

**Local Government Efficiency Task Force  
Recommendation to Milton Board of Selectmen  
August 18, 2021**

**I. Introduction – Karen and Bruce**

***A. Introduce committee members – Karen***

***B. Local Government Efficiency – The story! – Bruce***

Refer to Appendix A

***C. Review the LGETF mission – Karen***

We as the Local Government Efficiency Task Force have been charged by the Board of Selectmen to identify and recommend changes that will improve the financial position of local government by identifying local and regional cost sharing opportunities, revenue stream enhancement opportunities and other collaborative efforts to reduce redundancies and identify underutilized capacities in ours and other communities that can be shared fairly through what might be termed “Intergovernmental Mutual Aid.”

***D. Review our goals – Bruce***

- Review the scope and funding of Town Government services
- Regional and cross-border partnerships
- “Best Practices” goals for staff, contracts, and 3<sup>rd</sup> party purchases
- Identifying and meeting Community Vision goals

***E. Did we accomplish what we set out to do?- Karen***

Refer to Appendix B

***F. What we will be presenting today - Karen***

Note: Need to point out that some comments have been redacted for legal reasons.

**1. Review survey matrix – How many sent, how sent, how many returned, statistically sound**

Note: Review survey response rate spreadsheet

## **II. Where did we begin!**

***A. Review at high level Town Survey and overall results on PowerPoint document - Tammy***

***B. Review summary spreadsheet and process for how we populated it - John***

### **III. How did we use all the data? – Mike**

#### ***A. Review how we developed recommendation***

- 1. First, we started Recommendation list based on committee experience**
- 2. Second, we went through every survey comment for Question 12.**
- 3. Third, we reviewed all Recommendation and assigned the following:**
  - a) Status – In Process, Not Started or N/A**
  - b) Next Steps – For IP, we listed steps. However, for most, we listed where recommendation should be addressed.**
  - c) By Whom – Most often, what committee or department we recommend implement the recommendation**

### **IV. Recommendations review**

***A. We will step through each recommendation – Tammy, Kym, Mike, and John***

***B. Q & A session – Karen moderate***

### **V. Conclusion - Karen**

#### ***A. Recommendation for future surveys***

- 1. The LGETF strongly recommends future survey, as we felt this survey was very successful in hearing from the residents of Milton and Milton Mills**
- 2. As we utilized the bulk mailing option, mailing cost were held to approximately \$1,000**
- 3. We would recommend obtaining assistance from an outside consultant to make the survey more effective**
- 4. We recommend doing survey on 4-year interval, possibly around the time of an election. This might ease**

the return of completed survey and increase the response rate

***B. Next steps for committee***

1. We will be putting the following up on the Town Survey: Original survey responses, LGETF summary of survey responses and this presentation

2. In closing we want to thank the BOS and Ernie, the prior Town Administrator, who deserve considerable credit for starting the work of this committee to help the town succeed financially in these hard-economic times. Our work particularly to the original charge was summarized here today. The community survey, which started as a way to find out what businesses needed for their own success, has generated a broad range of responses that points to a great reservoir of interest and goodwill for the “community pride and spirit” that is our town. We as a town, need to continue this good work completed by this committee. ---Larry Brown

3. Our work is complete and we look forward to seeing many of these suggestions implemented.

4. At this time, we respectfully request that the BOS discharge the LGETF committee members and dissolve this committee

**VI. Final Comments - Claudine**

**VII. Public Comments**

## **Appendix A:**

### **B. Local Government Efficiency-The Story**

Citizens expect government workers to work as efficiently as possible so that their tax dollars are put to the best use.

Efficiency requires a clear goal, supported by a well-defined process, the right resources, and the ability to adapt as needed. It requires the accomplishment of key activities in the least complex way with clear progress as well as outcome measures that let you know you are making the appropriate progress.

Local government duties are largely controlled by state statutes for record-keeping, licenses, collection of taxes, budget, land use regulations, maintenance of roadways, and public safety. These core functions cannot be made more efficient, but the staffing and processes in place to enact them can be. Core functions can be only inefficient when staff are undertrained, overworked, and understaffed.

Therefore, clear goals require staff teamwork, communication, cooperation, and collaboration through meetings that identify performance goals, strengths, and barriers that in the end identify the necessary resources to get the job done efficiently.

Well-defined processes can be addressed by preparing a Town Services Handbook that describes the steps both staff and residents must take to get the job done. It can show at a glance who does what, when and why. Adaptability will necessarily come out of the Services Handbook because in a Town with so few staff, it must be used for other staff to know exactly how to accomplish another department's task.

Local government duties also entail promoting appropriate business and employment opportunities for citizens. Effective local governments provide overall quality of life for the people who reside in their communities. Our Recreation Department does these things but getting the word out may be the way to greater efficiency.

Efficiency must also require a discussion of potential regional and/or municipal partnerships, affiliation group memberships, participation in state contracts and increased use of state and federal grant opportunities to further the Town's core functions. These require discussion and study and a clear policy to explore and put some or all of these in place. The policy and goal statement would be the first step. Additionally, instituting formal inventory and maintenance programs for vehicles and equipment, government buildings, roads and other capital infrastructure is a way of slowing budget creep simply because it is efficient to know when to repurchase or reconstruct and the reasons why. The use of incremental funding to save into a capital reserve fund when you know how long vehicles or equipment will last, has the effect of spreading out (smoothing) the budgetary impact for such purchases.

In the end, understaffing is the great killer of efficiency. Economy is not synonymous with efficiency and the Board should determine if there really is this condition in Town Hall. Do your staff try to do two or three major functions? And is it simply "lower taxes" that is the goal or is it truly efficiency in our local government?

## **Appendix B:**

Maybe not the goals outlined in print! But we did achieve a goal and a very important one. Let me take a few minutes to explain.

This committee set out in 2020 to identify local government inefficiencies. Hmm!! We spent some time talking and pondering first, what is a government inefficiency? How does one identify with factual data? Finding ourselves left with more questions than answers on how to proceed, the group decided to utilize a town survey concept. This was suggested by Bruce based on an initial draft of a type of survey the MEC had started. We modified this draft survey to include questions pertaining to government efficiency and communication. This survey was published on December 31, 2020. The number of responses were remarkable and thus sparked the flame for our revised mission! Listen to the residents who were clearly very interested in making this community better. It was from the residents that many of the ideas to improve our local government came from. Back to the beginning, did this accomplish all the goals outlined in our original mission – No! But more important this committee achieved the goal of reaching out to and hearing from our residents of our community. That to us is the larger success. Thank you for your time.