Chapter V

IT Governance at the City of Naperville, Illinois

Donald J. Carlsen, City of Naperville, Illinois, USA

Executive Summary

This case study details the process that the City of Naperville, IL has developed to govern its information technology project selection process. IT governance can be defined as “a structure of relationships and processes to direct and control the enterprise in order to achieve the enterprise’s goals by adding value while balancing risk versus return over IT and its processes.” While the definition sounds ominous, the reality is that IT needs to connect the needs of the business to process improvements and projects that can enhance operations, create efficiencies, lower costs, and solve problems. The chapter entails the description of the way that business needs and IT projects were connected in the past, why that was a problem for the city and IT, and what was done to try and to correct the problem. The case study includes an overview of a toolkit used by the city as well as a discussion of challenges and the current status of each piece of the toolkit. The toolkit includes:

1. Strategic technology planning
2. Project management
3. Capacity analysis
4. Budget/CIP review teams
5. Budget process improvements including project scope and scoresheet
6. Information technology project evaluation team
7. Balanced scorecard

Introduction

It is my hypothesis that use of the toolkit described in this chapter lowers risk and improves the ability to execute on information technology (IT) projects.

The case study will detail the process that the City of Naperville has developed to govern our information technology project selection process. IT governance can be defined as “a structure of relationships and processes to direct and control the enterprise in order to achieve the enterprise’s goals by adding value while balancing risk versus return over IT and its processes.” While the definition sounds ominous, the reality is that IT needs to connect the needs of the business to process improvements and projects that can enhance operations, create efficiencies, lower costs, and solve problems.

The basic topic entails the description of the way that business needs and IT were connected in the past, why that was a problem for the city and IT, and what has been done to try and correct the problem. Naperville’s IT Department has developed a toolkit that includes the following:

1. Strategic technology planning
2. Project management
3. Capacity analysis
4. Budget/CIP review teams
5. Budget process improvements including project scope and scoresheet
6. Information technology project evaluation team
7. Balanced scorecard

Because Naperville is a high-growth, dynamic community, I think that readers may find it interesting to see how IT works in an extremely innovative public-sector environment.

Background

The City of Naperville was incorporated in 1831. Over the past 175 years, the city has grown both in population and size to approximately 140,000 residents and a service area of about 38 square miles. Recently, the city is the recipient of the following accolades: