



James City County

Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Study

Final Report

Prepared by



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of Project

In August 2008, James City County released a Request for Proposal for an *Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Study* of identified County departments and services. The RFP requested that consultants provide an implementation plan that includes recommendations for the most effective delivery of government services with projections of potential savings of costs based on the implementation of those recommendations. Specifically, the County's RFP identified the following key study requirements:

- Analyze service levels, workloads and staffing.
- Evaluate programs and services in terms of necessity, efficiency, staffing, funding and responsiveness to citizens needs.
- Identify policies, procedures or other factors that impede productivity and effectiveness.
- Identify other local governments, especially comparable counties in Virginia, as benchmarks or models from which the County can learn.
- Recommend alternatives that will enable the County to deliver services in the most efficient and effective manner possible.
- Project immediate and long term savings in capital and operating costs from implementing recommendations.
- Develop plans to implement recommendations, including timelines, resources and anticipated impediments to implementing recommendations.

In September 2008, MFSG responded to the County's request for proposals, was interviewed via telephone in October and subsequently engaged to perform the requested services. MFSG initiated work on the project on November 4, 2008. The first site visit and interviews commenced on December 1, 2008 and were completed during the first week of January 2009. Members of the project team made a total of three site visits for three days during the evaluation stage of the project and have had frequent interaction with James City County staff by email and telephone. The project team is appreciative of attitude and helpfulness of the County staff. We were also pleased that the Board of Supervisors could take time to meet with MFSG during the project.

Our work program enabled the project team to assess whether County departments were fulfilling their missions in accordance with adopted County laws and policies and relevant Federal and State regulations. In addition, our assessment provided us with the necessary information to make recommendations to address identified problems and concerns and to improve the operations and services delivered by the County. Our assessment was designed to identify for the County those processes and procedures it should have in place to:

- Ensure projects and services are delivered in a professional manner on time and within budget.
- Ensure that completed projects meet a high quality of customer service delivery and all performance objectives.
- Organize project staff and project development processes effectively.

- Provide for reporting mechanisms related to the status of on-going projects.
- Map processes in operating and administrative departments for business process improvement suggestions and future information technology projects.

James City County operates under a Charter in a manner similar to the traditional or county administrator form of government. The Board of Supervisors is a five-member body representing the five electoral districts in the County: Roberts, Jamestown, Berkeley, Powhatan and Stonehouse. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board are elected annually by its members. The Board members are elected to staggered four-year terms. This body enacts ordinances, appropriates funds, sets tax rates and establishes policies and generally oversees the operation of the County government. The County Administrator is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. As the Chief Executive Officer of the County, he is responsible for developing an annual budget and carrying out policies and laws which are reviewed and approved by the Board. The County Administrator directs business and administrative policies and recommends to the Board those methods, procedures and policies which will properly govern the County.

As of February 2009, the County has reduced its operating budget to \$166 million for each fiscal year 2009 and 2010. This represents a \$4 million reduction from the adopted \$170 million FY 2009 budget and a \$10 million reduction from the \$176 million fiscal plan for FY 2010.

Project Fundamentals

At the onset of the project, MFSG established the following project fundamentals to help guide the study:

- Understand the past but focus on present and future needs.
- Understand the myriad of driving forces facing the County.
- Ensure the staff understands our objective is to fit the needs of the County with the correct staffing level and that the study is not a “witch hunt”.
- Recognize that public sector changes are generally more successful if they are evolutionary vs. revolutionary.
- Focus on the “big ticket” items.
- Interview a cross section of James City County employees, appointed and elected officials and users of the County’s services.
- Inspect the field locations to verify employee input.

Description of the MFSG Project Methodology

Our approach to the *Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Study* consisted of four phases encompassing the programs and functional areas included in the scope of the review:

- **Phase I – Preliminary Investigations** – The project team makes initial contact and performs initial investigations to obtain a general understanding of how the organization is organized, how it operates, and how well it performs as evidenced by operating and financial records.

- **Phase II – On-Site Investigations** – The project team performs on-site investigations of the management of the organization and of the daily operation and support functions associated with its operations. Internal and external drivers are identified. On Site Investigations may be consolidated with Phase I-Preliminary Investigations.
- **Phase III – Functional Evaluations** – The project team performs an assessment and evaluation of each of the management, support and operation functions of the organization, identifying potential problem areas within the various functions.
- **Phase IV – Report Preparation** – The project team prepares an analysis report, summarizing the findings of the functional evaluation.

