

NON-DEPARTMENTAL CITIZEN BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO: Chair Madrigal and Commissioners

FROM: Multnomah County Non-Departmental Citizens Budget Advisory Committee

DATE: April 14, 2014

SUBJECT: Non-Departmental CBAC 14/15 Report

PROCESS:

The Non-Departmental Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) is responsible for reviewing the budgets of various offices and programs, including centralized administrative functions (e.g., the Chair and Commissioners' Offices, Auditor, County Attorney); Communications Office; Office of Diversity and Equity; Office of Emergency Management; Office of Government Relations; Office of Sustainability; independent agencies within the county (e.g., Citizen Involvement Committee, Tax Supervising and Conservation Council, Public Safety Coordinating Council); and additional areas in which the funding is essentially non-discretionary (e.g., the Business Income Tax pass through to the East County cities, facility costs for the State Courts, and accounting costs for various sinking funds outside the county's General Fund). The remainder of the non-departmental budget is composed of allocations to non-county agencies from which county residents benefit, such as Multnomah County school districts and the Regional Arts and Culture Council.

The Non-Departmental CBAC reviewed and vigorously discussed goals, priorities, and plans for responsibly allocating the county's budget funds. We studied the county's non-departmental services for both the current fiscal year and the budget offers for the next budget cycle. We also received feedback during our committee sessions about our thoughts on cost savings, including comments from the Chair's and Commissioners' Offices. Further, the CBAC orientation provided information on how funding for the next fiscal year was shaping up. We met with the Chair's Office; Commissioners' Offices from Districts 2, 3, and 4; Office of Diversity & Equity; Communications Office; Office of Government Relations; the County Attorney's Office; Auditor's Office; Office of Emergency Management; Office of Sustainability; and the Regional Arts & Culture Council. We are also planning to meet with the Chair's Office again and District 1 in September.

The Non-Departmental CBAC is diverse, consisting of new and returning citizen volunteers. Returning members include Sherry Willmschen, Pauline Duffy, Mary

Stewart, Brenda Ray Scott, Laura Chenet Leonard and Cain Bloomer. Michael Wade also joined our CBAC last December. What we have in common is a concern for the fiscal health of Multnomah County, a belief in the maintenance of fiscal responsibility among the county offices and agencies, and a desire to seek collaborative and proactive actions to improve non-departmental functions benefiting the community. As a committee, we appreciate the efforts of all who provided us with the information and materials needed to make well-informed recommendations regarding the use of county resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To summarize, the Non-Departmental CBAC concludes:

1. **Internships for high school and college students:** District 2's Office administers an internship program for at-risk high school students and the Office of Diversity & Equity (ODE) administers a program for college students. These internships: (1) give youth professional experience which will inspire and help shape their lives, and (2) create projects that improve county services. Our Committee supports the mission and outcomes of the county's youth internship programs. However, we believe the programs should increase their coordination. For example, rather than county departments and offices being asked by each program separately to create student internships, they should combine their requests into one document or solicitation. This would reduce confusion and improve understanding by county staff about what each internship program covers. It would also maximize the opportunity to create internships that best fit a particular department or office.

We also encourage county leadership to closely monitor and create a competitive contract bidding process for the organization awarded to manage the at-risk high school students program. We understand that Worksystems, Inc. is the only contractor qualified to receive matching federal money for the program, but would like to encourage the county to assist other contractors to become qualified to receive federal matching funds. This would allow a competitive and open bidding process, and identify the contractor most likely to succeed.

Additionally, as we mentioned in last year's report, there should be increased emphasis on open recruitment for interns throughout the county, with significant efforts made to increase student participation in East County. This should include outreach efforts for East County students equal to the efforts Portland students receive.

2. **The Office of Emergency Management (OEM):** Our Committee continues to recommend that staff responsible for emergency management throughout the county be centralized in OEM in order to increase efficiency and improve performance. OEM staff can then be assigned to work with specific departments as appropriate. We continue to encourage county leadership to closely monitor the level of funding for emergency services, and to pursue emergency management funding as part of its legislative agenda. Finally, we recommend that OEM

continue to collaborate as much as possible with emergency management staff located throughout the county, region and the state like the city of Portland and other municipalities, in order to efficiently use resources while maximizing performance.

3. **Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC):** Our Committee is pleased to hear that RACC's funding is stable and even growing, potentially freeing up resources to expand arts and culture programs. Similar to last year, we encourage RACC to take more strident efforts to increase funding for arts and culture programs in underserved communities, with particular attention to East County (e.g., cities of Gresham, Fairview, Troutdale; schools districts like Centennial, Reynolds, Parkrose, David Douglas and Gresham). These steps could include conducting significant outreach, holding an East County Arts Summit, and designation of funds for these communities.
4. **Office of Sustainability (OS):** Our Committee is very concerned that OS's new, primary emphasis on using an equity lens when carrying out its initiatives and programs duplicates the responsibilities the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) with regard to county programs and services. While we acknowledge the importance of using an equity lens to ensure all Multnomah County residents have equal access to a healthy environment and critical life needs, we believe OS should continue focusing on improving environmental health and critical life needs both inside and outside county government. This previous emphasis is particularly important given OS has less staff than in past years to support these successful programs. The important role of implementing the equity lens within sustainability initiatives and programs should be assigned to ODE. ODE can actively consult with OS staff to ensure equitability factors are included and appropriate guidelines are adopted. This approach will preserve critical resources, and set goals and priorities for future initiatives and programs.
5. **County Chair's Office:** We appreciate the efforts of the Chair's Office to make the transition to the next chair as smooth as possible by transferring a significant amount of information about county processes and programs utilizing summary reports. We strongly support Chair Madrigal's decision to have the Board of County Commissioners approve the county budget earlier this year to avoid the political consequences that could result if the new chair was elected prior to the budget approval.
6. **Communications Office (CO):** We recognize that the CO had to dedicate extensive time and resources to handle the conduct of county officials last summer and early fall. These efforts were successful in allowing the county to maintain its positive image and minimize repercussions from the community. However, we are concerned that important decisions like hiring a part-time graphic designer were delayed. Funding had been allocated for the graphic designer in last year's budget. Hiring occurred about three months prior to the end of the fiscal year. As we mentioned in last year's report, we believe that graphic design is a very important function for the office to provide services countywide.

