

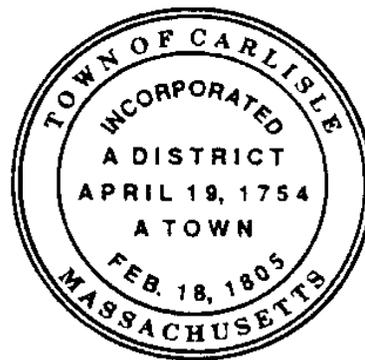
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# **ORGANIZATION AND EFFICIENCY STUDY OF TOWN HALL DEPARTMENTS**

***TOWN OF CARLISLE, MASSACHUSETTS***



**OCTOBER 2012**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>A. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>B. OPERATIONAL ISSUES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>C. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>APPENDIX A CURRENT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR JOB DESCRIPTION</b>	

## **A. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management (the Center) was retained by the Town of Carlisle to conduct an analysis of government operations for departments located at Town Hall. This analysis included the following departments.

- Town Accountant
- Treasurer/Collector
- Assessor
- Town Clerk
- Council on Aging
- Recreation
- Planning Board
- Conservation Commission
- Building Commissioner
- Housing Authority
- Board of Health

This report presents the results of the study, which began in June 2012, and was designed to provide an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of Town operations, identifying strengths and improvement opportunities relating to organization, staffing, and management.

In this concluding point of the study, the project team has assembled this report which summarizes our findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## **1. STUDY METHODOLOGY**

In this Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness Study for Carlisle, the Center utilized a variety of data collection and analytical techniques. The project team conducted the following data collection and analytical activities:

- At the outset of the project, the study team interviewed the Town Administrator. The purpose of this interview was to develop an initial understanding of the issues and background which led to this study, as well as to establish the steering committee composition and to determine milestones for accomplishment.
- The project team conducted interviews of department heads in each department in the study.
- While on site, the project team collected a variety of data designed to document workloads, costs, service levels, and operating practices. This was supplemented by data and information collected from the Town's website.
- The project team developed descriptive summaries, or profiles, of each department in the study – reflecting organizational structure, staffing, workloads, service levels and programmatic objectives. This profile is included as an attachment to the report.

This report focuses on the most significant organization, staffing, and management issues facing Carlisle.

The next section provides an overall summary of the project's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **2. STRENGTHS OF CARLISLE'S OPERATING DEPARTMENTS**

It is important to place any analysis such as this into a complete context. A study such as this one necessarily focuses much of its attention on improvement opportunities which need to be addressed in a client agency. However, this study process has also identified positive

characteristics for the Town of Carlisle. For example, the Town is exemplary in the sharing of clerical and administrative staff among the departments in Town Hall. The Town of Carlisle, with a population under 5,000 residents, has a relatively small staff, and has economized by sharing clerical staff among two and three departments in some cases. Also, department managers and staff work hours that are, in some cases, well beyond the posted hours of Town Hall, attending evening meetings, assisting customers, and other events.

Pervading these department-specific positive attributes is good communication between departments. This is true for all departments with which the project team interacted, but it is especially true of the departments with necessary interactions. These include the financial functions of Treasurer/Collector, Accounting, and Assessor, as well as the development-related functions of Building, Housing, Conservation, and Recreation, and the Council on Aging.

### 3. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following exhibit provides a list of the principal recommendations made in this report.

#### Summary of Recommendations

Page	Recommendation
<b>ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL ISSUES</b>	
9	The Town should begin to develop, adopt, and implement a five-year IT Strategic Plan.
11	The Town should capitalize on its GIS asset to a much greater degree than is currently the case, and should begin the process, in the near term, by assigning "ownership" of the system to a specific department.
14	The Town should purchase and install an automated information system for the COA that will collect data related to senior attendance at programs and activities.
15	The Recreation Department should acquire a software package that records critical

<b>Page</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
	information regarding its program participants.
19	The departments in Town Hall should enhance their web pages to provide residents with a wider variety of information, in addition to, in some cases, organizing the web pages in a more user-friendly manner.
22	The departments located at Town Hall should ensure that all office hours are posted on their individual web pages. Further, the project team recommends that individuals be cross-trained in the basic operating elements of other departments in order to be able to assist visitors in cases in which departmental staff are absent from their work stations.
25	The Finance Department should develop a financial plan that covers multiple years and evaluates the Town's current and projected financial condition based on projected scenarios.
26	The Board of Selectmen should assess the potential of strengthening the position of Town Administrator in order to consolidate daily supervision over operations and performance of staff.
28	The Council on Aging and the Recreation Department should strengthen their cash handling
29	The Town should consider the "insourcing" of the payroll function that is currently performed by a third-party provider. The estimated payback of five years makes the investment attractive if the payroll software has a useful life of at least this period of time.
<b>ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES</b>	
32	The Town should consider the consolidation of the Carlisle Council on Aging and the Recreation Department, into a newly-formed Community Services Department.
34	The Town should consider the creation of the position of Chief Information Officer in the Town, reporting to the Town Administrator.
37	The Town should consider the conversion of the Town Clerk position from an elected to an appointed one.
39	The Town should consider relocating the departments of Building, Planning, Housing, Health and Conservation to the Highland Building on School Street creating a One Stop shop for permitting and plan review while also addressing space needs for multiple departments.
41	The Town should identify critical managers and employees who are nearing retirement age and begin the transfer of knowledge and skills through hiring employees at lower levels to work with these individuals.

The following sections provide analysis for each of the recommendations provided in the table above.

## **B. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

The following sections provide analyses and recommendations related to operational issues in Town Hall Departments.

### **1. THE TOWN SHOULD DEVELOP A FIVE-YEAR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Town of Carlisle, as a relatively small town with limited numbers of governmental personnel, has historically relied upon outside vendors for the provision of information technology maintenance, repairs and training. This is currently the case, with a private contractor being on-call for any limited, maintenance-related, IT services needed by Town Departments.

The Town does not currently have a centralized approach to information technology, even as it regards approval for technology purchases by the various Town departments.

The Town budgeted \$12,300 in FY 2012 for “Computer Maintenance”, and has increased this budget for the upcoming fiscal year to approximately \$25,000, an increase of \$12,700, or about 103%.

There has not been, however, any comprehensive strategic focus by the Town on its information technology needs. The absence of a Strategic Plan for information technology leaves the Town without consistent guidance on the use of information technology as a management and customer service tool.

The above factors have several operating impacts for the Town, including the following:

- There is no vehicle by which to develop and measure effective provision for, and coordination of, information technology services, applications, training, repair, maintenance, etc.
- There is no consistent means for the establishment of priorities for hardware and software acquisitions or replacement and no long-range guide for financial planning and investment.
- Technology decisions appear to be largely reactive to immediate situations rather than planned and driven by standards of customer service.

As a supplement to the current method of calling an IT consultant for each specific IT need, the Town should strategically address its longer-term information technology requirements through the establishment of an IT strategic plan. The plan should include the following:

- **Well-Defined Planning Model.** The plan should start with a specific work plan for accomplishment of the immediate planning task as well as provide the vehicle for annual planning reviews and updates. The model should include creation of a planning committee (which could become an on-going Town-wide Strategic Information Policy Committee) consisting of user representatives, formal staffing assignments, a specific work plan and timetable, and measurable goals and performance, which would likely focus, at least initially, on the shared information needs of Town departments.
- **Organizational and Governance Structure.** The plan should establish the structure of the Information Technology function in the Town, and provide for policy and priority oversight through users. The plan should detail the current and future state organization and any potential staffing of the IT function. This element should also detail the skill sets needed by the technology staff and provide the planning and the vehicle to assure that employee(s) receive the proper training and support.
- **Applications Planning.** The plan should inventory all existing applications and establish a priority listing for future applications, both new applications and significant upgrades. The listing needs to be based on objective standards relating to customer service, demonstrable improvements in work efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness to industry or vendor decisions, and cost-benefit.

