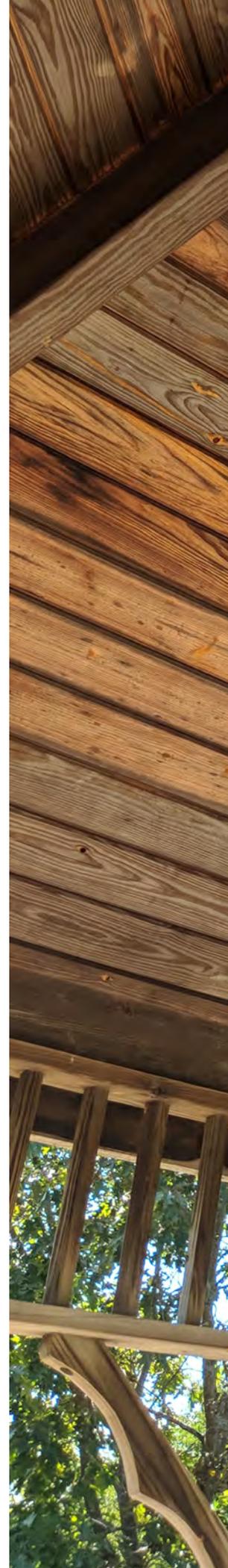


# APPENDIX - B





# OPERATIONS REVIEW

As part of the Master Plan process, an Operational Review was completed. Major elements included comments from a series of staff focus groups, a review of the organizational structure, a review of District documents, including the District's Strategic Plan, the Village of Oswego's Strategic Plan, marketing information, Website and program guide reviews, and financial information. In addition, the National Recreation and Park Association Part Metrics database was used to assist with comparisons to other agencies. The following report is a high level summary of the employee focus groups. The full report exists as a separate document for the District's internal use.

## Staff Focus Group Summary

The following information is a summary of comments generated from the employee focus groups. All of the comments represent the opinions and perspectives of District employees.

### **What are the strengths of the District that we should build upon?**

There were many comments from the employees about what makes the District so great: the employees, the relationships, the feeling of family, and camaraderie among staff. Many staff commented about the programs and services offered, specifically special events, great trails and well-maintained parks, the wide variety of programs, athletics, gymnastics, and good amount of open space acreage. The staff feel as though they provide a lot of service with having limited facilities and are very resourceful. The cooperation with the School District is good for Kids Connection. The District has a good presence in the community and residents are very comfortable and enjoy visiting District facilities.

### **What are the major issues and challenges facing the District? Your Department?**

The lack of space was the most frequently mentioned response to this question. There are wait lists for many programs. The ability to offer more programs is impacted by the lack of space. This is made even more difficult as a result of population growth in the area.

The topic of space relates not only to programming space, but also space for park operations, office and storage space for programs such as athletics. The office isn't equipped with space for private conversations. Office furniture needs an upgrade.

The second most mentioned topic area was technology, the need for better technology and keeping up with technology to ensure that customers can access services efficiently. There were many comments about the need to have a full-time technology staff person.

Population growth, in general, will provide a challenge for the District. Given the lack of resources, staff feel that it will be difficult to keep up with the growth. A lack of financial resources was also mentioned as a concern, along with the population growth.

In order to retain good employees, it is important to provide staff with promotional opportunities or the ability to grow within their current roles. If the Master Plan results in more parks and facilities, the staffing numbers will need to grow. There have been recent retirements; more will occur in the next several years. As a result, the District needs to think about succession planning.

**Does the current organizational structure work well? Any thoughts on how it can be improved?**

Many comments were offered about the organizational structure. Some employees feel that the structure works well, while others had ideas about improving the structure. The Operations Assessment full report provides detailed recommendations for a revised organization chart.

**How would you assess the adequacy of staffing numbers throughout the District/your Department?**

The operations group's staffing levels were mentioned most frequently. There are 63 park properties to maintain, which is difficult for the limited number of staff who are doing the maintenance activities. Operations is supplemented with additional part-time and seasonal employees. Continued growth of the population will stretch resources even further.

