

Blue Ribbon Commission II Meeting Summary
01/08/09

Members Present: Sue Graf, Tom Hagerty, Suzanne Jones, Dan King, Michelle Krezek, Beth Pommer, Dorothy Rupert, Jeff Wingert

Members Absent: Michael Leccese, Rich Wobbekind

Staff Present: Jane Brautigam, Bob Eichem, Paul Fetherston, Stephanie Grainger, Kathy McGuire, Maureen Rait, Jim Reasor

Public Participation

- None

Welcome by Deputy City Manager, Paul Fetherston

- Paul introduced City Manager, Jane Brautigam, and then gave an overview of the evening's planned agenda.

Where have we been?

- Paul briefly reviewed the purpose of BRC II in reviewing expenditures, exploring organizational efficiency and maintaining community confidence in the city's use of public funds. In recapping the BRC II's progress to date, Paul mapped the discussions and presentations (e.g., budget overview, city "basket" of services, master plan, business plan, performance measurement) of the first five meetings to the desired outcomes and required inputs identified by the Commission.

Where are we going?

- Paul proposed an outline for the Commission's final report and identified areas where city staff and management were already taking action, such as the city's compensation philosophy, budget and fiscal policies and organizational efficiency studies.
- The Commission determined that the focus of its future efforts would be on gaining an understanding of city services/programs and considering alternate service delivery methods. "Alternate delivery methods" might involve the use of new technologies, regional partnerships, outsourcing and/or other approaches.
- The Commission set a goal to identify the essential, desirable and discretionary services on a citywide basis and then to repeat the process at the department level, seeking increased efficiency and effectiveness. The Commission acknowledged that community values shape the city's services and deferred deciding whether the funding of those services (e.g. grants vs. fees vs. taxes) is a separate conversation from prioritization.
- The Commission made an initial effort to prioritize existing citywide services by tiers, indicating that there will be further, informed and ongoing discussion of the list. The Commission will revisit the "basket of services" chart in depth and may examine existing Capital Improvement Plans. The Commission identified several criteria and guidelines for prioritizing services:
 - Legally required services

- Services that provide safety and security of persons and property
- Services the community could function without if forced
- The primary services established in any new community
- Services provided by unincorporated Boulder County
- Basic services that provide a minimal level of civilization
- Do non-essential services fund themselves or subsidize other services?
- Duplication of services by other entities (e.g., County, State, municipalities, non-profits)

The Commission indicated it would like to maintain a running list of considerations/guiding principles used in its discussions. The initial principles identified as informing the discussion of services included:

- Strategic budget thinking/adjustments are preferred over across-the-board increases and reductions.
 - A decision framework should be recommended to the city intended to inform decisions regarding essential services and the prioritization of service requests.
 - A service evaluation/prioritization process should be required on a regular basis (such as every 5 years).
 - Budget trade-offs necessitated by earmarked revenues and funds should be articulated to the community (i.e., earmarking reduces flexibility to meet other needs).
- Since the Commission's goal involves review of each department's function and budget, a presentation from each department will be necessary. The Commission determined that review of departments will occur on January 22 and will include the Finance and Fire departments. The following were the initial topics identified by the Commission as items Departments must minimally include in the presentations:
 - Assuming the Commission knows nothing, explain what the department does.
 - Which items/services are required by City Charter (or other legal mandate)?
 - Which services have been identified as essential, desirable and discretionary?
 - How does the department measure its own success?
 - If there were no constraints, how could the services be provided in the most effective & efficient manner?
 - Who else in the region currently provides the same or similar services (in either the private, public or non-profit sectors)?
 - Compare city provision of services to those that could be provided through outsourcing or partnering.
 - What is the vision of the future of the service, function or department?
 - Where would the department make reductions/cuts if forced? How would it adjust?
 - Bring departmental Capital Improvement Plans.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:55PM. Next meeting scheduled for January 22, 2009, at 6pm in the Twenty Ninth Street Mall's Community Meeting Room.