

**Report on Select Citizens'  
Organizational Efficiency  
Review Committee  
Recommendations Requiring  
Further Study**

**Citizens' Budget Advisory Council**

**May 2014**

## **Introduction**

In September 2012, the Winston-Salem City Council created the nine-member Citizens' Organizational Efficiency Review Committee (COERC) to examine the efficiency, organization, and staffing of City operations. In their final report, the COERC presented over 40 recommendations that would yield \$4.7 million in budgetary savings, including revenue enhancements, efficiency improvements, and changes in City services. The City Council approved incorporating several of the recommendations into the adopted FY 2013-2014 budget, totaling approximately \$1.5 million in budgetary savings and the deletion of 15 positions. Twelve of the recommendations were identified by City Council as requiring further study.

In August 2013, the City Manager proposed that the Citizens' Budget Advisory Council (CBAC) review four of the COERC recommendations identified by City Council for further study. These recommendations were:

1. Explore using more temporary laborers in residential refuse collection in order to facilitate the transition to curbside collection.
2. Reduce staffing in City Link during non-peak times.
3. Review staffing in the Inspections Department to bring expenses in line with revenues.
4. Review the crew size and workload for Department of Transportation operations.

The CBAC held monthly meetings starting in August to review each of the areas above (Appendix A). The CBAC also toured part of the operations of some of the services under review, including:

City Link Operations

Sanitation Fleet

Department of Transportation Field Office and Fleet

Department heads and staff from these areas, as well as the Planning and Development Services Department, presented information on their operations, answered questions, and provided input on the impact of the recommendations on service delivery. The Budget and Evaluation Office, serving as staff support to the CBAC, presented select performance measures and other background for each area, where necessary.

The following sections summarize the areas reviewed by the CBAC, their findings, and recommendations. Appendices B-E provides the information that was presented at each

meeting, and Appendix F includes responses to questions from CBAC members during these meetings.

**COERC Recommendation:**

*Explore using more temporary laborers in residential refuse collection in order to facilitate the transition to curbside collection.*

The City of Winston-Salem Sanitation Department provides weekly curbside refuse collection to single-family residences, multi-family residences, and small businesses that generate the same amount of trash as a residential unit. The Refuse Collection Division collects approximately 51,000 tons of garbage annually and services approximately 76,000 households each week.

Starting in FY 2010-2011, the Sanitation Department implemented a five-year transition plan to purchase side-loading refuse trucks in order to automate more refuse collection routes. By purchasing these trucks, the City will realize savings by converting three-person crews to one-person operations. After full implementation, department staffing levels for residential refuse collection will be reduced from 109 to 68 full-time authorized positions. The below chart shows the transition in staffing and vehicles.

<b>Curbside Transition</b>	<b>FY 2005-2006</b>	<b>FY 2013-2014</b>	<b>Full Implementation</b>
Full-Time			
Operators	49	44	35
Laborers	56	37	30
Supervisors	4	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>68</b>
Temporary	31	10	10
Carts	24,500	76,000	76,000
Trucks			
Rear Loaders	37	27	17
Automated Loaders	0	5	16

Temporary workers in Sanitation are front-line employees and are needed to cover absent full-time staff. The responsibilities of temporary workers include routine manual work, which does not require a commercial driver’s license (CDL) certification or previous training. As full-time laborer positions have become vacant, the Sanitation Department has used temporary laborers to fully staff work crews. The use of temporary employees is limited because they cannot operate city vehicles. Once the Sanitation Department’s curbside transition plan is fully implemented, the department will maintain a combination of automated trucks and rear-loading vehicles at an approximate ratio of half and half because of the City’s topography and road network.

The members of CBAC participated in a field visit to City Yard to learn about the automated side loaders and observe the efficiency of the equipment and how it is operated by a member of the Sanitation staff. The Sanitation Deputy Director provided a summary of refuse collection, the automated equipment, and the use of temporary workers and full-time staff. Budget staff provided the Sanitation budget, benchmarking information, performance measures, capital planning, and staffing history.

