



Meeting 11 Report

March 3, 2010

Engage Gwinnett, the citizens committee on the future of Gwinnett County, held its 11th meeting on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, at the Gwinnett Center in Duluth. The meeting started at 8:00 a.m. and lasted three and a half hours. The Engage Gwinnett committee will make recommendations in April on county government services, the benefits citizens receive from those services, and how they should be paid for.

The first 20 minutes was held in plenary session (with all members present), so members could hear a welcome, a report on the recent public outreach sessions, and instructions about the next few meetings from co-chairs Mike Levengood and Bill McCargo and receive an overview of the day's activities from Jon Abercrombie, the Engage Gwinnett facilitator. Members then went to their Work Group meeting rooms, spending the rest of the time in Work Group sessions.

Meeting Process

Mike Levengood and Bill McCargo, Engage Gwinnett's co-chairs, welcomed the members, alternate members, citizens and observers. Bill reminded them of Engage Gwinnett's mission:

- Look at the major services provided today by Gwinnett County government and the benefits these services offer to citizens.
- Make judgments about these services, their levels of service, and how they are delivered.
- Recommend ways of paying for the ones that are truly needed.

Bill reminded members of some additional Engage Gwinnett meetings in April: April 13 to review and approve a draft report and recommendations, April 17 to offer citizens an in-person opportunity to comment on the draft report, and April 23 to review citizens' comments and approve a final draft to be delivered to the Board of Commissioners.

Bill and Mike said they were impressed by how well Engage Gwinnett's preliminary recommendations were received by citizens in the four public outreach sessions held from Feb. 18 to Feb. 25. "The citizens

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

really ‘got’ Engage Gwinnett and what we’re trying to do,” Mike said. Citizens came up with a number of ideas of their own, and he urged Work Group members to review what they suggested and consider the ideas seriously.

Mike returned to a topic he raised at the last Engage Gwinnett meeting, on Feb. 17, which was to urge the Work Groups to consider a “worse-case scenario,” where the county’s tax digest declines dramatically in 2010 and 2011, as it did in 2009. The preliminary recommendations of the Work Groups were excellent if the tax base did not shrink significantly – if, as Mike put it, “the status quo” held. “But my fear,” he said, “is that when it comes to our county’s budget – and particularly the revenue side of the budget – the status quo will not hold.”

Therefore, he urged the Work Groups to go beyond the recommendations they’ve made so far to a separate set of recommendations that assume the worse case becomes reality. Consider which valuable services should be cut and how they should be cut, he said. “What we may find,” he said, “is that we can’t get there on cuts alone and we’ll need to recommend that the county increase its revenues in some way. But our first obligation is to look for major cuts that can be made, even if we’d rather they not be made.”

Work Group Discussions

The Work Groups worked on recommendations in their work areas, editing previous recommendations and adding new ones. Some groups began their work on what should happen under a “worse-case scenario,” where the tax digest continues shrinking in 2010 and 2011. The following is a brief summary of some of the discussions that were held.

Community Services

Work Group members spent most of their time editing their previous recommendations – combining some recommendations, changing the language of others and rearranging recommendations’ order to make them clearer. But some new recommendations were added – including a new major recommendation about volunteerism that grew out of citizen suggestions at the recent public sessions.

Officials of the Community Services Department, which includes the Parks and Recreation Division, and the Gwinnett Library System were on hand. Library officials wanted to add an important detail to the Work Group’s recommendation that the library system restructure itself as a regional system. (Last year, when library officials said they were considering a “tiered” system that would change the hours and services at some branch libraries, many patrons turned out to oppose the idea.) The Community Services Work Group felt that the plan had not been explained well last year – it was built around the idea of establishing regional services around the county, so that if the closest branch did not offer a particular

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

service or was not open at a certain time, patrons could drive to a library not far away that did have the service or was open. When the idea was recast as a “regional system,” citizens at the public outreach sessions grasped the idea and supported it. Work Group members said they were confident others would, too.

What Work Group members didn’t know is how much money a regional system would save over the existing system, and that is what library officials wanted to explain. Early analysis, they said, showed it could save from \$1.2 million to \$1.8 million a year in salary and other operating expenses. At the higher figure, that is about 10% of the county’s share of the library system budget.

Work Group members spent considerable time discussing what their “worse-case” recommendations would be. Their general ideas were for parks and recreation to reduce programming, privatize or close some active-recreation facilities (such as pools and tennis courts), and selective close ballfields. (A place to begin, the Work Group said, was for the Parks and Recreation Division to implement its 2009 plan for cuts, which was drawn up before the Board of Commissioners increased the property tax millage rate last December. A copy of the plan is attached as an appendix to this report.) For libraries, Work Group members recommended pushing the regional idea further – by closing some branches while keeping nearby branches open, so every part of the county has roughly equal services even as the system shrinks.

The major new idea came out of complaints at the citizen sessions that it was too difficult to volunteer to help in areas like parks, libraries and social services, which could reduce the county’s expenses. One citizen suggested a central volunteer system. Library officials said they already utilized the equivalent of 10,000 volunteer hours every year. This led Work Group members to think about increasing the amount of volunteer hours exponentially. Hence, the recommendation was to set up a system that could deliver 1 million volunteer hours every year and make significant contributions in areas that county employees now work.

Members agreed that such a system would require a significant upfront contribution of technology (for tracking and marshalling the volunteers), political support and management. And it would require new thinking about how to manage people, since volunteers much be managed differently from employees. But the potential of such an effort to reduce cost and build citizen commitment to the community was enormous, they felt. One measure: If volunteer hours were figured at the equivalent of \$25 an hour, 1 million hours of volunteer work could reduce staff costs by \$25 million a year.

