



EFFICIENCY STUDY – PHASE TWO

Prepared for

The Township of Howell, NJ

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**GOVERNMENT
STRATEGY
GROUP**

Innovating the Business of Government

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INTRODUCTION

Phase 2

This report is the second phase of a review of Howell Township departments and operations as conducted by Government Strategy Group (GSG). Previously GSG studied the three largest departments of the Township – Police, Public Works, and Community Development – as well as related financial and technology issues – and produced a report in April of 2022 containing over sixty recommendations for the Township for improving efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

This Phase 2 study includes the following departments, divisions, and offices:

- Manager's Office
- Community Relations
- Human Resources
- Information Technology (applicable to these units and Township-wide)
- Payroll
- Financial Administration
- Tax Collector
- Tax Assessor
- Purchasing
- Office of Emergency Management
- Sewer Utility

Additionally, certain areas covered in Phase 1 – such as the Township's finances and how it compares to other municipalities – are updated in this Phase 2 review. It should be noted that the following areas were not included in the contract for this assignment: Fire Bureau, Senior Services, Fire Districts, and analysis of Health Benefits, General Liability, and Risk Management.

Township Background (updated)

Howell Township is an eastern central New Jersey municipality located less than ten miles from the Atlantic Ocean with its beachfront communities and boardwalks. It is one of the largest municipalities in New Jersey, ranking thirty-fifth in population and nineteenth in land area. Of the fifty-three municipalities in Monmouth County, Howell is the largest in size and second only to Middletown in population.

One of the noteworthy characteristics of Howell Township that impacts municipal operations and issues is the fact that a number of major roadways – with heavy traffic

and nearby robust commercial activity – cross through the community. These include U.S. highway Route 9, two State highways (33 and 34) and a major Interstate highway, I-195.

The municipal government offers a wide range of municipal services to the community, with a total budget of \$55.6 million. Numerous recreational opportunities are available in the community, including more than fifteen parks and playgrounds, and there is an active and involved citizenry, including such organizations as the Police Athletic League (P.A.L), which provides a robust roster of athletic opportunities for the community's youth. The P.A.L. has also recently taken over management of the Township's summer camps.

Recognizing that citizens are always concerned about property taxes, Township officials are constantly looking to contain costs while satisfying the expectations of the citizenry to have Township services that contribute to a good quality of life in the community. This is a constant challenge.

Quality of life issues are currently a growing concern for Howell officials, residents, and stakeholders, in particular with respect to development and "over-development" and what impacts such activities may have on the community. These issues put significant time demands and stress on elected officials and Township management and staff.

Nevertheless, like so many other communities in New Jersey who have been impacted by the lingering after-effects of Superstorm Sandy and the ongoing effects of a worldwide pandemic of historic proportions, Howell officials – to their credit – are seeking to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal operations, as well as doing whatever they can to help their residents and businesses thrive. As a result of seeking to do its best to ensure efficiency in municipal operations, the Township determined that there was a need to obtain an outside, independent, objective review of departments and operations.

It should be noted that the form of government under which a municipality operates can have a definite impact on the efficiency, effectiveness, and cost of operations and departments. There are generally three frameworks for how a municipality operates: 1, managed by a group of individual elected officials; 2, managed by an elected Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with the title of Mayor; and 3, managed by a hired professional CEO appointed by the elected officials. Within each framework are a variety of specific forms of government, all of which are authorized by and enabled by specific State statutes.

From an effective, business-like management ability to get things done, the form that has most fallen out of favor lies within the first framework – the Commission form of

government. In this form, the elected members of the municipal council or “commission” are each individually the actual department heads who manage individual departments. In the business world, this is known as “management by silos” and is frowned upon.

On the other end of the spectrum, the form considered the most business-like comes from the third framework – the Council-Manager form of government. Under this form, the Manager – not the Mayor or any other official – is the CEO of the municipality with broad authority over municipal operations, including authority over all hirings, promotions, and disciplinary actions. The Manager is appointed by and accountable to the elected officials, who by law can only take official action as a body, not as individuals, and who are prohibited by law from directing the actions of employees under the Manager. This form of government is modelled after most large corporations where a board hires a CEO with full authority to run the business and can replace him or her if not satisfied with performance.

The Howell Township municipal government is chartered as a Council-Manager form of government. Elected officials consist of a mayor and four council members, who together form the municipal council of five voting members. The Mayor presides over council meetings (similar to the Council President in other forms of local government), makes certain appointments to other municipal organizations, and formally executes contracts and written obligations of the municipality, while the Manager serves as Chief Executive Officer. As with any organization consisting of people, how people perform their roles within the organizational structure can and does impact the effectiveness and efficiency of operations.

In preparing this report, Government Strategy Group (GSG) sourced numerous local documents and reports, including budgets and audits, as well as data available publicly from such sources as Rutgers University, City-Data, other municipalities, and the New Jersey Public Employment Relations Commission. Although no one can guarantee the accuracy of all sources, GSG has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of information in this report.

To ascertain facts, evaluate same, and draw conclusions, numerous relevant parties were interviewed comprehensively, including department and division managers and staff, elected officials and other Township officials. Attached in the Appendix is a listing of the interviews conducted, with most individuals interviewed on multiple occasions. All available relevant reports and documentation – such as budgets, working forms and reports, current financial and procedural records, backup paperwork and data, third-party reports – were obtained, inspected, and analyzed. At times, conflicting

information was obtained in interviews or otherwise uncovered and extra time devoted to resolving such instances.

A team of more than a dozen experienced experts in the management of municipal government plus subject experts were employed in this effort to assist Howell. A full listing of the team members is attached in the Appendix.

Nothing contained in this document should be construed as having legal expertise or as legal advice. The sole objective of this Phase 2 study is to provide the Township with a professional, objective review of the operations and efficiency of the departments and operations under review.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Financial Status

As part of this Phase 2 assignment, Government strategy Group conducted an updated assessment of the Township's finances. If the departments currently under review, as well as those previously reviewed, need financial resources to upgrade or improve efficiency, is the Township in a position to provide those resources?

Accordingly, Government Strategy Group conducted this updated overview of Howell Township's finances and financial situation. The purpose of this assessment as summarized in this update is to help inform decision-making going forward by pointing out financial conditions or situations that appear to be financial strengths or that may require further attention.

A review of the financial operations and position of the Township of Howell was completed in conjunction with the other studies performed by Government Strategy Group to determine what financial impact findings from the other areas might have on Township finances if they were to be implemented. Other reviews of the Township of Howell finances have recently been completed in relation to the Township's Bond Rating. Moody's Performed an Annual review in 2017 providing the Township with an Aa3 rating which is the median rating given to other US cities. Standard & Poors completed a rating study dated 9/18/20 providing an AA rating to Howell Township, indicating stability.

The review performed by Government Strategy Group focused on the date range from the year of 2017 through the most recent documents of 12/31/22. The documents used to complete this review were; the 2017 – 2021 Annual Audits and Financial Statements, 2017 – 2021 Annual Debt Statements, and the Municipal budget for each year.

As shown in the financial information table that follows, the Municipal Tax Rate has been kept at a relatively flat rate for the last five years while the Net Valuation Taxable has increased each year, allowing for the Amount of Tax Anticipated in each successive budget to increase without increasing the tax rate. During the years 2017 through 2021 the average growth in the Net Valuation Taxable ranged from 2.14 to 4.2%, however in 2022 the Net Valuation Taxable in Howell increased almost 12%.



HOWELL UPDATED BUDGET DATA 2017 - 2022						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Net Valuation Taxable (billions)	6,642,287,000	6,920,904,100	7,195,667,500	7,388,630,600	7,546,137,900	8,450,898,100
Municipal Tax Rate	0.397	0.388	0.395	0.395	0.387	0.358
Amount of Tax Anticipated in Budget	26,338,557.00	26,804,765.00	28,391,951.00	29,201,215.00	29,201,215.00	30,280,000.00
Collection Rate	98.20%	98.37%	98.60%	98.39%	98.20%	97.72%
Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	3,234,857.72	3,237,696.12	3,007,112.63	3,031,685.22	3,021,603.29	3,026,627.58
CAP Bank				2,115,875.00	2,032,656.00	1,732,515.00
Amount Under Tax Levy CAP	877,653.00	1,298,430.00	297,957.00	519,487.48	1,215,211.25	91,043.02
Misc Revenue Not Anticipated Realized	1,985,737.86	1,942,564.43	1,721,799.25	919,424.42	567,389.91	314,355.15
Major MRNA components (one time)						
FEMA Reimbursement	(1,530,000.00)				(250,684.22)	-
Sale of Township Land		(1,608,500.00)	(1,599,797.34)	(123,221.00)		
Township Auction					(208,182.68)	-
Cares ACT Reimbursement				(550,000.00)		
Net MRNA less one shots	455,737.86	334,064.43	122,001.91	246,203.42	108,523.01	314,355.15
<i>MRNA = Misc Revenue Not Anticipated</i>						
Deferred School Tax / Revenue						3,300,000.00
Capital Fund Balance					1,000,000.00	0.00
American Recovery Act / Revenue						2,000,000.00
Amount of Surplus Anticipated (used)	3,600,000.00	6,195,000.00	6,000,000.00	6,000,000.00	7,287,000.00	4,860,000.00
Amount of Surplus Regenerated	6,611,621.17	6,346,639.28	6,649,161.23	5,698,160.95	4,602,704.69	8,831,671.50
Surplus Balance at 12/31	10,017,045.72	10,166,685.00	10,815,846.23	10,514,007.18	7,829,711.87	11,801,389.37
Municipal Budget Total	47,767,000.00	51,065,000.00	52,325,000.00	53,541,820.00	54,843,000.00	55,562,000.00
Grants	532,739.93	910,483.86	776,731.74	775,798.17	566,299.63	574,613.23
Net Municipal Budget	47,234,260.07	50,154,516.14	51,548,268.26	52,766,021.83	54,276,700.37	54,987,386.77
Annual % increase in Appropriations		6.18%	2.78%	2.36%	2.86%	1.31%
Total Appropriation increase 2017 - 2021					14.91%	
Total Appropriation increase 2017 - 2022						16.41%
Chapter 159	424,965.89	139,243.32	157,594.40	679,801.82	613,008.11	106,638.53
Debt Service	6,380,110.00	7,635,040.00	8,111,413.00	8,505,923.00	8,234,875.00	7,350,000.00

A notable concern in the 2022 financial operations, which will impact the 2023 budget, is that the 2022 tax collection rate fell roughly one half a percent from 98.2% to 97.72%, which not only reduced the amount of surplus generated through the municipal operations in 2022, but will also require a sizable increase in the Reserve for

Uncollected Tax (RUT) appropriation for 2023. Depending on the amount of tax levied in the 2023 budgets of the different taxing entities, (municipal, county, schools, etc.) , comprising the overall 2023 Howell Township tax levy, the collection decline could put substantial pressure on the 2023 municipal budget which provides for the tax collection function for not only the municipal tax but for all the township taxing entities. The decline of tax collection percentage in 2022 is the fourth consecutive year in which the percentage of tax collection has fallen in Howell Township.

The appropriation (spending) side of the 2017 Township budget was \$47,767,000.00 containing \$532,739.93 in grants leaving a net appropriation total of \$47,234,260.07 as shown in the table below. The amount of the appropriations in each budget year since has increased to a total of \$55,562,000 containing \$574,613.23 of grants, leaving net appropriations of \$54,987,386.77 in 2022. This represents an increase of \$7,753,126.70 or 16.4% during the last six years. Meanwhile, during the same time period, the amount of Tax Anticipated in each budget has only increased from \$26,338,557.00 in 2017 to \$30,280,000.00 in 2022. This represents an increase of \$3,941,443.00 or 14.9% during the same time period.

The Township has increased the amount of Surplus used as a revenue in the Municipal Budget from \$3,600,000.00 in the 2017 municipal budget to as high as \$7,287,000.00 in 2021. The 2022 budget saw a decrease in the use of Surplus but contained American Recovery Act money in the amount of \$2,000,000. Also, in an effort to generate Surplus to use in the 2023 budget and beyond, the Township deferred school tax in the amount of \$3,300,000 increasing the previous amount of \$13,585,000.00 to \$16,885,000.00. New Jersey Statute limits the amount of deferred school tax a municipality is permitted to defer to 50% of the school levy. While Howell is only \$158,557 from the statutory limit on the Regional High School, it has not deferred any school tax from the local levy which is currently \$82,309,520.00.

It is not problematic for a municipality to use additional Surplus to buffer the tax impact in a budget on an as needed basis; however, a municipality must be able to regenerate the Surplus used through recurring operations and not make it the norm to use non-recurring revenue as a routine to artificially minimize tax increases. A closer look at the Township of Howell financial operations shows that in each year there have been a number of different non-recurring items that have been recorded as Miscellaneous Revenue Not Anticipated or "MRNA". In 2017 the item was a reimbursement from FEMA in the amount of \$1,530,000.00. In 2018, it was the sale of Township owned land in the amount of \$1,608,500.00, with another sale of land in the amount \$1,599,797.34 again in 2019. In 2020, CARES Act reimbursement was taken in the amount of \$550,000.00 accompanied by another sale of land in the amount of \$123,221.00. 2021 had an additional FEMA reimbursement of \$250,684.22 as well as

\$208,182.68 from the Township Auction. The 2021 municipal budget contained \$1 million in Capital Fund Balance and as previously mentioned, the 2022 budget contained the use of \$2 million of American Recovery Act monies. The 2023 budget will have an artificially increased Surplus to use with the deferral of over \$3 million in school tax. These items are non-recurring and the availability of additional non-recurring items to help the Township regenerate the increased dependence on Surplus as a revenue it has shown over the last six years is unknown.

The Debt Service appropriated in each budget year had also grown during the period from \$6,380,110.00 in 2017 to \$8,234,875.00 in 2021. However, the Township paid off a Bond issue and restructured debt which has yielded a \$900,000.00 decrease in the required debt service appropriation for the 2022 and 2023 budgets, providing some relief from the shortage of available revenue. As a note, the percentage of municipal debt as it relates to the 3-year average of Equalized Assessed Valuation has been relatively stable at a rate of roughly 1%, with 3.5% being the debt limit for New Jersey municipalities without requiring approval from the Local Finance Board.

The Township of Howell currently has a "Tax CAP Bank" of \$1,732,515.00 that can be used in the preparation of the 2023 budget which provides for the possibility of the Amount to be Raised by Taxation or the local tax levy to be increase significantly. .

In summary, our study provides that the Township of Howell does have the financial ability to finance the needs of its departments and operations. This can be done either through budgetary measures or through capital (the issuance of debt); however, GSG's review would indicate that any additional expenditures, given the Township's current financial status, would probably have a direct impact on taxes either through an appropriation or through additional debt service.

Finance Operations

An additional review of the staffing (positions and responsibilities) of Howell Township finance operations was performed as part of the scope of this Pahe 2 study performed by Government Strategy Group. The review focused on four main functions; finance and accounts payable, tax collection, tax assessing and purchasing. The Township uses the Edmunds Accounting and Tax software system and, as such, the Finance, Tax Collection, and Purchasing functions are all run through this software which is the most common accounting software used by New Jersey municipalities and counties.

Finance

The staffing level and the responsibilities of these positions seemed adequate to perform the functions of this office. The major issues came to light when the individuals

holding these positions and their long-term service with the Township was considered. Two of the finance employees are eligible to retire at any time. This causes concern in two different areas; with employees having long tenure with the Township, naturally they have high-level salaries for the level of performance provided, as well as receiving an increased amount of earned time off which in turn requires increased staffing to provide office coverage. If and when these employees decide to retire, either replacement employees can be hired at a lower salary or the responsibilities of their position can be assigned to other existing employees; but in any case, succession planning needs to be a consideration. The CFO was aware of the situation and offered that going forward the two positions could be filled with one replacement.

The function of Payroll has also been a topic of discussion. It seems that a former Township Manager made the decision to remove the payroll function from the finance operations and bring it under Administration. Reportedly, this was done in the mid 2000's. The rationale for this decision was apparently to better align payroll with Human Resources. However, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for establishing and maintaining internal controls throughout the organization.

The topic of escrow recordkeeping and reporting was reviewed. An employee who formerly was in Engineering but is now under Finance is responsible for this function. While the function of escrow recordkeeping is important to maintain and keep current, it does not require more than a part time position.

Tax Collection

The Tax Collection Office oversees the property tax records of approximately 22,000 line items. The long time Tax Collector retired in August of 2018 and the successor left Howell in December of 2021 to become the Business Administrator in Neptune City. A new Tax Collector, who was a former banker, followed in January of 2022 and has been working to revamp the office with new staff being cross trained and attending classes. Two employees are currently out on medical / maternity leave leaving a staffing void.

Tax Assessing

The Tax Assessor's Office in Howell employs four people including the Deputy Assessor. GSG finds this level of staffing adequate to perform the required tasks. The Assessor has been in his position for roughly twelve years and the office appears as running efficiently. Howell Township is participating in the Monmouth County Assessing program where 20% of the Township gets reassessed every year while the entire Township's assessment is adjusted annually to reflect market conditions.

Purchasing

The purchasing function is performed through the Edmunds software where a purchase requisition originates in a given department and with programmed levels of approval is then turned into a purchase order, which is then sent out to a vendor for signature. Once signed, the document is returned to the Township for payment to be processed. The assigned approvals must be obtained prior to payment being processed. (see IT section of this report for technological recommendations regarding purchasing.)

Recommendations

1. *GSG recommends that the Township step up efforts to cross train employees in Finance.* Training finance employees to be able to understand and perform one another's responsibilities and to assist in other areas such as tax collection during peak collection times is recommended.
2. *GSG recommends that payroll be returned to the jurisdiction of the Finance Office/CFO.* This is especially relevant in light of recent issues concerning payroll irregularities in different municipalities and counties in the State of New Jersey. It is recommended that this function be returned to Finance.
3. *GSG recommends that the staff member performing escrow record keeping also be trained for and assigned other duties.* This function does not require more than a part-time position. If it has not already been addressed, this position should be cross trained in other areas of financial operations to assist as needed.

OFFICE OF THE MANAGER

The Township of Howell operates under the council–manager form of government. The model of council–manager is considered by many to be the most effective form of municipal governance by providing representative policy making by elected officials and the implementation of policy by a professional local government manager.

The incumbent Manager filled the position in an acting capacity in May of 2022, and was officially appointed to the role as of December 2022. Previously he served as the in-house counsel for a period of five years. He is responsible for a workforce of approximately 200 full-time employees and the various duties consistent with the council-manager statute. The Director of Community Development serves as the deputy manager.

The Manager is in the process of understanding the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members to determine their strengths and weaknesses and opportunities

for improvement. He expressed that there is a “need for people to be nimble in their roles.” His view of the manager’s role is that of a diplomat.

He has identified a need for proactively communicating with the community regarding all aspects of the Township as an important initiative of the governing body. Using the local cable access channel as a component of an improved communication initiative was suggested as an opportunity by the manager.

Some physical changes being considered include relocating the Human Resources office away from its current location adjacent to the Manager’s office to avoid an impression of oversight.

It is an exciting time for Howell; the relatively new changes relating to the Manager, Clerk, and governing body are great opportunities for the Township. Internally the people GSG met with all have varied and important experiences and skills to support Howell and are dedicated to the Township. Department head meetings would be helpful to ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities and helps each other, as there is much institutional knowledge in the building. It would also be beneficial for the Manager to clearly outline the OEM director’s role working with the various first responders to mitigate further miscommunication or animosity between the departments and entities.

If the governing body and manager deem enhancing communication with the public a priority, consideration should be given to naming a Public Information Officer (PIO). This person could be focused on proactively communicating events, issues, and policies, working with the local community and businesses, and ensuring more focus on sharing communication and information. Importantly, the PIO could serve as a spokesperson and contact for the Township when there is a local emergency incident.