### Findings

The CBAC made the following findings based on its review of Sanitation's use of temporary laborers in refuse collection. More information can be found in Appendix B.

- The transition to automated side loading trucks has reduced the need for temporary staffing since FY 2005-2006 from 31 to 10 workers.
- The Sanitation Department has achieved efficiencies from the increased use of automated side loader trucks and a smaller workforce of full-time city employees and temporary contract laborers. The Department continues to rely on temporary laborers, but they make up a smaller percentage of the total workforce than in the recent past. The use of temporary laborers appears to be cost effective and sufficient for the current daily workload.

### Recommendations

- The CBAC recommends that the Sanitation Department continue its efforts to transition the refuse collection operation from rear-loading trucks with three-person crews to automated side loaders with one-person crews.

### **COERC Recommendation:**

*Reduce staffing in City Link during non-peak times (7 P.M. until 7 A.M. and weekends)*

City Link is the City's call center, which provides a single point of contact for citizens to access information, twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week. City Link responds to citizen requests by telephone, live chat, email, web intake, social media, and smartphone mobile applications. City Link staff also initiates service requests and routes these requests to the appropriate City departments. City Link receives approximately 345,000 calls per year and creates approximately 376,000 service requests. The department has 27 full-time positions currently in its operation.

The Director of City Link completed an analysis of City Link's performance metrics and compared them to the national call center standards. As a result of networking with officials from other contact centers, the director developed and implemented a survey to compile key

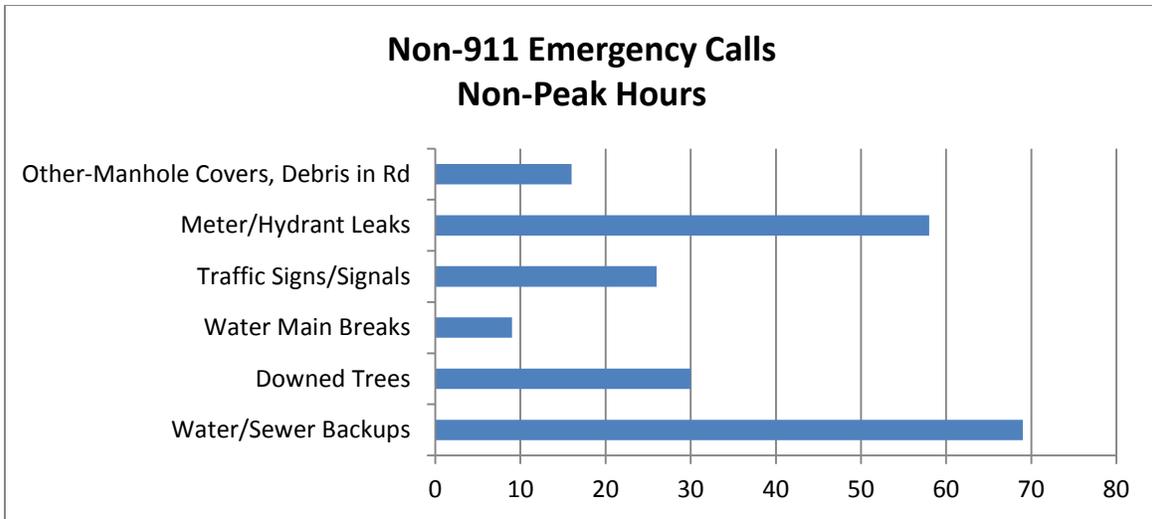
benchmarking data. Inquiries included current policies, best practices, schedules, operating hours, and hiring procedures. Reports were compiled from various cities of similar size and service orientation, including all regions of U.S. and Canada that compared to the City of Winston-Salem. The result of the analysis and survey demonstrated that there were staff deficiencies within City Link. A plan was initiated to increase productivity and service levels that were equivalent to, or beyond, the current industry standards provided to citizens.

