Cobb County
Citizens Oversight Committee

Final Report
Cobb County Commission
February 28 , 2012

Notes

The following Report is based on interviews and review of extensive documentation received from agency and department heads and other Cobb County personnel; but our procedures did not constitute a comprehensive audit.

The recommendations in this Report are made by the Committee as a whole, but it should be noted that not every member of the Committee agrees with every recommendation.

Agenda

- Opening comments
- Executive summary
- Team presentations
- Questions/discussion

Opening Comments

Brett McClung
Chair

Committee Members

Bob Barr

Vance Booker

Beverly Collins

Laurie Dyke

Brett McClung

Robert Plunkett

Jim Rhoden

Ford Thigpen

Darhyl Watkins

David Welden

Thank You!

- Judy Solomon
- Employees
- Citizens of Cobb County
- Department Heads
- County Manager
- Commissioners

Goals

- Assess organizational structure
- Review revenues and expenses
- Establish service priorities
- Evaluate budget options
- Make recommendations

Approach

- Teams
- Input
  - Interviews
  - Public and employees
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Output
  - Observations
  - Recommendations

Executive Summary

Service Priorities

- Identified County services
- Assigned priorities
- Assessed service level
- Developed improvement matrix

Priority ratings

- **Level 1** – Essential for the County to provide and should be fully funded.
- **Level 2** – Very important but may be limited based on resources available. Cost-sharing strategies are appropriate.
- **Level 3** – Services that are or can be primarily provided/funded by others (public/private). County may provide support.

Priority Ratings		
Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**
Code enforcement	Economic development	Adult sports
Court system	Libraries	Aquatics
Licensing/ permitting	Parks	Cultural
Public safety	Public transportation	Indigent care
Roads	Youth sports	Public health
Tax assessment and collection		Senior centers
Water and sewer		Social services
Zoning		

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Improvement Matrix			
Cost Savings/ Efficiencies		**Reduce or Share Costs/ Efficiencies**	**Improve Delivery/ Efficiencies**
Code enforcement	Public safety	Adult sports	Economic development
Court system	Roads	Aquatics	Public transportation
Indigent care	Social services	Cultural	
Licensing/ permitting	Tax assessment & collection	Libraries	
Parks	Water and sewer	Senior centers	
Public health	Zoning	Youth sports	

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General Observations

- Cobb County is a large, extremely complex operation
- Personnel we met were competent and well-prepared
- Organization structure is “tall” and “spread”
- Austerity fatigue is impacting morale
- Citizens are enjoying an abundance of services with low or no associated fees
- Reluctance to make difficult organizational/personnel decisions
- Public understanding of County operations and finances is inadequate
- Strategy and priorities are not well articulated or understood

Summary Recommendations

- Ensure a well-articulated strategic plan is:
  - Used as a framework for decision-making
  - Integrated with function and organization business plans
- Improve public communications strategy
- Avoid "across-the-board" decisions
- Consolidate "like" units of the organization
- Eliminate redundancies
- Maintain contingency plans for various economic situations
- Develop and implement comprehensive IT plan
- Create compensation and audit oversight committees
- Develop a process to monitor implementation of recommendations

Team Presentations

- Organizational structure and human resources
- Central support
- Court services and public safety
- Community services

Organizational Structure
Human Resources

Ford Thigpen
Vance Booker
Robert Plunkett

Approach

- Analyzed each organization using key indicators of organization effectiveness
- Examined overall organization and certain aspects of county governance
- Analyzed compensation/benefit programs/policies

Organizational/Management Structure Analysis

- Performed quantitative analysis on each organization to determine the following measures of organization effectiveness:
  - Levels of management
  - Span of control
  - Management ratio (percentage of management)

- Approximation of county statistics
  - Levels – Maximum of 6
  - Span of control – 1 X 5.75 (1 X 8 would be good)
  - Management ratio – 17%

Organizational/Management Structure Analysis

- Within specific organizations there are many opportunities to broaden spans of control by eliminating 1 X 1,1 X 2, and 1 X 3 reporting relationships
- Consider using the elimination of vacancies in conjunction with the organization analysis to improve organization effectiveness

Organization/Management Structure Analysis

- Corporate Boards are recruited with specific expertise in mind (e.g. financial, business, compensation, industry, etc.) whereas Commissioners are elected
- Corporate Boards operate with Audit and Compensation Committees to focus expertise and attention to key areas of the company
- To improve County governance, recommend adding the following permanent committees with two commissioners (e.g. Chairman + one) and two outside experts/professionals reporting to the BOC:
  - Audit
  - Compensation

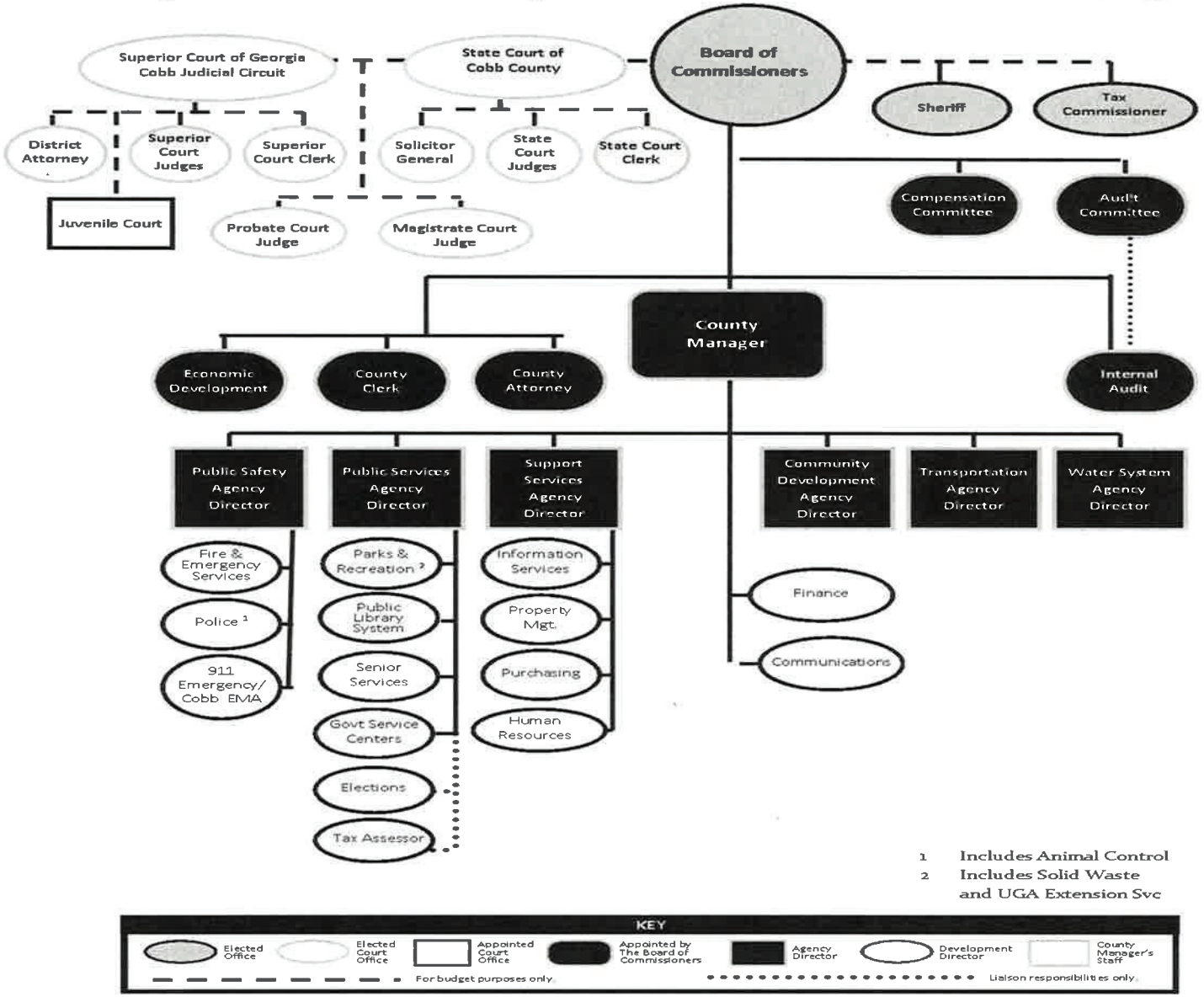
Organization/Management Structure Analysis

