



Minutes

Ad Hoc Committee for Boards and Commissions

February 01, 2023 – 4:00 PM

**CIC Conference Room, City Hall, 300 Laporte Avenue & via Zoom at
<https://fcgov.zoom.us/j/92427789756>**

Remote Participation Available

A) Call Meeting to Order

- 4:00 PM

B) Roll Call

- Committee Members Present: Emily Francis (Chair), Julie Pignataro, Tricia Canonico
- Staff Members Present: Davina Lau, Rupa Venkatesh, Honoré Depew, Anissa Hollingshead, Jenny Lopez Filkins
- Members of the Public: Kelly Ohlson

C) Approval of Minutes

1. Consideration and approval of the minutes of January 4, 2023.

The purpose of this item is to approve the draft minutes of the January 4, 2023, Ad Hoc Committee for Boards and Commissions meeting.

- Committee Member Julie Pignataro moved to approve the January 4, 2023 minutes. Committee Member Tricia Canonico seconded. The motion was adopted unanimously.

D) Discussion / Informational Items

2. Discussing and evaluating the purpose of Boards and Commissions, Council's role, recruitment and interview processes, and member composition of Boards and Commissions.

The purpose of this item is to discuss the purpose of Boards and Commissions, as well as options for process changes and the implications, pros, and cons that would come with those changes.

- *Discussion Highlights:* Staff Member Davina Lau outlined the current purpose of Boards and Commissions: to acquire and study information in specific areas and to make recommendations to City Council on issues related to the Board's area of expertise. She noted Boards and Commissions bridge the gap between Council and the public and provide the opportunity for members of the public to voice concerns and shape the community and its quality of life. She noted Council should consider how it sees Boards and Commissions in Council's role in policy development and where it wants Boards and Commissions to engage.

Staff Member Rupa Venkatesh discussed instances in which Boards and Commissions made recommendations to Council, including a Human Relations Commission recommendation related to foreign policy.

Staff Member Lau outlined public impressions of Boards and Commissions and associated feedback, including changes to increase the Council communication loop and Board effectiveness, and opportunities to improve Board Member orientation and onboarding.

Chair Emily Francis commented on the lack of consistency in how Boards and Commissions provide input to Council.

Committee Member Julie Pignataro stated a Board or Commission could influence policy as little or as much as determined by Council. She stated she does not believe looking at how Boards and Commissions influence policy is the right question; how they communicate to Council should be the consideration. She also commented on possible disconnects between staff liaisons and what they might understand is happening with Council.

Chair Francis stated Boards and Commissions have the greatest impact when staff members seek input on specific items.

Staff Member Lau stated her research through the 'reimagining' process showed Boards and Commission members want additional feedback from Council, either through work plans or annual reports; however, she questioned how best to address that.

Committee members commented on ensuring Boards and Commissions members have proper expectations set during the onboarding process regarding the input they can provide. Committee Member Pignataro suggested Council not change its relationship with Boards and Commissions and reiterated her thought that realistic expectations be set during onboarding and retroactively for current members. She also suggested staff liaisons be provided with expectations for conveying to their Boards the ways in which they can communicate with Council.

Kelly Ohlson commented on the origin of Boards and Commissions feeling as though they cannot bring forth issues that are not on their work plans.

Committee members discussed conducting periodic reviews of Boards and Commissions and what role a Council liaison should take in dealing with an identified problem.

Staff Member Lau outlined the 'reimagine' research which suggested an opportunity to simplify Boards and Commissions by creating 'super' Boards that share key outcome areas. Chair Francis asked what problem was being solved by this suggestion. Staff Member Honoré Depew stated the main impetus behind the work to reimagine was from the 2017 public participation report that analyzed Boards and Commissions and found that, from a demographic standpoint, their membership make-up did not match that of the community. He stated the potential consolidation of Boards had less to do with the diversity question and more to make things more functional and provide alignment with peer cities. Staff Member Lau noted Fort Collins has an average of 7.65 more Boards than its peer cities.

Committee Member Pignataro asked if some Boards do not hold regular meetings due to a lack of agenda items. Staff Member Lau replied there are some Boards, such as the Golf Board and Youth Advisory Board, that do not meet for certain months out of the year.

Committee Member Pignataro opposed the idea of 'super' Boards; however, she stated she would be open to a discussion of looking at the effectiveness of Boards in general, particularly if they are not meeting due to a lack of agenda items or the lack of a quorum, or if they are not having much interaction on Council topics.

Chair Francis stated it would be helpful to know more about what makes an effective Board.

Committee Member Canonico asked if there is information related to what types of extra Boards Fort Collins has over its peer cities. Staff members stated they would research that information. Kelly Ohlson commented on the city's pride in its Boards and Commissions. Chair Francis stated the issue is more around the time commitment for Council members related to Boards and Commissions than it is an issue of having more Boards than average.

Kelly Ohlson commented on the possibility of shortening interview times and automatically reappointing members who reapply as long as there are no issues. Committee members discussed options for Boards and Commissions interviews, including involving staff liaisons in interviews for non-quasi-judicial Boards.