Recruitment and retention of part-time staff is a challenge. The available pool of possible employees is not as large as it used to be. Furthermore, the pay of part-time positions is not high enough, and employees leave all of the time as a result of pay.

**Are there any positions/job responsibilities that currently do not exist in the District that you can think will be needed within the next five years?**

There were many comments in this area. First and foremost was the continuous discussion for the need of a full-time technology staff person. Also mentioned was the need to have a staff position dedicated to generating alternative revenues such as sponsorships and grant writing.

There is a need to project new full-time staff positions for the future. This should be an ongoing discussion. It was also mentioned that there is not much flexibility in being able to change job responsibilities of full-time positions.

**Tell me about your level of satisfaction toward internal support functions such as marketing, finance, park maintenance, human resources, etc.**

Most of the comments were positive. There is appreciation for the new human resources position and the skill set the Human Resources Superintendent brings to the organization. It may be helpful to also have a training specialist who provides training for all new hires. The quarterly meetings with marketing were deemed as being very helpful. Operations support was mentioned as being very good.

Forms are now on the P-drive, which is helpful to staff. However, the forms are not always up to date. There have been changes and improvements to finance related forms and processes, which have been good. Previously, it was mentioned that financial software is good. However, in response to this question, there were concerns about Springbrook not being the best software.

The hiring process is lengthy and includes many forms and paperwork. There is a team working on streamlining the process.

The District is very task oriented, and there is not enough available time to get to know other employees and to work together. Having employees spread out among different buildings also creates challenges in providing support.

### **How do you establish work priorities and goals and objectives for performance?**

There is accountability associated with the Strategic Plan implementation. There does not appear to be a standard approach to employee performance appraisals. One employee mentioned it would be appreciated if staff could provide some performance feedback to their supervisor. There could be more emphasis on professional development throughout the District.

### **How do you measure performance?**

Recreation staff mentioned the work being done related to cost recovery, which will exert more accountability and a basis for better decision-making for pricing services. Customer surveys are also used as a tool to determine customer satisfaction. There are quarterly finance reports provided to the Board which is another form of measurement of performance.

### **How would you assess the internal communication throughout the District and the level of cooperation among staff?**

There were many comments about internal collaboration and good camaraderie throughout the District. It is obvious the District is working on continuously improving communication.

Employees appreciate efforts by top management to communicate ongoing efforts by the District. Marketing has a good communication system, referencing *ready, set go meetings*. Some supervisors are much better at communicating than others. There is a committee for calendars which has been helpful. The STAT Teams have been helpful to improve internal communications. The *Staying Connected Newsletter* and *Staff News Bites* are helpful.

### **How would you assess the District's use of technology? Any areas for improvement that you can think of?**

There was consensus from all the groups that a full-time technology staff person is needed. Comments related to the need for more automated processes as there is manual work being done that could be performed more efficiently. There are only two laptops in the District. There is a lack of information sharing of how each Department uses technology. There have been advancements made in the administration building and other facilities.

The phone system was deemed as being inadequate. An automated work order system would be a big improvement, as well as inventory software. The District has ARC GIS which could help in building a work order system. Employees mentioned having to use their own cell phones for Park District business. Mobile apps and iPads in trucks would be helpful for information about property lines, inspections, and

information requiring an internet search. Everyone does a paper check request; there are more efficient ways of doing this.

**When you think about working for the District, what are the things you most like/enjoy? What are the areas that need the greatest improvement?**

- The people that we work with
- The freedom and flexibility
- Not tied down and can visit other buildings
- The work itself is rewarding; we find value in what we do
- I like the little people (kids)
- I like the customers that come in
- Small town feel
- We are proud of what we offer
- Technology, space, be bolder, be innovative, follow through

**What changes or improvements are needed to build the District into a best practice organization?**

This question was asked of some, but not all, of the focus group meetings. The comments included:

- A brand new building
- Fitness center
- Indoor Pool
- We need to demolish Prairie Point building and build a new facility
- Technology and space
- Being creative with how to capture more revenue