- Delineate specific responsibilities by creating a charter for each committee
- Committees need to meet at least quarterly; appropriateness of meeting fee for external members to be determined
- Citizens Oversight Committee will assist as needed in selection of external members

Top Level Organization

- Streamline organization and provide more manageable span of control for county manager
- Clarify Public Services role as external services versus Support Services as internal services
- Increase focus on, and add outside expertise to, the audit and compensation functions
- Provide greater independence and autonomy for the internal audit function
- Increase BOC focus on Economic Development

Proposed Cobb County Government Organizational Chart



Top Level Organization

- Structure should support strategy; as strategy shifts, the organization should adapt
- Suggested organization makes no judgment about the people currently in the jobs (if any), only structure of County government
- County should undertake comprehensive succession planning process to ensure a good pool of candidates for key jobs

Vacancies

- Eliminate the budget for the majority of full-time vacancies ($4.8m) and part-time vacancies ($2.8m) that are more than 3 months old, as well as seasonal vacancies that are more than 1 year old ($.5m)
- Total $8.1m, fully-loaded over $10m, although not all in 2011 budget (Finance discounts vacancies)
- Estimated potential savings $5-6m
- County has unfunded 66 vacancies in 2012 for a projected savings of $4m. This is in addition to the 48 unfunded vacancies in 2011 which amounted to $2.7m. Total unfunded vacancies amount to $6.7m.

Note: Normal turnover is less than 4%

Vacancies

- Two concerns with "unfunded" vacancies:
  1. Unless process is closely managed, vacancies could become funded through budget process or other mechanisms for hiring
  2. Presence of "unfunded" vacancies within the organization may cause management to avoid more difficult organization moves due to the expectation/hope that the vacancies will be filled

Medical Costs

- Premium cost sharing for employees vary widely by plan:
  - Employee only ranges from 9% - 18%
  - Family ranges from 16% -24%
  - Retiree is 25% after 30 years of service
  - Dental, Life, and ADD are provided free
- Alternative 1: Consider increasing cost sharing as follows:
  - Employee only - 25%
  - Family -30%
  - Consider having employees with salaries under $50,000 pay 5% less and increase on a sliding scale to maximum as employee's salary reaches $75,000

Medical Costs

- Alternative 1 (continued):
  - Retiree medical - 30-35%;
  - Dental insurance – 25%
  - Life insurance – 20%
- Alternative 2:
  - Consider comprehensive medical insurance modifications that could produce savings of $5+m (unverified). CPP Project proposal attached
- Under either alternative, perform cost analysis to determine savings and phase-in changes over 3 years to soften the impact
- County implemented significant changes to medical benefits resulting in a nearly $5M savings. Management committed to phasing in increased cost sharing beginning in 2013 to bring medical benefits more in line with private sector companies

Medical Costs

- Audit/review:
  - Patient utilization of services
  - 3rd party payment to contractors
  - Services provided by medical coverage that may represent duplication of services
  - Employees having other medical insurance where there may be opportunities to interface coverage
- Educate employees on HMOs
- County should perform a cost/benefit analysis on the use of telemedicine
- Management has acted or plans to act on all recommendations

Onsite Clinic

- County is evaluating the cost/benefit of an onsite clinic. Appears to be a good idea and should be pursued:
  - Savings could be over $2m annually
  - Productivity improves
  - Controls growth of medical benefit costs
- Savings assume use of existing facility(s) which seems reasonable in this regard
- Start-up costs of $25k per clinic seems low and attracting and retaining quality professionals could be an issue

Worker Compensation

Note: Current level of funds: WC = $3m and General Liability = $5m

- Internal Audit should conduct periodic reviews of WC and general liability claims
- Consider obtaining reinsurance to provide protection for higher level of claim settlements
- Review risk assessment program for corrective actions taken as a result of either general liability or worker's comp accidents
- Management has acted or plans to act on all recommendations

Compensation

- Following recommendations are still valid; however, we concur with management that most of the changes should be done following a comprehensive market review of total compensation (Provided this gets done in 2012)
- Comprehensive market study should include both public and private sector jobs in relevant markets
- Recommend compensation commitee oversight of process and recommendations

Compensation

- Ensure compensation decisions consider where an employee's salary is relative to the market value of his/her job
- Stop giving raises to employees that are more than 10% over market and have good or fully acceptable job performance
- Approximately 300 employees have a good or lower job performance rating and are paid more than 10% or $2.56m over market
- Reinstate raises to good employees that are significantly under market

Paid Time Off
Comp Time

- Eliminate the practice of giving "comp time" at 1.5 hours for each hour overtime worked for the select group of exempt employees (approximately 300). Determine transition plan as needed
- Employees use Comp Time and bank vacation leave, which is currently paid out upon retirement
- Significant overtime requirements can be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by management
- Policy is not market-based

Paid Time Off
Vacation

- Cap vacation carry over at 2 weeks and end accruals up to 480 hours. Employees having more than 2 weeks should not be able to add to their amount but not lose accrual
- Vacations are available to keep employees fresh and, in some ways, to serve as an internal control mechanism
- Payment at peak earnings (end of career) is costly and an unnecessary expense
- Re-examine vacation policy—possibly add one week after 25 years
- Estimated annual savings is approximately $900K

Paid Time Off
Sick Time

- Continue to allow accrual of sick time up to 480 hours in lieu of a short-term disability program, but stop the practice of paying out upon retirement in cash or adding to pension
- Payment at peak earnings is costly and an unnecessary expense
- Payout is not market-based, especially in private sector
- Phase out practice over the next 3 years
- Estimated annual savings is $230K

Overtime/Hiring

- Continue to monitor overtime closely and report to BOC on overtime and hiring at least quarterly
- Use of furloughs is damaging morale and allows management to escape tough decisions on services provided and performance. Recommend their use be eliminated. County responded positively to this
- Hiring freeze (Change what this is called since there is no hiring freeze and it confuses employees and the public)
  - County manager should report monthly on new-hires to justify external hires versus reallocation of internal resources

Pensions

- Eliminate Rule of 80 (full pension if age + years of service = 80). It's one of the most expensive pension plans and, from a policy perspective, it incents good people to leave early resulting in a loss of expertise to the County
- Bullet 1 is still valid concern, but management has taken positive steps to change the pension plan for new hires which significantly lessens the negative impact of the Rule of 80. We withdraw the recommendation, but BOC needs to closely monitor funding versus actuarial projections. Also, continue to review defined benefit vs. defined contribution plans.

Practice of Rehiring Retirees

- Reconsider cost-effectiveness of rehiring retirees part-time, considering cost of salary, pension, benefits, and any early retirement incentive
- Some employees and taxpayers view this as "double-dipping"
- Our cost analysis shows little, if any, benefit when all costs are considered as well as the loss of productive hours
- Future use of retirement incentives should be accompanied with accountability of eliminating jobs or otherwise they should not be used

Practice of Rehiring Retirees

- There are occasionally valid reasons for this practice, especially when the employee goes to work in another area of the County
- Returning to the same job, except part-time, can disguise the true cost-effectiveness of the decision when all costs are considered (e.g. pension, benefits, part-time salary, early retirement incentive)
- Full transparency of this practice to the BOC and public seems appropriate.

