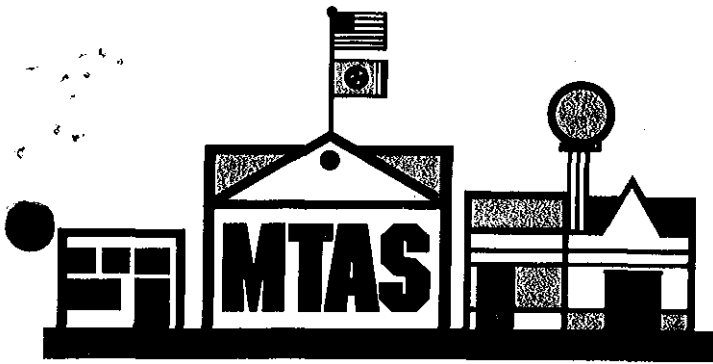




TECHNICAL BULLETIN

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COMPUTER GATEKEEPER COMMITTEES

By
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The world of computers has spread to many cities across the state. While computers are the answer to many questions, they also cause many questions to be asked. A common question is "When can this be computerized or when can I have computer time?"

Several Tennessee cities have set up a committee to deal with that question. While there are several names for these committees, they will all be referred to as gatekeeper committees. This bulletin will look at the way three cities (Chattanooga, Johnson City, and Maryville) are handling this review function.

Chattanooga:

Chattanooga has developed a Data Processing User Committee, which is comprised of representatives from each of the city's five departments. Before any major data processing resources may be utilized, this committee must approve the commitment. The data processing manager determines what constitutes a "major commitment."

The committee, which meets semi-weekly and is composed of department heads or assistants to the Commissioners, is now in the process of producing a user manual for the policies and procedures of purchasing hardware and software, including all microcomputer purchases. Additionally, the manual addresses requesting of services from data processing.

The committee is attempting to provide some standardization among the city departments as microcomputers are introduced to Chattanooga. This includes micro software applications as well as hardware purchases.

Johnson City:

The City of Johnson City formed the MIS steering committee soon after a data processing needs analysis was done for the city. This committee was designed to oversee the programming priorities for the system. The name of this committee has since been changed to Decision Support System Advisory Team (DSSAT) and is composed of the Assistant City Manager, the Management Information System Director, and several department heads.

To have information processed by data processing, a department head must provide preliminary information to the data processing department. The MIS department will then conduct a systems analysis to insure their understanding of the department needs. The DSSAT will then meet to determine validity of the request and schedule a priority to the project.

All software purchases, as well as hardware purchases and changes, are brought before the DSSAT. Implementation of new data bases are carefully screened before the application is initiated.

Maryville:

The Gatekeeper Committee in Maryville is composed of six employees and the Assistant City Manager. Three employees have hands-on experience and are from departments that use applications, including a word processing technician, an employee from public works, and a staff member from the finance department.

A department head who wishes to use the computer resources must first fill out a form showing understanding of the application he is requesting. The request is then referred to the committee for review. The Gatekeeper Committee then sends a recommendation to the city manager.

Any department head who is requesting funds in the following year's budget for the purchase of any computer hardware or software must appear before the Gatekeeper Committee prior to requesting funds.

Each of the cities has a large system (from a mini in Maryville to mainframes in Johnson City and Chattanooga) and are entering the micro world. Maryville currently has micros and both of the other cities are anticipating purchase of at least one during 1984.

Each of the three cities is working to make the most of the computer resources they have available. By decentralizing the decision-making process to include employees outside of the data processing department, the opportunity is available to broaden the scope of computer applications while insuring that the city's most important priorities are met first.

For further information and assistance in establishing a gatekeeper committee of this type, contact Pam Jones, MTAS Management Systems Specialist, at 615-974-5301.

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