

## **2018**

# **Marion County Communication & Advocacy Guidelines**

### **Purpose:**

To establish the Board of Commissioners communication requirements and guidelines regarding legislative advocacy, which includes advocacy on policy and non-policy (technical) issues, pending legislation and written correspondence to legislators, other elected officials and policy makers.

### **Background:**

An effective program of legislative representation includes advocating the legislative policies of the Board of Commissioners before members, committees and staff of the state Legislature; Governor and her staff; department heads and staff of state and federal agencies and commissions (hereinafter referred to as governmental bodies). It also may be necessary to direct legislative advocacy activities toward local or regional decision-making bodies. These bodies may include city councils, Salem-Keizer Transit District and school boards.

Normally, the timing of such advocacy will permit prior notification of and authorization by the Board of Commissioners. At times, however, advance notification and authorization will be impracticable due to the press of county business or time constraints at the legislature. It is the purpose of these guidelines to provide the parameters within which such advocacy efforts shall be undertaken by departments under board direction.

### **Guidelines:**

The communication and legislative advocacy guidelines are as follows:

#### Advocacy by County Staff

Appropriate county staff shall be authorized to advocate positions consistent with board policies, actions or directions. Such advocacy efforts shall not require prior specific authorization of the Board of Commissioners. Appropriate county staff shall include the following:

1. The chief administrative officer (CAO) or his or her designee
2. Department heads or their designees

Advocacy Involving Policy Issues

1. Advocacy efforts involving policy issues not reflected in prior board positions shall require the prior authorization of the Board of Commissioners.
2. When possible, department heads will provide proposed testimony and related materials to the Board of Commissioners five days before the scheduled testimony. Prepared testimony and materials shall be coordinated with the government relations manager in the Board of Commissioners Office (currently Barb Young.)

Advocacy Involving Non-Policy Issues

1. The CAO or department heads shall decide whether proposed presentations before governmental bodies and local or regional decision making-bodies are of a policy or non-policy nature. Non-policy information shall be defined as technical or factual in nature.
2. Appropriate county staff may present to governmental bodies and local or regional decision-making bodies information of a non-policy nature without prior specific board authorization.

Communications with External Elected Officials

1. Written correspondence to federal, state or local elected officials on behalf of the county shall be signed by one or more members of the Board of Commissioners or CAO. The CAO may delegate signature authority if necessary and appropriate.
2. Department heads may send written correspondence to federal, state or local elected officials on behalf of their departments with prior notification via phone or e-mail to the government relations manager. A copy of the correspondence shall be routed to the Board of Commissioners Office prior to or concurrently with mailing.
3. Department specific communications to stakeholder groups on pertinent legislative issues are to be copied to the government relations manager who will share the information with the Board.

Advocacy and Communication by County Elected Officials

The board encourages elected officials to follow these guidelines when possible and to forward copies of correspondence and testimony via the government relations manager. The purpose of this request is to ensure we are all informed, communicating and speak with a united voice.

If elected officials choose to advocate or testify on a policy issue that is not in line with the county or board policy position, they must clarify it is their own position and not the county's position. Notification and copies of testimony to the board upon such action would be appreciated.