Summary

- Organization has many opportunities to streamline and improve efficiency
- Audit and Compensation Committees will improve county-wide governance
- Compensation and benefit policies can be made more competitive and improved
- Savings have been achieved, but much more is possible with continued diligence on the recommendations

Central Support

Darhyl Watkins

Laurie Dyke

Robert Plunkett (Building Maint and Internal Audit)

Central Support Areas Reviewed

- General Fund Admin
- General Operations
- Information Services
- Property Management
- Tax Commissioner
- Tax Assessor
- Human Resources
- Communications
- Fleet Management
- Finance
- Building Maintenance
- Internal Audit
- Purchasing
- Non-profit contributions

Fleet Management

- Observations
  - Cost-conscious/recycle and re-use
  - Budget cuts implemented appropriately, some OK long-term
  - Some repairs not made, deferred purchases and maintenance not sustainable, impacting productivity of other departments
  - Processes are more manual than seem necessary
- Recommendations
  - As part of IT strategic plan, evaluate cost benefit of improved technology, such as:
    - Making technicians more mobile
    - Capturing mileage electronically
    - Eliminating duplicate perpetual inventory systems
  - Evaluate whether all vehicles are really needed, consider more shared vehicles
  - Fix or dispose of equipment and vehicles that are needed and sitting

Finance

- Observations
  - Accomplishing a lot with reduced staff
  - Effective implementation of technology
- Recommendations
  - Continue cross training/consolidation, technology
  - Eliminate furloughs – County responded favorably
  - Consider all costs of small grants
  - Consider operational costs of SPLOST projects
  - Coordinate with purchasing for financial analysis
  - Continue to develop and maintain contingency plans for various economic scenarios – significant progress in 2011

Purchasing

- Observations
  - Processes are good; people are qualified; expertise is vital
  - Workload increasing; staff has been reduced
  - Specifications are developed at departmental level, purchasing department handles bid process
- Recommendations
  - Consider opportunities for additional quantitative analysis of spending to evaluate effectiveness and identify opportunities
  - Continue to involve purchasing department personnel in most purchasing opportunities; limit exceptions
  - Internal audit should monitor contracts and purchases that have "higher risk" for abuse, such as
    - Those that do not involve purchasing department, e.g. certain professional fees
    - Contracts with few bidders

Tax Commissioner

- Observations
  - Excellent integration with Tax Assessor
  - Seems sensitive to constitutional mandate, service to constituents
- Recommendations
  - Strategic IT analysis should include evaluation of technology needs and support options
  - Continue audits to ensure tax compliance

Tax Assessor

- Observations
  - Excellent relationship with Tax Commissioner and commercial contractor
  - Economic conditions and new laws have created resource issues; ability to implement residential audits and handle appeals has been limited
- Recommendations
  - Review bid for commercial contract services – would prefer to see more than one qualified vendor
  - Strategic IT analysis should include cost/benefit evaluation of improved technology
  - Provide appropriate resources for residential and personal property audits and to handle appeals as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible

Contributions to Non-profits

- 2012 Budget $3.75M,1% total Cobb County, 76% 2008
- $2M State agencies & gov't activities for public health & welfare; 49% total NP, 75% 2008. Includes Public Health, DFCS, CSB.
- $1M Cobb Collaborative; 26% total NP, 90% 2008
- $600K Ambulance Services; 16% total NP, 100% 2008
- $133K other; 4% total NP, 23% 2008. Includes NCGLEA, indigent burial, Chambers of Commerce, Keep Cobb Beautiful, Cobb Convention and Visitor's Bureau.
- Limited opportunity for savings that would impact overall financial results.

Cobb Collaborative

- Observations
  - Formalized process for evaluating agencies
  - Multiplier effect is significant
- Recommendations
  - Evaluations should be consistent with County strategic priorities
  - Continue to limit override of Cobb Collaborative recommendations

Communications

- Web management and e-commerce seem misplaced in communications and overlapping with IT and other areas with the organization. Recommend move to IT.
- County operator/mini-help desk function seems misplaced. Recommend move to Support Services.
- Communications' "free services" to other county organizations do not get appropriate cost scrutiny and are likely to be overused as costs become more constrained. Recommend close monitoring and charge-back mechanism as needed.

Public Communications Strategy

- Ensure key messages are developed and systematically communicated including
  - Purpose of County Government (e.g. key responsibilities and service priorities)
  - Key challenges and contingencies
  - Strategy
  - Funding mechanisms and distinctions (e.g. property tax, SPLOST, schools)
  - Performance
  - Other?
- Use multiple media to communicate and reinforce key messages
  - Print
  - Web
  - Newspaper
  - Public forums
  - Employees
  - Retirees
  - Management/leadership
- Develop mechanism to measure effectiveness of strategy

Human Resources

- Opportunity for technology to improve efficiencies in personnel/employee records function. Very paper and labor intensive.
- Question why county-wide policies, such as workplace harassment, are not required of all elected officials. Since the County is ultimately liable, these policies should be consistent county-wide.

Economic Development

Key Facts

The Cobb County Office of Economic Development:

- Supports the development of Cobb County's quality business and job growth. Has 8 key goals:
  - Support growth of businesses and job growth
  - Facilitate the new business growth and expansion
  - Promote redevelopment
  - Communicate Cobb County viability to interested parties (i.e., citizens, local and global businesses)
  - Support and encourage outside funding
  - Serve as a strategist for elected officials and county depts for outside funding activities
  - Assist commissioners in improving quality of life
  - Serve as liaison in support of external affairs initiatives
- Outsources acquisition and grants to Holland and Knight. Paid for by grant and approximately $120k annually
- Staffed by 4 FTE's
- Obtained approximately $38mm in funds for Cobb County over the past 6 years
- Total budget has averaged about $360k annually. Approximately 97% of budget is personnel and 3% operational (i.e., FY12 $349,011 in personnel costs and $9,658 is operational). The Harland & Knight comes from the board of commissioners budget

Key Observations

- The staff is talented and energetic about their work
- The department has a number for what they have obtained in funds but it does not track any metrics for how they have affected the county's economy, such as job growth, revenue, etc.....
- The relationship with Holland and Knight is being bid out
- The department seems focused on looking for funds and less engaged in proactively seeking new businesses to attract to the county. Their operational budget is 3% of their total budget which limits their ability to study and attract new enterprises. The Chamber of Commerce (a non-elected entity) seems to be in the lead of attracting new businesses and driving growth.
- The Chamber of Commerce is driving an initiative (Competitive Edge) to envision county growth and drive county branding.
- The staff has limited resources to stay on top of redevelopment opportunities for a county the size of Cobb

Economic Development

Recommendation	Potential Benefits
Establish and maintain a County economic development scorecard	• Understanding of the true growth to costs ratio IMPACT: Medium COST TO IMPLEMENT: Low
Establish a clear designation of the role and relationship of the Economic Development department and the Chamber of Commerce	• Predetermined synergy across the entities • Citizen clarity • Increased and expedited growth IMPACT: High COST TO IMPLEMENT: Low

Department: Property Management

Key Facts

The Cobb County Property Management department:

- Manages 93 sites
- Manage approximately 1.8 million square feet of space
- The sites and space managed does not include the following departments: Parks, Sheriff, Fire and Water.
- Addresses approximately 6,000 work orders annually. Most work orders come in via phone or via the web. Usually assigned and distributed manually by the work order coordinator
- The software used to support work orders is Corrigo.
- Services include operations maintenance, custodial , event setup, renovations, construction design, construction & renovation management , energy management , parking attendants, and cabinetry
- The Department consists of 80 fte's that are supported by inmate labour for such functions as cabinetry, custodial and facilities projects
- Supplies are purchased centrally. Approximately $120,000 spent on cleaning supplies annually. Approximately $500,000 spent on maintenance supplies annually.
- New buildings and renovations have brought the advent of new technologies (i.e., HVAC, toilets, etc....)
- Currently, most future approved projects are funded via SPLOST, grant or stimulus funds