Each of the phases was sub-divided into discrete tasks as part of the project work plan. The key tasks in the study were as follows:

- Task 1: Project Initiation
- Task 2: Data Collection
- Task 3: Develop Work Plan Projections
- Task 4: Interview Stakeholders
- Task 5: Develop Evaluation Criteria
- Task 6: Develop and Evaluate Alternative Organizational Models and Operating Procedures
- Task 7: Develop Conclusions and Recommendations
- Task 8: Develop Report and Presentations

Key Findings from the Interviews

We interviewed a broad cross-section of employees and found results that were in some cases surprising and in others to be expected:

- James City County is a desirable place of employment.
- James City County staffing has not kept pace with the growing workload.
- County employees are concerned about their future employment.
- Some organizational changes are necessary.
- Gaps have evolved in several areas and with policies and procedures.
- Responsibilities continue to grow in both scope and volume.
- Reliance on institutional memory is too great.
- Staffing in some departments is inadequate.
- Internal communications should be improved.
- There is some concern with the hiring process.

Documents and Records Review

The project team invested significant time in reviewing various documents and records to ensure a complete understanding of the functionality of James City County departments. We received, reviewed and examined copies of virtually every type of document and file used or maintained by various County departments. We received complete cooperation from the County staff in

obtaining these and other documents. The County went so far as to set up a *Microsoft SharePoint* site to post relevant documents, records and information for the project team to review. This cooperation was of great value to the project team.

Benchmarking

The project team along with staff from James City County selected five Virginia counties for review based upon several criteria. The general criteria include the following:

- Proximity to James City County
- Demographics of population served
- Population growth rates
- Availability of data
- Geographic location
- Similarity of responsibilities

The Virginia counties that were selected for the analysis include:

- Albemarle County
- Fauquier County
- Frederick County
- Hanover County
- York County

Once the organizations were selected, the project team began gathering information from each entity. The latest data obtainable was included in the assessment. The benchmarking analysis demonstrated that organizationally there are actually very little similarities between James City County and the entities selected for comparison. All of the entities had significant differences in their organizational structures, including individual location of departments, sub-units, number and responsibilities of staff and reporting responsibilities. These structural differences made an “apples to apples” comparison very difficult.

The following specific observations were made during the course of the benchmarking analysis:

- All Counties are governed by a Board of Supervisors ranging from five to seven members.
- James City, Frederick and York Counties have a County Manager/Administrator with one Assistant County Manager/Administrator responsible for all departments. The other three counties have the reporting departments allocated to more than one Assistant Manager/Administrator. Albemarle County has a County Executive with two Assistant County Executives, Fauquier County has a County Administrator with a Deputy County Administrator and an Assistant County Administrator while Hanover County has a County Administrator with two Assistant County Administrators and two Deputy County Administrators.
- James City County has the second highest population density behind York County.

- The number of County full-time positions per 1,000 residents was lower in all of the benchmarked communities when compared to James City County. The number of County full-time positions per square mile of area was also lower in all of the benchmarked communities when compared to James City County, with the exception of York County. This is by no means an indicator of a lack of productivity or efficiency, due to the difficulties in comparing jurisdictions as alluded to in *Benchmarking Challenges* in the Benchmarking Section.
- James City County has the second lowest operating budget for Public Safety (Police, Fire, EMS, Emergency Communications) and the lowest Public Safety operating budget per full-time position.
- James City County has the lowest Police operating budget per full time position and the second lowest Fire (Fire, EMS, Emergency Communications) operating budget per full time position.
- The County has the lowest Non-Public safety operating budget per full-time position.
- The FY 2009 capital budget for James City County was the lowest of the benchmarked communities while the five-year CIP was slightly below the median.
- All of the benchmarked counties have a Public Works Department, with the exception of James City County and York County.
- With the exception of Hanover County, James City County has a higher property tax rate than all of the other benchmarked communities.

Evaluation Criteria

As outlined in our proposal, the project study team considered a variety of evaluation criteria including but not limited to customer service, public safety, finances and equipment to employ in evaluating the organizational models for James City County.

Alternative Organizational Structures

James City County's current organizational structure and staffing patterns evolved over time and reflect the best judgment of the County as to the deployment of available resources for the workloads faced by the County. Based on the information we collected during our interviews and site visits and comparing James City County with other organizations and sound management practices observed during our experience in working for other clients, we considered the following three organizational models for the County:

- "As Is" Model – the current structure
- "As-Is Enhanced" Model – current structure with some restructuring and the addition of new personnel

- “Functional” Model – significant restructuring of the current organization with emphasis on grouping personnel and divisions by functional responsibility

Each of these models is discussed briefly, together with the advantages and disadvantages of each as we see them.