The role of a PIO should include management of social media, speaking to the press, writing press releases, distilling complicated issues or policies for communication clarity to minimize opportunities for misinformation. An overall public information initiative should touch on the many ways of communicating, such as local cable access channel, social media platforms, and print.

Recommendation

The Township should consider creating/identifying a Public Information Officer who reports to the Township Manager and can also meet needs of the governing body. This may involve reorganizing/realigning the position of Director of Community Relations, who currently serves as a de-facto communications and social media person, but secondarily to other duties.

TOWNSHIP CLERK’S OFFICE

Overview

Duties performed by the municipal clerk include: preparation and distribution of the agenda for meetings of the governing body, serving as the election official with responsibility for 33 polling sites, preparation of meeting minutes, responding to Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests, maintaining contracts, ordinances and resolutions, and serving as the Registrar of vital statistics.

OFFICE OF THE TOWNSHIP CLERK STAFFING LEVEL	
Clerk	1 (full-time)
Deputy Clerk	1 (full-time)
Registrars	3 (full-time)

The incumbent clerk was appointed in July of 2022, bringing significant experience from 22 years of service in another NJ municipality.

The office is staffed by 5 employees, including the clerk, deputy clerk and 3 registrars, one staff member is pursuing certification as a certified registrar of vital statistics. The employees are reported to all work well together and are cross trained so that constituents do not need to wait or return later to address their issues.

In addition to the standard statutory responsibilities of the municipal clerk, additional duties include issuing a variety of licenses and permits, including more than 3,000 pet licenses and renewals in 2022. The office also provides notary services for the public, mails the local property tax bills and coordinates the annual rabies clinic.

The clerk has initiated a project to have all municipal contracts filed in the clerk’s office. This is an excellent practice that will improve efficiency whenever researching contract documents. The following chart lists the total in number and revenue for various licenses and permits processed by the Clerk’s Office during 2022:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK LICENSE & PERMIT ACTIVITY 2022		
	Total	Fee
Peddler & Solicitor	38	\$3,150
Massage License	2	\$500
Marriage License (State)	272	\$2,725
Marriage License (Twp)	271	\$324
Domestic Partnership (State)	0	\$0
Domestic Partnership (Twp)	0	\$0
Copy Fees (OPRA's)	27	\$143
Certified Copies Death	19	\$475
Certified Copies Marriage	311	\$8,075
Certified Birth Cert.	8	\$200
Bingos & Raffles	61	\$3,590
Resolution Fees	10	\$1,750
Burial Permits	0	\$0
Towing Application	9	\$2,250
Amusement Games	72	\$3,246
Taxi & Limo	6	\$500
Second Hand Dealer License	4	\$500
Junkyard License	2	\$1,200
Mobile Home Licenses	4	\$9,292
ABC Liquor Licenses Transfer	2	\$750
ABC Liquor Licenses	24	\$55,376
Notary	183	\$183
OPRA Requests	1882	
Return Check Fee	3	\$60
Pool Licenses	16	\$2,800
Septic Permits	81	\$10,560
Well Permits	40	\$4,000
Dog Licenses	2997	\$45,141
Cat Licenses	92	\$374
Food Licenses	265	\$34,525
Kennel Licenses	9	\$225
Park & Ride Permits	132	\$19,849
Park & Ride Coins	7	\$285
Park & Ride Bills	7	\$854
Tattoo Licenses	1	\$350
Total	6857	\$213,251

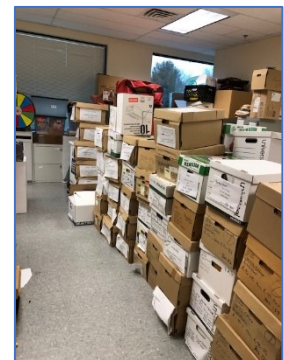
Public Health Services

Local public health services are delivered under a contract with Monmouth County Board of Health (MCBOH), managed through the clerk's office. Issues and concerns are reported to the clerk's office and transferred to the MCBOH. There is a link on the Township website (under the Community tab) to the MCBOH. Inspections and other activities are reported to the clerk's office via a monthly report. The clerk reports that the Monmouth BOH does an effective and efficient job.

Records Management

The state of New Jersey maintains strict requirements for the retention of records by local governments. The municipal clerk is responsible for retention of local government records. Without consistent attention as to proper filing and storage along with receiving state approval for destruction of certain documents, the steadily accumulating number of public records becomes overwhelming. Many municipalities struggle with maintaining an effective records retention program.

In Howell the clerk has instituted an aggressive plan to address the long-ignored issue of records retention. Many records are currently located at two off-site locations, where the environmental condition at the storage sites requires that the staff wear personal protective equipment (PPE) while reviewing files for potential destruction or laser fiche scanning. The laser fiche scanning creates a digital, searchable record that the clerk has organized into a filing system. One off-site location is reported to be 99% emptied while the second location has three floors of files awaiting attention. In addition, a separate location in Town Hall is used for document storage that will require similar effort by staff.



Various record storages spaces within the Howell Township Municipal Center

Recommendations

Records Retention

Cleaning up of physical paperwork continues to be a priority for the administration and Township, and it is a large task. The clerk has made significant progress and recognizes the importance; however, there are other duties the office has that usually take precedence over this task. Having staff dedicated to consistently working on the issue will help make even more progress in this area.

Implementation

To maintain momentum in reviewing these records additional time will be required – outside of regular work hours. Consideration should be given to authorizing overtime for members of the clerk’s office to work on the project outside of normal work hours, or to hire additional (experienced) part-time help.

High Speed Scanner

The Clerk’s office currently has one document scanner. A high-speed document scanner should be acquired to further improve the efficiency of the document retention program.

Implementation

A high-speed document scanner should be acquired to further improve the efficiency of the document retention program.

Records Storage

A common issue raised by employees interviewed by GSG members was the lack of an adequate on-site storage facility – not only for records, but other materials associated with the work of the departments.

Implementation

Consider creation of a records facility within the municipal center. There appears to be adequate vacant space within Town Hall that can be used for this purpose. Securing

sections within the space with specific employee card access would effectively control and secure the records while maintaining an audit trail of all access.

Septic and well permits

Septic and well permits are issued by the clerk's office and then taken by the contractor or customer to the Department of Community Development for review and approval. This requires that residents make two stops within Town Hall to accomplish a single task.

Implementation

Consideration should be given to streamlining this process by moving the permit issuance to the Department of Community Development.

Licensing Software

Currently, Spatial Data Logic (SDL) is the software platform used locally for managing planning, zoning and some DPW activities. However, SDL does not have modules for certain functions of the municipal clerk's office such as open public records requests (OPRA), licensing, and contract and performance bonds. These processes would be better supported using another software system, Gov Pilot.

Implementation

Consider the acquisition of Gov Pilot to improve workflow and efficiency in the clerk's office in processing OPRA requests and all licensing functions.

Consider integrating Gov Pilot in the municipal website to further provide easy access for those doing business with the municipal clerk's office.

Mail Distribution

Each day, a school employee brings the township mail from the post office to the clerk's office, where it is then sorted for the various departments. A DPW employee delivers the mail from town hall to the off-site departments. The current mail room in the municipal building is somewhat haphazard and serves as a gathering point for municipal employees.

Implementation

The clerk is in the process of creating a more traditional mail room, where department representatives will open a mailbox to retrieve the mail for their department. The access to the mailboxes will be from outside of the clerk's office, like post office boxes within a postal facility. This will improve the operations and minimize disruptions to the clerk's office.

Park & Ride Revenue

On a weekly basis, the DPW delivers revenue (coins) from the Park and Ride lot to the Clerk's office for processing.

Implementation

To eliminate a step in the handling of coinage, the DPW should deliver the Park and Ride revenue directly to the Finance Office.

Tax Billing

Currently, the municipal property tax bills are processed (stuffing and mailing) by the clerk's office staff members. This is a task that takes considerable time and effort away from other office responsibilities and functions.

Implementation

Explore outsourcing municipal tax billing.

Website

The Clerk's page on the website contains considerable information about their operations, including a list of the various permits and applications. However, the links to those forms are found on the main page of the township website. Many of those forms are paper based - either a regular or fillable .pdf which need to be printed and submitted.

Implementation

Include links for forms and applications specific to the clerk's office to the webpage for the municipal clerk. This would reduce the number of clicks needed to find the forms.

Notary Service

Currently, the clerk charges \$1.00 to notarize documents for the public. Service as a Notary Public was implemented as a convenience to the public. The \$1.00 fee is a fraction of what most private services charge and consideration should be given to raising the fee to cover the costs of personnel providing the service or to eliminating this courtesy service, which currently is provided to anyone who asks, including non-residents.

Implementation

Even if it only takes 10 minutes to notarize documents for a member of the public, the real cost of personnel providing that service is much higher than \$1.00. Consider increasing the fee to \$5.00 for residents with a higher rate for non-residents.

Board of Health Information

Information describing services provided by the board of health is listed under the “Community” tab on the home page of the website.

Implementation

In addition to the link in the current location, consider adding another link to the Clerk’s page.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The role of emergency management is to enhance the overall safety of communities by mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from natural or man-made disasters. The Office of Emergency Management is housed within the Howell Township Municipal Center in an expansive second floor office suite.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STAFFING LEVEL	
OEM Coordinator	1 (full-time)
Deputy OEM Coordinators	3 (part-time*)
Administrative Assistant	1 (shared position with Township Manager)
Volunteers	36
<i>*Each deputy coordinator serves in another full-time position and receives a stipend for work related to OEM.</i>	

OEM Coordinator – Department Director

The incumbent director is a retired police officer with extensive experience in emergency services response and communications center operations. After serving as an inspector in the Howell Community Services Department, he was appointed as Deputy OEM coordinator in 2016, assuming duties as full-time director in 2018.

The OEM Coordinator has certain duties and responsibilities as outlined in directives from the NJ State Office of Emergency Management (OEM). While he is an employee of Howell Township, he is ultimately responsible to the State Director of Emergency Management – the superintendent of the NJ State Police. The efforts of the 53 municipal emergency managers in Monmouth County are coordinated through the Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management (located within the Monmouth County Sheriff's Department) which coordinates with the NJ State OEM.

Planning and preparedness is a vital function of the office of emergency management to assure that all emergency services are ready to respond effectively in the case of an emergency. When emergencies occur, each department and agency head is responsible for the function of their operations, while the office of emergency management provides support, resources, and coordination during the event. Though many communities assign the duties of emergency management coordinator to the police or fire chief, doing so can inhibit that chief's ability to serve in both roles during an actual event.

The director described his philosophy as being available to assist the emergency service agencies and provide support during emergencies or other catastrophic events.

A significant portion of the director's time is spent filing documents and seeking reimbursement from federal, state and county agencies following emergency events. The office bills certain businesses identified as maintaining hazardous materials. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) forms are submitted by those businesses to OEM.

Since 2018, the financial recoveries and hazardous material business billing for Howell Township include:

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REVENUE FROM REIMBURSEMENTS SINCE 2018	
Hazardous Materials Billing	\$67,679
Hazardous Materials Disclosure Billing	\$145,720
NJ State EMAA Grant	\$60,000
FEMA 2020 Tropical Storm Isaias recovery	\$510,830
COVID Cares grant	\$1,500,000
CDC Covid Grant	\$252,000
FEMA Covid reimbursements (on-going)	\$456,706
Total Grants & Reimbursements	\$2,992,935

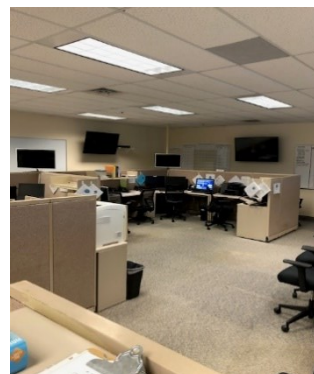
While the OEM Coordinator reported an excellent working relationship with County agencies, he indicated that there has been difficulty engaging local emergency services in drills and other required exercises. He specifically cited difficulty gaining participation by the fire districts in OEM drills.

Emergency Operations Center

The Office of Emergency Management includes an area designed as the Township’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC includes a secondary (backup) police dispatch center in the event of a failure of the primary dispatch center located at police headquarters. There are multiple workstations for use by OEM personnel to receive and route resource requests to appropriate agencies. There is adequate meeting space that is also used as a training site.



OEM Training Center



Redundant Police Dispatch

Civilian Emergency Response (CERT)

Howell maintains a CERT team of approximately 25 civilian volunteers. These community volunteers are trained in basic disaster response skills and can provide additional support for local response agencies during significant emergency events. CERT operates under the Office of Emergency Management.

HAZMAT (Hazardous Materials) Response

Hazmat response is initially handled by the local fire departments. OEM is a hazmat response resource, with equipment and materials to support that initial response. The OEM bills responsible parties for costs associated with hazmat issues/spills and has recovered approximately \$68,000 since 2018.

To facilitate those responses, the following vehicles are assigned to the Office of Emergency Management and are utilized in support of local response agencies:

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT	
2022 Ford F-150 pickup truck	1
2020 Ford Explorer (assigned to OEM director)	1
2021 Ford Escape (assigned to Fire Bureau)	1
2007 Dodge pickup (assigned to dep director of operations)	1
2005 GMC Rack Body Truck	1
1995 GMC Utility Light Rescue	1
Trailers	6
2003 Portable Light Unit	1

The director indicated that the potential for a hazardous materials incident is not insignificant. Among the issues he cited included:

- A recently re-activated rail line with railcars transporting hazardous materials.
- Chemical Industries.
- Propane Centers.
- Route 9 corridor with attendant truck traffic.

COVID Vaccination Program

During the pandemic, the Township's COVID vaccination program was administered by OEM. Emergency Management continues to operate one vaccination clinic each month at a local senior center.

Emergency Notifications

Community-wide alerts and emergency notifications are not centralized in one agency. OEM manages Nixle alerts, the police department posts notifications using Facebook, the Department of Community Relations posts to Facebook and to a degree Twitter, and DPW Manages the electronic bulletin in front of Town Hall.

As recommended elsewhere in this report, the role of a Public Information Officer (PIO) should be considered to be established with, among other duties, the responsibility to coordinate emergency notifications and alerts.

Recommendations

Critical Finding and Recommendation – Fire Districts

An alarming finding of this study has been the consistent reporting of a lack of cooperation from the Fire Districts in the Township in emergency response training and exercises, as well as other matters, including a lack of cooperation among the units themselves. This poses a potential threat to the health, welfare, and safety of the citizens and businesses of Howell Township and is not acceptable in emergency management. It should be noted that in any officially declared emergency situation, the Emergency Management Coordinator is the official with authority over all other emergency responders.

Should the Fire Districts continue a lack of cooperation after the recommendations indicated later in this report are undertaken, the Township should proceed with performing a comprehensive study of the Fire Districts, including exploring alternate methods of providing some or all fire services to the community as a whole or just in certain areas.

Technology

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are provided in hard copy and scanned for electronic filing by OEM. The MSDS data, however, is not made available to emergency responders.

Implementation

MSDS data should be made available electronically to all local response agencies. This may best be achieved by assuring that the MSDS information is included in the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system for the associated property location.

Veoci is a comprehensive software platform used by Howell OEM. However, the software is not integrated with all agencies.

Implementation

Provide the appropriate user training and access to *Veoci* software to all agencies participating in the local OEM program.

Fee Schedule

The hazardous material storage fee, as required in Ordinance 0-17-04, appears to have been last updated in 2017. This fee should be reviewed, and consideration should be given to adjusting the fee to better reflect actual costs associated with oversight of this responsibility.

OEM Exercises

In order to fully prepare for a hazardous material or any other large-scale emergency event, it is essential that operational drills and training related to these concerns be conducted. The OEM Coordinator indicated that there is a lack of interest from some agencies in participating in OEM exercises.

Implementation

Local OEM exercises should be developed with input from the various response agencies. An annual training and exercise workshop should be held to seek input, provide any necessary training and to plan, schedule and conduct the exercise. Participation in OEM and related exercises should not be optional.

Defining Roles and Working Together

Like many of the department heads we met, the OEM coordinator has many years of experience and is passionate about his role and responsibilities. While he reports an excellent working relationship with Monmouth County Health, Sheriff, and OEM, there

are challenges with communicating and delineating roles and responsibilities and how fire, EMS, and OEM should work together more cooperatively.

It would be beneficial to examine all roles and responsibilities so the expectations from each department are clear and outlined, which helps with the frustration of all parties involved.

Additionally, regular meetings where everyone participates and shares information would be helpful.

Implementation

A high-level officer of the township, perhaps the manager, should meet with each of the fire chiefs, the police chief and first aid squad captains to examine the working relationship with other entities of the township. The examination should review the emergency response within the township, specifically identifying any issues or concerns with mutual aid, response coordination or training. The review should seek recommendations from each participant for improvement or enhancements. It must be impressed on all agencies that cooperation and participation in OEM operational and training activities is required.

An operational directive should be issued, clarifying roles and responsibilities delineating the authority of each department. A table of organization for emergency responses should be considered.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Overview

The Department of Community Relations has the varied responsibility of organizing community events and providing public information. Until the current year the department operated a summer camp program for K – 5 youth. That activity has been transferred to the local PAL. The department will continue to operate a teen and special needs program.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS STAFFING LEVEL	
Director	1 (full-time)
Administrative Assistant	1 (part-time)
Seasonal (Camp Counsellors)	Varies (volunteer and paid)

Director

The incumbent director is a 20-year employee of Howell, previously serving in the Recreation Department until its disbanding in 2011. The director describes himself as customer service oriented and appears to be a dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate employee with a special interest in the recreation component of providing programming for the local residents.

Community Events

The approximately 35 annual events provided to the community are varied and range from *Easter in the Park* to the community's signature event, *Howell Day*. The director is generally accountable for inception through the execution of each program, including flyers, advertising and marketing, reminders, registration, ensuring participation, communication with residents who attend, and executing the event. The annual budget for events is \$40,000 with \$25,000 dedicated to the most significant event - Howell Day.

The department previously ran the summer camps for grades K-5; however, that responsibility has been transferred to the local PAL. A summer teen program as well as a program for special needs participants will continue to be the responsibility of the department. The programs are intended to be financially self-supporting through user fees.

Public Information

The department is responsible for website posting and social media, primarily using Facebook to accomplish this mission. While a Twitter account is established, it is rarely used. The local cable access channel is reportedly an underutilized asset. Nixle is the platform used as the primary means of communicating emergency information through Office of Emergency Management (OEM). There is no officially designated Public Information Officer (PIO) position in Howell.

Generally, information to be posted on the website or Facebook is submitted by department heads to the director. The director handles this responsibility 24/7 as there is no back-up for him in this position.

Recommendations

Summer Camps

The seasonal camp counselors have been the source of staff coverage for the many community events held each year. With the transfer of operations of summer camps to the PAL, there is a question as to whether the director will have access to the volunteer base and seasonal employees for the other programs. Defining how this will work for each going forward would be helpful so everyone can plan accordingly.

Implementation:

Immediately contact the PAL president and discuss and agree on how resources will be shared. This is essential for the success of the other programs in the township.

Public Information

Shifting the summer camp programs to the PAL presents a possible opportunity to enhance the Public Information function for the Township. Currently, this director is the sole provider of general public information in the community. Aside from emergency information that is shared by the OEM or the police department, the posting of general township information is the responsibility of the Director of Community Relations.

As the current Director is the only person currently with access and responsibility for social media posting, it is important to establish a plan going forward for public information and remaining community relations functions.