Key Observations

- The Property Management department has taken steps to reduce budget via: reducing preventative maintenance contracts (i.e., auto doors, HVAC doing in house), setting office temps at 75 degrees, reducing event setups by pushing out to the other departments, shutting off irrigation, and utilizing furloughs
- The department does not have a mechanism to understand the work order trends. For instance, limited capability exists to be able to categorize work orders, understand root causes and take preventative measures (i.e., replace items, train departments, etc...). Hard to understand if there is an opportunity to "refuse" or push out certain work orders to the departments (i.e., called to remove a roach)
- For the most part, work orders are dispatched thru a single point manually. May become a single point of failure. Also may affect getting right resources to job or efficiently .
- Difficult to understand the utilization of staff based upon the work orders and projects. For instance, is a given group 110% utilized on work orders and another group 60% utilized on projects.
- Staff has limited training on the new technologies being deployed
- Potential redundant functions exist with the Sheriff, Parks, Fire and Water departments that may be leveraged
- Work orders have reduced over the years

Property Management

Recommendation	Potential Benefits
Conduct a detailed review of the property management, sheriff, parks, fire and water departments to consolidate redundant functions	• Reduce staff count by leveraging resources and capacity across departments • Facilitates the growth of county services without growing infrastructure IMPACT: Medium COST TO IMPLEMENT: Medium
Investigate the deployment of automation and technology (i.e., 311, Maximo) to assist in analyzing work order trends, driving more preventive maintenance, and higher staff utilization	• Increase staff utilization • Reduce work orders • Reduce maintenance and repair costs IMPACT: Medium COST TO IMPLEMENT: Medium
Increase staff and user training and communication on facilities and usage	• Increase staff capabilities • Reduce user errors work orders IMPACT: Medium COST TO IMPLEMENT: Low
Deploy a work order rationalization policy. Certain work orders would not qualify for services.	• Reduce work orders • Reduce staff count IMPACT: Medium COST TO IMPLEMENT: Low

Next Steps

- Quantify benefits and costs
- Review overlaps of services

Department: Information Services

Key Facts

The Cobb County Information Services department:

- Supports approximately 270 individual applications
- Applications primarily support 6 different areas: Judicial, Tax, Public Security, Sheriff, Community Services and Mgmt & Admin (i.e., fleet, finance)
- Approximately 10% of the applications require 7x24x365 support. Mostly sheriff and public security. The remaining applications require support during normal business hours.
- Approximately 5 funded projects are underway that have a remaining balance of $2.8mm
  - Community Dev Application ($28k left on $5mm budget)
  - Police &Sheriff RMS ($560k left on $5.7mm budget)
  - Superior Court clerk technology ($7k left on $980k budget)
  - PC, Server & Printer replacement to run on later version o/s ($1.6mm on $18mm budget)
  - Cobb Addressing Repository ($390k left on $900k budget)
- Approximately 90 staffed resources, 4 funded vacancies and 7 unfunded vacancies

Key Observations

- The Information Services department has postponed and defunded 3 projects (i.e., digital orthophoto base map, 311 Call Center and Phase II & Phase III of the Web Portal
- The department has extremely large list of diverse applications and technologies to support. Some systems are candidates for release upgrades or may be out-of-support
- Some support groups seem to redundant. Public Security and Sheriff support may be more closely aligned..
- System administration resources exist in multiple groups. Synergies may be gained in creating a single pool of sys admin resources and/or developing a cross-functional solution architect view (i.e., break down silos and rationalize processes and systems).
- Due to large and diverse set of applications, a large set of interfaces are maintained therefore increasing maintenance costs
- Difficult to discern a formal project business case process. Some cases are made by the departments.
- Difficult to tell the utilization of the department resources based upon projects and support requirement

Department: Information Services (1)

Recommendation	Potential Benefits
Conduct review of the historical application support requirements and ongoing projects to the staffing model.	• Staff "right sizing" and increased staff utilization IMPACT: Medium COST TO IMPLEMENT: Low
Conduct applications and technology rationalization process based upon the county strategic needs. Build an application architecture and improvement portfolio with a strategic view.	• Reduced staff requirements • Reduce maintenance and repair costs IMPACT: High COST TO IMPLEMENT: Medium
Conduct application and technology outsourcing feasibility study.	• Reduced maintenance costs IMPACT: Medium COST TO IMPLEMENT: Medium

Department: Information Services (2)

Recommendation	Potential Benefits
Combine the Public Safety and Sheriff application support groups.	• Reduced staff requirements IMPACT: Medium COST TO IMPLEMENT: Low
Establish a central system administration group.	• Reduced staff requirements • Leverage system admins across multiple domains IMPACT: Medium COST TO IMPLEMENT: Low (some training required)
Institute a business case process for new projects that is reviewed and approved by a newly formed IS Steering Committee (comprised of key dept. heads).	• Greater alignment with the county strategic direction IMPACT: High COST TO IMPLEMENT: Medium
Next Steps	
• Quantify benefits and costs • Understand staff utilization against projects and support requirements	

Building Maintenance

- Last energy audit was conducted a few years ago
- Rapid technology advancement, equipment and methodology changes
- Conduct meetings with Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) Department of Engineering who has now developed an Engineering Technology Center to explore energy opportunities, shared resources. County responded and implemented internship program with SPSU in fall 2011.

Building Maintenance Possible Energy Opportunities

- Geo-thermal
- Recouping released hot or cool air from a facility and recycling it to either aid in heating or cooling other devices or systems
- Using smaller pump handlers for air exchanges in certain facilities depending on how many air exchanges are required in a given facility either during each day or at a reduced rate on weekends
- Photo-voltaic solar cells
- Use of electronic sensors to control On an Off of lighting systems as people move thru given areas

Internal Audit

- Expand role and capabilities of IA function
  - Change organizational structure so that IA reports to BOC and functionally to Audit Committee
  - Add additional qualified staff
  - Incorporate both compliance and operational functions into IA plans
- Audit Committee will assist in identifying and selecting opportunities for internal audit
- Implement process to ensure that audit findings are addressed in a timely manner

Internal Audit Example Opportunities

- Periodic review of medical and workers' comp claims that are processed by Third Party Pay contractors
- Review of general liability claims as processed by Risk Assessment to verify process and proper settlement of claims based on legal agreements
- Review frequency of transfers between Funds to determine reason for transfers
- Cross-check effectiveness of computer generated reports to verify if reports are needed and utilized
- Review of inventory controls to ensure accountability
- Evaluate compliance with purchasing procedures and controls

Court Services
Public Safety

Bob Barr
Brett McClung

Introduction

The Oversight Committee, and particularly the Subcommittee on Court Services and Public Safety, expresses its deep appreciation to the dozens of individuals in those agencies and in the county administration offices who made themselves available for interviews, and who provided timely and valuable information and feedback to the Subcommittee. Without such cooperation, this portion of the Final Report would not have been possible.

Overall, both the Subcommittee as well as the full Committee, found the level of professionalism and commitment to the law, to the state and federal Constitutions, and to the taxpayers of Cobb County, to be extremely high across all agencies and personnel considered in this portion of the Final Report. Certainly, however, areas recommended for improvement and action by the BOC, the agency heads, elected and appointed officials, and in some instances, legislators, manifested themselves, and are reflected in this Final Report. A number of these reflect or appear based on what might be termed a degree of complacency or "turf protection," and others appear the result of decisions or lack of decisions by the BOC.

Concerns were expressed and raised that within certain public safety departments, such as the Fire Department, that these departments are top-heavy; and that the process of promoting individuals to higher administrative positions is a way of indirectly granting raises and increased pay. While the Subcommittee considered these concerns, it found no clear evidence of such. Rather, we note this is an area for more careful and explicit study by the Board of Commissioners.

It should also be noted that – unlike other areas studied by the Committee – the agencies and positions considered by this Subcommittee necessarily involve matters of constitutional concern, and therefore positions and responsibilities to some degree outside the control of the BOC because they involve constitutionally-elected officials. However, insofar as the County funds much of the activities of such offices, we believe it is incumbent on the BOC to pay closer attention to, and work to implement changes to the procedures and expenditures of these offices and positions; something we believe can be accomplished with respect for the constitutional considerations related thereto.

