

Ways We are Looking to be More Efficient

Department directors were asked to identify how they are attempting to be more efficient; what are they doing to affect cost savings and operational efficiencies. Below are some of the changes that have or will be implemented.

Financial Services Department

ERP Implementation

Lead the implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning System, including the transition from current business levels and practices to adopting new business practices. The new ERP system will be the structure for better information flow throughout the organization resulting in significant cost savings. A secondary benefit to the ERP implementation process will be the pulling together of members throughout the organization for a central purpose and achieving success as an organization.

Fleet Management Software

Continue to fully integrate the new fleet management software (FASTER). It will interface with the ERP system.

Direct Deposit

Continue pursuing goal of all City of Topeka employees utilizing direct deposit for their bi-weekly paychecks.

Fire Department

Recent Implementation:

Training

- Created FETN w/video streaming for classes on-line; allows companies/apparatus to remain in stations.
- Participating in the Distance Learning System which allows training/communication from central location and allows companies/apparatus to remain in stations.
- Provide in-house training vs. hiring outside agencies.
- Developed the Chief Officer training and development program which allows for standardized operations.

Fire Prevention

- Relocated office to 620 SE Madison St. to streamline City services for contractors, etc.
- Appointed weekly "Point-of-Contact" inspector program to lessen turn-around response time for customers.
- Created Burn Seasons which will reduce time spent inspecting/tracking residential burning.

- Enhanced relationships with State Fire Marshal and Shawnee County Health Agency which will reduce the number of duplicate inspections and improve shared communications.
- Published the Fireworks Application Instruction Booklet which has streamlined the application process and increased user-friendliness.

Suppression

- Designed and use a computer program for staffing which simplifies and saves time in daily tasks.
- Created hydrant testing program which provides critical information to the Water Division, saves time and prevents duplication of effort.
- Utilize on-duty shift personnel to conduct tasks such as hydrant testing, SCBA testing, ground ladder testing, and pre-fire planning.
- Use Daily Planner by companies to communicate their planned activities to Shift Commanders.
- Second computers added to stations with two companies.
- "Rip-and Run" printers were installed at each station to expedite printing of incident details.

Administration

- Business Services Manager hired will help with inventory control and accountability for equipment.
- Vacancy credits discovered in budget that were being charged incorrectly.
- Review/Revision of Standard Operating Procedure's (fuel conservation, vehicle use, uniforms, sick leave, etc.)
- Pre-hiring to fill vacancies to be created by retirements.
- Partnering with Human Resources for recruiting efforts.
- Use of Internet to post jobs instead of paying for multiple newspaper ads.
- Recruitment hotline used to answer frequently asked questions.
- In-house pre-employment screening and background investigations tap into Fire Investigator's expertise.
- Combined ceremonies for retirement, promotion and graduation to save costs.
- Purchased used communication equipment at a significant savings.
- Replace vehicles with modern vehicles that are less costly to operate (2008 possible purchase). This is tied to the budget process.
- Federal grants have been used to obtain expensive equipment for special teams (haz-mat, technical rescue).
- Overtime pay changed from double-time to 1-½ time (standard rate for overtime work).
- Uniform replacement changed from "allowance" paid to firefighters to in-house ordering/distribution. This ensures the \$118,000 paid out each year is actually spent on uniforms.

Future Implementation:

Fire Prevention

- Organize a Fire Corps which will utilize volunteers in limited capacities to assist with some functions of department.
- Purchase hand-held computers to assist Inspectors in completing many tasks on-site during inspections.
- Hire Office Assistant to complete tasks (being performed now by Inspectors). This is tied to the budget process.

Administration

- Forecast future need to purchase apparatus, equipment, tools, etc. to receive discounted pricing.
- Implement "Firehouse" brand software to better match the reporting needs of the department.

Human Relations Commission

Attorney Usage

Use the City Attorney's Office for legal questions and reserve outside counsel for conflict of interest cases or at the advice of the City Attorney. So far the department has seen a \$1,185 in the first six months of this year as compared to the same period last year.

Office Supply Usage

Reduce, reuse, and recycle office supplies. A recent audit of expenditures on office supplies indicates a \$1,079 savings in the first six months of this year compared to the same period last year.

