

# Government Review & Efficiency – Transcript 4/1/2021

## **SPEAKERS**

Jean Raymond, Steve Bulger, Andrew Jarosh, Tara Gaston, Jonathan Schopf, Matt Veitch, Joe Grasso, Mike Hartnett, Eric Connolly, Pam Wright

### **Matt Veitch**

The government review and efficiency committee meeting April 1, four o'clock. Attendance has been taken. And I will ask as our first mode of order of business for a motion to approve the minutes from the march 4 2021 meeting.

### **Eric Connolly**

So moved, Supervisor Connolly.

### **Tara Gaston**

Second, Supervisor Gaston.

### **Matt Veitch**

Any discussion? All in favor say aye.

### **Several Supervisors**

Aye.

### **Matt Veitch**

Any opposed. Motion carried. All right, so just first quickly to go over our subcommittees that we have. First is the ethics code subcommittee update. And that's me. So Attorney Hartnett had sent us some information about our current ethics code, and anywhere that he could find references to ethics. And we have an ethics code in Saratoga County, and it's part of our county code. And we also have a policy out of the purchasing department kind of separated from the code for regarding some ethics when it comes to purchasing. So that was one interesting thing that we found is that we have it kind of in two different places. Second thing is that we have in our ethics code, kind of two boards that are set up, Ethics Advisory Council and the Board of ethics. Looking through everything that I saw, I did not see any really need for both. Looks like we may just need to have a Board of Ethics. We may not have to have the Ethics Advisory Council established as it is. I've kind of looking through the law, I haven't really gotten too far. I'm kind of putting together a little bit of a proposal for the subcommittee to look at. We have not met yet as a subcommittee. And we will be doing that probably in the next couple of weeks. So that's really where we're at right now on that just kind of in the initial stages. And hopefully, we can have a little bit more for this board for our next meeting next month. Records Management, Supervisor Raymond.

### **Jean Raymond**

Can we go back to ethics for just one minute?

### **Matt Veitch**

Yes. Supervisor. I'm sorry about that.

**Jean Raymond**

I would just I didn't take the opportunity to read it. No, I've read it before. But in particular, you might want to have somebody in Personnel go through the list of attachment A. Because we have people who aren't there and people who shouldn't be there anymore? And I don't think it's our committee function. I think it's just a matter of cleaning it up. So that it's more correct.

**Matt Veitch**

Yeah, I think the last time that it was edited, or changed, or sometime around 2010.

**Jean Raymond**

I think it was before that, because I see under General Services Director of General Services/Contract Administrator, and Assistant Director of Data Processing, and I don't think that's quite clear. And Eileen would probably like to be included in the ethics stuff.

**Tara Gaston**

I think that's what the County Attorney mentioned. It was informally changed in 2010, is to say, was that actually changed? But someone put in a shiny new list, which is also still probably not accurate?

**Jean Raymond**

So I think I think just administratively, it probably just be cleaned up. We could approve the changes once it is.

**Matt Veitch**

Yes, one of the things that I am doing as well, and I Yes, I saw that as well. And, from my perspective, and my community, the City of Saratoga Springs has an ethics code, I've taken a look at that. They do it a little bit differently than the county does. But they do have some good ideas in there that maybe are things we can use for ours, as well. So I did ask Supervisor Grasso for Town of Charlton's. I guess I'll ask if anybody else has one for their town, if they can email it to me. Because it would be helpful to see a couple of examples through the County, where those are set up, because each town does their own, and they have everybody has good ideas. So I think that seeing some of the differences, and including some of that maybe some of it may not be applicable at the County level, but some of it would. And so I think it would be good to see a few different examples of that too. So if you have any in your town, and you can email them, you can do that to me and maybe copy Attorney Hartnett just as to have somebody else have an eye on it. So, but yeah, I appreciate that, Supervisor Raymond. It's definitely time for updating. All right. So moving on, Supervisor Raymond, we're going to talk about the records management and record retention. And we had a great meeting yesterday here at the county to take a look at our record rooms. So I don't know if you want to take over.

**Jean Raymond**

Sure. I would be happy to. Is Pam in the room? Pam, were you able to get copies of the reports the board put together with the fix the photos?

**Pam Wright**

Yes, Steve Bulger brought them down and they have been dispersed.

### **Jean Raymond**

Very good. Thank you Steve. Thank you, Pam. We were fortunate to have a very good turnout, in spite of the fact that we had six people we did not, we did expect to be there. But we're unable to be there. We had a total of 12 people, I believe, who were there. And it was very informative, and very interesting. And Lauren Roberts our Historian took photographs, which I had asked her to share, and Matt had asked to share. But she was good enough and very good enough to also do a narrative to go with these photographs and talk about what we saw, which I appreciated very much. Some of what we saw was very good. Some of what we saw needed some help and some of what we thought needed a very lot of help. It's much too premature to talk about what kind of help we're going to recommend. But I think the one thing that did come out of it, there was one area in particular, I believe, with the DA's area where we thought it might be helpful to have some kind of a camera to make certain that we're monitoring some of the confidential substance in that room. And also, there was a couple of freezers and a refrigerator and a bathtub, in a small room, which I think had been a bathroom, that it would be helpful to have get some information on putting them alarm on if the compressor on the refrigerator or the freezer one so that we would know that we have monitoring apparently monitors the temperature so that we don't have that kind of system wide problem, but within the freezers and refrigerators contain evidence that must be kept safe. So it's important that we have pretty quickly to do some monitoring of those. The reports pretty self explanatory, it's very insightful to learn expertise and picking up on small things. Picking up on large things, one of the things that probably has to be looked at to be certain not active is there is a light, I believe was on the fourth floor, above which there was a leak that was leaking. At some point, whether it still is or not I don't know, but it was leaking into the light, which is probably not a good thing. We became aware of the fact that there is no fire suppression system within the floors that are used for storage. So that's another thing we should be aware of. So we really don't want it to leak in to the lights, potentially starting fires. Other than that, I think the next thing we will do is tour at this least one and possibly two more records facilities in the next month or so to get an idea of how other places do things. And then we're going to have plan some next steps from there. And I think that's probably going to have to involve getting inventory by department of who has what where it is and how much of it they have and how much they have to still in their departments that should be in storage and how much of the storage that doesn't need to be anymore, and begin to come up with some rough ideas of where we're going to go. We may very well need a consultant and we'll probably have to bring somebody in from State Ed. that is an expert on records management to give us some expertise. This is not going to be a quick process. I think you're looking at at least till the end of the year is not much longer. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

### **Matt Veitch**

Thank you, I think you've covered it really well. And really we only kind of scratched the surface, even though we did see a lot yesterday. I mean, other departments have records and storage spaces that we don't, we didn't even look at.

### **Jean Raymond**

If want to see the tax rolls for any, the pictures are not here for the section that has the tax rolls. There's a section on the first floor that has the tax rolls that go back into the 1800s. So if anybody wants to look up their assessment I'm sure they could make some arrangements to do that with the Treasurer's office.

### **Andrew Jarosh**

I'm surprised to learn that, didn't know my tax rolls were there.

**Jean Raymond**

It's in the jail building. The jail is in front of the jail building. You get very confused downstairs which building your in.

**Andrew Jarosh**

General ledger's were handwritten back then with leather bound.