Implementation:

Create a job description for Public Information Officer (PIO), describe the mission in detail, and determine/define the role of Community Relations going forward.

Part of the role should be to monitor other social media sites within the community and prepare an appropriate response should misinformation be circulating in the community. However, information presented should be posted on the official Township Facebook page, rather than on a community forum page. Commenting on these forums could result in an endless back-and-forth causing additional anxiety in the community.

Working closely with the manager, a weekly general information message could be shared on the township website, addressing any issues of interest. Additionally, working with the department heads, sharing information about those departments' activities will create interesting content for the website.

The PIO should cultivate a relationship with the Business Community (Chamber of Commerce) to create a partnership with the Township to strengthen the business environment. Sharing information on local business news (such as grand openings) strengthens the partnership and demonstrates the support of the mayor and council for the business community.

In addition to fully leveraging the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, the local cable access channel should be added as a component of a comprehensive public information initiative. A plan should be developed to fully utilize this important community asset.

Community events and special needs programs

The teen and special needs programs are a source of pride for the department, evidenced by the positive comments from people who have enjoyed them from Howell and neighboring communities.

Implementation:

Based on enrollment, the Township may want to consider establishing an out-of-town rate for some of their programs. In addition, if the Township desires to expand events, they may benefit from creating a volunteer committee or considering another part-time employee or seasonal help.

Program flyers

The flyers created manually for the programs are impressive. Unfortunately, since there is no specific publishing program used to prepare them, they lack a consistency of recognizable design. For example, standard elements, such as the Township logo and sponsoring agency help residents identify Howell Township-sponsored events creating an identity for the Township.

Implementation:

Consider employing specific publishing software and using standardized design elements to easily identify Howell sponsored events. Branding events in this way helps to establish a measure of consistency in the same look and feel of program flyers.

Storage

With current limitations for on-site storage, program materials are held at off-site locations. As events are mostly off-site from the Township building, the director uses his own car to retrieve and then transport supplies to travel to various events.

Implementation:

Consider converting vacant office space within the Town Hall into storage areas.

Consider providing a shared Township vehicle for use by the director when delivering supplies and equipment to special events.

Technology

It was noted that printing out paperwork for registration or medical needs at off-site locations is a challenge. Efficiency can be improved through use of mobile devices, for example iPads so that information can be easily referenced remotely.

The department uses RecPro as the software platform for registering online for programs. However, due to functionality and certain limitations, there is an interest in using the more robust program, Community Pass.

Implementation:

Purchase and assign iPads as deemed appropriate by the manager in consultation with the department.

Explore the acquisition of Community Pass to be used jointly by the PAL and possibly other entities for online registration.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & WORKFLOW

This review by Government Strategy Group covers information technology, including not just software in use but workflow and processes used by staff. In this narrative, numbers in parentheses refer to the recommendation number that will follow in the "Recommendations" sections.

Tax Collector's Office

The Tax Collector's Office staff members are relatively new (either to the Township or to this office). The Collector was previously the Township Clerk. The team does not have as much institutional knowledge as in other departments within the Township. However, the Collector and her assistant stated a desire to learn and grow the department. The bulk of the work done by this office is billing and collecting for property taxes and utility charges, including the standard modifications required on individual accounts (deductions, exemptions, assessments, and reimbursements).

The use of technology in this office is minimal and it relies heavily on paper documents. MS Office and Edmunds are the main platforms, along with the State system. Tax payments are made electronically in batches from paying agents for mortgage companies and banks and aggregated by the Payargo online payment system. Property owners have several ways they can pay their balances:

- Online from a link on the Township website (although it is not well marked). Edmunds WIPP is the front-end platform for these payments, and Datapoint is the back-end processor. The Collector reports that many users miss the last step of clicking "Process Payment" before closing the application, causing a failed transaction and a reluctance to use the online payment process again. The user believes the tax/payment has been made but the transaction never completes, resulting in confusion, unpaid bills and additional communication between the staff and the property owner. GSG checked the payment portal with a transaction, and the "process payment" function was clear and intuitive. (1) The Township website does not encourage online payments; it is the last option, and the payment portal link is not embedded in the directions. (2)
- The Township offers a secure drop box for deposits anytime.
- Payments can be mailed.
- Payments can be made in person at the service window in the Tax Collector's Office. This is the least desirable option as staffing the window is disruptive and handling cash is not optimal.

GSG reviewed one 15-day period when taxes were due and the following is the breakdown in payment types.

- Mailed/In Person: 3,576
- Payargo system: 480
- Township Online Portal: 943

The office also processes approximately 200 tax liens a year. This process is also very low tech. Contact between the Township, the property owners and the lienholders is done primarily via email or postal mail and phone. There is a written form (not fillable),

like many other departments' forms, located on the website but the application must be printed, completed, and either scanned, mailed back, or dropped off in person. A quick review of all the available forms on the Tax Collector's section of the website confirms that none are dynamic forms that can be completed in place and submitted digitally back to the Township. All are "fillable" PDF forms that require the user to use the Adobe "fill and sign" feature which may not be intuitive for many users. In addition, a dynamic form typically includes a "submit" button that allows the completed form to be electronically transmitted back to the Township. Another example is the instructions for individuals requesting lien figures which indicates that tax office responses will be mailed and that applicants are required to send a self-addressed stamped envelope for this response. Unless there is a prohibition on digital correspondence, this approach seems out of date and unnecessarily manual. (3)

The same website page has a section "Howell Township Tax Search." But the embedded link in the following copy does not work. "Howell Township is temporarily suspending its "Tax Search" website service. Basic property tax information can be viewed through this LINK." (4)

All Tax sales are handled electronically since November 2022.

The Collector reports that the Township PO Process is cumbersome. (GSG has heard this from several departments). We recognize that municipal oversight during this process is critical, but several steps do appear duplicative. The steps for the process are listed below.

- Deputy enters a requisition request.
- Approved by Department Head.
- Sent to Purchasing Manager. Either approved or returned if there are errors.
- Sent to Finance Office for signature.
- Sent to Managers Office for signature.
- Once approved, the requester receives an email, but must wait for the paper copy.
- Paper copy is signed again by Department Head.
- Some bills must be sent to the vendor for validation and signature before Department Head can sign.
- Once all signatures have been obtained, a paper copy and copy of the bill go to Finance for payment.

There is a lot of time spent waiting for signature and paper copies. (5)

The Tax Office works closely with Community Development (CD) to send invoices for sewer connections and usage fees. Given the amount of development going on in the Township, there are a significant number of new connections. The communication

process between CD and the Tax Office is inefficient and results in significant delays in billing and collections.

Currently, the Tax Office relies on the staff in CD to notify them of a finalized connection so the Tax Office can bill the property owners. CD uses an in-house form called Notice to Proceed that serves as the communication between the Inspector and Plumber and Tax Office to prepare and send an invoice. That notice should be sent as soon as the inspection is passed and the plumber completes the final connection. The Collector noted that the notification process between CD and the tax office is unreliable, resulting in delayed billing to the property owner by months or even a year. This is exacerbated by the amount of development currently underway in the Township. Not only does the Township wait for money owed, but the property owner is upset because they end up with a large bill for the connection plus a year's worth of usage. In an effort to address the property owners' complaints of large bills, the Collector's Office then allows them to spread out their payments, resulting in another delay in the Township collecting money owed. (6)

The Collector also discussed that she is required to compile a monthly report of the office's activities for the Township Manger. This report is eventually part of a larger report for the Governing Body.

The Collector reports that their office is still generating a lot of paper files, although fewer than they used to. They do have many boxes of historical files and the Clerk is urging them to review, scan, or destroy the documents. The storage and disposal of paper files is an ongoing theme of several departments. Many are retained well beyond their required retention period and no one person is responsible for managing them. A common refrain is that no one has the time to tackle these projects. (7)

The Collector states that her primary initiative is training her staff as the Clerk is still doing some of the work of the Tax Department.

Recommendations

1. *GSG recommends that it is in the Township's best interest to increase the number of customers who use the online payment portal for tax and utility payments, and to encourage all users to consider this form of payment. Additionally, the Township should take immediate steps to ensure that payers can complete the online payment process successfully. Each online payment that is made reduces the need to review and open mail, check the drop box, take payments at the window and manually calculate and deposit checks and cash. This is a near-term priority.*

2. *GSG recommends modifying the Tax Collector page on the Township website to lead with the online payment option and embed the online payment link into this copy.* Details on the “How to Pay Your Taxes” webpage do not mention the online payment option. Visitors must find the online payment link on the left-hand side of the page or on the main page of the website. Tax and utility bills should include a reminder that invoices can be paid online and include the printed link to the payment portal. This is a near-term priority.
3. The Tax Collector forms located on the website are technically fillable PDFs, but they are not dynamic documents intended to streamline the process of completing, signing and transmitting forms. To be fair, this issue is Township wide. *GSG recommends that all available forms be dynamic, allowing the user to complete and submit the form without leaving the site...with the goal of eliminating the requirement that the forms be printed, completed, and scanned in or mailed before they can be returned to the office.* Whenever possible, the email transmission of digital documents should replace the mailing of paper documents. The Township would gain the added benefit of receiving and storing electronic documents versus paper or scanned forms.
4. *GSG recommends that the copy and the link on the Tax Collector page of the website be corrected immediately.* We recommend a twice-yearly review of the information contained on the Department’s webpages to ensure its accuracy. This recommendation speaks directly to the effort to allow members of the public to access timely and accurate information at any time without a call to the Township.
5. *As a small initial step regarding the purchasing system, GSG recommends that the Township consider eliminating the final paper copy and rely on electronic signature(s) for approval.* As the Township Manager has already approved the purchase during the requisition stage, it seems redundant to print and sign another hard copy. This is a near-term recommendation.
6. *GSG recommends that Community Development review its process for notifying the Tax Office of a new connection.* The creation of a consistent, repeatable process of notifying the Tax Office within 15 days of a completed connection is a near-term priority.
7. *GSG recommends that Management consider a Township wide effort to review, retain or destroy old paper records.* (See Comments under Clerk’s office). This is a long-term recommendation.

Implementation

1. *GSG recommends that it is in the Township’s best interest to increase the number of customers who use the online payment portal for tax and utility payments and to encourage all users to consider this form of payment.*

Additionally, the Township should take immediate steps to ensure that payers can complete the online payment process successfully. The Township, at the direction of the Collector, can add a clear reminder of how to complete the transaction to the appropriate section of the website. Furthermore, the Edmunds WIPP System allows the Township to add this language to the first screen of the online portal so the users see it before they begin their transaction. These are simple steps to ensure that the user completes the transaction successfully and the Township receives the payment in a timely manner without additional work. This is a near-term priority.

2. *GSG recommends modifying the Tax Collector page on the Township Website to emphasize the ease of online payments.* This option should be the leading method for payments. The link to pay taxes and utility bills online should be embedded in the copy and easily located. All tax and utility bills should include a reminder that these invoices can be paid online with a link to follow to access the portal. If the Township uses a newsletter or other form of resident communication, the online option should be promoted. These small changes should reduce the volume of incoming mail as well as the walk-up traffic at the tax office window. This is a near-term priority.
3. *GSG recommends that all available forms and applications be converted to dynamic forms as described above. The Adobe software platform is already in use at the Township and can be leveraged for this effort. GSG further recommends that any correspondence and form that can be legally transmitted via email or a dynamic form located on the website should be. Whenever practical, documents should be stored digitally in the mapped drive to reduce the use of paper and physical storage. This is a near-term priority.*
4. *GSG recommends that the copy and the link on the Tax Collector page of the website be corrected immediately. We recommend a twice-yearly review of the information and links on this office's website for accuracy. We would extend this recommendation to all departments in the Township.*
5. *GSG recommends that the Township consider eliminating the final paper copy and rely on electronic signature(s) for approval.* The Township Manager and the Finance Office can review the existing process and determine whether all steps are necessary and whether utilizing the electronic signature and digital storage of documents is acceptable.
6. *GSG recommends that the Department Head of Community Development review the current process of notification to understand what is creating the delay in communicating the new connections to the Tax Office.* Once the issue(s) has been identified, Community Development should create a reliable electronic notification process and review it with the Township Manager and the Tax Office. GSG also recommends that the Township set up a 1-month review period to

assess whether the new process is effective in delivering the notification to the Tax Office within the 15-day period.

7. *GSG recommends that any records that are important and/or required to be kept should be scanned to a digital drive; the balance should be destroyed.* Paper records that are uncategorized, maintained, and protected are no good to anyone. Smoke, fire, water, mold, and age often render these records unusable. As stated previously, a concerted effort to use digital documents (not printed at all) going forward will prevent the creation of more archive records that require categorization and storage.

Clerk's Office

The Township Clerk's Office is managed by the Township Clerk and includes a Deputy Clerk and four staff members. This office has experienced a lot of turnover. The current Clerk, who was hired just six months ago, is the fifth person in the role in six years.

The office is flooded with OPRA requests and went live with Spatial Data Logic (SDL) on January 1, 2023, to streamline a previously paper-based process. The Clerk reports that there have been numerous issues with the platform to date. Workflow charts are incorrect, the SDL support staff is not responsive, and training is scant. The software has not improved the process; rather, she has had to ask her staff to come in early to deal with the issues. The Clerk is skeptical that these issues will be resolved, and reports that a similar platform, GovPilot, may be a better option. (1)

SDL is also used for dog licenses and the credit card function has been enabled. It is also the payment platform for Park & Ride fees. The Clerk would like to implement it for vital statistics, food handler licenses, and other clerical functions but reports being held back by staff intimidated by technology and change.

The department has been very paper heavy and over the years has generated an enormous amount of paper document storage. No obvious document retention policy was in place. The township stores old files (vitals, minutes, resolutions) most of which have not been touched in years, in two buildings. The Clerk has made it a priority to clear out this backload and create document retention policies, and recently coordinated the removal of boxes that were stored in an older, unused recreation building. Records were either destroyed or saved to be scanned. The remaining boxes in that building are mold infested and unusable. (2)

The previous three-story municipal building also contains numerous boxes of old paper records, many of which are also in poor condition. The Clerk is coordinating an effort to empty that building as well. Sorting through and making decisions on what can be destroyed versus what should be scanned is a very large project. (3). Physically

scanning the documents is another ancillary project not central to the daily work of the Clerk's office. This is a comment repeated often.

There is some general knowledge regarding document categories and the retention periods associated with them but nothing that has been documented and reviewed. (4)

Edmunds is used for requesting POs and for viewing and tracking the office budget. Laserfiche is used by several departments and the Clerk finds it very useful to find documents she needs to access from other departments. Currently, the Clerk's office leverages the Laserfiche application to scan and retain Township professional contracts. Up until recently there was no one repository for these contracts and they were stored all over the municipality. Since the beginning of the year all professional contracts are maintained by the Clerk's office. All signed contracts are signed into Laserfiche and no paper copies are retained. This can be a simple model for other departments.

The Department uses CivicPlus for agenda items and meeting management as well as community notifications. The council agenda itself is created in MS Word and delivered to each council member by a member of the DPW staff prior to the meeting (except the Mayor who prefers email). (5) The Clerk reports ongoing last-minute requests to amend the Council meeting agenda. The schedule currently in place is for the final agenda to be posted in Civic Plus on Fridays for the meeting on Monday, but changes continue to be requested. Civic Plus does not allow postings on Sundays. This process is typically a scramble and the Clerk suggested agreeing on a deadline that everyone adheres to, unless there is an emergency. (6)

General Code's E-Code is used to post resolutions online so they can be searched and viewed by members of the public. The Deputy Clerks also use this platform for legal ads etc.

In discussion with the Clerk, there were numerous areas of inefficient or duplicative work, much of which seems to fall into the category of "we have always done it this way." The Clerk explained that her office oversees the mail for the entire town and one person spends approximately two hours every day just sorting mail. That same staff member is also responsible for OPRAs and the redactions required on the requested documents. (See comments above under Tax Collector's Office regarding efforts to reduce mail). When school is in session, a member of the school staff delivers the mail to the Clerk's office; when school is out a member of the Public Works team picks it up. Mail is sorted and either placed in mail slots or department bins for pickup. The Clerk commented that bins are not emptied regularly and the Clerk's office must remind departments to pick up their mail. Certified mail is delivered directly by the post office at different times during the day and causes another interruption when it arrives, as

does Fedex and UPS. She expressed that having the Clerk's office be the main repository for every piece of mail delivered to the Township is not efficient. (7)

The Clerks Office also handles sewer and septic permits. Residents are unsure where to go to request these permits and often end up in CD rather than the Clerk's Office (8)

The Clerk's office is also the main repository for cash taken in by all Departments. For example, the money bags that come in from the Police Department each morning are delivered to the Clerk's Office and the Clerk sends a member of her staff up to Finance with the bags. (9)

The Office is responsible for the advertising budget for all departments in the Township, resulting in the Clerk approving ad spending for other departments. (10)

The Clerk's office is the only one that can affix postage to outgoing mail. They recently spent two and a half days putting postage on the tax bills after they were stuffed. The office was chaotic during this time and the process is inefficient. (11)

Members of the public regularly come to the Clerk's Office to request notary services for various documents including wills and bank documents. Four members of the Clerk's staff are notaries. The current policy is to charge \$1 for each page notarized. No appointment is necessary; an individual can come to the window in the Clerk's office at any time without an appointment and request services. Requestors do not have to be residents of the Township. There are often up to four requests each day and it is not uncommon for the requestors to come unprepared with the required documentation. This is a very disruptive issue, causing multiple and unpredictable interruptions in the workday for the staff of the office, and is increasing in frequency. (12).

Dog licensing was recently changed to twice a year. The Clerk was unaware of what prompted the change but it has caused unforeseen complications, not the least of which is increasing the amount of work the staff must do to drive compliance. The cost of a license is \$14. If it is paid online (where it should be paid), the resident is charged a \$3 fee for a \$14 license so it drives down online purchases. If the portal accepted ACH payment, the fee would be lower. The ordinance also specifies a late fee, driving the cost higher. There is a lot of time wasted on this effort. (13)

Recommendations

1. The current software platform for handling OPRA requests, Spatial Data Logic (SDL), does not meet the needs of the office. OPRA requests already put an increasing demand on the Clerk's office, and the inefficiencies with the current

software and workflow make it worse. GSG recommends replacing this platform (for OPRA requests only) as a near-term priority.

2. *GSG recommends that unusable documents should be destroyed and discarded.* As these documents are no longer being categorized and have no value to the Township, the work of discarding the boxes should not fall to the Clerk's office. This is a med-term recommendation,
3. *GSG recommends that the Township consider contracting with a document scanning service (there are many) or rent or purchase a high-speed scanner and bring a part-time staffer in to complete this work.* Using the Township's skilled staff on a low-level scanning project does not make sense. This is a long-term priority.
4. *GSG recommends the creation of retention policies for all records, whether they are paper or digital.* The policy should be documented, reviewed with the staff and adhered to consistently. Documents (physical and digital) should be discarded once the retention period has been met. This is a near-term priority.
5. *GSG recommends that elected officials receive the agenda packet via email and the Township eliminate the delivery of paper copies to their homes.* Council members can easily and efficiently review the agenda and the backup on their own computers.
6. *GSG recommends the Township Manager, in coordination with the Clerk, create a firm deadline for any items to be included on the council agenda.* The deadline will help to create a culture of organization and readiness and set clear expectations for the staff. Allowing multiple last-minute changes is disruptive and inefficient and sends the wrong message to the staff members that request them.
7. *GSG recommends that the Township consider a more efficient mail delivery system. The current system is inefficient and disruptive and is clearly in the camp of "this is the way we have always done it".* Consideration should be given to obtaining a high-speed mail machine, such as Pitney Bowes.
8. *GSG recommends that the Township consider relocating the application for sewer and septic permits to CD/ Land Use where it seems most appropriate.* The existing approach causes confusion and an extended waiting period for residents.
9. *GSG recommends that each department, including the Police Department, deliver cash directly to the Finance Department.* The current process is duplicative and inefficient.
10. *GSG recommends that advertising practices be reviewed by the Township Manager with the Clerk to understand if this is the best procedure for the Township.*
11. *GSG recommends that the Tax Collector's Office take over responsibility for their own mass mailings, relieving the Clerk's Office of this low-level work.* The

Township may want to consider outsourcing to the post office or a service that can handle the postage efficiently and in another location or consider obtaining a high-speed mail machine, such as Pitney Bowes.

