Recommendation From
Boynton Beach Financial Advisory Committee

Subject/Topic: City Services Survey, general

Reviewed By: Donald Scantlan

Recommendation (Specific Action Recommended): Review the results of the City Services Survey and use them as a data point during budget discussions this year

Pros of Recommendation: The results of this survey reflect the opinions of 513 citizens of Boynton Beach (using self-attestation as the source of residency). The survey **did** prevent two submissions from the same IP address to prevent overstuffing the survey. Although it is not obvious, the number of persons responding is a statistically significant number to represent the adults in Boynton Beach using a 95% confidence level and a +/- 5.7 error rate

Cons of Recommendation: As stated above, the number of respondents represents a statistically significant sample size. What would make this an invalid assumption is that if the sample were not truly random. Since a very few respondents chose to enter their names, the assumption of randomness cannot be verified. The obvious question is, was there an abnormal number of a specific group represented in the survey (such as did more city employees answer the survey compared to the population of Boynton Beach). I believe (intuitively, not supported by data) that the results of questions 20 and 23 indicate that **there was not** an excess of city employees that answered the survey.

References (Staff, Documents, and Public): The questions were developed thru a combined effort of city staff and the Finance Advisory Committee. The answers were from the general public who chose to respond.

Impact on 2011/12 Budget: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Out Year Budgets: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Citizens: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both increases in fees and/or taxes as well as reduced or increased services available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on City Staff: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are possibilities for lay-offs, furloughs as well as some staff increases expressed by the opinions in this survey.

Committee Vote Result: For: __7__ **Against**: __0__

Recommendation From
Boynton Beach Financial Advisory Committee

Subject/Topic: City Services Survey, Question #8. *What is your annual family income?*

Reviewed By: Donald Scantlan

Recommendation (Specific Action Recommended): The results of this question call into consideration the true randomness of the sample. Specifically, those more affluent residents are overrepresented in the survey.

Pros of Recommendation: Of the 297 respondents who provided their annual family income, 36% said their annual family income exceeded $100K. Reviewing Census Bureau data revealed that 16% of Boynton Residents have household income over $100K. This dissimilarity in the sample and the real Boynton Beach population causes some concern that more affluent residents are over represented in the survey.

Cons of Recommendation: Since there is the possibility of an excess of wealthier residents who responded to the survey, the opinions to allow increases in taxes and fees may not represent the actual opinions of the most of Boynton residents.

References (Staff, Documents, and Public): The questions were developed thru a combined effort of city staff and the Finance Advisory Committee. The answers were from the general public who chose to respond.

Impact on 2011/12 Budget: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Out Year Budgets: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Citizens: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on City Staff: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are possibilities for lay-offs, furloughs as well as some staff increases expressed by the opinions in this survey.

Committee Vote Result: For: __7__ **Against**: __0__

Recommendation From
Boynton Beach Financial Advisory Committee

Subject/Topic: City Services Survey, Question #s 11, 13, 18 & 26. *How important were the following factors in influencing you to move to Boynton Beach?* Question 13*. Thinking back to the previous question about how important the following factors were in influencing you to move to Boynton Beach, how important are these same factors in influencing you to remain in Boynton Beach?* Question #18*. To maintain the property tax rate at 6.7626 mills, are you in favor of cutting services for Public Safety (i.e., Police, Fire, and Communications*)? Question 26. *Relating to Police coverage/response time, would you rather: Increase property taxes, or Reduce coverage and see a possible decrease in response time*

Reviewed By: Donald Scantlan

Recommendation (Specific Action Recommended): The results of the responses to these questions indicate the importance of public safety in the decision to move to and stay in Boynton Beach. It (public safety) received the highest number of extremely important responses. Items in the budget relating to public safety should be weighted higher relative to other issues. If this survey is conducted next year, a response option of "low taxes" should be added to questions 11 & 13.

Pros of Recommendation: The factor of Public Safety as an attraction to get people to want to move to and remain in Boynton Beach is foremost, according to the responses. Citizens are willing to pay more taxes to keep good response times.

Cons of Recommendation: Taking public safety issues "off of the table" means that other issues face deeper cuts or that taxes must be raised.

References (Staff, Documents, and Public): The questions were developed thru a combined effort of city staff and the Finance Advisory Committee. The answers were from the general public who chose to respond.

Impact on 2011/12 Budget: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Out Year Budgets: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Citizens: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on City Staff: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are possibilities for lay-offs, furloughs as well as some staff increases expressed by the opinions in this survey.

