

Name: Douglas Morgan

Occupation/Title: Professor of Public Administration (20 years) and Director of Hatfield School's Public Administration Program

Questionnaire/Interview Guide Topics

1. Describe your position, responsibilities and your regular interactions with the Board of County Commissioners, including level, frequency and the county contact you interact with most often.

As a citizen, I do not have regular interactions with the Board of County Commissioners. In my educational role, I have taught several county career employees who have graduated from our Executive MPA program.

2. What is your familiarity with different forms of local government and specifically cities or counties (in Oregon or elsewhere) with an appointed manager?

I have focused much of my expertise over the last 40 years of teaching and research on local government. I have published three books in the last five years that focus on local government in the United States: *Foundations of Public Service* (2013); *New Public Governance* (2014); and *Budgeting for Local Communities* (2015), all published by ME Sharpe. I have served on the Portland School Board and have chaired and/or served on more than a dozen advisory committees and citizen oversight boards. I served as chair of the City of Portland's Public Utility Board for the first 7 years of its existence. I have good working knowledge and close professional relationships with multiple local government jurisdictions in the region.

3. Points in support of an appointed County Manager include the significant administrative responsibilities and time required to manage a large, complex organization and supervision of numerous directors and managers and indirect supervision of thousands of employees. Describe your experience with this aspect of the Chair's responsibilities, including the frequency and effectiveness of interaction between the Chair and department directors and other senior staff.

The executive function is what citizens see the least. It is the inside story of our democratic systems of governance. By executive functions I mean more than just creating a high performing organization and staffing it with high performing personnel. This by itself is a daunting task requiring considerable strategic management expertise. But more than that is needed from an executive. Legislative bodies need the help of the executive in figuring out how to carry out their organizational oversight responsibilities. The executive almost always has to take the leadership role on this because members of the legislative body really don't know what questions to ask; they

don't have the expertise needed to ask the right questions regarding organizational accountability issues. Following is a list of what this responsibility entails.

Executive Role in Norming Legislative Oversight Expectations		
Documents	Purpose	Advantages
Annual Council Goals with debate and citizen input	To establish service priorities in advance of the annual budget development process.	Enables elected officials to take charge of the budget preparation process and provides the CEO with budget development guidelines
Annual budget assumptions	To officially memorialize the following assumptions in preparing the annual budget: Inflationary cost increases by category Increases/decreases in services Changes in revenue from all sources Salary adjustments Amount to be budgeted for reserves	Enables elected officials to have control over major cost drivers of the budget process prior to budget preparation and official submission to the elected board.
Separate operating & capital budgets with a requirement that they be sustainable.	To ensure that both the operating & capital budgets can fund services & capital maintenance on a sustainable basis. To prevent the operating budgets from being used to fund capital replacement by optimizing utilization and minimizing long-term lifecycle costs.	Provides for separate capital and operating budgets with sufficient funds allocated on an annual basis to cover needed expenditures to maintain capital and for capital budgets that fund capital replacement.
Long-term operating and capital expense projections	To provide governing body and administrators with at least a six year projection of projected operating and capital expenses.	Provides administrators and elected officials with the lead-time necessary to make program adjustments as a result of changes in revenue and demand for services. Reduces surprises and allows time to make needed policy changes.
Internal Cost Allocation Plan	To determine the cost of providing central business management services and/or indirect costs to the various operating funds.	Ensures that the necessary central business functions will survive during budget adjustments and limits propensity to obtain cost savings through reductions in maintenance and use of reserves.
Policy on management of budget funds.	To ensure that funds are managed independently according to generally accepted accounting	Ensures that budget funds are not commingled and that they are being balanced with the dedicated

	principles and practices. Policies should include the amount and use of reserves.	revenues legally linked to the fund.
Financial control and reporting.	To maintain financial control by providing monthly reporting to elected council of revenue and expenditures at the line item detail and reconciliation of all accounts	Provides spending control by giving managers the information they need to identify positive and/or negative trends. Future evaluation of these trends also allows for more precise future budget estimates.
Financial Accountability	To ensure comprehensive annual financial reporting at the end of the budgeting year, with the elected board having the advice of independent certified public accountant staff to report on the condition and accuracy of the financial and reporting systems.	Ensures that adequate reporting systems are in place and are being properly used.
Long range fiscal impact statements for new programs	Provides the legal and policy justification for new programs, sources of revenue to be used with assessment of alternative approaches.	Provides governing body with the information they need to make long-term commitments.

The county can bench-mark its existing performance against the above list of role responsibilities to determine how well both the legislative and executive functions are being carried out with regard to maintaining oversight of county operations.. If it is falling short, my guess is that it will do better with a fulltime professional executive who has considerable training and experience with respect to the executive leadership functions dealing particularly with organizational accountability issues.

4. While the current Chair has appointed a Chief Operating Officer (COO), who reports to the Chair, to oversee administration and operations, the Chair formally retains authority over these areas. Goal setting, performance evaluation and oversight are important responsibilities for all organizations, including our county. Describe how this is working and whether an appointed County Manager that reports to the Board would be an improvement.

See my response to question #3 above.

5. Are you familiar with the 1990 proposed Charter amendment to establish an appointed County Manager? What were the issues at that time?

Yes, I am familiar and have followed the charter debate changes for both the City and the County since 1978. I have written about these debates regarding the City of Portland Charter process (see Morgan, Nishishiba and Vizinni, “*Keep Portland Weird*”, *More than Mayor or Manager: Campaigns to Change From of Government in America’s largest Cities*, pp. 279-301. Ed. James Svara and Douglas Watson. 2010. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Press.

The issues generally pit increased efficiency, effectiveness and organizational accountability against a loss of responsiveness, citizen access and citizen-centered v. business-centered governance.

