- Two new facilities will come online next year

Senior Services

Suggestions for Consideration

- Sustain current direction
- Considering assessment of Membership Fees
 - to impact 2013 budget

Community Development Information Gathering

- Meeting with Director Hosack
- Review of organization structure and function
- Input from citizens and county personnel
- Review of Budget and Agency materials
- General familiarity with subject matter
- Need to do more

Community Development Observations

- \$28 million 2010 revenue
- \$7.2 million 2011 budget
- New facility seems quite efficient – good for future
- Organization is larger and more complex than expected – will schedule departmental visits
- All Planning for Development is done here except for that performed in DOT Planning
- Fifty-two pickup trucks

Community Development Suggestions for Consideration

- Consider moving DOT Planning into this Agency
 - Improve efficiency and control
- Revisit after departmental interviews

Library System Information Gathering

- Meeting with Director Poyer
- Review of Director's presentation book
- Casual visits to various locations
- Input from citizens and county personnel
- Review of Budget and web materials

Library System Observations

- **17 locations: size, condition and services vary widely**
- Board of Trustees, appointed by BOC, is governing body
- The Board counsels a Director who runs the library operations
- The organization under the Director is tall and fragmented
- **There are significant social demands on several locations**
- Professional standards and credential requirements are very high.
- The collection is extensive and expensive to maintain
- **Number of public computers is being reduced**
- Use fees and fines are reasonably low
- The Library webpage is very useful and friendly

Library System

Suggestions for Consideration

- **Before closing smaller locations consider population and needs of the user community**
- Increase capacity/size of some locations
- **Increase computer facilities at some locations**
- Reduce collection acquisition to a minimum
- Reduce number of periodicals offered
- Reduce FTE's and increase PT's and Volunteers
- **“Social needs” should be responsibility of others**
- **Increase fund raising by support organizations**

Department of Transportation Information Gathering

- Meeting with Director DiMassimo & Staff
- Review of Division Summary Report
- Interviews of fifteen department heads
- Input from citizens and county personnel
- Review of Budget and web materials

Department of Transportation Observations

- SPLOST projects dominate the engineering and construction activities of DOT and its contractors
- Frequent mention of low morale
- Some secondary functions may fit more comfortably in other parts of county
- Apparently, numerous independent contractors have established permanent residency at DOT offices
- Project management systems need upgrading
- Extensive use of consultants is routine
- DOT is the central source of GIS throughout the county
- Inadequate equipment maintenance is a growing threat

Department of Transportation

Suggestions for Consideration

- Can GIS expertise be sold to others?
- Contracting processes such as bid invitation, RFQ, bid evaluation, contractor selection, accountability, project accounting, QA, etc. should undergo procedural review in the near future.
- SPLOST oversight and management should be reviewed and audited prior to implementation of the 2012 SPLOST
- Upgrade software and purchase NEW equipment and rolling stock
- Eliminate furlough program and institute merit raises
- Transfer of Planning, HR, Communications and Traffic Operations positions
- Reconsider the four day work week in certain departments
- Transfer landscape maintenance to Parks Division

DOT – CCT Bus System Information Gathering

- Meeting with Rebecca Gutowsky
- Tour of facility guided by David Jackson
- Input from citizens and county personnel
- Review of Budget and DOT materials

DOT – CCT Bus System Observations

- All operations are contracted out
- Management team is highly qualified
- Segmented RFQ for O & M is out for bid
- CCT has no Marketing budget
- Onboard advertising is not permitted
- Para-transit has been growing
- No fed money available for dial-a-ride service
- A Transit Planning Study is underway
- Fed subsidies are substantial and governing
- Ridership statistics are very limited

DOT – CCT Bus System

Suggestions for Consideration

- Any opportunities will likely result from increases to service vs. cost reductions
- Consider establishing a Marketing program
- Consider promotional fare reduction trial
- Consider zone-based fare structure
- Consider employer subsidies for special service
- Improve ridership statistics collection
- Revisit after new contracts and Transit study results become known

Parks

Information Gathering

- Presentation by Director Canon & staff
- Interviews of Division Directors
- (Pending interview of Business Manager)
- Tour of central shops and stores
- Casual observations of Park facilities
- Input from citizens and county personnel
- Review of Budget and other materials

Parks

Observations

- Impressive management team
- No work order system
- Performs small engine equipment maintenance for others
- Many crews stationed at parks
- Scope of Recreation programs and services is enormous
- Loss of summer seasonal staff will present big challenges
- Community relies on availability of facilities.
(ex: Mt. View Aquatic Center)
- There appears to be room for increased fees
- Organization knows how to deliver with PT's

Parks

Suggestions for Consideration

- Initiate “Tough Love” fees program
- Restore PT staff and reduce furlough program
- Become the county’s sole landscape maintenance service except for Fire Dept.
- Roadside mowing elimination initiative
- Inherit Solid Waste and KCB (separately)
- Acquire and implement work order system
(possibly Maximo as used by Water Dept)

Summary/Closing

Brett McClung
Chair

Immediate Impact

- Vacancies
- Medical benefits
- Tax exemption audits –
homestead/conservancy
- Residential real estate and personal
property tax audits

Summary

- Progress report
- Continuing effort
- Future progress reports
- Final report with management response

Questions/Discussion



Cobb County...Expect the Best!