Olympic Performance, Inc.

Office of Management and Finance Stakeholder Feedback for CAO Transition and Strategic Planning

December 2016

Why this document?

This document provides a summary of Office of Management and Finance (OMF) stakeholder feedback as background information for Fred Miller to share with Tom Rinehart.

Development of this document

The findings in this document were generated from 28 interviews (42 interviewees) and two focus groups (11 participants) conducted in October and November of 2016 by Ronald Sarazin of Olympic Performance, Inc. (ron@123workflow.com).

Format of this document

This document presents a section reporting general impressions comparing information gathered this year to years past, followed by sections for each of seven themes that emerged from the interviews and focus groups. Each theme is summarized and supported with example statements. An appendix at the end of this document identifies supporting documents.

General Impressions

The tone of the stakeholder feedback received this year feels significantly more positive than in the past. In 2005, Olympic Performance, Inc. (OPI) conducted a customer service survey and a series of interviews and focus groups for OMF for the first time. This process was repeated in slightly modified forms five times over the following six years. In 2012, as preparation for the 2012 – 2017 Strategic Plan, OPI conducted a more extensive set of interviews and focus groups, and analyzed survey results from City stakeholders and OMF employees.

In the early years, feedback received regarding OMF services was highly critical and full of negative examples. Many interviewees talked longingly of the days before services were centralized by the City. By 2012, the tone had evened out to a point where there seemed to be about as many positive statements as negative, and very few comments about the 'good old days.' This year, the positive statements outweighed the negative and only one person talked about wishing a current OMF service was returned to his bureau.

The positive statements received this year most frequently centered around the impression that OMF has quality subject matter experts, is trying hard, means well, and has demonstrated improvement. Even when negative issues were brought up, they were often softened with the sentiment that the OMF employees are good people. There seems to be a growing understanding that the work OMF does is challenging and important, and an understanding of the value provided.

Top Themes

Below is a presentation of the top themes identified in the interviews and explored in the focus groups. These topics are listed in order of intensity communicated during the interviews and focus groups.

1. Convener role (Use influence, not power; discover and facilitate Citywide issues; don't be perceived as centralizing) – Page 3
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1. Convener role (Use influence, not power; discover and facilitate Citywide issues; don't be perceived as centralizing)

Summary:

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is in a unique position of interacting with all bureaus across the City, providing the opportunity to help bridge differences and focus efforts to benefit the City. At the same time, it is important that the CAO uses influence when engaging with bureaus outside of the Office of Management and Finance (OMF) since the position is not a City Manager.

Wherever possible, OMF and the CAO should identify and facilitate Citywide issues for the best interest of the City. Trust, coordination, and acting proactively but not in a 'pushy' way appears to be what is hoped for.

The concern expressed regarding acting in the convener role is that the CAO and OMF must not be perceived as acting from a position of self-interest at the expense of those they are serving.

Comments:

- "Fred is doing a good job of bringing bureaus together for economies of scale."
- "At the end of the day, OMF provides services to the City which is run by those five that are elected. Serve all five. This is moving in the right direction."
- "Shouldn't pretend the CAO is the City Manager. The CAO needs to provide leadership on the backroom functions and coordinate between the elected officials. Fred has done this well: he is a convener. He also knows not to set policy like a City Manager would. "
- "Although there are separate bureaus, all are judged by the citizens as a whole. That puts a burden to work together and work things out. Since there is no City Manager to direct coordination, the bureaus have to do that on their own. The CAO can help encourage and facilitate that."
- "Get the Mayor and Council working together and then focus OMF to support that."
- "Utilize influence, not power."
- Many interviewees commented that they appreciate and would like to see continue the role Fred and Business Operations has provided as a convener, including bringing Bureau Directors together in periodic meetings to address their issues. The Business Hour group Jane Braaten started "is a great forum and it should be continued, along with the Speaker Series." One City Commissioner said, and was echoed by others: "The role of OMF through the CAO is to serve as convener for all Bureau Directors to move us toward the goal of a unified government. The CAO can establish baseline standards and uniform systems for the City. An efficient and effective government finds those areas that should be uniform and coordinates them, but also recognizes areas where unique differences are needed." "Fred took OMF to a new level of corporate approach. We want to make sure that continues. Fred found ways to bring people together within a corporate business model. It really worked; would like to see more."