Norwood Davis was the principal drafter of the recommendation to set a goal of 1 million volunteer hours. The idea is included in the notes of the Work Groups below. After the meeting, Norwood added more detail to the recommendation, which is included as an appendix

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

Development and Infrastructure

The Development and Infrastructure Work Group focused on revising their observations, considerations and recommendations for the final report. The Work Group also heard a brief presentation on a previous report from the Matrix Consulting Group's study of Gwinnett County's Planning and Development.

The Work Group finished its recommendations for the county's public transit system, most of which focused on finding new sources of revenue or cutting costs. Officials from the transit system were on hand to answer questions. In response to one Work Group member's suggestion to cut transit further so that the county was just fulfilling its contractual and legal obligations, the transit director said that transit service is at that point.

The Work Group also reviewed the suggestions and comments from the public meetings. One suggestion, to use libraries as places for transit route information, was adopted by the Work Group, and expanded to include community centers and grocery stores.

Another citizen idea was to identify illegal rental housing and businesses operating without a permit. One Work Group member pointed out that there is currently a bill before the General Assembly that could make this easier.

The Work Group also considered a suggestion to increase or enact fees for pet licenses. After some discussion, the Work Group reached the conclusion that for the fee to be acceptable to the public, it would not generate enough revenue to be justified.

The Work Group brainstormed about short-term cost-cutting strategies. These cuts would be unpopular, but necessary. One Work Group member compared them to a homeowner who delays repainting the house an extra year. On the question of service levels, the Work Group member suggested that all service levels in transportation, planning and water services could be reduced in a worst-case scenario, but did not want the Work Group to make specific recommendations beyond that level.

Fire and Emergency Services

The Fire and Emergency Services Work Group heard from three department heads. Chief Bill Myers outlined possible scenarios in anticipation of additional budget cuts. Administratively, cuts made in Fire and EMS would have a negative impact on other administrative departments who would have to handle transactions required by Fire and EMS. Reductions in firefighter personnel would lead to a higher homeowner and business owner insurance premiums and cause longer response times in cases of

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

emergency. Human Resources Director Kenneth Poe and Financial Services Director Aaron Bovos discussed county funded retirement benefit plans. They explained how funds were to be contributed in future years to fund OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) for Gwinnett County retirees only. They also outlined how the defined benefit pension plan would affect current and future year's budgets. Technological advances in software has played a role in back office functions and is still being determined if it is actually reducing or increasing work load of staff.

The Work Group reiterated its primary concern was to do no harm to essential services. While the county works to exceed national standards, response times already fall behind these standards.

Law Enforcement and Judiciary

The Law Enforcement and Judiciary Work Group concentrated on completing its recommendations and providing observations to support those recommendations. The group decided that most citizens seem to be fairly satisfied with the level of services they receive in this work area but aren't willing to support a tax increase to keep services at their current level.

The Work Group also discussed feedback from the community meetings. A common question from the citizens concerned the reason Gwinnett has both a police department and a sheriff's department. The group considered a merger between the two for cost savings and efficiency gains. Members also considered conducting several cost-benefit analyses to see if the outsourcing of corrections, courthouse security, the animal control facility, process servers (civil), building maintenance, and other support services as well as the consolidation of IT and building maintenance for all facilities would save a significant amount of funds.

The Work Group also discussed the implementation of technological advances and innovative processes on productivity, such as expediting implementations of information technology and a paperless system for courts. Members also recommended that fees and fines align with the cost of service and that the county and the cities also align their costs.

The Work Group also discussed a recommendation to implement an educational initiative to leverage citizen volunteer capacity for community building, and to extend and complement service delivery.

Observations, Considerations, Recommendations

The following is a complete list of the draft observations, considerations and recommendations from each of the four Work Groups, as they were revised at the Engage Gwinnett meeting on March 3. Most of these were written at earlier meetings, but there were some changes at this most recent meeting.

Community Services Work Group

General

Recommendations

- While elections are a significant expense, they are core to the maintenance of democracy
- Cooperative Extension Service – relatively small budget amount and they're doing a great job – no cuts recommended

Health and Human Services

Observations

- Benefit: Safety net for those at risk and most vulnerable
- Benefit: Information, education, awareness
- Benefit: Early intervention before a situation gets worse (or before government services are needed)
- Research and data are being used to prioritize and focus on needs in community
 - Also used for grants from outside of county
 - Coalition has created strategic plan
- Big difference between subsidies: Hospital, DFCS, MH, BOH; vs. Ch Shelter, BF Gw, Coalition, etc.
- Senior population growing greatly and living longer
- Haven't done adequate planning for senior growth – not just community services, but also transportation, planning, etc. – we're just playing catch-up now. All County Departments need to consider the great senior population increase in planning for future senior services and needs.
- Senior services funding is based on census (change in funding will come in approximately 2012) – mainly work with seniors ages 80+; very few services are available for 60 to 80 year-olds.
- Needs far outstrip funding, losing ground on Health and Human Services indicators
- Granting system is not working
- Leverage provided by subsidy funding is important
- Public health money is based on 1970s population
- Cannot afford to lower funding for Health and Human Services
- Approximately 50% of children in school are on free or reduced lunch
- County is mandated to provide Senior Services
- Broad network of providers trying to meet Health and Human Services needs

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

Considerations

- Subsidy process broken
 - We cannot fail to provide health and human services funding
 - Revise process – Gwinnett Coalition for HHS (or another central agency) be a re-granting agency to address specific needs and leverage capacity
 - Can ill afford to reduce funding
 - Basis of funding shouldn't be "because we always have"
 - May not be addressing biggest needs today
- How do you prioritize?
 - Create fees for some services
 - Out of sight, out of mind concern
- What group should be involved in planning senior services? (study)
 - Coalition sub-committee
 - Friends of Gwinnett County Senior Services
 - Planning Department
 - ARC
 - Non-biased
- Why are Public Health dollars based on 1970s population?
- What would be the possible consequences of the coalition being charged as the re-granting agency?
- Want more agencies considered for subsidy funding
- Consider having Coalition (or another existing group – not a new one) assume responsibilities for regranting subsidy funding
 - More efficient
 - Certain subsidies (hospital system and public health) may need to be treated differently from smaller ones