Cobb County Police Department

- "COPS" grants – It is recommended that COPS grants, in particular, be more carefully studied and assessed (as Chief Houser, for example, indicates he does) in all instances. The key here is to ensure that such grants, which are made attractive on the front-end, make sense and are cost-effective *over the long run.* Care must be taken to ensure that short-term benefits do not result in more costly, long-term salary and other costs the County would be required to pick up or continue funding.
  - Long-term impact statements should be required to be prepared and submitted to the BOC and/or the County Manager
  - Concerns also were noted regarding spending grant monies on high-tech equipment, considering the cost of such items.
    - One example of this concerns bomb robots (which the County maintains two or three) which cost some $375,000 apiece.
    - Could grant money be used for recurrent basic needs or for refurbishing existing equipment rather than for the latest high-tech products.
- DHS Grants – Similar concerns
- Use of Police-owned vehicles
  - No major problems revealed, but BOC should conduct a comprehensive, cost-benefit study across all public safety agencies; to include consideration of risk-management factors.
  - Top management personnel and those truly needing official vehicles 24-7 should have them; but it is noted that officers in certain other units having such vehicles may not all require them (e.g., PIO, motorcycle, STEP, DUI-TF, Crime Prevention, Internal Affairs)
  - Given tightness of vehicle maintenance budgets, cost-per-mile increases and use of vehicles while not on duty can lead to increased maintenance costs

Cobb County Police Department

- Overtime
  - Overtime in police work is essential, including in the normal course of routine shift changes, but must be carefully and regularly monitored and reevaluated; it can "get out of hand" quickly and easily
    - Arbitrary, across-the-board overtime restrictions or limitations are not compatible with police work
      - Undercover officers, for example, must be able to overlap with others and other shifts absent counterproductive overtime limitations that could endanger continued operations
  - Overtime in some respects has become the "tail wagging the dog," and this is not appropriate prioritization for law enforcement activities
  - The BOC should concern itself with, study, and correct the matter of overtime pay being calculated into, and increasing, retirement pay in order to correct and avoid abuses.
- Furloughs
  - Reduces morale and can adversely affect pro-active nature of police work
  - Reduces pride
  - BOC urged to carefully review such policy as regards law enforcement activities and personnel
  - "4/10" Schedule – furlough does not seem a good fit with such scheduling

Cobb County Police Department

- Uniforms
  - The Department has cut back on the need for store-front for uniforms and equipment, and streamlined the process
  - However, process may need further review to identify areas in which further savings can be realized
    - E.g., are 10 positions in Department of Public Safety Admin. (Supply Unit) truly necessary?
    - Review overall warehouse costs and administration as well as specific supply item replacement frequency
      - E.g., monitor the frequency according to which officers turn in boots for replacement; reevaluate need for certain "top-of-the-line" clothing such as Under Armor, when less-costly brands perform adequately and present just as professional an image
    - BOC should work with the Sheriff's Office to combine Sheriff's Office supply needs at a single supply warehouse
- Firearms and Ammunition
  - No concerns revealed with the manner in which law enforcement officers and agencies purchase, use and track ammunition
    - But, consideration should be given to combining orders county-wide and possibly with other jurisdictions using similar calibers, to achieve economies of scale
- Lack of sniper range and in-house firearms training facility in County
  - Use other county facilities – seems to serve purposes adequately

Cobb County Police Department

- Specialized Units
  - Encourage Chief Houser to continue effort underway to look at the number of specialized units that proliferated in earlier, flush economic times, to determine those truly necessary
    - Concern with high levels of supervisory positions
    - Abolish "Quality of Life" Unit as unnecessary and inappropriate law enforcement function and philosophy
  - There are 11 teams under Special Ops
    - Not necessary to have so many specialized units
      - Should combine four special teams which deal with various aspects of motor ways and vehicles – STEP, Hit and Run, Motorcycle and DUI – into a single special unit; or else consider configuring these similar to the Bomb Squad, SWAT, Dive and Crisis Negotiations teams in which officers have other full-time assignments as well
    - The Crossing Guard Unit should be transferred to the Board of Education; there is no reason this responsibility should be assigned to the Police Dept.
- Training – KEY CONCERN
  - The BOC must re-visit the decision made more than a decade ago to develop and maintain two separate law enforcement training facilities in Cobb County
    - Cost and duplication
    - Communication and camaraderie between departments and agencies suffers
    - Consistent standards
  - Different agencies (Sheriff, Police and Fire) can and should be able to set their own, particularized course and training requirements, which may differ in some particulars; but these *can and should be accommodated in a single training facility*
  - May require some costs to expand and modify the NCGLEA, for example, but overall and in the long-term, such a decision would pay positive and *significant dividends* as noted above
- Crime Scene Investigations Units
  - It does not appear necessary for both CCSO and CCPD to maintain separate units; BOC should combine into a single unit; make the decision and do it
    - Probably makes sense to place under administrative control of the CCSO

Cobb County Sheriff's Office

- Number One Problem – Requiring other jurisdictions to pay $55 per day actual cost to house their inmates, as opposed to current $22 paid by the State of Georgia
  - BOC must aggressively press the Cobb County legislative delegation to make this a priority
    - Encourage Gov. Deal to incorporate this matter in the work currently commencing through the recently-created criminal justice reform commission
- Overtime concerns same as noted above for CCPD
  - Part-time positions should be reviewed as well
- Training
  - Sheriff's Office favors joint training facility
    - See specific notes above under CCPD

Cobb County Sheriff's Office

- Medical requirements for inmates and detainees
  - Recommend a secure facility at appropriate Cobb County medical center such as Kennestone to drop off those inmates/detainees requiring medical attention
    - This is needed because the CCSO cannot take custody of a person needing medical attention from CCPD or other jurisdictions until released by medical personnel
    - Having a single, secure drop-off medical facility would save considerable officers' time and expense because the delivering officer(s) would no longer have to personally wait (sometimes for hours)
    - Immediately conduct study to determine short- and long-term costs/benefits and risk analysis
- Inmate Labor
  - Limited by need to ensure appropriate monitoring/guarding – decision must continue to be made by the Sheriff

Cobb County Sheriff's Office

- Protective Gear
  - To the extent joint procurement with other law enforcement agencies can be effected, this should continue and be encouraged
    - Recognizing, however, that there will be some specialized needs for certain units
      - E.g., jail personnel have greater need for puncture protection than "street units"
  - Supply warehouse
    - Combine with CCPD and FD
  - Crime Scene Investigations Units
    - Consolidate with CCPD . CSI under administrative control of CCSO.

Cobb County E-911

- E-911 receives its funding from subscriber fees
  - Legislation sets maximum rate of $1.50 per subscriber's bill
  - County then determines exact rate
    - Cobb sets $1.25
    - Landline and wireless carriers receive 3% admin fee and wireless can charge up to $0.45 per subscriber
  - Ultimately, Cobb E-911 receives approx. $0.90 per subscriber
  - Obviously, there is considerable flexibility in these rates and structures, and is ripe for approaches to legislators
  - The law allows for audit of vendors; probably a good idea for BOC to conduct one
- EMA receives general funds from County, in addition to grants
- Currently, E-911 director serves as acting EMA deputy director (County Manager serves as Director of EMA)
    - BOC should move to appoint a permanent deputy director, rather than simply deferring the decision indefinitely
    - Remove this post from the day-to-day responsibility of the County Manager and place in the hands of a single person as EMA director under the Public Safety Director

Cobb County E-911

- 800 MHz is funded by costs pro-rated among participating jurisdictions
- HB 256 established that funds coming in for pre-paid phone cards and disposable phones, will be dispensed from the state to counties based on population – Good
- Note: Cobb County E-911 was first E-911 center in Georgia to be nationally accredited
- Still, problems with turnover of personnel
  - Problem is being addressed, but BOC needs to ensure recruiting is carefully assessed and the pay is competitive