- Be a "problem spotter," and then bring the right parties together to help solve those problems.
- Hold open meetings on topics that OMF is hearing about from lots of bureaus (e.g. online payments or Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) system).
- Encourage Council to develop a shared "work plan" annually. This would identify tangible, multi-bureau efforts to be prioritized each year.
- Need a better way to share technology solutions across bureaus. What new software is a bureau using that may be helpful in my work? The Business Hour is one tool, but are there others?
- Opportunity for bureaus to learn from one another, identify synergies – but not simply to establish one standard.
- CAO should be a pseudo City Manager – which sometimes means making decisions that are not in OMF's interest in pursuit of a larger City goal.

2. Small bureaus support (Provide dedicated assistance)

Summary:

Because of their limited staff size, small bureaus do not have the internal expertise nor staff availability to navigate through complex and time consuming administrative processes, including some that come from OMF. Small bureaus appreciate the forum OMF has created for them to meet and to work through small bureau related challenges, and hope that OMF can find additional ways to support them.

An idea that surfaced is for OMF to designate a single point of contact for more of their operations for small bureaus, thus simplifying the OMF/small bureau interface. Other recommendations include providing a resource group that could aid small bureaus navigate administrative compliance, helping identify how to receive help from larger bureaus, and demonstrating sensitivity to the impact on small bureaus when administrative requirements are created.

Comments:

- "Small bureaus can't easily respond to some edicts that come down. There is a disproportionate impact. Fred has opened up this conversation and it needs to continue. Administrative overhead functions in bureaus is the least important thing they do and it needs to be kept in check."
- "In fact, the small bureau lens helps see some of the administrative overhead in the City that might be removed."
- "We don't have expertise in-house to complete some of the forms we are required to complete correctly. That wastes a lot of time with us going back and forth fixing problems. Can't OMF take a more helping hand, especially for small bureaus?"
- "Small bureaus are asked to have a lot coordinators, roles, and knowledge that can be overwhelming. Can these be done more centrally from OMF, at least for small bureaus?" Understand that bureau needs differ, especially between small and large. Develop different service level targets?
- "We don't have resources for specialty personnel to address administrative requirements. "Can OMF can lend expertise and personnel?"
- Share, spread knowledge of bigger bureaus. Can OMF coordinate with larger bureaus so they (larger bureaus) help smaller bureaus?
- Have more groups within OMF designate a business consultant or business partner to provide support – leading to a single point of contact in OMF wherever possible.

3. OMF as problem solvers (We can help you achieve your needs)

Summary:

OMF is a service organization to bureaus within the City, including OMF bureaus. Bureaus want OMF to help them accomplish what they believe their needs are, even if it requires unique navigation through rules / regulations. At the same time, OMF must enforce those rules / regulations and balance the needs of the City with the unique needs of individual bureaus.

To be successful, OMF must build trust, be transparent, put listening and problem solving at the front of any interaction, and manage expectations.

Comments:

- "Technology institutes Citywide systems but they do not address customer centered needs. They need to better understand our needs and then provide solutions, perhaps through Citywide systems."
- "Provide a reasonableness test of why we are doing things rather than just shutting down ideas. An example is scrolling graphics on the website."
- "OMF is providing more creative problem solving and is more responsive. They are trying to figure out how to say 'yes,' listening to the unique bureau needs. Creativity and critical thinking has improved. Fred set the tone, and it is helping."
- "I support that OMF is a gatekeeper, but I think they have lost the customer service aspect. Bureaus need the 'no, but here is what could be done for you' approach, coupled with 'and this is when we can get to for you,' supported by constant updates as to progress or delays."
- "We would like OMF to see us as a customer. Help us get solutions we need rather than tell us what we can't do. Let us make the risk decisions. They should only keep us from doing something if it truly is going to harm the City."
- "I wish for OMF in general to error more on the side of leadership/taking the initiative on things rather than being in a reactive mode."
- Instill a culture of honoring proactive behavior.
- "HR business partners are often good at this. They convey that the City has rules, and within those rules bureaus have options."
- Eliminate the tendency to be a "policing" organization and replace it with a culture of listening, responding, and guiding.
- "Reset the culture to focus on serving customer needs; not serving OMF's perceptions of those needs."
- "Require OMF to know the operations of the client bureau."
- Be familiar with all bureau strategic plans.
- Be flexible and creative.