Recommendations

- Level of funding for Health and Human Services not be cut any further
- Maintain current level of subsidy funding
 - Establish more efficient granting process that meets current needs, without creating a new entity
 - Revised process for results-based strategic (accountability, process, needs assessment, strategic plan) funding for subsidies for Health and Human Services
- A study of senior services be commissioned to assess needs and what is already being done (cost)
- Advocate for state public health funding to be based on current population rather than based on Gwinnett's 1970 population

Library

Observations

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

- Budget has been constant for last three years
- Only change Hamilton Mill branch
- It is a well-run organization
- Current staffing model is very rigid – may be a structural defect that needs to be addressed with need to cut budget
- Quantify savings of regional model – need thoughtful presentation of what it involves (recommendation)
- After several decades of growth in the county tax digest, in 2009 Gwinnett County experienced a decline in the tax digest. 2009 was a wake-up call for the government and the citizens of Gwinnett County. We anticipate further declines in the tax digest before it begins to increase again. We should make recommendations that take this volatility into account while still providing some predictability. If the tax digest declines or increases by more than x% (10?), then the Board of Commissioners should revisit budget recommendations.
- Public library supports pre-kindergarten through 12th grade education – public, private and home schooling

Considerations

- Potentially degraded services
- Hours stay the same, services may be different
- Might promote efficiency and creativity of how to address future funding decline
- Technology changes in five years may be enormous
- Maintain high quality of service with more flexibility
- There is a need for meeting space
- Inappropriate to assume “one size fits all”

Recommendations

- Defer/suspend new sites (renovations okay)
- Implement flexible regional library system targeting a cost savings of 10%, maximizing new technologies.
- Use SPLOST money to renovate libraries that will result in future cost savings (in lieu of additional new libraries)
- Charge user fees to result in an increase to 5% of total budget, or more.
- We strongly encourage the Library Board and leadership to explore alternative staffing models, including but not limited to:
 - Re-engineering the model of maintaining multiple degreed personnel to accomplish tasks that could be completed by non-degreed staff or volunteers
 - Muster a volunteer recruitment, training and placement campaign, aggressively increasing volunteer staff at all libraries with a 5-year target goal of 100,000 volunteer hours per year.
- Fix five-year budget at 2010 levels – revisit and quantify savings on regional/tiered system
- Meeting space should be made available for homework, study, independent team problem solving during afternoons, evening and weekends

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

Parks and Recreation

Observations

- Has already reduced recreational programs, services and special events, eliminated 18 full-time positions and reduced facilities' operation hours
- Deferred capital projects
- YAAs have an important role in our community
 - Number of volunteers and volunteer hours
 - Involve thousands of youth and teens in activities and increase skills
 - Parent involvement
- Must preserve quality of assets – avoid cycle of decline

Considerations

- Community may benefit from county and Board of Education to work together better: communications, coordination of facilities, planning

Recommendations

- Use SPLOST money to renovate parks that will result in future operational cost savings (in lieu of additional/new parks) (i.e., artificial turf, different lighting, natural landscaping, etc.)
- Active recreational facilities – recoup more of their costs, evaluate potential for this (including EHC)
- Research potential cost savings for artificial turf
- Increase coordination with GCPS – comm. Schools, use of ball fields, pools, etc., could Parks and Recreation leverage school fields more/better? Maximize cooperation and coordination.
- Institute an online process to reserve fields, park, etc. (potential cost savings with staffing)
- Privatize, sell or outsource operations of active recreation facilities or increase user fees so they're completely self-supporting, including future capital costs not covered by SPLOST, staffing, etc.
- Charge user fees for active fields and facilities. Analyze all costs, savings, youth athletics' fair share of these expenses, charge market rates for other groups (for-profits, traveling teams, adult athletics, etc. – possibly a per-player fee?)
- New active parks – if not developed by county, give communities the option to cover the operating costs
- Rethink currently planned parks to minimize operating costs in future
- If the golf course is servicing the county's debt obligation, let it ride. If not, plan an exit strategy (develop a work out plan).

Development and Infrastructure Work Group

Planning and Development

Observations

- County is perceived to be more pro-residential and anti-business development
- Conflicting policies in planning and development
- State responsibility of all roles of planning and development, Board of Commissioners and planning commission
- Planning and development department is and should be about generating revenue
- Planning and development is tasked with the future of Gwinnett County
- No near-term demand for outsourcing
- What are the current service levels?

Considerations

- Consider opportunities to combine departments (cross-train)
- Policy and procedures should be business friendly because businesses generate revenue. Our tax base is too heavily weighted to residential vs commercial.
- Can permits and inspection be combined with license and review (consideration)

Recommendations

- Board of Commissioners to maintain current permitting, processing and plan review service levels – keep us competitive when growth returns
- Department evaluate policies and procedures to ensure that they align with Partnership Gwinnett goals
- Fast track renaming the Planning and Development department to Planning and Economic Development
- Do not outsource (outside contracting) any essential Planning and Development functions
- Consider updating the recommendations made by the Matrix Consulting Group
- Implement interventions of the 2030 Unified Plan
- License and Review: County should look into ways to identify non-licensed and non-compliant businesses operating in the county
- Planning and Development should re-evaluate its fees on an annual basis
- Offer all forms of payment options with a fee for credit card for all county services

Transportation

Observations

- Public transportation system serves less than (0.5% - what % is this available to?) of population in Gwinnett

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

- Roads: SPLOST is capital only, not for operating
- Great strides in efficiencies and cost-cutting (maintenance)
- Centralized facility functional and efficient
- Everything stops at the county line – no coordination with the other counties
- The oversupply of parking raises the impact of stormwater runoff and discourages the use of transit services
- Cuts have already been made to some bus routes. Can any more cuts be made?