**Matt Veitch**

Yeah, that's what we saw.

**Jean Raymond**

The tax rolls were over there and the quantity was just astounding.

**Matt Veitch**

And we didn't see some of the other areas of things where they're stored as well. So, there's a big project, and I think you're pretty much right on, I think it's gonna take maybe some outside help, among other things, so I don't know if anybody else has any other comments or questions regarding this?

**Joe Grasso**

So this is a Supervisor Grasso, Supervisor Raymond I'm not sure who's can best answer some questions but great report. I am sorry I didn't take part in the site visit. And after looking at the pictures, I think it's pretty self explanatory. And you've described some of the issues. So just mean, I assume, as a Committee, Supervisor Veitch, our objective in terms of the records management is to make recommendations for adoption of improving our records storage.

**Matt Veitch**

Yep.

**Jean Raymond**

I think our purpose is to determine our situation and based on the situation, make recommendations. And I think, just look at the pictures, it's obvious we are going to have recommendations.

**Joe Grasso**

I guess one of the fundamental ones is the location. I'm not that familiar with why the jail was picked and I assume because it was available and rightly suited from a space standpoint.

**Jean Raymond**

I would finish that statement, probably with the word available.

**Joe Grasso**

So before we delve into the improvements to the space, I guess the fundamental issue that needs to be answered is at the right location. And Jean, like you said, maybe that comes out of the evaluation phase. Just in terms of the records that are here, is there like a sign in sign out system in place?

**Jean Raymond**

Absolutely not. The only thing that we have at the moment is to get through the door to the elevator, which you use to get to the third and fourth floor of the old jail, there is a camera. So if you want to know who went in there, you'd have to have somebody review the film from the camera. There is absolutely no way to know who was in there within the building, within the records areas. There are areas that are locked that you cannot go in without a key or a pry bar. But there are you'll notice, if you look carefully at those pictures, there's records, that should be under much more security. There are records that have the divorce proceedings, people may fill in them. There's just, there's a lot of stuff. Somebody who wanted to get in there, poke around, there's probably stuff they shouldn't be able to poke around with. And we also keep cleaning supplies in that in there along with our records.

**Joe Grasso**

I think what my point is trying to understand where our starting spot is where we're starting their interest rates from. I assume that there's also no database in terms of what's there. So it's just based on people's memory, I think that might this box and I need is someplace here.

**Jean Raymond**

I would have to say in all honesty, I think that would depend on the department. This is done by departments. Departments move things in into storage and manage their storage. I think there were some departments that it was pretty obvious, pretty meticulous about how they did it, within the confines of the space. But I also think I know and once things have changed, that there are departments that prefer not to have their things in storage because they want to them handy so you go to some offices, you may find dozens and dozens of file cabinets and boxes that have never made it to the storage. Some, I think, keep careful records of exactly what they put into storage and others who knows. As people keep personnel changes come and go. People come and go. Somebody who knew what was there retired, somebody who came in doesn't know. We have no dinners. I can tell him I don't know this for sure. But I don't think we have any formal training program for records management other than whatever for individual departments do.

**Matt Veitch**

Supervisor Gaston just asked to speak.

**Tara Gaston**

It may be a second or a minute late here, but I just wanted to remind everyone that we are in a public meeting. And then while I do agree that things should definitely, there's significant room for improvement in how you're meeting records. We're also talking about sensitive information and how they can be accessed. And we should recall that while doing it on a public line, please.

**Jean Raymond**

Well, I think realistically, they can't be easily accessed, because you can't even easily access the building, much less the area where the records are kept. But there may be some very minor things that we can do to change and make things more secure as well. And one trip through doesn't give you the total sense of what is under lock and key up there. And that is something we may want to look into further as well. But thank you very much to Supervisor Gaston.

**Matt Veitch**

Yeah, so I think at the end of the day, this is we're at the ground level, for sure. I think everything that was said is exactly the way things are. It's definitely a place where we have to come in to some room

for improvement. I think some of the ideas that were brought up early on about visiting some of the other counties, and how they handled this, is definitely something we need to do. Because again, there was some discussion about sign in and sign out; how do we organize the records. If every department does it on their own, there could be 33 different organizational programs for the records for each department. And that is not efficient at all. And confusing. It can be confusing. I mean, if I'm one department, I can't access another departments record if I need it, because I don't know how they file it. So it just doesn't really make sense to keep doing this. And it's really important for many reasons. I mean at some point, a file may only be needed for some very important thing and we can't find it. And then what do we do? Right.

**Jean Raymond**

I think you're absolutely right, Supervisor Veitch. And I think also, we need to have an overall policy. Whether it's implemented at the department level, or its implemented, working with staff or people who actually work in the records management areas, that's their job. Those are things that we don't have to decide for a while. But I think it's going to become obvious as we visit other places. We have a lot of counties around us nearby who are larger and have had more resources or can put resources into this to where we can learn a lot from their experiences, good and bad. And then we can be the best.

**Matt Veitch**

Absolutely. Treasurer.

**Andrew Jarosh**

Thank you. I'm curious, just as we discuss this further, as the subcommittee continues to meet about this. There's one thing I'm curious about on the radar Supervisor Raymond said, we're going to take field trips to go visit some of our neighboring counties. I'm curious how the towns in the counties and the cities and the counties are addressing the issue. All municipalities are required to keep records. They all have different space issues and requirements. And I'm sure some do as well, and some not so well. Maybe they're facing the same challenges we are. Maybe they found a way. There might be examples in our own county that we can look at, for some good ideas. But furthermore, I'm curious, something to keep on the radar, if we do ultimately suggest some sort of formal, specifically structured facility for this. Maybe it's something that the towns would want to jointly pursue, because I'm assuming that the towns and the cities, the villages also have similar issues, just something to keep on the radar.

**Matt Veitch**

Yeah, I think that's a great idea. And I, when I brought this up, actually, we have our city council meetings couple times a month, but I did bring this up, as something that was one of our issues that we were going to tackle in this Committee. Commissioner Franck is the records management clerk for the city. He does have an employee who does the records management for the city. They're not that's not the only job but that is part of their duties, and it's their specific thing. The other thing that's out there that we really can look at as well as I know that the city has gotten a lot of grant funding from the State for their records management program, whether it's digitizing items or doing things where you can search them through a database. Those are all kinds of things that the State from time to time will have funding available for so we may be able to also get some funding through that process. But they did invite me and I can bring whoever I want to come to the city and see how they do records management there. They've offered that to me. But, I'm sure they invite anybody to come and see what we do. So happy to do that.

**Jean Raymond**

That would be great.

**Tara Gaston**

Nancy is that employee at the city has volunteered previously to assist the county in teaching anyone and best ways to do it, getting grants, records management, etc. to help connect people to that. She was very grateful to county helped the city during this, the City Hall incident in providing some digital records that the city could get copies of.

**Jean Raymond**

The other thing to for a matter of history, the records management of grants became available, I'm going to guess maybe 20 to 23 years ago. And there was quite a run, if you will, on the grants to create inventories and things like that. And I know particularly my own town did some of it made a lot of other towns did at that time. And Saratoga County, in particular, former County Clerk, Kathy Marchione received a lot of grants for the County Clerk's office at that time, and I think at some point along the way, subsequently, she was actually on the committee that selected people to get grants. So we were very aware of it at the county level. I don't know what's still available and how much is being offered, how competitive it is. But there definitely was money. And I think it had a dedicated source, if I remember correctly, of revenue to fund it.

