

2018 Innovation Ambassadors: SWOT Presentation

Slide 10: Strengths vs. Weaknesses

Financial Strengths

Fiscally Responsible

We have the process and procedures in place that adhere to financial standards set by law. Our staff, Mayor and Commission and all staff involved in financial processes have focused operations with long range plans in mind. Additionally, the fiscal budget is an integral part of and supports the six “Mayor and Commission Strategic Commitments and Directions” initiatives for the fiscal year.

Financial Stability

Our budget in fiscal year 2019 remains balanced, without reductions to current services. The current budget includes funding to support voter approved “Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax,” or SPLOST, projects. Athens-Clarke County remains the industrial and retain center for the northeast region of Georgia. Our bond ratings are high and we are able to report positive balances of total net position for the fiscal year ending in 2018.

Online Services

A limited amount of services can be paid online by our citizens. At this time, some court fees, parking tickets, taxes, tag renewal, water & sewer, solid waste and other services may be paid online.

Pay Study

The pay study approved in fiscal year 2017, offers potential for changes in job classifications and to give Athens-Clarke County a true, nonbiased comparison of compensation and benefits of similar governments and organizations. The current fiscal year budget includes funding increase to provide a full implementations of the recent pay study in January 2019. Details are to be shared with employees in October 2018.

Financial Weaknesses

Funding and Budgeting

Due to flat budget requests that have been adopted in the past decade, limited cost of living increments and increased benefit costs, employee salaries have been compressed and stagnant. As a result, many employees do not feel fairly compensated.

Furthermore, with flat budgets and increased services, there may not be enough funding or staff to successfully manage all services that our constituents expect and need.

Control Over Budget Allocation

Budget allocations are frozen and sometimes changed without notice. More input and communication would be welcome to explain budget allocation purposes and the reason for changes.

Do More With Less

As mentioned previously, services that employees are expected to fulfill are continuously increasing in number. The budget allocation request for our operating and internal expenditures is kept flat, or has been decreased in some fiscal years over the past decade. This strain on employees, equipment and facilities seems to be a perpetual issue that needs a solution.

Limited Online Bill Paying Services

Although some services are offered online to pay bills and fees for the government, they are few and not easy to find. Not all departments offer this service, some charge fees for the service, and navigation to find the page online to pay a fee are detriments. This service should be easy to find, free or low cost to the citizen, include option to pay online for all department fees.

Pay Study

Since results of the online pay study questionnaire were to be reviewed by the employees' manager, a fear of being punished for honesty may have occurred. The study was complex, leading some to question if results would be accurate. Additionally, employees expect no resulting action based on historical results of a prior pay study.

Slide 1: Ideas

Although the SWOT team was not charged with finding solutions to financial issues, during our meeting discussions, ideas formed and we would like to share them.

Extend Online Services

We could consider extending the online services of the Intranet for the employee to learn, communicate and easily find resources needed during work within and between departments.

Extended Bill Pay Services

Consider extending the bill pay service to include all departments, and easily found on the ACC website.

Extend County Lines (to include all of Loop 10)

Extending county lines will increase the tax base, resulting in additional revenues for the county.

Continuation of Culture Change

Athens-Clarke County government is a progressive organization. We continue to put forth pioneering programs such as the Innovation Ambassadors, What Works Cities, Envision Athens, and more. While the programs are key in our culture change, support from top management, and the encouragement of intradepartmental relationships is necessary to continue any of these programs successfully.

Mayor and Commission Goals & Objectives

These financial strengths, weaknesses and ideas relate to the following FY18 M&C Goals and Objectives, also continued in the FY19 M&C "Strategic Commitments & Directions" list:

- Accountable and Responsive Government
- Economic Prosperity
- **Informed and Engaged Citizens (website bill pay)**
- Healthy, Livable, and Sustainable (waste reduction using online bill pay)