Committee Vote Result: For: ___7_ **Against**: __0__

Recommendation From
Boynton Beach Financial Advisory Committee

Subject/Topic: City Services Survey, Question #s 11, 13 & 19. *How important were the following factors in influencing you to remain in Boynton Beach?* Question 13*. Thinking back to the previous question about how important the following factors were in influencing you to move to Boynton Beach, how important are these same factors in influencing you to remain in Boynton Beach? Question 19. To maintain the property tax rate at 6.7626, are you in favor of cutting Cultural and/or Recreation services (i.e., Library, Recreation programs)?*

Reviewed By: Donald Scantlan

Recommendation (Specific Action Recommended): The results of the responses to this question indicate the willingness of the community to forgo Cultural and/or Recreation services during these challenging times. City amenities and cultural factors received the lowest ratings in questions 11 & 13 (schools was second lowest for question 13, followed by city amenities).

Pros of Recommendation: The factors of city amenities and cultural factors as an attraction to get people to want to move to and remain in Boynton Beach is insignificant, according to the responses. Citizens accept cuts in costs/services in these areas.

Cons of Recommendation: Especially during challenging times, the use of city amenities is more critical to many citizens. As families look for ways to stretch their budgets, use of public facilities (library, parks and recreational facilities goes up).

References (Staff, Documents, and Public): The questions were developed thru a combined effort of city staff and the Finance Advisory Committee. The answers were from the general public who chose to respond.

Impact on 2011/12 Budget: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Out Year Budgets: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Citizens: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on City Staff: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are possibilities for lay-offs, furloughs as well as some staff increases expressed by the opinions in this survey.

Committee Vote Result: For: ___7_ **Against**: __0__

Recommendation From
Boynton Beach Financial Advisory Committee

Subject/Topic: City Services Survey, Question #21. *21. Since it was implemented in June 2009, the Compressed Work Week for employees (Monday-Thursday, 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., except for essential services) has enabled the City to budget an annual savings of $140,000. Are you in favor of continuing the Compressed Work Week for employees?*

Reviewed By: Donald Scantlan

Recommendation (Specific Action Recommended): Continue the compressed work week.

Pros of Recommendation: Continued savings. City Hall hours more available before and after traditional workday hours.

Cons of Recommendation: At least one city department has been negatively impacted by the compressed work week. The City Clerk's office previously had Fridays to transcribe meeting minutes (no committees/boards met on Fridays). Now there are no workdays when no meetings are scheduled, impacting the turnaround time for transcribing meeting minutes. Citizens who expect to conduct business at City Hall on Fridays are disappointed when City Hall is not open on Fridays.

References (Staff, Documents, and Public): The questions were developed thru a combined effort of city staff and the Finance Advisory Committee. The answers were from the general public who chose to respond. Comments relative to the impact to the City Clerk's office were gained from conversations with staff members.

Impact on 2011/12 Budget: $140K in cost avoidance each year.

Impact on Out Year Budgets: $140K in cost avoidance each year.

Impact on Citizens: Lower taxes and City Hall hours available more during the week, but, not on Fridays.

Impact on City Staff: Some city staff do not like the extended days as it impacts child care and other family obligations. Others do like it.

Committee Vote Result: For: ___7_ **Against**: __0__

Recommendation From
Boynton Beach Financial Advisory Committee

Subject/Topic: City Services Survey, Question # 22. *The City's Fire Rescue Assessment is a non-ad valorem fee (i.e., not based on property value). Are you in favor of an increase in the residential Fire Assessment, which is now set at $68 a year, to $88 a year and a corresponding increase in the current rates for non-residential buildings (e.g., commercial, institutional and industrial/warehouse buildings) to enable Fire Rescue to maintain its current quality levels of emergency response times and level of service? For residential buildings, this represents a monthly increase of approximately $1.67 a month; for non-residential buildings the fee is calculated on a square footage basis. For a 10,000 square foot building, this represents a monthly increase of $39.22 for commercial buildings and $9.80 for industrial/warehouse buildings.*

Reviewed By: Donald Scantlan

Recommendation (Specific Action Recommended): The results of the responses to this question indicate the willingness of the community to pay more for the fire rescue assessment. This could offset fire department operational costs and reduce general fund expenditures for fire operations. **Note cons below and comments to question 8.** Since this assessment is levied on all properties (including those that pay no ad valorem taxes) the assessment is viewed by some as being more fair.

Pros of Recommendation: The assessment increase would offset some costs currently borne by the general fund.

Cons of Recommendation: This is a tax increase borne by all property owners.

References (Staff, Documents, and Public): The questions were developed thru a combined effort of city staff and the Finance Advisory Committee. The answers were from the general public who chose to respond.

Impact on 2011/12 Budget: Costs of fire operations currently being funded by the general fund, could be shifted to the revenue generated by increasing the assessment.

Impact on Out Year Budgets: Costs of fire operations currently being funded by the general fund, could be shifted to the revenue generated by increasing the assessment.

Impact on Citizens: This would be a tax increase on all residential property owners of $20/year and depending on the size of the commercial property an increase of roughly 30%.