**Matt Veitch**

That's definitely something more that we can explore. And I think just to kind of close this out, I mean, it does touch a lot of areas of the county outside of this committee. So I think when we, when we make recommendations, or if we come up with a plan, or some kind of an idea, whether it's policy or otherwise, based on whatever we need, it touches other committees. I mean, Buildings and Grounds was there yesterday, because they're the space, HR was not there, but they may be the policy, right? Or a different department. So there are places where we have to have, we're going to touch a lot of different places on this, I think when we go forward. Because every department needs records management, but a few departments actually have to kind of do the set the space up, get it ready, do the management of it. So this is going to be like say it's gonna be a long process, and at least at least to the end of the year, like you said, maybe longer. So I appreciate that. And, again, good meeting yesterday, and we'll keep going. So anybody got anything else?

**Jean Raymond**

thank you to everybody who participated yesterday in the to the good ideas today. And right now we're in the learning stages. Some of us have more to learn than others, and some of us have to relearn what we thought we knew.

**Matt Veitch**

All right, thank you. And then last on the subcommittee's is the budget subcommittee. I do have Supervisor Schopf as the Chair of that. I don't know if our Administrator sent any information out on that. I seem to remember that he did. But I have not had a chance to look at it. So I don't know if we've really gotten anywhere on this one yet. But I don't know John or if Steve, want to just speak to this briefly.

**Jonathan Schopf**

I'll take the bullet on this one. I did get some information, this is Supervisor Schopf, I did get some information from County Administrator and County Attorney. I've just been a little buried this month. So that is one of my projects to pick up here in April and hopefully get the ball rolling on that. I don't know if county administrator has anything to add to that. But I will follow up on this.

**Steve Bulger**

No. Nothing really new on my end. We're ready to pick this up at the appropriate time.

**Matt Veitch**

All right. Appreciate that. No problem. And thank you again for everything that we're all doing here on these three particular topics. And I'm sure at some point, as we complete them, we'll get more topics to add to the list. So the other thing I have today is we had mentioned early, I think maybe at our first meeting, somebody had to ask about the County organizational chart. I believe that was emailed out to everybody shortly after that meeting, but we didn't have an our agenda last month. Because a lot of the things on our agenda, but I did want to put on our agenda this month. And it is attached to the paper agenda that's here today and attach to the agenda online. For me, I didn't really have a whole lot on this that I thought needed to be changed. I do think that there is a little bit of at least on the first the administrative organization chart which is the 2021. I think it's interesting that the elected officials, the county elected officials, I don't know how they're actually connected to this chart. They should be kind of separated in some way, because they are elected officials of the county. And although they are department heads, they don't necessarily have to report through the same structure as everybody else, in my opinion. They do have some privilege as elected officials to run the departments in the ways that they see fit. So I don't know if there is a way to make this look any different that works better. I don't know if anybody really took a look at this or had any comments on it.

**Jean Raymond**

I have a question, Matt. Or more of a comment. I did look at it. I'm not sure if it all made a whole lot of sense. Probably looked at a couple more times. But I noticed the elected officials, which are kind of off to the side, and maybe they kind of need to be a little bit in a different spot entirely not be part of that chart. But I also noticed that the Sheriff on the second page where it says Board of Supervisors, blue on the bottom, on the far right, under Animal Shelter, you also have the Sheriff, but I wasn't quite clear as to why the Sheriff was there.

**Matt Veitch**

Yeah, they have Treasurer under real property tax. So I think the second chart is more of a the Board of Supervisors and committees. And then the blue are who in what departments report to each committee. I think that is what the second one is.

**Jean Raymond**

Than maybe it needs to be relabeled and made a little clearer.

**Matt Veitch**

Yeah, so I think you're right.

**Jean Raymond**

It caught my eye with the Sheriff in particular. Because it makes them look like somehow the Public Safety Committee, and I assume those were the committees, but if the Public Safety Committee is



telling the Sheriff, the Sheriff has to report to Public Safety Committee, which implies the public safety committee has some authority over the Sheriff. This is probably not the case.

**Matt Veitch**

Right. So maybe we can rename those so that they're not looking like they report to the committee's. I think that's, that's probably a better way to go. Their departments are associated with those committees. But they're not necessarily as individuals reporting to those committees, because they're their own elected officials. So yeah let's maybe try to we rework that. Yes, Supervisor Connolly.

**Eric Connolly**

A possible easy fix on that would be to just make the blue lines, dotted lines, and then have a key with what the dotted line means.

**Matt Veitch**

But I mean, otherwise, other than that, do we see anything else that may be a question or comment on this?

**Mike Hartnett**

Supervisor Veitch, Mike Hartnett, County Attorney, the second chart, as it was relayed to me, the way that I interpreted that chart was, that was the flow of resolution requests. And if a request was coming from one of those departments, that was kind of the direction they should go when bringing things before the Board to streamline that. That's the way I interpreted this when I got it. The first chart is extremely interesting. I just went through this exercise in the County Attorney's office. I created one for myself. I think this chart needs to be 3d. It involves elected officials that work outside in a different spheres, so to speak, in being beholden to the voters, but also responsible to report to the Board of Supervisors who set policy and the power of the purse, so to speak. So it's an interesting chart, but my suggestion would be if there's a way to make it 3d, I think that it might be easier. Thank you.

**Matt Veitch**

So yeah, I mean, if we could do that, I would like to see how that would look, actually. I think that's a kind of a neat idea. And, I mean, there probably is a way. I mean, there's some way to probably visualize that better. So yeah, because it is a little it looks a little off. I mean it has the County Administrator towards the top right above those elected officials. But that's not necessarily how that works in reality. So I mean, I know that they have to have budget and policy from the Board of Supervisors. And some of that may go through the Administrator or be worked on with the Administrator, but they aren't necessarily underneath that flow. And so that's where I think that has to be kind of, like you say, almost 3d, where they're not necessarily above or below. They're kind of on on the side, but around. So alright, let's see what you maybe come up with something better on this for next month. I do have a question from Supervisor Grasso.

**Joe Grasso**

So a couple of lines on the 2021 organizational chart. When I first looked at it, I had a lot of questions. And they made a lot of markups and question marks, but then I kept on coming back to it. And every time I did I kind of understood it better. And I actually thought that it was a pretty decent reflection. I think what it's trying to represent is something that should be noted someplace on the org chart, is this is a flow communication or workflow. I don't think it's a hierarchy of authority. And that should be clear because we know the role of the County Administrator, and obviously, some of these departments or