12. *GSG recommends that the Township consider suspending the notary service pending a review of the policy between the Township Manager and the Clerk.* The delivery of notary services to the general public is not a core function of the Clerk's office. The \$1 fee does not cover the time and overall disruption to the important work of the office and the existing policy of allowing this service without an appointment further exacerbates the inefficiency of the delivery.
13. *GSG recommends reviewing the new dog licensing ordinance with the Clerk's office to understand what promoted the changes and how the office can increase compliance in an efficient manner.*

Implementation

1. *GSG recommends that the Township eliminate the use of SDL for OPRA requests and replace it with GovPilot, a competitive centralized government records software platform.* The Clerk is very familiar with GovPilot, making the transition to a new process less complex. This is an immediate priority and will quickly improve consistent service and office productivity.
2. *GSG recommends removing and destroying the documents remaining in the old recreation building.* The Township Manager could consider requesting Public Works or an outside service to dispose of these remaining files.
3. *GSG recommends that the Township consider contracting with a document scanning service or rent or purchase a high-speed scanner and bring a part-time staffer in to complete this work for historical documents only).* There are many companies that specialize in document scanning and digital search and storage for historical records. That is the most efficient way to address this issue quickly, but the cost may be a factor. Another alternative, as mentioned above, is to rent or purchase a high-speed scanner and hire an hourly worker to scan the documents to the correct file location. Care should be taken to ensure that only documents that are still within the retention window are retained.
4. *GSG recommends the creation of a retention policy for all records, whether they are paper or digital.* Printing documents and filing them when digital copies have already been saved on the drive should be eliminated. This will be a challenge for some staff members who have been printing and filing for years and the Clerk will have to be vigilant on these issues. Under the guidance of the department head, the staff will also have to adhere to the dates for document expiration and commit to record destruction (paper or virtual) once retention policy has been met. This is a medium-term priority.

5. *GSG recommends that elected officials receive the agenda packet via email and the Township eliminate the delivery of paper copies to their homes.* This is a practice left over from the time when most members of the governing body did not have easy access to a computer. If necessary, the agenda page(s) can be printed and placed on the dais for reference. The Mayor is already receiving her packet by email only. This is a near-term priority.
6. *GSG recommends the Township Manager, in coordination with the Clerk, create a firm deadline for any items to be included on the council agenda.* This is a near-term priority.
7. *GSG recommends that the Township consider adopting the following practice to address the inefficient and disruptive mail delivery process. This proposal was discussed at length with the Clerk. (Note: This process would require the addition of a part-time employee.)* PT employee start at 10:00 am and begin stamping mail. 10:30: Pick up any mail from Court, Sr. Center, and Police and deliver to the Township. 11:00 – 11:30: Pick up mail at Howell Post Office. Disburse the interoffice mail and process any envelopes/mailing for outgoing. 12:00 pm bring the metered mail back to the post office. 1:00 – 1:30 drop off interoffice mail to Court, Sr. Center, & Police. If there is downtime, drop off boxes to departments at Town Hall. (The boxes stack up and the Clerk's office fields many calls from departments looking for their boxes.)
8. *GSG recommends that the Township consider relocating the application for sewer and septic permits to CD/ Land Use where it seems most appropriate.* This is a near-term priority.
9. *GSG recommends that each department, including the Police Department, deliver cash directly to the Finance Department.* This is an immediate priority.
10. *GSG recommends that advertising practices be reviewed by the Township Manager with the Clerk to understand if this is the best procedure for the Township.* This is a medium-term priority.
11. *GSG recommends that the Tax Collector's Office take over responsibility for their own mass mailings, relieving the Clerk's Office of this low-level work.* The Township may want to consider outsourcing to the post office or a service that can handle the postage efficiently and in another location, or consider obtaining a high-speed mail machine, such as Pitney Bowes. This is medium-term priority.
12. *GSG recommends that the Township consider suspending the notary service pending a review of the policy between the Township Manager and the Clerk.* The Township should consider whether offering notary services to the general public is part of its core group of services. If a new policy is created, services should be delivered by appointment only. Appointments should be made through an online portal on the website (no phone calls or walkups) and the site should clearly list all the documents required for the appointment. Appointments should

be limited in number and to the date and times the Clerk's office can reasonably manage. GSG would suggest an increase in the fee to cover the cost of the staff time and limit the service to residents of the community. Appointments should be scheduled in advance through an online portal and the requirements. This is an immediate priority.

13. GSG recommends reviewing the new dog licensing ordinance with the Clerk's office to understand what promoted the changes and how the office can increase compliance in an efficient manner.

Human Resources

This office has just one staff member who handles all the HR functions for the Township and the Township police department. She was previously the mayor's secretary. She does not have a designated trained backup although the Payroll Administrator can perform some of her duties (benefits and workers comp) when necessary (1). Her daily work includes the typical responsibilities of HR including candidate interviews, onboarding/offboarding of employees, contracts, discipline, union communications, workers comp, OSHA issues, EO reporting, drug testing, and benefits. HR stated that workers comp issues take a significant amount of time. She works closely with the insurance adjusters regarding the determination of an employee's ability to work. During the pandemic, HR worked closely with OEM on employee COVID testing.

There is not much technology in use in this department and HR readily admitted that there is an "old culture" in the Township that resists change. Staff resistance to change is a barrier to progress. HR appeared to be engaged in her work and genuinely interested in assisting employees with their issues.

The Township recently adopted WEXCloud for benefits cards and online access but HR reports that employees have had login issues that have not been resolved (2). Primepoint is the application used for time, attendance, and payroll. Primepoint does offer electronic onboarding of new employees but HR onboards manually. HR reports that she does not use all of the functionality of the application; she prefers to keep some records on excel spreadsheets. When asked about that, she had concerns that she may not have lifetime rights to some information stored in the application (3). The NJ Motor Vehicle CAIR Program is used for lookups for CDLs.

The State Health Benefits offers a Benefit Solver Program, a website designed as an employee self-portal for enrollment, changes etc. to their health plan. HR states that employees do access this system for simple tasks like address changes or additions to

their family but states that it is not user friendly. She prefers to meet personally with each new employee and work out the details of onboarding individually.

HR reports that a personnel manual exists as a digital document but that employees cannot access it. They are sent a copy and must print and sign the acknowledgement page. (4)

Most forms are paper documents that must be printed and completed by hand. (5) HR reports that personnel documents require lifetime storage and that, as the sole staff member handling HR, she does not have time to scan or file digitally (6).

One of HR's initiatives is the development of an intranet as a location for employees to access various types of documentation (employee manual), news, benefits, wellness options, etc. (7)

Recommendations

1. *GSG recommends that the Township create a formal backup for the Human Resources (HR) function with specific knowledge of processes, document storage, vendor platforms and access credentials. HR plays an increasingly important role in the Township business and to have all daily work and institutional knowledge dependent on one person is not a best practice and leaves the Township vulnerable if the one staff member is unavailable. As an alternative, the Township could consider outsourcing this function although the cost to do so may be prohibitive.*
2. *GSG recommends that the HR Department document the issues associated with the WEXCloud platform and schedule a call with support to have them addressed. The Township is paying for the application and should either leverage it or move to another solution.*
3. *GSG recommends that HR leverage as much functionality from Primepoint as is practical, and the Primepoint application should be the repository of documentation related to HR. It is a secure place to store sensitive information, certainly more secure than an excel spreadsheet stored on a desktop. Any reports created in Primepoint can be exported to other programs as necessary, including Excel, so data will not be lost. This is a short-term priority.*
4. *GSG recommends making the Township personnel manual available online to employees. This is a best practice given that the Township may make changes to the policies and procedures from time to time, and it is impractical to send a new manual to all employees each time there is a change. This is a mid-term priority.*
5. *GSG recommends that onboarding documents be created as dynamic forms and stored digitally in a mapped HR drive. (This issue has been discussed previously.)*

6. *GSG recommends considering Laserfiche for HR records management. It is already in use in the Township and can be leveraged by HR to scan and store documents digitally. GSG further recommends that HR research what, if any, documents must be retained as paper documents rather than assuming the entire personnel file must be maintained as a paper file. This is a short-term recommendation.*
7. *GSG recommends that the Township, with the assistance of HR and IT, create an internal intranet as a repository for company documents, frequently used forms, new hire center and HR related information.)*

Implementation

1. *GSG recommends that the Township create a formal backup for the Human Resources (HR) function with specific knowledge of processes, document storage, vendor platforms, and access credentials. In our experience, a backup who is trained once but is not active in performing the department functions will be only marginally effective in the event of a prolonged unexpected absence or staff turnover. Best practices would have the backup engaged regularly in the department's operations to develop familiarity and experience with the work. If the current makeup of the Township workforce does not permit the addition of a backup, consideration should be given to outsourcing some or all of the responsibilities of the HR department.*
2. *GSG recommends that the HR Department document the issues associated with the WEXCloud platform and schedule a call with support to have them addressed. This is an immediate priority.*
3. *GSG recommends that HR leverage as much functionality from Primepoint as is practical, and the Primepoint application should be the repository of documentation related to HR. The Township Manager should schedule a review with HR to compare the functionality available in Primepoint against what is being leveraged by the HR Department. Given that the HR position currently has no real backup, the Township has a vested interest in understanding how all of her relevant information is stored and how to access it.*
4. *GSG recommends making the township personnel manual available online to employees. HR can work with the Township IT Department to complete this task.*
5. *GSG recommends that onboarding documents be created in dynamic forms and stored digitally in a mapped HR drive. This can be completed as part of a Township wide effort to move to this approach.*
6. *GSG recommends considering Laserfiche for HR records management. It is already in use in the Township and can be leveraged by HR to scan and store documents digitally. GSG further recommends that HR research what, if any, documents must be retained as paper documents rather than assuming the*

entire personnel file must be maintained as a paper file. This is a short-term recommendation.

7. *GSG recommends that the Township, with the assistance of HR and IT, create an internal intranet as a repository for company documents, frequently used forms, new hire center and HR related information.* The Township can also consider requesting their website provider to create this function. *(This is a long-term priority.)*

Payroll

The Township Payroll function is staffed by one employee. She has been in the Department for three years and works closely with both Finance and HR. While she does not have a formal backup, the Finance Department runs payroll in her absence. (1) As noted earlier, a one-person function leaves the Township vulnerable, particularly in the case of a sudden absence or departure of the employee.

The main application used by this office is Primepoint and the payroll administrator finds it easy and intuitive to use. Time and attendance for all is captured on this application except for the PD, who are still using the Police Scheduling Software Solutions system (POSS). Each payroll, POSS generates a file with PD payroll information and then imports it into Primepoint. The application also easily accommodates special pays generated by grants (DWI check/county roadblocks) with an initial manual entry. The next time that event pay is triggered, the system configures it seamlessly.

All police scheduling is done in POSS. The PD is interested in moving to Primepoint but the application cannot support the 24-hour schedule cycle. Civilians are paid biweekly and sworn officers are paid semimonthly. The two payroll schedules do not present a problem. The payroll administrator confirms that she has access to the POSS application and can run reports without assistance.

MS Excel is used to track deductions like life insurance and Aflack. This spreadsheet is saved to a mapped drive on the network and both Lou and Alexis on the Finance staff have access to it. The payroll administrator also keeps her monthly payroll disbursements (gross pay/taxes/cash transferred) on Excel sheets saved to the drive.

The payroll administrator also coordinates the Employee Action Notices (EAN), which are paper documents that serve as notification and approval of step increases, raises, and other employee financial records. The payroll administrator, the employee, and the Township Manager all must sign these. Typically, it is a printed sheet that is physically dropped in the payroll office and makes the rounds of several other departments. The PD sends them via email but they are then printed so that the Township Manager can

sign them. Multiple paper copies are kept in several departments (1). This entire workflow seems needlessly complicated and redundant and may simply be a sacred cow...“this is the way we have always done it so why change?”

Paper files containing all employee payroll files are kept in a storage room on the same floor as the office. Both Payroll and HR access the files. The Township migrated from ADP to Primepoint in 2015 so anything prior to 2015 is manual (including check registers, reports, etc.). GSG is often told that the original paper records must be maintained but we have been unable to verify that statement. Digital copies are simply another format of the same file and can be produced if requested from any auditing organization. The focus should be on efficient and safe storage of information and efficient retrieval. It makes sense that the data saved from the old payroll system is physical documents but the creation of an entirely new group of current and historical files on paper does not. (2)

Contractual salary changes are documented manually by Payroll. The document was previously sent to Primepoint to be uploaded but there were mistakes so HR inputs this information manually into the Primepoint application. This duplication of effort should be eliminated. (3).

Much time is spent calculating retroactive pay and reporting the results correctly, especially when contract negotiations are extended.

Recommendations

1. *GSG recommend that the Employee Action Notice workflow process be reconsidered.* From our view, it is needlessly complex when information can readily be shared by multiple departments without the back and forth of paper documents. Nearly all employees are covered by a bargaining unit and increases and step advances are automatic. Why the approval process and the requirement for multiple signatures and copies of the form?
2. This issue of keeping paper copies is repeated in nearly every department GSG has spoken with. Employees are more comfortable with physical files than digital files, and yet digital files, when stored correctly, are more secure than paper. Please see previous recommendations regarding these issues.
3. *GSG recommends that HR or Payroll contact Primepoint support to determine why the salary change process is not working correctly and what needs to be done to ensure that the contractual salary change can be uploaded digitally without manual intervention.*

Implementation

1. *GSG recommends that the Employee Action Notice workflow process be reconsidered. Is this simply an audit trail of any pay increases? If so, it can be automated. Who actually needs this information and can it be stored electronically in one place so that multiple departments can access it? Are all the signatures, especially the Township Manager's signature, important? Why is the Township generating and storing multiple copies of the same document? Can a more streamlined document be generated/stored in Primepoint with other payroll related documents? Automating a process that touches nearly every employee, every year, will have an immediate return on investment. If it is determined that this EAN should remain, the Township should consider leveraging Adobe Acrobat software to streamline the document approval process. Many departments could benefit from this tool.*
2. *Along with previously suggested changes, GSG recommends that Township-wide guidelines that govern the production, sharing and storage of files replace the old system of allowing the Department to choose how they manage their data.*
3. *GSG recommends that HR or Payroll contact Primepoint support to determine why the process is not working correctly and what needs to be done to ensure that the contractual salary change can be uploaded digitally without manual intervention. The time spent working with support to correct the issue will eliminate an ongoing unnecessary manual task.*

Community Relations

The Township Community Relations Department is a small department with one full-time employee (Director), with some part-time clerical assistance. The Director coordinates the Township recreational special events and works with local businesses to solicit donations for his events. He also handles most of the Township's social media posts. He works with the Clerk's Office, IT and Community Relations to update posts on the Township website. The Director stated that for many years a large segment of his work was managing the Township summer camp, but the management of the camp was transferred to the Howell Police Athletic League for the upcoming summer.

This is a very low-tech department. MS Word and Excel are the main applications. Residents can use ReCPro for applications and payments but the Department Head stated that all applications are paper and kept in binders behind his desk. He believes that ReCPro is a poor application and has had discussions with CapturePoint but that may be overkill for his small department. (1) He explained that many applicants still

come to the building to register and pay in person for events and summer camp. Since the camp is transferring to Howell PAL, that traffic should decrease significantly.

Recommendation

1. *GSG recommends that if the Township moves forward with event registration and payment software that it standardize on one platform township wide.*

Implementation

1. *GSG recommends that if the Township moves forward with event registration and payment software that it standardize on one platform township wide. The program mentioned above is one of the commonly used applications for this function in municipalities.*

Office of Emergency Management

The Township Office of Emergency Management is staffed by one full-time employee who serves as OEM Director/Coordinator and is assisted by part-time employee. There are also three other full-time Township employees who function as deputies when necessary: a Communications Coordinator, the Fire Bureau Chief, and an Operations Coordinator.

During the pandemic, the OEM Director was working with HR on testing employees and sourcing required supplies. He also worked on submitting reimbursement requests to the State for the EMS calls during the pandemic. Currently, the OEM Director spends much of his time on Township hazmat inspections, billing and reporting. He has also developed an emergency operations plan that includes evacuation in the event of a disaster. That plan is a word document stored digitally on a drive on the server. He reports drilling once a year on the plan.

All 2004 FEMA disaster documents are paper documents stored in a file cabinet. There is no backup. (1)

Veoci Emergency Management Software is used for emergency management and hazmat reporting. The OEM director sends a report to the Township Manager once a month. Property owners who are required to do so pay an annual hazmat disclosure fee via check. (2)

The Township leverages Everbridge Nixle for emergency communications to residents. The Director works with IT to send out notices when necessary (snowstorms, traffic accidents, storms).

Recommendations

1. *GSG recommends confirming whether paper FEMA documents are still required to be kept.* Most FEMA documents have a three-year retention period once the case has been closed.
2. *GSG recommends that Hazmat fees be collected via an online portal using MunciPAY.*

Implementation

1. *GSG recommends confirming whether paper FEMA documents are still required to be kept.* Most FEMA documents have a three-year retention period once the case has been closed. If the documents are no longer needed, they should be discarded. If they are still within the retention period, they should be scanned, either into the OEM drive on the server or using the Laserfiche application. This is a short-term priority.
2. *GSG recommends collecting Hazmat fees via an online portal using MunciPAY.* Currently the OEM administrator must either accept this payment in person or process the mail payments. Online payment will streamline this process immediately. This is a near-term priority.

Sewer Utility

The Utility Director previously served as the Township Engineer. The utility has a licensed operator and four additional staff to support 7,500 residential sewer accounts and 456 commercial accounts. The Director reports that it has been difficult to attract and retain staff. Once staff members have achieved their certifications, they often move on to other jobs that pay more.

Operations are limited to sewer collection. They do not treat sewage (handled by the MRRSA – Manasquan River Regional Sewerage Authority) but have responsibility for maintaining pipes and other infrastructure at 12 pump stations. The Director explained that he has created a spare pump/pump replacement program that has been funded but his staff has not had the time to execute it. They also do approximately 80 utility mark outs each month. (1)

Much of the Township infrastructure is still documented on paper. Several years ago, the Township hired a consultant to create a GIS map of all the sewer infrastructure and overlay it with the town map. It was never completed. The Director explained that his staff is attempting to continue to identify the manholes and cleanouts with two GPS handheld units, as time permits. The work is approximately 50% complete.

Documentation for all sewer infrastructure in new housing developments relies on as-builts from the CD office. Typically, they are simply utility plans with these assets marked up on the plan. Once the builder leaves the project, the Township takes over. Currently, all they have are rolls of paper plans. (2)

The DEP is requiring the Township to have an asset management plan. The consulting firm of Mott McDonald, which has strong experience with wastewater, will be completing this effort.

The Director reports that his team also supports NJ American Water by manually reading approximately 40 water meters. When asked, the Director was not familiar with why NJ American was not reading them. The task is completed four times a year and takes approximately a week to complete each quarter. (3)

Comete Security Monitoring monitors the Utility's buildings and physical assets. The system also monitors the pumps for high and low water, seal failure, and equipment overheating. The system will be replaced by a new Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition platform (SCADA), giving the Township real-time data to monitor and control equipment dealing with critical and time-sensitive materials or events. The Director reports confirmation from the Finance Director on the purchase.

