



Performance Audit of the Clerk of the Board Services Final Report

County of Orange

April 16, 2020



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Introduction

The Clerk of the Board (COB) is a core administrative function for the County, critical for effective and efficient governance of the County's democratic process, public access, and transparency to elected officials. It is also critical to the recording of the County's decision-making and expenditures. The COB is a critical position in the ability of the County to perform non-partisan administrative diligence. This critical role is performed by providing agendas for the Board of Supervisors (BOS), as well as posting those agendas for the public within legal time limits. As the official record keeper of the BOS, the COB records and prepares the official records of the proceedings and any recorded actions taken by the BOS. In addition, the COB manages the hearings and proceeding for Assessment Appeals for property taxes. The COB also performs a variety of other various duties, related to record keeping for the BOS, ensuring that the BOS is functioning according to State regulations.

The purpose of conducting a performance audit is to examine the department's current operations, policies, procedures, and practices in order to determine which functions of the department are currently working well and which functions have gaps and could use improvement. In the County, the department's primary responsibility is to provide clerking services for the BOS with the department divided into three units which includes Board Services, Assessment Appeals, and Administration/Files Management.

Performance audits are useful for determining efficiency and effectiveness of current operations and looking for opportunities for improvement. In particular, this performance audit of the COB is intended to:

- Review the current operations, policies, procedures, and practices for consistency with the governing laws and policies;
- Review the current operations, policies, procedures, and practices for efficiency and effectiveness with existing resources;
- Review the current use of technology and make recommendations for improvements and enhanced efficiency; and
- Review the organizational structure and make recommendations for enhanced efficiency within existing resources.

Methodologies

We used a combination of methodologies that serve to support our findings and recommendations. Below is a summary of each method we utilized:

- **Interviews.** We conducted 24 one-on-one interviews with department staff, allowing opportunities for each member of the department to share their perspective of the department's performance. We also provided opportunities for interviews with each

of the Board of Supervisors and their Chief of Staff as well as other County stakeholders. The County stakeholders interact with the COB and affect its ability to meet its role and responsibility to the County. In all, we conducted interviews with three Board of Supervisors along with their Chiefs of Staff and conducted interviews with the Chief of Staff for the remaining two Supervisors, as well as several executive members of the County. A list of interviewees is included in Appendix II.

- **Field and In-Office Observations.** Through observations of the offices, basement storage, and viewings of online Board meetings, and other observations of day-to-day operations, our Project Team gathered first-hand information regarding the provision of the department's services.
- **Data and Document Review.** We reviewed data received from the department and the County including organization charts, policy and procedure documents, job descriptions, and other information collected and provided by the department. A list of documents reviewed are included in Appendix II.
- **Smart Practices and Benchmark Analysis.** We conducted research and collected information regarding smart policies and practices of other county clerks. In addition, we conducted benchmarking of other county Clerk of the Boards including Los Angeles, San Diego, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties.

Summary of Performance

The department is currently providing critical services to the County that is consistent with governing law and policies. The department also performs several non-mandated tasks for the BOS, including processing human resource needs, processing payroll, some responsibilities for the budget, managing the purchasing process, coordinating building maintenance needs, and providing other administrative functions for the BOS.

Overall, our study noted that current operations in the department are generally effective and show a high level of understanding of the core competency areas of the COB. We have noted that the department is responsive to providing services to the public. In particular, we noted:

- High accuracy ratings in the Board Services unit, providing the Board and County with agendas with a high accuracy rating - 95% of published agenda titles were accurate with no errors (2018 Business Plan Results).
- High approval ratings for the Assessment Appeals unit. The unit continues to file and schedule assessment appeals hearings well within their two year deadline. Assessment Appeals additionally holds public workshops in order to help County residents understand the assessment appeals process and has consistently received favorable ratings (continued 100% overall satisfactory or better by workshop attendees).

- Timely replies to public records requests by the Administration/Files Management unit as a result of a highly responsive staff and an improved process of implementing the Next Request system to track and respond to requests received by Clerk of the Board.

Summary of Recommendations

While all of the critical functions of the department are currently being met, we found that there are several issues and opportunities for improvement in the department, primarily in the department's ability to increase services provided to the Board of Supervisors and their staff.

This report includes 13 issues with 24 recommendations for departmental improvement. Our specific recommendations for the COB fall into three primary themes:

- Reorganize the department to strengthen the administrative management function to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) as a singular unit.
- Utilize existing state of the art agenda and file management technology to be used to streamline and enhance the policies and procedures for the department.
- Increase communications, both internally and externally in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness as a department.

We also found that some of the County's *Rules of Procedures* and other agenda procedures required for the agenda process could be updated in order to streamline work activities while meeting County needs. The current agenda process may be requiring additional workload and staffing for the COB compared with the other benchmarked counties. Many of the *Rules of Procedures* regarding the agenda were implemented prior to the current BOS and County Executive Officer (CEO). We recommend that the COB convene a process with current BOS and CEO to address the overall agenda process to ensure that the *Rules of Procedures* follow required state regulations while not unnecessarily creating additional workload throughout the County.

II. ORGANIZATION

In Orange County, the current organizational structure is a top down hierarchy structure as seen in Figure II-1 below (as of September 2019). At the top of the structure is an appointed Executive Manager of the Clerk of the Board. She has assistance for management of the department from a Chief Deputy Clerk of the Board along with administrative support of an Executive Secretary. There are three primary units in the department: Board Services, Administration/Files Management, and Assessment Appeals. The Chief Deputy Clerk of the Board oversees only two of those units, Board Services and Administration/Files Management. In addition, the Deputy Clerk of the Board also oversees a Financial Planning Services Manager for the department, which is separate from the aforementioned units. Assessment Appeals, a third unit of the department, has its Intake members housed three floors below the rest of the department. The Hearing members for Assessment Appeals and their offices are located in a separate building, in which the hearings for Assessment Appeals take place. Each of the three units is managed by an Administrative Manager (Assistant to the Clerk of the Board) with support from a number of Lead Board Service Specialists, Senior Board Service Specialists, and Board Service Specialists. Up until the current Fiscal Year, the department also had its own Information Technology (IT) unit that provided significant support for the technology being used in the department. The staff from the IT unit was moved to a centralized County Information Technology Department (OCIT) per a County policy.