these elected officials don't report to the County Administrator. But I'm not sure that that's the intent of the org chart. So as long as it gets clarified, I think it's a pretty good chart. I agree with Mike's comment about the elected officials are different. And whether or not that could be shown some way that would be helpful. From the County Attorney, Director of Finance, Auditor and Human Resources Director at least it's still confusing to me how those are organizationally different than the various department heads. I submit there's a reason why they have a special place on the right hand side, but maybe that should get somehow clarified. So, not too much on that one. The other work chart, I might get as a great description of what its purpose was. And then I think that's the easy way to understand it in terms of how the resolutions flow from various departments. I think it's really just that. It's about the committee's, and how they are going to consider certain things and then flow it up to the Board of Supervisors. And I think that should also be noted someplace on the name of the org chart so that it's put in the right context. Our committee is the Government Review and Efficiency, and when I look at this org chart through that lens, I think that there's definitely opportunities to make the organization of the committee's more efficient. And I think that's something that's done every year just started the year. And I know, this year, there were some big changes to the committees. And I like those changes. But as we look at this, there's 13, various committees, which to me, seems like a lot. And I'm not on all the committees. But I look at a lot of minutes, and it seems like there may be a more efficient way to organize the committee's and maybe have some of these 13 become subcommittees so that there's limits. For example, Real Property Tax, maybe that falls under Economic Development, maybe Racing falls under Economic Development. Maybe those are subcommittees and not standalone. Again, I'm new to the game and may not have a good understanding of these. And so, I may be a little bit naive, but, the Veterans whether or not it needs to be its own or should become part of maybe Health and Human Services. So, I think I've got that underlying question, and then just how all the committee's kind of flow through Law and Finance. And I know, that's something that that's the way so we've done it in Saratoga County. Why that is, or whether or not that committee is expected to serve as a clearinghouse, before anything gets to the full Board of Supervisors. I think it's something that I think should be affirmed and with an understanding; because, when I look at this org chart, it looks like all of the committee's really serve as a subcommittee almost to Law and Finance and I assume that that's purposeful for certain reasons. My understanding of Law and Finance is just that. That somebody is always looking at from the financial impact and before things get finally voted on. But from an efficiency standpoint, if you've got half a dozen people on a committee, which are all supervisors of the town's, and then you've got another, say half a dozen on Law and Finance by the time it gets to the full Board, you're talking about half of the Supervisors, have basically blessed something. Well, then what does that do to the other twelve that haven't been part of that? And do they really have the right opportunity to weigh in and influence decisions, or does it really become a rubber stamp at that point. So, again, it's all about efficiency, and are we operating in the most efficient way possible.

### **Matt Veitch**

Yeah. And I know that you mentioned that beforehand, before the meeting that question and it to me, that was a very interesting question. Because, I mean, everybody coming in as a new Supervisor, I mean, it's just kind of the way that we do business here. And there has never really been any question about that flow, at least from the last, I've been here 13 or 14 years now, and that's just the way it is. Right? And so you kind of get used to that process. I don't know how other counties maybe do their flow or how they kind of deal with their committee structure. I mean, most counties have subcommittees. And they handle certain aspects of the county. And it's really up to each county to do with the way that they want. There is no rule or process that's spelled out in law or anything like that. The question is whether or not I think I see your point is that like, why would a Public Works resolution,

for example, have to go through Law and Finance before it goes to the full Board? I mean, if the Public Works already knows what they need to do, why is that got to go through another layer? So I know Supervisor Gaston wants to talk. So I'm going to go to her next. And then we'll, keep talking.

### **Tara Gaston**

I must say, there have been questions about the flow. They're just mostly me yelling in the corner. Thank you, Supervisor Grasso, that's actually a pretty good word of like running in the direction that this is not efficient. And if you look at this, even if you look at it from the idea of what are departments bringing. So under my committee, the Technology and Resiliency, all departments. That all departments bring the resolutions there. It makes much more sense for us to have fewer, tighter and subject oriented committees, as opposed to like we have Public Works and Buildings and Grounds, that only the Department of Public Works reports to. That in and of itself, those two lines should be very clear indications that we have redundancies. Because we have two committees, each of which only have one department reporting do it. The fact that those are separate doesn't make any sense. And I think that there are ways to do it. There's no ideal way to do it. But the Law and Finance the like, and then we go to this meeting, and then we sit here and we read the same thing that we just that doesn't make any sense from either time perspective or subject matter perspective. I agree with Supervisor Grasso. But I think if we did something that was more content, or subject based, which is going to require a lot of thought, it's good. What does this mean? Do we do it if it's particular financial impacts, if it has HR issues, and it may not work out. But to me, that seems something that's going to make a lot more sense. At least for as much of the departments that we can. Obviously something, Veterans or IT, they're very specific. But they also cross. IT crosses every department. So it would make sense for IT or technology request to go through the technology committee. Certain things like that Buildings and Grounds, any department that needs any upgrades or changes or anything like that to the structure, that seems like an appropriate place. That is going to be a significant etch-a-sketch of the County organizational system if we do that. But I think that would potentially reduce a lot of the redundancies and also allow for committees to actually be experts in their particular area or where they're more precise at. And that might make for a better place. Because I agree, when you look at this, I thought that there were some places that we could be more efficient. But looking at this and even just the Public Works and Buildings and Grounds, I was like, no thank you. As for the org chart here, I don't know that making it 3d is going to help me. But I understand. I think there are a lot of questions about where department heads go and who they report to, and all of that. But I think that is going to take a little bit more work. But I do think some more clarity on that would be helpful. Not just for being able to look at the org chart and going where things flow from, but I think that also makes it more helpful for the public, when trying to determine how their government functions, and who does what. They will have a better idea of what the elected officials do, but also what all of our various parts of the County do, in ways that I think perhaps they do not at this time.

### **Matt Veitch**

Go ahead Jean.

### **Jean Raymond**

The thing that I suspect drove the way things are is many years ago, there was no County Administrator. And it was Supervisors had their own little fiefdom, if you will. And if you were not enough, looking at the big picture, and trying to say, Okay, this is important, but this is more important for this year, because of whatever. And I think that's how, eventually, the Law and Finance Committee probably became constituted to look at the big picture, whereas the particular committees were looking

at only the area that they were overseeing. I think that is why traditionally, people moved around from committees to committees so that they could have more opportunity to see the big picture, because they served on different committees. I think this is the balance you have, you don't want to wreck the balance and suddenly have Chairs of committees and committees kind of fighting with each other over resources. This system we're using is echoing and I keep hearing myself talking.

### **Matt Veitch**

Right, Drew's microphone is on, and it's probably picking up the speaker next to his microphone at the same time. So sorry about that. You'd like to you'd like to speak. So he turned his mic on. So go ahead.

