

CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Policy Session Worksheet

Presentation Date: 02/02/21 **Approx. Start Time:** 2:45 p.m. **Approx. Length:** 15 mins.
Presentation Title: 2021 BCC Listening Sessions & Town Halls
Department: Public and Government Affairs (PGA) and Human Resources (HR)
Presenters: Dylan Blaylock, Community Relations Specialist – Senior; Chris Lyons, Government Affairs Manager
Other Invitees: Sue Hildick, PGA Director; Martine Coblentz, Equity & Inclusion Officer

WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING FROM THE BOARD?

The Board of County Commissioners is receiving a proposal regarding the workflow and regularity of virtual Listening Sessions, Town Halls, and Government Affairs meetings for 2021. Staff is asking for Board approval of the plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In 2020, PGA experienced strong success producing virtual digital meetings between commissioners and the public. Since March, 18 different online Town Halls or Listening Sessions have been produced. Engagement and attendance has exceeded previous in-person BCC events.

Events allow commissioners to hear directly from residents about community concerns. Sessions may be oriented toward commissioners primarily listening to residents, presenting information, or a mixture. For the BCC's consideration, PGA is developing a framework and proposed schedule to continue these events – **Listening Sessions** and **Town Halls** – throughout 2021.

- **Listening Sessions** (1-2 commissioners) can be held at a regularly scheduled monthly time (e.g., last Mondays). Time of day can be rotated between evening and daytime.
- **Town Halls** (3-5 commissioners) can be held quarterly or at County Administration's request to cover urgent issues.

PGA recommends establishing a calendar with monthly topics decided in advance for the upcoming 2-3 months, allowing for better planning and coordination with outside participants when appropriate. Topics may be replaced if urgent issues arise. Topic examples include:

- **Listening Session: Supporting the Children of #ClackCo.** How can county officials best help children and parents, and best advocate for their needs? *(Tentatively set for February-March. Commissioners Fischer and Schrader have committed to this as a follow-up to a previous Listening Session.)*
- **Listening Session: Mental Health struggles.** What are some best-practice tips for those coping with mental health issues during the pandemic? *(Possible month: March)*
- **Town Hall: Wildfire Response.** What did the county do well during wildfire response? How can improvements be made? *(Possible month: April)*

- **Listening Session: 2021-22 Budget.** What is public opinion about #ClackCo programs that receive money through the general fund? (*Possible month: May*)
- **Listening Session: Local Business & Economic Development.** How can the county better help its businesses recover and start thriving? (*Possible month: June*)

Non-English speakers

Partnering with the Equity & Inclusion Office (E&I), PGA broke ground with two unique Spanish-Language Town Halls in late 2020 – the first-ever forums where the BCC could hear directly from Spanish-language residents. PGA looks forward to working with E&I to build upon these events in 2021. We are collaborating to develop an enhanced framework for these discussions (including bringing in outside guests), making them more intimate and comfortable for attendees, and extending the scope beyond Spanish-language only (e.g., holding a Russian-language event). PGA anticipates 3-4 of the proposed digital events in 2021 will be for non-English speakers.

Government Affairs option

The BCC and PGA can use a similar format to Town Halls (or perhaps time at Policy Sessions) to connect with our cities and regional partners, using this time following the election to learn about their activities and priorities, and share our own. Ideas include:

- 1-hour Policy Session with each mayor to present a city update and share strategic needs
- Mayors & Chair meetings held monthly to discuss key issues, overlapping projects, needs, and areas for improved coordination
- Clackamas Caucus legislative update at BCC business meetings mid- and post-legislative session
- Monthly C4 and C4 Metro meetings
- Clackamas City/County Summit

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (current year and ongoing):

The only cost, outside of staff time, is an expected \$2,880 for interpretation services for the Spanish (and other) language events. PGA does not currently account for this cost in its budget.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item aligns with one of the county's five Performance Clackamas goals, and one of our Policy Perspectives:

Build public trust through good government – by helping the county to “listen, be accountable and deliver what we promise.”

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – by specifically providing forums where the county's non-English speakers can voice concerns and give feedback to commissioners.

LEGAL/POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

N/A

PUBLIC/GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION:

Clackamas County prioritizes transparency as a means of building public trust through good government. This information is being presented at a public meeting, and the work described has the potential to impact future public and governmental engagement.

OPTIONS:

- **Option #1:** Approve the plan of one monthly Town Hall or Listening Session from February through December 2021 (at a dedicated day/time), and the proposed Government Affairs meetings.
- **Option #2:** Provide guidance to PGA on changes to the plan above.
- **Option #3:** Reject plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **Option #1:** Approve the plan of one monthly Town Hall or Listening Session from February through December 2021 (at a dedicated day/time), and the proposed Government Affairs meetings.

ATTACHMENTS:

- None

SUBMITTED BY:

Division Director/Head Approval _____

Department Director/Head Approval s/Sue Hildick

County Administrator Approval _____

For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Sue Hildick @ 503-742-5900
