

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: CITY OF AMES RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

BACKGROUND:

The City's official Records Retention Schedule (RRS) is intended to answer questions about what documents are to be kept, by whom, and for what period of time. This schedule was initially adopted by Resolution No. 98-143 on April 14, 1998.

The objective of the City's Records Management Program is to provide the right information at the right place at the right time to the right person at the lowest possible cost. In order to allow for that utmost accuracy and efficiency, it is imperative that the Records Retention Schedule list all records currently being retained by each department.

The key to a successful Records Management Program is ongoing implementation of the Retention Schedule. It was determined in early 2009 that the RRS was not being kept up-to-date. There had been considerable turnover in the personnel responsible for that task. A Process Improvement Team was then formed in January 2009 to address that issue. The attached charter was devised, and Records Stewards were named throughout the organization.

On March 25, 2009, all Records Custodians and Stewards attended a process improvement kick-off meeting where the importance of an accurate Records Retention Schedule was emphasized by Team Sponsor Bob Kindred and Team Leader Diane Voss. At that time, a goal for compliance was aggressively set for July 1, 2010. Records Management Team meetings were held monthly for the first 13 months to address roadblocks identified by the Stewards. Records Manager Diane Voss then held multiple individual meetings with departments to provide additional guidance and assistance.

After each department created its Plan for Compliance, the scope of the project (i.e., how many records needed to be added to the Schedule and how long the update was going to take) was realized. The next step for each Records Steward was to manually inventory all the records in his or her department. This proved to be very time-consuming, and it was soon realized that the July 1, 2010, compliance date was not achievable. A complete re-write of the Schedule was going to be necessary.

Updating the RRS consisted of the following steps:

- (1) Inventorying the records of every department/division;
- (2) appraising the value of each record according to its administrative, fiscal, legal, and/or historical value;
- (3) determining the retention period based on *Iowa Code* requirements; and
- (4) ascertaining whether the record would be kept on-site or stored elsewhere until destroyed.

Ultimately, the final step was a review by the Legal Department to ensure *Code* compliance.

All steps have now been completed and the updated Records Retention Schedule is now ready for Council approval.

Once the revised RRS is adopted by the City Council, each Records Steward will be responsible for maintaining it and educating other personnel in his or her department on its implementation.

The complete, 80 page RSS is available for review on the City's web site as an attachment to this Council Action Form.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Adopt a resolution approving the revised Records Retention Schedule.
2. Do not approve the revised Records Retention Schedule and direct staff to make further changes.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Maintaining an up-to-date Records Retention Schedule is a key step in seeing that the City complies with open records laws. Equally important, it will facilitate our providing exceptional records management services to our citizens and others who need to access those records. Updating this RSS represents a monumental effort on the part of the City's Records Stewards.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1, thereby adopting a resolution approving the revised Records Retention Schedule.