Considerations

- Will stimulus funds save costs on traffic lights? How much, now and in the future?
- 21st Century traffic control training (more efficient) – need more training
- The department of transportation has managed well within the box – time to consider a new box.
- What role would technology play if starting a department from scratch?
- What are the consequences of privatizing the airport? What is the impact?
- Transit
 - Add Wi-Fi to express buses
 - Create “intra-county” express routes with fewer stops to increase ridership
 - Quantify the market penetration on existing routes. What if ridership increases by 15%?
 - What if weekly or two-week transit passes are offered?
 - Increasing commuter ridership requires more Park-and-Ride capacity
 - The Unified Plan is a long-term plan and vision for Gwinnett County. Revitalization needs density and density requires transit.
 - Transit also carries an impact on economic development (developments of regional impact).
 - Can transit be dropped to a minimum?
 - Continue to monitor ridership
 - Can route patterns be further altered?

Recommendations

- Do a better job of marketing transit service, including providing schedules in community centers, libraries, grocery stores, etc.
- Ensure we’re maximizing our use of technology
 - Staff trained and knowledgeable in its use
 - Develop plans and strategies
 - “Smart” technology
- Independent expert review of county’s use of technology and facilitate integration across functions (e.g., traffic lights, public safety)
- Third party facilitation/review of inter-departmental coordination
- Transit
 - Complete 5-year transit master plan
 - Offer weekly passes in addition to monthly
 - Market to potential riders of necessity for local routes to increase ridership

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

- Assess market penetration in areas currently served and develop strategies to increase ridership to break-even status from general fund standpoint
- Evaluate the return on investment and funds from MARTA (Breeze Card program)
- Generate revenue through ad sales for the buses
- Eliminate the cost of printing transit brochures by making them available electronically or outsourcing the printing to libraries

Water and Sewer

Observations

- Goal is to pay as you go and reduce debt
- No more bonds – Water department has determined that it's their goal to no longer issue bonds to finance future projects and to maintain a triple-A bond rating
- Operates on an enterprise fund, which means it pays for itself through user fees. Therefore, it receives no income from the general fund.
- Costs more to treat sewer than water (60% more)
- Storm water is on property tax bill – funding is approximately 50% of what's needed. Department is researching alternative technologies to reduce costs.
- Implemented collection agency to improve collections by ___ / to ___ % of collectables

Considerations

- How do we address the storm water infrastructure failing? (cost)
- Shortfall in revenue from fees

Recommendations

- Continue following the current policy of department operations and financing.

Fire and Emergency Services Work Group

Observations

- These cuts have already been made:
 - Human resources from 3 to 1.5
 - Reduction in overall headcount – countered by new hires (need exact figures – we have them, and will find them)
 - Consolidation of warehouse (police warehouse added) – centralized inventory
 - Overall reduction in support personnel
 - Consolidated Fire Marshall, etc., in headquarters
 - Plan review has had cuts in Planning and Development
 - General Operating a/c's have had to cut certain percentages – more cuts than capital with personnel – example, fuel costs

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

- Gwinnett County has ensured that we have adequate staffing at each site – deliberate cross-training – Fire/EMT
- Interconnection of total system as it relates to service – not just your local station
- Very flexible/dynamic system and process
- Very well trained, professional staff that is well-equipped
- Outsourced some – fire hydrant inspection, EMS billing and collection
- Response time does not meet national standard
- Openness of fire chief and staff – very good attitude
- High morale and team spirit – team-based approach – morale high despite challenges
- Maintain an ongoing process of consistent interpretation of various codes
- Outsourcing was looked at – example: warehousing
- Improvement in relations between fire and hospital system
- Have tried to hire diverse staff – identified current staff and volunteers to promote education

Considerations

- Response time does not meet national standard
- Aging population in Gwinnett
- Impact of road system and congestion (response time), density, development types, redevelopment (CID)
- Halt in new development gives Fire Department time to catch up
- Gwinnett County strives to exceed the national standard
- Water delivery system affects ISO rating
- SPLOST must do what was voted on – result: unmanned stations, which must be staffed
- Georgia Gwinnett College's new dorms
- Cultural/language diversity
- Effectiveness and efficiency of 911 affects Fire/EMS
- First, do no harm – don't make it worse

Preliminary Recommendations

- Group cautious in recommending changes; concerned about unintended consequences
- Continue good work underway by Department
- As funding allows, add stations, equipment and staffing to maintain and improve coverage across County
- Focus on efforts to reduce community risk through education and outreach; expand use of volunteers and coordination with other organizations
- Address outdoor burning issue through education initially but consider possibility of more stringent regulation where warranted based on risk
- Identify and assess code adjustments likely to have greatest impact on fire risk and management
- Identify and evaluate best practices from other progressive Fire Departments
- Where possible, benchmark performance against comparable jurisdictions
- Consider increasing frequency of fire hydrant inspection and maintenance

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

- Evaluate privatization of other functions

There is additional detail about the Fire and EMS Work Group's work in Appendix C.

Law Enforcement and Judiciary Work Group

Observations

- (4a) Information is available online – general public is not aware of resources
- (5) Constitutional fees (not updated) outdated – does not reflect actual costs or cost of living
- (1a) Justice system components are complex, interrelated and interdependent
- (4b) Justice system could benefit from implementation of new technology
- (1a) Benefit of consolidation of police and sheriff (reference article from Randy Meacham on city police training) requires detailed planning and time frame.
- (1c) County does have department for process analysis, measurement and improvement (Public perception without this information breeds mistrust)
- (3 – 2/3) Culture of “risk aversion” stymies innovation and creativity at the county government level
- (2) Consolidation of all business unit IT functions (refer to #3 observation from 1/20)
- (7a) Justice system has done well utilizing “do more with less” eliminating all “fat” from operating budgets.
- (7b) Gwinnett County Police Department has been accredited since 1993 (re-accreditation comes every three years) by Commission for Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies five times.
- (7c) 3.4% of all law enforcement agencies are accredited.
- (7d) 458 standards apply to all facets of the Gwinnett County Police Department.
- (6) Cost of indigent defense care is excessive.

