



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Anita Gallagher, Assistant to the City Manager, City Manager's Office
COPY: Government Performance and Finance Committee; Andy Cherullo, Director of Finance
PRESENTER: Anita Gallagher, Assistant to the City Manager, City Manager's Office; Clark Mather, Government Relations Officer, Tacoma Public Utilities
SUBJECT: Government Relations Shared Services
DATE: August 20, 2019

PRESENTATION TYPE:

Request for Resolution

SUMMARY:

At the request of the Government Performance and Finance Committee (GPFC) Chair, the presentation scheduled for the August 20, 2019 meeting of the GPFC will provide a summary of ongoing efforts to ensure harmonization between the government relations staff of General Government and Tacoma Public Utilities. Staff seeks council input on future options to be considered by both the Public Utility Board and City Council.

BACKGROUND:

Inter-governmental relations work and issue advocacy is performed by staff at General Government and Tacoma Public Utilities in order to advance the priorities of operational departments and our policymakers. The work of these staff members is directed by Executive leadership, consistent with legislative policies adopted by policymakers, and is responsible for responding to emerging policy and inter-governmental issues that have the potential to impact operations and service delivery. Because of the need for strong coordination of these efforts, staff will provide a summary of ongoing efforts to ensure harmonization and seek Council input on potential structural enhancements to promote the goal of government relations synergy to be considered by both the Public Utility Board and City Council.

ISSUE:

While there have been recent improvements in the harmonization of government relations work between General Government and Tacoma Public Utilities, staff seeks Council feedback on additional recommendations to ensure ongoing, systemic coordination. Staff recommends the addition of government relations-related metrics in the performance reviews of both the City Manager and Director of Public Utilities. One such metric would include regular reporting from staff to Executive Leadership on government relations efforts that are being coordinated between General Government and Tacoma Public Utilities and established protocols on how such efforts will be communicated effectively to the Public Utility Board and City Council. Additionally, staff recommends the addition of an ex officio (non-voting) membership position on the Government Performance and Finance Committee for the Chair of the Public Utility Board to boost collaboration and policy discussion amongst City Council and Public Utility Board members.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Government Performance and Finance Committee could choose to not move the recommended Resolution outlining specific actions to enhance the government relations structure forward to the full City Council for consideration, in which case the Public Utility Board would not adopt a companion Resolution.



A second alternative would be to launch a standalone department of Government Relations that would consolidate these functions. Such an action would likely have impacts to legislative advocacy efforts – some of those impacts are unknown at this time. Staff does not recommend this option given the small number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff that perform government relations work.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact should the staff recommendation be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommend that the City Council and Public Utility Board consider additional options to ensure legislative harmonization across the City of Tacoma. Staff recommends the adoption of resolutions by both the Public Utility Board and City Council. Those resolutions would include provisions directing the City Manager and Director of Public Utilities, respectively, to implement systematic changes to enhance the coordination of government relations, to include joint presentation to the City Council and Public Utility Board on the legislative agenda and amendments to the City's Legislative Policy Statement, and to collaborate on potential government relations metrics for their respective performance reviews and report those suggested metrics to the City Council and Public Utility Board in advance of their 2020 performance reviews. Further, staff recommends the addition of an ex officio position on the Government Performance and Finance Committee for the Chair of the Public Utility Board.