**White Paper - BEST PRACTICES TO ATTRACT AND TRAIN BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**SUMMARY**
Municipal and county clerks face the daily challenge of board and committee management. What follows is a review of 'best practices' to attract and train board and committee members, and provide needed information in an engaging, accessible format.

<u>**Primary Goals**</u>

- ATTRACTING APPLICANTS – Presenting information about boards/committees' functions and vacancies in a user-friendly format, and then using social media and other tools to attract those interested in filling vacant positions.
- STREAMLINING/IMPROVING APPLICATION PROCESS – Creating a system to assist in processing and maintaining board and committee applications
- CREATE INFORMATION DATABASE FOR BOARDS/COMMITTEES -- Organize, consolidate, and update board and committee information online.

**ATTRACTING APPLICANTS**
How do you increase the number of applications, and as a result improve the diversity of applicants? Providing needed information is a critical step.
What should be included for prospective applicants:

- Name of board or committee and reference to city, county, state, or federal statutes establishing it
- Meeting dates, times and location
- Number of members and number of city appointees
- Number of years in a term
- Annual expiration dates for terms
- Residency requirements
- Reference to by-laws (ordinances/resolutions)
- Name and contact information of city staff liaisons
- Name of Council representatives/liaisons

**Ways to provide information:**

- Consider the use of press releases to generate greater visibility to a wider audience.
- Create a designated webpage containing boards and committees information, spotlighting each body's mission and current vacancies. Include an application link with information presented in easy-to-read format, with supporting graphics
- Provide links to forms that can be filled out and submitted on-line
- Consider an on-site kiosk with user-friendly features to encourage applications
- Consider print and on-line ads to encourage engagement and direct prospective applicants to appropriate forms. An informative video can also be produced to call attention to vacancies and encourage applicants.
- Include access to the application process via Facebook and other social media portals. This is key, considering the popularity and widespread use of social media platforms by potential applicants.

**STREAMLINING THE APPLICATION PROCESS**
In many instances, streamlining the application process is accomplished by moving to an online process that simplifies how applications are accepted, evaluated and saved.

- Applicants should be notified by email of the application's receipt and informed of the evaluation and approval process. This would include note that those being chosen for interviews would be notified via email; those not considered would be informed that applications are kept on file for a specific period of time.
- Completed applications should be stored in a designated directory, making them easy to access for review when filling a position. It should be noted to applicants that they are considered based on the timing of vacancies – for example, applications for a position may be considered 6-8 weeks from the term expiration date.
- Create a formal review process. For example:
  a. Applications are presented to the reviewing body (for ex, City Council) for consideration.

b. Applicants who are chosen to be considered for a vacancy should be informed of status of the application and next steps (interviews, etc.). Applicants not under consideration should be notified as well and their application stored for future consideration.

c. If the appointment is approved, the applicant should be notified of the appointment and informed of next steps (meeting dates, etc.) Also, the applicant should receive written notification of appointment along with a copy of Ethics and Boards/Committees general information. Applicant is advised that a liaison (staff member or board/committee secretary) will be contacting them with further information and to schedule orientation.

d. The website should be updated with new appointment(s).

**MANAGING BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

The goal here is to save time and resources in managing boards and committees. Evaluating the current system and moving to an online management tool can make the process more efficient.

In addition to an online application and review process, consider these next steps:

- ✓ **Consolidate** all necessary manual records, including discarding duplicates and locating manual records in a central file drawer to be scanned and then discarded.
- ✓ **Create** a directory for each board and committee with necessary documents stored in those directories. (i.e. laws, ordinances, resolutions, etc.)
- ✓ **Construct** an historical summary of board and committee information, including history, appointments, composition, purpose, meeting information, establishment, code section references, etc.

*This information has been compiled by OnBoard, in coordination with Camilla G. Pitman MMC, Certified PLS, Office of the City Clerk, City of Greenville, South Carolina.*