The Township leverages two companies, Pumping Services and Rapid Pump, for pump management. The Township just completed a POC (proof of concept) with Pumping Services to replace the old SCADA in the control room with Icontrol. Icontrol is a new platform that provides the technology to allow the system to be managed remotely by laptop or iPad. (4)

The Director reports including \$10K in his budget for developing a comprehensive disaster recovery/emergency response plan that would be available to any related department in the event of an emergency. He plans to work with Mott MacDonald on this effort.

Not surprisingly, the Utility relies heavily on paper and admits to being very low-tech in the office. Their desktops are very old and slow and still running Windows 2016. The department MAP device is obsolete, and the hand scanners are not reliable. (5) The Department previously used Laserfiche, but the Director reported that their data is not well organized in the application, and the users don't know it well. They do very little scanning of documents now and keep maps and site plans of subdivisions on paper (6). All station monitoring and daily work is on paper and kept in binders or banker boxes. No work order system in place. (7)

From a communication and customer service perspective, the Director explained that residents and property owners often call him directly with billing issues. A quick website review shows the Director as the main contact (his picture, email and phone number are prominent). His office does not handle billing, but residents don't know this and are directed back and forth on phone lines, causing unnecessary waits and poor service. (8)

Recommendations

1. *GSG considers utility mark outs as low-level work that can easily be outsourced, freeing up staff to complete more skilled work (like the spare pump project). GSG recommends exploring the cost and benefits of outsourcing utility mark outs.*
2. *GSG recommends that a complete map of the Township sewer infrastructure be completed. It is difficult to see how this can be completed without dedicated resources.*
3. *GSG recommends that the water meter reading responsibility be transferred to NJ American Water.*
4. *GSG recommends replacing the outdated SCADA system with either the Icontrol from Pumping Services or the equivalent technology from another industry leader. Next-generation, remotely managed technology will allow the operators to take advantage of a fully automated control system without the requirement to buy and maintain hardware.*
5. *GSG recommends requesting IT to review/replace existing desktop hardware.*
6. *GSG recommends the Department review Spatial Data Logic's (SDL) Sewer module. The software platform is already in use in CD and since so many documents are shared between the departments, this approach may be the simplest.*
7. *See the recommendation above regarding SDL.*
8. *GSG recommends revising the Sewer Department section of the website to clearly indicate whom to call for specific requests. The Township Phone menu should also be reviewed.*

Implementation

1. *GSG recommends exploring the cost and benefits of outsourcing utility mark outs either informally or through an RFI process. This is a med-term priority.*
2. *GSG recommends that a complete map of the Township sewer infrastructure be completed. Reliance on paper documents and institutional knowledge of a large system make the Township vulnerable and cause unnecessary delay when problems arise. The Sewer Utility Director indicated there is a balance of over*

\$100k (not enough of course) that was still available for the I&I work. The Township could consider engaging an experienced consulting engineer to complete the work. Given the pace of development on the Township, consideration should also be given to how new connections and infrastructure are added to the plan, so the staff does not inadvertently create another workload waiting to be digitized. This is a med-term priority.

3. *GSG recommends that the water meter reading responsibility be transferred to NJ American Water.* One employee of the Sewer Department spends a month manually reading water meters, a task that is not part of the Departments focus. At the least, the Township should understand why they are tasked with this responsibility and require payment for the work. This is a near-term priority.
4. *GSG recommends replacing the outdated SCADA system with either the Icontrol from Pumping Services or the equivalent technology from another industry leader.* There are many advantages of a managed system, including keeping the staff focused on their main responsibilities rather than supporting technology that always ages out. The Township should investigate more than one managed solution before any purchase is considered. This is a medium-term priority, perhaps timed with the need to upgrade or replace the existing SCADA hardware, this could be a long-term priority.
5. *GSG recommends requesting IT to review/replace existing desktop hardware.* The IT Department has most hardware on a 5-year replacement cycle. If this hardware is not due for replacement, IT should review for performance. This is a near-term priority.
6. *GSG recommends the Department review Spatial Data Logic's (SDL) Sewer module.* The Sewer Department should move to a more digital system and understanding what SDL has to offer is a good first step. This is a med-term priority.
7. *See the recommendation above regarding SDL.*
8. *GSG recommends revising the Sewer Department section of the website to clearly indicate whom to call for specific requests.* The Township Phone menu should also be reviewed. This is low-hanging fruit that will have an immediate impact on customer service. This is a short-term priority.

Purchasing

This operation is staffed by one individual, who was previously the assistant to the Township Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) and is overseen by the Finance Department. She presents as energetic and eager to please, if overwhelmed. GSG noted that this role is split between managing all aspects of specific Townwide contracts and

bidding and managing a supply closet down the hall from the office. Dual roles are described below.

Purchasing states that she works closely with the Finance Department to create, manage, and award large contracts (like snowplowing). She also works with the Clerk to store contracts and resolutions related to these contracts. (Clerk reported using Laserfiche to consolidate and digitally store all contracts.) Her office also often coordinates with Community Development (CD).

The Department is also responsible for all requisitions for professional counsel and engineering services and enters the invoices for those services. Her office is first approval on all CD requisitions. Once all the requirements have been met, the office sends it to Finance and the Township Manager for approval. Once approval is received, a PO is created from the requisitions and prints. The Manager reports that the printing, stuffing, sorting by department and delivering POs, either through interoffice mail or post, takes approximately 4 hours a day, every day (1).

Purchasing eliminated in-person bidding and leverages BidNet Direct for online access to bid packages.

Many of the Township professionals still mail physical invoices. (2) CD also sends over paper invoices to her department for requisitions and payments, which the Department then must scan. (3)

The Department also buys all miscellaneous office supplies for the Township and manages that process in a notebook and on Excel. The process is completely manual, from taking requests by email and phone, to sourcing, keeping track of SKUs and orders, and managing inventory. (4)

Recommendations

- 1. GSG recommends that the Township reconsider its approach to the PO process to eliminate the unnecessary manual work described above. Many departments have commented on the cumbersome PO process; the work described above is needlessly manual.*
- 2. GSG recommends that the Township require their professionals to send their invoices via email directly to the individual designated by the Township.*
- 3. GSG recommends that CD send all invoices to Purchasing via email, eliminating paper.*
- 4. GSG recommends creating a digital process for requesting and fulfilling office supplies orders and maintaining inventory levels.*

Implementation

1. *GSG recommends that the Township reconsider its approach to the PO process to eliminate the unnecessary manual work described above.* The Township can consider the initiative to contact large vendors that the Township works with directly to accept POs digitally via email to replace printing and mailing from the Township. GSG's experience is that vendors who want to work with the Township will accommodate these requests. This is a near-term priority.
2. *GSG recommends that the Township require their professionals to send their invoices via email directly to the individual designated by the Township.* This is easily accomplished by contacting each professional and confirming the Township's new policy. This small effort will eliminate the time spent delivering, opening, and scanning hard-copy correspondence. This is a short-term priority.
3. *GSG recommends that CD send all invoices to Purchasing via email.* The Purchasing Department can attach the digital copy of the invoice while creating the requisition in Edmunds, eliminating the extra step of scanning the paper invoice. Also, can Edmunds be leveraged to replace more manual tasks in this Department? This is an immediate priority.
4. *GSG recommends creating a digital process for requesting and fulfilling office supplies orders and maintaining inventory levels.* The Department Head has created a supply request form and should enforce its use. The Department can leverage an inexpensive cloud-based work management system like ProofHub to keep inventory in one place and replace the inefficient notebook/Excel process currently in use. This is a mid-term priority.

Township Manager

The Township Manager appears to have a very good relationship with the Governing Body. He was previously the township attorney, so comes to the role with some visibility into the staff and processes. Many of his issues and concerns have been identified and addressed in earlier sections of this report. In his words, The Township is a \$50 million business still being run like a small town.

The Manager's concerns are split between improving the efficiency of his existing teams and ensuring that the Township is looking forward to what will be needed in the next 5-10 years. He sees the warehouse boom that the Township has been experiencing beginning to slow and is focused on the next phase of the community's development. What facilities are newer residents of Howell looking for?

Currently, the Township contracts for legal services with an outside firm. The Manager reported that he believes that the Township would be better served by hiring an in-house attorney. (1) The manager agreed with many other department heads that the Township still relies heavily on paper, with little attention paid to retention periods or centralized visibility. (2). He also pointed out that the AV equipment in the Council Chamber is poor (3). He stressed that the Employee Action form (EAN) be discontinued as it is needlessly redundant and causes work that is not valuable. (4). The Manager agreed that the Requisition and PO process is redundant and cumbersome. (5).

The Manager reports that he has a weekly meeting with Community Development and finds it very productive. He plans to do the same with the Finance, Tax Collector, and Assessor offices.

The Manager shared his top initiatives:

- Removing the silos between departments.
- Upkeep of existing parks and creation of new facilities.
- Driving development that is in keeping with the population turnover. What do the residents want?
- Document retention policies, centralized document storage and visibility.
- Streamline the Requisition and PO process.
- Create a new division dedicated to open space, parks, and community playgrounds funded by the open space tax.

Recommendations

1. *GSG recommends that the Township compare the cost of retaining outside counsel versus hiring a full-time township attorney.*
2. *GSG has made specific recommendations about reducing/eliminating paper in many of the departments we spoke to, but the mandate must come from the Township Manager with the support of the governing body.*
3. *GSG recommends that the IT department review existing AV equipment and recommend upgrade options to the Manager.*
4. *GSG recommends that the Township review what if any value EAN forms have and consider eliminating them.*
5. *GSG recommends a review of the requisition and purchasing process by the Township Manager, Finance and Purchasing.*

Implementation

1. *GSG recommends that the Township compare the cost of retaining outside counsel versus hiring a fulltime township attorney. The Township spent*

approximately \$400,000 on outside counsel last year. Can the Township get more value for the money spent with a full-time employee available whenever the staff requires assistance? This is a medium-term priority.

2. *GSG recommends that the Township Manager mandate that departments quickly create a document management/retention plan that can be reviewed and approved by the Township Manager.* (A version of this recommendation is included in many department findings.) The Township may also benefit from leveraging Adobe DocuSign or DocHub to digitize the review and signature process in key departments. This is a near-term priority.
3. *GSG recommends that the IT department review existing AV equipment and provide upgrade options to the Manager. This recommendation was in GSG's Phase 1 Report and no progress has been made.*
4. *GSG recommends that the Township review what if any value EAN forms have and consider eliminating them.* Several other departments have mentioned the same. This is a short-term priority.
5. *GSG recommends a review of the requisition and purchasing process by the Township Manager, Finance and Purchasing. This issue has been reported numerous times. The Township is using Edmunds for this process, but if it cannot be addressed within Edmunds and by internal policies, some thought should be given to another platform that streamlines the review and signature process. This is a medium-term priority.*

GENERAL GOVERNMENT & WORKPLACE ISSUES

Labor Contracts & HR Policy

Government Strategy Group reviewed three labor contracts currently in force in the Township: 1, the PBA contract, which expires 12/31/23; 2, the IBT contract, which expires 12/31/25; and the TWU contract, which expires 12/31/25. GSG found all of these to be well-prepared contracts in line with widely accepted practices in New Jersey. The Township may wish to consider the following:

1. PBA salary increases for Police Officers in the guide are effective on the annual employee date of hire anniversary. This can be an administrative issue, in terms of keeping proper track. A common practice is to adjust salary only on January 1, or July 1, for Police Officers hired in the first or second half of the year, respectively.
2. Teamsters Article XVII, Sec. 3, grants a fair degree of latitude to the Township Manager to set the salary level for new hires (and newly promoted) within limits (15% below or 20% above the salary currently being paid for the position). While unusual in terms of language, it might be better to codify the ranges at

15% below & 20% above those salaries established in the tables. For example: Social Worker 2023 is listed at \$79,250. A codified range would be \$67,363 (85%) to \$95,100 (120%). We would also suggest specifying justification(s) for whatever salary is established, such as tenure with township, external experience, performance in prior assignments, etc.

GSG also reviewed the current HR Policy Handbook and found it to be adequately comprehensive. It is currently under review for update by Howell's labor counsel.

Shared Services

A total of seven shared services agreements applicable to this Phase 2 assignment were provided to GSG for review. Each is listed below with a brief description, comments, and any recommendations. Also, attached as Appendix 4 is a presentation from the NJ League of Municipalities which the Township may find helpful in evaluating shared services agreements and opportunities.

Western Monmouth Active Shooter Training Group –

Howell is one of nine entities that share costs related to active shooter, interdepartmental training. Freehold Township serves as the lead agency for this agreement and the fees for protective gear, simunitions (munitions used for training), planning, materials and incidental costs are shared on a proportional basis by participating agencies. The cost to Howell is \$1,000 for the one-year term of the agreement.

The agreement has an effective date of July 1, 2022, and a termination date of June 30, 2023, there is no automatic renewal.

Recommendation: Sharing costs for training materials among police agencies that are likely to work together during an interdepartmental response to an active shooter event makes sense. A determination should be made now as to the effectiveness of the agreement and whether it should be renewed.

Public Works Services –

This agreement provides the Borough of Farmingdale with access to certain public works services offered by Howell Township. There are ten services identified within the agreement; however, the listing of services is not intended to be exclusive. The agreement language states that pricing for any services provided by Howell is to be based on "estimate of the actual cost for a) equipment, b) materials, c) labor, but not profit."

The agreement has an effective date of February 2, 2023, and a termination date of December 31, 2024, and includes a 30-day termination provision based on written notice by either party.

Recommendation: There are certain administrative costs to providing the services to Farmingdale that should be recouped by Howell. For example, the scheduling, coordinating, and billing on the part of Howell should be reimbursed as part of the “estimate of actual costs”. Including a standard percentage to the cost as an administrative fee should be considered.

Municipal Court –

Howell Township and the Borough of Farmingdale have a shared municipal court with Farmingdale using the Howell court facility and its administrative staff. Each municipality is responsible for appointing their own judge, prosecutor, assistant prosecutor, special counsel, public defender, and assistant public defender.

The agreement has an effective date of February 2022 through December 31, 2024. Farmingdale pays \$10,000 annually to Howell and the agreement includes a 2% fee increase to be assessed annually for the contract term.

The agreement includes a Shared Services Municipal Court Advising Committee made up of the municipal administrators from each entity and one elected official from each municipality. The group is required to meet at least twice annually with the purpose: “effectuate the intent of this agreement which is to sustain excellent courts in a more cost-effective manner.”

Fuel Depot –

This agreement permits the Manasquan River Regional Sewer Authority (MRRSA) to fuel their vehicles at the Howell Township municipal fuel depot. The term of the agreement is January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2025.

The fee paid by MRRSA is \$0.17 added to the cost per gallon.

Recommendation: Prior to the renewal of this agreement, an analysis should be performed to assure that the fee covers any additional costs that may have been paid by Howell to maintain the fuel depot based on the additional use by MRRSA.

Firearms Range –

Through a shared services agreement the Township of Marlboro uses the Howell firearms range based on a daily use fee. The fee schedule is graduated with a discount

on the daily rate based on the number of days scheduled. The agreement term is January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, with a cancellation provision by either party based on 14-day written notice.

Recommendation: Prior to the renewal of this agreement, an analysis should be performed to assure that the fee covers all costs incurred by Howell.

Licensed Water and Sewer Utility Operator –

This agreement with the Township of Freehold provides three licensed water and sewer utility operators for Holmdel Township for an annual fee of \$26,160. The agreement includes that the Freehold license holders provide oversight of the Howell system and serve as back up for the single Howell operator.

The term of the agreement is January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, with a 30-day written notice requirement for termination.

Use of specialized equipment owned by Freehold is made available to Howell based on a daily rate schedule.

Sharing licensed staff members for highly specialized operations such as water and sewer utilities is an excellent example of shared services.

Chief Financial Officer and Tax Collector Services –

Through this agreement the Borough of Shrewsbury receives Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Tax Collector services from the Howell CFO and Tax Collector. The agreement has a term of June 1, 2021, through May 31, 2024.

The annual fee paid by Shrewsbury to Howell is \$90,000 and includes the expectation that the CFO and Tax Collector will be present approximately 6-8 hours each week in Shrewsbury.

There is a stipulation in the agreement that Shrewsbury may terminate the agreement immediately if the current Howell CFO and/or Tax Collector leave their respective positions in Howell. Otherwise, a 30-day written notice is required by either party to terminate the agreement.

The parties are required to meet at least 45-days in advance of the termination date (May 31, 2024) to determine if compensation should be adjusted.

Workplace Issues

During the course of this review, Government Strategy Group detected a number of workplace and culture issues that are impediments to the efficient and effective functioning of Township government and the delivery of services to the public. We found these issues to be more serious in Howell than in any other municipalities we are familiar with. While the lack of cooperation from the fire districts is alarming, it is also an issue in other internal areas of the government as well. Our first-hand findings in this regard were also borne out in a number of the responses to the employee surveys conducted as a part of this review.

Among the issues reported to GSG were siloed work, a lack of cross training, low morale, certain “toxic” employees unwilling to learn, and a lack of performance reviews. Additionally, there were reports of certain staff/offices refusing to work with other staff/offices.

It should be noted that employers have the right to enforce performance standards so long as they afford employees the opportunity to receive adequate training. Howell Township is not a “mom and pop” operation – it is a \$55 million organization requiring performance and best practices from all staff. Twin obstacles of staff resistance and sacred cows cannot and should not be tolerated.

The new Township Manager has inherited the above issues and commendably has begun to address them; he deserves the full support of the governing body in doing so. GSG stands prepared to more specifically review these issues with the Manager.

COMPARABLES

As with Phase 1 of this assignment, Government Strategy Group extracted, reviewed, and formatted data from three municipalities other than Howell that could be utilized in identifying areas of interest or concern that should be further analyzed by the Township to help inform future decision making. The focus of this effort was on data that could be relevant specifically to the added departments that are the subject of this Phase 2 study.

As explained in Phase 1, the three municipalities chosen for this purpose were Jackson, East Brunswick, and Middletown – chosen in consultation with Township management. Middletown and Howell are both Monmouth County communities, ranking in the County’s top two in size and population, and with similar management structure – i.e., with a strong Manager/Administrator who has authority over employees while elected officials are barred from directing employees. GSG considered it to be of value to have at least one comparable be from Monmouth County. Jackson Township shares a partial border with Howell and is a neighbor with similar population. It also faces many of the same issues and challenges as Howell does, for example where building projects and

development are concerned. With respect to East Brunswick, demographics are quite similar to Howell, in particular with such data as population, household income, home ownership, and crime rates. And, of course, East Brunswick shares the property tax and management challenges common to so many New Jersey municipalities, and also expends similar sums as Howell on many of its municipal operations.

When performing budgetary, financial, and staffing comparisons between municipalities in New Jersey, care needs to be taken not to jump to conclusions. Municipalities do not compare exactly to one another for a variety of reasons, some clearer than others, some subtle. For example, two of the most financially significant areas where municipalities may differ is in how they budget for fire protection services and for refuse and recycling collections services.

For example, most municipalities have volunteer fire departments, some have fully paid fire departments, and some have hybrid departments of paid and volunteer firefighters. Yet, all will have some level of budget appropriations and tax support for the service as provided. Similarly, regarding refuse collections and recycling, some municipalities handle the services entirely in-house, some contract for all or parts of the services, and some provide no municipal service at all or a hybrid of privately arranged collections and municipal services.

These two examples of how services are delivered and budgeted for are just two of the most cost-significant examples of differences between municipalities; there are many more examples of other differences, even if less in magnitude.

