

Government Review & Efficiency Committee Minutes  
August 25, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Matt Veitch; Committee Members Eric Connolly, Tara Gaston and Joe Grasso; Ridge Harris, Matt Rose, Audra Hedden, Christine Rush, County Administrator; Michael Hartnett, County Attorney; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Andrew Jarosh, Treasurer.

Chairman Veitch called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

**On a motion made by Mr. Grasso, seconded by Mr. Connolly, the minutes of the August 5, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Grasso, proposing a Local Law adopting the Capital Plan and setting a public hearing. Unanimous.**

Mr. Veitch said while they were updating the Policies and Procedures Manual and revising the process for the Capital budget they discovered a New York State law that requires a Board of Supervisors to have a local law passed to include the Capital program in their budget process. Mr. Veitch and Mr. Hartnett found that the County had not previously passed a local law to include the Capital Plan in their budget process and this item is being referred to the Law and Finance Committee in order to conform with the statute. A discussion was had regarding the required two-thirds majority vote when amending the Capital Plan after the adoption of the budget. A discussion was had regarding what back up will be given to the Law and Finance Committee and Mr. Hartnett said he will be providing a draft local law of what will be proposed.

**A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Grasso, to move the updates to the Travel and Discretionary Policy for discussion.**

Mr. Veitch said the County currently uses the US General Services Administration formula for meal reimbursement for employees. Mr. Veitch said the General Services Administration formula doesn't meet the actual cost of meals in metropolitan areas and this change to the policy would allow reimbursement of a set dollar amount for meals in the 25 designated metropolitan areas.

Mr. Veitch said the next change would add additional reimbursable expenses and the last proposed change is to no longer require Elected Officials (Sheriff, District Attorney, Treasurer, County Clerk and Coroner) to obtain approval from the County Administrator for travel and expenses. Ms. Gaston said the locations appear to be limited to the continental United States. A discussion was had regarding the possibility of a need for rates outside of the continental US. Ms. Gaston said that Supervisors are not listed as Elected Officials on the policy and she finds that problematic. A discussion was had regarding the difference between the approval policies for Supervisors and Elected Officials and the Chairman's role in approving travel for Supervisors. Ms. Gaston said she finds it inappropriate if any elected official working on behalf of the County is denied the ability to go to a conference. Mr. Grasso asked if the rates were a maximum or a per diem and questioned the why receipts are not required for payments made. Mr. Veitch said he would like to have unanimous approval at the committee level so he would like to table these policy changes.

**A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Connolly, to table the motion to update the Travel and Discretionary Policy. Unanimous.**

*Press Release/Social Media Policy*

Mr. Veitch said they found a one sentence policy from 1980 that said all press releases had to go through the County Administrator and he asked Mr. Harris and Mrs. Rush to update that policy. Mr. Harris said the new policy expands the press release policy to a public relations policy and includes media press releases from all departments, encourages independently elected officials to coordinate with the Director of Public Relations and County Administrator's Office for scheduling purposes so they aren't competing for media coverage with other departments, allows for the Director of Public Relations to have access and administrative authority on all public facing social and digital media channels, and requires any print or external communication outside of normal business to be reviewed by the Director of Public Relations. Mr. Connolly questioned whether department heads are required to inform the Director of Public Relations of media inquiries or are they required to direct the inquiries to Public Relations. It was clarified that media inquiries would be directed to the Director of Public Relations. A discussion took place regarding a Supervisor's ability to respond to media outlets and post on County media sites. Mr. Veitch said they will revise the policy and bring it back to the committee next month.

*Other Business*

Mr. Veitch said he looked into other County policies and the next policy to be updated will be Budget Transfers. A discussion took place regarding the County's fund balance policy.

**On a motion made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Grasso, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Bridget Rider  
Deputy Clerk of the Board