Priority Recommendations

Based on the project team’s findings and conclusions, we developed a large number of specific recommendations for the County to consider. Those recommendations are outlined in Section III of this report. Our recommendations included cost savings wherever they could be qualified. Likewise, we quantified estimates of potential cost increases relating to our recommendations wherever possible. All of our recommendations are intended to improve overall effectiveness and efficiency in the County’s delivery of services.

Additionally, we have further identified what we consider to be the *six highest priority recommendations* for consideration and implementation by the County. We recommend that these priority recommendations be acted upon immediately if possible, but in no case later than the end of Fiscal Year 2010.

The following provides a brief summary of these priority recommendations. The analysis, findings, conclusions and justifications for each recommendation are further discussed under their respective functional department or divisional write-ups in III. James City County Department Evaluations.

1. Organizational Changes

- Create a new Citizen Services Department under the management of the Assistant County Administrator. The Department would consist of the following existing departments and divisions:
 - Communications
 - Satellite Services
 - Economic Development
 - Neighborhood Connections
 - Cooperative Extension Services
- Maintain a Community Services Department that would consist of those departments and divisions that are not recommended for inclusion in a new Citizen Services Department. Community Services would consist of the following divisions:
 - Social Services
 - Housing and Community Development
 - Colonial Community Corrections
 - Parks and Recreation

- Move Stormwater from General Services to Development Management as a standalone division reporting to the Development Manager.

2. Funding for Staff Positions

- Fill two vacant Groundskeeper I positions within Grounds Maintenance in FY 2010.
- Fill three FY 2010 BOS approved/not-yet funded new positions within the Police Department.
- Fill three FY 2010 BOS approved/not-yet funded new positions within the Fire Department.
- Fill one FY 2010 BOS approved/not-yet funded new position with Emergency Communications.
- Hire two additional civilian administrative staff for Police Department in FY 2010.
- Hire two additional civilian administrative staff for Fire Department in FY 2010.
- Hire one additional Programmer/Analyst position for Information Resources Management in FY 2010.

3. Purchase of Laptops/Mobile Devices

- Purchase approximately 20 laptops/mobile devices for Stormwater, Environmental and Code Compliance Inspectors for field work to connect to existing County data sources (i.e., *CaseTrak*, HMS software) and write reports. Estimated one time cost is \$65,000 and recurring annual cost is \$12,000.
- Implement IT process/system improvements to utilize laptops/mobile devices.
- Implement modified version of HMS software in Codes Compliance Division.

4. Facilitated Retreat for Board of Supervisors

- Organize a facilitated Board of Supervisors “Retreat” during the current FY 2010 budget deliberations.

5. Reconsideration of Stormwater Utility Fee

- Reconsider full or partial implementation of the Stormwater Utility Fee. During reconsideration, previous efforts should be examined, problems identified and adjustments made where appropriate.

6. Development of Detailed Implementation Plan/Schedule

- Develop a detailed implementation plan and schedule to ensure that the report’s recommendations are properly implemented, and that the follow up training and resource documents can be developed in a timely manner.

JAMES CITY COUNTY
Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Study
Report Recommendations

RELATED TO STAFFING

Add the following mission-critical staff in a time-phased manner:

Funding for Staff Positions

- Fill two vacant/Groundskeeper I positions within Grounds Maintenance in FY 2010.
- Fill three FY 2010 BOS approved/not-yet funded new positions within the Police Department.
- Fill three FY 2010 BOS approved/not-yet funded new positions within the Fire Department.
- Fill one FY 2010 BOS approved/not-yet funded new position with Emergency Communications.
- Hire two additional civilian administrative staff for Police Department in FY 2010.
- Hire two additional civilian administrative staff for Fire Department in FY 2010.
- Hire one additional Programmer/Analyst for Information Resource Management in FY 2010.

RELATED TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Implement mission-critical IT technology improvements

- Purchase approximately 20 laptops/mobile devices for Stormwater, Environmental and Code Compliance Inspectors for field work to connect to existing County data sources (i.e., *CaseTrak*, HMS software) and write reports. Estimated one time cost is \$65,000 and recurring annual cost is \$12,000.
- Implement IT process/system improvements to utilize laptops/mobile devices.
- Implement modified version of HMS software in Codes Compliance Division.