- **Hardware Planning.** Hardware planning should follow applications planning. Pricing should be incorporated into applications planning. This should include initial acquisition, annual operations, maintenance, and replacement. One of the immediate needs noted by the project team was in the area of handheld technology, for example the use of tablets for issuance of real-time field inspection status updates.
- **Financial Planning.** The plan should include reasonable cost estimates for annual operations of information technology, assignment of costs and recovery from user agencies, capital acquisition and replacement funding. The plan should include identification of funding resources. New capital should be incorporated into the Town’s annual Capital Improvement Plan; replacements should be paid for through dedicated replacement funds.

**Recommendations: The Town should begin to develop, adopt, and implement a five-year IT Strategic Plan. This plan should be one that includes all systems needs and support requirements. The project team suggests that the Finance Department take the lead in the establishment of the Plan, however its development should be a collaborative effort, involving multiple departments, under the guidance of an ad hoc strategic planning committee composed of Town employees and residents.**

## **2. THE TOWN SHOULD ENHANCE THE UTILITY OF ITS GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS).**

A GIS is a computerized system that holds and stores geographical information for the purposes of managing, analyzing and observing relationships between the Town’s geographical features and the data that describe it. Typically, a Town’s parcel data, tax information, underground infrastructure, political boundaries, and other features will reside in the GIS database, and can be used to reflect assessed values, building permits issued (open and closed) by parcel, land use designations, age and maintenance histories of water line, buildings, Town trees, and many other features.

The Town of Carlisle has a GIS system, however it is under-utilized, and there is no “owner” of the data that reside on it. The project team recommends that the Town assign

ownership of the data that reside on the GIS to a specific department such as Planning or Assessor. The nominal owner of the system would ensure the accuracy, synchronization and integration of the data that reside on it, and would ensure that updates are made in accordance with established policy.

The potential benefits available to the Town through an enhanced GIS include the following:

- The delineation of neighborhoods by geographical boundary
- A method of checking for structures that have been added, remodeled, improved or removed, through comparison of updated aerial photography to work performed in the field.
- The viewing of shape and orientation of parcels for the purpose of adjusting land valuations.
- The viewing of where sales have occurred, and where there are trends in land sales.
- The viewing of growth trends in specific types of properties over time.
- Facilitation of environmental review of projects.
- Facilitation of development review, analysis and compliance by ensuring the simultaneous distribution of plan sets to affected departments, and the assemblage of all plan comments in a single file for all reviewers to view in real time.
- The presentation of more informative mapping data to Town residents, Board of Selectmen, and others.

The Town of Carlisle has a relatively affluent and technologically-sophisticated residential population, and for this reason, the inclusion of GIS into an expanded role could have other benefits as well, such as online mapping, fee payments, application submissions, licensing, permitting and other benefits that could provide residents the convenience of avoiding unnecessary trips to Town Hall for services that could be obtained on-line.

Although the scope of services of this current project include only the departments located within Town Hall, a GIS does, in fact, have an enterprise-wide impact, as is indicated pictorially below.

### Information and Communication Distribution Wheel



The Town should recognize the cross-departmental uses of the GIS, and these should be instrumental in shaping the development of the Information Technology strategic plan, recommended previously.

**Recommendation:** The Town should capitalize on its GIS asset to a much greater degree than is currently the case, and should begin the process, in the near term, by assigning “ownership” of the system to a specific department. Currently, no single department has this ownership, and as a result, the system has languished, and it not being fully used for internal Town departmental purposes such as facilitating development review, or for the residents of the Town who could benefit from enhanced E-Government services available through the GIS. The project team recommends the establishment of an ad hoc committee, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, that includes representatives from the Assessor, Planning, Conservation, Building, and, although not a part of this study, the Public Works Department and Police and Fire Departments.

### **3. THE TOWN SHOULD ENHANCE THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS CAPABILITIES OF THE COUNCIL ON AGING.**

Chapter 40, Section 8B of Massachusetts General Laws establishes Councils on Aging (COA), and requires each to carry out “programs to meet the problems of the aging in coordination with the Department of Elder Affairs.” The Carlisle COA provides a wide array of services to its growing senior population at 11 different venues. These services include the senior tax worker program, food assistance, fuel assistance, caregiver support, Friendly Visitor services, informational services and referrals, transportation, cultural arts programs and lectures, social programs, fitness and exercise, health screening and more.

Interviews with the COA staff indicate that there is a large and growing senior population in Carlisle, as is the case in most municipalities across the country, as “baby boomers” are reaching retirement age. Departmental data indicate that in 2008, there were 943 seniors (defined as age 60 and older), which represented 16.8% of the Town’s population. In 2011, there were 1,184 seniors, representing 21.1% of the Town’s population. Clearly, with over one of every five residents being in the “senior” age group, and with this ratio climbing each year, meeting the needs of this population should be an important focus of the Town.

Historically, senior centers have been viewed as facilities at which visitors engaged in primarily passive activities such as card games, crafts, health screening, information referrals, and others. Increasingly, however, seniors are demanding a wider set of options. The Carlisle COA has many provided many of these needs, however, in discussions with the staff, data related to the numbers of participants in each program are difficult to obtain, making the task

of determining the most popular programs difficult, and forces a reliance upon memory or anecdotal evidence.

In 2008, the Town of Carlisle administered a town-wide survey in which it asked questions related to many topics of interest to the general population in the Town, however few of these questions related specifically to the preferences of seniors regarding their preferences for programmatic services through the COA. Therefore, although there was some useful information regarding the needs for socialization, exercise frequencies and methods, and other factors, it did not define specific programs that the senior population desired.

The project team recommends that the COA institute a method of data collection that will allow it to analyze the programs and services that are most important, and most-utilized, by its senior population. To the extent that senior centers collect these data at all, it is generally by requiring visitors to sign in for each service in which they engage. This can be an annoyance to visitors, and can also create lines waiting to sign in. However, there are software programs with which the project team is familiar that facilitate the sign-in process, and, if utilized properly, will allow the analysis of data related to attendance at each programmatic activity. Utilizing a coded identification card, seniors “swipe” the card into the terminal, typically located in the lobby, and they select the activities in which they intend to engage while at the facility that day. This allows the COA to assimilate the information in near-real time, and to determine the attendance at each program, and to help to maximize attendance at future programs. At the end of the reporting period, the information can be easily assimilated by program and activity, as well as the numbers of duplicated and non-duplicated attendees. Further, the

system holds valuable information related to each individual senior's profile, including preferences, address, emergency contact information, relatives, and other important information.

The project team does not make a recommendation here for any specific information system.