Cobb County Fire Department

- Since 1992, Cobb County has been rated ISO 3 (on a scale of 1 to 10, with the lower score being the best) – BOC should openly commit to maintain at least ISO 3 rating
  - Chief Heaton is concerned we are "bumping" at dropping to ISO 4
  - Affects insurance costs, etc.
- Basic Consideration of Priorities
  - Number One Priority is RESPONSE
    - Response based on
      - Personnel
      - Training
      - Equipment
      - Facilities
  - Based on review of Response as Number One priority, certain questions or concerns for further consideration flowed; and recommendations are to:
    - Study feasibility of consolidating number of stations county-wide with municipalities into a single Cobb County Fire Department (primary problem – politics)
    - Seriously consider consolidation and decrease number of Special Operations units in order to reduce supervisory positions and expand span of control
    - Fire Education/Safety Village (see below)
  - Interim report recommended study reduction in number of fire stations in unincorporated Cobb County (currently 29, with two more in ten-year plan); based on further discussions and in consideration of priority of maintaining ISO rating, however, final recommendation is not to interfere with overall number of stations, but to move toward consolidation with municipalities as noted above

Cobb County Fire Department

- It has been suggested also, to assist both the Fire Department and the BOC in determining the very best allocation of resources and setting of priorities, that a review of the overall operations and facilities be conducted by an independent consulting entity specializing in such evaluations
  - We take no position on this but pass on to BOC for consideration
- Recommend the BOC relay concerns with the cost of so-called "green equipment" to state and federal legislative delegations
  - E.g., $30,000 additional cost per fire truck to use diesel fuel simply because the EPA has decided this is "greener"
- Personnel
  - Overtime – Appears to be well-managed (but, see discussion of Fire Safety Village, below)
    - As with Police and Sheriff, BOC should monitor policy and implementation on a regular, ongoing basis
  - Battalion Commanders
    - Concerns expressed by others regarding span of control and fire personnel accompanying commanders
      - Current T/O structure appears well-justified
    - Training structure, as well, appears well-justified
  - In light of already-mandated budget decreases, further cuts would require personnel cuts
    - Should be considered further only with extremely careful analysis of ramifications
      - Keep in mind it takes approximately a year for application and training requirements for a new recruit to result in new personnel being qualified to begin work
    - Similarly, consideration of furloughs

Cobb County Fire Department

- Training
  - Recommend incorporate FD training into overall move toward a single, county-wide training facility with Sheriff and Police departments
    - Currently, Fire Dept. trains at the DPSTC facility on Valor Drive, not at NCGLEA; and utilizes certain facilities at Dobbins ARB
      - Fire Chief expressed view that Fire Dept. could train at either facility so long as expanded to accommodate needs
- Public Safety Education/Safety Village
  - Notwithstanding Chief Heaton's eloquent rationale for maintaining a heavy educational component and responsibility within his Department, including the Cobb County Safety Village, it is recommended that the propriety of maintaining such a facility, as well as the cost thereof, should be a clear and major concern for BOC
    - Significant overtime required
  - FY 2011 costs to Fire Dept. appears significant as well -- $843,942 "Total Salary/Fringe for all Safety Village Positions" [not including +/- $284K general operations budget or $250,012 Fire Educ. Overtime salaries]
  - Add to those figures whatever the Foundation raises (+/- $140K ?), and one is looking at a cost of at least nearly $1.4 million.
  - Careful study by the BOC and County Attorney should be undertaken in order to divest the Fire Department of responsibility for conducting and paying for public safety education; as well as studying the legal basis – if any – for such an expansive program
    - Preliminary review of O.C.G.A provisions, Georgia Department of Education Performance Standards for Health Education, and Core Curriculum standards, conducted by this subcommittee indicates this is unclear at best
    - Consider shifting responsibility for costs of Safety Village and public safety education training to Board of Education , or move to complete privatization of the Safety Village.

Director of Public Safety

- Recommend placing Cobb EMA director under Director of Public Safety
  - Functions are public safety-related
- Public Safety Director currently reports to County Administrator
  - Recommend PSD report to BOC for policy and County Manager for administrative matters
- Overall purpose and management
  - Careful consideration was given to recommending abolishing the position of public safety director; but on balance, with implementation of recommendations contained herein, recommend maintaining the position
  - If primary purpose is to consolidate and help resolve disputes between police and fire departments, incumbent must be independent of component agencies
    - Currently, incumbent is Fire Chief as acting PSD, and by all accounts, is doing excellent job; but for long-term and as a county policy matter, the post should be filled not by an acting director, but by a permanent director with extensive public safety experience
- Administrative budget appears to be +/- $1.5 million
  - BOC should take steps to reduce management overhead
- Animal Control should not be included under DPS as a separate organization and line item
    - More appropriate under CCPD (where it previously was parked)
      - Question the need for arrest powers
- Internal Affairs
      - Recommend further study regarding whether each department should control and manage its own internal affairs matters

District Attorney's Office For The Cobb Judicial Circuit

- Office has made significant cuts already, as have virtually all other departments and agencies interviewed
  - Office is a state agency that receives majority of its funding from the county
- No major recommendations for BOC
  - Note: Two areas identified for further study
    - Reduce $525,000 law enforcement court costs
    - Coordinate and streamline calendars as between DA and courts/judges

Cobb County Superior Court Clerk

- Office has been a leader in modernizing records with electronic filings, etc.
  - Resulting in significant personnel savings and reductions in filing times and retrieval times for documents (e.g., real estate records)
  - Overtime has been reduced from +/- $302,000 in 2007 to virtually nothing today (+/- $2,200 in FY 2010)
- BOC should mandate a single case management system for all courts within the county, including Superior Court (currently, the State Court, Juvenile Court, Magistrate Court, Probate Court, Solicitor General and District Attorney utilize the Contexte Case Management System; the Superior Court does not); and mandate all courts implement electronic records keeping/imaging
  - This does not appear to conflict with the constitutional duties of the Clerk; if county funds are being used, then the county has a right and responsibility to ensure the systems and equipment are the most appropriate and cost-effective
- Problem for Superior Court Clerk's office as well as State Court, is that both are required to stay open after-hours and keep at least some personnel present, in order to meet needs of judges holding court after normal business hours
  - Mandate steps to make process more predictable and less-costly

Cobb Superior Court (Judges and Court Administrator)

- Ratio of Superior Court and State Court judges to population appears disparate (1:68,000 pop. Superior Court vs. 1:57,000 pop. State Court)
  - While it is recognized this is not a conclusive factor in determining how many State Court and Superior Court judges are needed, we recommend the BOC study the question of workload, total cost, and policy of maintaining the current level of State Court judges
- Considering the current costs for Senior Judges ($450/day), and the availability of State Court judges, the BOC should seriously consider greater emphasis on use of State Court judges rather than senior judges to assist Superior Court
  - BOC and County Manager should pursue some way to better "work out" schedules between State and Superior courts
  - Substantial increase developed in 2009 as result of the state no longer paying the $350/day of the $450/day fee for senior judges
    - Costs continue to increase (e.g., figures as of March 2011 indicated an increase in senior judges' professional fees from $80,000 "as adopted" to $103,400 adjusted
- There are legitimate functions the bailiff corps performs for the judges, prosecutors, and clerks, but question the need for as many as are currently employed (some two dozen)

Cobb Superior Court (Judges and Court Administrator)