The members of CBAC participated in a field visit to City Link to observe staff receiving calls. The City Link Director facilitated a presentation about the department, which included its organizational chart, operations, and performance measures. Benchmarking data were provided to members that allowed them to evaluate the operations of twenty call centers across the country.

### Findings

The CBAC made the following findings based on its review of City Link staffing during non-peak hours. More information can be found in Appendix C, including the results of a survey City Link completed comparing its operation with other government call centers.

- The survey of 20 call centers showed that the City of Winston-Salem is providing more extensive coverage during non-peak hours than similar sized cities. Most of the call centers that participated in the survey reported that they provided online self-service options to customers after normal business hours. Of the cities surveyed, 65% were not operating on a twenty-four hour, seven days per week basis. These cities are utilizing twenty-four hour phone prompts to reach on-call personnel and on-line self-service systems to report non-911 emergencies. The remaining 35% of cities surveyed are open twenty-four hours, with call agents answering non-911 emergency calls. The cities selected to complete the survey had operations similar to City Link.
- The CBAC finds that between July 1, 2013 and early December 2013, City Link received a total of 2,554 calls during non-peak hours. Most of the calls were routine; however, 208 (8.1%) of the calls were non-911 emergency calls that required dispatch of on-call staff from other departments. With such a low percentage of calls requiring dispatch of on-call staff, CBAC questions whether the calls are handled efficiently. Below is a breakdown of those calls.



Non-Peak Hours are typically from 7 P.M. until 7 A.M.

**Recommendations**

- CBAC recommends that the City Manager accept for inclusion as part of the FY 2014-2015 budget the recommendations put forward by the City Link Director to adjust operating hours and associated staffing levels, as indicated in the contact center operating hours recommendation memo dated December 30, 2013 (see Appendix C).

**COERC Recommendation:**

*Review staffing in the Inspections Department to bring expenses in line with revenues.*

The City/County Inspections Department merged with the City/County Planning Department as part of the FY 2013-2014 budget to create the Planning and Development Services Department. The Inspections Division consists of two areas: Zoning Enforcement/Administration and Construction Control. Zoning Enforcement/Administration provides for the enforcement of zoning sections of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Construction Control provides for enforcement of the North Carolina State Building Codes and inspects building, electrical, plumbing, heating, and refrigeration work for all new construction in Forsyth County, excluding Kernersville. Licenses and permits account for the majority of user fees in City/County Inspections.

Zoning Enforcement/Administration provides services that are categorized as serving the public good; therefore, revenues are not meant to recover all of the expenses. For FY 2013-2014, Zoning Enforcement/Administration has a budgeted cost recovery percentage of 27.4%. Construction Control revenues for FY 2013-2014 are budgeted at a level that would recover 100% of its expenses. Revenues are received from permits and inspections and follow a “user

pays” fee structure. As workload increases, revenues will also increase. Beginning in FY 2007-2008, permit fee revenues decreased greatly, along with workload in the Construction Control Division. City/County Inspections was recovering close to 100% of its costs during the large growth in real estate prior to this period. However, that recovery dropped down into the 60% range as construction activity slowed during the recession, reaching a low of 61.5% in FY 2009-2010 before leveling off and beginning to gradually increase to the current cost recovery level of 77.1%.

For their review of City/County Inspections, CBAC members heard an overview of Inspections operations from department staff, including a summary of the changes in fees approved as part of the FY 2013-2014 budget. Budget staff provided background information on the budget, benchmarking information, a history of the number of inspections by type and the number of inspectors by type, and other select performance measures.