**Recommendation: Purchase and install an automated information system for the COA that will collect data related to senior attendance at programs and activities. This system will likely cost approximately \$10,000, with ongoing maintenance of about \$100 per month. The Carlisle COA may need to invest somewhat more in this system, however, given that it has no dedicated facility at which it can install the system. Rather, it should investigate the availability and costs associated with portable scanners that may be transported to event sites, wherever they occur.**

#### **4. THE TOWN SHOULD ENHANCE THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS CAPABILITIES OF THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

The Recreation Department, like the Council on Aging, has no automated records of participants in its programs. Therefore, each time a Town resident enrolls in a programmatic offering, critical identifying information is re-entered for each event, thus creating a multitude of separate and unrelated databases of participant information which is duplicative in its consumption of staff time, and ineffective in targeting potential participants in offered programs who have participated in similar programs in the past.

The entry of participant information into a single database that is updated each time an individual participates in a program is vital in the targeting of potential participants who may have interests in programmatic offerings that are similar to those in which he or she has

participated in the past. Further, the capture of personal information about the participant in a single database will eliminate the need for duplicative data entry in the future.

**Recommendation: The project team recommends that the Recreation Department acquire,(or develop, a new software package that records critical information regarding its program participants. Any new package include the following data elements:**

- **Participant name, age (to be updated automatically on birth date), gender, address, phone**
- **Parent(s) name (if under 18), and alternate contact**
- **Program identification numbers in which the individual has participated**
- **Personal Identification Number (PIN)**
- **Allergies**
- **Medications needed**
- **Other medical conditions or assistance needed**
- **Resident/Non-Resident**
- **Permission (Y/N) to photograph/video participant**

**In addition, the Department should integrate the participant information with the Town's GIS once that information system is more mature.**

**5. THE TOWN SHOULD ENHANCE THE FUNCTIONALITY OF ITS WEBSITE TO CONFORM TO BEST PRACTICES IN THE INDUSTRY.**

Residents today expect that their governments' web sites will be informative, interactive, and easily navigated. In fact, "web surfers" throughout the country and the world scan websites for information, and a well-designed website says much about a municipality, just as does a poorly-designed one.

The project team has made numerous visits to the Town's website throughout the course of this project, and there are several facets of its content and design that perhaps could be refined and enhanced to provide a more informative and useful experience for visitors, whether they are residents, other governmental entities, or simply interested viewers.

Darrell West, of the Brookings Institute, in his book, *Digital Government: Technology and Public Sector Performance*, describes four stages of government websites that progress from the “billboard style,” that simply houses information, up to the “interactive democracy style,” that offers residents services and a variety of ways to communicate with public officials and to accomplish tasks. It is this latter style that West says that governments should aspire to in order to develop a more knowledgeable, engaged and empowered citizenry.

Although the Town of Carlisle’s website is more than a simple “billboard” of information, it falls short of being truly interactive. Further, it does not provide certain information that the project team believes should be shared with visitors to the site. The project team noted several areas in which the departmental websites should be enhanced and has listed these in the table below. Although not noted in the table, all departmental web pages should state the mission and purpose of their respective organizations, as well as specific performance metrics that relate to the operations of the departments, with a particular emphasis on those that directly impact residents.

Department	Comments on Web Page
Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the issuance of dog licenses is one of the most voluminous activities of the Office, the Clerk should:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow for the on-line payment of license fees (the Town has made the on-line payment option available in other Departments)</li> <li>- Provide dog (and pet) safety tips</li> <li>- Provide references and/or links to any ordinances related to dog ownership</li> <li>- Provide information on rabies shots and clinics</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide access to Town archives of a public nature</li> <li>• Provide birth, death and marriage indexes</li> </ul>

Department	Comments on Web Page
Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clickable search on street or parcel identifier, owner name, for assessed values, lot size, assessment history, building sketch, home area, year built.</li> <li>• FAQs</li> <li>• Description of appeals process</li> </ul> <p>The Assessor web page contains several references to links that are inactive, such as for abatement applications, change of address, motor vehicle excise tax, exemptions, form of list and personal property tax.</p>
Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide demolition permit application</li> <li>• Allow for on-line payment of fees</li> <li>• Allow for electronic submittal of plans, sketches</li> </ul> <p>Provide status of application/inspection</p>
Treasurer/Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide current and previous operating budgets</li> <li>• Provide current and previous capital improvement plans</li> <li>• Provide budget message to Board of Selectmen</li> </ul> <p>Provide financial forecasts</p>
Conservation Commission	<p>This site is generally very informative, however it should include certain general information related to FAQs, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does a Conservation Commission do?</li> <li>• What is the Wetlands Protection Act, and how do I know if there is a wetland on my property?</li> <li>• Why does my project need to be reviewed if there is no pond or marsh on my property?</li> <li>• Does the Conservation Commission ever permit construction within 100 feet of wetland?</li> </ul> <p>What is a vernal pool?</p>
Planning Board/Zoning Board of Appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need FAQs on basic functions , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is a conditional use permit or variance?</li> <li>- What do I need to do to file for an application for a hearing?</li> <li>- Are there fees and what do they cover?</li> <li>- How long does it take to process a conditional use permit or variance?</li> <li>- What is the process after an application is</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Department	Comments on Web Page
	<p>filed?  - How does one file an appeal?  The site would benefit from the provision of a flow chart for the zoning application and review process.</p>
Housing Authority	<p>Several useful links to information, however the site would benefit from a listing of FAQs for quick reference, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locations of housing developments</li> <li>• How do I get on the wait list?</li> <li>• How do I apply for affordable housing?</li> <li>• How long will it be before I know if my application is accepted?</li> <li>• What are the income limits for affordable housing?</li> </ul> <p>How do I make a complaint?</p>
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good listing of programs and services in the quarterly program guides.</li> </ul> <p>Site would benefit from listing of fields and amenities available on the Recreation home page. Color photographs of parks would enhance the appeal of the site, as these are typically centerpieces of the Town.</p>
Council on Aging	<p>Web page is comprehensive and provides numerous links to helpful information.</p>
Health	<p>Many useful links to local and state regulations, well testing, guides to obtaining permits, vegetable composting guidelines, sharps and needle disposal, and other items of general interest. In addition, there is a useful and important alert regarding EEE and West Nile virus in the “News and Alerts” section of the page.</p> <p>The web page follows the same format as others in the Town, however, this is not as conducive to quick reference as perhaps the site should be, given that visitors to Public Health web pages generally are interested in emergency response. The project team believes that the site could be benefit from a better organization of information under the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal Trends (Flu preparation, breast cancer awareness, natural disaster preparations, etc.)</li> <li>• Health Centers and Treatment (Locations of health centers, immunization, alcohol and drug</li> </ul>

Department	Comments on Web Page
	<p>help, mental health, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspections and Enforcement (Restaurant database, children’s campgrounds, tobacco violations and inspections, etc.)</li> <li>• Emergency Preparedness (Bioterrorism, Home heating assistance, etc.)</li> <li>• Healthy Living (Healthy eating, food allergies, WIC, smoking cessation classes, minority health)</li> <li>• Environment (Waterways, pollution, vector control, hazardous waste, recycling information, etc.)</li> <li>• Diseases and Illnesses (Flu, West Nile, Lyme Disease, EEE, etc.)</li> <li>• Business Resources (Food Manager classes, tobacco vendor education, body art certification, etc.)</li> <li>• Complaint process and reporting of violations</li> <li>• Travel clinics-immunization</li> <li>• Radon information</li> <li>• Organ donation information</li> <li>• AED information</li> </ul> <p>Medication safety and poison control</p>

**Recommendation:** The departments in Town Hall should enhance their web pages to provide residents with a wider variety of information, in addition to, in some cases, organizing the web pages in a more user-friendly manner. The Town’s staff is small, and at times, department staff are unavailable to visitors to Town Hall. The addition of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to each web page could answer some residents’ questions and needs for information, which may eliminate the need to make a personal visit to Town Hall. The Board of Selectmen should establish minimum criteria for each department to include on their respective web pages, and ensure that each department posts these criteria.