As indicated in Phase 1 and repeated here, the true purpose of high-level budgetary, financial, and staffing comparisons is to raise a flag – initiate an alert – when numbers appear as out of sync between municipalities being compared, so that the causes or reasons for same can then be explored and understood to determine the significance for such discrepancies.

Following is a series of charts detailing data regarding these three communities. Comments are noted when appropriate on the charts.

GENERAL CENSUS DATA and DEMOGRAPHICS					
		Howell	Jackson	E Brunswick	Middletown
Housing					
	Owner Occupied	88.20%	85.00%	81.30%	84.40%
	Median Value of Owner Occupied Housing 2015 - 2019	\$341,200	\$361,600	\$398,400	\$425,300
	Median gross rent (2015-2019)	\$1,528	\$1,441	\$1,439	\$1,366
	Households	17,910	20,498	16,840	23,805
	Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2015-2019	93.60%	88.70%	93.40%	92.30%
	Persons per household, 2015-2019	2.89	2.77	2.83	2.74
Employment & Insurance					
	Persons without health insurance, under age 65	6.00%	5.40%	4.90%	2.90%
	In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2015-2019	69.40%	65.80%	67.90%	66.70%
	In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2015-2019	64.30%	60.80%	60.80%	60.70%
	Median household income (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019	\$105,082	\$95,069	\$115,445	\$118,351
	Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019	\$42,944	\$39,544	\$49,857	\$54,603
	Persons in poverty, percent	4.90%	5.40%	6.10%	3.60%
	Average Commuting Time	36.7	35.3	39.7	37.3
Race					
	White Only, Not Hispanic or Latino	85.70%	87.80%	66.00%	93.10%
	Asian Alone	6.00%	3.30%	25.70%	3.40%
	Foreign Born Persons	13.00%	7.70%	32.30%	7.40%
	Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2015-2019	16.20%	11.20%	40.20%	9.10%
Education					
	High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015-2019	95.40%	94.70%	94.40%	95.60%
	Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015-2019	40.00%	33.30%	56.00%	47.00%

HOWELL BUDGET COMPARISONS				
	Howell	E. Brunswick	Middletown	Jackson
Item				
Total appropriations	\$55,562,000	\$74,074,072	\$88,729,654	\$54,656,783
Surplus anticipated	\$4,860,000	\$4,200,000	\$10,700,000	\$9,167,000
Surplus as % of total	8.75%	5.67%	12.06%	16.77%
Amt to be raised by taxes to support muni budget	\$30,280,000	\$42,080,759	\$57,975,374	\$34,641,046
All other revenues	\$25,282,000	\$29,253,923	\$26,605,236	\$20,015,736
Prior year tax collection rate	98.29%	98.32%	99.38%	98.69%
Population	53,537	48,010	65,490	59,614
Budget per population	\$1,038	\$1,543	\$1,355	\$917
Paid Fire Dept	No	No	No	Both
Municipally provided refuse collection	No	Yes	Yes	No

SALARY COMPARISONS - ADMINISTRATION									
HOWELL			EAST BRUNSWICK			MIDDLETOWN		JACKSON	
ADMIN. SUMMARY			ADMIN. SUMMARY			ADMIN. SUMMARY		ADMIN. SUMMARY	
TOTAL SALARY	\$ 559,040		TOTAL SALARY	\$ 860,276		TOTAL SALARY	\$ 1,193,600	TOTAL SALARY	\$ 597,200
TOTAL STAFF COUNT	7		TOTAL STAFF COUNT	11		TOTAL STAFF COUNT	16	TOTAL STAFF COUNT	8
TITLE	CURRENT SALARY	SALARY RANGE	TITLE	CURRENT SALARY	Total	TITLE	CURRENT SALARY	TITLE	CURRENT SALARY
Township Manager	160,000	95,000-200,000	Business Administrator	195,264	199,170	Township Admin	231,966	Bus Administrator (1)	186,188
Township Attorney	165.00/hr	contract	Conf. Admin. Aid	69,516	72,297	Asst Admin	120,420	Asst Munic Admin	91,361
Admin Asst to Mgr.	51,611	40,000-51,567	Township Attorney	Info Not Available		Township Attorney	60,000	Clk 2	48,181
HR Administrator	87,990	40,000-92,390	HR Manager	81,755	85,025	HR Admin/EEO	83,508	Pers Off/QPA	97,000
Payroll Admin.	71,451	40,000-75,025	Personnel Assistant	44,540	44,540	Clk Typ	33,524	Clk 2	42,000
			Purchasing Asst	44,540	44,540	Acct Clk	39,257	Township Attorney	Info N/A
Info Syst Operator (1)	94,039	70,069-94,039				Clk Typ	18,746	Network Admin	81,681
Info Syst Operator (2)	94,039	70,069-94,039						CMPTR SVC TECHN	50,789
(1) = + 1,000 pay diff			Manager of IT	132,934	132,934	Dir. MIS	128,700		
(2) = + 750 pay diff			Telecom Spec.	75,002	75,002	Asst Dir MIS	84,233	(1) = + 3,600 car allowance	
Note: Pay differential replaced and froze longevity.			Devel. System Admin.	78,697	78,697	Mngt Spec MIS	60,000		
			Systems Admin.	76,570	76,570	Mngt Spec MIS	60,000		
			Deployment Tech.	51,500	51,500	Mngt Spec MIS	56,650		
						Mngt Spec MIS-Pol	61,545		
						Sys Analyst	56,650		
						Clk Typ	33,524		
						Sr. Radio Rpr	64,877		

SALARY COMPARISONS - FINANCE							
HOWELL		EAST BRUNSWICK		MIDDLETOWN		JACKSON	
FINANCE SUMMARY		FINANCE SUMMARY		FINANCE SUMMARY		FINANCE SUMMARY	
TOTAL SALARY	\$ 1,129,390	TOTAL SALARY	\$ 1,578,871	TOTAL SALARY	\$ 1,573,438	TOTAL SALARY	\$ 1,061,242
TOTAL STAFF COUNT	15	TOTAL STAFF COUNT	21	TOTAL STAFF COUNT	22	TOTAL STAFF COUNT	16
TITLE	CURRENT SALARY	TITLE	CURRENT SALARY	TITLE	CURRENT SALARY	TITLE	CURRENT SALARY
CFO (1)	\$ 132,670	CFO	\$ 159,345	CFO (1)	\$ 169,352	CFO	\$ 131,235
Asst Finance Officer (2)	\$ 76,260	Conf Admin Asst	\$ 55,301	Dep CFO/Asst Dir (2)	\$ 123,674	Asst Munic. Treas./Payroll Sprv	\$ 84,931
Admin Asst VII (3)	\$ 79,402	Asst CFO	\$ 97,747	Payroll Sprv	\$ 90,900	Prn Acct Clk	\$ 44,389
Accounting Assistant (3)	\$ 86,679	Accts Contro Clk	\$ 67,774	Dir Purch.	\$ 103,000	KBC 3	\$ 58,820
Guarantees Coord (4)	\$ 86,679	Payroll Spec.	\$ 79,310	Asst Payroll Sprv	\$ 62,200	Clk 3/Payroll Clk	\$ 54,492
		Staff Acct.	\$ 58,504	Sr Acct Clk	\$ 53,581		
				Pr Acct Clk	\$ 61,116		
Purchasing Officer/QPA	\$ 70,069			Payroll Clk	\$ 42,734		
				Acct Clk	\$ 43,480		
				Sr Pursh Asst	\$ 70,052		
						Tax Assessor	\$ 112,417
Tax Assessor	\$ 123,754	Tax Asses.	\$ 149,884	Tax Assr	\$ 136,283	Dep Tax Assessor	\$ 68,214
Deputy Assessor	\$ 90,878	Dep. Tax Asses	\$ 111,965	Dep Tx Assr	\$ 90,000	Clk3	\$ 63,150
Asst to Assessor II	\$ 61,542	Field Insp. Analyst	\$ 81,618	Asses Trainee	\$ 58,986	Assess Aid	\$ 41,502
Asst to Assessor I	\$ 54,425	Sr Asses Asst	\$ 45,886	Clk Typ	\$ 35,308	Clk 3	\$ 50,161
		Admin Asst	23.50/HOUR			Asst Assess	\$ 70,728
Tax Collector (5)	\$ 74,986	Collector of Revenue	\$ 133,900	Tax Coll (2)	\$ 100,785	Tax Collector	\$ 95,000
Confidential Asst (6)	\$ 48,645	Collec Clk 1	\$ 57,288	Dep Tx Coll	\$ 69,525	Clk 2	\$ 42,945
Collection Clerk III	\$ 61,311	Collec Clk 2	\$ 59,725	Sprv Tx Clk	\$ 68,669	Clk 3	\$ 50,161
Collection Clerk I	\$ 41,045	Asst Util Coord	\$ 97,443	Cashier	\$ 38,056	Clk 2	\$ 37,163
Collection Clerk I	\$ 41,045	Dep Tax Collector	\$ 72,996	Cashier	\$ 42,260	Clk 4	\$ 55,934
(1) = + 21,994 stipend-sharedserv		Collect Clk 2	\$ 55,301	Cashier	\$ 37,401		
(2) = + 19,406 stipend-sharedserv		Collect Clk 2	\$ 52,000	Cashier	\$ 46,883		
(3) = + 1500 pay diff		Revenue Coord	\$ 51,500	Acct Clk	\$ 29,193		
(4) = + 1250 pay diff		Collec Clk 1	\$ 34,978	(1) = + 25,000 stipend-sharedserv			
(5) = + 2,500 tax srch stipend		Collect Clk 2	\$ 56,407	(2) = + 10,000 stipend-sharedserv			
(6) = + 1,000 asst tax srch stipend							
Note: Pay differential replaced & froze longevity.							

SALARY COMPARISONS - MUNICIPAL CLERKS OFFICES							
HOWELL		E BRUNSWICK		MIDDLETOWN		JACKSON	
CLERK SUMMARY		CLERK SUMMARY		CLERK SUMMARY		CLERK SUMMARY	
TOTAL SALARY	\$ 439,989	TOTAL SALARY	\$ 212,581	TOTAL SALARY	\$ 525,495	TOTAL SALARY	\$ 254,128
STAFF COUNT	6	STAFF COUNT	3	STAFF COUNT	12	STAFF COUNT	5
TITLE	CURRENT SALARY	TITLE	CURRENT SALARY	TITLE	CURRENT SALARY	TITLE	CURRENT SALARY
			Base				
Township Clerk	103,500	Township Clerk	108,150	Township Clerk	118,521	Township Clerk	97,500
Deputy Clerk	78,780	Dep Twsp Clk	59,431	Asst Mun. CLK	66,978	CLK 1	38,977
Admin Asst IV (1)	66,746	Admin Asst	45,000	Clk Typ	40,568	CLK 2 (1)	40,059
Admin Asst IV (2)	66,746			Records Tech	47,629	CLK 1	36,090
Admin Asst V (3)	74,136			Dep Registrar	46,337	CLK 3 (2)	41,502
Admin Asst III	50,081			Clerk (pt)	20,573	(1) = + 5,000 for Registrar	
(1) = +1,000 Pay Diff				Clerk (pt)	14,695	(2) = + 3,000 for Dep Registrar	
(2) = +1,000 Pay Diff				Clerk (pt)	16,172		
(3) = +1,250 Pay Diff				Clerk (pt)	18,369		
Note: Pay differential replaced & froze longevity.							
				Mail Clk (pt)	20,573		
				Comm Dir	78,000		
				Dep Comm Dir	37,080		

SALARY COMPARISONS - OEM														
HOWELL				EAST BRUNSWICK				MIDDLETOWN			JACKSON			
OEM SUMMARY				OEM SUMMARY				OEM SUMMARY			OEM SUMMARY			
TOTAL SALARY	\$ 66,883				TOTAL SALARY	\$ 149,661				TOTAL SALARY	\$ 21,840	TOTAL SALARY	\$ 2,500	
TOTAL STAFF COUNT	1ft/4pt				TOTAL STAFF COUNT	1				TOTAL STAFF COUNT	1 p/t	TOTAL STAFF COUNT	1 p/t	
	CURRENT				CURRENT				CURRENT			CURRENT		
TITLE	SALARY	SALARY RANGE				TITLE	SALARY				TITLE	SALARY		
OEM Coordinator	\$ 58,383	40000-75000												
Dep Coordinator	\$ 1,500	Stipend				Comm Syst Coord	149,661				Clk Typ (pt)	\$ 21,840	Dep Coordinator	\$ 2,500
Dep Coordinator	\$ 2,750	Stipend				(Incl stipend for OEM)							(Stipend)	
Admin Asst	\$ 1,250	Stipend												
Ops Coordinator	\$ 3,000	Stipend												

SALARY COMPARISONS - COMMUNITY RELATIONS/RECREATION															
HOWELL				E BRUNSWICK				MIDDLETOWN			JACKSON				
Comm Relations SUMMARY				RECREATION				RECREATION			RECREATION				
TOTAL SALARY	See below				TOTAL SALARY				TOTAL SALARY			TOTAL SALARY			
STAFF COUNT					STAFF COUNT				STAFF COUNT			STAFF COUNT			
	CURRENT				CURRENT				CURRENT			CURRENT			
TITLE	SALARY				TITLE	SALARY				TITLE	SALARY	RANGE			
					Base	Total									
Director	94,058				Director	124,438	171,955				Director	102,703	Director	66,450	73,095
Admin Asst	19.50/hr														
Park Attendant	14.50/hr														
Park Attendant	18.00/hr														

SALARY COMPARISONS - SEWER														
HOWELL				EAST BRUNSWICK				MIDDLETOWN			JACKSON	MUA		
SEWER SUMMARY				SEWER SUMMARY				SEWER SUMMARY			SEWER SUMMARY			
TOTAL SALARY	\$ 388,644				TOTAL SALARY	\$ 555,470				TOTAL SALARY	\$ 833,736	*See note below		
TOTAL STAFF COUNT	5				TOTAL STAFF COUNT	9				TOTAL STAFF COUNT	32	TOTAL STAFF COUNT	50	
	CURRENT				CURRENT				CURRENT			CURRENT		
TITLE	SALARY	SALARY RANGE				TITLE	SALARY				TITLE	SALARY		
					*See note below	Base								
Director	\$ 146,961	146,961				Exec Admin Asst Wtr/Swr	64,970				Executive Director	\$ 174,762	Exec Director (includes Water)	\$ 172,653
Utilities Crew Leader	\$ 82,952	61,542-82,952				Swr Util Srv Wkr	80,500				Staff Engineer	\$ 100,006	Sewer Utilities Superintendent	\$ 112,551
Utilities Laborer	\$ 56,504	47,942-64,016				Swr Maint Coord	91,173				Maintenance Mgr	\$ 118,186	Sewer Repairer Supervisor	\$ 65,670
Utilities Laborer	\$ 50,081	47,942-64,016				Swr Util Srv Wkr Equip Op	74,718				Supervising Acctnt	\$ 104,998	Maintenance Supervisor	\$ 75,822
Utilities Laborer	\$ 52,146	47,942-64,016				Lead Swr Maint Tech	66,712				Superintendent	\$ 103,002	Laborer 1	\$ 34,093
					Swr Tech Apprent 2	43,010				Operator	\$ 48,922	Sewer Repairer2	\$ 51,503	
					Swr Tech Apprent 2	43,010				Clerical	\$ 41,126	Maintenance Supervisor	\$ 75,822	
					Swr Tech Apprent 2	43,010				Mechanic	\$ 50,700	Clerk 1	\$ 38,563	
					Admin Asst	48,367				Clerical	\$ 64,175	Sewer Repairer1	\$ 50,282	
					*Sewer management falls under DPW Director					Clerical (25hrs)	\$ 27,859	Pumping Station Repairer	\$ 52,532	
												*The Jackson MUA also includes Water supply and treatment, so positions similar to Howell were selected for this comparison.		

SEWER UTILITY

The Howell Sewer Utility is a NJDEP C-3 system consisting of 130 miles of pipe including sixteen miles of force mains. The sanitary system has 2,200 manholes. There are 7,722 sanitary sewer laterals, which currently the Utility maintains from the curb cleanout to

the transmission line in the street. It has twelve sewer lift/pumping stations moving wastewater from different elevations to arrive at the MRRSA (Manasquan River Regional Sewerage Authority) system. The MRRSA is the receiving treatment plant for the Township. Wastewater flows through Howell in a large capacity sewer line which also carries wastewater from upstream communities. MRRSA measures the flow going into Howell from “upstream” and then measures the total volume of water entering the treatment plant. This enables MRRSA to determine how much has been added to the flow by the Township – i.e., to calculate how much of the flow is attributable to Howell – and thus to calculate the volume charge per year for the Township.

According to its budget, staffing consists of a Director, Crew Leader, and Utilities laborers – i.e., a total of six full time personnel – along with thirteen “other” staff allocations. These allocations are accounting “charge-backs” to reflect allocations of direct and indirect time spent by municipal managers and staff on utility related matters. (This is a common practice in New Jersey municipalities and is a concept approved by the NJ Division of Local Government Services.) In dealing with the director/license operator, a good amount of time is spent doing clerical work including payroll, purchase orders, and other items. While the Director was not complaining, the Director’s time could be better spent on other issues at hand.

In discussions with the staff, critical lines are maintained much more often than the rest of the town due to potential issues involving the trouble areas. Conversation revealed that the town is flushed every few years, which is quite common. Certain areas labeled “critical” address low pitch lines, siphons, low volume lines or businesses where grease or higher solid discharges occur. Howell staff stated that generally no more than three surcharges per year occur and no insurance claims were processed in the last ten years. The Utility reports that no CSO’s (combined sewer overflows) exist. Currently, no flow meters exist internally. Staff indicates that they are included in the capital budget for the future. This is important as information gained from flow meters is valuable in many ways. First it shows increased flows during high rain events. This will allow staff to identify I&I (inflow and infiltration) issues. Not only will finding these issues save electricity costs, hours off of equipment, and treatment costs, but it will allow for reserved capacity in the collection system. (Recommendations below will include a smoke blower to help find inflow and infiltration locations.)

Vehicular inventory included a newer Vac-Con Truck 2018. This is a flusher/Vactor type truck used for jetting sanitary lines and also for cleaning the wet wells of the pumping stations. (Vactor is a trade name for a high-powered vacuum.) This vehicle is essential for system maintenance. A camera truck which is shared with DPW was also on the inventory list. Many of the pickup trucks on the inventory list have over 120,000 miles. At a certain point, vehicles cost more to maintain/repair than to purchase new. Current

market and inventory conditions make it difficult for many, if not most, municipalities, to obtain vehicles.

Government Strategy Group visited the Utility's four pumping station locations and made the following findings and observations.

34 Lily Pond station is a newer pump station. It is in excellent shape. It was also well maintained. It has a natural gas generator which is oversized so that additional pumping capacity was available for future flow. All the equipment was up to date. Two pictures of our visit to this station appear below, reflecting the good conditions found here.





16 Barre Drive is an older station that is due to be reconditioned in the near future. It has a diesel generator that is trailer mounted and is connected to the electrical panel.





Above – wet-well at 16 Barre Drive Pumping Station

27 Mistaire Place is a older yet well maintained station. All stations visited had backup generators fueled by either natural gas or diesel. This station has older pump controls but they are still functioning properly. Depending on future SCADA updates, these should be updated for reliability. (SCADA – “supervisory control and data acquisition” – is a category of software applications for controlling industrial processes, which is the gathering of data in real time from remote locations in order to control equipment and conditions.)