Impact on City Staff: It is expected that a dollar for dollar reduction in the amount of fire operations that would be shifted from the General Fund to be funded by the increased revenue from the fire assessment, thus, this in and of itself should have no impact on City Staff. However, the funds made available to the general fund because of this shift could make more funds from the General Fund available for other City operations.

Committee Vote Result: For: ___7_ **Against**: ___0_

Recommendation From
Boynton Beach Financial Advisory Committee

Subject/Topic: City Services Survey, Question # 24. *How much do you agree or disagree that the following taxes and/or user fees should be raised to the extent to which the City is able in order to maintain the City's high level of services? (Franchise fees are fees that the City charges utility companies for the use of City streets and right-of-ways. The utility company - electric, telephone, cable, water - is allowed to pass the cost on to the customer.)*

Reviewed By: Donald Scantlan

Recommendation (Specific Action Recommended): The results of the responses to this question indicate a desire to raise fees. When combining both the agree responses, all but one of the responses have over 50% of the citizens desiring increased fees (Franchise fees have 49%). If you remove the neutral responses an overwhelming number of citizens are in favor of increasing fees. Fees should reflect the actual cost for the city to deliver the service requested or a fair market value price when comparable prices are available.

Pros of Recommendation: Raising fees should increase revenue to the city.

Cons of Recommendation: Raising fees could reduce revenue. If the fee increase causes fewer people to opt to use the service tied to the fees, the revenue to the city could actually decrease. Also, increasing fees could cause a negative effect on the lower income families who rely on the city's services.

References (Staff, Documents, and Public): The questions were developed thru a combined effort of city staff and the Finance Advisory Committee. The answers were from the general public who chose to respond.

Impact on 2011/12 Budget: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Out Year Budgets: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Citizens: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on City Staff: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are possibilities for lay-offs, furloughs as well as some staff increases expressed by the opinions in this survey.

Committee Vote Result: For: __7__ **Against**: __0__

Recommendation From
Boynton Beach Financial Advisory Committee

Subject/Topic: City Services Survey, Question # 25. *Relating to garbage pick up, would you rather: Decrease service (fewer pickupdays), or Increase fees*

Reviewed By: Donald Scantlan

Recommendation (Specific Action Recommended): The results of the responses to this question indicate a reduction in service is preferred to increasing fees. I also talked to many citizens about this issue and the common response was that with the bigger garbage cans, pickup was only required once a week.

Pros of Recommendation: While not expected to be a 50% cost reduction, significant savings should be available by reducing pick up to once a week.

Cons of Recommendation: Larger households that generate a lot of garbage could have difficulties with once weekly pick up.

References (Staff, Documents, and Public): The questions were developed thru a combined effort of city staff and the Finance Advisory Committee. The answers were from the general public who chose to respond. In addition to the responses to the survey, I personally asked a lot of citizens this question.

Impact on 2011/12 Budget: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there could be significant savings to the city by reducing solid waste staff and reducing fuel and maintenance costs of sanitation vehicles.

Impact on Out Year Budgets: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there could be significant savings to the city by reducing solid waste staff and reducing fuel and maintenance costs of sanitation vehicles.

Impact on Citizens: Citizens who generate a lot of garbage may have to request another garbage can.

Impact on City Staff: By changing to once weekly pick up, it is expected that fewer sanitation/solid waste workers will be required.

Committee Vote Result: For: __7__ **Against**: __0__

Recommendation From
Boynton Beach Financial Advisory Committee

Subject/Topic: City Services Survey, Question # 27**.** *The Utilities Fund is an enterprise fund for the City; operational expenses for the Utilities Department come from customer fees. They are not part of the City's General Fund budget. Water supply infrastructure consists of what is built to pump, divert, transport, store, treat and deliver safe drinking water. In order to maintain and expand the City's utility infrastructure to meet increasing water supply and demand, it may be necessary to increase fees. Should the City increase fees: Annually or Semi-annually (two years).*

Reviewed By: Donald Scantlan

Recommendation (Specific Action Recommended): The results of the responses to this question indicate a desire to raise rates every other year instead of yearly.

Pros of Recommendation: Rates would not go up every year..

Cons of Recommendation: Raising every other year would make the raises bigger.

References (Staff, Documents, and Public): The questions were developed thru a combined effort of city staff and the Finance Advisory Committee. The answers were from the general public who chose to respond.

Impact on 2011/12 Budget: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Out Year Budgets: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on Citizens: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are both cost savings and revenue increases available from the opinions expressed in this survey.

Impact on City Staff: Depending upon the decisions made by the City Commission, there are possibilities for lay-offs, furloughs as well as some staff increases expressed by the opinions in this survey.

Committee Vote Result: For: __7__ **Against**: ___0_