Considerations

- (4a) Explore partnership with private industry to automate court, fee and filing processes
- (3) Consolidate all facility maintenance
- Expense of providing whole GJAC security
- Goal: create a world class justice system that is cost-effective, innovative across all platforms
- (5) Analyze and determine potential revenue with updated fee structure
- (1a) Greater efficiencies and client outcomes can be achieved by interdepartmental consultation
- (4b) Expedite implementation of Criminal Justice Information System – recognize investment in Criminal Justice Information System
- (1b) Assess cause/effect relationship between components of justice system
- (4c) Determine cost efficiency of online payment systems
- (2 – 2/3) Make departmental ‘score cards’ available online

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

- (7) All law enforcement and corrections facilities maintain the highest industry-recognized level of certification that is fiscally possible.

Recommendations

- Ask county to reevaluate state mandated fees/price for service and court fees; advocate legislative action
- (5) Privatization of collection of remaining unpaid fees/fines at end of probation period; recommend legislative action
- (6) Explore indigent defense funding, fee per case vs. hourly defense
- Expedite “paperless” system for courts, filing fees, permits
- Use innovation to streamline all processes/implement technological advance to increase efficiency
- Explore outsourcing for operations:
 - Corrections
 - Courthouse security
 - Building maintenance
 - Animal control facility
 - Process servers (civil)
- Examine staffing of animal control and number of animals per household
- Recommend independent review of each judicial system department and the inter-connectivity/cause and effect/interaction of their budgeting, staffing and processes (possible task force of consultant/staff/citizen members)
- (7) Education/community building
- Solicitor’s office explore level of charges not requiring jury trial (less than 6 months jail)
- (5) “Summit meeting” of municipalities and county courts on fines and binding costs
- (5) Explore state reimbursements for county services
- (5) Support legislation to update Constitutional fees
- (5) Recoup court costs
- (5) Adopt a coordinated and strategic approach to justice system service delivery
- (3a) Expedite implementation of Criminal Justice Information System
- (3b) Explore private/public partnership for self-service or paperless delivery of services
- (3c) Implement online payment systems
- (1 – 2/3) Continue Engage Gwinnett process to provide continued citizen input and support
- (7) Continue and support process improvement initiative in the justice system
- (7) Education/community building to extend and compliment the capabilities of the justice system
- (1) Initiate independent review of law enforcement/judicial system, promoting interconnectivity between all departments with a goal of establishing a process model for budgeting, staffing and eliminating service duplication.
- Maintain current service levels by achieving efficiencies of cost reduction related to fluctuation of tax digest.

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

- Direct the Performance Analysis Department to lead a task force of key staff, citizens and subject matter experts.
- (2) Conduct cost-benefit analysis for outsourcing:
 - Corrections
 - Courthouse security
 - Animal control facility
 - Civil process servers
 - Building maintenance
 - Other support services
- (3) Recommend consolidation of:
 - Building maintenance
 - IT Services
 - Other support services
- (4) Implement technological advances and innovative processes to increase productivity and transparency
 - Expedite implementation of CJIS
 - Expedite paperless system for courts, tickets, licenses and permits, police reports
 - Provide online access or self-service kiosk for service delivery
 - Case Management Electronic Court Filing
- (5) Align fees and fines with cost of service delivery. Advocate legislative action to:
 - Increase state mandated fees to be more compensatory with costs.
 - Authorize privatization of fee/fine collection.
 - Create new class of misdemeanor for level of charges requiring jury trial (less than six months)
- (6) Explore funding of indigent defense.
- (1) Implement an educational initiative to leverage citizen volunteer capacity for community building to extend and compliment the service delivery of the law enforcement and judicial system.
 - Support current, ongoing review of indigent defense funding
 - Recommend fee-per-case vs. hourly rate

Worse-Case Scenario

The Work Groups were also asked to consider recommendations under a worse-case scenario, where the county's revenues would turn out to be much worse than expected. The following is a list of those recommendations. (Note: Only one Work Group completed its work on these recommendations.)

Community Services

Parks and Recreation

- Further privatization of facilities and programs

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

- Implement additional cost cuts the department has already identified (get that info from Phil Hoskins)
- If absolutely necessary, close parks
- Privatize or close all skate parks
- Privatize or close pools
- Privatize or close fields incrementally (i.e., one field at each park closes at a time, rather than closing all fields at one park)
- End up as “Parks” not “Parks and Recreation”

Libraries

- Find within the regional system more ways to cut expenses as needed (15%, 20%, whatever is necessary)
- Could possibly result in closing one or more libraries, but with services provided at other branches to try and equalize services
- Library system should define and narrow down core or essential services and consider eliminating non-core, non-essential programs and services before closing libraries

Health and Human Services

- Even in a worst case scenario, these services are so underfunded now that we recommend no cuts be realized from HHS or subsidies

Development and Infrastructure

Cut or reduce services in all areas

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

APPENDIX A

REPORT ON THE 2009 PARKS AND RECREATION REDUCATION PLAN

At the March 3 Community Services Work Group session, Community Services Department Director Phil Hoskins was asked to provide a brief summary of proposed cost savings which were NOT incorporated in the 2010 Parks & Recreation budget due to the increase of the tax millage. These service reductions or revenue enhancements were to be included in a list of possible budget reductions if required due to a decline of the tax digest. With the Recreation tax millage already at its maximum of one (1) mil, a tax increase is not possible to offset any budget shortfall.

