Response to Questions on the FY 2010 County Lines of Business & Schools Program Review Processes Fall 2008

Request By: Public

Question: What is the status of the County study that is being conducted on the four day workweek?

Response: The attached memorandum on this issue was provided by the County Executive to the Board of Supervisors on October 24, 2008.

County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCT 24 2008

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Anthony H. Griffin
County Executive

SUBJECT: Analysis of Issues Related to Implementation of a 4-Day Work Week

The Board of Supervisors directed staff to review the issues related to implementation of a four-day work week (4-10 model) to include its effect on public access to county services, impact on the county workforce, operating cost savings and environmental benefits.

The state of Utah (population 2,550,063) implemented the *Working 4 Utah* initiative in August, 2008, changing government service hours to 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. This change affects approximately 17,000 state employees (80% of the workforce). Other local jurisdictions considering the feasibility of the 4/10 model include Arlington and Prince William County, Virginia and Prince George's and Montgomery County, Maryland.

Using Utah's baseline methodology to evaluate the collective impact of adopting the 4/10 model in Fairfax County, staff determined the following:

Effect on Public Access to County Services
Fairfax County has established a partnership with residents providing "high touch" services, those services that are readily accessible in multiple mediums. At present a critical element of this accessibility is residents' direct access to county facilities and staff in real time at least five days a week and in some instances seven days a week. A 4-10 model would, of course, limit accessibility to four days. Conversely, the 4-10 model would provide extended hours during those four days allowing some residents to access services before and after their eight-hour work day.

Impact on County Workforce
Another consideration in instituting the 4-10 model is the balance between potential benefits for the "quality of life" of county employees and potential issues that may result from the initiative. Two key advantages of the 4-10 model include an additional day off per week to accommodate personal and family commitments and the potential reduction of unscheduled absences that can disrupt productivity. The 4-10 model may also be helpful as an incentive in recruitment and retention, reducing employee commuting expenses and enhancing morale and job satisfaction.

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The primary disadvantage of a 4-10 model is that extending the length of the work day may adversely impact employees' ability to meet personal and family obligations that are time sensitive and/or only occur in the evening. Coordination of child and adult daycare services, participation in after school activities, participation in continuing education, retention of secondary employment opportunities, coordination of van pools or public transportation and medical conditions that preclude a longer work day are examples of potential disadvantages.

Savings in County Operating Costs

The impact of 4-10 model on county operating costs is difficult to assess. Initial projections estimate that the utility cost savings would be in the neighborhood of $100,000 per year if the three Government Center complex buildings were closed one additional day per week. It should be noted that that the Government Center complex has benefited from recent energy performance enhancements and performs better than many of the facilities in our inventory. It is assumed that the additional two hours of the extended workday four days per week would not significantly increase daily costs because the current energy management system is programmed for activation and shut-down in excess of the ten hour operating schedule of the 4-10 model. In estimating these costs, consideration must be given to the climate control requirements of the data center and usage of the conference center that might preclude closing of the Government Center completely for a three day period each week.

Environmental Benefits

Using Environmental Protection Agency methodology, it is estimated that 78.52 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CDE) could be eliminated per year for every 100 employees who commute one less day per week. Additionally, the reduced vehicle usage associated with the 4-10 model would result in reductions of fossil fuel consumption and subsequent CO_2 and air pollution emission. If the 4-10 concept were to be applied county-wide to non- 24/7 services and facilities and related support operations, the potential reduction in greenhouse emission and air pollution could be meaningful. On the other hand, only 20-25% of miles driven in the metro area are for commuting. An additional day off does not necessarily translate to employees not driving on that additional day. A more refined estimate would require further analysis.

Additional 4-10 Implementation Considerations:

If the county were to consider implementing the 4-10 model, further research would be required. Three areas requiring further review include: the impact on county IT services, an assessment of which county operations could realistically convert to the 4-10 model, and an assessment of the expectations and interest of county residents and employees.

<u>Possible increase in demand for IT services and related costs:</u>

- Need to increase e-government services that residents currently access in person on the traditional fifth work day of the week. Not all county agencies currently have a strong on-line presence and staff hours and costs to develop effective e-government services countywide would need to be reviewed.

- Requirement to provide IT support to 24/7 operations on the fifth day when IT staff would not be working if the county moved to a 4-10 model.

Employee compensation

Additional costs would be incurred due to the increase in holiday pay compensation as the county moves from an eight to ten-hour workday. A preliminary estimate of the extra holiday cost to add two hours to the workday is $450,000. Depending on the nature of the work there may be areas where additional overtime is required to ensure coverage and continuity of service.

Assessment of which operations could convert to a 4-10 schedule

Before seriously considering a move to a 4-10 model, the county would need to carefully and systematically assess which functions could be performed in a four-day work week. Twenty-four/seven operations such as public safety, residential facilities and related support staff would not lend themselves to the 4-10 model. Additionally, a number of county functions directly support the School System; further review would be needed to assess impact on schools operations.

Summary

There are many complex pros and cons when considering the 4-10 model as implemented by the State of Utah. Considerations associated with closing county government one additional day per week include:

- The county's current capacity for e-government services and the cost and development efforts required to overcome deficits in these services;
- Residents' acceptance of a 4-10 model and a method to capture and evaluate residents' opinions or concerns;
- Complexity and criticality of efficient logistical coordination and effective communication to ensure both residents and employees understand the schedule changes and impact on services;
- The workforce's acceptance of the 4-10 model and impact on productivity and the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff;
- Determination of which agency operations and/or services lend themselves to the 4-10 model; and
- Cost savings associated with 4-10 model and environmental impact due to reduced energy usage and fuel consumption.

If the county's primary goal is to reduce employee commuting costs, supervisors could stagger employee work schedules (as work operations permit) using alternative or compressed work schedules or enhanced telework participation reducing the number of commuting days for employees. Expansion of the teleworking program and/or increased use of compressed/alternative work schedules would still afford citizen access to county facilities and staff real time five days a week while at the same time reducing employee commuting costs.

It should be noted that the county already has an active telework program and managers are regularly encouraged to consider flexible or alternative work schedules to support the county's commitment to a work/life friendly environment.

If the county's primary goal is to reduce energy costs and air pollution, it is projected that the 4-10 model would provide reduction in both areas. Savings associated with reduced energy usage by closing some buildings one day per week would be at least partially offset by increased costs associated with the required IT support and services. Lastly, the 4-10 model would support the county's Go Green initiative with the reduction in greenhouse emissions and air pollution.

Recommendation:
Given the complexity of issues associated with moving to the 4-10 model, staff recommends that the county monitor the experience of those jurisdictions, such as the state of Utah, over the course of the next year. In addition, significant operational changes will result from the Lines of Business review that will take place in the coming months. These changes would need to be considered carefully against any proposed changes to schedule for county operations. Based on the above referenced review, recommendations can be provided to the Board for further consideration. In the interim I will continue to actively promote the successful telework program as well as encourage managers to give consideration to alternative or flexible schedules for their employees when appropriate.

Please let me know if I can answer any questions.

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