

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

**Special Meeting**

**Wednesday – November 17, 2010 - 9:00 a.m.**

A special meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Wednesday, November 17, 2010, at 9:00 a.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

Commission members present were: Anne H. Beebe-Center, Commissioner District #1, Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2, and Roger A. Moody, Commissioner District #3.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, Executive Assistant Constance Johanson, Technical Support Specialist Mike Dean, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves, Registrar of Deeds Lisa Simmons, and Finance Director Kathy Robinson.

Others in attendance: Don Jutton, President of Municipal Resources, Inc.; Andrew Gilmore, Senior Consultant at Municipal Resources, Inc.; Michael Loewe, Human Resources Consultant; Commissioner Elect Carol Maines; and Knox County Budget Committee member Tina Plummer.

## **Special Meeting – Agenda** **Wednesday – November 17, 2010 – 9:00 a.m.**

- I. 9:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 9:01 Discussion Items – Departments & MRI Experts**
  - 9:01 – 10:30 a.m. – IT (via phone conference)
  - 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. – Registry of Deeds (via phone conference)
  - 11:00 – 11:30 a.m. – Building Maintenance
  - 11:30 – 12 Noon – Administration/Finance
- III. 12:00 Lunch break**
- IV. 12:45 Discussion Items – Departments & MRI Experts**
  - 12:45 – 1:30 p.m. – Sheriff's Department
  - 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Next steps
- V. Adjourn**

### **I. Meeting Called to Order**

Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center called the November 17, 2010 special meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 9:00 a.m.

### **II. Discussion Items – Departments & MRI Experts**

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center explained that the purpose of the meeting was to speak directly with the content specialists to gather further information so that the Commission can make decisions on what to do with the recommendations.

Don Jutton explained that he had asked his experts to give a brief overview and then ask for comments. They have all seen the comments and concerns relayed by the county employees.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – Ryan Barton via phone conference**

Mr. Barton explained that his portion of the MRI report contained the following:

- He had begun by analyzing Knox County's IT infrastructure and support system. Where is the County now?
- Basic recommendations for moving forward.
- Compared Knox to similar counties.
- Overall use of technology.
- Full report shows that IT needs to be used more in every department.
- Current foundation is not up to industry standards. The way the resources are shared and implemented is not industry standard.
- There is a lack of separation of departments on the network when there should be some shared resources but some that should not be shared because of it being sensitive information.
- With the foundation not being stable, relying on the current IT structure is unstable.
- He had concerns about level of effectiveness because of the ongoing issues.
- 35 to 1 ratio is too many IT staff per number of computer users. This is a red flag as far as effectiveness goes.

- IT should be an A-Political department. It has been very difficult for the IT staff to move forward because of the politics of departments.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center commented that the report had stated that the County has a very poor infrastructure and IT plan for the amount of time there had been an IT department. She wanted to know what Mr. Barton thought was missing. The report contained many statements that indicated Mr. Barton asked for documentation that was not provided by the IT staff. She asked if his statements regarding that were in the report because the IT infrastructure and plan are really as poor as he said, or if it was because he didn't receive whatever documentation he felt he needed.

Mr. Barton responded that he had spoke to various department employees to ask specific questions. He had also asked for some documentation, some of which MRI did get, but there was also some that MRI did not have access to or the County indicated that it did not exist. Some information was received after the preliminary report was released. As such, the pieces pertaining to missing information will be removed from the report. The overall findings of the report, however, are correct. It was not about casting blame but rather seeing where the County is at, accurately, and what the County needs to do to move forward. IT does have a plan for moving forward and building the foundation.

There was some confusion with Mr. Barton repeatedly saying that the IT department had been around for "years" and yet nothing had been stabilized and made no progress. Commissioner Beebe-Center asked what he meant by that because the County had only had an IT department for about a year and a half. Mr. Barton responded that the information he was given implied that the current CIO/CSO was in IT for 10 years. Commissioner Beebe-Center clarified by explaining to Mr. Barton that CIO/CSO Lake had previously been working on the Spillman system at the Sheriff's Office only, and did not provide technical support to any of the other County's departments. She added that the severity of the concern is different if you're looking at 1 ½ years to untangle the mess vs. 10 years, but the concern of untangling the system remains the same.

