



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Donald
Rocha

SUBJECT: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

DATE: February 10, 2011

Approved

Date

2/11/11

ANALYSIS

As we stand at the beginning of the budget process, our deficit and already lean organization are a bleak combination. Service impacts will likely be unavoidable, but we all share a strong interest in minimizing them as much as possible. To that end, I would like to offer my thoughts and questions on a topic that's especially important as we contemplate restructuring, layoffs, and service impacts: our organizational structure.

While reading the Public Safety Staffing Audit, I was struck by the section on span of control (a term used to describe the number of employees per supervisor.) At this point I don't pretend to know whether we should adjust span of control in the Police Department, but I think it's noteworthy that, according to the report, cost savings could be substantial if we did pursue that strategy. The specific case analyzed in the audit illustrates the broader principle that organizational structure can have, in the Auditor's words, "a profound impact on cost," and reinforces for me the importance of paying close attention to factors like span of control and the number of management layers across all departments. I understand from staff that in past cycles they have studied our management structure and proposed changes through the budget process; as we prepare for difficult budget decisions, I want to express my strong support for continued efforts to preserve service delivery to residents by reducing management positions where possible and allowing responsibility to move downward. I have confidence that we can create a culture that encourages capable employees at all levels to own their work and take more responsibility.

Thinking about this issue has brought to mind a question I would like to share in advance of our meeting on Monday: do we collect departmental data on management structure, such as span of control or the number of management layers? I can appreciate that span of control may be easier to analyze in the Police Department than in other departments with different structures and job functions, but as our organization shrinks rapidly, it may be useful to have a data-driven understanding of how our management structure has adapted. For my colleagues' consideration, I offer a suggestion that we begin collecting data (if we don't already) on span of control, management layers, and any other relevant measures of organizational structure for the current budget year, and harvest the same data from previous year organizational charts to reveal trends.

I thank staff and my colleagues for their consideration and look forward to our discussion on Monday.