



Legislation Text

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A MOTION relating to the organization of the council; amending policy as it relates to confidential assignments; and amending Motion 10651, Section VIII, as amended, and OR 3-040.

WHEREAS, the council has adopted a strong chief of staff model with administrative and policy staff reporting directly to the chief of staff, and

WHEREAS, the council is more effectively served by greater transparency and accountability by the chief of staff being aware of work program items of direct reports, and

WHEREAS, the council can create a workload imbalance that is unclear to the chief of staff, it is critical that the chief of staff be able to cross-level assignments, and

WHEREAS the chief of staff is being held accountable for a work program that requires full knowledge of staff efforts;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

I. Motion 10651, Section VIII, as amended, and OR 3-040 are each hereby amended to read as follows:

Staff guidelines.

A. For the purposes of this section, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

1. "Administrative staff" means the council chief of staff and staff who report directly or indirectly to the council chief of staff; and the director of government relations and staff who directly or indirectly report to the director of government relations; and

2. "Policy staff" means the council staff who report directly or indirectly to the chief of staff, including, but not limited to, staff assigned to a standing or regional committee or the board of health, and who

are assigned to provide policy, fiscal or program analysis for all councilmembers;

B. Ethical considerations.

In common with all county employees and officials, legislative branch employees and elected officials shall comply with the King County code of ethics, K.C.C. chapter 3.04. Employees shall familiarize themselves with the content of the code of ethics and in the event they identify any issue of possible concern they shall promptly seek advice from their supervisor, the council chief of staff or the legal counsel or shall seek an advisory opinion from the board of ethics.

C. Lobbying restriction on administrative and policy staff and on the legal counsel to the council.

1. Administrative or policy staff or the legal counsel to the council shall not in any way seek to influence the passage or rejection of any matter under consideration by the council or any committee of the council, except where an employee within the scope of his or her duties is required to make a recommendation or is specifically asked by a councilmember to give a recommendation on the particular matter. This restriction does not apply to the director of government relations or the chief of staff to the council pursuant to previously adopted council action.

2. With respect to contacts involving the news media related to the political or policy aspects of county business, administrative and policy staff and the legal counsel of the council are encouraged first to refer such matters to the committee chair or councilmember with jurisdiction over the subject matter.

D. Reporting relationships and assignments of policy staff.

1. Policy direction. Policy staff work for and are accessible to all councilmembers, the chief of staff and the director of government relations. Policy staff receive policy direction regarding issues within the committee's jurisdiction from the committee chair, members of the committee, the chief of staff and lead staff. Where issues are related to the work of the director of government relations, municipal relations or strategic policy initiatives, the chief of staff and lead staff shall consult and confer with the director before providing direction to policy staff.

2. Policy staff assignments. Policy staff assignments shall be made by the chief of staff with collaboration from committee lead staff. Notwithstanding an assignment to a standing or regional committee, policy staff may be assigned tasks to various committees by the chief of staff or his or her designee. All policy staff are subject to the administrative supervision of the chief of staff or his or her designee. Policy staff are responsible for conducting objective analysis on legislation and work items to which they are assigned.

3. Administrative supervision. In order to ensure maximum effectiveness of the resources of policy staff and ensure that the Charter-based needs of the council are met, administrative supervision includes: overall coordination of all policy staff work plans; developing and implementing an ongoing equitable performance evaluation system that provides accountability of staff work product; developing, conducting and overseeing training and development programs, plans and processes for policy staff that link assessment of policy staff work with staff's professional development and growth. The chief of staff or his or her designee shall have administrative supervision responsibility over policy staff. The chief of staff and director of government relations or his or her designee shall have administrative supervision responsibility over administrative staff under his or her supervision as detailed in OR 1-020.B.

4. Lead policy staff. Lead policy staff function as the supervisors for the policy staff assigned work in their respective committees. The lead staff for a committee is responsible for managing the administrative work of the committee, including ensuring that committee agendas are prepared, approved by the committee chair((s)) and distributed in a timely manner. Subject to the confidentiality rules in subsection F. of this section, policy staff are expected to keep the chief of staff and lead staff informed about their assignments and any issues that may arise.

E. Scope of work.

1. The first priority of policy staff is to support committee work responsibilities as established by the council and carried out under the direction of the committee chair. Their second priority is to support committee members' work requests. Their third priority is to support noncommittee members' work requests

related to the work of the committee. Their fourth priority is to accomplish all other work requests from councilmembers. The committee chair shall make reasonable provisions for each priority.

2. If policy staff believe that a work request cannot be accomplished consistent with the above priorities, they should discuss the issue with the committee chair, the lead staff for the committee and with the chief of staff, subject to the limitations identified in subsection F. of this section concerning confidentiality.

F. Confidentiality.

1. Councilmembers may request an administrative staff or a policy staff member to perform work and keep the nature of the work confidential. ~~((Unless otherwise instructed by the councilmember requesting confidential work,))~~ However, administrative analytic and policy staff ((shall)) may apprise the chief of staff ((or the director of government relations based upon the staff assignment under OR 1-020.B.)) as to the ((general nature of)) requested work and time required to perform ((a confidential work request)) it. The chief of staff shall maintain the confidential nature of the request. The chief of staff may consult with the director of government relations about the confidential work request, in which case the director of government relations shall also maintain the confidentiality.

2. Consistent with the reporting relationship and assignment rules in subsections B. through E. of this section, policy staff are expected to inform lead staff and the chief of staff about the amount of time required to perform the work.

3. Based upon staff assignment under OR 1-020.B, if administrative staff or policy staff believe that a work request by a councilmember is contrary to adopted council rules or violates the staff's professional ethics, the staff may consult with the director of government relations, the chief of staff or lead staff and for this purpose may disclose the information necessary to identify the problem. The director of government relations, the chief of staff and **lead staff** shall also maintain confidentiality.

G. Staff assistance. Based upon staff assignment under OR 1-020.B, administrative and policy staff

should seek the assistance of the chief of staff or the

director of government relations to resolve any concerns regarding performance of their assigned duties.