### **Andrew Jarosh**

Sorry, Supervisor. I'd like to chime in for the committee, based on what Supervisor Gaston said and what Supervisor Grasso said. I think I'm going to contribute something that addresses both comments. My department is an interesting little microcosm, not only being an elected official and having my own by law and sections me off to be and says I'm responsible for this for very particular reasons, actually, hold the county's cash and, and whatnot. But it's an interesting part of this discussion, because my department has both a public service function where I serve the public directly those collections, tax collections in reporting and certificates residency. I have the public counter in my office, the public comes in, it's almost like a bank, a bank teller counter, I deal with the public hundreds of times a day. Also know I have an internal administrative function, where much of my department's job is to help administer functions within the County, paying the bills, receiving the revenues of the departments, doing the banking, making sure vendors get paid, making sure we're reporting everything we need for the State, the petty cash policy and things like that. When I did my org chart in my department, which has evolved every year, and it's finally at something that I like, I'm actually presenting it to this committee next month, you find that one of the easiest ways to make a org chart more appropriately is to make it org chart. Instead of going person by person by person, we do function by function by function. And we find too is that I have staff for my department that does both property taxes and accounting. I can't really break my department up like that. It's just not efficient. And I might not need a full time person over here into this to be dedicated to this job, they need to do other things. And it's funny because I ran into this problem, very recently, when all the departments had to identify essential personnel for COVID reasons and who would be essential. I kept running headlong into this, and I made it known that it's not about an essential person, it's about an essential task. The task has to be accomplished in is essential required by law to be available to the public for certain tasks. If this person is available, then I can have this person come in but that task has to be accomplished. So as I provide that, because I think on the org chart, the reason certain administrative departments were sectioned off is because they were internally administrative, as opposed to public serving operations. That was my guess on your questions Supervisor Grasso of why those were cut off to the side. The attorney, administrator, HR, IT, Treasurer does across the work administrators. Those are the internal administrative offices. Some of us have public duties but most have internal administrative offices. For instance, and to this petty cash policy that I think is next on the agenda we brought it to HR committee earlier in the week, because it's most certainly has an HR aspect of HR components to it, but I'm also bringing it to Government Review, because this is where it's an appropriate thing to do. Because I'm talking about a new mechanic for the county that I'm proposing that I like to work to collect and authorize. There's reason that goes before both committees. And to Supervisor Gaston's point, it may be worthwhile to think about organizing the committees based on function rather than department. For several departments cross over, several departments are going to have different needs. Some are technology needs. So the Department of Public Works software requests go through technology, which

we're building. So there's that kind of thinking. It might be the subject matter of the request, dictates which committee I bring it to.

### **Matt Veitch**

And I think that I totally agree with you. And I think that the points are very well taken. Because I, I've thought about that, too, in my careers, the where, kind of what's the best way to do this, right. And back in the earlier iteration of the Technology Committee that we ran up against that all the time; as to whether the software request was going to come to that committee, or whether it was going to go to HR or Health and Human Services, because it was the new software for DSS or something like that? And do they just bring it there? Or do they bring it over here, and this committee has a little bit of that. We're running into it already with petty cash policy and some other things where, I think our role, I see it as much more of a blessing the process, rather than the policy, saying that, we think we're going to do petty cash in a minute. But like, we think petty cash is a good idea. Now take it to that committee to get it through the rest of the way. We like to we like the way the process, we like to we know we have a justification for the need, we know why you're bringing it and then go on to HR and do the policy. This is why this week's been a little backwards because their meeting was first this week. And we're second but other than that, I kind of look at it that way is that our job is really much more of a the practicality of the ask, and do we like that? And if we do, then you go move on to the next committee. Not so much, not so much dictating how you're going to do it. But just the fact that we think this is a good thing we should do when the county, right. But I agree with potentially the looking at the committee and trying to figure out, maybe a better way of doing that. I will bring Buildings and Grounds and Public Safety back, or Public Works back again, because that's one that's really easy to kind of look at. The truth is, is that as Chair of Building and Grounds now for my second year, Supervisor Peck, who's on the phone, he chaired that before me. There's some months where we don't have any agenda. And there's some months where our agenda is never really that substantial. Maybe we can do our business in a pretty quick period of time, which may be beneficial to some who don't need to be down here a lot. but at the same time, if you combine the Public Works and the Buildings and Grounds agenda some months, you're not talking about a whole heck of a lot of stuff. You're not going to be here for four hours. You may be able to do it. And now we're talking by department not by function. But at the same token, it could be done. And so the question is, do we want to do that or not. And really, at the end of the year, because one of our charges for this committee every year is to review the rules of the board before the next year, that would be where that discussion will come in. Because that's where the list of committees is in the rules of the board. So if we decide we want to change committees or consolidate or do something different than then this committee would be in charge of doing that. We'd have to let everybody know first before we do it, but when we go through the review of the rules of the board, that's where the committee list is generated. So just the thought. I don't know if anybody has anything else but I thought this was a great discussion.

### **Tara Gaston**

I think it'll not really help with efficiency and what we're preferring as a government, one of the first conferences that I went to as a Supervisor, I was told by a vendor that various departments in the county each had separate contracts of a certain kind of software. Those are the kinds of things that when you have department reporting, as opposed to an overseeing, you don't have the fiscal efficiency that we could have in having one overarching, like, we've just got to be a Director Bennett, could you please make sure that we have whatever we need so that every department has access to this or whatever. So that we deal with that on a function base, I think that would save us money by having your

department asking for contract for this department and this department. And that comes up more and more often, especially as I'm sharing services these days.

**Matt Veitch**

A great a great example of that, from a technological perspective is our conferencing software. We have every kind of cost conferencing software usage, in this County right now by different departments. Some have webex, some use zoom, some use teams, some use Google meets. And we don't have one overarching conferencing software in this County, because we leave it up to the departments to find the best solution for themselves.. And whether that's a good or a bad idea, I don't know. But the truth is, is that we're all on different platforms here at this county, because and we had to do it quickly. And I don't blame anybody. But at the end of the day, that's a great example of that, where it could be kind of unwieldy, because we're we do it that way here. So, again, I think it's a great discussion, I think, it is something we will probably having the agenda for next month, and keep going from there. But does anybody have anything else before I move on? All right, hearing none, we'll move on. Next on the agenda is the petty cash policy. And we talked about this in HR and Insurance on Tuesday. They did a vote to approve the petty cash policy for the next step, which would be Law and Finance. But as Drew had just mentioned, they're bringing it here for us today to discuss as well. There are actually some small edits to this from Tuesday's meeting that were brought up as questions from the committee. So I think what we should probably do here is vote to move this forward, because it has been amended from the original from Tuesday. Treasurer, if you want to go ahead, we'll go from there.

**Andrew Jarosh**

Thank you Supervisor Veitch. You want me to give them overview like I did in HR?

**Matt Veitch**

That would be great. Thank you.

**Andrew Jarosh**

For several months ago, in fact, several years ago, I became aware of the fact that the county is absent a petty cash policy, even though petty cash is in use with over 13 different departments. Now, none of them are significant amounts of money. We've done for a long time, there is state law that governs this. So the problem, though is that it's not codified. It's not formalized, and it's certainly not controlled. On the petty cash program, if you want to call it that any kind of controls on it, that either I or the county auditor or for that matter, even the County Administrator and as the board have on it. I'd like to propose we have our first true petty cash policy. Now, that being said, so there are certain, underlying aspects to a policy about what you can and can't use petty cash for and what not. But the impetus for this actually prompted me to rethink an entire mechanic for the petty cash policy, and that mechanic is what I really want to propose to the government review committee. So in the past, when the department wanted to replenish the petty cash, they went through the request for the county auditor, who would then pull it out of their budgets or whatever they spend money on, what budget lines came out of it, kind of track them and extrapolate the cash and then that cash will go back into it. Now, to cash that check, in the past, he wrote it out of Adirondack Trust, or one of our other banks would say sure it's a County account, we know what it's for, there's a memo on it, we'll cash the check. Rightfully so over the last several years, banking policies and making regulations have been getting more rigorous. I, I agree with that, and I approve of that. And now the banks are basically saying that if you want to cash a check, you need to make it out to a specific person. And that person either needs to be a client of the bank, or have an account at the bank. And like, I can't do that unless I make that person a vendor in our system, and I

