



**CITY OF HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA  
BUILDING DIVISION  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

Date: December 3, 2013 FILE:BD-13-001

To: Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark,  
City Manager

FROM: Reginald A. Cox,  
Chief Building Official

SUBJECT: Building Division Review Report – Prepared By JRD & Associates, Inc.  
Additional Innovations & Initiatives

The JRD report outlined several recommendations that focused on providing the City of Hollywood a roadmap for operating an effective and efficient construction permitting process. In addition to JRD's recommendations, I have recommended additional initiatives that I think will place the City of Hollywood in the best position to provide adequate controls for the construction, use and occupancy of today's complex buildings, and all of their various components. JRD's report focused on the following permitting functions.

The major objectives of the study were to:

- Perform an organizational and staffing analysis of the Building Division.
- Conduct a customer service survey using four key focus groups.
- Develop workload standards/performance measures for Division personnel to achieve optimal employee performance.

The customer surveys, conducted in February and March 2013, revealed 70% of the customers surveyed were repeat customers. The survey established that 78% of customers were satisfied with their experiences at the Building Division. (Division)

I would agree with the JRD report based on my observations and interaction with the customers. The greatest areas of improvement that are needed for a better customer service experience is customer service training for all personnel, information access within one platform, comprehensive technical policy and procedures manuals, updated handouts, updating the website, one-stop shopping experience, and adequate staff coverage.

My goal is that the Division shall increase customer service experience to 85% by the end of fiscal year 2014 and to 90% by the end of fiscal year 2015. The performance measures identified on page seven of the JRD report are adequate indicators for reporting our progress.

Based on JRD's findings, they recommended creating a building department to accomplish the necessary and critical building permitting functions that will enable the City of Hollywood the best opportunity for success in the future. I believe this direction is appropriate and allows for a direct line of communication to the decision-making level and greatly enhances the Division's ability to secure resources that are needed to perform the myriad of duties required by today's building departments.

The functional areas within the Division as identified on pages 4 through 7 of the report include staffing, administration, training, permitting process, customer service, technology, performance, measures, and permit fees. Several recommendations have been identified to improve these functions and some of them are already in progress.

#### **Division Staffing/Administration Analysis:**

30 full time positions were approved for the FY2014 budget. Currently 26 positions are filled and four are vacant. (See attachment "A")

In summary JRD recommended the following:

- Fill two building inspector positions ASAP.
- Utilize CAP and Calvin Giordano only for special projects, surge support, and to reduce or eliminate backlogs.
- Address succession plan. Nine key employees are in the "Drop" program which represents 36% of the current workforce. Their departure date is two and a half years away.
- Conduct a classification and compensation study for personnel.
- Continue using part-time support to eliminate backlog in the file room.
- Create on-going (monthly, quarterly, annual) management information reports.
- Locate cashiering function in the permit counter area. (one-stop experience)
- Develop policies and procedures manuals for staff.

#### **In response to JRD's staff recommendations, I suggest the following Immediate Actions:**

1. Fill two current vacant building inspector positions ASAP. One building inspector position has been offered to the #1 ranking applicant and currently proceeding through the hiring process. I recommend converting a current budgeted position from Administration Secretary to Building Inspector I to allow for an entry level inspector affording the opportunity for growth within the Division.

2. Transfer funding from Calvin Giordano and CAP accounts as required to fund part-time inspector positions for plumbing, electrical, and mechanical disciplines. The current union approved hourly rates for these positions represent a savings of 42% to the City of Hollywood. If these positions were in place for fiscal year 2013, the City could have saved \$63,000.00.
3. Convert the vacant Administrative Services Coordinator position to Assistant Building Official and reclassify Chief Building Inspector to Chief Structural Inspector. Consider converting Chief Structural, Electrical, Plumbing, and Mechanical Inspectors positions from general to management or supervisory positions. These are highly skill management positions within the Division that are required by the Broward County Administrative Provisions to Florida Building Code (BORA). Section **104.4 Powers and Duties of the Chief Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing and Structural Inspector states the following:**

***104.4** - The Chief Inspector shall have the power to delegate powers, duties and assignments to subordinate regular employees working under his/her authority, but only to those employees certified by the BORA as qualified to perform such powers, duties and assignments within his/her particular discipline. It shall be his/her duty and responsibility to supervise and coordinate the work of all subordinate Plans Examiners and Inspectors within his/her particular discipline. The Chief Inspector shall have the sole authority to render interpretations of this Code and to adopt policies and procedures in order to clarify the application of its provisions within his/her particular discipline.*

Broward County currently possess the most stringent certification requirements in the State of Florida for code officials and this fact alone speaks volumes about the specialty training, experience, and licensure requirements needed to perform the duties required to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City of Hollywood. The chief's system is unique to Miami-Dade and Broward Counties which are known throughout the code compliance community as the high velocity hurricane zones. (HVHZ) The chief's certification requirements are unique to the Building Division personnel and do not exist anywhere else in the City of Hollywood. The chiefs are currently part of the management structure of the Division and the Chief Building Inspector, by job description, is qualified to act as the Building Official if required in the absence of the Building Official.

