



The Effective, Efficient Government Committee was appointed in December 2008 by Guilford County Board of Commissioners Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston with a charge to “bring efficiencies and increased effectiveness within Guilford County Government.” This effort included developing short-term actions that might affect the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year budget, intermediate actions, and long-term actions that can streamline and strengthen County government.

Short-Term Actions/Recommendations

The 2009-2010 fiscal year budget was adopted at the earliest date ever with a zero tax increase. The work of the Committee will also impact the 2010-2011 budget.

Intermediate Term Actions/Recommendations

The Effective, Efficient Government Committee made the following intermediate action recommendations in March 2009. Attached is the progress in each area as reported by Departments.

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Explore software options to increase technology and automation to further streamline intake functions in the Human Services Departments.</p>	<p>Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Information Services (IS) completed Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) research, with multiple presentations and recommendations, as well as multiple RFP’s for a phased approach. A new hosted VOIP proposal representing a less expensive capital outlay has been received from AT&T. ➤ The Guilford Center installed VOIP technology for care managers and the Guilford Call Center. This new system improves the reliability of equipment, enhances reporting capabilities, integrates voicemail and email, and improves quality of service through monitoring and recording telephone conversations.
	<p>Public Health Electronic Medical Records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Information Services assisted Public Health with implementation of an Electronic Records Management project and workflow evaluation.
	<p>Public Health Client Intake Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Health developed a central registration and records room and streamlined public health services with the relocation of the pharmacy and the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program.

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<p>Explore software options to increase technology and automation to further streamline intake functions in the Human Services Departments.</p>	<p>Department of Social Services Client Intake Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IS created QMGR and QDATA (software) for the Department of Social Services (DSS) to enable tracking, analysis and management of reception area waiting queue information and telephone call follow-up actions. ➤ DSS implemented QMGR in the Reception Area to assign clients a number and a specialty window based on their request. DSS now has the ability to track and monitor the amount of time it takes for a client to receive a number and to receive services. ➤ DSS implemented an assignment/appointment process where clients make the decision to either wait in the Reception Area to be seen, receive an appointment that same day (whereas client can leave the premises until appointment time) or receive an appointment for another day. The appointment can be made through a Reception Window or through the Appointment Phone Line. ➤ DSS implemented a Food & Nutrition Reception Change Window & e-mail usage to handle client questions, changes or receipt of documentation requested from client.
	<p>Animal Control Dispatching & Tracking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IS completed project work on Animal Control automation for dispatching and tracking calls/mobile units. IS helped Animal Control move to Maple Street and interface with Emergency Services and Metro 911/City of Greensboro. ➤ IS re-engineered Animal Control's application and database to improve performance and provide historical reports.
	<p>Guilford Center Customer Intake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Guilford Center revised and updated its Provider Database and developed a web-based Provider Search to facilitate appropriate referrals.
<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Work To Be Done</p> <p>Create Dashboards to Manage Performance & Develop a Single Portal of Entry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ DSS created manual dashboards for many programs and has worked with Public Health and IS to develop an RFP for the implementation of an automated dashboard solution in 2010. ➤ County Administration hosted a meeting with the Human Services Departments on January 27th to coordinate the dashboard solution to extend it to other departments. A follow-up meeting was held in early March 2010 to facilitate a joint Human Services RFP ➤ IS continues to explore other technological consolidation software options that would include a central demographic database that can be shared. ➤ The Technology Committee is meeting to study county-wide technology needs and to consolidate efforts between departments. 	

