

**Board of Allen County Commissioners  
Efficiency and Effectiveness Task Force  
Thursday, January 7 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.**

Location: New Haven Police Training Room (815 Lincoln Highway East, New Haven)

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Task Force Members Present: Roger Hadley, Kent Castleman, Terry McDonald, Michael Eikenberry, Ben Eisbart, Bob Taylor, Ellen Cutter (facilitator)  
Commissioners Present: Nelson Peters, Therese Brown  
Others Present: Harold Kleine, Chris Cloud, Gloria Yagodowski, Roy Buskirk, Mark Cullnane

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Welcome**

Ellen Cutter passed out a draft of the task force's recommendations and called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the prior meeting. No revisions were made to the prior meeting's minutes.

**Task Force Recommendations Deliverable**

Ms. Cutter stated that most of the comments received concerning the task force's recommendations were edits and were not highly substantive. She asked if any changes should be made before final review and an adoption vote.

Ms. Cutter then began the process of walking through the recommendations deliverable as it currently stands.

**Purpose and Process of Task Force**

Ms. Cutter explained the purpose of the task force and the process by which it conducted business. Creation of an organizational chart for Allen County government by CRI in consultation with staff from the county commissioner's office was discussed. It was noted that the organizational chart should be current as of December 2015.

Ms. Cutter stated that the task force held six meetings from March 2015 – January 2016. It was noted that all task force documents are posted online at CRI's website.

The difficulty of coordination across the pancake structure of Allen County government was discussed. Ms. Cutter mentioned that this structure can present challenges to collaboration and accountability, and that it can at times lead to inefficiencies, confusion, and apathy.

**Discussion of Recommendations**

Pertinent to the task force's first recommendation of enhancing and integrating strategic planning and budgeting processes, Ms. Cutter noted that performance and citizen participation could be improved with enhancement of strategic planning and collection of more citizen input.

Pertinent to the task force's first recommended action, Ms. Cutter suggested that an annual strategic planning retreat could encourage cross-departmental collaboration and could help identify innovations that would result in efficiencies.

Recommended action 1.2, adoption of a zero-based budget by the county, was discussed. Ms. Cutter stated that zero-based budgeting (ZBB) helps to put expenditures in context and ensure that expenditures are justified on a yearly basis. It was mentioned that line-item budgets are required by state law.

Mayor McDonald stated that each department could create zero-based budgets from line item budgets. He mentioned that New Haven moved to ZBB a few years ago and that each department head must annually submit a capital improvement plan. Mayor McDonald noted that a line-item budget could be created from a zero-based budget and expressed his support for ZBB.

Mike Eikenberry suggested that the following sentence under Recommendation #1 be altered: "Line-item budgets do not provide the context necessary to understand how expenditures are bundled to provide existing or proposed new services." The suggestion was to change "...budgets do not provide the context..." to "...budgets may not provide the context..." Ms. Cutter suggested that the wording be changed to "Line-item budgets do not always provide..." The task force agreed that to change the wording of this recommendation to reflect the language suggested by Ms. Cutter.

Roy Buskirk mentioned program-based budgeting as another method to better tie the budgeting process to strategic planning. Roger Hadley then asked if the goal was to recommend a model for emulation by all forms of county government.

Ms. Cutter moved on to begin a discussion of the task force's second recommendation: coordinating performance reviews across the organization and possible implementation of merit pay. It was suggested that linking performance reviews to a merit pay system is akin to linking the budgeting process to the organization's strategic plan, and that this could help to identify managers who do not link compensation to performance reviews.

Commissioner Peters asked if there was consensus on this recommendation. It was determined that there was sufficient support to proceed.

It was mentioned that the performance review process can be fraught with problems. Bob Taylor stated that performance reviews force managers to have difficult conversations with employees. Mike Eikenberry replied that performance reviews force managers to honestly evaluate employees. Commissioner Brown noted that an example of a recommendation that sets a bar for future policy could be the suggestion that the county provide competitive wages. Ben Eisbart then stated a rhetorical question: "if you can't measure it, how do you manage it?" He went on to state that pay should be tied to outcomes. Commissioner Peters pointed out that varying levels of county government and lack of a definite hierarchy within the organization leads to uncertainty about how performance reviews and merit pay would be implemented. Mike Eikenberry stated that these are recommendations and that people will have to examine them and decide what, if anything, they think should be done.

Ms. Cutter asked if there were any changes suggested for recommendation #2. There were none.

Ms. Cutter provided an overview of the final page of the proposed recommendations, including information about the Allen County Strategic Plan, Indiana Association of Counties, and International City/County Management Association.

Mike Eikenberry then moved to vote on the recommended proposals. Ms. Cutter called a voice vote. All who participated voted in support of adopting the recommended proposals.

Ms. Cutter was thanked by task force members and county commissioners for her service.

Commissioner Peters then stated that the task force proved to be a beneficial exercise, that recommendations from the task force will be instituted, and that the process should be repeated every 2-3 years.

### **Adjourn**

Ellen Cutter adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.