4. Fill the vacant Administrative Assistant II position and reclassify an existing Administrative Secretary position to confidential and rename to Permit & Customer Service Supervisor. These two positions would complete the management team of the Division. The management team shall comprise of the following:
  - Chief Building Official – Certified Building Code Administrator
  - Administrative Assistant II
  - Permit & Customer Service Supervisor

- Assistant Building Official – Certified Building Code Administrator
- Chief Structural Inspector
- Chief Electrical Inspector
- Chief Plumbing Inspector
- Chief Mechanical Inspector

The management team as indicated above reflects figure 14 on page 24 of JRD's report except for code enforcement. I suggest that we consider integration of code enforcement and building inspection so that the two substantively different disciplines can function as a team.

5. Rename all secretaries to Permit Technicians II, and rename two clerical specialists to Permit Technician I. As stated in the JRD report the secretary and clerical specialist titles are antiquated and do not reflect the actual work duties which are standard permit technician functions as recognized by the International Code Council (ICC).
6. I strongly suggest modifying salary pay scales to at least the average ranges as indicated on the 2013 (BORA) salary survey. The City of Hollywood is a diverse City that has a mix of industrial, commercial, high-rise, residential, coastal, and mixed-used facilities. This diversity demands an environment that attracts people of high caliber who have a reliable level of technical proficiency.

A significant challenge to the Division inspector's personnel is the amount of time they spend assisting code enforcement and fire inspectors with technical assistance. Aspects of code enforcement inherently overlap with Division inspectors in all disciplines; however, the impact on the Division is disproportionate and effects several positions beyond the inspectors within the Division. The end result of this challenge equates to a lack of customer service for the following reasons:

- Code violations written up by Division Inspectors for work without permits do not get followed up on because the inspectors have continuous daily building inspections which need appropriate attention to insure health, safety, and welfare for the public.
- Division front counter and records personnel get pulled into researching code enforcement complaints after the fact and piecing together information which takes time away from their primary functions.
- As a result of due process inspectors have to prepare for special magistrate cases which impact which currently lack the necessary clerical functions and impact their ability to perform the primary functions of their jobs.

The Division personnel have many years of experience with the City of Hollywood and possess an abundance of institutional knowledge as noted on page 25 of the JRD report. Unfortunately many of them are in the "Drop". The fact of the matter is that these

employees have held the Division together under challenging circumstances, by taking on additional duties outside their primary tasks, with the economy and staff reduction over the last six years. However, these additional duties compromised the level of service provided by the Division. The above staffing re-organization requests will be the beginning of providing the adequate level of service required.

I suggest that recommendations for the remaining functional areas that were identified, consisting of training, permitting process, customer service, technology, performance, measures, and permit fees, be implemented once the separation of the Planning and Building is completed. With that said, some recommendations have already been implemented. The current status is as follows:

### **Training:**

- All 2013 evaluations for Building's personnel have identified specialized training as a developmental goal. Over the last several years Buildings technical personnel only received the minimum continuing education training and the non-technical staff has not received any. In order to provide and maintain the safety and customer service that the public demands it is critical that a training plan is implemented. The training should be targeted to gain knowledge in areas that will augment the employees existing skill base. Furthermore, adequate training insures that staff stays current with today's ever changing building technology.

### **Permitting Process:**

- JRD suggested concurrent plan review and electronic permitting is the way to get us there. I am currently a member of the Broward County ePermits Building Official Subcommittee. The goal of the program is to achieve countywide electronic permitting review in the near future. Building, Planning, and IT are currently researching and taking the necessary steps to bring electronic permitting to the City of Hollywood.
- Building staff is currently working on a policy to establish a walk-through program for simple permits.

### **Customer Service:**

- A new television was purchased for the customer service area.
- Uniforms were provided for all front counter staff.
- Discussions with third floor department heads regarding a more efficient facilities layout.
- Discussions with finance revealed that the majority of the payments received from permitting are from credit card or checks. Permit Technicians have collected payments in the past and I suggest we implement those services again. This would provide our customers a one-stop shopping experience.

- Customer service hours will be changed to from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily and 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. Plan review assistance will remain on Tuesday and Thursday morning ending at 11:00 a.m.

### **Technology:**

- IT, Planning, and Building's technical staff have attended multiple meetings reviewing electronic develop management, permitting, and inspection software. John Barletta and I participated in conference calls with the municipalities of Cambridge MA., Marco Island, and Cedar Rapids regarding the performance of the GIS based software Energov. In addition Planning, Building, and IT staff visited the City of Marco Island to review the software hands on. We feel this software will revolutionize our planning, plan review, inspection, and code services.

### **Performance Measures:**

- JRD recommends implementing the following performance measures:
  1. Percent complete building permit applications reviewed within scheduled time frame.
  2. Use of online permitting services.
  3. Inspections completed within 24 hours of inspection request.
  4. Overall customer satisfaction.