**6. THE POSTED BUSINESS HOURS AT TOWN HALL MAY BE FAILING TO ADEQUATELY SERVE RESIDENTS OF THE TOWN**

The posted business hours at Carlisle Town Hall are from 9:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, not all offices are actually open during these hours. To some extent, this is a function of the relatively few numbers of staff members available within each department to provide a customer service presence at all posted hours. However, it is also true that the absence of any staff member to provide basic information regarding the

operations of a particular department can be a frustrating experience for a customer who makes a trip to Town Hall during the posted business hours with the expectation that they will be able to complete their business.

The project team surveyed a sample of towns with similar populations as that of Carlisle, and found that almost without exception, the posted Town Hall business hours are greater than those posted at Carlisle Town Hall. The following table provides a summary of the hours of the eight towns with populations similar to Carlisle's.

Town	Hours
Rochester	8:30 am to 4:30 pm M-F. Posted on web site home page.
Marion	8:00 am to 4:30 pm M-Th. 8:00 am to 3:30 pm Fri
Lenox	Departments vary in availability, and no hours are posted on web site. However, availability is posted on individual departmental web pages and varies from a low of five hours daily (Assessor, from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm) to nine hours (Town Manager, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Town Clerk hours are not posted.
Boxborough	Great variability in available hours. The Town's home page of the web site does post Town Hall hours as 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Warren	The Town's web site has a button on the home page to go directly to the available hours for each department. Although they vary by department, these hours are generally in the range of 8:00 am to 3:00 pm or, for some departments, 4:00 pm
<b>Carlisle</b>	Hours posted at Town Hall are from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. There is no notation on the Town's web site regarding Town Hall office hours, however, most departmental web pages list these hours. It should be noted that there are no hours posted for the Assessor, Town Administrator, Accounting or Planning.
North Brookfield	There are no hours posted on the web site, either on the home page or in individual departmental web pages.
Hadley	Office hours are generally between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm. Building Inspector is available from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, M-F, and additionally from 7:10 pm to 9:00 pm on Tuesdays.
Deerfield	Office hours are not posted on the Town's home page, but are generally 9:00 am to 4:00 pm M-F, as posted on departmental web pages.

There are variations among the similarly-sized towns regarding their posted business hours, and further, there are variations even within the departments of each of these towns. However, it is also clear that most posted hours provide for more than the six posted by Carlisle. The project team does not possess information regarding the number of staff within the departments in these towns, so it is at least possible that they do, in fact, have greater staffing levels than Carlisle, which would allow for a greater overall availability.

One simple means of increasing exposure, if not physical presence, of departments to the public is through the virtual force-multiplier effect of providing a comprehensive set of frequently-asked questions (FAQ) on departmental web sites, with the objective being to minimize the need for residents to make physical visits to Town Hall. The project team has, in a separate discussion in this report, made recommendations in this area, and we reiterate these here.

Another method of increasing the availability of Town Hall staff to Carlisle residents is to “trade” hours of low visitation for potentially higher ones. Many Massachusetts cities and towns now close Town Hall during hours of historically low visitation hours, and stay open for extended hours on late afternoons and evenings. A typical scenario is one in which Town Hall stays open till 6:30 - 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays, and closes at noon on Fridays. These hours may or may not be optimal for Carlisle. The project team suggests that each of the departments in Town Hall begin the process of documenting the numbers of visitors (and time spent) at their

individual counters and offices in order to determine whether there are common patterns of low visitation.

Finally, the project team recommends that each department in Town Hall begin a more extensive cross-training effort in order to be at least minimally able to assist visitors to departments that have no available staff on particular days. This is not to suggest that any employee of another department should make decisions related to policy, however having multiple staff members in the open office setting at Town Hall who are able to, for example, answer permit and regulatory requirements, site plan submittal requirements, fee-related issues, and others, can only be beneficial, and may reduce frustration on the parts of visitors to Town Hall.

**Recommendation:** The departments located at Town Hall should initially ensure that all office hours are posted on their individual web pages. Further, the web site's home page should be modified to include an option for "Office Hours", that lists each department and their normal operating hours, outlining periods of each day and week during which they are routinely unavailable, and also any hours during which they have staff who are routinely available during non-normal Town Hall operating hours. The project team also recommends that FAQs be added to each department's web page (a recommendation that may, in fact, be advisable for departments not within the scope of this particular study) in order to potentially be able to answer questions that may obviate the need for residents to make trips to Town Hall. Finally, although Town Hall staff members are currently able to assist residents to some degree with questions not specifically related to their own departments, the project team recommends that this cross-training effort be formalized, and that each department head and clerical and administrative staff member train to be fluent in the permitting, regulatory, programmatic and financial requirements of at least one other department in Town Hall.

## **7. THE TOWN SHOULD BEGIN TO FORMALLY DEVELOP AND ADOPT A LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

Although the Town has gone through a recent process of planning for the construction and renovation of its public schools, the Finance Department has not formalized its financial planning to develop any significant documents such as a Long-term Master Financial Plan. The Department should develop this plan as a tool to evaluate its fiscal health, ensure its fiscal strength and stability in the near-term, and evaluate various methods for financing major capital projects. This Master Plan should address at least the following issues:

- Financial trend analysis
- Performance measurements
- Five-year financial plan of revenues and expenditures
- Analysis and projection of major revenue accounts as specified by Town staff
- Fund balance scenarios
- General obligation capital improvement project and debt service analysis
- Evaluation using Brown (GFOA) 10-point test and ICMA's Factors of Financial Condition, or a suitable combination of the aspects of both monitoring systems
- Evaluation of program and service costs
- Scenarios for setting ad valorem tax rates for maintenance and operations and debt service

Other issues that might be addressed in the plan include:

- Classification of any revenue shortfalls as cyclical (short-term, based upon specific economic circumstances that are not likely to continue over the long-term) or structural (long term and requiring either additional revenues or expenditure reductions).

- Development of financial policies regarding such items as debt and a percentage of general fund, goals for free cash, etc.
- Relationship between the use of fund balance and classified shortfalls (e.g., it is safer to use fund balances when shortfalls are cyclical).
- Ratio of government costs (e.g., local revenues plus intergovernmental revenues) to personal income. This analysis is known as “determining the price of government.”
- Impacts of specific legal issues (e.g., if litigation requires specific expenditures, those expenditures need to be included and specifically identified in developing expenditure forecasts).
- Impacts of increases in pension and health insurance costs.