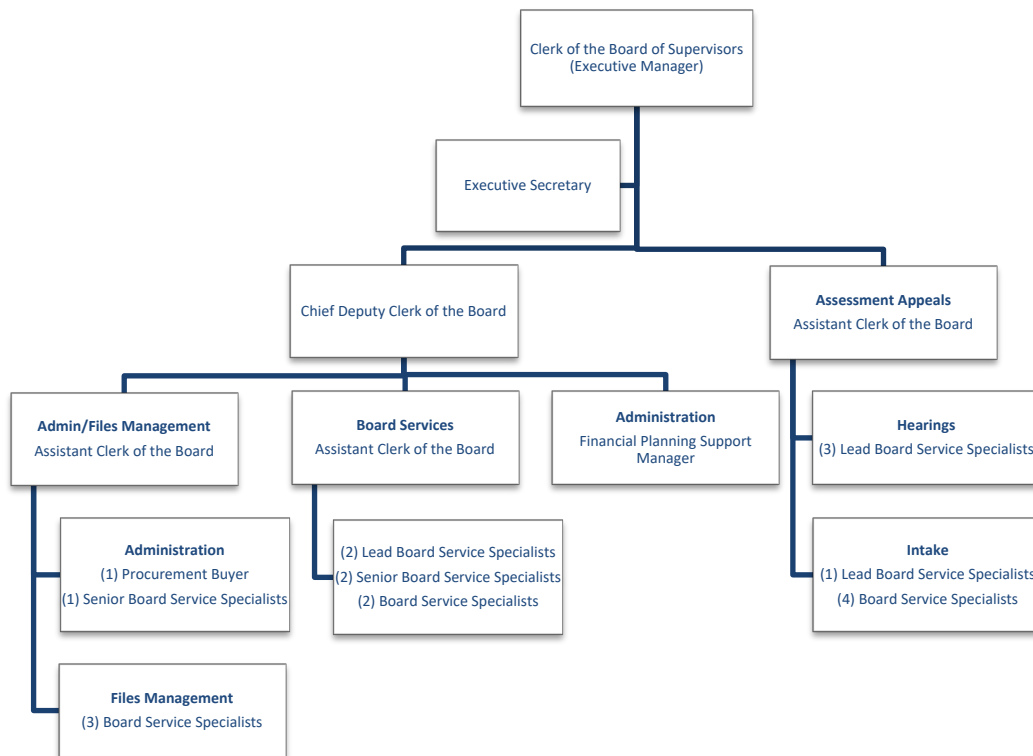


Figure II-1

Functional Organizational Chart as of September 2019

Critical for any organization are the years of experience and tenure of its employees which are in the public arena. They provide the short and long-term memory of an institution and its ability to effectively perform and provide critical redundancy for operational success. Based on our extensive interviews of nearly all staff and staff self-reporting, the Clerk of the Board office has at its base very experienced line staff primarily in two functional units, Board Services and Assessment Appeals, where a few of the staff have been serving the Clerk of the Board for over 20 years. These services operate according to the State rules and regulations, with staff that are knowledgeable in their roles.

Issue #1: Policy and Procedure Manuals

Finding: There are no full policy and procedure manuals for the prime unit functions.

The department manages several key operations for the County that involve highly complex procedures in order to ensure that County and State regulations are satisfied. We reviewed a hard drive of all the department's policies and procedures and noted that while there were policies and procedures for many situations, e.g. "Final Agenda Checklist," there were no manuals that explained a process from start to finish. In the August 2018 Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new Agenda Management system ("OC Agenda"), the County's IT department put together *Business Requirements* for the department's current agenda process as an Appendix to the RFP. The *Business Requirements* was a 140-page manual that provided detail of the current IT procedures required for their current agenda process. From the materials that we were provided, there are no other written full procedures for any of the units.

The interviews noted that longer tenured staff have traditionally provided informal training for the newer staff on the department's policies and procedures. Many of the written procedures that exist have not been updated, an indication that many of the written procedures are not referenced. Organizing the policies and procedures into a complete manual would allow the full process to be managed, even if the long tenured staff are unable to complete the tasks.

Recommendation #1. Managers of the unit should develop a written procedures manual for their unit functions.

Policies are created to establish expectations and to provide a footprint on how to consistently manage and carry out diverse functions. Having the managers of the unit organize a formal manual for the primary unit function would help to ensure that the processes are properly exercised. This can also be utilized as a training tool for new staff as well as a reference for longer tenured staff, should conflict about processes and procedures arise. It is further recommended that on an annual basis, managers should review the policies to ensure they continue to comply with federal and state laws and the needs of the department, and update those policies as applicable.

III. BOARD SERVICES

The Board Services unit's primary responsibility is to provide the agendas for the Board of Supervisors meetings with a secondary responsibility to provide clerking support for County Commissions that do not have the ability to clerk their own meetings. As an Assistant Clerk of the Board, the Manager of Board Services' primary responsibility is to ensure that the agenda is managed according to the rules and regulations of State agenda practices for counties. The manager coordinates with the County department directors on County agenda items for the Board meetings. The manager is also responsible for managing appointments on County Commissions as well as managing Conflict of Interests forms and regulations for the County.

As shown in Figure III-1, the unit utilizes two (2) Lead Board Service Specialists, two (2) Senior Board Service Specialists, and two (2) Board Service Specialists. Each is assigned specific County Departments for all agenda items. In addition to being assigned to County Departments for agenda items, the two (2) Lead Board Service Specialists alternate taking the lead to manage the agendas for Board meetings as the agenda project manager.

In addition to producing the agenda, the Board Services unit also provide clerking services to several County Commissions. At the time of the interviews with Board Services staff, the unit noted nine (9) clerking responsibilities for County commissions. The Assistant to the Clerk of the Board and the Lead Board Service Specialists regularly provide clerking services along with Senior Board Services Specialists as back up. The Senior Board Service Specialists are trained and prepared to provide clerking services for County Commissions.

The organizational culture in the unit demonstrated a value of high work ethic and the mission-focused agenda production. Each member of this unit has a specific role in the production of the agenda. The unit has a reputation for agenda accuracy and timeliness of agenda postings. The business rules for the agenda process are extensive, with each type of agenda item having different template requirements and each item reviewed and approved multiple times.

There are many contributors to each agenda in addition to the Clerk of the Board. While the department continues to produce its agenda similarly to the patterns from the past 25 years, there have been many improvements in the development of technology that could allow the agenda process to be quicker and easier for all of its users. Other County agencies utilize these agenda technologies and processes which allow for easier tracking and changes to agenda items. The department has continued to utilize County IT staff for technology programming to continue its current business processes with the CAMS and Agenda Works systems, both software programs that have been long discontinued by their developers.

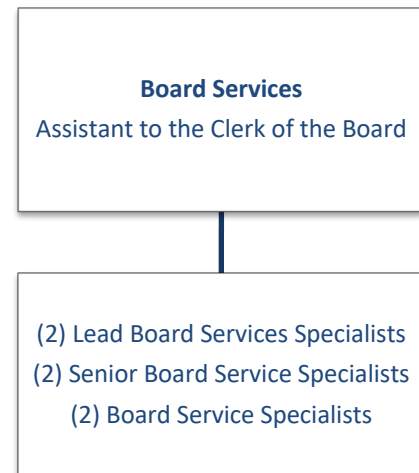


Figure III-1
Organizational Structure of the
Board Services Unit

While many of the business processes for the agenda were developed over the years of producing agenda for the County, the overall business processes have not been reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness. The department is currently pursuing the development of a new Agenda Management system developed to continue with much of the current primary business procedures, with some new enhancements and features.

Issue #2: Current Agenda Process

Finding: There is system duplication in the County's effort to produce each agenda as a result of County policies and procedures.

Over the years, the County has developed policies and procedures regarding the agenda process, some of which is documented in the County's *Rules for Procedures*. The policies and procedures were enacted by former BOS and CEO and enhanced agenda requirements for the County, beyond the State requirements for BOS agendas. Specifically, County policies require the BOS agenda to be formalized three weeks in advance of a meeting and the full Final Agenda to be posted two weeks before each BOS meeting instead of the required 72 hours in advance of a meeting per the Brown Act. We found that the COB effectively carries out the County's policies and procedures for the agenda process. During our interviews, we found indications that those outside of the COB are "working around" the County's current agenda process, an indication that the current business processes may have become obsolete.

- The CEO develops its own "grey" agenda – a working agenda of the CEO for use by the BOS, CEO and CEO Chiefs two weeks prior to the Board meeting.
- Board of Supervisors staff stated preferences to utilize the Supplemental Agenda for changes and items to the agenda, rather than contributing to the County's regular agenda processes.
- There is a system of various colored hard copies of agendas utilized by the COB, CEO, and County Counsel for each Board meeting that are also received by the BOS.
- Some Board of Supervisors staff stated that they do not review the material in the "Final Agenda," because there is an expectation that the agenda items will change significantly with the Supplemental Agenda prior to the Board meeting.
- Our review of a sample of Supplemental Agendas revealed that several items are not necessarily last minute items, often placed by the CEO and BOS, and should have been properly vetted through the regular agenda.
- Board Services Specialists find that their received hard copy versions of agenda items from departments sometimes differ from electronic versions received from the department as departments may have revised their documents after the department's imposed deadline for receiving agenda items.

Instead of the BOS and CEO contributing to one agenda process, the result is that the COB focuses its workload and efforts on developing and posting a Final (Blue) Agenda that is vetted by the department process and is posted two weeks ahead of the meeting. Outside

of the County’s agenda process, the CEO’s department keeping a separate version of agenda changes in a “Grey Agenda” and BOS has a preference to submit agenda items for the Supplemental Agenda both which provide additional items as well as significant changes to the “Final Agenda.”

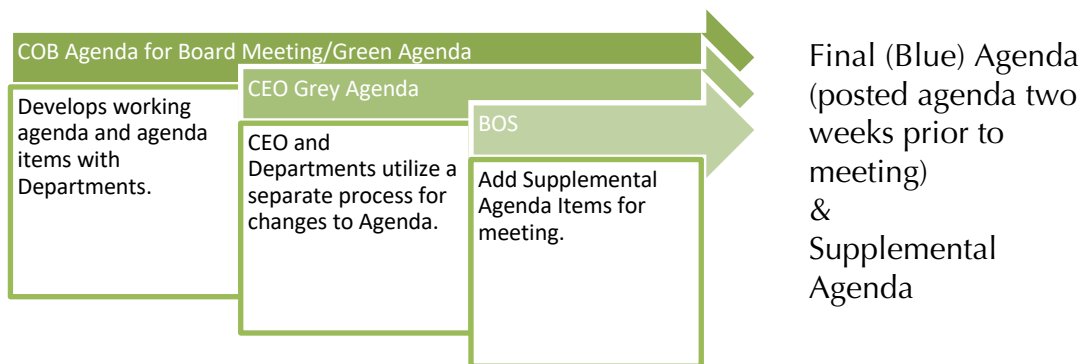


Figure III-2: Current Agenda Process

Recommendation #2: The COB should meet with the BOS and CEO to re-evaluate the County’s agenda process and procedures.

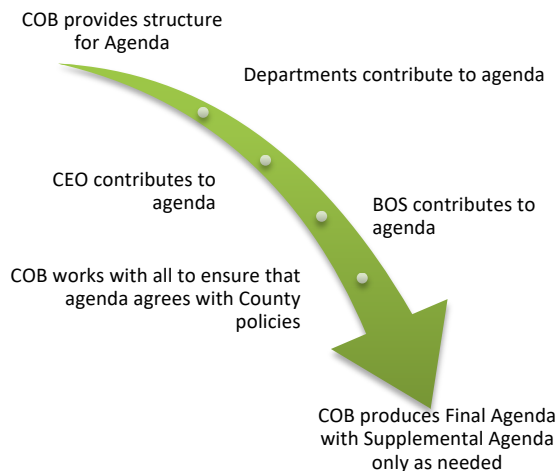


Figure III-3:
Singular Agenda Process

The development of the Board agendas should be a collaborative effort in order to allow the County to properly function. The COB’s role in developing the agenda should be to allow the County, its departments, and the Board of Supervisors, to make necessary adjustments before publication while the COB should simultaneously guide those efforts in ensuring that the agenda correctly reflects the

regulatory requirements of the County and that the language correctly reflects the legislative action that will take place. This could be done in a singular agenda process that does not require the CEO and BOS to develop their own processes outside of the County’s established process. The County’s current agenda process should be updated in order to reflect the needs of the current BOS, CEO, and departments and not continue to be based on policies and procedures that no longer meet the County’s needs.

Issue #3: Staffing Resources in Board Services

Finding: Workload for staff in Board Services is not evenly distributed.

The workload of the Board Services primarily revolves around deadlines for the agenda. Versions of the agendas are distributed weeks prior to the meeting and each of the staff in the unit have individually assigned County departments to process agenda items. The assignments of the departments are primarily to help the staff to develop their expertise with agenda items from those departments. This also leads to some staff members having heavier workloads for some agendas while having lighter workloads for others.

In order to spread out the work within the Board Services unit, it is recommended that the workload be distributed with each agenda. The staff can retain its primary relationships and expertise with each County department, but also develop working knowledge of agenda items with other departments. Additional internal communication and management of the unit will be required in order to manage the workload of the unit by each agenda, but it will also lead to better management of workload within the unit.

Recommendation #3: Agenda workload should be distributed according to agenda items.

The County should look to revise its current agenda business processes instead of pursuing technology to fit the current agenda business process. A new agenda management technology should allow the CEO, BOS, and departments to collaborate on agenda items and changes into the agenda process, while the agenda process is managed by the COB.

Recommendation #4: Review the full agenda process with the County and develop new agenda process policies and procedures that accommodate County users.

We conducted a benchmark study of the Orange County Clerk of the Board with other County Clerks departments in particular, comparing their agenda staffing (Figure III-4). The neighboring County of Los Angeles is a significantly larger County than the other benchmarked counties in population and hold regular weekly Board of Supervisor meetings. It is significantly noticeable that the COB for Orange County has more staff dedicated to developing Board Agendas compared with the other similar sized benchmarked Counties. With populations around 2 – 3 million people and BOS meetings between 22 – 30 per year, the benchmarked counties reported that their dedicated agenda production staff was significantly smaller with 3 or 4 people, as compared to the 7 staff in the Board Services unit in Orange County. When conducting the surveys, we did not inquire about the details of each of the specific roles and responsibilities of each of the agenda staff in order to compare duties and responsibilities.