Kelly Ohlson stated he does not believe staff or management should be involved in the Boards and Commissions appointment process as many staff members have no desire to have a Board to manage. He stated some of the most impactful Board members have been some of the most challenging for staff and the organization. Committee Member Pignataro suggested Council members may not be immune to having the desire to appoint accommodating members to the Boards. Additionally, she stated having staff liaisons involved would help bridge the gap between them and Council.

Kelly Ohlson commented interviews being one of the only ways for Council members to have influence on Board and Commissions, and in some cases, a member may be the liaison for several Boards whereas another member may be a liaison for only one. He also commented on the relationships that are built between Council members when doing Boards and Commissions interviews.

Committee Member Canonico supported the idea of staff liaisons being involved, though she did express concern with decreasing the number of Council interviewers to one. Chair Francis noted the Council liaison is the one who ultimately appoints members. She stated having the staff liaisons present could be beneficial and she disagreed staff liaisons only want amenable Board members.

Kelly Ohlson disagreed that the Council liaison is the final decision-maker; he stated both Council interviewers have always worked together to make appointment decisions in his experience.

Staff Member Lau clarified the role of the Council liaison is to take the lead in filling vacancies, reviewing applications, and interviewing candidates. She noted staff wanted to provide the Committee members with options because the interview process is time consuming and there is a disconnect between the Council liaisons and Boards so the goal is to begin to bridge those gaps.

Committee Member Pignataro opposed options one, three, and four. She supported a combination of options two, five, and six. She suggested staff return with other options after considering the discussion and time, responsibility, and knowledge.

Chair Francis also asked staff to consider tightening up the interview scheduling process.

Staff Member Venkatesh discussed recruitment timing and the incumbent process and questioned whether there should be changes made. She noted incumbents currently have to reapply; however, they do have a slightly different application process which can save some time during the interview process, though there is a public perception issue related to the differing process.

Chair Francis suggested incumbents who have had a formal complaint filed against them or who have missed a certain number of meetings should be required to go through the entire application and interview process.

Committee Member Pignataro stated incumbents should have to complete an application as they may have a different perspective from the first time they served. She also suggested the staff liaison and Council liaison look at all applications and discuss any issues with the incumbents, and if there are no issues, then they do not need to be re-interviewed.

Chair Francis reiterated her suggestion about the complaint and/or missed meetings and stated that makes the process less subjective.

Staff Member Venkatesh suggested staff bring back an incumbent criteria process for the Committee's consideration.

Staff Member Lau stated recruitment currently occurs annually with applications opening September 1st and closing around the 26th, unless there are quorum issues, with appointments made in November and December after interviews. She noted there is currently a concern with that timing due to the Council elections now being in November and she provided other options for timing of the process. Committee Member Canonico generally opposed having two separate recruitment cycles.

Kelly Ohlson cited an issue with the Air Quality Advisory Board in terms of recruitment timing. Staff Member Lau noted the current practice is that a special recruitment does not occur unless there are quorum issues. She asked if the Committee would like to consider opening applications any time there is a vacancy. Chair Francis noted there were issues with that in the past because the public was not aware of the one-off vacancies and applications tended to be driven by staff liaisons encouraging people to apply.

Committee Member Pignataro expressed support for bi-annual recruitment. Chair Francis suggested that would allow for recruitment for all open positions twice a year.

Committee Member Canonico suggested recruiting in the summer could be problematic given travel and children not being in school.

Kelly Ohlson suggested there may need to be a systemic look at where to save time for Council members in general as it seems a great deal of time is being spent on how to save a few hours of interviews, which is an important use of Council's time.

Staff Member Lau outlined the effects to the timeline of shifting the recruiting cycles.

Committee Member Pignataro stated leaving the recruitment timeline the way it is currently is not an option. She reiterated her support for bi-annual recruitment.

Committee Member Canonico and Chair Francis expressed support for annual recruitment. Chair Francis supported option one, which would provide annual recruitment but avoid the summer months.

Staff Member Venkatesh noted this Committee will cover recruitment in more detail.

Kelly Ohlson suggested bi-annual recruitment with some Boards recruiting during each cycle could get confusing to the public.

Committee members expressed support for the timing of option one, which shifts the calendar for the annual recruitment. Committee Member Pignataro suggested opening the application period from December 1st through January 30th so as to allow students the opportunity to apply prior to them leaving for the holiday break.

Staff Member Lau opened discussion on whether all Boards should be comprised of seven members unless there are enough applications for nine. She outlined which Boards currently have nine members.

Committee Member Pignataro asked if quorum would need to change depending on how many people are on the Board. Staff Member Lau replied in the affirmative and noted odd numbers are better than even, though that could be considered.

Committee Member Pignataro asked how many Boards and Commissions currently exist. Staff Member Lau replied there are 23, or 24 including the Women's Commission which currently still exists.

Committee Member Pignataro suggested allowing all Boards except quasi-judicial and type 2 Boards to have between seven and nine members. Committee Member Canonico asked if it would be up to the discretion of the Council liaison to decide the number of members based on the applicants. Chair Francis opposed using a sliding number as it may be confusing. She suggested postponing the conversation to the next meeting.

E) Other Business

- None

F) Adjournment

- 5:50 PM

Next Scheduled Committee Meeting: 4:00 PM, March 1, 2023

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