

## **SUBMISSION TO SAGE COMMISSION**

My report focuses on a macro-approach to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service and ultimately the government. Areas discussed are long-term planning; consistency in ministries, departments and senior civil servants; dependency on consultants; participatory approach to management; staff incentives; organizational restructuring at senior levels; promoting cohesion amongst department and ministries; establishing contracts for senior and executive civil servants; attracting and rewarding bright and innovative personnel.

### **Long –Term Planning**

In an organization, executive leadership and management set the tone for the environment. There is no long-term planning in government; there is no vision for Bermuda.

Individuals, families, companies, non-profit organizations implement 5 and 10-year plans. Developing countries are required to submit ten-year plans to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Annual budgeting is a band-aid approach to effective governance. The government of Bermuda needs to engage in long-range planning.

The recently-developed National Plan for Tourism is a step in the right direction. However, a tourism plan cannot stand alone. Approximately, 2 decades ago, hotels were converted to condominiums; in recent years there have been discussions of the need for creating new hotels. Government needs to establish a clear vision for our future.

### **Consistency in Ministries, Departments and Senior Civil Servants**

In recent years, whenever there has been a change in government, premiership and/or cabinet, there have been too many changes in the names of ministries and ultimately the respective departments that come under the umbrella of the various ministries. So much time has been wasted on restructuring which leads to inefficiencies, frustration and low morale within the civil service.

There have also been too many changes in ministers and permanent secretaries. For example, in the last 2 decades, the Ministry of Education has gone through at least 10 ministers and 5 permanent secretaries. Additionally there have been at least 3 changes in the external high school exams. Such disruption and lack of continuity adversely affects staff morale and the quality of education of our children.

The names and structure of all ministries should be made permanent after close collaboration amongst government, the opposition and key senior public servants.

## **Dependency on Consultants**

While consultants might be necessary for extremely specialized areas and major projects, there is a perception that consultants take up the slack for inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the civil service.

Once there is greater efficiency and effectiveness and enhanced accountability, hopefully there will be less reliance on consultants.

Should consultants be required, it is beneficial if they are Bermudians, Bermuda residents or individuals who have an intimate knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Bermuda, our history, culture and traditions. Additionally, because of their advanced research skills, personnel in the Department of Statistics can be a great resource for special projects.

## **Participatory Approach to Management**

Public servants at lower levels feel that their contributions are not valued or appreciated. Employees at the ground level in all institutions potentially can offer practical and simple solutions to problems that might appear to be complex at senior levels. Regular meetings and open door policies can contribute significantly to greater morale and ultimately greater efficiency and effectiveness.

## **Staff Incentives**

There is no correlation between staff appraisals and salary increases. There should be some incentive for personnel who perform at above-average or exceptional levels. This can be in the form of special recognition, bonus, additional vacation, special retirement benefits, and support for further education or professional development. The costs of such incentives would be offset by greater efficiencies and limited incremental for staff that are under performing.

## **Organizational Restructuring at Senior Levels**

Cabinet Office appears to be overstaffed at the executive level: the number of Assistant Cabinet Secretary (ACS) posts has increased from 1 to 5 during the last 15 years. This potential overstaffing at such high staff levels needs to be addressed.

The posts of Auditor General and Accountant General have assistants. It is apparent that some department heads and permanent secretaries are bogged down with administrative duties and mundane tasks. Maybe their time can be spent on concentrating on developing and promoting innovative ideas and implementing various programmes. This can be

facilitated by creating new posts such as executive assistants or assistant permanent secretaries. These proposed post holders can be groomed to be permanent secretaries and other senior posts. The associated costs can be offset by the proposed decrease in the number of ACS posts.

### **Promoting Cooperation, Cohesion and Integration of Functions within Departments and Ministries**

In contrast to the private sector, departments and ministries appear to work in isolation. Effective dissemination of information, regular meetings and events, promoting understanding, cooperation and integration of functions within and between related ministries and departments would reduce duplication, promote efficiency, enhance effectiveness and accountability, and increase staff morale.

By having a more intimate understanding of how their functions play an important role in government, public servants would feel that they are making a significant and meaningful contribution to our government and to Bermuda.

Coordinating the functions of the various departments and ministries was one of the functions of the Central Policy Unit (CPU). If it is no longer in existence, the re-establishment of this unit should be considered.

### **Contracts for Department Heads, Permanent Secretaries and Executive Level Posts**

Department heads and permanent secretaries need to be more accountable for the results of their departments. This can be accomplished by initiating contracts and aligning their responsibilities with the proposed 5-year/ 10-year plans.

They should be members of an Association of Senior and Executive Civil Servants, similar to the Association of Principals.

### **Attracting and Rewarding Innovative Personnel**

Quite often public or civil servants join the civil service for security. Hopefully, more are joining the civil service because they want to make a major contribution to Bermuda.

Awarding of bursaries and the introduction of the summer internship and management training programmes and summer internships are definitely steps in the right direction. Possibly a more aggressive approach in attracting future civil servants while in high school and in university needs to be explored.

Effective orientation programmes should be established. New and existing employees would then have a clear vision of how their respective department contributes to the workings of government and to Bermuda.

Identifying bright, innovative civil servants early in their careers for upward mobility would provide effective succession plans when senior civil servants retire.

Personnel in the Internal Audit Department and the Office of the Auditor General potentially can play a key role in identifying such individuals during their respective reviews.

Additionally, the Government of Bermuda should have a registry of Bermudians, who are residing overseas: they might have a wealth of experience to offer.

### **General Remarks**

The possibility of privatization has not been addressed. If that direction is taken, it should be gradual. Possibilities are creating more quangos; and partnerships between public and private sectors.

While some suggestions might require additional costs, the associated benefits of greater efficiency and effectiveness potentially can outweigh the costs. As government is overburdened with debt, special funds can be created by raising revenues by progressive means, and using untapped resources; e.g. unused reports and under-utilised human resources.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The civil service is the backbone of the government. However, our elected government officials must provide a strong vision for the future of Bermuda. Long-term strategic planning, thus a National Plan is the step in the right direction. Additionally, fixed-term elections in five-year cycles in alignment with the National Plans would enhance accountability for elected officials and civil servants.

Creating the best environment in the civil service to promote innovation, national pride, and respect for all public servants at all levels, rewarding success will be key to greater efficiency and effectiveness and enhancing accountability.

Respectfully Submitted,

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