Human Resources Department

Drug Screens and Physicals

Conduct drug screens only for new employees and eliminate physical examinations except for Police and Fire. Employees are never refused employment due to the results of a physical and a violation of the ADA could be called into question if they were. The new practice will reduce the time it takes to hire employees and therefore save money.

Electronic Correspondence

Solicit email addresses from applicants, candidates, employees, retirees and others who require communication. That information will be used to send correspondence electronically whenever possible saving on the cost of postage.

Online Resources

Increase online resources of current paper documents, such as the approximately 20-page Enrollment Package. Also included will be the voluminous Supervisor's Handbook which contains the Personnel Code and the Administrative Rules and Regulations. Besides reducing printing costs, the change in operating procedure will

increase the efficiency of the enrollment process and allow updates to the handbook to be completed more timely.

Brown Bag/Lunch & Learn Sessions

Improve communications and increase morale through these monthly sharing and training opportunities. The lunches will focus on voluntary attendance and include topics such as advanced computer skills, relaxation techniques, managing conflict at work, etc.

Advertising Shift

Direct potential applicants to the website for details and additional information about a particular job opening. This will reduce advertising costs and increase website traffic which will add interest to other city services.

Information Technology

Telecommunications Contract

Continue negotiating with our telecommunication service provider to put a new contract in place that will lower our telecommunications costs and support by approximately \$20,000 annually.

Department Realignment

Realigned the IT Department to increase our capabilities to provide additional computer software and development support. This change reduces dependence on outsourcing, provides tighter controls on software development projects, provides more opportunities for innovation, and creates an environment to better support the various software initiatives found throughout this document. These changes are within the budgeted allocation levels funded in the 2007 adopted budget.

Training and Employee Development

Continue training employees, which continues to be one of the best investments a business can make. This increases the knowledge base of the City's workforce. The importance of training is magnified significantly for technical positions because technology continues to advance. Training ensures that the City maximizes its return on investment in technology by fully utilizing all functionality of each product. IT has shifted its educational objectives from the trade show/conference experience to direct training with certification requirements. While there is value in the trade show/conference experience for some staff members to retain existing certifications, IT has shifted to a new training philosophy. IT will also emphasize employee development for managers through in-house training to continue to improve management techniques and to ensure that we are continually optimizing our operations. These changes are within the budget allocation levels funded in the 2007 adopted budgets.

IT Cooperation and Coordination with Outside Governmental Agencies

City IT continues to look for opportunities to share and leverage technology investments with Shawnee County, the State of Kansas and the 501 School District. The City maintains a significant telecommunication and network infrastructure so

most new opportunities are supported by City infrastructure. Bottom line cost savings are realized to help hold the line on tax increases for all taxing agencies involved.

Municipal Court

Prisoner Costs

Focus greater efforts on prisoner costs (out of county holdings, house arrest and continued daily review of jail populations). The court is in the midst of finalizing a contract with a new house arrest vendor that should enhance our ability to utilize house arrest more frequently as a viable option to actual incarceration in 2008.

Docket Schedules

Review and change docket schedules to better streamline case processing resulting in more efficient disposition of cases in 2008.

Implement Changes in State Law

The court will also be moving forward in 2007 and 2008 to implement upcoming changes to state law which authorize our collection vendor to pass the cost of collection on to the offender.

Scanned Application Usage

Utilize more "scanned" applications in 2008 designed to allow less paper usage and save staff time needed to process documentation.

Cross Training

Continue cross training staff to increase efficiencies and department effectiveness.

Daily Habit

Continue to change and alter our processes daily to stay on top of the flow of cases and information.

Parks and Recreation

Electrical Service

Eliminated the in-house electrician position and now contract out electrical projects to local electrical contractors. This allows for multiple electricians to work at the same time

Brochure Partnership

Our department partnered with the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department and Kansas Wildlife & Parks to produce the Shawnee County Urban Fishing Brochure. A total of 20,000 brochures were printed, saving the city approximately \$1,250 by not having to bear the entire expense.

Trail System

Increasing the city's trail system which provides an alternate transportation path for citizens in lieu of driving motorized vehicles.

