

The Shared Services Committee was charged in January 2016 to investigate the feasibility of combining municipal and education operational functions that serve the Town of Newtown by:

- Continuing the high level of service to our taxpayers and employees
- Providing cost savings and efficiencies in the long term that make said changes worthwhile.

In order to achieve these goals, the committee was directed to review work done by previous committees, research and possibly visit towns that have successfully combined operational services, work closely with BOE and BOS designee to understand benefits and risks, and make a complete report including recommendations back to the full Legislative Council by June 30, 2016. The membership of this committee was as follows:

- Dan Weidemann, Chair (Legislative Council)
- Jim Ritchie, Vice Chair (Newtown Resident)
- Christopher Eide, Member (Legislative Council)
- George Ferguson, Member (Legislative Council)
- Robert Tait, Finance Director (Municipal)
- Ron Bienkowski, Director of Business (Board of Education)

The committee determined that it would be beneficial to begin by reviewing previous work and getting input from the various town offices. In reviewing the previous work, it was noted that many of the recommendations of the previous Shared Services Committees had not been implemented. The feedback received noted that the previous recommendations had failed to identify one person to oversee the changes and, as a consequence, changes were not implemented. Feedback also included concerns regarding perception of the shared services process in Town departments and BOE departments.

This led the committee to create a values statement to better communicate the purpose of the committee and the values that the committee intended to use in the development of a plan for shared services. This statement recognized the value of Newtown employees' experience in their respective jobs, the

desire to ensure Newtown taxpayers receive the best value in terms of services received and tax dollars expended, the necessity of trust between all parties involved in the shared services process, and the intention to include all affected parties in the conversation as the plan was created. This values statement was circulated to Town and BOE employees prior to meetings to discuss current implementation of shared services.

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Shared Services Committee Values Statement

The members of the Shared Services Special Committee of the Newtown Legislative Council have assembled to continue the process of identifying efficiencies that could provide a benefit to town employees and Newtown residents through utilizing available resources between the Newtown Board of Education and Town Departments.

The Shared Services Special Committee intends to use the following values to guide this process:

- Newtown's employees are vital resources to the Town. The experience they bring to their positions is vital to continued successful operations. As such, the Shared Services Special Committee will seek recommendations that find efficiencies through attrition whenever possible.
- Newtown's taxpayers, parents, and students deserve value for their contributions to our town in tax dollars. The Shared Services Special Committee seeks to bring the greatest possible value to Newtown residents, while maintaining the level of services that are currently in place.
- The implementation of shared services in any municipality requires trust and cooperation by all involved parties. The Shared Services Special Committee will attempt to bring open and honest communication to the process of consolidation of Town services, both in and out of committee meetings.
- Shared services best practices will never be implemented without the cooperation of those responsible for implementation. To ensure support of those affected, efforts will be made to include affected parties in the development of a plan for implementation of shared services in the Town.

Upon adoption of the values statement, the committee began the process by gathering information from Town employees. In order to facilitate discussion, department heads were paired up and asked three questions: what is already in place between like departments which illustrates best practice and/or efficiency, what in the immediate short term could be put in place between like departments to showcase best practice and efficiency, and what would a long term commitment to shared services look like between you and your colleague? These responses were used to formulate questions to guide meetings between committee members and department heads. These meetings were scheduled and carried out, then discussed as a committee.

Meetings were held with the following Town/BOE common departments: Human Resources, Information Technology, Parks and Recreation/Athletics, Parks and Recreation/Facilities, Police/Security, and Public Works/Facilities. At these meetings, the committee members discussed current levels of shared services and current plans for shared services in the future.

In meeting with the departments, the committee members made several findings that they were able to bring back to the committee in formulating a list of recommendations. The recommendations that were decided on by the committee are represented in Table 1, listed with the anticipated benefits of making such changes.

Table 1 - Recommendations of the Shared Services Committee

Operational Function	Recommendation	Anticipated Benefit
Purchasing	Create a position for a purchasing agent for BOE and municipality.	Provides for more expert assembling of bid packages including liability, insurance, bonds and other legal requirements of the State and Federal governments. Improve the capacity for research and vetting of products and services. Reduce distraction from other professional duties required of purchasing authorities.
Facilities and Maintenance	Have a consultant create a maintenance schedule to be implemented at all BOE and municipal facilities. Develop a cost-benefit analysis to understand the annual cost of the currently outsourced custodial maintenance and compare that to the potential cost of providing the same services with in-house personnel.	Regular maintenance will increase the reliability, efficiency, and lifespan of buildings and equipment, while potentially decreasing the costs of current service contracts.
Accounting	Combine accounting functions of the BOE and Municipal Finance Departments, including accounts payable/receivable, payroll, and general bookkeeping. The departments will cross-train employees and have one set of accounting policies and procedures. The Finance Director will oversee all accounting processes.	Will allow Director of Business to focus more effectively on needs germane to BOE operations. Cross training will create efficiencies by increasing the breadth of expertise of all finance employees, including those serving the municipality.
Human Resources	BOE and Municipal Human Resources departments be co-located in a single space. That these departments maintain facilities that allow for collaboration with necessary departments and dedicated	Will promote professional collaboration between BOE and Municipal Employees and improve efficiencies in current practices.

	spaces for independent work.	
Information Technology	Formalize a collaborative hiring process that takes input from both departments.	Will ensure that new hires are capable of working in a collaborative environment and promote the sharing of skill sets across departments.
Security	Investigations determined that there is currently a high level of collaboration between NPD and Newtown BOE Security. The committee did not find any additional efficiencies that could be gained at this time.	

In conclusion, it is the committee's belief that the above recommendations will bring greater value to Newtown taxpayers by promoting collaboration between departments, cross-training Town and BOE employees, and possibly leading to savings through attrition in the future. The committee suggests that the Legislative Council approve the preceding changes and recommend that the First Selectman and Superintendent begin creating a plan to implement these changes.

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