Mr. Barton had some comments/concerns he wanted to share with the Commission:

- TSS Dean is great at interacting with staff and putting out fires. That role needs to be there but his position is not the one that should be moving the County forward and getting where it needs to be.
- Look at outsourcing – have one lower-end IT staff to do day-to-day and outsource for higher-end needs. Need good quality engineering, foundation set up, high-level CIO/CSO services, business services, encryption, proper security solutions, backup support for when other IT staff is not available.
- It's difficult finding someone who is good at everything in a rapidly evolving industry. Recommendation is to look for high-quality outsourcing firms. Absolutely not recommending using a small local company with a couple techs that just stop by and fix something. If there are no companies nearby who can handle the upper-level needs that option would not work.
- Suggested that the County look at doing some RFP's to find out what the options are. Worth doing an RFP to outsource entirely just to see what it would cost and use that information to compare.
- Acceptable response time for IT staff? Two hours is pretty typical. If you build in some redundancies and backups there are going to be less emergencies. Also need to decide what qualifies as an emergency. Then see what an RFP for just the higher level of support (planning, building, etc.) and how much that might cost. If there's a firm with experience working with similar clients, they can recommend decisions and offer a vast pool of resources.
- WindXNet is a company out of Portland that is highly recommended for engineering and support services. They often have employees that live throughout the state. It could still be a win-win situation for the County. There is a conference on December 3<sup>rd</sup> in North Conway, New Hampshire being hosted by WindXNet.
- One option would be to hire another CIO/CSO with direct experience. If that person does their job correctly, in a few months you wouldn't need him anymore. The beauty of co-sourcing for those functions is that you'd only have to ask for that type of help periodically. You need CIO/CSO services all the time because the industry is constantly changing. If you hire a new CIO/CSO and they fix everything and then they leave, or are let go, because they aren't needed full time, then you have to start all over again.
- There should be some funds for one-time expenditures like hiring consultants or doing one-time upgrades built into the 2011 budget. It can cost \$20,000 to \$35,000 as a one-time cost but will save money over the next five years. \$30,000 will let you do a fairly good-sized upgrade of infrastructure. \$50,000 would be recommended.

- Everybody wants IT to move forward, use it more, understand it better, utilizing more tools. There are budgets that the County is spending on salaries and PC replacement. IT is about the personnel implementing it. It doesn't do any good without proper people implementing and engineering it and putting it to use. The over-all prejudice towards the IT department is a problem. IT should not be involved in political struggles. Department heads should be working to keep the IT staff out of those situations and make it clear that the oversight is being done by department heads not the IT staff – the IT just gives the ability. Department heads need to buy into the IT department and support it.
- More often than not, IT departments have a unified IT budget that covers all departments. Some things should still be in separate departments but the finance department should have an idea of where those pockets of IT expenses are. Good planning principles have to be in place – the County has to look at what is being budgeted for this year, next year, etc. If the IT budget in one place, it's difficult to plan head three – five years.
- Training for employees should be a combination of things. Some employees just need to have a one-hour training in a specific tasks in an application (or software) as it applies to that department. That would be more useful than having a two-hour over-all application training. Training needs to be an ongoing goal for the County. The administrator should look at his employees and see who already has knowledge and can train their peers.
- It is understood that some departments (the KRCC, Airport, etc.) to have IT assistance from individuals who can pass public safety background checks because of the sensitive nature of the information they will have access to. There are also state and federal guidelines of who is allowed into the Knox Regional Communications Center and who has access to the sensitive data. Anytime an IT vendor works with that type of account, any employee they would send to be work with the client will already have been fingerprinted and had a background checks done. Most vendors will already be doing that anyway because of other clients they work with. The County also needs someone who already has extensive experience with Spillman or other law enforcement systems so that there is already a specific level of understanding in terms of what the County's needs are. It may also be possible to have someone in-house get trained to handle day-to-day non-technical questions.

