

STAFF SURVEY SUMMARY

In an effort to represent all of the users of the Town Office facility and to gain some insight into the program requirements for our community services a survey was drafted to solicit responses from the department managers and their staff. The survey was given to the staff of the departments housed in the Town Office building and was followed up with individual meeting with each department listed below:

- Assessors office
- Building/Code/Zoning
- Finance/Tax/Accounting
- Human Services
- Planning
- Town Clerk
- Town Manager

Many of the departments gave considerable feed back on the use of the facility and the needs of their departments, both current and future. These series of interviews combined with the Committee's visits to other municipal office buildings help to solidify our planning assumptions. Please see comments provided by departments in Appendix E.

The committee's observations regarding the space needs and adjacencies described by the staff were that the departments shared similar concerns, but did not perceive of themselves as part of the town offices as a whole. There appeared to be a reluctance to share information between departments and that any suggestions regarding consolidation or the sharing of resources was viewed as a negative. When asked what departments they interacted with on a regular basis it was commonly answered that there wasn't much. The use of technology was almost nonexistent in comparison to business operations of similar scale. The notion of consolidating information via a network system was not readily viewed as a positive. The territorial nature of the responses to the committee illustrates the difficulties that have been indicated in prior attempts to develop a comprehensive plan that meets the needs of the entire organization.

All departments responding to the survey expressed a need for additional and organized storage space for both current as well as archived records. Some of the record storage appears to exceed the RSA standards, but are intended to provide historical records and/or easy access. It was noted that the type of storage available and the locations were not ideal and were factors in the overall cluttered appearance of the offices. The need for additional storage space that is appropriate for the type of records being archived is apparent. The filing cabinets, storage drawers etc. are not efficient and illustrate the fact that not much has been done on a comprehensive scale to address the issue.

The departments all appeared to be frustrated and disillusioned with this process as they did not feel that any significant changes will be made. They did not feel that they were being heard or represented in a process to improve the work environment. The committee feels strongly that some basic organizational and communication steps can be made to alleviate some of the pressure points currently experienced by the staff.

The issue of the use of information technology as a resource was on the forefront of some of the friction points in the facility. We, as a committee, do not feel that technology is a panacea, but we understand that the coordinated use of this resource would be beneficial to the community and the Town employees. We recommend the formation of a technology sub-committee to assist the Town in producing a comprehensive plan to modernize these services and schedule the appropriate upgrades to allow for this resource to be utilized in a more effective manner.

One area that was not addressed in the survey is the topic of environmental comfort and electrical appliances. While touring the various departments the Committee observed several electric heaters, electric fans and window unit air conditioners. These are a result of lack of a regulated and zoned heating and cooling system. The extra appliances cause a severe power draw on the electrical service to the building, resulting in flickering lights and blown fuses and unsafe extension cord or power strip situations. The layout of furnishings and the shapes of some offices prevent an even heating and cooling such that some employees are too hot while sitting in the same room with another who is too cold. Some spaces require an open window in winter months in order to lower the temperature in overheated offices. There are no thermostats to control temperatures. This inefficiency directly effects the amount and cost of fuel used annually. The committee also observed some departments have duplicate appliances such as coffee brewers, refrigerators, microwave ovens, etc. aside from the ones in use in the Break Room. Aside from the obvious inefficient use of energy, this individualization of needs is representative of the lack of recognition that all departments are working together as a cohesive unit for the residents of the Town.