County	County Population (in millions)	County Budget (FY 2019-20) (in billions)	COB and BOS Budget ¹ (in millions)	# of Board Meetings per year	# of FTEs on Agendas
Los Angeles	10.0	\$33.1	\$220.4	50	13
Orange	3.1	\$6.8	\$12.0	26	7
Riverside	2.4	\$6.1	\$11.4	36	4
San Bernardino	2.1	\$6.6	\$10.4	22	3
San Diego	3.3	\$6.3	\$14.4	30	3

Figure III-4
Benchmarking of other County Clerks of the Board

The Board Services unit maintains a high level of professionalism in its efforts to produce agendas without errors. The efficiency of the production could be improved by streamlining the County's agenda process. Streamlining measures could include allowing the various County departments and the COB to quickly make any necessary changes to their agenda items prior to the agenda being published. It also could include having the Final Agenda be published a week ahead of the Board meetings, so that changes and deletions of agenda items for the Supplemental Agenda are utilized less often. Should the department decide to implement newer technology with new County policies and procedures, it is likely that the unit can be managed more efficiently, with less staff and a flexible distribution of workload.

¹Several County Clerks of the Board have their budget included with the Board of Supervisors and their staff.

The Assessment Appeals unit is a function of the Clerk of the Board which receives and processes Assessment Appeal applications. In addition, the unit schedules assessment appeals for hearing before each Assessment Appeals Boards, clerks the hearings, records, and provides all parties with the final decision of the Assessment Appeals Board. In its simplicity, the Assessment Appeals Board serves as a conduit of the Board of Supervisors role as the Board of Equalization for the County. Each Supervisor appoints a member to each of the Appeals Boards. The Assessment Appeals unit works regularly with the public tax payers, the Appeals Boards, and the Assessor’s Office.

There are two sections within the Assessment Appeals unit of the COB. Most of the staff in the Assessment Appeals unit work in the Intake section of the assessment appeals process. They also staff their own reception area for the public. In addition, they hold workshops for the public to help them understand the County’s Assessment Appeals process. They regularly answer questions about the process and applications to ensure that the applications are processed correctly before being scheduled for a hearing with an appointed Assessment Appeals Board. The Hearings section is staffed by Lead Board Services Specialists, who schedule the hearings, clerk the hearings with the appointed Appeals Boards, and provide any actions that are needed following the hearings, including the processing of any payments or refunds.

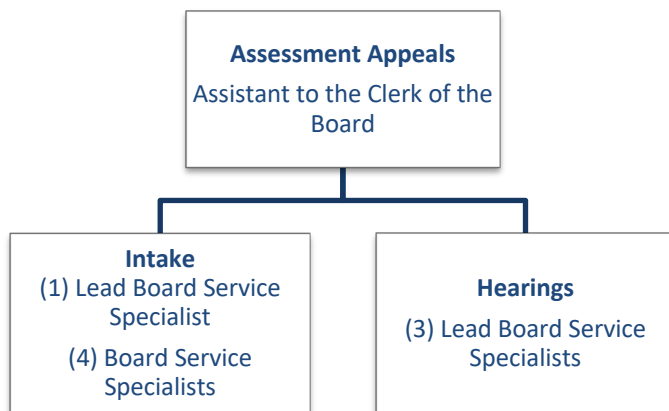


Figure IV-1
Organizational Structure of the
Assessment Appeals Unit as of September 2019

The Assessment Appeals process is well ordered and follows the State mandated rules and regulations. They enjoy high customer satisfaction ratings and are proactive in anticipating public tax payer needs by providing Assessment Appeals Workshops and a website that provides information so that the assessment appeals hearings are able to run efficiently. As a unit, they function effectively. Their day to day functions are primarily independent of the rest of the department.

The Manager of the Assessment Appeals unit provides a clear sense of direction as to the need for staff teamwork and cross training. It was the manager’s belief that because of the specialized nature of Assessment Appeals, a strong core of redundant skills was necessary for effectiveness and long-term stability. There was a strong understanding of employee skill-building and succession planning. Succession planning has been part of recent discussions with the COB and necessary budget allocations have been advocated to offer potential advancement opportunity within the unit. As such, a new job classification was recently approved. The position is an Intake Manager of Assessment

Appeals to manage the intake section and support the duties and responsibilities of the management of the Assessment Appeals unit as a gateway for an employee with a broader unit-level experience.

The workload of staff in Assessment Appeals seems to be evenly and fairly distributed, with staff also encouraged to cross train in the work and responsibilities of the other staff in the Assessment Appeals unit even as they have their assigned primary responsibilities. Since each Assessment Appeals application can be managed by multiple staff, the staff operate as a team with realization that their specific work impacts the work of others. Each of the Lead Board Services Specialists is experienced and knowledgeable as the primary lead for clerking. They are given the responsibility of ensuring that each Assessment Appeals Hearing is clerked and run properly with assistance from other Board Service Specialists.

Issue #5: Files Management for Assessment Appeals

Finding: Assessment Appeals files are often the lowest priority for the staff in Files Management.

The stacks of unfiled completed cases for Assessment Appeals is currently not an issue for the unit, now that Files Management is fully staffed. This has been an issue in the past and could potentially become an issue should State regulations change the Assessment Appeals process. Currently, at the completion and the processing of a hearing, the files are sent upstairs to the Administration/Files Management unit to be scanned into the electronic filing systems and filed away. File management for Assessment Appeals has traditionally been the lowest priority over Board records and public record requests.

Recommendation #5: Dedicate a Board Services Specialist in the unit with the responsibility to upload and manage the files for Assessment Appeals.

An Assessment Appeals staff member with the responsibility to manage the files after they are no longer needed, would ensure that the files are stored and managed properly. With specialized documents, it would be more efficient for the unit staff to manage and store their own files after the hearings have been completed. It would be the regular final step in closing in a file on the assessment appeals process.

Files Management is a section in the Administration/Files Management unit, but has little overlap with the rest of the staff in the unit who are focused on administrative services of the Board. Files Management manages the records and files for the Board of Supervisors and provides services to the County and the public for record requests. An important role of the department is to properly store and manage files for the Board of Supervisors and their meetings. Files for the County are currently scanned by the COB and stored electronically. Physical files are kept in files and stored in the basement of the Hall of Administration as well as in an off-site storage facility.

In addition to managing the storage of Board of Supervisor records, this function of the department is also responsible for responding to record requests by the County and the public. Public record requests are tracked via an online system. Public record requests received from walk-ins and the phone are recorded onto the online system to ensure records of those requests as well as to ensure that the requests are processed in a timely manner.