Specific service reduction / cost saving initiatives were:

- 1) Reduce general recreation programming opportunities provided by Parks & Recreation: reduction of operational hours at all Community Recreation Centers; eliminate two countywide special events; reduce tennis services at existing facilities; reduce other general recreation programming.
- 2) Reduce programs and services in aquatics/swimming pools: close Dacula Pool; close all pools one day per week (year-round and seasonal pools).
- 3) Delay the opening/operations of two new recreation facilities: Stone Mountain Tennis Center; and, Isaac Adair House.
- 4) Increase fees and charges for Parks & Recreation services: new and/or increased fees for non-rental sport fields' user groups (note: this service reduction will primarily affect youth athletic associations - increased fees for ball field lighting, water consumption, use of concessions buildings); increased fees for aquatics/swimming pools; facility rental increases (pavilions, gyms, pools, community rooms, and fields); and decrease percentage paid for instructors (independent contractors).
- 5) Reduce Recreation Fund Capital Contribution: funding for major capital costs associated with maintaining existing facilities.
- 6) Reduce Environmental & Heritage Center services: further reduction of community programming.

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON THE PLAN FOR 1 MILLION VOLUNTEER HOURS

*From Norwood Davis
Community Services Work Group*

Background

As we have discovered the wide variety of government services and programs within the Community Services work group, we are impressed with the significant leveraging of community volunteers within these program areas. For example, volunteers deliver about 20,000 hours each year within the library system. In addition, the youth athletic associations and their programs are delivered completely with volunteers. Among our work group, we discussed and envisioned additional volunteer opportunities among the library system, parks & recreation, and health and human services. These discussions led us toward a broader, more audacious recommendation that transcends the Community Services area.

Recommendation

Therefore, as we applaud these efforts, we also challenge the Board of Commissioners to consider a radical mind shift in the delivery of services. We challenge the Commission to consider an audacious initiative that extends these nascent volunteer efforts into a comprehensive volunteer engagement campaign that transcends departmental boundaries. Specifically, *we call for a campaign to achieve 1,000,000 volunteer hours per year to execute and deliver government services that are currently delivered by paid staff by the year 2015.*

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
25,000	100,000	200,000	400,000	700,000	1,000,000

We envision a staged campaign that cultivates, develops and channels momentum toward the 2015 objective. We conservatively estimate that such an initiative could result in annual savings of up to \$25,000,000.

We unapologetically recognize the audaciousness of this objective and the radical reorientation and refocusing of current paradigms that will be required to successfully achieve this vision. We acknowledge that dedicated, professional, long tenured public servants may perceive this as a threat to their livelihood. We acknowledge that citizens served by current approaches may be concerned about degradation of service and reduced access. We acknowledge that those in government leadership positions may perceive this as an unnecessary leadership task. We acknowledge that near sighted

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

individuals may object based on the balance of short term investment to long term returns. We acknowledge the experts will deem this is without precedent and therefore impossible. Indeed, we acknowledge there will be many real obstacles. However, to all of those, we introduce the invitation of Ferdinand Magellan, Explorer c. 1520:

The sea is dangerous and its storms terrible, but these obstacles have never been sufficient reason to remain ashore . . . unlike the mediocre, intrepid spirits seek victory over those things that seem impossible . . . it is with an iron will that they embark on the most daring of all endeavors . . . to meet the shadowy future without fear and conquer the unknown.

Below we outline additional necessary elements of success and obstacles or objections we anticipate.

Essential Elements of Success

To achieve this 1,000,000 hours vision, county government must reorient its leadership and staffing models to elevate its capacity to:

1. Inspire incumbent leaders and staff to embrace this vision.
2. Recruit, hire and train a new cadre of staff with core skills and experience in leading volunteers.
3. Identify and structure potential volunteer staff roles.
4. Recruit, train, empower, and reward volunteers.
5. Equip volunteers to effectively and efficiently deliver services.
6. Navigate a maze of employment, privacy and liability legal issues that may retard this initiative.
7. Resource this campaign sufficiently.

We believe, by our own experience and observation, that there are numerous best of class modes in leveraging volunteers to achieve organizational objectives. We commend the Commission and county staff leadership to seek out these models, evaluate them, learn from them, and apply the appropriate principles to this campaign.

In addition, we acknowledge the significant volunteer initiatives that currently exist among a wide variety of community organizations from youth associations, the faith community, chambers of commerce, and civic organizations. We encourage the county to coordinate this campaign with those efforts where appropriate. We believe there is much to learn from these organizations and potential synergies to be harvested. We also believe that a “rising tide lifts all boats” and as the county pursues an audacious vision of community volunteering a shared value will be elevated among all citizens. New relationships will be forged and new ideas generated. The convergence of these things will result in more volunteers across all organizations, not just county government.

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

Further, we urge sufficient start-up investment capital be allocated to ensure appropriate systems may be developed to support the vision. Specifically, we envision data systems, registration systems, marketing initiatives, and social media assets must be developed to achieve this vision.

Finally, and importantly, we implore the Commission to appoint and authorize an appropriate leader for such an initiative. We envision that such a leader would report directly to the County Administrator and would deliver systematic reports directly to the Commission on the progress of this campaign. We envision such a leader would, by virtue of his or her role, develop a prominent profile across Gwinnett County. We envision that such a leader must possess a broad and well developed set of skills to lead and administrate such a campaign. Such a leader must have the positional authority to demand enthusiastic compliance from department heads and the relational savvy to ensure they enjoy the experience. He or she must be able to be obsessed with detail in one moment and nimbly champion the strategic vision the next. He or she must possess the proven capacity to lead change, and lead it well.