don't want that person to be responsible for that. And if it's not the department head that is the person who's actually going across the street to do the cashing of the check. Alright, we need something new. This is the old way of doing things just isn't working. What I really need is a separate bank account for every department that has petty cash, which I don't mind doing because of the side bank account. And then off of that bank account, I would be the signer on the account, but the I can have issued a debit card in the name of the department head. That way, I have control over the cash, I can move money into another bank account. And as County Treasurer, I'm required to do that. And then when we replenish the account, it's just an internal transfer. The department head now added the added benefit of instead of just having a shoe box of cash in it, in some drawer in the office, they now have a debit card that has the visa logo on it and making these purchases online or with one of their vendors and whatnot. And then that receipt will come back to the county auditor and be replenished. Now, Burke County law, excuse me, per New York State county law, section 371, the department heads are personally liable for their petty cash. That's fine with me. And so I will extend that to also the debit card and the security the debit card and the pin numbers. This also gives me now and thus the board a little bit of control. I put it in the policy that I have to report to Law and Finance at least once a year and in the report will be the last time it was audited, which we will do at least once a year for the department's and more if we need to. That debit card and now the account allows me to have visibility into the accounts and see what's actually being withdrawn from the ATM. I should therefore know how much cash is in the department itself being in cash on hand plus the amount the bank account adds up to the total proof of petty cash amount. Now you can see what they're spending money on. There's either a receipt process and county auditor can approve things and reimbursements much more quickly and much more easily. And I think for everybody all around, this just facilitates the process makes it amicable for the banks with which I deal with and makes the entire process a little bit more streamlined in addition to work control, which is ironic by true.

### **Matt Veitch**

All right. I appreciate that. Thank you. And again, we got pretty much the same overview at the HR and Insurance Committee meeting. I think some of the questions that were asked the committee ran mostly toward accountability for the department heads and the individuals who will be handling petty cash. And many of the edits I think in this from the original are based on those questions. And to me, I think they meet the ask that we had at that committee, for sure. I didn't know that the state had, a petty cash policy or a law regarding that. So that was an interesting thing that I found out, and that we had no policy. So I think this is a great step for working efficiently in our county with that type of thing. And so I appreciate you bringing it up. I don't know if anybody on the committee or anybody else on the phone has questions, happy to entertain any discussion. So go ahead.

### **Eric Connolly**

This is Supervisor Connolly, just under control policies, Drew, and the debit card and pin number. What is the advantage of actually even bothering with a pin number, when you could just utilize the debit card as a credit? And then you don't have to deal with any pin number stuff?

### **Andrew Jarosh**

That's a fair question. It's similar question came up with the HR committee Supervisor. And there are needs for cash, cash usage. Just to give an example there. For instance, mental health and public health often, front the cab fare for somebody to either get to and from the facility. Unless you're using Uber and Lyft or the cabbies take Square, it might be easier to deal with cash and so I don't I don't want to take away the ability for the department to utilize cash. Sometimes it is just the more feasible option.

**Eric Connolly**

Fair enough. Thank you.

**Tara Gaston**

The highlighted parts of this is that are those the changes since HR?

**Matt Veitch**

Yes.

**Tara Gaston**

Okay. Thank you. Yeah, no, I like it. Not that anyone in county government would have a shoe box of cash anywhere. But I do appreciate you proactively coming up with this policy to prevent such things from happening. Thank you.

**Jean Raymond**

I have a question if I may.

**Matt Veitch**

Yes Supervisor.

**Jean Raymond**

And I will apologize if I am missing it because I'm scanning this because I got to my computer at 4:03 and the meeting started at four. Am I to understand that the county treasurer is going to be opening an account for department 'A' and department 'A' will determine how many people on the staff will have access to that account. So it could be three or four or five people, depending on which department it is. Where they all have a separate pin number to get into the account.

**Andrew Jarosh**

So because New York State county law 371 says specifically that the department head is personally liable. I am setting the policy on so that the bank account which is my purview into which I am legally required to maintain, it's fine, but I will give the department head access to that account only through the debit card, the department head is not a constitutional custodian of county cash. And so there are only certain number of officers across the county that can actually open bank accounts and be signers on bank accounts. Obviously, I'm the primary one. So I can't have department heads being a signer on the account, but I can provide them a debit card, through most of our banks have the program what they have called they call it an employee debit card for a business account, where you get a card from one of your employees. And so I've issued a debit card in the name of the department head and that department head, I would be liable for that debit card. I don't assume that the department head would ever give any of their staff that debit card and the pin number to run across the street to the ATM.

**Jean Raymond**

Okay, so it's just the department head that wasn't quite clear to me. But does that mean does that say the department has had a number of people that from time to time, may need access to petty cash. And each time that happens, the department head had to get in their car and go to the bank or go to an ATM or whatever?



**Andrew Jarosh**

Yes, that is exactly what the policy does and require. I think from our ability to hold department heads liable by the law, that the only thing we can require by policy. Anything further than that would probably get into some civil service areas that I did not want to go into. So by policy, only the department head should be using debit card.

**Jean Raymond**

But can they use that to reimburse an employee who chooses to use their own money as petty cash because a small amount for whatever reason?

**Andrew Jarosh**

God I hope that's not happening. You know what Supervisor Raymond I think as long as the actual expense incurred is a legitimate expense that's approved, that's ultimately approved by the county auditor, then that's fine, because we'd be reimbursing the expense, which was paid for directly or indirectly out of petty cash. From my point of view I think we're safe, I think we are solid in policy.

**Jean Raymond**

Okay, so I think you would never want to require an employee to use their own cash. But if for some reason they asked, then at least that would mean that after the county auditor was maybe three or four different requests, it would make one trip to the bank. I just don't want to be see the county employee running to the bank every other day and then putting in if they have to go to a bank, or if they work out at the County Farm, they have to get in the car and go somewhere. And next thing, we're reimbursing people for three miles there and three miles back three times a week.

**Andrew Jarosh**

And we certainly aren't going to do that. It's not an employee's job to run to the bank. It would be the department heads job to run to the bank.

**Jean Raymond**

No I'm talking about the department head. We're paying the department head a sum of money based on their talents to be the department head not to be the somebody to run to the bank.

**Andrew Jarosh**

That's a good point. But I think then there would be some forethought required from the department heads. Maybe they get a lump sum of cash once a month and have that as cash on hand. They are still allowed to have cash on hand. I'm not taking the cash away.

**Jean Raymond**

Okay.

**Tara Gaston**

This is my suggestion. Perhaps the department heads think about how often they are required to use petty cash. And maybe they make regular withdrawals instead of having to go quite often. I agree that would be not fun.

**Jean Raymond**

And that makes perfect sense. Maybe that's in there. And I just didn't get it because I was trying to listen and read at the same time. But that makes sense. Maybe for the first three months, keep a little bit better track of how often people are accessing petty cash and maybe keep track of, if we're being asked to reimburse mileage to go to the bank.

**Matt Veitch**

Go ahead, Attorney Hartnett.

**Mike Hartnett**

Just want to put it in my personal experience that there are expenses that employees incur where, for instance, like with the attorneys, because the state registration system only takes credit cards, you pay your registration fee by yourself, but then you submit a voucher. So a lot of those individuals expenses that are being made by employees, whatever they may be, if they have to front their personal cash. There's a way to vouch for that, because it comes off in the budget line. And it wouldn't necessarily be a petty cash situation. Correct me if I am wrong, Drew.