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves commented that the Communications and Airport's budgets are special in the way they are set up compared to other departments, so that makes things a little bit different in how IT expenses are handled.

County Administrator Andrew Hart asked Mr. Barton if he had any samples of out-sourcing or co-sourcing RFP's for IT services. Mr. Barton responded that he did have some examples. He said that he would talk to Don Jutton and get those out to the county.

Carol Maines commented that Mr. Barton had said several times that politics are an issue. She asked if anyone could explain what he meant.

It was explained that there were some positive and negative relationships between employees and there are always going to be conflicts of egos, appointed vs. elected, etc. The IT department gets sucked into those situations. Every department is used to operating on their own and they've been doing so for many years. Some departments felt left out when the Sheriff's Office was the only department to have IT support. When IT was moved to the Executive office of the County and began covering all departments, the Sheriff's office no longer had their own IT staff and this could have caused some ill feelings.

### **REGISTRY OF DEEDS – Cathy Ann Stacey via phone conference**

Ms. Stacey explained that her portion of the MRI report contained the following:

- She had begun by coming up to the County's Registry of Deeds and spent time with Lisa Simmons and her staff.
- Wonderfully run operation.
- The department has made great decisions with how they are utilizing ACS.
- Main concern was the \$60,000 being spent to host and keep track of the documents.
- Equipment is all leased by ACS and is working well.

Registrar of Deeds Lisa Simmons commented that the scanned plans currently on the website go all the way back to 1975.

Ms. Stacy shared the following comments/concerns with the Commission:

- At some point the County is going to run out of space for printed books. The most efficient thing to do is to provide more terminals for people to access the images online. This could be looked at that down the road.

- She wanted to see a flow chart to see what happens with a document, who handles it, where it goes, where ends up, etc., but she said that she did not receive one.
- She believes that there is an extra staff member but that is up to the Commission to decide. The number of staff is driven by the volume that the department is taken in.
- The problem with not getting a copy of the flow chart is that she was unable to see who is handling what and how its being handled. Depending on what the volume is, it's directly applicable to how many staff members you have to handle the volume and deal with the public.
- Foot traffic was low the day she was in the office, but that varies depending on what day it is in the week and the month, and what time of day. She only saw one member of the public coming in to the Registry that day.
- Lisa is very hands-on and obviously knows her job well.

Registrar of Deeds Lisa Simmons apologized for not giving Ms. Stacey a flowchart but stated that she did not remember ever being asked for one.

The Commission felt that before the department could be discussed any further, Ms. Stacey and Ms. Simmons should review a flowchart to get a better idea of whether or not any positions within the department should be cut. Currently, Ms. Stacey felt there was one employee too many, while Ms. Simmons felt that she could not lose an employee without the department suffering for it.

Ms. Stacey commented that besides the flowchart, she had also requested copies of the job descriptions for the Deeds employees and had not received those either.

*(For clarification's sake, the process by which job descriptions were submitted to MRI was this:*

1. *The Administrative Assistant to the Knox County Administrator emailed copies of job descriptions to the respective department heads to double-check that the Administration office had the most current versions of the job descriptions.*
2. *After receiving confirmation from each department head, she emailed the job descriptions to Andrew Gilmore, who forwarded them on to the other MRI consultants and content specialists.*

*Therefore, the County had done its part in making sure MRI had that information. Mr. Gilmore and Mr. Jutton appeared confused about why Ms. Stacey was saying that she had not received copies of the job descriptions.)*

There was a discussion regarding the volume of work processed in Deeds and how the employees' time is split between tasks. Mr. Jutton felt that given the number of transactions, it looks as though the County has an extra employee. Ms. Stacey asked if there was coverage for when employees were out sick or on vacation. The response was that there was just the four employees, and if some of them were not at work, whoever was left had to cover everything. Also, the number of documents processed each day is only a portion of the amount of work handled by staff. It did not include time spent answering the phone or helping members of the public who needed assistance, especially with the terminals since there were still a lot of people who are not comfortable using them.