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<p>Develop a digitization initiative that moves Guilford County government toward a more “paperless” operation.</p>	<p>Clerk’s Office Scanning Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Welfare Reform Liaison Project has prepared the Clerk’s records for scanning.
	<p>Public Health Scanning Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Register of Deeds worked with the Health Department on scanning medical records – 5,290 documents were scanned for a total of 97,575 pages.
	<p>Sheriff’s Use of BizHubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sheriff’s Department implemented BizHubs for scanning/printing/fax functions.
<p>Additional Work To Be Done</p>	
<p>Issue RFP for County-wide imaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IS has issued a Request for Proposals for county-wide imaging, which is scheduled to be awarded April 15. ➤ In collaboration with the Welform Liaison Project, approximately 200 boxes of Public Health medical records will be imaged and indexed. 	
<p>Explore current billing practices (Human Services, Emergency Services, Tax, etc.) for efficiencies of operations, compliance issues, and maximization of revenues.</p>	<p>DSS Billing Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Internal Audit worked with DSS and Finance to reduce the number of Program Integrity billings (Fraud) to meet State Mandates.
	<p>Tax Department Billing Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintained tax collection rate of 98.17% on the total levy in FY 2008-2009; ➤ Offered customers ability to pay with debit cards.
	<p>Emergency Services Billing Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The number and dollar value of credit balances due to duplicate payments by insurance companies and customers have greatly improved since last fiscal year. ➤ In August 2009, EMS Management & Consultants, Inc. (billing service) completed a SAS 70 Type II audit (Statement on Auditing Standards No. 70: Service Organizations) for the period November 1, 2008 to April 30, 2009. No relevant exceptions were noted in any of the areas examined.

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<p>Explore current billing practices (Human Services, Emergency Services, Tax, etc.) for efficiencies of operations, compliance issues, and maximization of revenues.</p>	<p>Health Department Billing Services Facilitated by IS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Migrated the Community Alternatives Program (CAP) Medicaid billing process from the mainframe Accounts Receivable System to Practice Partner; ➤ Implemented processing of electronic remittance advice data; ➤ Re-engineered processes and provided staff training to handle the long running billing and payment processing on 2nd & 3rd shifts; ➤ Provided enhanced ability to electronically preview Patient Statements prior to printing including developing improvements that saved the Health department Centralized Billing Unit 2 to 3 days of work per billing cycle and increased the monthly billing frequency from monthly to daily; ➤ Modified Patient Statement processing to handle insurance refunds; ➤ Developed a program to supplement a standard Collections/Delinquency Analysis Report with additional data needed by collection agencies to recoup fees for services; ➤ Developed improved method of matching electronic remittance data to corresponding charges on a patient's account for services billed through Medicaid.
	<p>Guilford Center Billing Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Guilford Center ensured that all billable service offered in the community were incorporated into Benefit Plan; ➤ Guilford Center improved client records by including county-fundable services that might not have been shown in client-specific records; ➤ The Guilford Center developed reports to facilitate billing improvements to make sure all claims that were denied were appropriately handled and that providers enter their claims timely into the Care Link system to minimize potential losses by the County.
<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Work To Be Done</p> <p>Complete Implementation of New Tax System Providing More Billing Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More Automation with overpayments & collection of other fees ➤ More web-based solutions for customers with new system ➤ Additional exploration of collaboration between Human Services billing functions 	

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<p>Explore the feasibility of Call Center implementation based on departmental inventory of customer information and service requests.</p>	<p>Consolidation of Transportation & DSS Call Center Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Transportation Operations relocated to DSS Call Center at Maple Street providing more “call taking” consolidation between Transportation and DSS. This resulted in the reduction of four positions and improved customer service and staff development through cross training.
	<p>Relocation of Animal Control Dispatch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Animal Control is also stationed at Maple Street in the same location and this can lead to further consolidation in the future. Software will be upgraded in the near future to better manage the distribution of calls to the Animal Control Officers.
	<p>Guilford Center Call Center Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Guilford Center installed Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) technology for care managers and the Guilford Call Center. This new system improves the reliability of equipment, enhances reporting capabilities, integrates voicemail and email, and improves quality of service through monitoring and recording of telephone conversations. Fax-Over-Internet Protocol (FOIP) was also implemented, which integrates faxing with email and allows employees to fax to and from their desktop computers. The Provider Database was also updated, improving the Call Center’s ability to be responsive to its customers.
<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Work To Be Done</p> <p>Facilitate More Call Center Consolidation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cross training among Animal Control, DSS and Transportation Call Center Employees ➤ Software upgrades to distribute the calls to Animal Control Officers ➤ Investigate consolidation of High Point and Greensboro DSS Call Centers 	