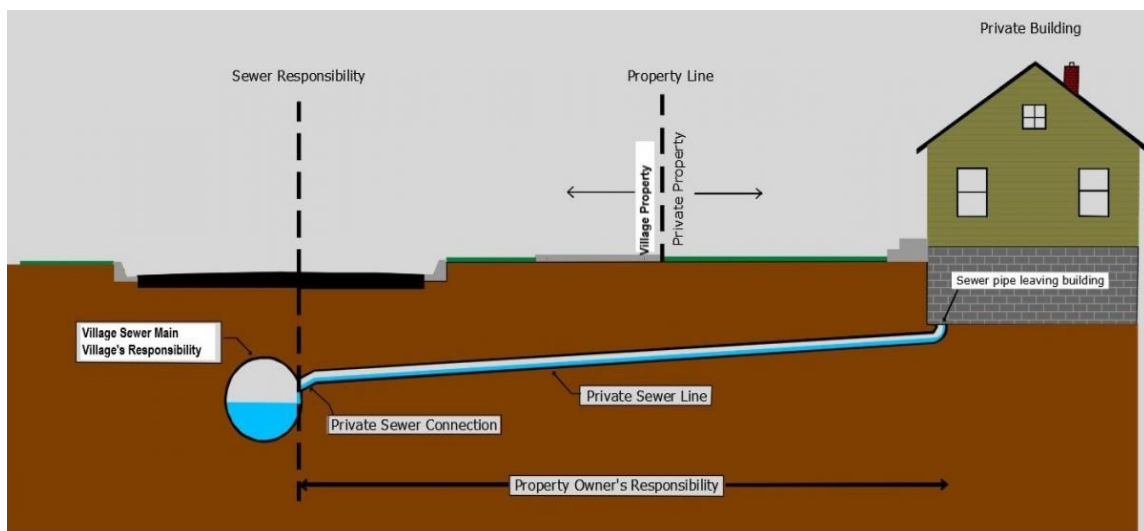
20 Eisenhower Street was also visited. A backup generator was onsite as well as a basic pump control. GSG found this station to be well maintained.



During its review, Government Strategy Group noted that the Howell Sewer Utility has been taking advantage of the NJEIT (New Jersey Environmental Trust Infrastructure Trust) loan program. While having the right rate and allowing fees to pay for capital improvements is a wise practice, sometimes loans are necessary or more prudent and NJEIT loans can have low rates and principal forgiveness, which makes them very desirable. The Utility is currently utilizing the NJEIT and should continue to do so.

Recommendations

1. *Government Strategy Group recommends continually upgrading SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) and acquiring related IT support.* This allows for better operations, finds potential problems before they occur and sometimes allows for troubleshooting instead of sending out personnel. With Cellular Modems, hardwire can become unnecessary. Depending on the amount of data and control, controllers can be inexpensive. It will also allow for high- and low-level alarms before surcharges or issues occur. It can also allow for personnel to know of generator starts, wet well levels, pump/motor failures, and intrusion alarms. Generally, if cameras are desired, internet access is necessary.
2. *GSG recommends that the Township adopt an ordinance establishing that customers are responsible for their laterals up to the connection to the main line.* Under the current ordinance, the utility has to maintain the sewer lateral from the curb clean-out to the main line. This is difficult for personnel as homeowners frequently want to blame the utility for issues. It is also difficult to easily diagnose issues. Many utilities have the property owners own the lateral completely including the connection to the main line. The thought is that the property owner connected to the utility, not the utility to the homeowner. Utilizing this policy also makes it easy to determine whose problem it is. During an issue, utility personnel pull the two manholes surrounding the lateral issue, which will reveal if the mainline is properly flowing. Below is a sample illustration that explains the ownership.



3. *GSG recommends improving the website as it pertains to the Utility.* The website has minimal information and links. Today's public expects the website to include many FAQ's, bill examples and meanings, links to ordinances for billing and connection fees, etc.
4. *GSG recommends updating Township ordinances to refer to the Sewer Utility only, not "Water/Sewer Utility.* Many ordinances still refer to Water/Sewer utility. It appears NJAW (New Jersey American Water) now is the water utility.
5. *GSG recommends that the Township undertake a thorough review of its Sewer Utility rate model.* Currently homeowners pay a flat fee for sewer service. This can be considered an inherently unfair system inasmuch as low volume users wind up subsidizing higher volume users; for example, senior citizens subsidizing residences with numerous occupants. Other sanitary sewer utilities break the sanitary sewer bill into two sections. One is a treatment charge, the other a capacity charge. For Howell, this would mean the treatment charge would pay the MRRSA fees and the capacity charge would pay for the collection system. Using an ordinance for the treatment charge, it could be a formula of gallons of water during the winter months (quarter) so outside usage is not involved, divided by the total bill of the MRRSA, would give a unit per 1,000-gallon rate. If this is written into an ordinance, then no new ordinances every year would be necessary for the treatment costs. The capacity charge could be based on the size of the water meter. The larger the meter, the more "capacity" of the main sewer line the meter's potential flow could use. This fee would be less for smaller meters, increasing with the size of the water meter. This fee would support collection system maintenance and capital. A sample ordinance with this type of rate structure is attached as Appendix 1.
6. *GSG recommends that the Township adopt an ordinance regulating the discharge of fats, oils, and grease into the sewer system (i.e., provide a "FOG" Plan).* While

most food establishments have grease traps, and staff commented that this hasn't been an issue to date, having a proactive plan is always beneficial. Having a proper ordinance in place can solve future problems and disputes.

7. *GSG recommends that the Utility purchase a smoke blower unit.* Below is one example of a smoke blower unit. It uses a non-toxic liquid smoke. The blower can find illegal interconnections which can contain catch basins, leader drains, basement drains, etc. It also finds broken cleanout caps. They can also be used before commissioning a section of new development to verify proper installation and no interconnections with storm lines. Alerting the fire department of using the device is always a good operating procedure as customers may call the FD during testing. During testing, observing roof vents blowing smoke verifies proper operation. Should any smoke appear inside a home, it alerts a homeowner to the possibility of methane gas possibly entering the home. For example, unused sinks/showers with no water in the trap will sometimes allow smoke to enter the home.



- Blowers available for LiquiSmoke™ or smoke candles
- The liquid smoke blowers are a cost effective way of smoke testing
- 1 gal of liquid smoke can last up to an hour
- A solid 1 piece aluminum axial flow impeller for maximum air displacement at high static pressures and a solid steel shroud to protect the impeller and ensure long-lasting durability
- RIPCORDER ID: 18.5"
- Super RIPCORDER ID: 23.5"
- HPS2 Includes: 6' x 4" hose

SKU	CFM	Type	Price
A HSMK18LS	4130	RIPCORDER™	\$1,730.00
HSMK24	8761	Super RIPCORDER™	\$2,570.00
B HPS2	700	Portable Liquid Smoke Tester	\$1,785.00
Parts & Accessories			
HLS1		Liquid Smoke; 1 gal	\$60.00
HLS14		(4) Liquid Smoke; 1 gal	\$190.00
HLS5		Liquid Smoke; 5 gal	\$215.00

8. *GSG recommends the installation of Flow Meters by the Utility.* Installing flow meters at points of entry allows for continual measurement of sanitary sewer water (daily volume). This informs operations of I&I (inflow and infiltration) during storms or ground water infiltration, diminishing pump capacity, and if the pump station has a power failure/generator or no start condition. This input would be used with the SCADA system for alarms.
9. *Government Strategy Group recommends that the Howell Water Utility pursue utilizing cure-in-place lining/pipe bursting for force mains or lines that are in need of refurbishment.* This is a far less expensive method of rehabilitating lines compared to trenching and replacing and can save hundreds of thousands of dollars going forward. It also offers the benefit of not requiring full road closures to get the job done. This refurbishment system is widely used in the sewer industry for refurbishing sanitary lines. Not only is it structural in nature but it can also increase the "C factor" of an existing pipe, which is a factor or value used to indicate the smoothness of the interior of a pipe. The higher the C Factor, the smoother the pipe, the greater the carrying capacity, and the smaller the friction or energy losses from water flowing in the pipe. This process can be used instead of digging a force main (properly sized of course) and replacing it saving the potential restoration of a regular trench cut replacement. Another method of line replacement – pipe bursting and replacement with HDPE pipe –is less costly than trenching and can also be considered in appropriate conditions.
10. *GSG recommends that the Utility develop an employee retention and succession plan.* Retention of employees for municipalities in current market conditions is difficult. Private companies recruit trained employees by offering better pay. Well qualified and trained employees are not easy to find. Pay scales offered by municipalities must be competitive to the private companies as retraining and losing employees is costly. Also, a succession plan should be in place as licensed operators are not always available and having someone with knowledge of the system is invaluable during times of crisis and continued operation.
11. *The Utility should consider adjusting its sewer connection fee.* The current fee of \$1500 per dwelling unit should be re-evaluated. A few others range from \$2,030, \$2688, and \$3,246 local to the area. (Jackson, Freehold, and Red Bank). The value of the "buy in" to the sanitary system is of higher value. It allows also for additional capital improvement without bonding moneys.
12. *The Utility should consider adding part-time administrative help.* Addition of an administrative person to help with PO's, attendance, etc. could enable management to focus on higher priority work. A person at the office who can help with filing, mail, attendance, purchase orders, as built sets, storage, etc. would allow the Director to spend better time in the field, attending to customer needs, NJDEP

needs, inspections, issues, etc. This could be a part-time position without requiring benefits.

13. *GSG recommends that the Utility address vehicle needs now given current marketplace conditions.* Cooperative purchasing systems and local bidding efforts have been confronted with low available vehicle inventory. Efforts should be made to replace trucks sooner rather than later. As stated previously, at a certain point vehicles cost more to maintain/repair than to purchase new.
-

APPENDIX 1 – Sample Sewer Rate Ordinance

Following is a sample sewer rate ordinance using a common rate model:

The below rates and charges shall be in effect commencing on the date shown. The Director shall review said rates and charges annually to preserve the self-liquidating status of the utility. Each user shall pay an annual rental charge for use of the sewer system and an annual usage fee for treatment of discharges to the system. The rental charge, also known as the "capacity charge," shall be based on the size of the user's water meter. The treatment charge shall be based on actual treatment costs incurred by the utility, to be billed to all users according to a formula as set forth below. These annual charges shall be payable each year in two equal installments on July 1 and December 1, except that annual charges for "large institutional users" (to be defined in accordance with written guidelines prepared by the Director and approved by the Commissioners) shall be paid in one annual payment due on July 1 of each year.

Capacity Charge

<i>Meter Size</i>	<i>Annual Charge</i>
<i>5/8 x 3/4"</i>	<i>\$136.00</i>
<i>3/4"</i>	<i>\$205.00</i>
<i>1"</i>	<i>\$342.00</i>
<i>1.5"</i>	<i>\$670.00</i>
<i>2"</i>	<i>\$1,000.00</i>
<i>3"</i>	<i>\$3,000.00</i>
<i>4"</i>	<i>\$6,800.00</i>
<i>6"</i>	<i>\$13,500.00</i>

Treatment charge

The treatment charge shall be calculated by taking the total of all water consumed in the Utility territory during the billing cycle for the first quarter of the current year and

dividing this total into the actual total of all treatment billings incurred by the utility for said year from the regional wastewater treatment authorities serving the municipality, to determine an actual rate of wastewater treatment cost per 1000 gallons of water consumption. Each user shall then be billed an annual charge for treatment that is equal to the aforesaid rate per 1000 gallons times the user's actual total gallons of water consumption during the billing cycle for the first quarter of the current year. Said annual charge shall be payable in two equal installments on June 1 and December 1 of each year, except that annual treatment charge for "large institutional users" (to be defined in accordance with written guidelines prepared by the Director and approved by the Commissioners shall be paid in one annual payment due on August 1 of each year. The treatment charge for any user who connects to the sewer system after January 1 of any year shall be prorated for the year in question and shall be calculated on the basis of the average water consumption for that user's meter class. The Commissioners may, by resolution, extend the due date for payment of capacity and/or treatment charges due under this article.

APPENDIX 2 – Project Team

JOSEPH M. HARTNETT, Executive Managing Director, Project Lead/Project Manager – Joe Hartnett is one of New Jersey’s most respected professionals in the management of municipalities. He has been admitted as an expert on the Faulkner Act in Superior Court and as an expert on municipal personnel management before the State legislature, as well as serving as an expert for colleges and universities, Freeholder Boards, the NJ League of Municipalities, and Congressional representatives. Most recently he has served as Project Manager and report author for management studies for Red Bank, Long Branch, Matawan, and Toms River. Joe served for six years as Township Manager of Montclair (400+ FT employees, same Faulkner Act form as Howell) and sixteen years as Business Administrator in Rahway, as well as holding significant State and County appointments. He is also the former Vice President and CFO of Saint Peter’s University. In 2014 Joe was appointed by a former Chief Justice of the NJ Supreme Court and a former Director of Criminal Justice for NJ to manage the dissolution of a corrupt public agency in Newark, New Jersey’s largest city, where they recovered more than eight million dollars in stolen funds for that city’s taxpayers.

CHRISTOPHER COTTER, Senior Managing Director, Departments & Operations Review Manager – Chris has over 30 years of experience in various local government roles which have included as Summit’s City Administrator. He began his career in the Fire Department where he ascended to the rank of Chief and was the Emergency Management Coordinator. He oversaw the reorganization of the police department and was the Director of the Department of Community Services, responsible for public works, engineering and code enforcement. Chris was responsible for instituting several successful shared services programs. He also served as a member of the leadership team that implemented a shared 911 communications center for fire, police and EMS in three municipalities spanning two counties.

ULRICH (AL) STEINBERG, Senior Managing Director, Municipal Finances SME – Al Steinberg is another member of the GSG team who served as the NJ Director of Local Government Services and Chair of the Local Finance as well as liaison to the Governor’s Office regarding policy matters affecting local governments. He is an expert in all aspects of municipal finance who recently retired after his distinguished career in New Jersey local government. During his long municipal career he served numerous communities and county governments in senior financial management positions, including as a full-time CFO/CMFO. Al’s services include budget consulting, software design and other financial technology applications. He holds a Master’s Degree in Accounting from Rutgers University as well as undergraduate degrees in Accounting, Computer Science, and Business Administration from William Paterson College

DOUGLAS MARVIN, Managing Director, Departments and Municipal Offices Operations SME – Doug is an expert in municipal administration and law enforcement. He began his career with the New Providence Police Department where he worked his

way through the ranks to become Chief of Police. After twenty-seven years with the Department, he was appointed Business Administrator, where he served for an additional fifteen years. Doug also served as a Commissioner with the NJSACOP Police Department Accreditation Commission and as Chairman of the Garden State Joint Insurance Fund. Among many achievements, Doug is highly regarded for being instrumental in numerous shared services agreements, including for municipal courts, tax assessing, sewer management, and central 911 dispatch for Police, Fire, and EMS.

JOSEPH SALEMME, Managing Director, Staffing and CBA Analysis SME – Mr. Salemme has over 30 years' experience as a versatile public sector executive with a record of accomplishment in a wide range of highly responsible assignments. Joe's major achievements have been in the areas of operations management, labor relations & contract negotiations, and organizational leadership. As the former longtime Director of Administrative Services for the County of Union – with 3,000 employees and twenty-two labor unions – Joe was intimately involved with all aspects of departmental personnel administration, including serving as chief labor negotiator with all unions and conducting all economic research and analysis required for the development of the County's labor policies, staffing needs, and negotiations strategy. He also collaborated with the County's health benefit providers and insurance brokers to develop cost containment options and strategies. Before being appointed to the Director's position, Joe served as a Special Assistant to the County Manager where he played a major role in the reorganization of the County that reduced the number of operational departments from eleven to six. Mr. Salemme holds a B.A. in Sociology from LaSalle University and a Master of Labor and Employment Relations from Rutgers University.

JENNIFER NAUGHTON (via Radiant Resources, Inc.), IT Systems, Workflow, and Social Media SME – Jen brings over two decades of experience in technology consulting, project management and IT services to commercial and public clients in NJ and NY. She is a highly skilled IT Professional and is President and CEO of Radiant Resources, a successful IT consulting firm whose clients have included Verizon Wireless and Hackensack University Medical Center. Jen has worked with GSG on previous assignments for municipalities to evaluate their systems, workflow, and uses of social media and to make recommendations for improvement in all aspects of the use of technology. She is a graduate of Montclair State University, the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth–WNEBC Executive Program, and the NYU Stern School of Business StreetWise MBA Program. Jen also serves as the Mayor of Spring Lake, enabling her to bring extra value and insights to IT consulting work in the field of municipal government.

GARY OBSZARNY, Managing Director, Municipal Utilities SME – Gary Obszarny's skills and hands-on experience with municipal utilities' operations are unsurpassed. Prior to becoming Director of Utilities (Water, Sewer, and Parking) for the Township of Montclair and the beginning of his career in municipal utilities work in 1995, Gary worked for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft assembling and testing military and commercial

aircraft engines, as a maintenance mechanic in a chemical plant, and as a maintenance supervisor for a sewerage treatment plant. Thus, his overall background has given him a meticulous approach on best practices in running utilities operations, as well as detailed knowledge of up-to-date applicable technologies. In addition to completing basic and advanced water and wastewater courses, Gary holds the following credentials: Certified Public Works Manager; NJDEP W-4, T-3, and C-4 certificates; and FAA Airframe and Powerplant Certificates.

DOROTHY BLAKESLEE, Managing Director, Metrics and Analytics SME – Ms. Blakeslee has over 25 years of experience as a financial analyst, financial advisor and investment banker. She has a proven ability to find creative solutions to financial problems. Dotty started her career as a computer programmer. She designed and executed computer models at Merrill Lynch and Bear Stearns. Her career then moved over to municipal finance as partner in a woman owned financial advisory company where she analyzed and modelled debt for municipalities. Currently, she works with Government Strategy Group and assists municipalities in optimizing operations. She is experienced in design and use of databases and has recently analyzed large amounts of data from the US Census in order to facilitate comparisons between municipalities. Ms. Blakeslee serves on the boards of Bergen Community College, the NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (for 23 years), and the NJ Ethnic Advisory Commission.

DEANA GUNN, Managing Director, Municipal Operations/Communications SME – Deana specializes in providing a client experience that exceeds expectations and has a strong reputation for getting things done. She is operationally minded and focuses on keeping projects moving forward while exercising responsiveness and agility. In addition to her previous work in communications and public relations for public entities, she is also an experienced elected official. Deana understands the intricacies of municipal government, especially how important effective messaging and communication can be for meeting policy goals and achieving success. Previously, she worked for a large financial institution and then as an entrepreneur, experiences which have been invaluable in helping her understand clients' needs in private, public and non-profit sectors. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Georgian Court University and recently completed her Master's Degree in Public Administration at Rutgers University.

HITEN PATEL, Director, Metrics and Analytics SME – Hiten is an expert in data analytics, cloud computing, and project management. He has spent the majority of his career in private industry in corporations such as Lockheed Martin, Johnson and Johnson, Valeant Pharmaceutical, and Newell Brands. As a Senior Business Intelligence Analyst, Hiten implemented system improvements and led business process change efforts, replacing inefficient reporting processes by utilizing the latest software tools. He implemented KPI (key performance indicator) dashboards and used visual analytics tools including Qlik and Tableau. Mr. Patel was the project manager using Microsoft Azure suite to switch to cloud computing for data reporting and analytics. He has

created and maintained SharePoint sites to house KPI dashboards and reports. During his career, Hiten earned Top Secret Clearance from the GAO/Department of Defense. In the public sector, Hiten most recently utilized his private sector experience in the analysis of the Suez Group privatization of water infrastructure for Edison Township. He has a BBA in Finance and Economics from the University of Iowa and is near completion of an MBA with a concentration in Data Analytics at Rutgers University.