Catalog Revamp

Saved \$400 by reducing the number of pages in the 2007 summer catalog.

In-house Instructor

Our Performing Arts Supervisor at the Helen Hocker Theater is currently teaching all theater classes except dance classes, as a cost savings measure. In addition, this person has directed every theater show the past several years with no guest directors. This is not ideal for the long-term, but helps in the short-term with budget constraints.

Helen Hocker Theater

The 2007 theater season has mostly small cast shows which equates into less funding spent on costumes, sets, props, etc.

Old Prairie Town Staff

At Old Prairie Town, after one part-time rental assistants left employment and another one retired, we added their responsibilities to that of two permanent, benefit-eligible employees.

Cypress Ridge Golf Course

Renovated the Fairway Café and added a drive-up window for golf carts. Installed directional signs to assist the golfers. Send out weekly email blasts to the golfers to better communicate current golf specials, new course improvements, upcoming tournaments and special events.

Implement, as funding becomes available, some of the components of the Cypress Ridge Golf Course Master Plan that was produced by Billy Casper Golf.

E-Commerce

Develop and implement an E-Commerce registration system whereby citizens can register for programs and services from their computers at home or work. This will save our citizens time, mileage and postage expense. The implementation of this system is dependent upon the city's IT Department work schedule and priorities.

ERP

Implement the city's new ERP system should positively impact our department's ability to prepare financial reports, streamline purchasing processes, prepare payroll, etc.

Department Reviews

Review all staff work schedules to minimize staff costs where feasible; review current programs and services to make sure we are offering hours convenient for our customers; review the athletics division staff assignments to insure current full-time employees are being utilized as effectively as possible, and make appropriate adjustments where feasible.

Paperless Refund System

Create a paperless refund system. The staff will complete the refund on the computer and send it automatically to the A&FC for payment.

Colored Mulch Service

Expand the colored mulch service at the Yard Materials Recycling Facility for the benefit of the public. This should generate more revenue.

Police Department

Foot Patrols

Increase the emphasis on Foot Patrols which will result in officers staying in touch with their neighborhoods and businesses. This will increase the effectiveness of Territory Officers by putting them in direct contact with citizens and developing community partnerships.

Recruiting

Focus more on specific individuals identified by community organizations who possess desirable characteristics. The outcome of this partnership will be an increase in the effectiveness of the Recruiting program resulting in a police department that is more representative of the community it serves.

Repeat and Violent Offenders

Increase awareness and focus on repeat and violent offenders as identified through crime analysis databases. This will result in a more effective deterrence effort by the police department.

Crime Analysis

Produce more timely crime statistics thereby providing a clearer picture of crime occurrence to Police Commanders. This will allow a more effective assignment of Patrol Officers on all shifts who will then address crime trends and issues in a more timely manner.

Vice

Increase enforcement of vice crimes by the Narcotics Unit in bars, taverns, clubs, and streets will increase the effectiveness of that unit by increasing their awareness of what is occurring. This will reduce crime in and around these businesses.

Complaint Process

Make complaint forms available on websites and throughout the community. In addition to this, the Police Conduct Hotline 368-9595 will be available 24-hours a day for citizens to report conduct of officers including complements. These two initiatives will increase the accessibility of the department by the citizens and make the department more responsive to community concerns.

Gang Intelligence

Assign a Corporal to supervise the collection and distribution of related information about gang crime. This will increase the efficiency of the Gang Intelligence Unit.

This position was developed by merging the responsibility of two existing Corporal positions into one.

Gas Conversion

Convert patrol units to 87 octane gas which will result in an annual savings of between \$15,000 and \$30,000.

Citizen Surveys

Use citizen surveys to gauge the department's performance. This feedback will increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of the police department.

Oversight

Require police supervisors to concur with active police pursuits resulting in a more effective police pursuit policy potentially resulting in fewer claims.

Public Works Department

General

Competency Based Pay Plan Practice

Currently providing competency based pay plans in several divisions. This provides for cross-training, skill related pay increases, and provides increased staffing flexibility.

Utility Billing

Implemented additional and improved utility bill payment options and increased locations accepting payments provide enhanced customer service. Online check writing was added to credit and debit card options, and a contract with a local bank provides many additional locations accepting payments.