Anticipated Objections and Obstacles

While we acknowledge there is much yet to discover, we anticipate the following objectives and obstacles.

1. **Volunteers will not be able to deliver as high a quality of service.** We reject this objection. Numerous organizations from Scouts to disaster relief organizations to churches, synagogues and temples achieve seemingly impossible tasks everyday with volunteer staff hours outnumbering paid staff hours overwhelmingly. Indeed, many of these organizations realize a degree of dedication and professionalism that is fueled by intrinsic, self-motivating factors that far surpass extrinsic enumeration.
2. **Volunteers are more difficult to lead.** We acknowledge this reality. However, we also believe that the benefits of an engaged citizen far outweigh the difficulties. We acknowledge that the skills required to lead a volunteer to accomplish a task are very different than the skills to accomplish the task. Therefore, as previously discussed, we commend the recruitment and equipping of existing and new staff with skills targeted toward leading volunteers to lead volunteers. As noted in #1 above, so many organizations rely on volunteers as their principal human resource, we know this is possible.
3. **Volunteers are not available during normal business hours.** While we acknowledge normal business hours constrain the pool of potential volunteers, we also see a rapidly aging population. A population that possesses significant experience and wisdom. We believe this population is a primary target audience to achieve this vision.

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

4. **Volunteers are restricted by training, certification, or policy.** We acknowledge that many staff roles appropriately and necessarily require specific training or certifications. However, our goal of 1,000,000 hours represents approximately 10% of the total staff hours among county employees. We believe that 10%, while audacious, is achievable among staff positions that don't require such certifications or training. In addition, we believe that many positions may be parsed to extract tasks that do not require such certification or training. Again, this will require a mind shift of seismic magnitude.
5. **Volunteers cannot have access to specific resources like computer systems.** Again, many things will have to be reconsidered. Volunteers will need access to database systems, computer systems, facilities and other county owned assets. New policies, procedures, and systems will be necessary to appropriately administer this access. Again, we point to the successful model of many other organizations that successfully navigate these obstacles every day.
6. **Volunteers won't have the same intrinsic motivation to volunteer for government as they do for their church, youth athletic association, or civic organization.** We reject this premise. Our nation was founded upon the selfless collaboration of people of goodwill to build a government of the people, by the people and for the people. We submit this vision is the very realization of that aspiration.

APPENDIX C:

ADDITIONAL DETAIL FROM THE FIRE AND EMS WORK GROUP

Note from Charlotte Nash: This is a revised version of the Fire and EMS report. We have added information to it and identified how we think that OCR's should be sorted and grouped. We have used the following color coding to distinguish groupings:

- *Yellow – Fire & EMS*
- *Purple – Overall HR*
- *Green – Additional questions we need answered*

Public meeting report – ah-ha moments?

- **Consideration: Public says Fire is the last to be cut.**
- **Consideration: We need to be careful in how we explain the background for recommendations for all groups.**
- Question arose at first meeting – privatizing ambulance.
- **Don't build stations we can't man – leave as-is until we catch up - Recommendation**
- **Observation: Public expressed a real concern about protecting what we have.**
- **Observation: Public perception Fire/EMS doing well –partly why we should protect it in addition to the need.**
- **Observation: Public perception: Recognition that without warning any one of us may need Fire/EMS.**
- **Consideration: Public Perception: Fire/Police – very basic services of government.**
- **Consideration: Widespread support for services but reluctance to pay more (except Norcross).**
- Question re: police – are police factored into ISO rating? No.
- No one really seemed to have an axe to grind, but a general sense of “Let's do something!”
- People who come to sessions seem to value Engage process.
- Hot topics: libraries, parks, transit.
- Reinforcement of need to give context to recommendations.

Question: Why concern for response time in Norcross? Norcross probably has better response time due to resources. They may not live in Norcross.

As a result – validation for our findings but we need to flesh it out. Continue refining recommendations. Follow up with Ga. Gwinnett.

Question: Cuts and impact of cuts.

- Have examples from other locales across country – always start with admin (already cut).
- **Consideration: Any more cuts to Fire/EmS would impact service.**
- HR cut from 3 to 1.5 (running background, etc.) and if cut totally – small fire department.
- **Consideration: Can't Close fire academy due to need for ongoing certification and represents small budget dollars so would have less impact**
- To get to 10% - people have to come off streets.
- Atlanta used brownouts in different locations.
- **Consideration: Will not run an engine with less than the standard # of personnel required – unsafe for firefighters.**
- Would need to work with county to close a station.
- Bottom line – personnel would be cut.
- **Observation: any cuts that would make a difference would mean cutting firefighters**
- Rough estimate – to get to 10%, would have to cut three stations.
- What is administrative impact of a brownout? What are the unintended consequences? Security of station.
- **Consideration: administrative and unintended consequences of rolling brownouts**
- Brownout – close a station for a day or shift (i.e., spread personnel out across city) – Atlanta city stations cover smaller geographic area.
- **User fees – Revenue gained minus cost of billing did not seem to be significant - observation.**
- Subscription-based fire departments – do they exist? Originally how volunteer fire departments funded their service.
- Many homeowner fees have a fire charge.
- Less than 2% of cost is structure fires, etc.
- **Consideration: – closing three stations would not keep response times the same.**
- ISO would return immediately to redo the rating if station did not open.
- **Fire department is 20% of the general fund: Consideration**
- Estimated savings of rolling brownout vs. closing fire station – easier to quantify closing a fire station than a brownout because it depends on which station. **Closing a station – about \$3 million - Observation**
- **Easier to recover from a rolling brownout than a closed station - Consideration**
- Station location based on two factors: geographic location, population density.
- Fire Department decides where to put stations.

Overall HR Observation: 2010 Budget: Salaries remain the same, percent of benefits and medical insurance paid by employees went up.

HR Observation: Gwinnett has not had any furloughs

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

Furloughs – Gwinnett has not had any. Why?

