

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MICHAEL ANTONOVICH

SEPTEMBER 23, 2014

REVISED AGENDA ITEM #15: COUNTY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Over the last decade, members of the Board of Supervisors have periodically explored ways to improve the County's form of governance to meet the increasing complexity of issues facing local governments, such as prison realignment, sex trafficking and implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

On March 27, 2007, the Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance establishing an interim governance structure for the County. The purpose of the interim ordinance was to determine whether a strong, centralized administrative approach via the creation of a "Chief Executive Officer" would allow greater service integration, focus on outcomes for County customers, and allow the Board to increase its focus on policy. This provided an opportunity to examine, on a time-limited basis, whether this structure would truly facilitate operational improvements that were not feasible through the existing Chief Administrative Office (CAO) structure.

The interim governance structure organized County government into 5 key areas: public safety, children and family well-being, community and municipal services, health/mental health and operations. These areas, known commonly as "clusters" were designed to facilitate cross departmental collaboration and service integration to achieve better service outcomes. This has proven to be a positive outcome of the CEO structure and should be retained in any future structure, as complex projects that require intensive collaboration around health care, public safety, homelessness, foster care and child sex trafficking have been managed effectively.

MOTION

MOLINA _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

YAROSLAVSKY _____

ANTONOVICH _____

KNABE _____

While the cluster system has by and large worked, a negative consequence has been the bureaucratic distance created between department heads and the Board of Supervisors. Under the interim governance system, department heads whose areas of responsibility fall under each of the cluster headings, report to either a deputy chief executive officer or a senior assistant chief executive officer. It hasn't proved necessary for high-level executives to run interference between the CEO and ultimately the Board, and in some cases it has been a hindrance. In addition, as the authority for the Board of Supervisors to hire and fire department heads did not change with this interim structure, it has also impaired the Board's ability to effectively assess the performance of department heads.

The County is facing an unprecedented era: two newly elected Supervisors; a newly elected Sheriff; and a newly elected Assessor will all be seated by the end of this calendar year. The Board is also faced with having to hire a new Chief Executive Officer, County Counsel, Public Health Director and Auditor-Controller. Given the changes in leadership, there is a unique opportunity to rethink the County's form of governance and adopt a more permanent governance structure that satisfies the Board's organizational objectives. A return to the original governance structure, with some modifications, would provide for a Chief Administrative Officer to have the authority to supervise "the affairs of the county..." and "to coordinate the administration of all departments, services, institutions and districts." The (CAO) as articulated in Chapter 2 of the County Code could then be directed to structure the office to retain some of the elements that worked in the interim, namely the cluster system, but also streamline the bureaucracy that was put in place by eliminating any unnecessary layers of management between the department heads and the CAO and ultimately the Board.

Oversight of all 31 department heads would be retained by the Board of Supervisors, with the CAO assisting the Board in evaluating performance. This would ensure that the Board can continue to focus on setting policy and ensuring effective delivery of services to more than 10 million people across the County.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct County Counsel to prepare an ordinance that repeals the 2007 interim administrative system of governance, thereby reverting back to the original governance structure, whereby the County's administrative system would be governed by the Chief Administrative Officer as articulated in Chapter 2 of the County Code; and
2. Revise the job description for the Chief Administrative Officer to comport with the updated governance structure.

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