Mr. Gilmore stated that he would double-check on whether Ms. Stacey had received the job descriptions because MRI did get those from the County.

## **BUILDING MAINTENANCE – Don Jutton**

Mr. Jutton explained that his portion of the MRI report contained the following:

- The Building Maintenance department was the department that MRI had heard the most complaints about.
- Compared to other counties, Knox does it very differently with it being mostly handled in-house. It could be done far more efficiently and with less problems with at least part of it outsourced.
- Three of four employees are working during the day which does not make sense. It was set up that way by a previous administrator. Was assumed to still be wanted that way because no one was told any differently.
- Of all County operations, it was clear, pretty consistently across the board, that the rest of the staff is not happy with the department.
- The things MRI would have expected from Building Maintenance Supervisor Jon Grout to have at his finger tips (square footage) just wasn't there. Took a long time to get information on the footprint of the property and even then it came in pieces. If an entity can't provide the number of square feet, the number of doors, windows, etc, it will not be able to get quotes for services.
- The County is spending too much for the maintenance of this facility and yet *still* have so many complaints and problems.

Supervisor Grout stated that he had submitted some concerns about the report to the Commission. He felt that it contained some misleading statements. At this point, he felt that what needed to happen was that the Commission, county administrator and himself would decide what to do with the information presented and decide which parts are either pertinent to the discussion or not, and then decide what to do from there. Since the previous discussion with MRI, the County has had various contractors coming and going to provide estimates to the county administrator. Supervisor Grout felt that some of the recommendations made by MRI in the report do not make a lot of sense. Rather than eliminating the department and completely outsourcing, Supervisor Grout felt that a better idea would be to use a contract cleaner to cover for when the current janitor employees of the County go on vacation. He added that he is the one working with contractors and is in the building when the cleaning staff is not. He stated that his staff is barely able to keep up with their duties because one janitor had to retire earlier in the year because of health issues.

Mr. Jutton shared the following thoughts and concerns with the Commission:

- Outsourcing will eliminate the cost of paying employee benefits and worrying about covering for employee vacations or sick days.
- Outsourcing eliminates scheduling issues.
- One firm could be hired to do both the janitors tasks and the building maintenance supervisor's duties. No tasks currently performed by either role could not be outsourced.
- Other County employees are so frustrated with the lack of cleaning being done by the janitorial staff (especially in the bathrooms) that employees do things like leaving candy wrappers on the stairs to see how long it takes a janitor to remove it. Surfaces, especially in offices, are not getting cleaned. Supervisor Grout commented that he knew about the complaints but that the personnel issues he has been dealing with have made things difficult.
- The complaints made by County employees are being treated by the building maintenance department as though the employees in the offices are the enemy. Mr. Jutton stated that Supervisor Grout had made it very clear that he believed the employees in the offices are deliberately causing trouble for him, rather than reacting to poor cleaning conditions. Mr. Jutton stated that no one he had spoken to believes that the services are adequate or acceptable. There is an antagonistic relationship between the building maintenance department and the other offices. While Supervisor Grout is not a janitor and would not schedule himself for a cleaning shift, he should still be acting as the quality control officer and ensure that the janitorial staff are all doing their jobs correctly. None of the other County employees interviewed jumped to the defense of the building maintenance employees because they are not happy with the department.

Supervisor Grout commented that certain tasks require appropriate licensing for someone to do it. He does diagnosing to get the right people into the building to fix it. He works with the contractors who have the overall knowledge while he has the specific knowledge of the building as it sits. He stated that there are some things that he and the janitors do in-house that are not janitorial, which includes mowing lawns, hauling out trash, making sure paper recycling gets shredded, etc.