**Andrew Jarosh**

That is accurate. You can always get reimbursed through the voucher process too.

**Jean Raymond**

Right that I understand, but I'm thinking more in terms of I think there was, you use the example of somebody who needs taxi fare to get to public health or something. I mean, that kind of thing. where somebody gets reimbursed with cash, needs to be paid back cash tends to be reimbursed.

**Andrew Jarosh**

Yes and that's still within the discretion of the purview of the department head. Department has had that autonomy to oo long as they're confident that the county auditor will ultimately approve reimbursement of that expense from County funds. If the County Auditor doesn't, then the department head it doesn't then the department head has to put the \$20 bucks back in themselves.

**Jean Raymond**

But if they can also draw it down, even a reasonable \$50. And once a month, get reimbursed with the proper documentation to have their petty cash account reimbursed, that's fine. That works fine for me. I think it's definitely a step in the right direction.

**Matt Veitch**

All right, we got Supervisor Gaston.

**Tara Gaston**

I would like to move to accept this policy as presented to the committee today.

**Matt Veitch**

All right, we've got a motion to accept the policy. Is there a second?

**Eric Connolly**

Second.

**Matt Veitch**

Any further discussion? All in favor, say aye. Aye. Any opposed? All right, matter carries. Thank you very much. Good discussion. Couple more things left on the agenda, and then we'll be done. So first, just a quick update on the local laws. In my personal review, I'm up to the 1990s. So I think I was in the 1970s last month. So we're moving forward. Still going through that review and finding some pretty interesting things in there that were local laws, that when the county had passed, and over the years, some have been repealed now by the 1990s, some have been amended many times. So hopefully, in the next month or so we'll have all that completed. And I can get a spreadsheet out to everybody to kind of follow along where we're at on that. Again, that's only starting from 1950. We'll go deeper and back further, probably at some point. But for right now, that's all we really have on hand. So still working on that. And stay tuned as we go forward with that. At the last meeting, we did talk about potentially using a company to accumulate all of our codes together. Attorney Hartnett has done some research on that. So I'll have him briefly speak about that going forward.

**Mike Hartnett**

Thank you Supervisor, and follow up from the last meeting, there was discussion about e code and updating our online presence of local laws and etc. But as far as I can tell that it was last updated in approximately 2011. So I reached out to E code and obtained a quote from them to update, which they did provide. It looks like there has been 16 local laws passed in that time, as well as a number of other items that are updated as it's the appendix on our county code. Some of the things that have come through. They provided a quote, and it would depend on what services just how, how much the board would want to do. Print updates to official pages, tables of contents, review statutory citations, complex consistencies, etc. And the quote that they gave me was arrangement between \$5,390 and \$6,485. So if that's something that the committee would support, I'd be happy to advance that as an agenda item at next month's meeting.

**Matt Veitch**

So I mean, that would be to bring everything up to speed. And then is there any ongoing with that, did you say? Does that cover a longer period?

**Mike Hartnett**

It does. It is just to bring us up to speed.

**Matt Veitch**

Okay. All right. I mean, look, I am totally willing to entertain that and try to figure out a way to fund it. I think it's something we really should do. We should really have been doing it all along. Since we had e-code come in back around 2010/2011. I think my copy is like 2010. And we should have been doing it all along. So I don't know if we want to move anything at this point. Maybe I haven't seen the quote itself yet. So I think if you just share that with me and maybe the county administrator as well, as well as Clerk of the Board, because they are responsible for the local laws as a department. So we should have that first in hand before we move forward with it, but I think that was great work, researching it. And, think we'll go forward from there. So I don't know if anybody has any other questions or comments, but go ahead.

**Tara Gaston**

So with moving that forward, frankly, this committee or would that be Law and Finance?

**Matt Veitch**

We would probably push it to Law and Finance.

**Tara Gaston**

Okay. So can we all can the whole committee get a copy?

**Matt Veitch**

Yeah, sure.

**Tara Gaston**

I mean, also, while I appreciate respect the work that you're doing, I think it's well worth the county's money to spend \$6,000, to have a group a business that does this and can devote a lot of time on it and knows where the tricky parts are. And just get it done. I know that will ruin a lot of your Friday afternoons digging through dusty books, but this way we can get it done as quickly as possible. And move forward to solving all the remainder of our issues.

**Matt Veitch**

Sure. No problem. So yeah, I again, I don't want to move anything until we've all seen it. So I totally agree. How do you know I'm spending my Friday nights down here?

**Tara Gaston**

I heard rumors. No, I didn't want to have to wait until next month, if we can get the quote and do it through Law and Finance that's totally fine with me. I just wanted to make sure we weren't waiting until next month.

**Mike Hartnett**

Certainly. I'll circulated before I leave the building today.

**Matt Veitch**

Yeah. I mean, if it could go straight to Law and Finance I'm okay with that, too, as long as there's maybe an agreement from the committee in principle here that we would do that.

**Jean Raymond**

I would certainly agree with Tara. I also think that I don't know, specifically what all the supplemental little things are, that would make the quote go from 53 to 64, or whatever it was. But if it has to do with things like doing the table of contents, tests and things, I think the extra money is more than well worth it. You want to have it done correctly. And not nickel and dime it at this point. It's not much money to begin with. There's probably more than sufficient money just in the mileage category under the Board of Supervisors because so many of us no longer come to the County all the time.

**Tara Gaston**

I second Supervisor Raymond's non-motion.

**Matt Veitch**

Alright, so anybody else have any other questions or comments? I mean, I'm totally in agreement. So I mean, I think as a committee, we don't have to formally vote on it. But I think if everybody here feels we should look at it further and potentially have it ready for Law and Finance, maybe informally, that

committee can of course, always bring anything through. I don't want to go back to Agenda Item Number four, but that that committee can always bring anything through without private committee. So I'm fine with that. I don't know about you guys, Supervisors if you're okay with that. All right, sounds like it. Appreciate that. Thank you. And then last on the agenda or before other business we have here is the county suggestion box. Last thing that we had talked about on this was we're gonna have Attorney Hartnett take a look at the potential FOIL impacts and some of the other issues surrounding suggestion box before we implement it. So Attorney Hartnett, go ahead, there's some research has been done. So he's going to kind of review that for us. And probably I'll share a document after the meeting. But go ahead.

