

Scope of Work

Performance Audit

Jackson County

Permitting and Code Enforcement

May 26, 2015

Purpose: The purpose of the performance audit is to identify opportunities for improvement in existing policies and procedures and to incorporate industry best practices into the current business operations of Permitting and Code Enforcement. The audit should evaluate current organizational structure and determine if appropriate and confirm that the North Carolina State Building Code and other state and local regulations applicable to the department are being enforced.

Tasks:

- **Review organizational structure for the Permitting and Code Enforcement Office.** This review would identify unnecessary layers of supervision as well as opportunities for consolidation. Are reporting lines clearly identified and documented? Are roles and responsibilities appropriate for the structure in-place?
- **Review the work flow from the time a permit application is submitted to the time a permit is closed as the result of the completion of the project.** This review should sample a reasonable number of files to determine if documentation is complete and all necessary approvals have been obtained. Conduct interviews with a sampling of local contractors to determine if current procedures are user/business friendly or if opportunities for improvement exist from the perspective of the customer. The interviews should also evaluate the contractor's experience from a customer service standpoint as well as the responsiveness when inspections are requested and when questions are submitted. Does a formalized process exist for conflict resolution?
- **Review the use of technology and management systems currently used in the Permitting and Code Enforcement Office.** Over the past two years, in conjunction with an outside computer company, a permitting software system has been developed and implemented by the Office of Permitting and Code Enforcement. Perform a high level review of the system's effectiveness and the staff's commitment to utilizing the system in the day to day operations of the organization. Is the system adequately documented and are disaster recovery procedures in place? Are there obvious opportunities for improvements in this system and in the use of technology overall. Does this system offer access and information to other county users?
- **Review the perceived areas of responsibility between Permitting and Code Enforcement and the Planning Department.** Are responsibilities of each department clearly stated? What are the best practices related to a single department of planning and enforcement, separate

departments for planning and enforcement, or hybrids of the two? Could Jackson County benefit from a revised organizational structure? Are staffing levels for both departments appropriately sized based on the departmental activity and population of the County? Is there an open line of communication between the two departments?

- **Review management reporting system.** Do permitting activity reports exist that provide elected officials with information about building activity within the County? Do management reports exist that provide productivity statistics for staff? Do reports exist that identify open projects, inactive projects, and projects in need of additional oversight? Is the overall reporting system adequate and timely? Are there reports that would be of value to the departmental administration and county administration? Are there initiatives that would better educate the general public about permitting and code enforcement?
- **Review system for staff training, professional development, and updating current systems as they relate to legislative actions, building code updates, and local ordinance modifications.** Does staff have the opportunity for professional development and instruction related to changes resulting from legislative actions? Has staff participated in necessary training to maintain certifications?

Deliverables:

Throughout the entire engagement, the contractor will provide regular updates to the County Manager. At the end of the project, the contractor will submit a written report of findings and recommendations. This information will be reviewed in draft form with the County Manager and Director of Permitting and Code Enforcement as part of an exit conference. The purpose of the exit conference is to discuss the findings and recommendations and to answer any questions, provide additional information, or clear up any misunderstandings prior to the issuance of the final report. The final report will be presented and discussed with the Jackson County Board of Commissioners at a regularly scheduled meeting or work session.