

CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Study Session Worksheet

Presentation Date: 1/13/15 **Start Time:** 1:30 pm **Approx. Length:** 30 minutes
Presentation Title: Town Halls/State of the County
Department: Public and Government Affairs
Presenters: Gary Schmidt and Amy Kyle

WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING FROM THE BOARD?

Public and Government Affairs (PGA) is asking the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to determine the schedule for the 2015 BCC Town Halls and State of the County events.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The BCC held 4 Town Hall meeting in 2014 in locales within the county including; the City of Wilsonville (17 attendees), City of Sandy (31 attendees), City of Estacada (10 attendees) and the City of Happy Valley (6 attendees).The meetings discussed a wide variety of topics of concern to the public.

PGA recently conducted a non-scientific survey about Town Halls that included 236 responses. The survey results weighed in favor of continuing to schedule quarterly Town Halls throughout the county, but make them topic specific and allow for more one-on-one time between the BCC and attendees.

The 2014 State of the County was held on June 19, 2014 during a scheduled BCC meeting. The presentation included video of county accomplishments and a speech from the Chair announcing BCC goals and accomplishments for the next fiscal year.

PGA recently conducted a non-scientific survey about the State of the County (SOC) event which included 282 responses. Respondents preferred that the SOC event not be included during a BCC business meeting, that the event be free of charge, be held in the evening and that there is an opportunity for each commissioner to respond to questions from the public.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (current year and ongoing):

N/A

LEGAL/POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

N/A

PUBLIC/GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION:

N/A

OPTIONS for Town Halls:

1. Continue to hold 4 topic specific Town Hall meetings per year in geographic locales within the county.

2. Hold 2 formal Town Hall meetings in locations that already have an audience (i.e. Clackamas County Fair) and host an online meeting. Create an "ask me" type of forum that encourages interaction and facilitates more conversation.
3. No Town Halls in 2015.

OPTIONS for State of the County:

1. Hold a State of the County event within the first quarter of the year to provide county stakeholders an opportunity to learn about county goals and accomplishments. The presentation will include an introduction speech from the Chair followed by a question and answer time between the BCC and attendees.
2. Hold a State of the County event during regularly scheduled BCC business meeting
3. Do not host a State of the County event in 2015.

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Halls - Staff recommends holding 4 topic specific Town Hall meetings per year in geographic locales within the county.

State of the County- Staff recommends hosting a State of the County event within the first quarter of the year to provide county stakeholders an opportunity to learn about county goals and accomplishments. The presentation will include an introduction speech from the Chair followed by a question and answer time between the BCC and attendees.

ATTACHMENTS:

Survey results

SUBMITTED BY:

Division Director/Head Approval _____

Department Director/Head Approval _____ s/Gary Schmidt _____

County Administrator Approval _____

For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Gary Schmidt @ 503-742-5908
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Survey Results:

The Future of Clackamas County “Town Hall” Meetings

In December 2014, PGA was tasked with conducting a survey about resident/customer feelings and awareness about the town hall (TH) events. Utilizing an existing contact list housed inside the county’s GovDelivery service comprised of individuals who provided their explicit permission to be surveyed, PGA constructed a form via Survey Monkey and twice asked (via email) the aforementioned list to complete the survey. PGA also promoted the survey (elicited responses) to the general public via social media postings and by highlighting the survey on the front page of www.clackamas.us.

A total of 236 individuals responded to the survey, which was open for 19 days (Dec. 11 – Dec. 29). ***(Please note that the percentage of respondents detailed below for each question are based on the total number of people who answered that specific question, NOT the total amount of individuals who participated in the survey.)***

Below, please find select key findings of the TH survey results. This section is followed by the raw data/answers to most of the survey questions (not included are the open-ended answers of all respondents to those answer types, but such information can be made available upon request).

Key Findings

1.) Following a brief paragraph explaining how THs are separate from weekly business meetings held by the BCC, 58% of respondents (136) indicated that they were unaware that such meetings were held at different locations throughout Clackamas County. 43% (100) did know about such events.