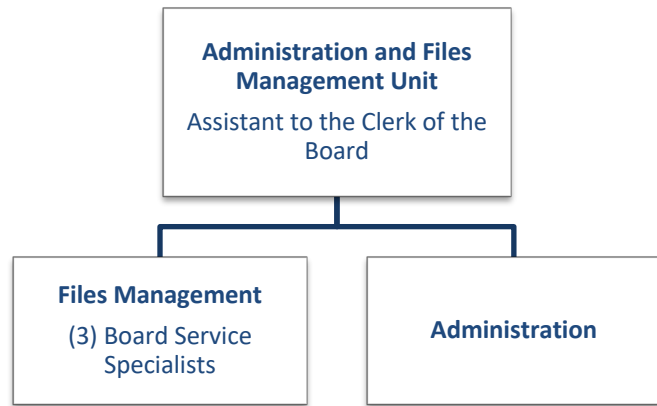


Figure V-1
Organizational Structure of Files Management Section

Currently, there are three dedicated Board Services Specialists in the Administration and Files Management unit who are dedicated to managing the files and managing public records requests. Recently fully staffed, they focus on responding to the County and public record requests in a timely manner. They have made progress on electronically filing and cleaning up physical files that had not been previously filed. The unit is dedicated to getting many of the physical files from the Hall of Administration basement scanned and will be supported by additional scanning and filing services. The physical files will still be maintained offsite in the County’s storage filing facility.

Issue #6: Reception Area

Finding: The Files Management staff are currently not in a position to see any of the walk-ups to the Clerk of the Board.

An important function of the Clerk of the Board is to be able to provide customer service to the Supervisors, County departments, and the public when documents are needed for review. We found that staff are most responsive to the requests received via online (website or email) or phone. The staff responsible for responding to public walk-ins are currently not

positioned to view the reception area to the Clerk of the Board, leaving the customer to wait until another member of the department informs one of the staff of Files Management.

Recommendation #6: Designate a receptionist for the Clerk of the Board office.

A receptionist for the Clerk of the Board would ensure that someone is appointed to acknowledge visitors and to be available to provide customer service for the department. While there is not a lot of foot traffic received in the department, setting up a workstation in view of the reception area or at the reception area would allow the receptionist to be productive when not managing customers.

Recommendation #7: Place a computer kiosk in the COB reception area to allow customers to enter in their own public record requests.

Having a kiosk in the reception area that allows customers to enter public records requests or other information would also allow for County customers to be acknowledged. The receptionist would be able to aid users, but also allow tech savvy customers to quickly get the help they are seeking.

Issue #7: Filing System

Finding: The County's current filing system relies on a physical filing system to locate physical documents which is not easily accessible to other County Departments.

Depending on the age and type of files, the researcher needs to utilize a system of binders, files, microfiche, before being able to identify the location of the physical file. Older physical files are stored off site and need to be requested and fetched. While it may not be of value to scan all of the County's existing physical files, utilizing a comprehensive electronic filing system so that the location search for the file can be done electronically without searching through binders, files, and microfiche, would save the researchers available time, but also be able to be utilized by more people in the COB and throughout the County.

Recommendation #8: Utilize a professional files management service to implement a new electronic files management system that organizes and manages all of the County's past, current, and new files, that could be easily accessible to County employees.

A new files management system should be implemented so that anyone in COB and County can easily search for files, not just those in Files Management who have been trained to use the current system. The use of a professional files management service could sort and organize physical and electronic files that have been long neglected as well as provide a method to combine the various filing systems currently being utilized.

Recommendation #9: Allow a Board Service Specialist to manage files and records in each COB functional unit.

Once a more user friendly filing system is implemented in the COB, it will be easier for others to access the filing system. Rather than place all of the Board Services Specialist for files management in one place, we recommend that each COB unit have a Board Services Specialist that could provide filing services for that unit, managing the filing for those units as records are completed. Board agenda and files should be properly filed after each Board meeting. Assessment Appeals Hearing material should be properly files after each Hearing is completed. Any administrative records should be filed when the contracts or other records are executed. Those Board Service Specialists should also have the ability to work with one another across units to additionally provide support where needed.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Many County Clerk of the Boards (i.e. Los Angeles, Riverside, Kern, and Santa Barbara) provide the administrative management functions for the Board of Supervisors, despite not being a mandated function of the Clerk of the Board. In Orange County, the COB has been the primary provider of administrative services for the BOS. The position of the Administration management for the BOS was previously left vacant for several years. While this position was vacant, some of functions of administration management were picked up by the CEO and other members of the department. The department now maintains a unit title of Administration/Files Management as well as a position of a Finance and Budget Manager. The Administration/Files Management unit is primarily focused on the County purchasing functions for the Board of Supervisors and the department. Other functions of administrative management of the BOS remained with other positions within the department and the CEO.

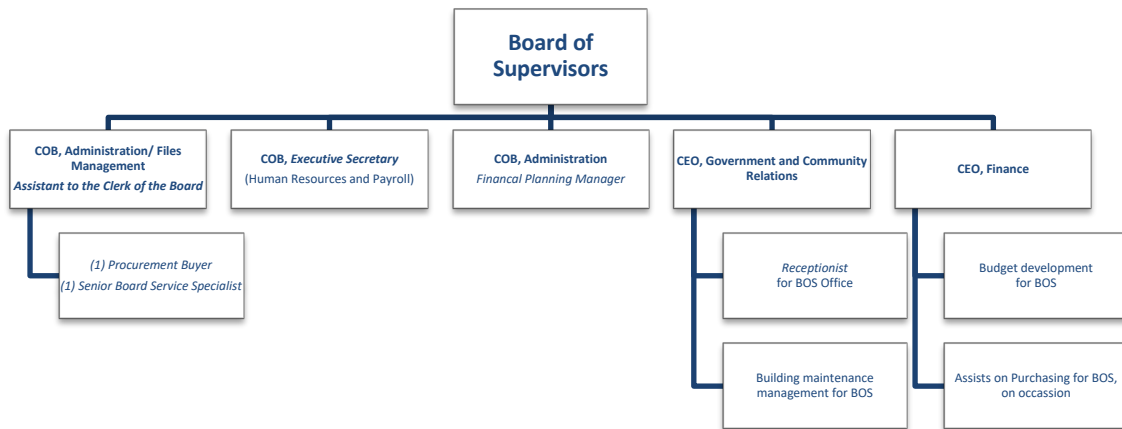


Figure VI-1
Current Functional Chart of Administrative Services to the Board of Supervisors

Issue #8: Administrative Management Function

Finding: Administrative management functions to the Board of Supervisors is spread out among staff in the department and the County Executive Office with some overlapping responsibilities.

The Board of Supervisors and their staff have been given a contact list of various people in the County to manage different administrative issues. Some of the interviews with Board of Supervisors and their staff noted difficulties for getting resolution on County equipment, building maintenance, making purchases, Commission appointments and vacancies, etc. Depending on the problem, a different person or number needed to be contacted.

Additionally, we found that some roles and services for the Board of Supervisors were duplicated and spread out among various staff members:

- COB Administration and Files Manager – COB contact for the needs for purchasing, building and equipment maintenance, and other County needs for the Board of Supervisors offices.
- COB Executive Secretary – Performs the Human Resources functions including employee management and payroll comprising approximately 60% of her workload (self-reported).
- COB Financial Planning Manager – Prepares and provides administrative support for the services and supplies budget of the Board of Supervisors.
- CEO Finance and CEO Government and Community Relations units additionally manage the BOS receptionist and scheduling, the salary and benefits budget for the BOS, providing building maintenance fixes, and purchasing support. While overlapping with some of the roles of the COB, the CEO staff noted that they pitch in to provide support when requested by the BOS.

