

## **Executive Summary**

In 2005, the Somersworth New Hampshire Public Works and Utilities Department agreed to participate in a partnership pilot program with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). The purpose of the pilot program was to evaluate the City of Somersworth's collection system business practices. The evaluation provided an assessment of the gaps between the City's current business practices and generally-accepted industry standards for collection system management, operation, and maintenance. With this information, the City will be able to develop a prioritized long term plan to address the identified gaps. The pilot program was not only a learning tool for all parties involved, but also provided the City with a foundation to better manage, operate and maintain their extensive collection system.

NEIWPCC, NYSDEC, and the City, together with input and assessment from outside experts, participated in the business practice evaluation and gap assessment. The scope of this project included the following tasks and is described in detail below:

Task 1	Document Review
Task 2	Staff Interviews
Task 3	Field Observations
Task 4	Business Practice Evaluation
Task 5	Project Team Consensus Workshop
Task 6	Matrix of Recommendations

### **Task 1 Document Review**

The first step was to review and compare the City's plans, policies and procedures against how work is actually performed, measured and reported. In order to do this, a compilation and review of relevant documents and supporting information was performed. The information from this review was used to formulate and prompt questions for the staff interview and field observation phases.

### **Task 2 Staff Interviews**

Staff interviews were conducted in October of 2006. The interviews covered the entire City Department of Public Works and Utilities organization and also included CH2M HILL-OMI staff responsible for the industrial pretreatment program and the operation and maintenance of the wastewater pump stations. The interviews ensured that every position and level associated with collection system management, operation, and maintenance were fairly represented. The interviews consisted of groups of 1 to 2 employees at the same level within the organization to avoid intimidation by senior staff. In total, ten interviews were conducted. It is important to note that interviews must remain confidential and information gathered through the interview process has been presented in a generalized format in order to protect the confidentiality of

organizational staff. The information from the interviews has been used as a tool to identify positive traits within the organization as well as opportunities for improvement.

### **Task 3                      Field Observations**

Field observations were also conducted in October of 2006. These observations consisted of a ride along with field staff to various aspects of the collection system to observe work practices and communication. This exercise also allowed for additional interview time in a relaxed environment that encouraged honest and real conversations.

### **Task 4                      Business Practice Evaluation**

The project team worked together to combine their findings of the document review, staff interviews, and field observations to develop a draft Business Practice Evaluation Report and accompanying Evaluation Worksheet. In this evaluation, twenty-nine categories - associated with collection system management, operation, and maintenance; as well as environmental compliance - were analyzed. Each category consisted of several subcategories which were then ranked based on their current performance level under the following criteria:

Stage 1 - Unaware

Stage 2 - Systematic approach not developed

Stage 3 (Low or High) – Defined, repeatable approach. High Stage 3 is generally considered an acceptable performance level.

Stage 4 (Low, Medium or High) – Approach with defined measurements and standards

Stage 5 - Continual improvement and refinement of all processes and procedures

### **Task 5                      Project Team Consensus Workshop**

Once the draft Business Practice Evaluation was completed, City staff had time to review the documents. In August of 2007, a consensus workshop was held with Department of Public Works and Utilities management. Each of the twenty-nine categories and their associated subcategories were reviewed during the workshop. The rankings presented in the draft evaluation were adjusted as the project team came to a consensus of the actual performance levels across all of the business practices.

Once the current performance levels were set, the team reviewed each category again in order to establish the desired level of performance with respect to regulatory requirements, public expectations and level of service.

With the rankings complete, the gaps (or opportunities for improvement) were clearly defined in the evaluation worksheet. The project team then prioritized the gaps with associated ratings of 1 through 5, with a score of 1 being high-priority and a score of 5 being low-priority. With the opportunities for improvement identified and prioritized, the City had laid the foundation for a

business optimization plan; a plan that is compliant with regulatory requirements and makes good business sense.

## **Task 6                      Matrix of Recommendations**

Once the consensus workshop was completed, a Recommendation and Action Matrix was developed. This matrix includes the priority ranking for each category, the associated findings, recommendations, risk, and consequence.

## **Acknowledgements**

All of the City and CH2M HILL-OMI employees that participated in this project should be commended for their thoroughness and active support of the project. The information and data provided during the project was extensive and clearly the staff spent a great deal of time providing it. Without exception, everyone who participated in the interviews and field inspections was well prepared, extremely knowledgeable and highly professional.

## **Attachments**

Attachment 1	Business Practice Evaluation Report
Attachment 2	Gap Analysis Evaluation Matrix
Attachment 3	Evaluation Criteria
Attachment 4	Recommendation and Action Matrix