Electronic Maintenance Management System

Continue implementation of an electronic maintenance management system (CityWorks) throughout the department allows for planning for preventative maintenance, tracking of hours and costs, identification of potential problems with equipment and better utilization of maintenance staff.

Project Information Management System

Continue to upgrade the project information management system (PIMS), which will provide up-to-date maps and information on the internet for residents to obtain information about projects throughout the city.

Temporary Sign Policing

Continue to enforce the right-of-way sign ordinance with temporary part time employees. Previously, higher paid skilled employees were taken from more critical maintenance work to collect illegal signs.

Vehicle Energy Conservation Strategy

Continue replacing pickups, flat bed trucks and other vehicles are with smaller, more fuel efficient vehicles. Energy conservation plans are being implemented.

Water Division

Water Meter Reading Routes

Implementation of routing software and restructuring of water meter reading routes reduces hours spent on reads, saves fuel and increases productivity of field employees.

Paperless Work Orders

Implementation of paperless work orders allows the use of laptops to complete and obtain new water maintenance work orders, reducing time in the office and saving fuel.

Customer Service Training

Reviewing, updating and writing scripts for customer service agents to follow increases knowledge and ensures consistent information is given to customers with questions about water and sewer services.

Developer Water Meter Installations

Installation of water meters up to 2 inches now is done by developers and contractors, with only inspections by city staff. This allows more time for preventative maintenance for valves and hydrants.

Lime Residuals Disposal

Lime residuals disposal at the water treatment plant previously was contracted to a private hauler. By using existing equipment and Water employees to haul materials, cost savings have been realized.

Transportation Operations Division

Fiber Optics Usage

The traffic signal communication system was changed to fiber optics from telephone lines, resulting in a 50% cost savings.

Metered Traffic Signals

Convert traffic signals from tariff rates to metered poles. The cost for the change from tariff rates is recouped in less than one year.

Traffic Signal Bulb Replacement

Continuing to convert traffic and pedestrian signal bulbs to LED will save as much as 95 percent in electricity usage.

Water Pollution Control (WPC) Division

Treatment Conversion

Converted the North Topeka Treatment Plant from using chlorine gas to a less volatile chemical. This allows the City to eliminate the elimination of the hazardous materials handling program at the plant.

Control/Data Upgrade

WPC completed implementation of the supervisory control and data acquisition system (SCADA) to allow for remote monitoring of pump stations.

Facility Operations Division

Administrative Function Consolidation

Consolidated the Parking and Facility Operations administrative functions to better utilize staff.

Payment Center Consolidation

Combined the utility payment center with the parking payment center, which allowed for cross training and support staff from both operations.

Standardized Signage

Standardized signage and color schemes in all parking garages. This allows for efficiencies in maintenance and increased customer satisfaction.

Zoo Department

Rate Increase

Increase rates by 25 cents for all admission categories during 2008. The increase is expected to generate \$10,000 to \$15,000 in additional revenue.

Marketing Improvements

Strengthened the Zoo's marketing efforts by partnering with an outside advertising agency. For example, the "Cookies and Milk" promotion was a very successful program sponsored by FOX 43, 94.5 Country and FOTZ. Similar programs, some for adults, are planned over the next 12 months.

Volunteer Usage

Increased the number of volunteers and seasonal staff which provides more educational camps and overnights. This allows more program offerings and therefore generates more revenue.

Special Event Expansion

Continue to expand special events to provide more opportunities for visitors to experience the Zoo in the evening. To date the evening events are financially successful because costs are being paid for by sponsors, including FOTZ.

Cross Training

Improved customer service by increasing a .5 FTE to a full-time FTE in the Visitor Services area (we used a .5 FTE position who retired in December 2006, to convert the other .5 FTE to fulltime) This person has been cross-trained to do payroll and data entry, in addition to selling tickets, handling advance tickets sales and invoicing and trained to assist in concessions if needed. Second, Zoo concessions staff have been trained to cover admissions when needed. Third, zoo animal care staff continues to be cross trained to provide the optimal in animal care regardless of where they may need to work on a given day.