

Transition Task Force

Personnel subcommittee

Report of 3/7/12 meeting

Members of the Transition Task Force's Personnel Subcommittee (Thea Berkhout, Jo Butler, Jill Jachera, Jim Levine, Shirley Meeker, Gary Patteson, Bruce Topolosky, Bob Bruschi, Kathy Monzo, Jim Pascale and Sandra Webb) met and discussed the following items:

- Thea Berkhout informed committee members that Joe Stefko of the Center for Governmental Research will attend the joint governing bodies meeting on Monday, March 12, and will participate in the next Personnel Subcommittee meeting by phone on March 14. In a preliminary discussion she had with him, Joe had provided the following guidelines as to the role of the committee:
 - To focus on making recommendations to the governing bodies, laying the groundwork for the new governing body
 - To develop timelines for implementation in 2012 and 2013
 - To use the commission's plan as a jumping off point, taking advantage of further opportunities for economies of scale, but not to reinvent the wheel.
- Alice Small and Ryan Lillianthal -- Consolidation Commission members who are liaisons to the Personnel Subcommittee -- provided background and reviewed some of the major points from the Commissions' recommendations. They urged Personnel Committee members to read the May 2011 "options" report to get a fuller background. Some of the points they stressed were:
 - The Commission had recommended a "right-sizing" with the merger, but not cutting to the bone. They had reached out to the community and concluded that they did not want to see a diminution of services.
 - Joe Stefko of CGR had done a thorough review of all of the staff positions and did not see any glaring examples of overstaffing in either municipality. The May 2011 report that includes options provided a spectrum of more conservative to more aggressive approaches to staffing. There was no real work done on comparative data or best practices because it was felt that Princeton was unique and residents demanded a lot of services. There was a public safety consultant who had been hired to look at the type of service calls reported and whether services needed enhancement or not.
- Jim Pascale and Bob Bruschi provided copies of their recommended reorganization plan and reviewed some of the key points in the plan. They suggest that merged staff reorganize so that only 5 individuals would report directly to the administrator. This would entail creating some new positions of directors overseeing a number of smaller departments. They felt that some of the individuals in merged positions, instead of being laid off, could be "repurposed." They also presented recommendations for best ways to handle redundant positions, which could include attrition, layoff with severance, or ERI plan, and selecting new department heads based on merit, record, and interview.
- Gary Patteson presented an overview of three employee separation options, along with pros and cons of each:
 - Attrition – keeps the knowledge base, but violates the mandate

- Involuntary separation – There are already policies in place, providing period of notice based on years of service. Criteria would need to be developed.
 - Early Retirement Incentive program—per state statute, Princeton has the option to offer this to the municipality as a whole or to just affected departments. A study could cost \$15,000 - \$35,000 and would entail a 6-month lead time.
- The review of a process for merging policies and benefits was postponed to the next meeting, which will take place on Wednesday, 3/14, at 7:00 p.m.