



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 21, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GLORIA SITTON, CITY CLERK AND CLERK OF COUNCIL

DOCKET TITLE:

Update on Recommendations from the Boards and Commissions Audit/Review Committee.

ISSUE: Receipt of update on recommendations from the Boards and Commissions Audit/Review Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the update from the Committee.

BACKGROUND: In March 2019, City Council established a committee to review and audit City boards and commissions. The Committee was charged with reviewing processes, procedures, and policies as they are related to the Council advisory bodies. In January 2020, the Committee brought a report to Council on its findings and received suggested recommendations for procedural and policy changes. The COVID-19 Pandemic delayed a subsequent update until now.

DISCUSSION:

Administrative Process Updates

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the City Clerk's Office has made some changes to allow members of boards and commissions to communicate with the Office without coming into City Hall. All notifications of appointments, oaths, handbooks and other materials are emailed to members and can be returned electronically to the City Clerk's Office.

Members with upcoming expiring terms now receive three notifications: 90 days, 60 days and 30 days. These notifications are set for distribution from the Boards and Commissions database.

City staff liaisons receive an updated roster following appointments at the first legislative meetings with new

member information. City Clerk staff is working with the database vendor to give staff limited access to the system in order to update information (e.g., adding bylaws, attendance reports, and minutes).

Upon request of City Council, City Clerk's Office now includes redacted copies of all applications on published dockets with a disclaimer notice.

All applications are retained for six months and are resubmitted for consideration when a vacancy becomes available in that six-month timeframe.

Recommendations:

The Committee is recommending changes to the City Code. An ordinance for introduction and first reading will be docketed for the first legislative meeting in May (May 11) with the following changes:

- Remove the waiver for term limits and require members who have reached their 10-year term limit to wait one year before reapplying for the same position.
- Add a stipulation that members who do not return their oath of office to the City Clerk's Office within 60 days of appointment will be subject to removal from their respective board/commission.
- Add a mandate for boards/commissions to develop bylaws (if they do not have them) and file the approved bylaws with the City Clerk's Office.

Composition Changes

Community Criminal Justice Board and the Alexandria Gang Prevention Community Task Force have already had ordinances approved for composition changes.

Other boards/commissions who desire composition changes should contact the City Clerk and City Attorney's Office for guidance on next steps.

Finance Policy for Boards and Commissions

The Committee recommended that the general or default rule should be that fundraising, which is defined as solicitation of and collection of funds, by committees is prohibited unless it is permitted by the enabling legislation or permission is received from City Council. The Committee also recommended that Council (as a whole) determine the appropriate exceptions, whether to grandfather in groups currently fundraising and other components of this prohibition.

The Committee recommended working with the City Manager's Office, Internal Audit and Department of Finance to develop a policy and promulgate procedures for fundraising for committees that are permitted to do so, including regulation of accounts and accounting of funds, as well as other considerations. A resolution will be docketed for your consideration.

Social Media Policy

The Committee recommended that a social media and communication policy be established for official communication by committees. The Committee recommended that this policy drafting responsibility be

delegated to the Office of Communications and Public Information. The Committee will bring forth a resolution to establish social media policy for boards and commissions that is similar to that City's overall social media policy and regulations for Council consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT: No impact at this time.

STAFF:

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Adrienne Fine, Assistant City Attorney
David E. Lanier, Assistant City Attorney