

Governor's Task Force on Shared Municipal Services
January 31, 2013, 1:00 p.m.
East Providence City Hall

Present: Chairperson John Simmons, Executive Director Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council (RIPEC); Mayor Donald R. Grebien of Pawtucket; Peter Grazcykowski, City Manager City of East Providence; John McJennett, Receiver City of Central Falls; and Susanne Greschner, Director of the Office of Municipal Finance

Also in Attendance: Mayor James A. Diossa of Central Falls; David Clemente, Pawtucket Purchasing Agent; Jim Savage, Municipal Finance.

Mr. Simmons opened the meeting, and the task force voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Simmons welcomed Mayor Diossa to the task force. Mr. McJennett asked about progress related to Leslie Taito's initiatives discussed at the November meeting. Mr. Simmons responded that they were ongoing, and that Johnson & Wales University had volunteered to help.

Mr. Grazcykowski stated that East Providence still views joint purchasing with Pawtucket as a good option but had an immediate internal need and thus posted a purchasing position. Mr. Clemente said that Pawtucket is ready and willing to help, and looks forward to continuing to explore the options available.

Mr. Savage then discussed regional assessment issues. He said the executive board of the assessors association believes that a count-wide model would be best, and that they have expressed interest in continuing to explore the idea. Mr. Simmons said the test group is moving along and that he hopes the assessors around the state will take the lead on the projects. Ms. Greschner said that while the focus had been to look at abutting communities and those of similar size, the assessors' perspectives have value and should be explored. She said that her office, through Jim and herself, will work with RIPEC to keep the process moving forward.

Mr. Simmons then discussed Pawtucket's work to merge certain functions between the city and school department. Information technology services are very close to being merged and then the group will be looking at HR, Facilities, and Finance. The effort has been cooperative, with participation of administrators from both organizations, the school committee, and the city council. Mr. Grazcykowski added that East Providence had success with its initiatives, and that vacancies can help.

Mr. Simmons said that the task force continues to work cooperatively with the joint legislative commission on shared services, and that RIPEC will be serving on the commission's sub-committees.

Ms. Greschner said that regional public safety dispatching continues to be a focus. She discussed the talk given by Senator DiPalma, State Police Commissioner O'Donnell, and Bill Guy at the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns conference. They discussed opportunities and challenges, and stated that they believe the challenges can be overcome.

Mr. Grazcykowski said he'd like to open the task force to other communities that may be interested. The other task force members echoed support.

Ms. Greschner recommended the task force prepare a progress report for the Governor and the task force voted to do so.

Mr. McJennett said that Central Falls will continue to be a contributing partner through Mayor Diossa.

The task force discussed East Providence's recent bid for ERP services and said there is a need for legal review by other communities who may wish to join the bid. The next meeting was set for February 28th at 1:00 in East Providence.

The task force adjourned.