

Transparency Advisory Group (TAG) Meeting Notes

Date: 1/20/2022

[Recordings - OneDrive \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Attendees:

(Present)

Morgan Damerow

Ginger Armbruster

William Downing

Jonathan Martin

Ramsey Ramerman

Julie Kipp

Eric Stahl

Rowland Thompson

Ashley Hiruko

Isolde Raftery

Amy Radil

Kathy George

(Absent)

Keith Shipman

Norman Dizon

Michele Earl Hubbard

Poppy MacDonald

Agenda:

Introductions:

- New members: Ashley Hiruko, Isolde Raftery, Amy Radil (KUOW)
- Kathy George, Attorney
- Overview of Action Items

Update on the Mayor's Office

- Annual Report
- Two meetings in 2021
- Membership
- Meeting cadence: 8 weeks
- Charter/PRA Directive/Objective
- Meeting agenda/notes
- Recommendations
- Additions: review/approval

Update on Annual Report –

- Presented for approval of additional comments; will send out to everyone
- Overview of report
- Next steps: meeting in 2022 to understand what we are doing, who would be involved
- Charter: to advise on areas of improvement/training
- Scope: provide perspective
- Mayoral Directive overview

- Recommendations –asking if everyone had a chance to look at
 - Highlighted amendments from TAG member after the meeting
 - Deemed reasonable
 - Jonathan Martin:
 - how can we identify what is frequently requested?
 - More we can automate on what is public facing
 - Highly topical issues
 - Requests already filled (maybe without the name of who redacted it)
 - Morgan Damerow
 - Suggestion that identifying top five topics might cut down on pdrs
 - Focus on high profile issues
 - Ramsey Ramerman
 - Some consideration for privacy concerns (police reports on very sensitive issues)
 - Policy changes:
 - Financial liability to CAO and some departments don't have individual responsibility
 - Eric Stahl: that doesn't mesh with idea of centralized office
 - Rowland Thompson: consequences can teach behaviors/responsibility
 - Ginger Armbruster: we're waiting for direction from new Mayor
 - Kathy George: what is scope of group? Grouping policies?
 - Ginger Armbruster: can add to document

Centralized Office Analysis Summary

- Started in 2014 with CPRA
- Divided into two thoughts:
 - **Centralized Office**
 - Benefits
 - One centralized spot where requesters don't wait to be told to go another dept (Jonathan Martin approves)
 - More controls over staffing
 - Reduce training/retraining
 - Eliminate redundancy
 - Independent appeals process
 - Ramsey Ramerman:
 - Is the ask having to make a request of the different depts.
 - Specialization is necessary so is this a matter of centralization outfacing
 - Challenges
 - Potential conflict with having different branches of govt. centralized
 - Rowland Thompson: Courts under different statute
 - Depts have different compliance requirements (i.e. CGIS)
 - Costs of standing up new dept
 - Employment issues with smaller depts and PDOs doing multiple tasks

- Loss of institutional knowledge
 - Loss of ability to keep individual depts answerable
 - Loss of dept. relationships/trust and knowledge who works on what records
 - Duties change and share responsibility
 - Jonathan Martin:
 - Wonder if we're getting enough help- would engrained staff be more likely to shield?
 - Morgan Damerow:
 - Impossible to not have local PDOs in depts with specialized
 - Centralized office wouldn't necessarily divest accountability that needs to flow through with culture/relationships
- **Chief Public Records Officer**
- Benefits
 - Centralized support for funding
 - Citywide attention to importance of records requests
 - Standardized compliance and performance metrics
 - Challenges
 - Could we fully do this for the citywide
 - Loss of dept independence according to means/budgets
 - Potential conflicts/govt branches
 - Eric Stahl:
 - Benefit to the requester- eliminate the siloing
 - Getting records in response to requester quickly and effectively
 - William Downing:
 - So important to get the individual depts brought around to prioritizing
 - Ramsey Ramerman:
 - Who the PDO reports to could make a difference
 - Issue with MOS last year maybe could have been avoiding if the PDO is accountable outside the dept
 - Jonathan Martin:
 - Ombudsman position- AG has had this and been successful
 - On the side of public records and possibly away from dept land
 - Rowland Thompson:
 - Ombud up and down depending on agency/person
 - If within city, could have someone to chide dept along

Demonstration of CPRA Dashboard

- Jonathan Martin: could we put delay of month before publish widely
- Julie Kipp: wouldn't that cut transparency to the public?
- Morgan Damerow: treat all requesters the same – so embargo all and get 30 days

Next Steps:

- Ombuds Office consideration
- Rowland Thompson: Utilities & Transportation – Office of Public Council
- Jonathan Martin:
 - Grouping policy
 - 3rd party notice
- Follow up next time with new leadership
- Amy Radil:
 - Ombuds idea interesting to bridge smaller
 - Best practices? A look at some of the larger
- Ramsey Ramerman: State of New Mexico: really good website
- Rowland Thompson: State of Utah: really tried to centralize
- Morgan Damerow: State of Oregon: resolution process/ombuds idea
- William Downing:
 - Third party issues an issue.
 - What about a concrete proposal that the city could adopt/focus on rather than debate generally?
- Ramsey Ramerman: Cautious about denigrating the third-party notice because could lead to agencies withholding
- Eric Stahl: Not asking to get rid of it; There are times like trade secret when it's relevant. But now in public employee context/police context.
- Jonathan Martin: Only have to give 3rd party if you believe the record is disclosable (police case currently before the Supreme Court)
- Rowland Thompson: Can be more expensive because can take more time to do it (notice)