



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
455 North Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
Virtual/Teleconference

The Beverly Hills City Council Liaison / Audit Committee

SPECIAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Friday, January 8, 2021
2:00PM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Date / Time: January 8, 2021 / 2:00pm

IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor Lester Friedman, Vice Mayor Robert Wunderlich, City Manager George Chavez, Deputy City Manager Gabriella Yap, City Auditor Eduardo Luna, Principal Performance Auditor Shawneé Pickney, Principal Performance Auditor Abbey Tenn, and Executive Assistant Evelin Garcia.

Public in attendance: Due to the virtual nature of the meeting, there was no public in attendance.

1) PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public were given the opportunity to directly address the Committee on any item listed on the agenda.

None.

2) Performance Audit of Innovation and the City's Transition into the 21st Century

Purpose

The Office of the City Auditor (OCA) conducted a survey to obtain staff feedback about their:

- Telework experience
- Ideas for innovation in their respective departments' operations

The survey provides a baseline of employee sentiments for future evaluations of a telework program if instituted. Survey results identify areas for management consideration related to strategic planning around technological infrastructure, policies and procedures for remote working, and ideas for operational improvements within the City.

Scope

Teleworking employees within the following bargaining units:

- Confidential
- Management and Professional (M&P)
- Municipal Employees Association (MEA)



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Methodology

Surveyed each group between October 22, 2020 and December 1, 2020

Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Pandemic mitigation strategies from all levels of government which resulted in implementation of stay-at-home orders, limited in-person contact, and other virus mitigation strategies. The City Manager directed departments to implement telework based on position suitability. As of December 18, 2020 the City of Beverly Hills has roughly 1,300 cases of COVID-19 and 14 deaths.

Evaluating City Operations

The pandemic created an internal case study to evaluate the City's capacity to:

- Operate virtually
- Innovate
- Prepare for 21st Century governance
- Meet its Sustainability Goals

Utility costs remained consistent while energy use declined. Teleworking may be a mechanism the City can use to reach long term goals of energy efficiency and reducing traffic congestion as outlined in its sustainability plan.

Survey Respondents Demographics

- Total survey response rate: 74%
- Almost 60% of respondents have been in their positions for 1-5 years
- Approximately 20% of respondents have been employed with the City for more than 10 years
- Observations from the study show that workforce appears to be very tech-savvy
- Geographically, respondents live in areas that extend farther than 20 miles south, 30 miles east, 16 miles north, and 10 miles west of Beverly Hills

Employees Telework Experience

- 24% of survey respondents state service levels have increased
- 63% of survey respondents report increasing their productivity
- Respondents report benefits experienced including work/life balance, increased productivity, and reduced commutes



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- Respondents report home office set up and technological resource needs, such as using personal cellphones and access to documents and other work files as challenging while telecommuting, also noting they did not receive ergonomic equipment
- Suggestions from respondents included having access to discounted desk and chairs, access to monitors, etc.
- Although respondents report receiving VPN access, they also commented that other cloud-based options would provide more access to City networks

Management Considerations

- Clearly identify expectations for home office setup in terms of internet access, equipment and furniture as to what the City will provide and what the employee must have
- IT infrastructure:
 - Has cloud-based services and secure shared drive for employee document sharing
 - Microsoft 365 implementation is part of their current strategic plan
- If offered under non-emergency circumstances, respondents would telework and the desire to do so extended among all groups (e.g. employees who have been with the City for 1-5 years to employees with 10 or more years of experience)
- Only 41% of respondents answered yes to their departments soliciting feedback from customers about their level of satisfaction with the City's service delivery.
- City needs to clearly articulate its vision for conducting business in City Hall over the next 5-10 years and incorporate teleworking and other technologies and develop policies and staff expectations accordingly
- City will need to embrace the culture shift to a hybrid work environment and tech-savvy society

Respondents' Ideas for Innovation

- Continuing to offer remote interviewing online for HR recruitment
- Enhancing the City's Permitting System by providing data for customers to conduct own research
- Automating services



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Mayor Friedman wanted to know if management or the public was surveyed during this review related to the efficiency of teleworking. Auditors stated it was discussed internally that all three groups (employees, management, and the public) would be survey groups. As such, the auditors chose to survey employees first to gauge teleworking sentiments. The next phase of this audit will include management and public feedback. The Audit and Finance Committee supported the next phase.

Teleworking was discussed briefly prior to the pandemic and the liaisons believe in pursuing the pros, like the reduction of traffic congestion and productivity efficiency, and recognize cons, such as employment agreements and duplications of expenses.

3) Annual Audit Work Plan for FY 2020/21

As discussed at the beginning of the fiscal year, the audit team would re-evaluate its audit plan at the beginning of Calendar Year 2021. During the last audit selection process, the committee previously discussed enforcement activities and high dollar exposures to the City. The current proposal is for a parking enforcement audit and working with management to select a high dollar contract to be audited.

Vice Mayor Wunderlich suggested traffic enforcement instead of parking enforcement seeing as prior to the pandemic there were a higher number of accidents and a lower number of traffic enforcements, and currently even though there are less miles being driven, speeding accidents have increased. Mayor Friedman noted that the take-home vehicle audit had been deferred and inquired as to whether it was still in consideration. The City Manager also stated that the take-home vehicle audit is critically important as the vehicle fleet has increased significantly. In the relatively near future, the City will have a new Police Chief and this audit would assist in cost-savings for this department. The Liaisons would like to see diverse type of audits that fall under either operational and/or cost-savings.

4) ADJOURNMENT

Date / Time: January 8, 2021 / 2:44PM