6. Communication, collaboration and coordination are often difficult in large organizations in both the public and private sector. Do you believe collaboration and sharing is adequate in Multnomah County and would transparency and collaboration be improved by an appointed County Manager?

I do not have operating knowledge of the amount of time and energy that managers in Multnomah County spend in building collaborative relationships with other jurisdictions, agencies and community stakeholders. But I know for sure that this work has grown significantly in scale and importance over the last two decades and will grow at an accelerated rate in the years to come (see Morgan and Cook *New Public Governance: A Regime-Centered Perspective*. ME Sharpe, 2015). Most well run jurisdictions have reached the limits of performance improvement by emphasizing management reforms. The next wave of improvement will be found on the inter-governmental, organizational and sectoral collaboration fronts.

7. Do you believe the Board as a whole would be more effective at its community leadership, political and legislative responsibilities if administrative and management responsibilities were shifted to an appointed County Manager? Describe how this would or would not benefit the county.

Following is a list of legislative functions that have to be performed at a very high level:

- **Providing constituency service (responsiveness)**
- **Policy deliberation and direction (responsiveness and accountability)**
- **Establishing priorities and mediating conflicting values (compromise & negotiation)**
- **Organizational oversight (efficiency and effectiveness accountability)**
- **Protecting substantive and procedural rights of citizens (rule of law)**
- **Effectively functioning deliberative and decision-making body (civic discourse)**
- **Community leadership (political leadership)**

It is extremely rare that all members of a legislative body have the time, energy and will to perform all of the above functions equally well. What is important is that the board as a whole perform these functions.

The function that tends to get short shrift is the community leadership function. By this function I mean working to create a shared community vision and working hard over the years to get the community to take ownership of this vision. Community leadership is not about creating a strategic plan that sits on the shelf and gathers dust. It is about creating a living plan that gets constantly renewed, energized and changed by board members exercising their community leadership role. This function can't be done if the board is spending the bulk of its time internally rather than externally.

8. Appointed city and county managers often have education and/or work experience that directly relates to the administration and management of local governments. How important is it that the top staff person responsible for day-to-day execution of county policies and management of programs and staff has extensive knowledge and experience in public management?

See my response to questions #3.

9. Do you believe that the current structure contributes to politicization of county administration, management or personnel actions? Do you believe an appointed County Manager would better address this concern?

I do not have working knowledge of how much of the administrative work in the county gets politicized. This is always a common complaint everywhere from middle and lower level career administrators who do not have an appreciation of the importance of making sure the work that gets done is supported by the citizens and stakeholders it serves. But over the years the career administrators I have taught from Multnomah County in our Executive MPA Program complain about this often, although their complaints do rise to the level of those working for the City of Portland. I am confident that over time the complaint regarding “politicization” would drop significantly with the employment of a full-time professional manager.

10. Your educated guess regarding the response from senior county managers or rank-and-file staff if the county were to consider switching to an appointed County Manager? What about the response from county residents and businesses?

Most every jurisdiction that has adopted a County Manager system has been strongly supported by all ranks within senior management and the career public service. The exception are those instances where managers hold their positions because of personal/political loyalty rather than because of their competence. As I indicated in my response to question #3, citizens are generally not inclined to get invested much in the issue unless there is a campaign (usually run by those who have privileged access to the existing system) claiming that the manager system will cost the citizens more money and/or they will lose citizen access and influence. If the change results in the board spending more time on its community leadership function, the influence of citizens should increase.

11. Is the consideration of an appointed County Manager more a plan to increase the separation of powers between elected officials and staff or a desire to more operate more effectively?

This is a false dichotomy, as the leading scholar on this issue has demonstrated in many studies over the course of nearly two decades (see the following)

- James H. Svara. 2008. *The Facilitative Leader in City Hall: Re-examining the Scope and Contributions*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.**
- _____. 2006. "Complexity in Political-Administrative Relations and the Limits of the Dichotomy Concept." *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 28 (no. 1): 121-139.**
- _____. 1999. "The Shifting Boundary between Elected Officials and City Managers in Large Council-Manager Cities." *Public Administration Review* 1, (59): 207-227.**
- _____. 1991. "City Manager Role: Conflict, Divergence, Or Congruence?" *Administration & Society* 23(no. 2): 227-246.**
- _____. 1990. *Official Leadership in the City: Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation*. Oxford University Press.**

The manager council system actually increases the effectiveness of the working relationship between the council and the administrative functions of the organization,

not separate them. Managers last only because they are good at making sure the administrative operation is being well run and being done so with the council's priorities in mind. If not, the council can send the manager down the road, which isn't the case with an elected official who runs the management show!

12. Does the Board of Commissioners spend excessive time discussing small details and technical issues rather than policy, contracts, planning and general community improvement?

I don't have personal knowledge of this issue with regard to Multnomah County. But having served as an elected board member and witnessing councils function with respect to advisory oversight boards, this is a general tendency of both appointed and elected boards. A professional manager working with the board can change this process. It is hard for the board by itself to change it.

13. Is the county's current organizational structure advancing the board's short and long term goals and objectives or is it a barrier to their implementation?

I don't have personal knowledge of whether this issue.

14. If Multnomah County establishes an appointed County Manager, list the three most likely benefits and the three most likely challenges.

Benefits:

- **A better run organization with happier employees**
- **Happier elected officials who have more time to spend in community leadership roles**
- **More time spent by everyone on the most urgent and high priority issues**

Challenges:

- **Redirecting board members to their external political, deliberative, constituency service and public policy roles.**
- **Norming a coproduction relationship between the board and the administrative functions of the organization.**
- **Persuading external stakeholders who have a vested interest in the status quo that the community good will be more inclusively served by the manager system of governance.**