- Observation: Furloughs are a short term fix. Need long term.
- Observation: Already reducing staff
- Observation: Shift schedules make it difficult.
- Observation: Instead of furloughs, GCounty came up with other solutions for long term.
- Consideration: Furloughs are not off the table, could still happen.

Fire: overtime goes before a furlough; rolling brownout scenario.

DeKalb made all holidays unpaid.

Fire department – time is accrued.

What should we think about?

There are consequences for anything we do.

Consideration: If Fire Department does not grow, response times will increase because:

- Call volume increases
- Changes in demographics (aging, etc.)
- Traffic congestion
- Changes in residential/commercial infrastructure (age of buildings, etc.)

Service improvements if budget increases

- Will support Fire Department Plan: adding stations, ambulances, etc.
- How do we preserve and move forward with no harm done to infrastructure in the face of decreasing revenues (long term)?
- Regarding code issues: in these five years, lay the foundation for the next 15 years based on densification and urbanization: Recommendation – Consideration
- High rises create a different challenge – Fire Department watches what's approved

Other Post Employee Benefits (Refer to information contained in email from CFO Bovos, which is posted on website.)

Overall HR Observation: Personnel costs are such large portion of budget that this area deserves an overall review.

Overall HR Observation: Public Safety employees have been treated better than employees in other areas---their merit raises in 2009 resulted in increased base pay while other employees received merit pay increase as one-time payments that did not increase base pay.

Overall HR Observation: 2010 budget does not include funding for employee raises.

Overall HR Observation: Funding for contributions to Defined Benefit Pension Plan and Other Post Employment Benefits (primarily retiree health insurance) is a growing figure, as discussed by CFO.

Overall HR Observation: Spec for health insurance/retiree health care before 05/06 – pay as you go. Now they must accrue a liability reflect in notes to financial statements the amount of unfunded liability that exists.

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

Overall HR Observation: County has taken actions already to slow the growth of future OPEB costs, i.e. increasing portion of health care costs borne by retiree, restructuring plans to encourage enrollment in most cost-effective plan for county and capping annual payout by plans for individual employee.

Overall HR Observation: Additional cost containment changes in retiree health coverage (as well as coverage for active employees, likely in future).

Overall HR Consideration: Reductions in health care coverage and increases in employee premiums and deductibles coupled with stagnant retiree and employee pay = lower net pay; affects lives of individuals and employee morale.

Overall HR Observation: Health coverage for county retirees is coordinated with Medicare benefits and becomes secondary to Medicare at point retiree is eligible for Medicare.

Pay as you go accounts for one part. They make a contribution for the other part.

Overall HR Observation: Beginning 2010: spread contributions to all operating funds instead of just general fund.

2011/2012 – will fund it exactly as they fund DB.

Overall HR Observation: Some cost containment measures already have been applied to DB Plan. DB Plan closed to new hires after 1/1/07; new employees participate in Defined Contribution (DC) plan instead. Additional contributions from employees instituted in 2010.

Overall HR Consideration: DB plan represents legal obligation while status of retiree/employee health coverage is more flexible.

20.56 – 2010 percentage.

Overall HR Observation: Projections 2011/2012 – based on annual required contribution per actuarial estimates; some actuarial assumptions have to be changed to reflect effect of unintended consequences of certain budget cuts and cost reduction actions, i.e., accruing holiday pay rather than paying for it..

Consideration: Within the County's 5 year forecast, no funding is included for service enhancement to fire in general fund until 2014. Then everything goes upside down; will require a new revenue source. Three additional stations are funded in current SPLOST program. Overtime – if they are on a call at the end of a shift. Disaster, etc.

Recommendations

Do no harm

- Support plan of Fire Department
- But we don't have enough funding.
- Don't want to damage infrastructure and make it hard to recover.
- Tier 1 – minimum recommendations

Recommendations

Fire/EMS does not need to be cut

Support current 5 year plan of Fire Department and find a way to fund it.

- Increase millage rate.
- Charge user fees

Consideration: User fees could cause a public backlash. Must consider if the revenue generated is worth the backlash

Consideration: Must give detailed consequences of impact of cuts to Fire/EMS

What are the consequences if there is a cut? Need to spell these out.

Consideration: What happens if we don't cut fire? Impossible to just wipe out other areas. Other areas are smaller part of budget, so impact is less.

Consideration: Public perception – public will want to see parks and libraries cut before seeing millage rate increase and before any fire stations are cut.

Questions for Fire Chief:

- Are there other communities that have had to make cuts?
- What were the consequences?
- Can we have some examples?
- Heard a little about Atlanta and DeKalb. Can we have more info or hear about others

Discussion of Internal Service Operations (Finance, HR, IT, Support Services, etc)

Observations:

These departments and functions have sustained much larger percentage reductions in staffing and funding than operating departments.

These cuts were premised on the originally adopted 2010 budget which did not fund additional staff and initiatives in Public Safety, Law Enforcement and other areas of County.

Funding and staffing were not restored to internal service functions when millage rate increase was approved and 2010 budget was revised. Result = more service demand on internal services than anticipated without provisions to meet increased demand.

Pressures on staff in internal services areas are approaching non-sustainable level, and morale and productivity are suffering.

There are technology improvements which could increase the ability of HR and Finance to perform their core assignments if funds and staff time could be available to allow implementation of these.

ENGAGE GWINNETT
MEETING 11 REPORT
MARCH 3, 2010

Considerations:

Ability of operating departments to deliver services to public is strongly affected by effective functioning of internal services departments.

Certain basic functions like recruitment, employee transactions, purchasing supplies and equipment, accounts payable processing, keeping the books, etc. must be performed. If internal services departments are unable to handle these satisfactory, then operating departments have to take up slack. These shifts resources from the core mission activities of the operating departments.