

Policy Advisory Committees

-PURPOSE, AUTHORITY & RULES APPROVED DECEMBER 06, 2022-

The Board of Supervisors is the policy-making body of the County of Tuolumne. No other County official, representative, and/or committee may make policy on behalf of the County of Tuolumne unless expressly authorized by federal or state law, County ordinance, or resolution and/or other act of delegation by the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors desires to utilize policy advisory committees to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the full Board.

Purpose

The Board of Supervisors desires to create policy advisory committees in order to serve the full Board by:

1. The primary focus is to achieve Board Goals and Priorities
2. Insuring policy items coming to the full Board are mature:
 - the policy issue has been properly defined
 - all reasonable alternatives relative to a particular policy issue have been identified, researched, and considered
 - recommendations are clear and well substantiated
3. Providing a place for investigation of specific policy issues brought to the full Board's attention by members of the Board and/or public; and
4. Providing a forum for early and complete public vetting of potentially controversial policy issues.

Authority

The authority of any Board policy committee stems from the full Board which defines, and limits said authority. The Board of Supervisors authorize Policy Advisory Committees to complete their work in alignment with the Strategic Goals adopted by the Board of Supervisors and the following guidelines:

1. Through the Board approved purpose statements for each committee;
2. Committees are not to address and/or direct departmental operational issues;
3. Committees shall serve in an advisory capacity only to the full Board through Principal Staff Support assigned to the Committee;
4. Committees shall serve to support decision-making by the full Board;
5. Committees cannot direct or initiate policy action, establish departmental work priorities, and/or commit County resources without the authorization of the full Board; and
6. Annual committee work programs shall be developed and forwarded to the full Board for approval as to the items to be worked on, the priority order in which they should be addressed, and the use of resources to pursue the same.

7. Should the full Board approve, an Ad Hoc Committee can be established, with no more than two (2) Board members, for a limited time (less than 12 months) and a specific purpose.

Rules

The Board of Supervisors desires to create general rules to govern the conduct of all its policy advisory committees. Upon Board approval, this Handbook will supersede all committee bylaws, resolutions, and Board actions and will be used as the primary guide for running committee meetings.

Those general rules shall be as follows:

Membership

1. The committee chair and vice-chair shall be members of the Board of Supervisors as annually appointed.
2. Committee meetings must not occur without at least one Board Member present.
3. It will be the responsibility of the appointed member who cannot attend a meeting to find their replacement and arrange for the meeting information (e.g. agendas, back-up materials, etc.) to be provided to the alternate. Alternate attendees should be prepared to participate in meetings as called upon. In the event, a regular delegate of any Board committee, commission, or other organization cannot attend a meeting and the designated alternate is unable to attend in their place, any other member of the Board of Supervisors may serve as an alternate for that meeting.
4. Committee chairs are expected to report back to the full Board on activities of their respective committees under Board Reports at the regularly scheduled Board of Supervisors meetings.
5. Unless otherwise established in the Committee creation/modification resolution or minute order the terms shall be staggered and a minimum of 2 years.
6. All applications will be considered when filling district-specific vacancies. However, preference will be given to district residents.
7. Applicants will be required to attend a minimum of two meetings prior to their appointment. The purpose of this requirement is for the applicant to become familiar with the Committee Workplan and mission before membership commitment.
8. Committee members may be required to submit an Oath of Office with the Clerk of the Board's Office, upon appointment and before attending their first meeting as a voting member.
9. A member who is recorded as unexcused absent for 3 consecutive meetings may be removed from the Committee and their seat declared vacant by the Chair of the Committee. Notification shall be made in writing to the absentee member and the Board of Supervisors. An absence is recorded as an excused absence when the principal staff person is notified immediately.
10. If any member of a Committee fails to fulfill their duties and/or consistently distracts from the Workplan established and approved by the Board of Supervisors said member shall be removed from their appointed seat by a majority vote of the Committee.

Meeting Protocols

1. Agendas shall be set by the chair in consultation with the principal staff support. Items cannot be put on the agenda if they are outside of the purview of the committee/commission.
2. Agendas shall contain at a minimum the following elements according to Ralph M. Brown Act:
 - Meeting Location, Date, and Time
 - Participation Procedures (if not in person only)¹
 - Call to Order & Roll Call for Hybrid/Virtual Meetings
 - Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (Regular Agenda)
 - Open Public Comment for items not on the printed agenda under the Committee/Commission's purview
 - Discussion Items with a brief general description of each item to be discussed or transacted at the meeting
 - Adjournment
 - Notice for Special Assistance/Accommodations and Access to Late Agenda Materials with Contact Information
3. All committee agenda items shall be presented through a staff report or presentation that discusses the policy issue at hand, alternative approaches to address the policy issue, and the staff's preliminary recommendation. Staff reports are needed to focus committee deliberations and ensure agenda items are sufficiently mature for a preliminary discussion. Staff will determine the most appropriate and experienced presenters; this may require outside consultants.
4. The dual goals for complex policy issues coming to the full Board are that they have been fully researched and have a committee recommendation associated with them. It is the responsibility of the principal staff person to bring the recommendation to the full Board for their final decision on the committee recommendation. If a recommendation cannot be reached (via consensus or formal vote), the item shall not move forward to the Board.
5. Meetings shall be scheduled and determined by the Committees on an annual basis², unless otherwise specified. Meetings may be canceled according to the Ralph M. Brown Act requirements if there is no business to discuss. Special meetings can be scheduled as required following Ralph M. Brown Act requirements.
6. Committee meetings are subject to the open meeting laws contained in the Ralph M. Brown Act including requirements for proper postings of agendas³ opportunities for public comment³ and agenda back-up documentation.
7. The definition of a quorum is the full voting membership count (even if seats are vacant) divided in half, plus one. For example, full voting membership is 20 members, thus a quorum would be 11 members. If a quorum is not met, meetings shall be canceled according to the Ralph M. Brown Act requirements. Government Code § 54952.2. and § 54952.6.
8. Committee meetings will be canceled or rescheduled if neither the chair nor vice-chair are present and they are not able to find an alternate Board member; if the meeting is canceled, no business related to the purpose of the committee may be discussed.

9. Summary minutes of committee meetings shall be prepared by the principal staff support or their designee and adopted by the committee. Summary minutes⁴ should include all appearances, presentations, actions taken relative to agenda business, and all recesses and reconvening times.
10. Should the full Board approve, an Ad Hoc subcommittee can be established, with no more than 2 Board members, for a limited time (less than 12 months) and a specific purpose.

Operational Processes:

- 1 Due to the nature of County committee meetings, each agenda shall specify in-person and/or virtual options for participation and public comment.
- 2 Ensure the committees' webpage is maintained to reflect current information for regular meeting dates and times and that it is also on the main page calendar.
- 3 Agenda posting should occur through the County website "Agenda Center" which will publish to all subscribers upon posting. The agenda should also be pushed to the committees' event on the main calendar of the website. A printed copy of the agenda shall be posted on the outside of the building where the meeting will take place in an accessible and well-lit area.
- 4 To ensure consistency and transparency all draft minutes should be watermarked with draft and included with the agenda posting for approval. Once the minutes are approved and finalized, they shall be posted in the "Agenda Center" on the County website as a separate attachment under the original meeting date "Minutes".