RELATED TO STRUCTURE / OPERATIONS

Create a new Citizen Services Department under the management of the Assistant County Administrator. The Department would consist of the following existing departments/divisions:

- Communications
- Satellite Services
- Economic Development
- Neighborhood Connections
- Cooperative Extension Services

Maintain a Community Services Department that would consist of those departments/divisions that are not recommended for inclusion in a new Citizen Services Department. Community Services would consist of the following departments/divisions:

- Social Services
- Housing and Community Development
- Colonial Community Corrections
- Parks and Recreation

Move Stormwater from General Services to Development Management as a standalone division reporting to the Development Manager.

York County's organizational chart is included in the appendix at the end of this report.

Staffing

Total approved County personnel equals 777 positions for FY 2009. 286 of these positions are in constitutional offices, special revenue funds and enterprise funds unrelated to James City County. The largest departments in terms of personnel are Fire & Rescue Operations with 129, Law Enforcement with 58, Grounds Maintenance & Construction with 46 and Emergency Communications/911 with 30.

Budget

York County's Adopted FY 2009 Budget totals \$129.56 million. Excluding departments and components not relevant or comparable to James City (Judicial Services, Education, Human Services, Capital Outlay and Non-Departmental) yields roughly \$48.41 million for County operations. General fund related capital projects total \$52.51 million from FY 2009 to FY 2013 with \$7.60 million allocated for FY 2009.

Observations and Conclusions

The benchmarking demonstrates that while there are some similarities between James City County and the jurisdictions selected for comparison, there are certainly more differences.

The following specific observations were made during the course of the benchmarking analysis:

- The governing body within all of the benchmarked counties is similar. All Counties are governed by a Board of Supervisors ranging from five to seven members.
- James City, Frederick and York Counties have a County Manager/Administrator with one Assistant County Manager/Administrator responsible for all departments. The other three counties have the reporting departments allocated to more than one Assistant Manager/Administrator. Albemarle County has a County Executive with two Assistant County Executives, Fauquier County has a County Administrator with a Deputy County Administrator and an Assistant County Administrator while Hanover County has a County Administrator with two Assistant County Administrators and two Deputy County Administrators.
- James City County has the second highest population density behind York County.
- The number of County full-time positions per 1,000 residents was lower in all of the benchmarked communities when compared to James City County. The number of County full-time positions per square mile of area was also lower in all of the benchmarked communities when compared to James City County, with the exception of York County. This is by no means an indicator of a lack of productivity or efficiency, due to the difficulties in comparing jurisdictions as alluded to above in *Benchmarking Challenges*. Also, while the number of personnel required in some departments certainly varies depending on population size and area (e.g., Police, Fire, Emergency Services), in

other departments it does not (e.g., Finance, Human Resources, and other support services).

- James City County has the second lowest operating budget for Public Safety (Police, Fire, EMS and Emergency Communications) and the lowest Public Safety operating budget per full-time position.
- James City County has the lowest Police operating budget per full time position and the second lowest Fire (Fire, EMS, Emergency Communications) operating budget per full time position.
- The County has the lowest Non-Public Safety operating budget per full-time position.
- The FY 2009 capital budget for James City County was the lowest of the benchmarked communities while the five-year CIP was slightly below the median.
- All of the benchmarked counties have a Public Works Department, with the exception of James City County and York County.
- With the exception of Hanover County, James City County has a higher property tax rate than all of the other benchmarked communities.

The comparison of James City County with other communities within Virginia served to reinforce many of the initial observations made by the project team. Many of the observations are mentioned above and are spelled out specifically in the Conclusions/Recommendations Section for each division. A chart comparing various criteria for the benchmarking communities appears below.