**FINANCE – Doug Smith and Carol Granfield via phone conference**

Mr. Doug Smith explained that his portion of the MRI report contained the following:

- Finance is doing well as an accounting department but needs to work more towards being a finance department.
- Need to increase the hours of the two subordinate employees from 30 hours a week to 40.
- The resources are there to evolve the department but the amount of hours worked by the employees limits that.
- Increasing their hours allows the director to do high-level tasks which might include working more with the administrator on analytical and planning activities.
- There weren't really any problems in the department; it's just a matter of task management. The director is doing tasks that lower employees should be doing.
- The return investment of increasing those two positions by 10 hours a week is huge, in part because the employees being paid less are doing the tasks rather than the higher paid employee.

Mr. Gilmore commented that there needed to be better cash-flow analysis, etc., which the staff does not have time to do right now.

Finance Director Kathy Robinson felt that MRI was on the same page as where the department is already heading. There are a lot of things we'd like to get in place but there hasn't been time. Work a lot more hours than what's actually on time card.

Ms. Granfield wanted to reinforce that all individuals in there are extremely capable and the increase in hours would easily accommodate the need for certain tasks to be done so that Ms. Robinson could do more director-type tasks.

Finance Director Kathy Robinson commented that every contract has a cost implication and expectations of both the County and the vendor. The Finance Office handles the insurance certificates and the two things kind of goes hand and hand. She added that she is usually the last one to know about contracts because her office does not see anything about it until an invoice crosses her desk. Sometimes there are conflicts in language that have a financial implication on the County. Everyone looks at things differently.

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves commented that Ms. Robinson gets airport contracts after they are signed. He felt that having her involved before the contracts are finalized might be helpful. The airport had never sent contracts to the treasurer in part because the treasurer's office didn't want them. Having the finance director involved during the process is important because the airport plans for five years out and the cash flow is an issue.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE – Carol Granfield via phone conference**

Mr. Jutton and Ms. Granfield related the following thoughts/concerns:

- The County has a serious lack of policies. Policies that are there are very inadequate and there are a lot of policies that just do not exist.
- HR administration all falls on the administrator which is a huge liability.
- Labor contract administration is part of HR and is all being handled by the administrator. This needs to be addressed quickly. From an administrative perspective, the office is adequately staffed but MRI feels that the County should replace the executive assistant position with a mid-level management position with education and experience with labor relations and management. If things get screwed up, it has lasting implications.
- It is a huge liability and cost problem if the County does not have the right person with the classification, compensation, evaluation etc. experience.
- The County needs a mid-level management person to assist the administrator because while he is ultimately responsible for HR decisions, there needs to be someone else to keep up with the laws and handle the policies and labor relations. That will save a lot of money ultimately rather than legal expenses for dealing with grievances and lawsuits. It will also free up some of the administrator's time for other tasks that have had to be put off.
- If labor relation rights are not enforced, you lose the ability to do so in the future because of "past practice" being established with poor practices. If the lower management doesn't understand the contract then it doesn't matter how well the administrator proofread it. This is the most critical in terms of operation. Need someone who understands the labor laws and represent the management at the labor relations.
- Salary structure, methodology of salary reviews and performance appraisals, planning for future staffing needs, etc. would all be serving the County well if it was part of the planning rather than handling it as a reactive method. If there's in-house personnel making sure department heads understand discrimination laws, etc. you avoid the potential huge costs down the road.
- A good HR employee would save you money on future harassment claims or law suits and would more than make up for the cost of their salary.
- Things need to also be done consistently regardless of department and it should be the responsibility of that mid-level person to make sure that it is being done.
- The new position can coordinate training and identify the training needs of the employees and get that accomplished.
- The County needs someone who is relatively sophisticated in labor relations so that the County can avoid the legal costs in the future. Personnel files are not all centrally located but are supposed to be. It's not going to be like IT where you have a 90-day solution. It's more like a three-year solution with needing to keep things moving as time goes on.
- Some issues the administration has to deal with are personality issues, but it is also a matter of whether or not the Commission supports their administrator and whether they enforce the rules and policies that have been established.
- If the County were to get audited by the state and they found that the personnel files were not completely centrally located as they should be, the County could have to pay huge fines. If the state found a few things they didn't like, they will do an in-depth audit and there would be even more fines. If the administrator tells department heads what files are being centralized and are

