

Background: Six years ago, Mr. Bob Roby, MPA, PMP, CFM, was the Finance Director of the Arapahoe County Department of Human Services. A recovering workaholic who had risen through the ranks of city management (most notably with the City of Arvada, Colorado,) with an extensive history of administrative, budgeting and financial duties. His education, ICMA membership, and extensive leadership training had convinced him that there were better ways to motivate public employees and serve citizens. In fact, Bob had come to realize that many of the duties he had been tasked to complete over the years fit the definition of a project: "A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service." He pursued certification as a Project Management Professional, PMP[®], and earned a Master of Project Management certificate from Georgetown University.

Problem Assessment: Around this time, Arapahoe County had two very large construction projects; however, elected officials were troubled by a recent project which had numerous cost overruns and possible structural deficiencies. Previously, Arapahoe County had managed construction projects by assigning a staff member from the Facilities and Fleet Department to competitively bid, award and manage contracts as an "owners representative." With a vision that there was a better way to complete these construction projects, the Director of the Facilities and Fleet Management department, ICMA member Robert Patterson and the County Commissioners asked Mr. Roby to manage the two new construction projects. The result? The two projects were completed well under budget and within schedule using highly innovative funding methods and creative construction techniques. Conducting post-project reviews and documenting the "lessons learned," many people saw the benefit of Project

Management concepts, techniques and principles being used in many other tasks, duties and assignments. Even small renovation projects or operational studies could be effectively managed using the processes of Initiating, Planning, Executing, Controlling and Closing. Mr. Patterson was one of those who saw the benefit of having someone like Bob Roby on staff. Not satisfied with the way his department was operating, he worked with the Board of County Commissioners to approach Bob Roby with the idea of putting his Project Management skills and his administrative expertise to use in the reorganization of this large department. Presented with an offer he couldn't refuse, Mr. Roby joined the Facilities and Fleet Management department.

Program Implementation and Costs: That's when the real work began. Bob, now the Deputy Director of the department, was given oversight of the "Facilities" side of the operation including project management. He created a Project Management Office or PMO at the same time that he was busy reorganizing the separate "maintenance" and "custodial" operations into a harmonious team. Creation of this PMO operation, including equipment and salary, was accomplished using existing resources where possible and a budget expenditure of \$176,000. Because there were significant operational issues discovered in his analysis of the Facilities Services branch ("maintenance" and "custodial" operations) of the department, Bob arranged for an in-depth analysis by a contracted subject matter expert to take place. Over the past few years, several of the county's 20 facilities had fallen into some state of disrepair, many having problems with infrastructure systems (HVAC, electrical, plumbing, elevators, etc.) It seemed that previously, resources had been used to target aesthetic improvements such as paint and carpet, leaving the "behind the walls" equipment in

need of repairs or replacement. Coordinating these findings with Mr. Patterson, Bob Roby came to the conclusion that significant changes had to be made, changes not only in programs and duties, but changes of personnel. A year long reorganization took place (May 2004 – December 2005) which was not easy for anyone. Working together, Mr. Patterson and Mr. Roby made significant changes in how the department operated.

Some of the most significant changes were:

- Removal of the Facility Manager from that position;
- Removal of the “Maintenance Supervisor” position;
- Removal of the “Custodial Supervisor” position;
- Splitting the County into three separate geographical areas;
- Appointment three new Facility Managers in the new areas;
- Guiding and directing the new Facility Managers in hiring the appropriate staff, renewing operations and training them on leadership;
- Working within the County hierarchy to address the possibility of outsourcing the custodial work being performed by County employees;
- Implementation of a county wide recycling program;
- Implementation of an Energy Performance Contract.

All together, this two year long project to reorganize and rejuvenate the Facilities Management operation within Arapahoe County culminated in December, 2005, with a total expenditure of \$375,000, the majority of which was for analysis and an Energy Performance Contract.

Tangible Results and Measurable Outcomes: In the two years of the project, Mr. Patterson and Mr. Roby have turned the entire Facility Management Division around. In 2003, the employee turnover rate was close to 35%. It now stands at less than 15% and the 80+ employees feel that they have a say in how things are run. Surveys of the County staff and citizens visiting the facilities show a 90% satisfaction rate with the

cleanliness and safety of County facilities. Operational costs have been reduced significantly and projects are now managed efficiently and have resulted in a cost savings of over \$800,00 in 2005 and \$900,000 in 2006. The Energy Performance Contract allowed for over \$10 Million worth of work to be done on infrastructure equipment which had been neglected over the years. The cost of this work is being paid for over a 12 year period through savings realized by reduced energy consumption.

Lessons Learned: Among many lessons learned, Bob feels one of the most important is the need to have a vision and stay with it as dramatic changes take place in the organization. He gives credit when things go well and is accountable when things go wrong. He also believes that you must have a passion for what your are doing as a leader, but you still need staff to buy into the final outcome of the project. Finally, he contends that leaders must take care of themselves because this type of work is very stressful.

Conclusion: Bob Roby is a true professional and he has used his Project Management skills to create a Project Management Office and Facilities team which is optimizing today's hard to find project funds and showing that public sector employees can overcome obstacles and challenges to effective organizational management. Robert Patterson has demonstrated true leadership by allowing Mr. Roby and his team the latitude they needed to grow and change to accomplish some very aggressive objectives. His foresight and leadership have resulted in the streamlining of his department into a lean, well organized, functional team. I hereby nominate them both for consideration in the area of Strategic Leadership and Governance.