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Review more efficient use of cellular phones through study of other organizations.</p>	<p>Cell Phone Efficiencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Previous benchmark studies conducted by Information Services and Internal Audit show that organizations, which are in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations, do not efficiently use cellular phones because of documentation requirements. Stipends which are offered by the County may be a better option. The present law requires a County cell phone to be taxed as a fringe benefit if such documentation is not maintained. Legislative action to repeal the regulation which requires strict documentation has been introduced.
<p>Additional Work To Be Done</p> <p>Examine Base Rate Charge for Legacy System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The legacy 60,000 minutes plan continues to become more expensive for users. Information Services and Finance are examining a base rate charge to make charges more equitable for all users. 	
<p>Explore seeking legislative authority to conduct a “Voting Center” Pilot in Guilford County in 2010 thus eliminating Election Day precinct costs.</p>	<p>“Voting Center” Pilot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Elections brought this proposal before the Board of Commissioners in 2006, but the majority opposed it. Elections would welcome and support such an initiative if the Commissioners recommended it.
<p>Explore inter-jurisdictional partnerships and/or merger of County, City of Greensboro and City of High Point Planning Departments.</p>	<p>Planning Departments Merger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Merger Task Force has completed its report and made recommendations but the selection of common software has to be addressed. High Point has expressed an interest in the County software Accela.
<p>Additional Work To Be Done</p> <p>Inter-Jurisdictional Partnerships & Mergers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board of Commissioners has met with other jurisdictional Boards. 	

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Explore re-organization of Animal Control and intergovernmental partnerships for possible cost savings and improved customer service.</p>	<p>Animal Control Reorganization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Animal Control underwent a rigorous financial review with the 2009-2010 budget. With this review and ultimate conclusions, three positions were eliminated; a Cruelty Investigator position was created from within existing resources; operations were reviewed by the Sheriff’s Department, Social Services administration, Information Services, Emergency Services and Environmental Health administration. ➤ Guilford County’s Sheriff’s Department provided a critique of operations. A Cruelty Investigator was created from an existing staff position at the recommendation and request of the Sheriff’s Department. This position is solely dedicated to investigating customer complaints of cruelty, abuse and lack of care. Since implementation, this position has been very active as cruelty complaints are a leading type of complaint from the public. With this duty removed, the remaining Field Officers are dedicated to investigating other types of complaints received from the public. ➤ The Animal Control schedule was tweaked to optimize staffing with the volume of calls. Officers were assigned 4 x 10 hour workdays with the emphasis on the call volume. While there was plenty of help during the busy days, help was lacking in the low call volume days. Consequently, staff were overwhelmed on the slow days and work was being held over for days when more staff were available. After giving 3 months to this schedule during the busiest time of the year, the schedule reverted back to 5 x 8 hour days. This seems to be working out for the call volume as well as the officers. ➤ Duty areas and responsibilities of the Animal Control Unit were reviewed and appropriately resized to level of staff as well as operational duties prescribed by the GC Ordinance. Wildlife, unless posing a threat or having the appearance of being ill, is referred out to private industry. Private industry can then deploy certified staff to capture nuisance wildlife. Barking dog complaints are referred to Law Enforcement as barking dogs are under the domain for noise violations. Animal Control has found barking dogs to be a human issue and not an animal issue.
	<p>Intergovernmental Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Intergovernmental partnerships were used to extend the Guilford Metro 9-1-1 network and Computer Aided Dispatch system to include Animal Control.