Recommendation #10: The COB should work with the BOS and CEO to develop a singular functional unit either within the COB or CEO with a manager to provide a full suite of administrative management services for the Board of Supervisors.

During our interviews with the Board of Supervisors and their staff, there is an expectation that the COB should be providing more direct administrative management services to the Board of Supervisors. The role of administrative management for the Board of Supervisors needs to be elevated and should be organized as such. An Administrative Management unit for the Board of Supervisors and the COB should perform all of the functions mentioned above, under one unit, rather than be under separate units. That unit should function to:

- Perform the Human Resource functions and payroll for the BOS;
- Prepare and manage the BOS budget;
- Provide and manage the BOS receptionist;
- Provide purchasing services, building, and facility maintenance for the BOS; and
- Be available to the Board of Supervisors for any County needs and services.

Issue #9: Support to the Board Offices

Finding: Several Board of Supervisors and their staff noted that their primary contact with the COB is when there are issues or problems.

The Board of Supervisors offices are provided with daily mail delivery by COB Board Service Specialists. Other COB staff also occasionally provide services to the Board Offices. Yet interviews with the Board of Supervisors and their staff have expressed that they do not currently have regular communication with the Clerk of the Board, herself. There was an expressed desire to have regular communication in order to feel better supported by the department.

Recommendation #11: Provide proactive support to the BOS members and staff.

The COB should ensure that the BOS members and staff have their functional needs met, such as anticipating purchases/equipment for new staff and/or upcoming events, walking through the offices to see if there are building maintenance issues, reminding BOS staff of upcoming vacancies on Commissions, etc. This would require increased communication, knowing and understanding the BOS day to day and special activities through regular interactions with each of the BOS offices.

There was formerly an IT unit in the department until the current fiscal year when the positions were moved to a centralized OCIT Department for the County. Much of the work of the previous IT staff had been providing programming patches to the old software in order to continue using the software that is no longer supported by the companies that developed them. Much of the current procedures utilized in the COB today are shaped as a result of the technology being used, such as CAMS and Agenda Works, which are now decades old.

Issue #10: Updating Technology

The department has traditionally pursued like-for-like technology in order to continue the use of their current practices with the least amount of disruption. The County of Orange is currently developing a new customized agenda management software system. Due to the County's current policies regarding the agenda process, there are more layers to the County's agenda process that will continue to make a heavier workload for COB agenda staff compared with other counties.

Other counties utilize less staff and have greater reliance on technology to organize and manage the work of the COB. Technology is available that can provide more transparency to the process and allows the County to have the ability to cut down on the use of hard copies/printing that gets passed between departments and the COB for the agenda. This will require updating the County's current agenda practices so that the new technology being developed for the County can also allow for an efficient process. This could potentially result in different staffing needs for the COB, as efficient processes may be developed that require less FTE's for the agenda process.

Recommendation #12: Instead of utilizing like-for-like technology, consider updating the County's policies and procedures when updating technology to be able to utilize newer capabilities and features of available technology.

The COB is in process of implementing a new agenda management system. The detailed business practices included in the request for proposals for the new system would allow the COB to primarily continue the County's current agenda business practices and procedures along with some enhancements. The County should consider utilizing business practices that can facilitate the agenda process. Our observation of the County's current agenda system is that the process is cumbersome, such as the requirement of departments to send hard copies of documents even as changes and/or updates are made. Changes and updates can be made more quickly to electronic versions of documents, even as a hard copy is in transit to the COB. Because of the many changes that are continually being made to the agendas and agenda items, there are several versions of the agenda with various versions of agenda items floating around. The County's current process of agenda development has also led to some BOS staff preferring to forgo the lengthy agenda process and submit

Supplemental agenda items. These processes generate additional workload for the Board Services staff to publishing on going updates to a Supplemental Agenda.

The department should view the development of a new agenda management system as an opportunity to review features of available technology to improve the experience for all County users of the agenda process. Other stakeholders/users to the agenda process include the BOS, CEO, County Counsel, and other departments that need items on an agenda in order to conduct the County's business.

The department overall, is sufficient in performing its required duties of the Clerk of the Board. The staff have been found to be responsible in fulfilling their assigned roles and duties. A leadership hierarchical structure is in place to ensure that the staff fulfill their roles for the department. We have found that the department is currently effective in its role for the County. There are a few ongoing issues in the department have the potential to negatively impact the County. Should action be taken on mitigating these issues, the department has the potential to become significantly more efficient and effective in performing its functions for the County.

Issue #11: Communication

We have found that the staff in the department are capable and dedicated to their tasks, highlighted by several staff that have served in the department for several decades. One area for improvement mentioned in most of the interviews, was communication within the department, specifically between the units and from management. Improvements in internal communication within the department can improve its efficiency and effectiveness by allowing the department units to have better understanding of each other's roles and work together on achieving results.

Interviews with department stakeholders noted that the department sufficiently met County obligations. Several CEO and BOS staff mentioned that communication from the COB could be improved. Improvements in external communication with other departments could improve some of the current overlap and duplication of efforts with the CEO's Department as well as allow the department to better serve the administrative needs of the BOS.

Finding: There is a need for regular communication internally within the department.

Regular standing meetings among the department's management team should be held to ensure that departmental issues can be addressed in a timely manner. While standing meetings are scheduled, interviews noted that it is not unusual for them to be cancelled because of conflicting schedules or a lack of items for discussion with the other managers. The COB and/or Deputy COB should provide agendas for these meetings to develop proactive discussion items within the department that ought to be addressed among the managers.

Recommendation #13: Establish consistent weekly meetings of the COB managers to address collective issues of the department.

Weekly meetings of the managers should be used to address collective or shared management issues and strategies for managing the department. Issues of delegating and managing department-wide workload could be discussed. It could also be used as an opportunity for developing and utilizing strategic goals and objectives for the department.

Recommendation #14: Managers should have consistent regular meetings with their unit.

Regular meetings within each unit, whether formally or informally, would help the members in each functional unit to understand that they are part of a larger function, rather than merely performing a set of tasks and duties. These would give the opportunity for the manager of the unit to personally communicate with staff, allowing them to communicate a vision, goals, objectives, and challenges, so staff feel like part of a team. Staff will fare better with owning decisions when they understand the organization's vision. Regular meetings should be intentional and constructive, where the manager sets an agenda for discussion and allows for feedback. They could be used to inform the unit of upcoming workload, staffing, or technological changes as well as to discuss issues where the staff could be encouraged to provide feedback.

Recommendation #15: The COB should offer regular meetings with the BOS and their staff.