These are some examples of the components of a comprehensive strategic financial plan. The development of a long-range financial plan will provide benefits to the Town, but the plan should not be developed by the Board of Selectmen or Finance Committee in isolation from the stakeholders, who include residents, employees, Town officials, and others. The involvement of these stakeholders can have many positive benefits, including:

- **Refining the forecast made by Town staff.** Involving stakeholders in financial planning can help make forecasting more realistic. Operating departments can improve the qualitative judgments while elected officials can review critical assumptions.
- **Sharing of necessary sacrifices.** Stakeholders will be more likely to make sacrifices if there is open dialogue and clear communication of budgetary challenges. Towns that regularly share budgetary projections with all employees and other stakeholders find that the openness of the dialogue of budgetary priorities, and the financial circumstances of the Town are able to gain a broader base of agreement that sacrifices are necessary and that they are shared.
- **Institutionalizing financial planning.** The involvement of elected officials provides legitimacy to the process. In addition, formal financial policies adopted by the legislative body can help preserve practices through changes in leadership. Engagement of residents can generate grassroots support for financial planning within the community so that it becomes a routine and expected government practice.
- **Promoting strategic decision-making.** A long-term financial plan helps promote strategic thinking as it makes “the long-term consequences of decisions apparent.

- **Prioritizing services.** Input from the public is critical in effective prioritization. The long-term planning process is an opportunity to communicate the cost of services and available resources. The long-term financial plan should consider the preferences and policy outcomes that the Town desires. As Carlisle is increasingly faced with difficult decisions it should seek public input regarding appropriate service and taxation levels. In addition, using the long-term planning process can help provide guidance to departments that are implementing budget reductions.
- **Implementing the plan.** The involvement of all stakeholders results in a long-term financial plan that better reflects the interests of various groups and will therefore garner more support for the plan's implementation.

**Recommendation: The Finance Department should develop a financial plan that covers multiple years and evaluates the Town's current and projected financial condition based on projected scenarios. The Town should involve multiple stakeholders in the development of the plan.**

#### **8. THE TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER ENHANCE THE ADMINISTRATIVE SCOPE OF THE POSITION OF TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**

The establishment of the position of Town Administrator, with its duties and responsibilities, is not addressed in the Town's General Bylaws, however the Town has developed a position description for Town Administrator, and this is provided in the Appendix to this report.

The position of Town Administrator in Carlisle has the responsibility for coordinating the activities of the departments under the authority of the Board of Selectmen, and is further responsible for executing the policies of the Board in areas of municipal management, administration, coordination, and supervision, as well as exercising administrative authority over town departments, commissions, boards, committees, and officers under the jurisdiction of the Board.

As can be seen by a review of the full position description in the appendix, the authority

of the position of Town Administrator in Carlisle is limited, and does not align with the responsibility of the position. The project team noted in several internal and external interviews the use of the term “silos” when referring to the operations of the departments in Town Hall, meaning that the various departments operated in isolation from one another in certain aspects. This was notable if only because of the relatively small size of the staff, and the open design of the space at Town Hall.

The project team has noted certain issues in this report that are related to the lack of centralized authority over Town Hall operations, such as the non-standard business hours and the lack of cohesive information technology systems. These issues may be addressed most efficiently by a strong Town Administrator or Town Manager position that would also be responsible for evaluating the performance of Town Hall personnel, either directly, or by providing input to the individual Boards to which Town Hall personnel report.

The duties and responsibilities, as well as the overall authority, given to the position of Town Administrator are clearly within the purview of the Board of Selectmen, and the degree to which the Board delegates its daily oversight of staff and operations is also its prerogative. However, the project team suggests that the Board begin to reassess the role of the Town Administrator in view of the issues raised in this report.

**Recommendation: The Board of Selectmen should assess the potential of strengthening the position of Town Administrator in order to consolidate daily supervision over operations and performance of staff. This may be effected either by strengthening in the current supervisory roles of the Town Administrator or by making the transition to a Town Manager form of government, and could be accomplished by either changing the bylaws or through a Special Act of the legislature. In either case, the position would have input into performance reviews of Town Hall staff as well as authority to coordinate facility hours, vacation coverage, and other personnel matters. This role is intended to augment, not supersede, the authority of**

**the Board of Selectmen, which remain the head of the Town's executive branch regardless of the authority granted to a Town Administrator or Town Manager.**

#### **9. CASH HANDLING PROCEDURES SHOULD BE IMPROVED**

During interviews and observations, the project team noted that cash handling procedures were not as strong as is necessary in the Council on Aging and in the Recreation Department. In the Council on Aging, van drivers receive cash from seniors for trips and return the cash to the Council's administrative offices as trips are completed. In the Recreation Department, cash for program and activity registrations are received in person at the offices when the Director is present, however, during times of the Director's absence, residents insert registration fees inside a small unsecured box on the front desk in the office.

Stronger internal controls for cash collection are necessary to prevent mishandling of Town funds and should be designed to safeguard and protect Town employees from inappropriate charges of mishandling funds by defining their responsibilities in the cash handling process. Ideally, a receipt for payment should be issued immediately for any cash received. These should be on pre-numbered receipts, and should include the method of payment (e.g., cash, check, credit card), as well as the department and the identification of the person issuing the receipt. In the case of the Council's van drivers, the project team recommends that no cash be accepted for trips, but rather the drivers should note on a ledger the person transported, their home address, the origination and destination of the trip, and the date and time of the trip. The Council staff should ensure that riders are billed periodically for

the trips taken, with cash or check payments forwarded to the Treasurer's Office as they are received.

The project team also recommends that the Recreation Department discontinue the provision of the unsecured box in the office for payments for registration fees. During times when the Director is absent from the office, residents should be directed to the Treasurer's office to pay these fees.

**Recommendation: Strengthen cash handling procedures in the Council on Aging and the Recreation Department.**

#### **10. THE TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER INSOURCING ITS PAYROLL PROCESSING FUNCTION**

The Town currently expends approximately \$8,000 annually to process payroll for about 250 full and part time staff. The function is reportedly outsourced due to the fact that the Town did not initially purchase the payroll module of the Munis system.

Purchase of the payroll module would cost the Town a one-time amount of approximately \$15,000. The Clerk position currently in the Treasurer's office may, in fact, be able to assume the payroll duties within the currently-allocated 16 hours per week. However, working on the assumption of the payroll function would require that the Town increase the number of hours for this position from 16 to 20 hours per week, and assuming that this would increase the annual cost of this position by \$5,000, the payback on the investment of \$15,000 would be about five years, as is shown below:

Element	Number
A. Current annual contract for payroll processing	\$8,000
B. Additional amount paid to Clerk for payroll processing	\$5,000
C. Net amount saved annually (A-B)	\$3,000
D. One-time purchase of payroll software	\$15,000
E. Payback Period (D/C)	5 years

The payback of five years makes the investment somewhat attractive if the software has a useful life of more than this period of time, and clearly, if the annual expenditure of \$5,000 on the additional hours by the Clerk can be reduced, the payback period decreases to some degree for each dollar saved.

**Recommendation:** Consider the investment of \$15,000 in the Munis software module in order to save the \$8,000 expended annually on a third-party payroll processor. The payback of five years makes the investment attractive if the software has a useful life of at least this period of time. The payback period may be reduced if the expenditure of \$5,000 on the additional hours for payroll processing can be reduced, or even eliminated.

## **C. ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES**

The following issues provide analysis and recommendations of issues that have organizational impacts.

### **1. THE TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE RECREATION COMMISSION AND THE COUNCIL ON AGING INTO A COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

Recreational services in the Town of Carlisle are provided by the Recreation Department, under the direction of the Recreation Director, who reports to a five-member Recreation Commission appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Recreation Commission's objective is to provide recreational programs for all ages at minimal cost, and develops and delivers a selection of fee-based arts and crafts, life skills and fitness programs to Town residents.