2.) Of those who responded being aware of such TH meetings, 35% (35) have attended a meeting, while 37% (37) have watched at least part of one either online or on television. 27% (27) have neither attended nor watch (in any form) a TH meeting.

Of those who attended a meeting:

- 23 offered comments about what they enjoyed about the meeting. Generally, attendees liked “the access” to the commissioners and the “opportunity” to pose direct questions to the BCC. Others cited the changing locale and visiting local communities as being a positive.
- When given choices about what could be done to improve the meeting experience, of 33 total respondents:
 - 63% (21) said that “having a moderator present to ensure concise Q&A” would improve the experience. 27% (9) did not know or said it wouldn’t matter, whereas 9% said it would lessen the experience.
 - 52% (17) said that focusing town hall meetings on specific topics would improve the experience. 24% (8) did not know/predicted no effect, another 25% (8) said

it would lessen the experience.

- 44% (14) stated that shortening TH meetings to 60 minutes would lessen the experience. 31% (10) said it would improve, 25% did not know or predicted no effect.

To that end, 38% (12) stated that lengthening TH meetings to 120 minutes would lessen the experience, while 34% (11) stated it would improve the event. 28% (9) did not know or predicted no effect.

- 55% (18) stated that providing one-on-one time after the meeting ends, so that the public can take concerns directly to commissioners more privately, would improve their experience. 33% didn't know, 12% said it would lessen.
- 14 responses were given when asked what Clackamas could do to increase the likelihood of the responder attending. Can provide and discuss upon request.

Of those who only watched a meeting online or on television:

- When given choices about what could be done to improve the experience of watching the meeting, of 35 total respondents:
 - 71% (24) said that "having a moderator present to ensure concise Q&A" would improve the experience. 26% (9) did not know or said it wouldn't matter, whereas only one person said it would lessen the experience.
 - 63% (22) said that focusing town hall meetings on specific topics would improve the experience. 26% (9) did not know/predicted no effect, another 11% (4) said it would lessen the experience.
 - 28% (9) stated that shortening TH meetings to 60 minutes would lessen the experience. 38% (12) said it would improve, 34% (11) did not know or predicted no effect.

To that end, 53% (17) stated that lengthening TH meetings to 120 minutes would lessen the experience, while 28% (9) stated it would improve the event. 19% (9) did not know or predicted no effect.

- 17 responses were given when asked what Clackamas could do to increase the likelihood of the responder attending. Can provide and discuss upon request.

Of those who neither attended nor watched a meeting online, but knew about the meetings:

- 48% (13) expressed interest in attending future events. Another 15% (4) were interested in watching an event online/on television, and another 19% (5) would be interested to do so ***provided there was a topic of interest to them.***

3.) Of 135 people who did not know about TH meetings, 57% (77) are interested in attending a meeting, another 17% (23) are interested in watching online/on television, and another 21% (28) would watch online/on television if there was a topic of interest.

4.) 88% of respondents (182) feel it is either “very important” or “somewhat important” for the BCC to hold TH meetings around the entire county. Another 11% (22) feel it is “only a little important,” leaving just three respondents who consider it “not important at all.”

5.) 52% of respondents (113) selected “quarterly” as how often they believe the BCC should hold THs around the County. Another 15% (32) said “twice a year,” and two responses received another 13% (28) apiece: “Monthly” and “Every two months.”

6.) When asked for their day-of-the-week preference for THs to be held, 49% (106) selected “No preference.” Wednesday received the largest percentage of votes for any day, with 27% (58). ***Please note that respondents, for this question, were allowed to select all answers that applied.***

7.) 76% of respondents (161) felt that an evening selection (6:30 p.m.) is the preferred time for TH meetings. Overwhelmingly, the reason given was so that working people can attend.

8.) 85% of respondents (186) stated that if given the opportunity, they were likely to ask commissioners questions via Twitter or email in the days before a TH meeting.