- Superior Court Administrator encouraging two-week jury summonses rather than four-week, to reduce costs
- Consideration should be given to implementing a system of combined Superior Court-State Court jury pools (major problem is the two courts operate under different terms of court; would require legislation)
- Court reporters should be "pooled" rather than being assigned to particular judges
  - Reduce costs and down time
  - Three judges currently use pooled reporters, with no apparent loss of productivity or professionalism
- Court Reporter costs – the BOC must take the lead in "making up its mind" as to how the county courts, including Superior Court, pay for court reporters
  - Salaried or contract; or combination, but must be more clearly delineated and controlled)
  - BOC should work with each of the courts in the county system, but insofar as it is the taxpayers who ultimately foot the bill for much of the work performed by the court reporters, the BOC ultimately must bite the bullet and decide
    - Whichever way the BOC determines is most appropriate, it should be mandated that court reporters not be permitted to charge state and county agencies/officials (such as prosecutors) for transcripts they require
    - Other jurisdictions (e.g., Muscogee County) have tackled the problem of a fairer and more uniform system of paying court reporters by establishing defined duties and pay scales for such personnel within the county's civil service system
    - As noted in examples provided us describing short-term cuts to meet across-the-board mandated measures, such steps may very well wind up costing more in the final analysis – again, illustrating the need for a comprehensive reform of the system

Cobb County Solicitor General

- As with District Attorney's office, the Solicitor's office appears to be running extremely lean
- Concern is high cost of law enforcement court pay
  - FY 2008 -- $727,811
  - FY 2009 -- $823,189
  - FY 2010 – $838,226
  - FY 2011 – Likely similar to previous two fiscal years
- See notes above regarding court reporters and bailiffs

Cobb State Court (Judges and Court Administrator)

- Committee has concerns regarding number of State Court judges (12 total – seven Division I for trials and misdemeanors, and five Division II for traffic cases) – see discussion above under "Superior Courts" recommending BOC and legislative delegation carefully study
- State Court still working on implementing electronic filing system(s) pilot program
  - BOC should mandate implementation in 2012 *and* provide necessary funding
  - Coordinate with Superior Court system to greatest extent possible
- Overtime for trials and after-hours court proceedings
  - Encourage judges and administrator to improve planning

Cobb State Court (Judges and Court Administrator)

- HB 1055 increased filing fees for certain proceedings in State Court, which resulted in a dramatic and unfair shift of filings to Magistrate Court – BOC must address and "level the playing field" by providing more resources to Magistrate Court, including possibly shifting personnel from State Court
- FY 2011 through April 30th, bailiff costs for State Court totaled more than $225,000 (total, 57 part-time bailiffs)
  - Court Administrator is currently reviewing and implementing cost-saving measures in this area
- Court Reporters
  - Each Division I judge has an assigned court reporter, but these reporters often cover for others when necessary
    - BOC should require overall "pooling" of all court reporters within each court system, including State Court
    - Requires good scheduling/planning, and having adequate reporters available for unforeseen occurrences
  - Division II has less need for court reporters, and if needed, use court reporters in afternoon (savings -- +/-$30K)
- Recommend the State Court more aggressively pursue reimbursement for attorney fees as condition of pleas in cases involving court-appointed attorneys

Cobb State Court Clerk

- State Court Clerk has met mandated budget cuts
  - Partially the result of the lifting this year of local legislation doing away with the requirement that the court print all civil calendars in the *Marietta Daily Journal* (which duplicated printing of individual notices)
  - Returned two positions back to the County at the end of FY 11
- HR 1055 shifted significant filings from State Court to Magistrate Court (see discussion above under "State Court")
- Electronic filings should be encouraged, accelerated and implemented per directive from BOC (with appropriate funding)
  - See discussion above in "Superior Court Clerk" section

Cobb Magistrate Court

- Doing an awful lot with very little in resources (only court that must remain open 24/7)
- HR 1055 increased filing fees for certain proceedings in State Court
  - Dramatically shifted filings to Magistrate Court
    - Civil case filings increased to 33,492 in 2010, up from 18,634 the previous year
    - Projected total for 2011 is nearly 42,000
    - Returned one full-time magistrate in 2009; then HR 1055 hit last year
    - The State Court Clerk's office assisted extensively in the transition and transferred one vacant full-time position to the Magistrate Court.
    - The BOC has partially addressed the need with two part-time positions. However, the need remains great and the BOC must address and rectify.
- EWI (Electronic Warrant Interchange)
  - Fixed cost; annual maintenance contract
- Bailiffs – same questions as with other courts noted above
- Towing Issue
  - BOC should consider reducing the time period which towing companies are permitted to retain abandoned vehicles before auctioning them (currently, one year)
    - Reducing the time period (e.g., to 90 days) likely would result in a greater number of vehicles available for auction, and a potential corresponding increase in revenues from auctions that would accrue to the County

Cobb Probate Court

- Extremely small budget (Court's entire operating budget is only approx. $75,000)
- Probate Court has met all mandated reductions, but will be facing serious shortfall in this year resulting from changes to firearms licensing fees (which go to the County, not the Probate Court), estimated to increase costs to the Probate Court by as much as $60,000 in the coming year
- Another concern – "problem" administrators and conservators must be brought into the Court before they can be removed
  - However, if they are in any county other than Cobb, such process requires payment of $50 to serve the person
  - Such steps (i.e., removal) may be necessary to protect estates, but even these small fees are difficult for the Probate Court to find under current budget and other constraints
- County will pay Cobb Bar dues but not state Bar dues (since latter is "required" membership) – BOC should pay state Bar dues based on fairness and professionalism

Cobb Juvenile Court

- Recommend greater attention be paid to Juvenile Court
  - Probation officers are key component to the responsibilities and desired success of Juvenile Court – addressing problems with juveniles reduces risks of often more serious adult offenses/offenders
    - Yet, five probation officers and one probation supervisor have been lost – BOC should fund replacements
    - Vehicles in budget are primarily for probation officers
- Bailiffs
  - Paid for by Sheriff's Office at significant benefit to the Juvenile Court and the County
- Four full-time judges work five days a week hearing cases
  - Normally, one judge assisting Superior Court (scheduled through Superior Court Administrator)
  - "Professional Services" includes Pro Temp judges who assist
- Recommend BOC and court administrators for all county court systems consider consolidated drug screenings for all Cobb courts

Cobb Circuit Defender

- Payments to lawyers discrepancy between Grand Jury findings ($8.1 million) and figures provided by the Circuit Defender's office ($5.2 million)
  - Figures from Circuit Defender's office appear accurate
- Encourage – actually, recommend requiring -- Circuit Defender to implement information services systems to improve tracking of financial information and more timely and accurate accounting of payments to lawyers
- Implementing a system to require attorneys to submit everything electronically, would improve tracking, verification and approvals; and follow through with similar system between Circuit Defender and County disbursement office
- According to the Circuit Defender, the office has greatly increased the timeliness and results of ensuring only qualified defendants are provided public defenders
  - Currently denying some 40% of cases, as opposed to only 8% disqualifying in earlier years

Cobb Circuit Defender

- Defendants who enter pleas can be required as a condition of the plea, to reimburse attorney fees
  - Currently, recouping close to $1.0 million in this manner
  - Imposing fines, on the other hand, results in funds going to the state, with Cobb County only receiving back a percentage

Cobb Circuit Defender

- Questions have been raised concerning "contract" lawyers versus "appointed" lawyers
  - The Circuit Defender uses both types, and has used these for several years in some of the courts within its jurisdiction (which include Superior, State, Magistrate, and Juvenile)
  - The cost savings, while real, are somewhat speculative; but are based on analyzing average and sampling of time devoted to defendants by attorneys working under contract and those working appointed
    - Briefly, the contract attorneys (nine for Superior Court, five with State Court, six with Juvenile Court [including one for Magistrate Court]) are under contract to handle initial appearances and other "priority matters" such as probation revocations for the Circuit Defender (they may maintain private practices at other times)
      - This is designed to reduce the need for continuances
      - Essentially, the plan is to enable contract attorneys to focus exclusively on these appointed cases early on, and attempt to resolve them
        - Based on sampling and averaging, and comparing contract attorneys and appointed attorneys who would handle these cases if not resolved early, the Circuit Defender calculates the savings for the various courts
      - This analysis is subject to question regarding the precise savings, as being somewhat speculative, but the Circuit Defender bases his analysis on extensive experience and analysis, concluding the savings currently as follows:
        - Past 13 months for Superior Court -- $1,101,773
        - Past 13 months for State Court -- $263,348
        - Past 13 months for Juvenile Court -- $416,121
  - Concerns have been raised also about the "quality" of representation performed by contract attorneys (e.g., rush to enter pleas quickly, too close with prosecutors and judges), but these should be addressed with the Circuit Defender's oversight committee, and with prosecutors, court administrators and judges
    - The BOC, however, should undertake a proactive and timely study of this issue to ensure constitutional rights and fundamental fairness are not being lost in the process