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Begin initial energy audits of five County buildings by North Carolina A&T Center for Energy Research and Technology (CERT) to identify short and long term savings.</p>	<p>North Carolina A&T CERT Program Audits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ North Carolina A&T CERT Program conducted six audits on County Buildings identifying \$179,615 in energy saving projects such as relamping.
	<p>Energy Grant Applications</p> <p>The Economic Stimulus Team has applied for four grants for energy projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relamping Buildings; ➤ Renewable Energy Project at the High Point Detention Center; ➤ New chiller and boilers at the High Point Detention Center; ➤ Retrofitting of HVAC system at the BB & T Building; ➤ Energy Efficient Windows and Doors at the Bur-Mil Park Building; ➤ Funding for a position to help manage energy in a more efficient and effective manner.
	<p>Information Services Energy Savings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Information Services purchased software at a cost of \$20,700 to power down computers at night and power them back up in the morning in order to have annual energy savings of approximately \$44,545.
	<p>Adoption of Strategic Energy Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ County Commissioners accepted the Strategic Energy Plan.
<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Work To Be Done</p> <p>Energy Strategic Plan Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Energy education for employees, measurement and analysis of energy utilization, billing rate review, utility bill audits, building energy audits, measurement and verification of strategies, staff training, project completion, and application of sustainable building practices. 	

Long-Term Action Recommendations

The Effective, Efficient Government Committee made the following long-term action recommendations in March 2009.

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Complete a comparative analysis on the benefits of issuing bonded debt in the near term, to take advantage of reduced construction costs due to the economy and lower bond interest rates, versus delaying bonds until the economy improves. Will immediate cost savings outweigh increased costs and interest in the future?</p>	<p>Bond Sale Delay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The County seeks to balance cash and construction needs with a need for the funds and the status of the market. The County delayed sale of bonds because of projected cash needs resulting in delaying of payment of interest last year
	<p>Qualified School Construction Bonds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Guilford County Schools has requested American Recovery & Reinvestment Act Qualified School Construction Bonds for replacement of regular County bonds for Grimsley High School and Allen Middle School construction projects, potentially reducing interest payments.
<p>Undertake a department by department study to analyze mandated services versus service and programs that have developed over time that, while useful, may be considered for reduction or elimination. A subset of this study should include a space requirement study for future County facilities.</p>	<p>Mandated Versus Non-Mandated Service Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Budget has completed a mandated versus non-mandated services study. <p>Space Requirement Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Property Management completed Space Requirement Study. This study recommended selling three land parcels and seven buildings. <p>Linking Strategic Planning to Budgets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commissioners were asked to rank strategic priorities during their January Retreat.

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Review mutual service agreements between the County and each of the municipalities to determine costs and levels of service.</p>	<p>High Point Mutual Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ County Budget Office met with the City of High Point and discussed mutual services.
	<p>Greensboro Mutual Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Greensboro City Manager and staff met with Guilford County Manager and staff in January; they are charged with coming up with a list of which services (example – Animal Control) should be done by each jurisdiction and who would likely be the provider in the future (mutual service agreement study).
<p>Explore inter-jurisdictional partnerships and/or merger of duplicated services between the County and the City of Greensboro as well as with other jurisdictions such as High Point that desire to participate.</p>	<p>Inter-jurisdictional Partnerships & Mergers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consolidation of the County, Greensboro, and High Point Planning Departments whereby all jurisdictions could save financial resources and improve customer service in the areas of planning, permitting, and inspections through increased collaboration: ➤ The Merger/Intergovernmental Task Force has completed its study. ➤ Both the City of Greensboro and City of High Point perform limited fleet maintenance for County vehicles as capacity permits
<p>Additional Work To Be Done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Debt Study completed for Bond Issuance in March ➤ Complete Mutual Service Agreement Study for Cities of Greensboro and High Point ➤ Act on Merger/Intergovernmental Task Force Study 	