

December 2014

Outside Review of Eight City Departments Underway

Initiative is ambitious and intended to improve operational efficiency and use of resources

The Walsh Administration has initiated a process involving an outside review of the operations of eight city departments. The purpose of the reviews is to identify opportunities for savings and efficiency and maximize the resources in providing improved services to the public. Requests for proposals have been issued, interviews conducted and contracts signed with various management consulting firms or institutes to undertake the studies.

A core set of assessment factors is the same for each departmental review with specific issues germane to the particular department added. The expectation for each review is that the consulting firm will present an initial assessment early in the process and after that presentation, timelines for completion of each report will be set. Work on the Office of Human Resources review has been underway and will be the first study completed. The departments engaged in the outside reviews are shown below.

Departmental Review

Fire Department
Human Resources Office
Library Department
Neighborhood Development
Police Department
Property & Construction Management
Public Health Commission
School Department

The analysis for the School Department includes both an operational review and the preparation of a comprehensive school facilities strategic plan.

Managing the eight departmental reviews, evaluating the findings and planning and executing the implementation of the recommendations adopted is highly ambitious and will require personnel and financial resources to achieve the improved service efficiency and resource distribution sought. If managed well, the reviews should be useful in identifying short and long-term objectives that can be built into each annual budget for implementation. From past experience, the success of this initiative requires the absolute commitment of the Mayor to implement the recommendations.

Over the years, the Research Bureau has recommended that each fiscal year the City of Boston contract for a comprehensive management analysis of the operations of one major line department to identify actions to achieve more efficient service delivery. We make that recommendation again here for after the current series of departmental reviews are completed.

Scope of Services

A few of the core factors for all departments under review are assessment of:

- Operational effectiveness and efficiency of the department and reform solutions
- Department's fiscal and operational health and best use of resources
- Personnel policies and procedures regarding compensation, benefits, job descriptions and employee evaluations
- Whether department's policies and resources are best utilized for meeting its mission and goals