KENNETH DeROBERTS, Chief Executive Officer, currently overseeing the financial operations of New Jersey's fifth largest municipality, Edison Township and the ninth largest municipality, Hamilton. Ken DeRoberts is one of New Jersey's elite budget and financial executives and analysts. Ken has been a New Jersey Certified Municipal Finance Officer who has compiled an impressive record of accomplishment. While serving as City Administrator/CFO, he is renowned for leading Summit, NJ to become the first municipality in the nation to achieve AAA bond ratings from all three major Wall Street ratings agencies and for subsequently achieving the same impressive accomplishment for the Borough of New Providence.

Ken has served over twenty local and county governments and agencies as a consultant in a variety of challenging financial and management assignments. Through operational and cost-saving analyses, insightful forecasting, and a strong track record in creative shared services, he has been credited with savings millions of dollars for clients, while strengthening their financial positions. For the past eight years, Mr. DeRoberts has been engaged as a respected guest lecturer on redevelopment at New York University's Schack Institute (Graduate School of Real Estate). Ken serves as Co-Chairman of the Economic Recovery Advisory Council for Legislative District 11 and is Chairman of SoupKitchen411.com.

TEAM MEMBERS – while the above SMEs indicate areas of concentration, GSG team members are highly collaborative and work together to enhance each other's performance, sharing their knowledge and experience.

APPENDIX 3 – Roster of Interviews

In addition to conducting site visits and observations of operations, and in addition to 30+ officials and staff previously interviewed, GSG consultants either interviewed or met with, or both, and often multiple times, the following Howell officials and staff as part of this Phase 2 study:

- **Joseph Clark**, Township Manager
- **Fred Gasior**, Member of Council
- **Ian Nadel**, Member of Council
- **Susan Fischer**, Member of Council
- **Louis Palazzo**, Chief Financial Officer
- **Alexis Caufield**, Assistant Finance Officer
- **Diane Festino**, Township Clerk
- **Greg Hutchinson**, Tax Assessor
- **Amy Cordell**, Tax Collector
- **Matthew Howard**, Director of Community Development
- **Steven Fecher**, Director of Community Relations
- **Victor Cook**, OEM Director
- **William Nunziato**, Director of Sewer Utility
- **Jon Cordell**, IT Systems
- **Taylor Corallo**, Purchasing Officer/QPA
- **Allison Cirianni**, Deputy Township Clerk
- **Lauren Marshall**, Payroll Administrator
- **Jill Tripodi**, Human Resources Administrator
- **Allison Gee**, Asst to Manager & OEM

APPENDIX 4 – Shared Services Information

This Appendix consists of the attached PowerPoint presentation from the New Jersey League of Municipalities regarding the utilization of shared services by municipalities. It is provided here to help Howell Township officials consider other possible options for the use of shared services.



Serving Municipal Government Since 1915

Atlantic City Conference Center

November 21, 2013

10:45 am to 12:00 pm

Our Shared Services Panel

Presiding: **Susan Howard**, Mayor, Monmouth Beach

- **Gregory C. Fehrenbach**, NJ State League of Municipalities, Interlocal Cooperation & Management Advisory Service Coordinator
- **Nancy Malool**, Division of Local Government Services, Director of Shared Services and Municipal Consolidation
- **Gary LaVenja**, Township Manager, Township of Maple Shade
- **Colleen Mahr**, Mayor, Borough of Fanwood
- **Linda K. Murphy**, President – NJ Shared Services Association
- **Gary Passanante**, Mayor, Borough of Somerdale and former Shared Services Director, Camden County

Fun Facts for NJ Taxpayers

- In 2013, **Tax Freedom Day**[®] for New Jersey taxpayers was May 4, ranking them 3rd in the nation. Nationally, it is April 18.
- Property taxes in New Jersey have long been the highest in the nation, no matter how you analyze them.
 - Average property tax per household: **# 1**
 - Property tax per capita: **# 1**
 - Property tax as a % of the market value of the home: **# 1**
 - Property tax as a % of household income: **# 1**
- NJ ranks **#1** nationally with 85 government employees per square mile.
- In 2012, the average NJ property tax bill was **\$7,885**.





Serving Municipal Government Since 1915

THE PROS AND CONS OF SHARING SERVICES:

What are Shared Services?

What Is A Shared Service?

A service is defined by the law as “any of the powers, duties, and functions exercised or performed by a local unit.”

P.L. 2007, c 63 (C.40A:65-1, *et seq.*)

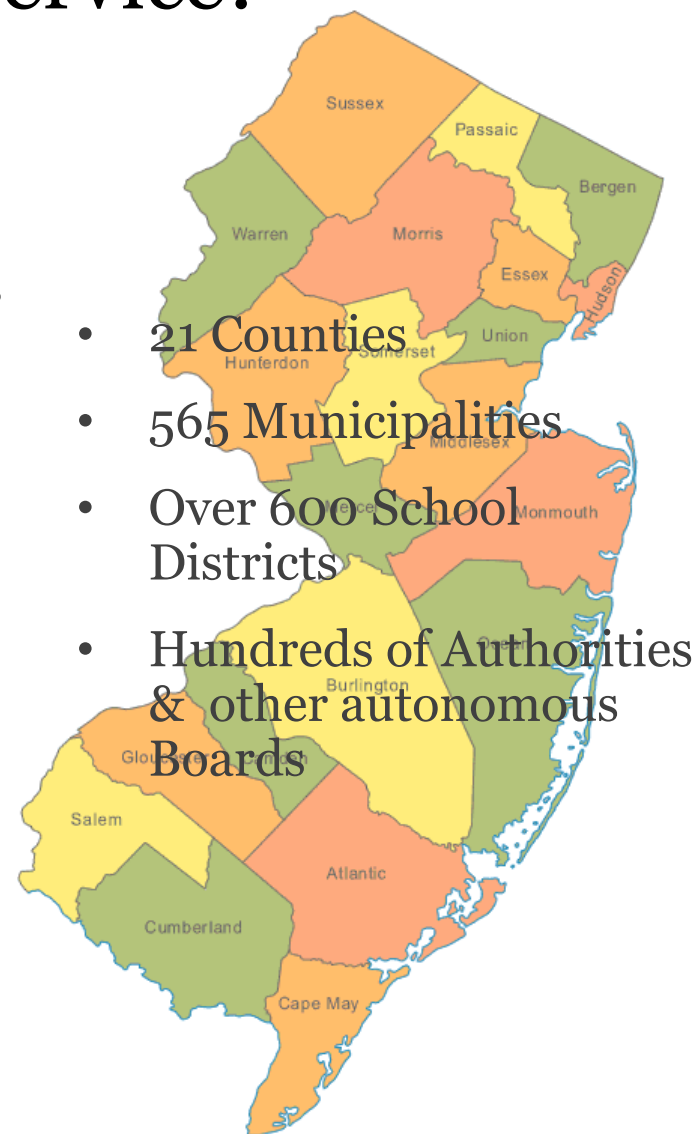
Other Types of Sharing

Mutual Aid

Cooperative Pricing

Cooperative Purchasing

Joint Insurance Funds



What Is Not A Shared Service?

Situation	Type of Sharing
Quinton loans Elsinboro a tractor .	This is not mutual aid (limited to public safety) and is not a shared service. If no money is exchanged, it's just being a Good Neighbor .
One CFO works for both Hawthorne and Passaic and gets two separate paychecks.	This is not a shared service. The CFO is just an Employee of two different towns. If Hawthorne and Passaic agreed to share the CFO, and Passaic pays the full salary but gets a contribution from Hawthorne, then it is a true shared service.
Morris Plains rents a street sweeper from Denville for \$100 per day.	Per Local Public Contracts Law, any local unit can contract with another local unit without bidding. If local entities have an agreement with each other for the use of the sweeper and Morris Plains is paying Denville, then it's a Regular Contract .

What Is Not A Shared Service?

Situation	Type of Sharing
Toms River puts out a bid for street repair; Beachwood agrees to have the contractor repair its streets and pays Toms River for the work.	In this case, the parties must utilize cooperative purchasing. Since Beachwood will be paying Toms River (the lead agent bidding, contracting with, and paying the private vendor), this should be done through a Joint Purchasing Agreement .
Monroe uses Cranbury's gas pumps to fuel their vehicles and pays Cranbury for the cost of the gas.	When one local unit sells commodities to another, the parties must use a Commodity Resale Agreement . Commodities include gasoline and diesel fuel; salt, brine, sand and other snow removal chemicals; and some public works items like road construction materials.
Avalon washes its trucks at Cape May County's vehicle wash facility and pays \$20 per wash.	Avalon is simply using the county's equipment for a fee, so it's a Regular Contract . However, if the County's employees were performing the washing, then it would be a real shared service.

Types of Shared Services

Local Government Shared Services

- ‘High Touch’
 - Public safety – police, fire, EMS
 - Road maintenance – ‘potholes’
 - Sanitation and recycling
 - Recreation programs/facilities
 - Buildings & grounds mtnce
 - Payment of property taxes, utilities, fees, and fines
 - All types of permits & licenses
- ‘Low Touch’
 - Budget, finance, and accounting
 - Personnel & payroll systems
 - Energy aggregation/renewable energy projects
 - Transportation routing system
 - Work orders/cost tracking
 - Health services activity tracking
 - Public records access (OPRA)

Types of Shared Services

Shared Services	# of Parties	Public Partners	Private Partners
Sharing specialized equipment and/or personnel	1:1 or multiple Regional = 3 or more	Any local unit (county, municipal or school district) Payment to lead agency for equipment <i>with operator</i> OR use of personnel	Commercial or nonprofit equipment and/or personnel = regular contract
Sharing a specific service area within a function	1:1 or multiple Regional = 3 or more	Any local unit (county, municipal or school district) Payment to lead agency for service delivery in a specific service area within a function	Lead agency may contract with commercial or nonprofit entity for service delivery
Sharing an entire service delivery function	1:1 or multiple Regional = 3 or more	Any local unit (county, municipal or school district) Payment to lead agency for service delivery of an entire function	Lead agency may contract with commercial or nonprofit entity for service delivery in some/all service areas
Consolidating entire jurisdictions	1:1 or multiple Regional = 3 or more	Any local unit (typically school district or municipality)	Consolidated entity may contract for commercial or nonprofit service delivery in some functions/service areas



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THE PROS AND CONS OF SHARING SERVICES:

Impediments that restrict sharing and cooperation

What Are The Primary Barriers?

Thought Process/Behavior

“Home Rule” Mindsets

Politics and Personalities

Loss of Control Fears

Short Term vs. Long Term Focus

Jobs Protection vs. Taxpayer

Territorial Leadership/Protectionist Department Heads

Willingness to Consider New Ideas



What Are The Primary Barriers?

Costs and Service Levels



Coverage of Start-Up Costs

Other Financial Incentives

Viable Cost Allocation Methods

‘Win-Win’ Agreement Negotiations

Service Level Expectations

Desire for Savings Guarantee

‘Right-Sizing’ Personnel

Terms of Agreement

What Are The Primary Barriers?



Other Barriers

Certain NJ Statutes

Civil Service Regulations

Unions/Labor Agreements

Collective Bargaining/Arbitration Awards

Partner Proximity and Size

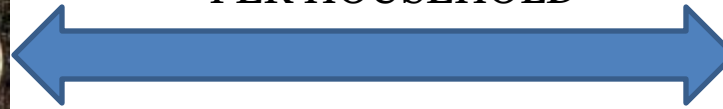
Existing Management Structures/ Fragmented Organization

Municipal Partnership

Scotch Plains – Fanwood Police Departments



EST. SAVINGS – \$80 to \$100
PER HOUSEHOLD



~\$1 MILLION ANNUALLY

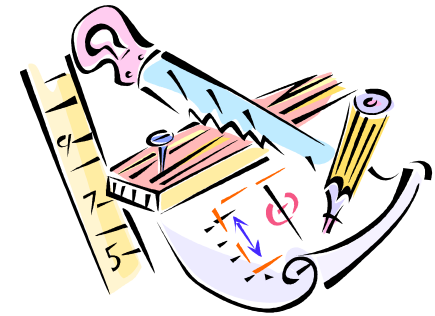


- Driven by desire to reduce cost and positively impact property taxes
- Issues yet to be resolved:
 - Partner relationship: Issues re: governance, risk management & sustainability
 - Organization model: Joint Meeting vs. Lead Agency
 - Civil service status: Larger department is, smaller department is not
 - Police Chief treatment: Executive Director vs. demote, retire, or resign
 - Cost allocation methodology: ‘Win-Win’ savings

Municipal Partnership

Combined Construction Code Offices

- Four Burlington County municipalities
- Impediments:
 - Partner size and work volume differences
 - Organization model: State advocated Joint Meeting vs. Lead Agency
 - Civil service status: Three were, one was not
 - Cost savings questionable
 - Cost of starting/managing Joint Meeting
 - No anticipated savings in Year 1



Municipal Partnership

Combined Police Departments

- Three Burlington County municipalities
- Impediments:
 - ‘Home rule’ mentality/loss of identity
 - Retirement ‘trigger’ missed (one Chief retired & was replaced)
 - Police officer safety concern (one Dept consisted of only 5 officers)
 - Socio-economic and crime rate differences
 - Statutory hurdles /civil service status



Municipal Partnership

Combined Municipal Courts

- Two Burlington County municipalities
 - Projected savings ~\$60,000
- Impediments:
 - Unresolved operational model: ‘shared’ vs. ‘joint’
 - Adamant resistance from one Judge
 - Politics/lack of political will





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THE PROS AND CONS OF SHARING SERVICES:

Factors that facilitate sharing and cooperation

What is The Real Value of Sharing Services?

- **Best Practice Areas:** Doing it better than anyone else
- **Available or Extensible Capacity:** Facilities, personnel, and other resources
- **Existing Leverageable Assets:** Buildings, vehicles, equipment, software, etc.
- **Knowledge Capital:** Innovative ideas for dealing with tough issues



Getting Underway With Shared Services

- Acknowledge the need for greater efficiencies and reduced cost of government.
- Seek serious partners with willingness to consider restructuring and a clear ability to work together.
- Look for shared services ‘triggers’.
- Concur on priority initiative(s) and scope.
- Involve affected personnel to the degree possible.
- Validate the opportunity with supporting facts/figures.



Responsibility, Accountability, and Control

Lead Agency Advantages

- Responsibility
 - Full powers as General Agent for duration of agreement
 - High quality service delivery at agreed upon cost levels
- Accountability
 - Operational excellence
 - Revenue accounting
 - Expense transparency
- Control as Lead Agency
 - All elements of service delivery necessary to meet obligations
 - Primary employer

Supported Entity Advantages

- Responsibility
 - Outsource delivery responsibility
 - Advisory Committee participation
 - Meet conditions of agreement
- Accountability
 - Transfer of personnel and assets to Lead Agency
 - Appointment of personnel, if needed
 - Feedback re: service delivery
- Control via Agreement
 - Specific services to be performed
 - Standard for cost, service level, quality, and scope of performance

Ingredients For Success In Sharing Services

- Organizational/Operational Models
 - Mutually agreed.
- ‘Win-Win’ Negotiations – All participants feel they will obtain value and benefits.
- Survivability – The agreement is capable of surviving changes in elected and appointed officials.
- Risk Management – None of the participants ever feel they are left ‘holding the bag’.
- Duration – Length is sufficient for operational stability and employee certainty.



Municipal Partnership

Pascack Valley Department of Public Works (DPW)



54.3% – SAVINGS – 45.7%
OVER \$800,000 ANNUALLY
MITIGATED CAPITAL NEEDS



Pros

- Significant projected cost savings
- Extended capacity w/ improvements in service efficiency and quality
- Leverage of existing and future assets

Cons

- Employee union litigation
(to be decided on its merits)

Less than 10 complete DPW consolidations statewide

Municipal Partnership

Joint Municipal Court of Dover

- Savings of at least 20% (lead agency)
- Improve court efficiency
- Maintain/improve quality of service
- Reduce overall costs

Lead Agency - Supported Agencies



21.1% – SAVINGS – 25.0% to 43.4%

\$265,000 ANNUALLY

MITIGATED CAPITAL NEEDS



The Mayors of Dover, Rockaway, Wharton, Mine Hill, and Mt. Arlington in Morris County, NJ celebrate the signing of a 10-year agreement in 2009. Since then, Victory Gardens has also joined the joint court in Dover.

Municipal Partnership

Regional Public Health Services

Lead Agency

~48 sq miles

Population ~55,700

\$10.18 per capita

Lead Agency

~80 sq miles

Population ~57,700

\$9.45 per capita

Lead Agency

~21 sq miles

Population ~50,000

\$15.37 per capita

- Reduce 'cost per capita served' from as much as \$23.64
- Expand pool of experienced, well-trained personnel
- Broaden staff specialization, where needed
- Produce greater compliance w/ Ten Essential Public Health Services

Regional public health services as a viable alternative

Countywide public health services in 9 of 21 NJ counties

Regional Collaboration as a Trend



GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY MOVEMENT INC.



Community Collaborative

- Nonprofit, municipality-led restructuring initiative involving 35 municipalities
- Identified savings of more than \$40 million annually
- Conceptual restructuring models in five service areas
- Collaboration among five (5) municipalities with assistance from a nonprofit Foundation
- Multiple areas of priority and common interest
- Jointly funding and pursuing restructuring efforts

Urban Communities Partnership

GOAL: Safe, Attractive, and Proud Urban Communities

Urban communities share the similar needs. The 29 members of this Association represent 5% of NJ municipalities, but have responsibility for serving ~22% of the population of the state.

- Common issues include:
 - Public Safety
 - Education
 - Public Health
 - Community Welfare
 - Affordable Housing
 - Economic Development
- Creation of a multi-point plan to strengthen and unite efforts.



Regional or Countywide Partnerships

Emergency Communications Centers

- Consolidated centers to route police, fire, emergency medical services and 911 calls
- Mitigate high costs for mandated equipment upgrades
- Deal with municipal budget challenges re: public safety



County Emergency Communications Centers are in 12 of 21 NJ counties

Regional or Countywide Partnerships

Shared Fire and EMS Services

- North Hudson Regional Fire and Rescue (NHRFR) – fire protection and medical assistance to North Bergen, Union City, West New York, Weehawken, and Guttenburg.
 - 3rd largest Fire Department in NJ
 - Protects 195,000 residents and more than 50,000 commuters.
- Gloucester County became the first in New Jersey to launch a county-based EMS program, saving \$2.6 million in the 1st year.
 - The program was awarded the 2009 Achievement Award winner for Regionalized Medical Services by the National Association of Counties (NACo).



The Shared Services Agreement

- A Shared Services Agreement is a multi-year contract for service delivery – put it in writing!
 - Duration of agreement
 - Cost allocator/formula
 - Employee-related decisions and actions
 - Treatment of facilities, vehicles, equipment and other assets
 - Ownership and insurance
 - Implementation target date
 - Clear exit clause
 - Specified capital reserve contributions, if needed
 - Service frequency/service levels
 - Make-up of *Oversight Body* for operational and financial reviews
- Approve in draft by all participating parties and attorneys
- Authorizing resolution/ordinance from Governing Bodies
- Formal signatures from all participating parties

The Implementation Process

- Create a specific plan for transitioning to shared services or regionalization
 - Answers to *Who, What, When, Where, and How?*
 - Anticipated efficiency gains/cost savings Year 1 and over time
- NJ State Department(s) involvement
 - Iterative response to issues or concerns
- Employee reconciliation plan
 - Notification, transfer, redeployment, retirement, or termination
 - Approval by Civil Service Commission, if needed
 - Contract reconciliation assistance by PERC



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THE PROS AND CONS OF SHARING SERVICES:

Thank You