**Mike Hartnett**

Absolutely appreciate it. Thank you, Chairman. Hugh Burke with our office, who is our resident FOIL expert of sorts, took the opportunity I'd like to thank him for running down research on this of whether or not the suggestion box comments would be subject to public officers law, 8789, commonly referred to as FOIL. The backdrop on that, as most known is any governmental record is presumptively available for public inspection. And once they fall within the scope of certain statutory exception, which allows an agency to withhold them. This is an area there is no as far as we could find directly applicable case. So it would be a case of first impression if somebody foil a suggestion box comment. The materials that would be submitted the suggestion box would likely fall into two categories, those being signed suggestions and anonymous suggestions. And that's an important distinction because signed suggestions could potentially qualify under an exemption to foil which is called the intra agency exception. And that's communications exchange between workers whose identities are known or exempted discussions for the purposes of formulating final policy decisions. The other category, which would potentially not be exempt from foil or anonymous suggestions. As the source of the comments are unknown, there is no quote unquote discussion, as the word is commonly used as regarding policy. And there would be no indication that the anonymous contributors in an advisory role, because it's impossible to identify that person because they're by nature, they're anonymous. So some of the other exceptions are personal privacy exceptions, so on and so forth. But without knowing who the identity of that person to put it under one of those exemptions, it would be a case by case basis. But suffice to say that if it is, if the suggestion box, the front end of it is anonymous, if it's truly anonymous, it's very likely that those documents or those suggestions would be subject to foil. It's something for the committee to consider when implementing this policy. Again, this would be a case of first impression, there's no court case that we can point to say, yes, definitely foil No, but it's, it's certainly something to consider with a suggestion box type scenario. While you can put some guardrails on it. You can warn people that not for certain types of complaints, not to disparage coworkers, so on and so forth, there would be no way to curate or prevent unsubstantiated or scurrilous, libelous material. And that gives me some pause in respect to foil, because those documents, certainly it's just something for the committee to consider. Also, in follow up, so that's the foil perspective.

**Matt Veitch**

Can I just ask one quick question on that point though. If, for example, the comment has just came to me, if, for example, the comment identified an individual, but was anonymously sent, would that be something we could protect under foil, because the target of the comment would then be identifiable.

**Mike Hartnett**

To qualify for intra agency, it would require both ends of the conversation to be identified for that for that exemption. Now, there are exemptions for personal privacy and things like that if you foil a government

document, and it has a government employees, I'm going to use a hypothetical example of their personal cell phone number on it that can be withheld under the personal privacy exemption. But in that one sided conversation. There's no expectation. It's not the person whose privacy is being protected that put the information out there. So it wouldn't fall under an exemption for that, so it would likely it would likely be subject to foil.

**Matt Veitch**

Okay. Well, it could be foil, but the main could be redacted comments as that identifies a county employee in potentially, depending what the comment was, right.

**Mike Hartnett**

potentially. Okay. Well, I mean, it would be a case by case basis that it would depend on the nature of that comment. But so it's very fact specific, very fact specific determination. But it certainly could be subject to foil. And we would be in a situation where potentially, it depends on what the nature of the suggestion is, where it would that would be subject to oil. And again, that's something for the committee to consider is as a potential consequences I'll call it with pros and cons.

**Matt Veitch**

Okay. Supervisor Gaston.

**Tara Gaston**

Was there more that you're going to say?

**Mike Hartnett**

The other thing that as we were talking about this and the suggestion box, and since last month, and I was thinking about it a little bit, is one thing that I would just offer from the county attorney perspective of whoever is determined to be the arbiter of this, I think there was some discussion that it would be the Administrator's Office, I think that that it would be important to provide that individual or individuals with certain training on first of all, what county agencies how information is routed to make sure it lands with the right person, or entity, but also things like mandated reporting, and things like that. Because the nature of when something's truly anonymous, as much as you can warn somebody that don't put in an HR complaint, don't put in a a workplace violence complaint, something like that. It may happen regardless, and whoever's doing that, I think in order to have them be able to appropriately respond to it as just a consideration in the implementation of this policy as a potential. Thank you.

**Tara Gaston**

Yes, I agree. That's one of my concerns. Is Regarding where what's getting in the system and how it's being handled. Almost sufficient for me to say that I would be uncomfortable with it anywhere outside of honestly county attorney's office or somebody that directly reported to because the County Attorney's Office would be best able to determine certain sensitivities and where to go not that the county attorney's office is super thrilled, probably about me suggesting that just saying that. But honestly, that interpretation of the foil, which I'm not disputing that reading of it, that makes me extraordinarily reluctant at this time to have any anonymous ability, I think that that's something that we need to have the ability as a county to have. But I would lean towards not setting it up to support that at this time. Because of the risk, I agree with the county attorney that you can't redact names just because the name is in there. And I would, I would be reluctant to provide an opportunity for individuals to make comments, suggestions, introduce information, and then that's foible irrespective of what is

determined to be the truth of the matter. I would, I would think that would put a lot of our counties staff, and perhaps electeds, in positions that we would not want them to be in. So while I think that that's something that we should work on building a structure of communication and ability to record, that sort of thing. I would, I would suggest that we limit access only to signs or identified comments at this time.

**Eric Connolly**

Yes, I mean, I agree, it's not to have some sort of suggestion box, not that dissimilar to something like Facebook, where people feel like they can say whatever they want to say. As supervisors, we all know what that's like. We do want feedback. We do want to hear from our department heads. And so this committee could do something like where we set up a schedule of department heads to come in and maybe bring one person with them, who has a slightly different perspective within that department. Somebody, not a manager just somebody who is a known asset to that department, and to give them an opportunity to speak on the record at our meeting, about efficiency, and if there's anything that we can do to help them be more efficient.

**Matt Veitch**

I totally agree. And that is a plan of this committee. At some point to bring department heads in' One of the things I said to them at a department is meeting we had back now, I think it was January, maybe late January, we're trying to get everybody's opinion. And if you had no budget constraints, what are the kinds of things you'd like to see happen in your department? And we haven't really asked that specifically in the departments yet. We've gotten into other things. But I totally agree with you that that may be something that we do, as the agenda, hopefully filters out a little bit in the next month or two. So appreciate it.

**Joe Grasso**

Yeah, so I agree with Supervisor Gaston's concern, and Mike great job describing that. But I think the concern, at least based on what I heard is, and what I share is limited to an anonymous comment that specifically identifies another individual. And if that's the only place where I have a concern, because obviously, that's foilable. And isn't there a way that we can just restrict that. I think anonymous comments that talk about any other policies, procedures way of doing business at the county, is really what we want to encourage people to write their name down. I think that's fine. And we don't want to discourage that. But if they're going to identify an individual, then can't we just say that that comment will not be recorded and will be discarded? Like, how do we how do we protect ourselves from that? Because I agree on that concern.

**Matt Veitch**

Yeah. I mean, I think that's something that we probably have to take back and look at because I think you're right. I mean, I think there could be a disclaimer or some sort of thing that says, comments about individuals or people will not be not, they could still submit it. I mean, that's the problem becomes a record as soon as it's submitted. So we have to, we have to try to figure out a way to limit that, or just make them not anonymous comments. And that would work too. And then those can all be restricted as in our county communication, you're going to get less suggestions, but we still will get suggestions even non anonymous.

**Joe Grasso**

Yeah. And I would just say it's still worth it having this suggestion box, if they have to be authored, they have to be authored.

**Matt Veitch**

All right. With that, anything else? Anybody on the phone? Comments? All right, hearing none, I think the next step here is to just kind of take it back. We'll look at that. I'll share the memo. And then basically, we can talk about at the next meeting, and hopefully get this rolling in the next month. So I appreciate the comments and the discussion. So that is it for our agenda for today. It's been quite a meeting. Anybody got anything else for other business?

**Jean Raymond**

I have a question. Unless it's been corrected, on my agenda you have an item #8 minor changes the rules of the board?

**Matt Veitch**

No, that was an old one that I think goes from January. That's not on our agenda. So pull that one. Anything else? All right. Motion to adjourn.

**Jean Raymond**

So Moved.

**Eric Connolly**

Seconded.

**Matt Veitch**

All in favor. We're adjourned. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time. Have a great day, everybody.