

COMPARATIVE TOWN SITE VISITS

The Committee planned that as part of their process in evaluating the use, operation and overall environment of the Town Offices that the group should tour other facilities. The facilities chosen represented a range of building types and age. The size of the communities chosen was intentionally larger population than Exeter in an effort to identify any issues that may pertain to this community over the next fifty years.

The Committee toured Dover, Portsmouth, Derry and Londonderry. The tours outlined a number of issues that were common to each other as well as Exeter. In Dover they had the challenge of updating a historic structure to accommodate environmental concerns as well as providing accessible services. Portsmouth had the opportunity to take over the existing Portsmouth Hospital site and convert it to their municipal facility. Derry and Londonderry have relatively new facilities and still have issues regarding the use and need for additional space. They all appeared to have the relationship of functions and operational models which allowed for change and flexing of services which had minimal affect on the services provided.

The four facilities the Committee toured shared the organizational structure of the consolidation of Town Services. It was noted by almost all of the administrators for these communities that it was very important for the communications and continuity of leadership to have the consolidation of services. Dover, Derry and Londonderry appeared to be very organized and had instituted specific systems and space allocation to accommodate the growing need for record storage and access. Each of these buildings had a clear organization and accessing most departments and services was easy. Each community had a robust computer communications system which all departments used and was controlled by a single department. The committee observed that at each of the buildings visited there was someone on the staff that served as the office manger and looked after the day to day operations. This position of responsibility and management was a crucial component to insuring that the work place was orderly and coordinated with other departments

The use of the space was impressive in each of the facilities we toured. The areas were in general very clean, well organized and free of everyday clutter. This outward appearance left an impression of less chaos in the everyday work environment. The storage needs appeared to be managed and a system was in place to file all material and the process was adhered to.

The business functions were co-located with a customer friendly appearance that was easily identified as the place to go to pay for Town managed services. Way finding and access were easy to manage and clear.

The information technology areas were well managed and consolidated for all departments to take advantage of. All departments were part of the overall town

network. Each facility had technology assess and cooperation. The management of this function was given a high priority and it was noted that this was an integral part of how they did business.

Each of these office buildings had their public meeting spaces housed in within the facility. There was a direct relationship to the TV studio area and they were primarily reserved for board and council meetings. The spaces had good visibility, clear circulation and functioned to improve the quality of the public process.

The Committee believes that these tours helped to formulate many of the opinions in this report. The visits to other municipalities illustrated the importance of overall leadership and the establishment of a cooperative and collaborative work environment.

Our experience with the Exeter Town Office functions illustrated the siloed, or individualized, operation of our town offices. The morale and demeanor of the staff illustrates that the current culture needs change. The work environment plays an important role in establishing the value our community has for its town employees and subsequently has an affect on those employees' overall work performance.

Derry

Type of Government – Town Administrator and Council

Municipal Employees 272 Total - 250 Full time, 22 Part time

The 2006 Census estimate for Derry was 34,103 residents, which ranked 4th among New Hampshire's incorporated cities and towns.

Population Density, 2006: 962.5 persons per square mile of land area, the ninth highest among the cities and towns.

Derry contains 35.4 square miles of land area and 0.9 square miles of inland water area.

Dover

Type of Government – City Council and Manager

Municipal Employees 300 Total - 270 Full time, 30 Part time

The 2006 Census estimate for Dover was 28,422 residents, which ranked 7th among New Hampshire's incorporated cities and towns.

Population Density, 2006: 1,063.3 persons per square mile of land area, the eighth highest among the cities and towns.

Dover contains 26.7 square miles of land area and 2.3 square miles of inland water area.

Londonderry

Type of Government – Town Council

Municipal Employees 195 Total - 185 Full time, 10 Part time

The 2006 Census estimate for Londonderry was 24,879 residents, which ranked 9th among New Hampshire's incorporated cities and towns.

Population Density, 2006: 592.1 persons per square mile of land area.

Londonderry contains 42.0 square miles of land area and 0.1 square miles of inland water area.

Portsmouth

Type of Government – City Administrator and Council

Municipal Employees 366 Total - 340 Full time, 26 Part time
(excludes school system)

The 2006 Census estimate for Portsmouth was 20,618 residents, which ranked 13th among New Hampshire's incorporated cities and towns.

Population Density, 2006: 1,315.8 persons per square mile of land area, the third highest among the cities and towns.

Portsmouth contains 15.7 square miles of land area and 1.1 square miles of inland water area.

Exeter

Type of Government – Board of Selectmen and Town Manager

Municipal Employees 157 Total – 130 Full time, 27 Part time

The 2006 Census estimate for Exeter was 14,754 residents, which ranked 18th among New Hampshire's incorporated cities and towns.

Population Density, 2006: 747.0 persons per square mile of land area.

Exeter contains 19.8 square miles of land area and 0.3 square miles of inland water area.