The Carlisle Council on Aging (COA) provides services to seniors in Carlisle. These services include classes, field trips, and many other leisure and instructional activities. The full time staff at the Center consists of a full time Director, an Outreach Coordinator, a Licensed Social Worker, a Transportation Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant and a number of part time drivers.

The project team recommends that the Recreation Department and Council on Aging be consolidated in a newly-formed Community Services Department. These two currently-separate departments provide leisure services to their constituents and charge fees for services and activities, which make them logical candidates for consolidation. Further, although most

Recreation Department programmatic offerings are for youth, there are many adult programs and activities offered by the Recreation Department, such as Cake Decorating, Garden Walks, Organic Vegetable Garden planting, jewelry-making, Yoga, Skin Care, art workshops and others that are highly suitable for seniors.

The consolidated Department should be charged with the attainment of specific qualitative and quantitative performance objectives. These performance measures may relate to such objectives as:

- **Outreach.** The consolidated department should develop methods for outreach to seniors and youth, such as on the web site, brochures distributed at doctor offices, churches, and other locations in order to provide information on services and the benefits of membership. The COA web site contains several links to useful information such as newsletters which include activity calendars and programmatic information, etc., however, it does not provide casual visitors or those who may be interested in activities with a general statement of its values, mission, or benefits of attending these activities.
- **Member Satisfaction.** The consolidated department should continually formally survey its membership and program participants to establish a baseline of satisfaction, and should be accountable for the maintenance and/or improvement upon this baseline each reporting period.
- **Financial accountability.** The annual report for 2011 indicates that the COA covers about 25% of its budget through grants and reimbursements. The Town, working with the Center, should establish reasonable levels of self-sufficiency in terms of fees, charges for service and other revenue sources that should be phased over time to attain these levels. These may include increased fee levels, grant acquisitions, additional programs and services, or other methods. The Recreation Department reports that it recovers 100% of the cost of its programs and services through fees which, if accurate, represents conformance to best practices in the industry.

The consolidation of these two currently-separate departments into a single Community Services Department will result in a greater degree of accountability for the attainment of

specific, and agreed-upon, results, and will provide an organizational mechanism to better coordinate the services provided to the populations served.

**Recommendation: The Town should consider the consolidation of the Carlisle Council on Aging and the Recreation Department, into a newly-formed Community Services Department.**

## **2. THE TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

As noted above, the Town of Carlisle has not developed an information technology plan that outlines its technological requirements over an extended period of time, and the project team has recommended that it begin the process of assessing those needs, and documenting them in such a Plan. The Town has historically relied upon an outside contractor for information technology services, which generally has meant maintenance and repair services for computers and peripheral devices. While minimizing costs, this approach has resulted in a focus on the short-term to the exclusion of a longer-term strategy for training, standardization, and the development of systems that will result in enhanced communications, efficiencies and customer service.

The project team believes that the continuation of the current reliance upon an outside contractor for computer repair and maintenance will result in the continuation of the status quo, which is that information technology strategies will not be addressed, training will not be obtained for Town employees, handheld technology will likely not be made a priority, and employees will continue to work in isolation from each other, as opposed to being members of a coordinated whole. There are several deficiencies inherent in the current reactive mode of approach to information technology in the Town. These include the following:

- General application systems such as GIS and permitting have not been implemented.
- The web site lacks certain functions, as was noted in the previous section.
- There is no coordinated decision-making process for technology investments.
- There is a lack of consistency in each department's customer service interface. For example, the Recreation Department facilitates on-line payments for programs, but the Town Clerk does not accept on-line payments for dog licenses.

The Town has increased the budgeted expenditures for information technology consultation to approximately \$25,000 this fiscal year. This expenditure is clearly lower than investing in a full time staff member to serve as the Town's Chief Information Officer (CIO), however, as has been noted above, there are gaps in the services as provided in the current approach of contracting out these services, and the project team believes that the Town has reached a point in its service provision where the creation of a CIO is warranted. This is not only because of the noted deficiencies in the Town's current information systems, but also because the Town serves a resident population that is technologically proficient and expects its Town government to be as well.

The Town should begin to view the provision of information technology services as more than simple repair and maintenance of personal computers, servers and peripheral devices, and this can be done most effectively through a focused and coordinated effort led by an experienced professional. The role of a CIO in the Town would include the following:

- Provide advice and assistance to the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator and department managers on IT acquisition and management
- Develop, maintain, and facilitate implementation of an integrated IT architecture.
- Promote effective and efficient design and operation of all major work processes.

- Assess requirements for personnel regarding knowledge and skills needed to achieve performance goals that have been established as part of both the long-range IT plan, as well as any future performance management initiative, and assess the extent to which all managers in the Town meet those requirements.
- Develop strategies and specific plans for training.
- Maintain the Town's web page. As has been discussed previously in this report, the project team has made certain recommendations to enhance the Town site as well as individual departmental web pages. The CIO would be responsible for the design and layout of the site, and for ensuring that all information posted is accurate, informative and timely. Further, the CIO should be the primary individual for staying current on new methods and vehicles for communicating with residents and other interested individuals, whether by incorporating of social media or other methods.

**Recommendation: Consider the creation of the position of Chief Information Officer in the Town, reporting to the Town Administrator. The annual compensation for this position should be determined through a formal job analysis after the final job description is developed. However, if the compensation can be roughly estimated to be equivalent to most department heads, this would be about \$56,000. Adding benefits equivalent to 35% of salary would make the total annual cost approximately \$75,600. However, as was noted above, the Town currently has budgeted \$25,000 for IT consultation, which would be largely avoided through the hiring of the CIO, making the estimated net additional cost to the Town about \$50,600.**

### **3. THE TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER THE TRANSITION OF THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE FROM AN ELECTED TO AN APPOINTED POSITION**

The project team was specifically tasked by the Board of Selectmen with evaluating the feasibility/advisability of transitioning certain elected positions to appointed status. This effort focused primarily on the position of Town Clerk since the Town had already, in the late 1990s, transitioned from separately elected Treasurer and Collector positions to an appointed Treasurer/Collector following a recommendation from the Carlisle 2000 Task Force. The Board's request to study this issue reflects the concern that in the future it may become

difficult to find qualified Carlisle residents willing to run for elected positions that have become more specialized and complex, requiring a high degree of skill and experience.

According to data provided by the Massachusetts Town Clerks’ Association, city and town clerks in 254 municipalities are elected, while seventy-nine cities and towns appoint their clerks. In eighteen other municipalities, clerks have been granted tenure. This group includes clerks who were elected as well as some who were appointed. Since 1997, towns have had the power to change positions such as Town Clerk and treasurer from elected to appointed without having to seek approval from the Legislature.

Although over three-quarters of Town Clerks in the Commonwealth are elected, there is no indication that their election markedly increases the qualifications of the office holder. Further, the data gathered by the project team in a limited survey of elected Clerks indicate that the incumbents are seldom challenged in their bids for re-election, thereby minimizing one of the primary advantages of electing the position, which is enhancing accountability.

The project team researched the experiences of Commonwealth towns with populations of similar size to that of Carlisle, and found that of these eight towns, two Town Clerks are appointed, and six are elected. However, as the table also shows, it has been rare for an incumbent to be challenged in their bids for re-election.