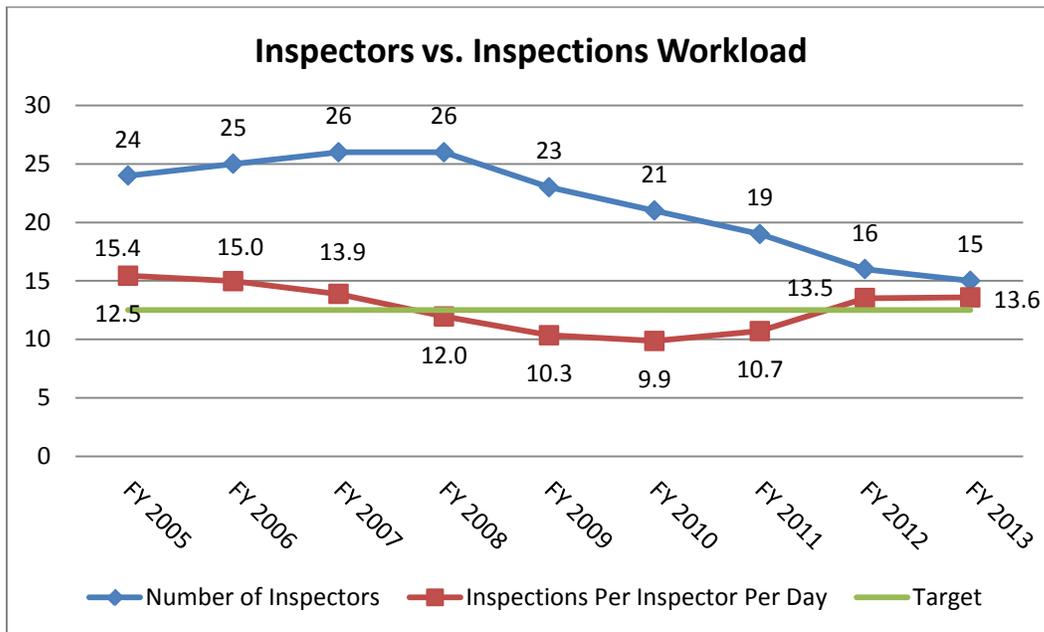
Findings

The CBAC made the following findings based on its review of staffing in Inspections. More information can be found in Appendix D.

- City/County Inspections experienced a sharp drop in revenues from FY 2007-2008 through FY 2009-2010, which outpaced any reductions in expenses. Taking into account the fee increase approved by the City Council during the FY 2013-2014 budget, the Construction Control Division of Inspections currently has a cost recovery slightly over 100%. Combined with Zoning Enforcement/Administration, Inspections has a cost recovery of 77.1% for FY 2013-2014, the highest level since FY 2007-2008. This level of cost recovery should be sufficient given the current fee structure and workload in the department. Below is a table showing the history of cost recovery since FY 2004-2005.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Zoning Enforcement/Administration</u>	<u>Construction Control</u>	<u>Total – Cost Recovery</u>
FY 2005	17.0%	128.5%	98.6%
FY 2006	32.5%	135.2%	105.8%
FY 2007	36.8%	121.1%	96.9%
FY 2008	35.1%	98.5%	80.5%
FY 2009	34.7%	80.0%	66.8%
FY 2010	28.1%	74.0%	61.5%
FY 2011	24.6%	82.5%	66.5%
FY 2012	31.4%	91.3%	73.4%
FY 2013	31.2%	83.9%	68.8%
FY 2014 - Adopted	27.4%	101.2%	77.1%

- City/County Inspections has set the target number of inspections per inspector per day at 12.5. This target is the standard for effective and thorough inspection results. The current balance between staffing and level of workload meets the standard set by the Inspections Division. The workload of inspectors dropped below the target of 12.5 inspections per inspector per day from FY 2007-2008 to FY 2010-2011 as the number of inspections decreased. With the reduced workload, staffing in the Inspections Division has been reduced by 11 positions since FY 2007-2008. Recently, the number of inspections has increased slightly, bringing the current level (FY 2012-2013) of inspections per inspector per day to 13.6. Below is a chart showing the history for this metric.



- Currently, field inspectors are trained in specific trades (building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing). This specialization results in inspectors only performing inspections in their respective trades, even if a project is in need of multiple types of inspections. The CBAC finds that cross-training inspectors in multiple trades would lead to a more efficient delivery of services. Travel times could be reduced, and customer service could improve as multiple inspections are performed by the same inspector on a job site.