shown a better way to do things, they usually will fall into line. Even if it's not in the central location, it does "exist" when it's in court. You can still be held accountable for it if the other departments hold separate records, even if it's not in the official files.

- Most of what has been expressed by MRI is about focus; from an operational standpoint of success, this really needs to have the capacity in place and start addressing some of these issues. It may need to be done by "muscle" but the departments need to be put into compliance with the law. The majority of distractions for the administrator are "people problems". MRI is not suggesting that the administrator shed authority or responsibility, but if an HR person could be found who is familiar with labor relations at the table, they are paying attention to the details for the administrator, who would then make the final decision.

It was commented that in a sense, labor relations was already being co-sourced by using County Attorney Peter Marchesi for negotiations and working on the contract itself. Having a specialist in-house would alleviate some of those legal costs.

This portion respectfully submitted,

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Candice Richards  
Administrative Assistant

### **III. Lunch Break**

### **IV. Discussion Items – Departments & MRI Experts**

The special meeting of the Knox County Commission held on Wednesday, November 17, 2010, reconvened at 12:55 p.m. Executive Assistant Constance Johanson was present to record the minutes of this portion of the meeting.

#### **SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

The major reason for today's teleconference is because the sheriff asked for some of the language in the report regarding the sheriff's office to be removed. Don Jutton of Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) stated that the language is not going to be removed.

The MRI consultants that reviewed the Sheriff's Office and its operations stated that they were impressed with the overall operations of the department. There was a comment on the facility that noted the space was cramped and there was a lack of privacy for conducting business. The level of equipment available to the department was impressive. Overall the morale was good, although some staff members appeared to be anxious and this could be due to the sheriff running for re-election. In regards to policies, there was a manual with numerous policies and while the review did not entail going into these in great detail, it appeared that some policies were followed while others were not adhered to. There was concern over the "following the chain of command" where the policy said the sergeant would report to the lieutenant and in some cases the lieutenant was bypassed.

There were some observations that were not unusual to see in a department of this size and it was not uncommon where there was not much managerial experience present. Although the sheriff wanted some of this language removed, it was the opinion expressed by the MRI staff. The sheriff's role is to carry forth the mission of the department, which was found to be lacking and suggested that this should be rectified. There needs to be strong management. It was suggested that the sheriff's office makes sure that there is a strategic process in place. That should address the seemingly large number of turnovers at the administrative staff level; chief deputy, patrol administrator, and patrol supervisor positions. It was noted that it is absolutely critical for all staff to know the mission and strategic plan so that when there is change in staffing everyone is "on board" insure a smooth transition and consistency.

There was concern on the hiring process. One observation was the lack of consistency in some of the hiring decisions, which was not to say that there were inappropriate candidates, but that the consistency in the selection of candidates could be a liability issue. MRI provided a recommended policy to address this problem.

The internal affairs process could use some work to insure the investigating officer has direct and consistent access to the sheriff. Internal affairs investigations are often personnel specific and there needs to be a policy that is consistently adhered to regarding investigations.

It was noted that it is desirable to have an integrated system with state police. This is considered to be a high priority. Any roadblocks that have been in place need to be overcome in order to provide better service to the community.

Another suggestion was that the sheriff should look into introducing online reporting because of the increase in the number of calls for service. The number of calls for service is twice that of the other counties surveyed. Online reporting could relieve some of the burden and be cost effective. This is seen as a method to increase efficiency. The county would not be the first agency in state, but could be a leader in the field.

