MINUTES & NOTICE OF BOARD ACTION

BOOK 153 PAGE 1929

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LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

This document, upon approval in a public meeting by the Board of County Commissioners, serves as official minutes of such meetings as required under the Open Meetings Law, ORS 192.650.

Pursuant to notice made by mailing agendas to news media, a selected list of jurisdictions and individuals in Lane County, a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held.

Questions should be directed to The Board Office Specialist 3, ext. 4203.

August 9, 1993 1:30 p.m.	BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW PROCESS	Commissioners' Conference Room

BOARD INTERVIEWS WITH CANDIDATES

Chair Steve Cornacchia presided with Ellie Dumdi, Marie Frazier, Jack Roberts and Jerry Rust present. Sharon Giles, Recording Secretary.

The Board briefly discussed process, deciding to rotate through the Commissioners, one question at a time, asking each candidate the same questions.

Kent Taylor 1:30 - 2:45

FRAZIER:

Q: Did you receive a copy of the budget document?

A: Taylor stated yes, the summary and full document.

Q: What changes would you make in its format/content?

A. Taylor replied that he thought it was a clear and complete document, based on the size of the staff. He indicated the one area he might like to see more emphasis on was giving information by program area - where funding is going; for example: Public Safety/gang prevention and then assessing program costs versus people.

RUST:

Q: On the topic of customer service, Rust asked Taylor to talk about the concept and his experiences.

A: Taylor stated that it is important to define the customer, but that basically it is the person you need to please in order to stay in business. He cited examples showing that some services have two customers, such as the jail operation serving the public and the inmates. He noted that the customer in County government, generally the public, gets their perception from the evidence before them; therefore, it is important to pay attention to details. He indicated that he feels customer service training/orientation for employees is important, along with the management team focusing on customer service.

DUMDI:

Q: What are the most important aspects of being a good manager?

A: Working well with people and having good judgment.

Q: What is your personal management style?

A: Taylor stated that he is a good listener, is accessible, is not overly formal, has a sense of humor and relies on people to use good judgment.

ROBERTS:

Q: What is your vision on the role of County government?

A: Taylor responded that he sees a need for local government particularly in the unincorporated areas, between the federal/state level and the people, stating that certain services need to be offered on a semi-regional basis. He indicated that a) he thinks there will still be county governments; b) it will probably look different than what we have now; and c) it will offer an array of services that make sense on a larger geographic basis than a city, but smaller than a state. Taylor stated that county government provides the opportunity to respond to local concerns. He remarked that his concern is responsibility versus funding sources.

CORNACCHIA:

Q: What do you feel is the County-wide community's willingness to financially support county government services?

A: Taylor stated that basically people are willing to pay what they've been paying. He noted that county government deals with an increasing workload, increasing population and increasing costs, while experiencing revenue drops. He indicated that if revenue increases are not an option, then the Board is left with the difficult task of deciding whether to delete certain programs.

FRAZIER:

Q: What role, if any, does the County Administrator play in assisting the Board to function as a team and not just as a group?

A: Taylor stated that the things that have worked for him in the past are: a) sharing the same information equally with everybody; b) being a good communicator amongst Board members; and c) assuring Board members that his (the County Administrator's) recommendations come from him and not from other Board members, requiring that his conduct be above reproach.

RUST:

Q: Noting that the County Charter vests the administrative and the policy with the Board of Commissioners, what is your perspective and experience about that and is it useful to try to define administrative versus policy?

A: Taylor stated that he had worked in situations at both extremes. He indicated that what is important is what the individual Board member's expectations are and that, as a group, the Board is able to set policy and expect that the "day-to-day nuts and bolts" of County Administration are being taken care of. He indicated that he thought, for example, that disciplining a County employee who reports to the County Administrator falls within the purview of the County Administrator; and that doing appointed department heads' performance evaluations would be an area on which it was not inappropriate to get the Board members' ideas regarding strengths and weaknesses.

RUST:

Q: Is it useful to go through some kind of consensus building around the issue of administrative versus policy?