### Recommendations

- The CBAC recommends that City/County Inspections continues to monitor the workload of its inspectors, including the metric of daily inspections per inspector, to ensure that it remains at or above the target set by the department.

- The CBAC recommends that consideration be given to encourage the cross-training of field inspectors across multiple inspection disciplines. A pay incentive for cross-trained inspectors could help reduce turnover. Further exploration into a pay incentive is also recommended.

**COERC Recommendation:**

*Review the crew size and workload for Department of Transportation operations.*

Field Operations in the Department of Transportation consist of traffic maintenance, streets maintenance, and drainage maintenance. Within these operations are the following crews: signs, signals, pavement markings, concrete, paving, seal, asphalt maintenance, base repair, utility street cut repair, pothole repairs, and drainage. There are 20 total crews ranging in size from two to nine crew members. Department of Transportation Field Operations is made up of 110 authorized positions. The make-up of each crew varies daily depending on vacancies and workload.

For its review of the Department of Transportation, the CBAC was provided background information on the budget, an organizational chart, benchmarking information on Asphalt Maintenance and Repair, and some key workload measures. Department of Transportation staff led the members on a tour of the Sign and Signal Shop and Streets Operation at City Yard. Department of Transportation staff presented to the CBAC an overview of the various field operations, crew duties, and crew make-up. Follow up information provided for the CBAC focused on work orders and a usage report on all Department of Transportation equipment and vehicles.

**Findings**

The CBAC made the following findings based on its review of Department of Transportation crew sizes and workload. More information can be found in Appendix E.

- Work orders and service requests are tracked through “Hansen,” the City’s work order management system. Traffic Maintenance crews produce service requests for each individual job completed each day, while the Streets Division crews may combine several smaller jobs into one larger work order that may take several days or weeks to complete. This practice creates inconsistencies in workload data. The CBAC finds that the Department of Transportation would benefit from an improved work order management system that better allows crews to capture workload and service requests. This system would allow for improved ways to manage workload and deploy crews more efficiently.

- Department of Transportation performance measures are primarily provided in the City's performance measurement reporting system. While the current performance measures for critical response times are valuable, others listed do not necessarily capture the daily workload of crews in an effective manner.
- As of the middle of January 2014, 18 of the 110 authorized positions in Department of Transportation Field Operations were vacant. With these vacancies, crews operate at less than full strength, or crew members are shuffled between crews based on the daily workload. Critical needs are met first, with routine and preventative maintenance work delayed.

### Recommendations

- The CBAC recommends that City staff explore more comprehensive performance measures to enable more in-depth analysis of the workload of Department of Transportation crews. Improved measures would better determine the effectiveness and efficiency of Department of Transportation crews, taking into account the complexity and length of some of the work provided.
- The CBAC recommends that the department strengthen its efforts to fill the vacant 18 positions and keep crews staffed at the fullest level possible.

### Conclusion

During the CBAC's review of these Citizens' Organizational Efficiency Review Committee (COERC) recommendations requiring further study, the members learned more about the details of the operations of the selected departments. After reviewing the information presented and touring the operations under review, the CBAC concludes that while the City is taking steps to improve its efficiency and effectiveness, there are still areas to improve and other options to consider or study further.

One problem brought to light is the City's ability to keep qualified, well-trained equipment operators on staff in the Sanitation Department and the Department of Transportation. The CBAC would offer the following recommendation in addition to those already mentioned:

- City management and staff should develop a training program for current and new employees to receive their Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for operation of medium and heavy equipment in the fleet.

The Citizens' Budget Advisory Council supports the City's continued study of the Citizens' Organizational Efficiency Review Committee (COERC) recommendations. There is ample

opportunity to achieve additional budgetary savings, gains in efficiency, and improved service to the citizens of Winston-Salem.