<b>Town</b>	<b>2010 Population</b>	<b>Elected or Appointed</b>	<b>Term (years)</b>	<b>Election Challenges</b>
Rochester	5,218	Elected	3	One challenger since 1984
Marion	5,217	Elected	3	Elected in '06. No challengers since
Lenox	5,105	Appointed	3	NA
Boxborough	5,097	Elected	3	One challenger in '10. None in previous election

Warren	5,071	Elected	3	Unopposed in last 4 elections
<b>Carlisle</b>	<b>4,882</b>	<b>Elected</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>One challenger in '12, none in '09</b>
North Brookfield	4,819	Elected	3	No challengers since 1986
Hadley	4,787	Elected	3	Elected 2007. No challenger in last election
Deerfield	4,731	Appointed	3	NA

As the table shows, even though six of the towns elects its Town Clerk, in only one (Boxborough) has there been a recent challenge in an election. The percentage of towns of similar size to Carlisle that have elected Town Clerks is roughly the same (i.e., about 75%) as in the Commonwealth, generally. Therefore, Carlisle is like most other towns, as it also has an elected Town Clerk. However, the project team believes that there are other factors to consider in determining whether the retention of the elected status of the Clerk is beneficial to Carlisle. The Collins Center has developed the following list of criteria that assists the decision process.

<b>Criteria supporting a position or board being Elected</b>	<b>Criteria supporting a position or board being Appointed</b>
The position has significant policy-making responsibility	It has minimal policy-making responsibility
It has few ministerial responsibilities and tasks whose performance is guided almost entirely by statute	It has many ministerial responsibilities and tasks whose performance is guided almost entirely by statute
Someone with little training or expertise could quickly and easily become effective in the performance of the required responsibilities	Someone with little training or expertise would have significant difficulty in performing the work effectively, potentially creating significant risk for the Town
The required roles and tasks are easily and widely understood by the public	The required roles and tasks are complicated and not easily and widely understood by the public
The nature of the position's role makes it relatively simple for the public to evaluate the performance of the position's duties	The nature of the position's role makes it relatively difficult for the public to evaluate the performance of the position's duties
The position is helpful as a check or balance against another center of power in the Town	The position is not needed as a check or balance against another center of power in the Town

It is not critical to the effective and efficient functioning of the government for this position to cooperate regularly with other officials	It is critical to the effective and efficient functioning of the government for this position to cooperate regularly with other officials
The election for the position historically produces a competitive race between highly-qualified candidates	The election for this position historically produces little or no competition and few to no highly-qualified candidates

As can be seen in the table, a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of the position of Town Clerk do not mitigate heavily in favor of retaining it as an elected position if the presented criteria are accepted as reasonable points on which to make this decision. The position of Town Clerk has few, if any policy-making responsibilities; is almost wholly guided by State or Town statutes and regulations; is not required as a check or balance against any other center of Town power or authority; requires regular communication and cooperation with other (particularly financial) officials in the Town; and elections for the position do not regularly produce competitive races, as is the case for most similarly-sized towns.

**Recommendation: The Town should consider the conversion of the Town Clerk position from an elected to an appointed one.**

**4. THE TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER CONSOLIDATING ALL OF ITS LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS INTO A SINGLE LOCATION AND CREATE A ONE STOP SHOP FOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND EXPEDITED PERMITTING**

Carlisle’s Town Hall has a two-floor open layout, with all departments on each floor accessible to all others, with the exceptions that the Council on Aging and the Recreation departments on the first and second floors, respectively, have walls separating their spaces from the others on their floors. While this may facilitate informal communication to some degree, it also has the effect of limiting privacy, not only for conversations among Town Hall employees, but also for visitors to the building. Further, in more than one interview, the

project team was told of the distractions caused by noise in a contiguous office that results in adverse effects on concentration. Additionally, several department heads cited a lack of work and meeting space as limiting factors to their program, especially departments such as the Council on Aging, that provide numerous services and programs to many clients and participants.

Some of the primary departments that generate the greatest volume of visitors to the building are in the land use functions. These include the Building, Planning, Conservation, Housing and Public Health departments. When contractors, engineers, developers, attorneys and the general public bring plans to Town Hall for review, to apply for and purchase permits, as well as other business, they must in many cases begin at one department and walk to other departments in order to complete their required routing of plans. This causes not only an inconvenience for the customer, but creates considerable noise and distraction for Town Hall employees not involved in the transaction. While these departments are situated in proximity to one another, a lack of work and meeting space make it less than optimal .

The project team recommends the establishment of a new, location for all land use departments in the Town. This configuration has been implemented successfully in many cities and towns in Massachusetts as well as across the country, and is referred to as a “One Stop” shop for all permitting and plan review.

In our view, the most feasible option is to consolidate and relocate the land use departments to an off-site location. One possible location is the Highland Building on School Street. This relocation has the advantage of centralizing all land use functions, employees and

records at a single location at which customers make a single visit for all plan review and permitting. This also has the advantage of allowing a reallocation of space at Town Hall to permit a greater degree of privacy, as well as for creating a centralized records storage area that would facilitate record retrieval. The project team is aware that the Selectmen have tasked an ad hoc committee with making a recommendation regarding re-use of the Highland Building and that this option has not been discussed previously, however, we believe it warrants serious consideration.

One offsetting issue related to the relocation of these departments to the Highland Building is that it removes the possibility of it being leased by a tax revenue producing enterprise. However, as it has been off the tax roll for many years, this does not represent a change for the Town, but rather does not allow the Town to recapture its initial investment of about \$410,000 in purchasing and stabilizing the property.

Another minor disadvantage is that the Building and Planning Departments currently share administrative and clerical staff with the Treasurer and Town Clerk, and as these departments would be physically separated under the relocation of the land use departments, the continued sharing arrangement would require the shared staff to travel between buildings at designated times.

**Recommendation: Consider relocating the departments of Building, Planning, Housing, Health and Conservation to the vacant Highland Building at 113 School Street, thereby creating a One Stop shop for permitting and plan review. The project team is aware that the Town has appointed an ad hoc committee to make a recommendation regarding the use of this building at the Spring 2013 Annual Town Meeting. The use of this building as a One Stop Shop would allow the reallocation of space at Town Hall to permit greater privacy as well as a centralized file storage location. The separation of the land use departments from those departments remaining in Town Hall may also serve to limit communication between the two**

**buildings. The project team recommends that the Town Administrator hold frequent staff meetings to facilitate communications among all departments of the Town.**

**5. THE TOWN WILL BE CONFRONTED WITH ISSUES RELATED TO AN AGING WORKFORCE WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS, AND SHOULD BEGIN PLANNING FOR THIS NOW**

The aging of the workforce is an issue that will confront many organizations, both public and private, over the next several years. It is one that has been examined thoroughly in many academic papers, and the project team will not revisit those here. However, the issue will present itself to several departments in the Town of Carlisle in a very real sense over the next five to ten years.

The project team determined that the average age of Town Hall department managers is over 57 years of age, with these ages ranging from 44 to 70. Five of the ten managers are over the age of 60, indicating that it is at least possible that half of department managers in Town Hall will retire within the next five years.

The Town could choose to simply fill vacated positions as they occur over this time period. However, the project team suggests that it should approach the inevitable loss of employees, particularly at the managerial levels, with a well-considered plan for succession.