9.) 124 respondents provided an open-ended answer to the question “What else can the county do to increase the attendance for future town hall meetings?” A lot of respondents stated that adequate/better publicity, through a multitude of channels, would improve attendance. Some also said specific topics of discussion would help.

10.) 87 respondents offered what they believe would improve the TH experience in general. These responses are available upon request.

Survey Results:

The Future of Clackamas County’s “State of the County”

In December 2014, PGA was tasked with conducting a survey about resident/customer feelings and awareness about the annual State of the County (SotC) event. Utilizing an existing contact list housed inside the county’s GovDelivery service comprised of individuals who provided their explicit permission to be surveyed, PGA constructed a form via Survey Monkey and twice asked (via email) the aforementioned list to complete the survey. PGA also promoted the survey (elicited responses) to the general public via social media postings and by highlighting the survey on the front page of www.clackamas.us.

A total of 282 individuals responded to the survey, which was open for 19 days (Dec. 11 – Dec. 29). ***(Please note that the percentage of respondents detailed below for each question are based on the total number of people who answered that specific question, NOT the total amount of individuals who participated in the survey.)***

Below, please find select key findings of the SotC survey results. This section is followed by the raw data/answers to most of the survey questions (Not included are the open-ended answers of all respondents to those answer types, but such information can be made available upon request).

Key Findings

- 1.) More than 61% of respondents (164) stated that they prefer the SotC to be a “stand-alone” event rather than incorporated into regular Clackamas County Board of Commissioner (BCC) meetings (39%).**

When asked to explain their answers, respondents stated that the SotC should have its own “focus” as an event and not get “lost” among other meetings. Some suggested that the event would have “greater impact” and “receive more attention” as a stand-alone. Many respondents who preferred an incorporation of SotC into an already existing meeting pointed to the increased cost and time expended to produce another event.

- 2.) When given a SotC format choice between the BCC Chair giving a sole address vs. allowing any of the five commissioners to take questions “after this initial address is made,” nearly 86% of respondents (222) preferred the latter.**

In general, respondents wanted to hear “more voices” and “opinions” at the event and have the ability to pose questions, as it would help “democracy” and “transparency.”

- 3.) A combined 56% of respondents (151) stated they were “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to attend a future SotC event.**

Of those who were unlikely to or didn’t know their own likelihood of attending future meetings, 77 respondents answered a question about potential actions that could increase their chances of attending the SotC. Many simply responded that they would prefer the event to be livestreamed or

broadcast, for convenience.

- 4.) **41% of respondents (106) stated they had no preference as to the time of year that the SotC is held, followed closely by 38% (99) stating during the first four months of the year.**
- 5.) **52% of respondents (135) selected an evening option (6:30 p.m.) as being the preferred time of day. An additional 27% (70) had no preference.**
- 6.) **In regards to the idea of holding the SotC as a luncheon at which attendees would pay “a small fee,” 55% of respondents (127) either were “strongly against” or “somewhat against” the idea. Another 26% (59) stated “No opinion/I don’t know,” while 19% were in favor of the idea (in some capacity).**
- 7.) **More than 70% of respondents (178) were not willing to pay “a small fee” to attend the SotC.**
- 8.) **The survey concluded with an open-ended box answer to the question “Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about the State of the County event?” Generally, respondents were upset at the notion of potentially charging money to attend such an event. Others stated publicity/outreach around the event should be better.**

Sample responses include:

- *The idea of charging a fee to attend is a bad one. You need to encourage attendance; not make it only for those who can afford to pay.*
- *I've not attended a State of the County event, but the thought of having to pay for such an event seem ludicrous.*
- *I disagree with citizens or employees having to pay anything. This is our opportunity to be accountable to or citizens and it seems very contradictory to ask tax payers to pay to attend.*
- *I have been in the county for 9 years and have never seen anything advertised for these events. I would like to take part in county happenings, but do not know where to find schedules. Things need to be visible to the "average citizen".*