



PAM SLATER-PRICE
 CHAIRWOMAN
 SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT
 SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
 2010 JUL 26 AM 11 39
 THOMAS J. PASTUSZKA
 CLERK OF THE BOARD
 OF SUPERVISORS

DATE: August 3, 2010
 TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: USING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY AT MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Overview:

Public communication at meetings of the Board of Supervisors is an essential aspect of conducting legislative business for the County of San Diego.

However, sometimes it is difficult for a member of the public to set aside hours out of a work day to address the Board in person on a particular issue. Still others might not participate due to physical disability, a lack of transportation, or the confidence to speak in public.

An online public comment system will allow constituents to comment on specific agenda items before the Board of Supervisors. It will improve transparency in government by allowing all Board members to view comments by the public, not just members of the public who e-mail the individual offices directly. Furthermore, public comments will be available for public consumption as part of each statement of proceedings – similar to a constituent commenting in person.

Technology has brought the County of San Diego countless opportunities to improve communicating with and delivering services to the public. We will continue our pursuit of the most effective technology to best serve residents, who expect information faster and in a wider variety of formats.

The Board of Supervisors must adapt our business meetings to this growing technology trend by creating an online public comment feature on the County Web site for Board meetings.

Recommendation(s)
 CHAIRWOMAN PAM SLATER-PRICE:

1. Direct the CAO to report back to the Board of Supervisors within 60 days with recommendations for creating and implementing a service allowing constituents to comment online for meetings of the Board of Supervisors;

Serving the communities of ...
 Cardiff
 Carmel Mountain
 Carmel Valley
 Del Mar
 Del Mar Heights
 Del Mar Mesa
 Encinitas
 Escondido
 La Jolla
 Leucadia
 Mira Mesa
 Navajo
 Olivenhain
 Pacific Beach
 Rancho Bernardo
 Rancho Penasquitos
 Sabre Springs
 San Carlos
 Scripps Ranch
 Solana Beach
 Tierrasanta
 Torrey Hills
 Torrey Pines

2. Direct the CAO to develop a policy for the rules and procedures that will guide online public comments for meetings of the Board of Supervisors; and
3. Direct the CAO to provide an estimate of costs associated with implementing a two-year pilot project for an online comment application.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with these recommendations.

Background:

During the last 15 years, online service has grown exponentially for both the private and public sectors. Every department at the County of San Diego, in one way or another, has harnessed technology to improve their ability to serve the public. As a result, the County of San Diego was ranked first in the 2008 Digital Counties Survey for excellent use of information technology.

Online public comment features have already been implemented across levels of government. The Orange County Board of Supervisors has an online public comment system for their Board meetings. The Cities of Sacramento and Boulder, Colorado also have online public comment options available for city council meetings; and Metrolink in Los Angeles selectively uses an online public comment application depending on the popularity of the meeting taking place.

Online public participation is quickly becoming the norm for public entities. We must adapt and embrace this technology and give this option to our constituents.

According to the California Emerging Technology Fund Annual Report 2009, 70 percent of Californians use the Internet and more than 60 percent have Internet access at home. A 2007 report by the Public Policy Institute of California pegged San Diego as one of the top three regions in California with residents most likely to use computers and the Internet. These reports indicate an ever-increasing population of computer literacy.

The County of San Diego has seized countless opportunities to improve our delivery of services through technology. For example, the County's utilizes more than 100 online tools available through the County's Web site. Moreover, the County has launched a Facebook page, Twitter stream, and a YouTube channel to enhance information-sharing with the public.

On January 5, 2010, our Assessor-Recorder-County Clerk's office joined an electronic recording delivery system that will allow real estate professionals to record property documents electronically in multiple counties from a single point of origin – *a first in California history.*

We have also seen a significant rise in circulation of library materials because far more library patrons are using home computers for library self-service.

In fiscal 2008-09, residents renewed 1.3 million items on the library's Web site – up 72 percent from the previous year.

During the same time period, total online reservations for library materials *rose 36 percent to 1.1 million.*

These examples highlight our efforts to continuously find the most effective ways to serve residents. Despite our accomplishments, we must continue to expand online services for the public benefit. This includes providing residents with the ability to voice their opinions online on agenda items before the Board of Supervisors.

Giving residents this simple option to communicate their opinions through the County's Web site prior to meetings of the Board of Supervisors will improve our ability to communicate with the public, offer more opportunities for participation in the government process, and most importantly, remove barriers for certain people who otherwise might not be heard.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pam Slater-Price".

PAM SLATER-PRICE

Chairwoman

San Diego County Board of Supervisors

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM
INFORMATION SHEET

**SUBJECT: ENHANCING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS OF THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

SUPV. DIST.: Three

COUNTY COUNSEL APPROVAL: Form and Legality () Yes () N/A
() Standard Form () Ordinance () Resolution
Review Board Letter Only: [] Yes [] No

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER REVIEW: () Yes (X) No
4 VOTES: () Yes (X) No

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES [] Yes [X] No

CONTRACT REVIEW PANEL: () Approved (X) N/A

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTION: N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE: N/A

CITIZEN COMMITTEE STATEMENT: N/A

CONCURRENCES: N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District Three

CONTACT PERSON(S): Mark Olson 531-5533 MS A500

DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

MEETING DATE