Interviews with the BOS and their staff noted the lack of presence of the COB in their offices, even as the COB should be providing services to the offices, including agenda items and other administrative services from the County. Because many of the BOS and staff are less likely to be long-term County employees, with regular turnover in staff due to the election process, there is a lack of working knowledge of the workings of the County, e.g. payroll procedures, purchases, the agenda process, etc. While there is County training available to the BOS staff, the COB should encourage staff to attend the trainings.

There was a desire by the BOS and their staff to have the COB to be more proactive in providing services to the BOS, rather than to only contact the COB when there are problems and issues.

Issue #12: Staffing

The proper staffing and resources are the key to effective and efficient organizations. Current management and organizational studies throughout the country are proving the massive gains that can be achieved through improvements in leadership and management development. While there is delegation of regular roles and duties that are performed by the department, when it comes to special projects or circumstances that come up, the department should delegate those new roles while considering workload responsibilities. Special projects should be delegated to various staff members, allowing staff in the department to be invested in duties of the department.

Recommendation #16: Delegate clerking of County Commissions to more of the COB staff.

While the Lead Board Service Specialists in the Assessment Appeals unit regularly clerk hearings, the other Lead Board Service Specialists and Senior Board Service Specialists in the department provide back up, but do not have the prime responsibility to clerk meetings. The clerking of County Commissions could be delegated among all Senior Board Services

Specialists and above, with Board Service Specialists as back up clerks, to give opportunities to more staff to develop their clerking skills. Commission support is critical to ensure that the work of the County Commissions is meaningful, and the recommendations of the Commissions are regularly reported to the County and the BOS.

Recommendation #17: The department should develop units as teams and provide cross-training opportunities.

The Assessment Appeals unit functions well as unit because they are encouraged to cross-train in other responsibilities and have better knowledge and understanding of each other's role in each individual case. However, the members in the unit acknowledged that they often feel left out of the department as a whole because they are physically removed from the rest of the department, being on the first floor while the remaining staff are on the fourth floor. Sharing in a vision or goals of the department would allow staff to feel as a valued team member of the department. Cross training opportunities could include training in the other units especially when there is a lightened work load, so that staff could also be trained to help when there are heavier workloads or open staff positions. The department should provide opportunities to build a culture of a team, rather remain with siloed responsibilities within the department.

Recommendation #18: Implement a career path for the Board Service Specialist classification for supervision and management in the County.

The Board Services Specialists classification was developed in order to acknowledge and provide compensation for the staff in the Clerk of the Board, who provide a unique function for the County. There are currently limited opportunities for the Board Services Specialists to move up in their careers beyond the Lead Board Services Specialists and limited opportunity for staff to move laterally in the County without a significant salary decrease. Implementing a new Supervisor Board Service Specialists staff position could provide staff within the department the opportunity to grow their career in the department and the County by providing an additional step of supervision and management of other staff. By providing the direct responsibility to supervise and train other Board Services Specialists within a unit, it would also open doors to other supervisory positions and eventually Countywide management positions.

Issue #13: Organizational Structure

We are unable to recommend an exact number of staff required in the department, because the number of staff is dependent on the technology and the business processes that the County is willing to utilize. Other benchmarked counties manage the agenda process with half of the staff of the Orange County COB as shown in Figure III-4: *Benchmarking of other County Clerks of the Board*. In addition, we recommend that the COB reorganize around key responsibilities in each of the functional units, moving staff and positions that more closely align to responsibilities and allocated the proper number of staff to those units

according to responsibility and workload. The following recommendations are for positions and responsibilities in the department.

Recommendation #19: OCIT should provide an in-house IT position to implement new technology in the department.

Implementing new technology may require additional technological costs. We recommend temporarily allocating an on-site OCIT staff member to manage the technology changes for the COB, that could be relocated back to OCIT after technology is implemented. The IT staff should work closely under OCIT management in order to implement and migrate technology that benefits not just the functional unit, but the department and County as a whole. After the implementation and policy and procedure improvements, there will likely be cost savings to the department by requiring less staff to conduct the current procedures. E.g. receptionists can also respond to public records requests for the unit if files management was easier to navigate.

Recommendation #20: Reorganize the department around core functions and responsibilities.

Currently, the organizational units of the department have reflected the traditional functions of the COB. The roles of each of the units have developed as new needs have developed. The names and the organizational structure of the units should reflect their core functions. The functions should be more closely aligned to the key responsibilities of the department.

Recommendation #21: Change the Board Services unit name to Agenda and Commissions Services.

While the Board Services title for the unit would indicate that they serve the Board of Supervisors, their primary function has been the production of the agenda for the BOS meetings and well as providing services for County Commissions. Their primary stakeholder focuses on the departments for items that need to appear on the agenda for BOS meetings. Additionally, the Board Services unit also provides services for County Commissions, by managing County commission appointments and providing clerking services to several County Commissions. The name of the unit should properly reflect their role rather than a broad term that could easily describe the responsibility of the entire department.

Recommendation #22: Change the Administrative/Files Management unit name to Administrative Services to manage the administrative service functions for the BOS and the department.

Should the County decide that the responsibility of providing administrative services to the BOS remain with the COB, an Administrative Services unit would become the primary unit to provide regular administrative services to the BOS offices. Currently, these needs are managed by a variety of staff from the COB and the CEO. If the BOS and their staff have a

need for County services, they have a phone list for who to contact, depending on the need and request. Rather, the BOS and their staff should be able to contact one person or unit at the department to help them, whether it be for a purchasing need, a maintenance issue, an IT issue, a human resource need, or a commissions appointment question. Should an Administrative Services unit be organized under the COB, it would be more apparent the BOS and their staff to understand their point of contact.

Finding: Human Resources and Payroll for the BOS and department has primarily been delegated to the Executive Secretary.

We found that the Executive Secretary, while maintaining many of the duties of an Executive Secretary, self-reported that 60% of her workload was providing human resource services to the COB and BOS offices, processing human resource needs, personnel issues, and payroll for the department. Because of the sensitive and confidential nature of Human Resources, much of this role should be delegated to the position of a Human Resource Manager and can be supported by the County's Human Resources Department. Additionally, because of the constant turnover of staff with the Board of Supervisor's Offices, especially upon election of a new Supervisor, there are much heavier Human Resource needs for the BOS than other departments without a Human Resource unit. Certification of timesheets for payroll requires a manager to coordinate with Supervisor's Offices and department managers to correctly manage, approve, and process days off.

Recommendation #23: Human Resources for the BOS should be delegated to a confidential Human Resource Manager.

Potentially, should administrative services to the BOS remain the responsibility of the COB, it should primarily be administered and managed by managers. Because they are directly providing services to the BOS and making management decisions for the department, this unit can be directly supervised by the Chief Deputy COB or COB and would include:

- Budget/Finance Manager – This position would manage the budgets of the COB and the budgets for the five Board of Supervisor offices, ensuring compliance with the budget as well as planning.
- Human Resource/Payroll Manager – This position would manage the human resource actions that are required with the Board of Supervisors. Due to term limits, there can be a revolving door of staff from the elected Board of Supervisor's offices. There are a large number of appointed commissioners that require new Board appointments and on-boarding of those commissioners to their role with the County. This position can also manage the payroll for the staff of the COB, BOS, and Commissioners, with the Deputy COB to sign off on payroll. Alternately, the County's Human Resources can provide the bulk of Human Resource services for the BOS and allow for the COB Executive Secretary to continue to manage these confidential services for the COB.
- Procurement Manager – This position would manage the procurement needs of the BOS and COB.