The elements of this plan should incorporate several elements, which include the following:

- **Consider what services are needed in the coming years.** As vacancies occur, the Town should critically examine whether the functions performed by the previous employee are necessary as currently designed, or whether there are unmet needs in the Department that could be filled through job re-design. The tendency in many governmental agencies is to simply fill vacancies as they occur, and thereby continue to perform services in the same manner as had been done for many years prior. However, this hiring model designs the job around the person, when in actuality, the skills of the prospective employee should be designed to fit the requirements of the job.

- **Consider the hiring of new employees for critical positions earlier than may have been forecast.** Certain positions may feasibly be filled without regard for true succession planning. However, the Town should take stock of those positions that require a critical skill transfer, and consider hiring new employees in order to capitalize on the fact that older employees are still present and available for this critical function. Job knowledge as well as institutional knowledge may be transferred under much less stressful conditions when it is phased in over a longer period of time.
- **Identify and train the departmental leaders of the future.** Potential leaders in an organization typically can be identified relatively quickly, however there are dimensions of leadership that are only partly innate. Others must be cultivated and groomed, and there are many leadership training courses available to refine these skills and qualities in future leaders.
- **Institute programs and processes that ensure that the Town is able to recruit talented employees when they are needed.** Not all vacancies will occur as planned. However, each Town department can ensure that it can recruit talented employees of the highest level by instituting effective practices, and by providing employees with the tools, training and technology that contribute to success.

The current economic and financial climates make it more difficult to add staff to ensure a transition and knowledge transfer to the next generation of Town employee managers and employees. And, in fact, although there are specific employees who are of an age, and in all likelihood, currently considering retirement, the average age of the managerial workforce is such that the issue of mass retirements is still at least a few years away. One option is to assume that economic conditions will improve to some degree, which will allow the hiring of selected staff members in key positions, affording them the advantage of working alongside employees who can transfer their knowledge over a longer-term period.

The project team recognizes the dilemma of poor economic conditions, and looming retirements on an increasing scale. However, the project team also recognizes the benefits of retaining critical knowledge and skills in the workforce, and recommends that the Town begin

identifying those employees who fit this category, and selectively hiring staff at lower levels to ensure that this transfer occurs.

**Recommendation: Identify critical managers and employees who are nearing retirement age and begin the transfer of knowledge and skills through hiring employees at lower levels to work with these individuals.**

**APPENDIX**

**CURRENT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR JOB  
DESCRIPTION**

## TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

### **Position Purpose:**

The purpose of this position is to perform professional, administrative and supervisory work in managing the Town of Carlisle and assisting the Board of Selectmen to discharge the duties of the office; all other related work as required. The Town Administrator is responsible for maintaining and improving upon the efficiency and effectiveness of all areas under his/her direction and control.

### **Supervision:**

*Supervision Scope:* Performs highly responsible work of a complex nature, requiring the exercise of considerable independent judgment. Provides professional advice to a variety of officials, departments, boards and committees concerning the development, implementation and administration of the policies, goals, regulations, and statutory requirements related to the administration and operation of the town.

*Supervision Received:* Works under the policy direction of the Board of Selectmen with considerable latitude for independent judgment and action. Assumes responsibility for developing and achieving the department goals and objectives. Questions are referred to supervisor only when clarification of town policy is needed.

*Supervision Given:* Has direct supervisory responsibility for four employees; hires staff, provides daily direction, prepares employee performance evaluations, and counsels and disciplines staff consistent with town policies.

### **Job Environment:**

Administrative work is performed under typical office conditions. Attends frequent evening meetings. May be contacted at home outside of business hours and during the weekend.

Operates an automobile, telephone, and standard office machines.

Makes frequent contacts with the general public; all other town departments/boards/committees; local, state, and federal governmental organizations; civic organizations; local businesses; and a wide variety of others individuals/groups. Contacts require considerable skill in negotiating and resourcefulness and discretion in influencing decisions and behavior of others. Handles the more difficult customer service requests.

Has full access to a wide variety of town-wide confidential information including bid proposals, personnel records, negotiating positions, criminal investigations, as well as personal information about citizens.

Errors in judgment could have continuing adverse effect on the town's ability to deliver services, result in loss of municipal revenues, have far-reaching legal and financial ramifications, and cause significant adverse public relations.

**Essential Functions:**

*(The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.)*

Represents the Board of Selectmen on a daily basis; executes the policies of the Board in areas of municipal management, administration, coordination, and supervision. Exercises administrative authority over town departments, commissions, boards, committees, and officers under the jurisdiction of the Board.

Coordinates the activities of the town offices including the Treasurer, Tax Collector, Accountant, Assessors, and Town Clerk.

Prepares agendas, sets meetings and correspondence priorities; attends all Board of Selectmen meetings and other board and committee meetings as necessary. Develops policy proposals and recommends policy alternatives to the Selectmen. Brings to the attention of the Board all information relevant to the performance of the Office of the Selectmen.

Oversees and coordinates the fiscal operations of the town government including overseeing the annual Town Meeting schedule, preparing and presenting the annual budgets for the departments under the jurisdiction of the Board, pre-approving treasury warrants/payments, preparing warrants for the Annual and Special Town Meetings, coordinating the formulation of the capital improvement program, and preparing the Annual Town Report.

Serves as the town's Personnel Administrator. In conjunction with the Personnel Board, reviews/maintains town personnel wages and records, job descriptions, salary ranges, and qualifications. Plays an active role in wage negotiations. Administers the implementation of all personnel policies. Sets goals and implements performance reviews.

Serves as the town's Chief Procurement Officer. Assists in the consolidation and monitoring of materials purchasing, and labor and materials contracts in the town to achieve cost effectiveness and compliance with applicable laws. Prepares and administers grant requests.

Serves as the town's interface between town boards/committees and Town Counsel; authorizes and monitors the use of Town Counsel as well as all outside consulting services.

Regular attendance and punctuality at the workplace is required.

Performs similar or related work as required, directed or as situation dictates.

**Recommended Minimum Qualifications:**

Education, Training and Experience:

Bachelor's degree in government, business, or related field and five years of municipal management experience in finance, government law, personnel administration, collective bargaining and/or organization development; or any equivalent combination of education and experience.

Knowledge, Ability and Skill:

*Knowledge:* Comprehensive knowledge of the functions of municipal government; general understanding of the interaction between local government, state government, and federal government. General knowledge of Massachusetts General Laws as they apply to municipal operations highly desirable. Working knowledge of business administration, practices, general office procedures, and applicable local, state, and federal laws.

*Ability:* Ability to plan, organize and direct the preparation of reports, analyze problems, and formulate recommendations. Ability to speak and write effectively. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with all town employees, board/committee members, officials and the general public. Ability to recognize town-wide priorities and work cooperatively to support their accomplishment. Ability to conceptualize and put into operation department and town-wide goals and objectives. Ability to analyze complex issues and to develop relevant and realistic plans, programs and recommendations. Ability to prioritize multiple tasks and deal effectively with interruptions, often under considerable time pressure.

*Skill:* Mediation, conflict resolution, and leadership skills. Excellent customer service skills. Good analytical and budgetary skills. Skill in the use of the above mentioned equipment.

Physical Requirements:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. Employee is regularly required to walk, stand, sit, talk, and hear; handles, feels or operate objects, tools, or controls, and reach with hands and arms as in picking up paper, files, and other common office objects. Employee may lift and/or move objects weighing up to 10 pounds such as books, equipment, supplies, etc. Vision and hearing at or correctable to normal ranges.

(This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee. It is used as a guide for personnel actions and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.)