Cobb Circuit Defender

- Hourly fees for appointed lawyers do not appear to be out of line with other jurisdictions
  - $60/hr. in-court for felonies and misdemeanors; $55/hr. out-of-court for Superior Court and $45/hr. for out-of-court time on misdemeanor cases
  - 214 lawyers on the appointed list
  - Attorneys who exceed averages are required to justify fees
- Court Reporters -- the Circuit Defender suggested consideration be given to creating a single and separate budget for court reporters for all court systems in the county
  - Similarly for interpreters

Cobb Medical Examiner

- Cobb is one of only four counties in Georgia that provides for a medical examiner to perform essential and required services
  - Other counties use GBI
- Cobb's Medical Examiner is an MD appointed by the County, who contracts with Cobb County for his services
  - Pays his own retirement, insurance, associate Medical Examiners, etc.
  - Employees of the office are county employees
  - Cobb County provides the building in which they operate and maintain offices
- Must have overtime available for weekends
  - Obviously, deaths are not predictable, especially those requiring investigation of the M.E.
- M.E. has excellent working relationship with CCPD and CCSO
  - Not necessarily the case of medical examiners in other jurisdictions, which leads to much greater cost through additional staff, etc.
- Cost per investigation by Cobb M.E. continues to come in under costs for other counties; the number of investigations per investigator is higher in Cobb

Community Services Infrastructure

David Welden
Beverly Collins
Jim Rhoden

UGA Extension Observations

- Knowledgeable personnel – underutilized
- Budget is ~ $450K; $157K by Cobb BOE; $119K by UGA; $174K by Cobb County
- Patronage has declined as Cobb has urbanized
- Service should be offered at regional level

UGA Extension
Suggestions for Consideration

- Consider divestiture of the function to a neighboring community where the primary functions and programs can be continued.
- Regional service would be more effective and more efficient.

Parks - Cobblestone Golf Course Observations

- Course condition has improved significantly
- Revenues are improving
- $1.4mm rev bond will be paid off in 2014
- Annual debt service is approximately $650K
- Golf cart fleet needs replacement soon (net $177K)
- Maintenance equipment deteriorating ($300K)
- Parking lot needs resurfacing ($130K in SPLOST)
- Using greywater for irrigation

Parks - Cobblestone Golf Course Suggestions for Consideration

- Consider sale of the business; put up for public auction
- Get out of the golf course business!
- Be sure to coordinate with Army Corps of Engineers

Solid Waste and KCB Observations

- Liable for over $2.0 million annual debt service through 2015 for revenue bond
- Recently privatized operation of Transfer Station, Recycling and Vegetative Recovery operations
- Now consists primarily of KCB plus Landfill post-closure maintenance, including:
  - Ground cover maintenance and remediation
  - Groundwater monitoring and intrusion prevention
  - Methane gas monitoring and release control
  - Landfill cap maintenance and remediation

Solid Waste and KCB Suggestions for Consideration

- Transfer Division, including budget appropriation, personnel and equipment, to Parks organization

Senior Services Observations

- Receives funding from ARC – 25% of annual budget
- Closure of Senior Daycare also reduced buses and drivers
- Many partnerships with care-giving NGO's
- Staffing down 30% since 2008
- Out of county patrons pay premium fees
- Two new facilities will come online next year

Senior Services
Suggestions for Consideration

- Sustain current direction
- Considering assessment of Membership Fees – to impact 2013 budget. Recommendation has been implemented.

Community Development Observations

- $28 million 2010 revenue
- $7.2 million 2011 budget
- New facility seems quite efficient – good for future
- Organization is larger and more complex than expected
- Some important functions are impeded seriously due to delays in implementation of IT systems

Community Development Suggestions for Consideration

- If IT solutions are not soon forthcoming, temporary alternatives should be arranged
- Independent review of application systems throughout the Division should be a priority
- Sucession plans need continued review throughout the Division

Water System

- Major infrastructure challenges. For example, 130 miles of storm water pipe are failing and need replacement soon
- Compensation of qualified staff needs to be examined for equity v. market
- Cost control initiatives must not jeopardize future security of assets. Ex: outsourcing
- Uncertainty of future economy and water supply impose serious strategic challenges

Library System Observations

- 17 locations: size, condition and services vary widely
- Board of Trustees, appointed by BOC, is governing body
- The Board counsels a Director who runs the library operations
- The organization under the Director is tall and fragmented
- There are significant social demands on several locations
- Professional standards and credential requirements are very high.
- The collection is extensive and expensive to maintain
- Number of public computers is being reduced
- Use fees and fines are reasonably low
- The Library webpage is very useful and friendly

Library System Suggestions for Consideration

- Before closing smaller locations consider population and needs of the user community
- Consider phase-out of four carefully selected locations
- Increase capacity/size of some locations
- Increase computer facilities at some locations
- Reduce collection acquisition to a minimum
- Reduce number of periodicals offered
- Reduce FTE's and increase PT's and Volunteers
- "Social needs" should be responsibility of others
- Increase fund raising by support organizations

Department of Transportation Observations

- SPLOST projects dominate the engineering and construction activities of DOT and its contractors
- Frequent mention of low morale
- Some secondary functions may fit more comfortably in other parts of county
- Apparently, numerous independent contractors have established permanent residency at DOT offices
- Project management systems need upgrading
- Extensive use of consultants is routine
- DOT is the central source of GIS throughout the county
- Inadequate equipment maintenance is a growing threat

Department of Transportation Suggestions for Consideration

- Can GIS expertise be sold to others?
- Contracting processes such as bid invitation, RFQ, bid evaluation, contractor selection, accountability, project accounting, QA, etc. should undergo procedural review in the near future.
- Upgrade software and purchase NEW equipment and rolling stock
- Eliminate furlough program and institute merit raises
- Transfer HR and Communications functions to appropriate departments
- Ensure proper coordination between Community Development and DOT Plan Review functions
- Assess the benefits of the four day work week
- Transfer landscape maintenance to Parks Division, including associated budget appropriation, personnel and equipment

DOT – CCT Bus System Observations

- All operations are contracted out
- Management team is highly qualified
- Segmented RFQ for O & M is out for bid
- CCT has no Marketing budget
- Onboard advertising is not permitted
- No fed money available for dial-a-ride service
- Fed subsidies are substantial and governing

DOT – CCT Bus System Suggestions for Consideration

- Any opportunities will likely result from increases to service vs. cost reductions
- Consider establishing a Marketing program
- Consider employer subsidies for special service
- Revisit after new contracts and Transit study results become known

Parks Observations

- Impressive management team
- No work order system
- Performs small engine equipment maintenance for others
- Many crews stationed at parks
- Scope of Recreation programs and services is enormous
- Community relies on availability of facilities.
  (ex: Mt. View Aquatic Center)
- There appears to be room for increased fees
- Organization knows how to deliver with PT's

Parks
Suggestions for Consideration

- Initiate "Tough Love" fees program
- Restore PT staff
- Become the county's sole landscape maintenance service except for Fire Dept. after acquiring the budget appropriations, equipment, personnel and safety equipment from other departments
- Roadside mowing elimination study
- Inherit Solid Waste and KCB (separately)
- Acquire and implement work order system (possibly Maximo as used by Water Dept)

Closing

Brett McClung
Chair

Questions/Discussion

Cobb County...Expect the Best!