Don Jutton commented that while the sheriff may not agree with the observations in the report, but the preliminary report expresses MRI's view point on the operation of Sheriff's Office. This report has been discussed and his opinion is that the MRI's view is accurate.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked if the sheriff wanted address any specific comments or issues in the report that might need clarification. Sheriff Dennison said she was all set with the report and then received an e-mail requesting written comments on the report. She said she understood that the report was a tool to make improvements within the department and she thought there were a number of good suggestions, but after talking to some of her employees she thought that some of the language should be removed. The sheriff commented that she did not need to come to the meeting to talk further with MRI's staff because she thought the commissioners had the power remove the language as she requested at a previous meeting.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center commented that the intent of today's meeting was to give a department head the opportunity to ask questions or to request a change in an area of the report that they felt strongly about. Sheriff Dennison stated that the report was already published. It was noted that this was not the final report and this was the opportunity correct any inaccuracies. The report expresses MRI's opinion of county operations. One item that was brought up was the assumption that a certain employee had been doing the job for many years. Because this was not the case, the statement will be corrected in the final report.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center commented that the commission needs regroup and go through the presentations and get some bearings on the recommendations that are on the table and see if there is anything else that needs to be discussed today.

#### **TAKING THE NEXT STEPS - IT**

The strongest recommendation on this department is to get an IT technology strategic plan in place. The conclusion is that there is technology in place, the equipment and software needs to be inventoried, documentation is needed on the way the system is set up, and a consultant hired to develop a five-year strategic plan. Then the county needs to decide how to implement the plan.

County Administrator Andrew Hart recommended leaving the proposed IT budget for 2011 as it stands, which includes funding for the IT director's position. The IT director resigned and that money could be moved to a contractual budget line to hire a consultant to conduct an in-depth assessment designed to create a technology plan. The other funding issue is the co-sourcing for additional coverage in support of the IT assistant.

Don Jutton offered to have MRI write a proposal to facilitate the defining of the IT department and its plan. The proposal would also include evaluating the submitted RFPs. He estimated the cost for this service to be \$10,000.00. Commissioner Roger Moody asked that MRI put their verbal proposal in writing.

It was suggested that IT Assistant Mike Dean could inventory the county's IT related equipment. County Administrator Andrew Hart said he was not comfortable with agreeing with this recommendation without speaking with Mr. Dean first. The inventory would help with planning for IT equipment replacement as well identifying what additional equipment may be needed.

It suggested that, before the RFP was developed for the strategic plan, a statement of qualification be developed and used to interview potential candidates that may be interested in developing the strategic plan.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center noted that the budget proposal for 2011 was being reviewed. Mr. Jutton asked for an approximate timeline to have the recommendations in place. He estimated that the request for qualifications and interviews could probably be done by the end of January.

#### **TAKING THE NEXT STEPS – BUILDING MAINTENANCE**

Don Jutton commented that the county was proceeding in right direction in terms how to structure the building maintenance department because the majority of the work is on a contractual basis with only the cleaning being done by county employees.

It was noted that funds allocated for personnel services could be transferred to contractual or capital budget lines within a specified budget. In restructuring a department, positions that are eliminated can provide for funds that would be used to outsource or contract out for the services previously done in-house. The budget committee approves the bottom line for each department. The commissioners can vote to transfer funds within a budget. The 2011 budget does not have many capital items proposed for 2011, which means that if equipment is needed it will probably have to come from reserves or surplus.

County Administrator Andrew Hart reminded the commission that the budget process needed to be completed and budget for 2011 finalized.

