



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSION AUDITOR**

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Chairman Esteban L. Bovo, Jr.
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Neil R. Singh, CPA
Acting Commission Auditor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Neil R. Singh", is written over the printed name and title.

DATE: June 15, 2017

SUBJECT: Response to File # 170900 Regarding Outstanding Board Directives

This memo is in response to a directive issued at the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) April 18, 2017 meeting, requesting an explanation from the Office of the Commission Auditor (OCA) for the quantity of late BCC directives. Pursuant to Resolution No. R-256-10, OCA is directed to utilize the directives database maintained by the Clerk of the Board to track departmental directives and submit quarterly reports to the BCC on the status of the directives. The Administration is responsible for updating the directives database on the progress and completion of respective directives. Throughout the quarter, OCA performs due diligence to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the information in the database. Moreover, the Administration is reminded by weekly computer-generated notices of upcoming due dates (*Attachment*).

Recently, there has been a concern by the BCC regarding the amount of outstanding directives reflected in the quarterly reports. On May 12, 2017, OCA staff met with staff from the Clerk of the Board and the County Mayor's Policy and Legislative Affairs Unit (Policy Staff) to address the backlog and discuss ways to improve the process to achieve a higher timely completion rate.

As a follow-up to the meeting, Nicole Tallman, Director of Policy Staff, has provided OCA with information summarized below including reasons why there have been delays in completing board directives, along with solutions that have been implemented to streamline the current process.

Legislative Process

When a directive is issued, whether by resolution or verbal request from a Commissioner, the Clerk of the Board inputs the directive into the Directives Database. In the directive description, the Clerk records which Commissioner made the request and to whom it was directed.

The Policy Staff then assigns the directive to the appropriate Deputy Mayor(s) or Senior Advisor(s). Deputy Mayors/Senior Advisors, and their staff, then work with applicable departments to generate the information requested. Once data and research are gathered,

staff from the respective departments will relay the report to the Deputy Mayor's/Senior Advisor's staff. The Deputy Mayor/Senior Advisor will then review the information provided and send it to Policy Staff for final review. After final review, directive reports may be returned for additional edits before being officially processed.

Reasons for Delays:

Technical Issues/Challenges

The current Directives Database utilized by the Mayor's Office was developed in the late 1990s and has not been upgraded since. The database, along with the databases used by the OCA and the Clerk of the Board, all access the same data from Legistar (i.e. the County's legislative tracking system); however, each office views a different interface based on the age of the particular programs used to access the data, and the coding used to query the data. For this reason, there have been instances where the systems' communications with each other are delayed.

Staffing Challenges

During 2016, the Mayor's Office experienced a reduction in staff, specifically Policy staff. As a result, for several months, there was no designated staff member tasked with managing directives requests.

Accuracy of Directive Due Dates

Currently, the Directives Database arbitrarily sets a two-week due date for new directives, regardless of the timeline actually requested. As a result, several directives that are not technically past due are recorded as so.

Appropriate Directive Assignment

Directives are often assigned to the Deputy Mayor/Senior Advisor present at Commission or Committee meetings and not necessarily to the Deputy Mayor/Senior Advisor who oversees the subject matter of the directive being requested. Additionally, some directives involve subject matter from the portfolios of multiple Deputy Mayors/Senior Advisors, which requires more time to coordinate and compile the necessary information to submit an accurate report. In both instances, directive assignments require careful consideration of what is being requested, and who is best fit to provide the correct information.

Quantity

From January 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017, the Administration has received 76 directive requests stemming from resolutions adopted by the BCC, as well as from discussions in Commission and Committee meetings.

Solutions Implemented to Streamline the Current Process:

In an effort to reduce the number of past-due directives, Policy Staff has implemented the following procedures and courses of action to address the backlog.

Technical Issues/Challenges

Although there have been several attempts to update the Directives Database, software incompatibility issues have prevented the County from integrating a system that is able to communicate with multiple users. However, a Request for Proposals (RFP) relating to the

procurement of a comprehensive agenda management system has been issued by the Information Technology Department (ITD) and is currently under review. This software would ultimately solve the discrepancies in how information is viewed by the stakeholders in the process.

Staffing Challenges

As of April 10, 2017, the Mayor's Office has a new Policy Staff Director in place and has added a Senior Policy Analyst. The new Policy Staff has made addressing the directives backlog a top priority.

Accuracy of Directive Due Dates

In conjunction with the Clerk of the Board, Policy Staff is working to ensure that, when entered into the Directives Database, due dates are correctly noted. Policy Staff is also taking a proactive role in ensuring that deadlines are appropriately noted in the system prior to assigning directives to the Deputy Mayors/Senior Advisors. If additional time is needed to complete directives, extensions are granted only after Administrative Assistants have notified requesting Commissioners of the delay in providing the necessary information. Administrative Assistants are also working to consistently update the status of outstanding directives listed in the database.

Appropriate Directive Assignment

Due to the diversity of each Deputy Mayor's/Senior Advisor's portfolio, Policy Staff is working with each Administrative Assistant, on an individual basis, to ensure that directives are assigned as accurately and efficiently as possible. When information requests involve more than one department, Policy Staff coordinates with the respective Administrative staff to facilitate delivery.

Quantity

In an effort to manage the amount of directives being received, Policy Staff is now conducting weekly meetings to address outstanding directives with the Administrative Assistants who report to each Deputy Mayor/Senior Advisor. Additionally, individual meetings with Administrative Assistants are held on a monthly basis to discuss the status of outstanding directives, and the actions being taken to issue the requested information in a timely manner. Policy Staff has instituted an internal tracking system to identify the reasons why directives are past due and is working to ensure that status updates are consistently recorded.

The OCA has observed that since the last quarterly report, there has been a significant reduction in outstanding directives. OCA is committed to providing the BCC with timely and accurate information on the status of directives and collaborates with the Clerk of the Board and the Mayor's Office to do so. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (305) 375-2524.

c: Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez, Mayor
Christopher Agrippa, Division Chief, Clerk of the Board
Angel Petisco, Director, Information Technology Department
Nicole Tallman, Director, Policy & Legislative Affairs, Office of the Mayor

ATTACHMENT
Computer-Generated Reminder sent to Assignees on Mondays

-----Original Message-----

From: Commission Auditor Directives [<mailto:ocaddt@miamidade.gov>]

Sent: Monday, April 06, 2015 7:00 AM

Subject: Notice of Board Directive(s)

Pursuant to Resolution 256-10, the Office of the Commission Auditor (OCA) hereby advises that the Board of County Commissioners has requested your action on the directive(s) below.

If you have complied with this directive, please ensure that the directive database is updated to reflect the status of this directive.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the OCA at (305) 375-2524 or ocaddt@miamidade.gov

Number of directives for <NAME OF ASSIGNEE> :

DIRECTIVE DATE:

AGENDA ITEM #:

DIRECTIVE:

DUE DATE: Past Due by ____ day(s)

REQUESTOR: Commissioner < >