Our current performance measures include the following:

1. Review aging report that shows how many reviews outstanding per discipline between 1-10, 20-40, and over 40 days respectively.
2. Inspection activity by day, month and year.
3. Plan review activity by day, month and year.
4. Issued permits per month and year.
5. Inspections completed within 24 hours of inspection request.

In addition to the above performance measures, electronic permitting software will provide a wide array of custom management reporting capabilities that will enable the City of Hollywood to provide more efficient forecasting and customer service.

### **Permit Fees:**

- JRD strongly recommends assessing the current fee structure/fees. I absolutely agree with this recommendation, and suggest that a consultant is obtained to do the analysis within the first 60 days of the formal creation of the Building Department. Even if the analysis reports that our fees are adequate based on the economy, the City of Hollywood should be collecting a larger percentage of

fees upfront for plan review services. An alternative to increasing the current fees is capturing fees for services that other cities provide such as:

- Overtime plan review
- Preliminary plan review
- Architect/Engineer meetings (Per Hour)
- Continuing education/training
- Pre-construction permit agreements
- Early Start Administrative Fee
- Excessive plan review fee F.S. 553.80 (2)(b)

Several developers have expressed an interest in paying for these services that would help them complete and occupy their develop projects faster.

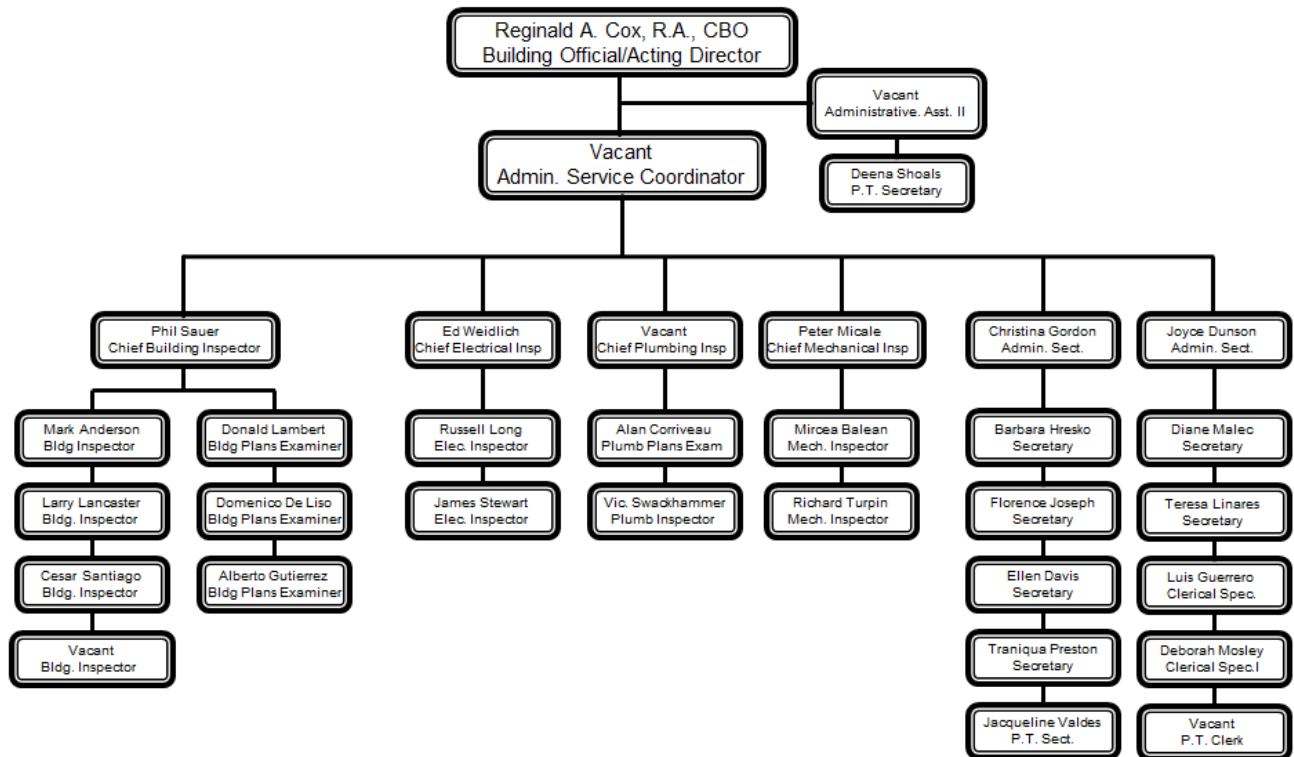
It is important to consider providing clear understanding among all interdepartmental personnel that the Florida Building Code authorizes the Building Official to delegate duties and assignments to buildings staff. However, other departments perform plan review and inspections that impact the time it takes for the Division to issue a permit and perform inspections. It is imperative that all Directors buy in to the fact that the public views the City of Hollywood as one entity and to that end our service delivery methodology should reflect that community perspective.

End of Memorandum  
December 3, 2013  
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Attachment

Attachment "A"

**Existing Building Department Organizational Chart (1416)**



**FY 2014 - FT Positions = 30**