Don Jutton commented that the building maintenance department does not appear to be well organized with so many contracts and so much money being spent. There are revenues from the state for maintaining that side of the building as well as costs that have been shared. It was suggested that a mid-management person could direct the operations and get a handle on the costs. County Administrator Andrew Hart said the problem is determining the direction that the county wants to go in with restructuring this department. The county administrator obtained an estimate of \$53,000.00 to clean the whole courthouse building. The cleaning services can be outsourced and that leaves the question as to whether or not to keep the supervisor's position. An assessment needs to be done as to what has been done, what needs to be done, and the associated costs. Outsourcing is the solution to getting a handle on the needs and the associated costs of fixing and maintaining the county facilities.

### **TAKING THE NEXT STEPS – REGISTRY OF DEEDS**

Don Jutton did not have any additional comments to make regarding MRI's report regarding the operations of the Registry of Deeds.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked what additional information was needed to decide on the four options regarding one of the clerks in the Registry of Deeds. The four options are status quo, eliminating the one of the clerks' positions, changing the position from a 35-hour work week to a 20-hour work week, or out-sourcing the position on an as needed basis. It was suggested that a flow chart or a list of projects that the Registry is currently doing would be helpful for next week's meeting.

### **TAKING THE NEXT STEPS - FINANCE**

MRI's recommendation is to increase the hours the number of hours that the support staff works from 30 hours per week to 40 hours per week. It was noted that the county was now on a solid foundation with the finance director's position in place. The additional hours would be for the county's benefits management program. The estimated cost is \$21,000.00 for this change with little change in benefits. Finance Director Kathy Robinson asked that the staffing hours be re-evaluated in a year. She suggested that the additional hours may not be needed in 2012. The newly created Human Resource position may impact what the finance office is responsible for in 2011. It was noted that the current staff is willing to work the additional hours.

### **TAKING THE NEXT STEPS – EXECUTIVE/ADMINISTRATION**

It was noted that there needs to be discussion on the recommendation to eliminate one position and creating another in the executive office. MRI's recommendation was based on the need for a professional mid-level position in the executive office. This position would not necessarily be restricted to HR, but rather could help the administrator with his schedule. A job description needs to be created for the new position. Jeff Northgraves recommended not giving the position the title of "assistant administrator".

There was discussion on the scope and scale of the minutes of commission meetings. It appears to be a question of what the commission really needs in terms of minutes. There was support for a shorter format of the minutes. It was noted that some minutes only contain the motions made, seconded, and approved or disapproved. Carol Maines was asked her opinion and she said she supported the longer format. It was noted while some minutes are in note format, others are in a longer format to provide the information presented for those members that could attend a meeting.

Mike Loewe recommended filling the HR position fairly quickly if the commission followed MRI's recommendation to eliminate the executive assistant's position.

The sheriff's report stands as it is. The next step is for the commissioners to decide on how they want to proceed with the information provided by the organizational study. MRI will finalize their report to the commissioners on their recommendations.

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves commented that he wanted to clarify the report's comment on the IT department going through e-mails without management oversight. He said he knew of two incidents of

this occurring and they were both management directed. Mr. Northgraves said he would like this comment taken out of the report. It was agreed that this would be taken out of the report.

The next commission is scheduled for November 23, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is for the commissioners to make their decisions on the recommendations of organizational study.

There was discussion on obtaining estimated figures for the possible changes to the budget that may occur because of implementing the recommendations. Some of the money needs to be kept in the building maintenance budget for the contracted services. Other allocations need to be kept in the impacted budgets to be moved around within those budgets to allow for the implementation of MRI's recommendations.

It was suggested that the job descriptions of the executive assistant and the administrative assistant needed to be reviewed and determine what duties would be transferred to the finance office. The additional hours in the finance office were to free up the finance director's time on some tasks and absorb the benefits administration. It was noted that the format of the minutes could be changed. These are the impacts to the executive assistant's position. One of the major benefits of this change is to assist the county's administrator with his carrying out his duties.

#### **V. Adjourn**

- A motion was made by Commissioner Roger Moody to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Richard Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

This portion respectfully submitted,

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Constance W. Johanson  
Executive Assistant

**The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on January 11, 2011.**