- Receptionist to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) – This position would be the primary receptionist for the Board of Supervisor’s reception area. Currently being provided by the CEO’s office, should the BOS budget be managed by the COB, the reception services for the BOS should be borne by the COB.

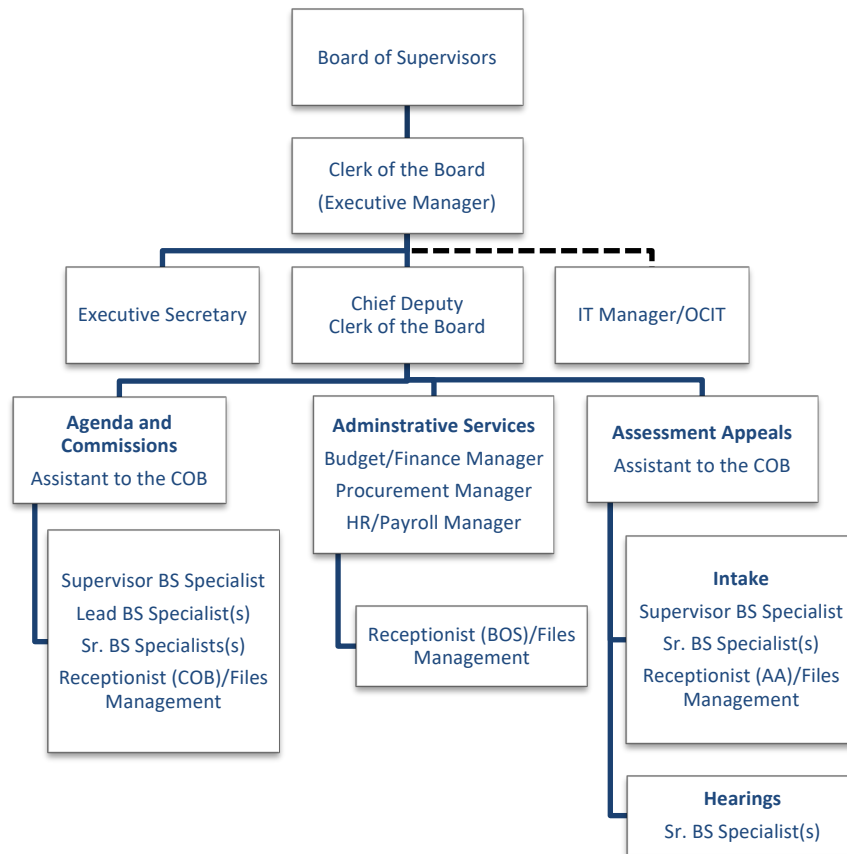


Figure VIII-1
Recommended Responsibilities/Organizational Chart

Recommendation #24: Designate a Receptionist/Files Management position in each of the units.

An additional reorganization recommendation would be to have a designated receptionist in each floor that the department manages. While the COB currently does not utilize an official receptionist, there should be someone within eyesight of the reception area with the responsibility provide services to the County departments and public who request public records. Because none of the reception areas typically experience high customer service traffic, in addition to providing receptionist services, these positions can also serve as the file manager for their respective units and support other administrative services of the unit. The COB and Assessment Appeals receptionist positions can also provide back up support for the BOS reception area for daily breaks and other time off.

Appendix I – List of Recommendations

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3. Agenda workload should be distributed according to agenda items.	12
4. Review the full agenda process and develop new agenda policies and procedures that accommodate County users.	12
5. Dedicate a Board Service Specialists in the unit with the responsibility to upload and manage files for Assessment Appeals.	15
6. Designate a receptionist for the Clerk of the Board office.	17
7. Place a computer kiosk in the COB reception area to allow customers to enter their own public records requests.	17
8. Utilize a professional files management service to implement a new electronic files management system that can integrate, organize, and manage all of the County's past, current, and new files, that could be easily accessible to County employees.	17
9. Allow a Board Service Specialist to manage files in each COB functional unit.	18
10. The COB should work with the BOS and CEO to develop a singular functional unit either within the COB or CEO with a manager to provide a full suite of administrative management services for the Board of Supervisors.	20
11. Provide proactive support to the BOS members and staff.	21
12. Instead of utilizing like-for-like technology, consider updating the County's policies and procedures when updating technology to be able to utilize newer capabilities and features of available technology.	22
13. Establish consistent weekly meetings of the COB managers to address collective issues of the department.	24
14. Managers should have consistent regular meetings with their unit.	25
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20. Reorganize the department around core functions and responsibilities	27
21. Change the Board Services unit name to Agenda and Commissions Services.	27
22. Change the Administrative/Files Management unit name to Administrative Services to fully manage the administrative functions for the BOS and the department.	27
23. Human Resources for the BOS should be delegated to a confidential Human Resources Manager.	28
24. Designate a Receptionist/Files Management position in each of the units.	29

Appendix II – Lists of Interviews and Documents

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

List of Interviews of the Clerk of the Board Staff:

Clerk of the Board, Executive Manager
Executive Secretary
Chief Deputy, Clerk of the Board
Assessment Appeals, Assistant Clerk of the Board
Assessment Appeals, Hearings, Lead Board Service Specialists (3)
Assessment Appeals, Intake, Lead Board Service Specialist
Assessment Appeals, Intake, Board Service Specialists (4)
Board Services, Assistant Clerk of the Board
Board Services, Lead Board Service Specialists (2)
Board Services, Senior Board Service Specialists (2)
Board Services, Board Service Specialist
Administration and Files Management, Assistant Clerk of the Board
Administration and Files Management, Procurement Buyer
Administration and Files Management, Senior Board Service Specialists
Administration and Files Management, Board Service Specialists (3)

List of Interview of stakeholders of the Clerk of the Board:

Board of Supervisors (3), Chiefs of Staff (5), and other BOS Senior Staff (3)
County Executive Officer
CEO, Chief Financial Officer
CEO, Director Government & Community Relations
County Counsel, Chief Assistant

DOCUMENTS AND DATA

- Current Organization Chart
- Proposed Organization Chart (August 2019)
- Job descriptions and list of duties and responsibilities for each members of the department
- Mandated duties and responsibilities of the Clerk of the Board
- Accomplishments of the Clerk of the Board (October 2018)
- Departmental Budget FY 2019-20
- Implementing a Shared Services Strategy for Information Technology: Pilot Report (Orange County Information Technology)
- Departmental Policies and Procedures
- Position Allocation Request (IT Position to Assessment Appeals Manager)
- Request for Proposal for Board Agenda software, including OC Agenda Business Requirements
- *Rules of Procedures*: Adopted by the Orange County Board of Supervisors Amended 2/6/18