Exhibit 3 – Comparison of James City County to Benchmarking Communities

	James City	Albemarle	Fauquier	Frederick	Hanover	York
County Seat	Williamsburg	Charlottesville	Warrenton	Winchester	Hanover	Yorktown
Population ¹	63,378	93,668	66,801	73,887	97,785	64,526
Area (square miles) ²	143	723	650	415	473	106
Population Density	443	130	103	178	207	611
FY 2009 Capital Budget ³	\$ 5.17	\$ 13.43	\$ 6.70	\$ 20.32	\$ 8.25	\$ 7.60
5-Year (FY 2009 - FY 2013) Capital Plan ³	\$ 40.62	\$ 77.01	\$ 33.37	\$ 48.19	\$ 37.24	\$ 52.51

	James City	Albemarle	Fauquier	Frederick	Hanover	York
FY 2009 Total Operating Budget ³	\$ 176.07	\$ 224.39	\$ 326.12	\$ 255.55	\$ 216.68	\$ 129.56
FY 2009 General Fund Operating Budget ³⁴	\$ 46.68	\$ 48.44	\$ 47.58	\$ 39.58	\$ 68.97	\$ 48.41
FY 2009 Public Safety Operating Budget	\$ 20.19	\$ 25.04	\$ 20.08	\$ 24.38	\$ 40.42	\$ 22.84
FY 2009 Police Operating Budget	\$ 8.48	\$ 12.76	\$ 10.61	\$ 13.97	\$ 20.79	\$ 8.65
FY 2009 Fire Operating Budget	\$ 11.71	\$ 12.28	\$ 9.47	\$ 10.41	\$ 19.63	\$ 14.18
FY 2009 Non-Public Safety Operating Budget	\$ 26.49	\$ 23.40	\$ 27.50	\$ 15.20	\$ 28.55	\$ 25.57
Total County Full-time Positions	605	629	628	758	1,179	777
Number of General Fund Full-time Positions ⁴	529	475	425	361	745	492
Number of Public Safety Full-time Positions	241	232	194	251	462	261
Number of Police Full-time Positions	103	152	131	134	236	93
Number of Fire Full-time Positions	138	80	64	118	226	168
Number of Non-Public Safety Full-time Positions	288	243	231	110	283	231
General Fund Operating Budget per Full-time Position	\$ 88,324	\$ 102,091	\$ 111,925	\$ 109,634	\$ 92,576	\$ 98,500
Public Safety Operating Budget per Full-time Position	\$ 83,944	\$ 108,159	\$ 103,459	\$ 97,128	\$ 87,503	\$ 87,587
Police Operating Budget per Full-time Position	\$ 82,711	\$ 84,197	\$ 81,330	\$ 104,626	\$ 88,078	\$ 92,805
Fire Operating Budget per Full-time Position	\$ 84,860	\$ 153,538	\$ 148,867	\$ 88,609	\$ 86,902	\$ 84,681
Non-Public Safety Operating Budget per Full-time Position	\$ 91,982	\$ 96,310	\$ 119,038	\$ 138,169	\$ 100,853	\$ 110,832

	James City	Albemarle	Fauquier	Frederick	Hanover	York
County Full-time Positions per 1,000 County Residents	8.34	5.07	6.36	4.89	7.62	7.62
County Full-time Positions per Square Mile of Area	3.70	0.66	0.65	0.87	1.58	4.65
FY 09 Real Estate Property Tax Rate	0.770	0.710	0.720	0.525	0.810	0.658

¹Provisional 2008, Weldon Cooper

²US Census

³in millions

⁴ Excludes non general fund expenses/positions and general fund expenses/positions not related to the James City County departments examined in this report such as judicial, education, constitutional offices, social services, regional jail, special funds, etc.

V. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In Section III of this report we outlined our findings and recommendations by County department/division. Our recommendations included cost savings wherever they could be qualified. Likewise, we quantified estimates of potential cost increases relating to our recommendations wherever possible. All of our recommendations were intended to improve overall effectiveness and efficiency in the County's delivery of services.

In this section, we have evaluated and prioritized those recommendations and identified what we consider to be the *six highest priority recommendations* for consideration and implementation by the County. We recommend that these priority recommendations be acted upon immediately if possible, but in no case later than the end of Fiscal Year 2010.

The following provides a brief summary of these priority recommendations. The analysis, findings, conclusions and justifications for these recommendations are further discussed under their respective functional department and divisional write-ups in III. James City County Department Evaluations and "As-Is Enhanced" Model in Section II.

1. Organizational Changes

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- Economic Development
- Neighborhood Connections
- Cooperative Extension Services

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- Organize a facilitated Board of Supervisors “retreat” during the current FY 2010 budget deliberations.

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- Reconsider full or partial implementation of the Stormwater Utility Fee. During reconsideration, previous efforts should be examined, problems identified and adjustments made where appropriate.

6. Development of Detailed Implementation Plan/Schedule

- Develop a detailed implementation plan and schedule to ensure that the report’s recommendations are properly implemented, and that the follow up training and resource documents can be developed in a timely manner.