A: Taylor felt a general meeting of the minds between the County Administrator and the Board was crucial and he would need time to assess whether or not consensus building was necessary and, if so, the timing.

DUMDI:

Q: From your experience, what have you done to resolve a budget shortfall/deficit, and how have you gone about it?

A: Taylor indicated that he thought a multi-year (long term) budget document/financial plan was useful to help the Board see long term projections in order to make better decisions. Noting that revenue raising has not been an option in his present experience, he has helped find all the areas that could be cut without grave results. He stated that he considers budget to be one of his strongest suits technically and that it is crucial.

ROBERTS:

Q: Noting that Lane County is becoming more racially/ethnically/culturally diverse, what would you, as County Administrator, do to prepare and cope with that reality?

A: Taylor remarked that Lane County has an active Affirmative Action and Human Rights Commission and he would rely heavily on that group for ideas on what to start doing now. He indicated that looking at things from a minority point of view, training in English as a second language, planning for likely employment opportunities, and providing and monitoring housing were all important issues.

CORNACCHIA:

Q: What is the role of the County Administrator and elected officials (Sheriff/District Attorney) in establishing the budget for their particular departments in terms of responsibility, authority and prerogative?

A: Taylor responded that the elected officials have the responsibility to tell the County, on behalf of the voters that they represent, what their needs are to provide an acceptable level of service and they are also responsible as a member of the County "team." He indicated that the County Administrator is responsible to see that there is a balanced, intelligent budget that reflects fairness and the priorities of the Board. Taylor stated that the County Administrator's role is to work out, through negotiation, etc., the lowest budget for the affected department as can be worked out. He noted that the County Administrator must have the strength and integrity to acknowledge that there is nothing wrong with professional disagreement, being careful not to destroy the relationship.

Q: Noting that Lane County expects a $3 million deficit for the next fiscal year and that the Sheriff's portion is a large chunk of the budget, Cornacchia asked who makes the call, in the recommendations made to the Board, as to cuts in that department.

A: Taylor stated that the County Administrator makes that call as that person is professionally responsible to give his own recommendations.

FRAZIER:

Q: How would you, as County Administrator, put together a results-oriented process for Lane County on various issues?

A: Taylor stated that determining and quantifying the expected outcomes of a task are important and then evaluating the exercise at a given time in the future. He gave an example related to the radical changes taking place in his present employment.

RUST:

Q: Referring to the upcoming budget deficits, what extraordinary measures can be contemplated to deal with that?

A: Taylor offered various possibilities, including: 1) salary and benefit take-backs such as employees paying part of the health care costs; 2) voluntary furloughs (or mandatory); 3) contracting out, perhaps in janitorial or data processing, although he noted that pitfalls can be experienced; 4) reducing the work week, thus possibly providing less public service; and 5) providing the opportunity for an employee suggestion program.

Taylor remarked to the Board that he felt it an honor to be invited to interview. He also stated that he was impressed with the Management Team and the Board's interest and sincerity.

This meeting recessed at 2:40 p.m. to reconvene at 2:59 p.m.

<u>Virginia Collins 3:00 - 4:15</u>

ROBERTS:

Q: What is your vision on the role of County government?

A: Collins suggested that if there is a superfluous level of government, it would be city not county. She stated that regional governments are far more important in today's times.

DUMDI:

Q: What is your personal management style?

A: Collins indicated that she thinks a "participative" management style is best, including people in the process. She stated that this promotes additional ideas and creativity, while creating "buy in" for the ideas on the part of the participants.

RUST:

Q: On the topic of customer service, Rust asked Collins to talk about the concept and her experience.

A: Collins responded that it is important to define "customer," whether it is another department or the public. She stated that the only reason county government is here is to provide services to the customer and that county employees need to treat the customer with respect, courtesy and politeness. Collins explained that managers and supervisors need to be trained in this area and that trainers need to make this concept part of the existing orientation process.

FRAZIER:

Q: Did you receive a copy of the budget document?

A: Collins stated she had.

Q: What changes would you make in its format/content?