We strongly feel that it is the CO's role to create and communicate goals, priorities, policies, and procedures to county departments and offices. The Director of the Communications Office should be held more accountable to ensure this role is achieved. The level of knowledge about this role seems to vary. For example, we learned the Office of Diversity and Equity wasn't aware of the services and tools the CO had to increase publicity about their public events, which could have increased attendance. Particularly with regard to Non-Departmental offices, our CBAC strongly believes the CO should meet periodically with their directors and leaders to review all related priorities, policies and procedures, and to respond to questions and concerns. Items to be covered should include a description of all the tools the CO has available to publicize activities, how to request graphic design services, guidelines to follow to have items posted on the county's social media accounts, and guidelines to request creation of videos. We recognize these efforts could take up significant staff time and may be best handled by one employee to promote uniformity.

- 7. Office of Government Relations (OGR):** Our Committee was very pleased to learn about the different approaches that OGR has employed in the last year to successfully lobby for legislation supporting the county's interests. These approaches range from direct lobbying to conducting analyses that other local governments can use to lobby. Additionally, we encourage OGR to adopt another performance measure to evaluate the effectiveness of the county's new investments to support grant writing and receive grants.

We strongly encourage OGR to expand the opportunities the public has to comment on and make recommendations concerning the county's annual legislative agenda by working with the Office of Citizen Involvement to create a public forum and/or use online tools. Currently, we understand the public's only opportunity to comment occurs during one Board meeting.

- 8. Office of Diversity & Equity (ODE):** We were very pleased to learn the office has returned its focus to working on initiatives and programs internal to the county. We feel ODE's resources are best spent on improving and overcoming significant deficiencies within the county's work environment. We appreciate the collaborative and informative approach the county is using to increase equity by collecting informative data utilizing Tableau Software to analyze the county's work force. They plan to meet with department officials to review the data.
- 9. Transition and knowledge transfer:** The CBAC is aware that many county employees have retired in the last year and that the number of employees eligible for retirement is substantial. We appreciate the current efforts that support effective succession planning and knowledge transfer, and we encourage expansion to all departments and offices. This is especially critical in small offices and divisions where specialized knowledge is held by fewer employees. Resources put into this initiative will ensure smooth transitions as the county's more tenured and very knowledgeable employees move into retirement. One example is having ODE utilize its Tableau Software to analyze employee demographics in ways that could maximize knowledge transfer.

10. Performance measures: In recent years, our Committee has been pleased with the increasing clarity and relevance of performance measures of non-departmental offices. This year, however, we have noticed that many of the measures did not convey the effectiveness or impact of certain county services to the public. Tangible performance measures, especially outcomes, are critical since they can help the community understand and appreciate the impact of the services provided by Multnomah County. We recognize the challenges of working toward and communicating about longer term measurable outcomes in impactful and meaningful ways. We encourage county staff to develop performance measures that evaluate progress over multiple years, by measuring the progress of larger projects in smaller increments. Effectively written performance measures describe tangible project outcomes informed by outputs and relevant data. We suggest that non-departmental officials and other staff working directly with performance measures closely review the instructions for creating them on pages 30-33 of the 2015 Budget Preparation Manual, as well as consult with Auditor Steve March. To demonstrate what a meaningful performance measure looks like we have provided the following example:

Measurable Outcome

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY13 Actual	FY14 Purchased	FY14 Estimate	FY15 Offer
Outcome	Number of multi-media videos/projects produced by the office	25	50	53	65

Measurable Outcome—modified

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY13 Actual	FY14 Purchased	FY14 Estimate	FY15 Offer
Outcome	Through the increased number of multi-media videos/projects produced by the office, more of the county's constituents and the greater community will have greater awareness of the impact of the county's services on everyday life.	25	50	53	65

By adopting the modified measurable outcome, the office is focusing on what changed and the outputs of their efforts driving the changes. We are also happy to provide an illustrative logic model if it is helpful.

In conclusion, the Non-Departmental CBAC appreciates the opportunity to be of service to Multnomah County, and we are grateful to all county employees who gave their time to meet with us about the budget process during this difficult economic time.

MEMBERS:

Sherry Willmschen, Chair
Laura Chenet Leonard
Brenda Ray Scott
Michael Wade

Cain Bloomer
Pauline Duffy
Mary Stewart