



2.30.010 Board/Staff Communications

Effective governance of the Authority relies on the cooperative efforts of the agency's elected Board, who set policy and priorities, and the Authority's Staff members, who make recommendations, analyze problems and issues, and implement and administer Board policies.

The Board is a legislative body responsible for approving the Authority's budget, setting policy goals and objectives and adopting strategic plans. The primary functions of the Authority Staff members are to execute Board policy and other Board actions and to keep the Board well informed. Authority Staff members are asked to take guidance and direction only from their immediate supervisor or from the General Manager as appropriate.

There shall be mutual respect from both Staff and Board members of their respective roles and responsibilities at all times. There is a need for access to Staff by Directors and at the same time, unlimited access could result in work priority conflicts for Staff.

The purpose of the policies listed below is to facilitate Board/Staff communications consistent with these principles.

(a) All requests for information or questions by the Board to Staff outside of a Board or Committee meeting shall be directed to the General Manager, Legal Counsel, or the Clerk of the Board as appropriate and shall include the desired time and date for receiving the information. Staff will confirm the date they can provide the information. So that all Board members are equally informed, all written informational material requested by any Director shall be submitted by Staff to all Board members with the notation indicating which Board member requested the information. If a Board member requests information from any other member of the Staff, Staff may either direct the matter to the General Manager or may ask the Board member to contact the General Manager directly.

(b) Individual Directors cannot directly assign work to Staff members. Board initiated projects will follow organizational channels, through the General Manager, unless there is an emergency. As no formal procedure will answer all cases, the following should be considered as a guide and used with restraint and judgment:

- 1) Directors should clear all short-term requests of Staff with the General Manager prior to contacting individual members of the Staff and, in most cases, the General Manager should direct and handle the request for the Director.
- 2) For long-term, involved studies or where the matter includes confidential material, the General Manager should be contacted and the subject matter discussed with the full Board at a Board meeting prior to Staff working on the assignments.

*Approved by the Board
January 13, 2011*



3) In the event that Staff is a participant or representative of a Committee or Work Group of the Board, the Board may contact the Staff member directly to request or provide information or confer regarding matters of the Committee or Work Group.

(c) At Board meetings and other public meetings, respectful communication is expected. Staff is encouraged to give their professional recommendations and the Board should recognize that Staff may make recommendations that could be viewed as unpopular with the public and with individual Board members. Board members may request clarification and ask questions of Staff at public meetings and Directors are encouraged to participate in healthy discussions amongst each other regarding items under discussion on the Agenda. However, Directors should refrain from debate with Staff at Board meetings about Staff recommendations or other items being discussed. Staff must recognize that the Board, as the decision maker, is free to reject or modify a Staff recommendation and that the Board's wishes will be implemented by Staff even if it was contrary to a Staff recommendation.

(d) Directors shall not attempt to coerce or influence Staff including in the making of recommendations, the awarding of contracts, the selection of consultants, the processing of any projects or applications, or the granting of permits. Directors shall not attempt to change or interfere with the operating policies and practices of any OSA department through interaction with Staff. Individual Directors may discuss these items with the General Manager to get clarification or raise concerns.

(e) Board members should not make public comments critical of the performance of an Authority Staff member. Any concerns by a Director over the behavior or work of an OSA employee during a Board meeting should be directed to the General Manager privately to ensure the concern is resolved. All complaints about employees from Directors should be submitted privately to the General Manager or, if a complaint concerns the General Manager, to Legal Counsel.

(f) Staff will respect the right of Directors to refuse to provide information or answers to Staff and recognize that Directors may be bound by other rules of law or procedure that do not permit the Director to speak about the subject matter presented. If a Director violates any of the policies regarding communications as stated in this policy, any member of Staff has the right to request that the Director speak directly with the General Manager about the subject matter presented without any fear of reprisal.