A: Collins replied that she thought the document was of high quality and that she found it to be readable and comparable to others she had read. She commented that improvement could be made in terms of dealing with the impact of service reductions. She also indicated that some of the detail portions could be separated out of the main document and put into an addendum/appendices.

CORNACCHIA:

Q: What do you feel is the County-wide community's willingness to financially support county government services?

A: Collins stated that correct marketing is important, noting that if it is a service people want, they will be willing to pay for it. She also indicated that people need to believe that everything possible has been done to streamline and be efficient.

ROBERTS:

Q: Noting that Lane County is becoming more racially/ethnically/culturally diverse, what would you, as County Administrator, do to prepare and cope with that reality?

A: Collins emphasized that the biggest risk is ignoring the inevitable - that as these populations grow, they will have political voices. She observed the need to acknowledge this reality and provide services and means for them to participate in county government now. Collins stated the importance of establishing a Human Relations/Affirmative Action group such as Lane County has already done. She stated that it is important to get good demographic data and she stressed the need for bilingual capabilities. She also noted that minority representation in the County workforce was important.

DUMDI:

Q: From your experience, what have you done to resolve a budget shortfall/deficit, and how have you gone about it?

A: Collins stated that tapping into existing programs at the federal level, particularly in the public health and employment/job training fields, can bring about additional grant revenues. She observed that private foundations can also be utilized and that "grantsmanship" is important.

Q: Are there other avenues, other than grants, that you would look at for revenue enhancement?

A: Collins responded that cost recovery is necessary in the County's fee structure. She also noted that utility taxes are an option. Collins indicated that she has a personal bias regarding sales taxes. She stated that perhaps a local income tax was better than a sales tax, as sales tax is no longer deductible on a federal tax return.

RUST:

Q: Noting that the County Charter vests the administrative and the policy with the Board of Commissioners, what is your perspective and experience about that and is it useful to try to define administrative versus policy?

A: Collins stated that she has experienced both extremes and that, ultimately, the individual Board needs to be comfortable with the situation and that this is dependent on the personal makeup of the Board members.

FRAZIER:

Q: What role, if any, does the County Administrator play in assisting the Board to function as a team and not just as a group?

A: Collins emphasized the need for effective communication in terms of providing good, complete information to all of the Board members, making sure that each Board member's office gets all of the information. She stated that the County Administrator's role is not to mediate, but to provide information, advice and guidance.

CORNACCHIA:

Q: What is the role of the County Administrator and elected officials (Sheriff/District Attorney) in establishing the budget for their particular departments in terms of responsibility, authority and prerogative?

A: Collins responded that the overall budget is the responsibility of the Board; but, while the Board can make recommendations, it is up to the individual elected official to determine how their department's budget is utilized.

Q: Noting that Lane County expects a large deficit for the next fiscal year, Cornacchia asked if Collins was suggesting that, with reference to the Sheriff's budget as a whole, the Sheriff would pick where the cuts are made?

A: Collins stated that the Board could try to guide, suggest and influence the Sheriff; but, as a practical matter, if the Sheriff disagrees, the Board's preferred alternative may not be achieved.

FRAZIER:

Q: How would you, as County Administrator, put together a results-oriented process for Lane County on various issues?

A: Collins explained that it is necessary to get the people who implement involved in the planning portion of the process. She also stated the need for setting goals and timelines.

RUST:

Before beginning his next question, Commissioner Rust took the opportunity to advise Ms. Collins, with reference to her comments regarding the Sheriff's budget, that, in Lane County, the Board has the ultimate ability to set the absolute budget and to define the categories and then the Sheriff has the budget authority within those parameters.

Q: Referring to the upcoming budget deficits, what extraordinary measures can be contemplated to deal with that?

A: Collins replied that in her experience the following have been options: a) 8 1/4 salary rollback; b) 4/30/6; c) additional dollars from the feds on health funding; d) data processing "outsourcing"; e) closure and/or decreasing hours at libraries; f) two percent reduction in Sheriff's Office, District Attorney and Assessor budgets; and g) park and recreation service reductions.

Collins thanked the Board for their time devoted to this process.

There being no further business, this meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Sharon Giles

Sharon Giles
Recording Secretary