4. Technology (Be proactive leaders)

Summary:

Bureaus want proactive support from OMF to help them accomplish their business needs through technology. Their primary focus is on doing the work of their bureau and thus they usually don't have time to investigate technology options or understand technology complexities. Their request is for OMF to lead them in the march toward ever more effective use of technology in the City and specifically in their individual bureau, to keep their solutions on par with solutions used in the commercial sector, and to provide implementation support to help ensure outcome success.

To accomplish this while keeping technology safe and effective across the City, BTS and EBS must be adequately funded, focused on understanding current and emerging bureau needs that can be aided by current or emerging technology solutions, good at balancing the individual bureau needs with the needs of the City, and inclusive and transparent in their decisions.

Comments:

- "Bureaus should not run technology projects; BTS should. Business owners need to own the software in the end, but they are typically not expert at managing implementation."
- "One bureau running a multi-bureau technology project does not work. BTS should run technology projects."
- "Don't just help us with our servers. We appreciate what you do there, but we also need BTS to look out into the future and help us move down the road. We are behind but don't have the internal capability to figure out what the options are – or even the need, in some cases. We don't know what we don't know, and sure could use the help."
- "They (BTS) are underfunded and thus behind on some things, such as Outlook and SharePoint."
- "BTS is a service provider that we can't afford to cut funds to. When the budget office and the Council give direction that BTS must preserve service and at the same time take budget cuts, it becomes really difficult. Further, cuts to technology provided to bureaus has a negative cost and capability impact on those bureaus."
- "Technology governance needs to be fixed. How do things that impact everyone get decided? It seems like no one can make those decisions."
- "SAP is hard to navigate. It adds layers of work without the benefit at the back end. We don't use the reporting tools as much as bureaus that have dedicated resources, so we miss some of the value."
- "Is BTS really ready to handle 200 VPNs that are likely to be required as the Portland Building renovation project dislocates employees? Do we understand what remote employee needs are? How will they informally network (replacing running into each other in the hallway) when working from remote locations?"
- "We need the rules to change to allow paperless operations. Printing out forms so we can sign them (and thus comply to the rules) is expensive and slows us down."

- "Right now, some bureaus have their own contact database, but this is uncoordinated across the City. A Citywide solution is needed to enhance relationships with citizens."
- The ability for citizens to make mobile payments is needed.
- We would like to see an enterprise-wide solution for some legal records. For example, can we implement a software solution for archiving text messages and social media?
- Recognize that a public entity may not be able to do all tech issues of private or commercial sector; must communicate ability and limitations.
- The goal should be for IT to be a productivity enhancer, not a barrier. For example, supporting and enabling remote work.
- Accommodate the needs and practices of the next generation workforce.
- Seems like we are always implementing software that is one to two versions behind where everyone else is.
- Need innovative and forward thinking.
- Be willing to accept some tech risk – e.g. viruses / malware are part of doing business.

5. Recruitment/procurement (Speed up; reduce complexity)

Summary:

Recruitment and procurement are two critical functions in the City. Without people or purchases, work cannot be effectively completed. The bureaus would like both functions to be sped up and simplified as much as possible, while still working toward equity goals.

Staffing for the recruitment and procurement functions must be adequate and lead and lag measurements must be used to drive improvement. Everything complicating the functions must be evaluated for purpose and effectiveness, driving toward simplicity. Lean analysis should continue and technology applied wherever the speed of the functions can be improved. Bureaus requesting services should be trained and the impact of their actions and decisions on the speed of the functions made obvious to them through real-time feedback. Finally, OMF should acknowledge that the request for faster speed has been heard and be transparent about actions being taken, even if no immediate action can be taken.

