



Office of Community Involvement



DCA and DCM CBAC

TO: Chair Deborah Kafoury and Board of County Commissioners (4) pages

FROM: Department of County Assets/Department of County Management
Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: April 16, 2021

SUBJECT: DCA and DCM Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

Dear Board of County Commissioners:

As volunteers to the budget process, we would like to thank you for your insistence to continue the community involvement process in these irregular times. At Chair Kafoury's recommendation, our final report will focus on our key values and principles related to the Department of County Assets and (DCA) and the Department of County Management (DCM).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The DCA/DCM CBAC has historically focused on one time only funding requests, out of target program offers, and new programs. Additionally, we review the major projects to provide our thoughts and input on the ongoing management, support, and monitoring of these projects. This year we interviewed department directors and reviewed program offers from both DCA and DCM, and provided our input on those that stood out in terms of cost, impact, or relative merit. We recognize that each DCA department must assess allocated fees to external facing departments to fund the work of the County. This year we focused less than previous years on the role of these allocated costs and did not hear concerns - for example at Central CBAC meetings - from external service departments. This committee's recommendations are to fund the College to County intern program, the Digital Access Coordinator position, a Human Resources position dedicated to internal communications, and urgent technology replacements. The committee also strongly recommends diligent and transparent communication and strong performance metrics associated with the new voter-approved tax revenues, bonds and programs.

PROCESS:

The DCA/DCM CBAC focused on one time only requests, and met with the leaders of those organizations which submitted one time requests. The discussions included an overview of the organization itself, particular concerns and themes, and specific requests that were anticipated (the majority of the discussions occurred prior to the actual budget submissions). The team met with the following county leaders:

- Tracey Massey, Interim DCA Director and Chief Information Officer
- Travis Graves, CHRO & Interim Department of County Management Director

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- Dan Zalkow, DCA Facilities and Property Management Director
- Ben Duncan, Chief Equity Officer, DCA Equity Manager and Casey Layton, DCM Equity Manager
- Eric Arellano, Chief Financial Officer
- Adam Brown, JOHS Business Service Manager
- Michael Vaughn, County Assessor and Tax Collector and Jeff Brown Deputy Director of DART

EMERGING ISSUES & CHANGES:

Key themes that emerged from our discussions with various County leaders included the following:

Pandemic and Emergency Response

We learned that DCA and DCM management and staff exhibited adaptability and resilience throughout an extremely challenging year. DCA and DCM led the nearly immediate transition to remote work for a large percentage of County employees and then supported employees as remote work became the long-term norm. The county expects remote work to continue through 2021 and plans to assess space needs given the likelihood of a large percentage of the workforce continuing to work remotely even when the pandemic ends.

Voter-passed New Programs

County voters' passage of the library construction bond, a new tax (collected by Metro) to fund homeless services, and a new income tax (collected by the City of Portland) for universal preschool will bring in significant revenues starting in FY 2022. DCA and DCM staff and management resources will support new program delivery and library construction with internal services such as technology development, procurement, facilities maintenance, online communication and tax code development. DCA and DCM will carry a great deal of responsibility for the fiscally responsible delivery of these programs.

Equity in Budgeting

As part of the 2022 WESP commitment, departments used an equity lens in the county wide budgeting process and program offer preparations. DCA and DCM made good efforts, guided by department equity managers, using internal evaluation to infuse equity and inclusion into their budgeting decisions. DCA and DCM also worked to make program offers more understandable and aligned with County values by using plain language and explaining how these programs, despite not providing direct services, help the County make progress toward equity goals.

Members: *Karen Williams, Moses Ross, Sam Coldwell, Nick Prelosky, Heather Berry, and Kent Zook*
Staff: *Mark Lewis (DCA), Lisa Whedon (DCA), Debra Anderson(DCM), Joel Juve (DCA) and Matt Moline (DCM)*

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Facilities Maintenance and Pandemic Response

DCA and DCM, and the Facilities Department in particular, were instrumental in setting up temporary shelters, working with the Joint Office of Homeless Services to expand shelters through purchasing motel properties, and staffing those shelters. We learned there are ongoing facilities maintenance needs (SE Health Center) as well as new construction planned (Downtown Behavioral Health Resource Center).

Technology

Most of the one-time-only programs offers were for updating and replacing outdated technology. The committee learned that regular, though not annual, technology replacement doesn't have a stable or dedicated funding source. This situation means departments face uncertainty each year about whether funding will be sufficient to assess and replace outdated technology.

Corporate broadband renewal and restructuring was a high priority program offer last year but we learned that a new vendor with a more favorable rate for the County meant this project was no longer needed. We also learned that a municipal broadband study showed this would be a multi-year and multi-million dollar project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

72017B - College to County Intern program

The committee supports the College to County Intern program offer and the performance metric to place 50 interns this year. We also recommend that DCM consider expanding this program even more in coming years because we learned that there are many more applicants than available intern positions. We also learned that there have been only twenty six permanent job placements of former interns over a nine year period. This struck our committee as somewhat low but we recognize this program's potential to contribute to recruiting a diverse workforce, a key element of DCM's and DCA's 2022 WESP commitments and we encourage its expansion.

78316B - Digital Access Coordinator

The committee supports the Chair's addition of this new position and hopes that this resource will allow the County to keep a seat at the table where regional partners continue long-term planning for municipal broadband. The pandemic, at-home schooling, and remote work have shown how essential high speed internet connections are to our community members and have highlighted inequitable access to broadband internet services in our county. In fact, a recent feasibility study found that 2,800 county households are entirely unserved by any broadband service.

78215 and 78219 - SE Health Center Maintenance and Behavioral Health Resource Center

The committee supports these program offers as sound investments for protecting county assets and responding to community public health needs. We understand that federal funding

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may become available for necessary renovation at the planned downtown behavioral health resource center.

78301 C, D, E Technology Improvements

The committee generally supports these one-time only requests based on the understanding that the current systems are either obsolete or due for upgrades based on technology fitness assessments. However, only 78301 D appears to be in the 'critical and urgent' category.

The committee is also concerned there is not a source of funding that departments can access for technology replacement that goes beyond maintenance costs included in operational budgets. While we understand that technology replacement costs are irregular and difficult to include in annual budgets, this committee has seen that periodic technology replacement and upgrading is relatively routine on a time scale of 5 to 10 years. This committee recommends the County explore ongoing funding mechanisms for technology replacement (similar to the Capital program).

72017 C Central HR Communications Specialist

This committee recognizes the need for enhanced internal communications when a large majority of the County workforce is working remotely and will continue to do so throughout 2021.

New Tax Collection Programs - Transparency and Accountability

As Multnomah County implements voter-approved programs, particularly those with new large, permanent revenue sources, this CBAC recommends program management meet the highest transparency standards in internal and external communications. Programs should provide frequent and detailed updates to the public and County staff about how funds are being expended, what new positions are being hired, what services are being contracted and how program success is and will be measured.

This committee also expects the County to put in place robust performance measures and metrics. Sometimes performance measures in program offers can be too vague for this committee to understand how the County intends to judge program success. For example, the IT Preschool for All program offer 78301B will develop or contract essential online services like a provider portal and program application, yet the performance measures seem somewhat generic: completing a project plan and keeping stakeholders informed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The Committee would like to give special thanks to Mark Lewis, Lisa Whedon, Deb Anderson, Joel Juve, and Matt Moline for their support, coordination, facilitation, responsiveness and enthusiasm. They were essential to the organization and scheduling of our discussions, and provided excellent perspective on all of the budget requests discussed. Additionally, we'd like to thank all of our guests/presenters for their time, informative presentations, and responsiveness to our questions.

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