Comments:

- "BHR seems to always have a staffing shortage, leading to a bottleneck in filling vacant positions. Waiting two to four weeks before openings are posted. It seems like they should be able to simply push a button, since we do most of the work."
- "Procurement and recruitment are slow. I like the people, but something is not right. The procedures are stale and bureaucratic. New thinking is needed."
- "It can be a bit of a struggle to learn how to navigate through the procurement system. Services they provide are good. They answer questions well, but they are not proactive in helping someone get through the system."
- "The Class Compensation study is a project that has been underway for about three years. It is demoralizing to employees that think something is going to happen. Employees spent a lot of time putting together position descriptions and are now in a limbo state waiting to hear information that impacts their pay. Further, some important classification work is on hold until this study is completed."
- "BHR is allowing open continuous recruitments. Good innovation. Do more and add more classifications in order to be nimbler."
- "If I am providing the basic information for a recruitment in NeoGov, and wording the position announcement, then why does it take up to 3 weeks to post the opening?"
- "An employee recently gave us a two-week notice. We informed HR that we needed to fill the vacancy. We got a response saying they'd get back to us in two weeks."

6. Equity (Important, and bureaus still need streamlined processes)

Summary:

Racial equity opportunities are important to capture. Every opportunity to do so should be made. The CAO should take every opportunity to champion equity, ensuring every process in OMF is effective and designed with equity as a core deliverable. Further, all equity actions throughout the City should be aligned. For example, Bureau of Human Relations classes and Office of Equity and Human Rights classes and actions should be consistent.

Comments:

- "Staff is frustrated with the way BHR approaches diversity. They seem stuck in the 1990's approach. Racial equity is the current issue, and BHR doesn't seem to be up to speed with that. We are also confused that the Office of Equity offers different diversity training."
- "Diversity training needs to be more sensitive to who is in the class. For instance, bringing staff of color into training designed for white individuals learning about diversity can be troubling. Wrong focus. For white people, the training is an introduction. For people of color, it is personal. How to handle situations that are offensive or harmful are closer to the needed focus."
- OMF is trying to clean up policies and make sure bureaus know about policies that impact them (e.g. telework policy). "This is important work that can make a big difference."
- "Hiring people of color and women might not be moving forward strong enough. The next CAO and all of OMF need to champion equity."
- "Procurement minority contracts are moving forward and doing well. Really good."
- "OMF is currently partnering with the Office of Equity and Human Rights to look at their systems to tune them to provide better equity and human rights. This effort needs to continue and be increased to sustain improved outcomes."
- Find the right balance between equity goals and efficient service delivery.
- Serve as an "on-call consultant' to help bureaus achieve equity objectives through OMF processes.
- Be sure OMF and OEHR are aligned, such as required training.

7. Portland Building (Get it right; keep services going)

Summary:

The Portland Building reconstruction project is considered a unique opportunity for the City and there is strong opinion that it should be 'done right,' which includes innovating and changing how and where things are done. At the same time, bureaus are hopeful that during the project, OMF service disruptions or delays will be minimized and all costs related to the project will be properly understood and reported.

To be successful, the currently successful project management of the project must continue, expectations for impacted bureau services during the project communicated carefully and in advance, and adoption of changes that result from the project managed well. Problems that occur during the project must be addressed immediately and transparently, and every bureau, even if not directly affected by the project, given the opportunity to provide input.

Comments:

- "The Portland Building is on time and on budget so far. Might need more community engagement, such as outreach to communities of color."
- "During the Portland Building relocation and renovation, critical services will need to be continued without interruption. This will be a test of our planning and execution."
- "Space continues to be an issue. During the reconfiguration of the Portland Building, can more space be made available? Can some people be moved out of City Hall to open up room for those that must be in that building?"
- "Don't cut corners."
- This matters to all, not just tenant bureaus.
- Communicate 'all-in' costs to bureaus – not just construction costs.
- "Furniture, fixtures and equipment should be part of the project budget, and not at the expense of each bureau tenant who is already going to have a significant rent increase."
- "Your team is trying very hard – working very hard."

Appendix

Supporting documents

- OMF 2016 Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups Summary Report
- OMF 2016 Environmental Scan Report