

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024**

**MINUTE ORDER NO. 30**

**SUBJECT: BACK TO BASICS: A REVIEW OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT CORE FUNCTIONS, ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

As a local government, we continuously adapt and work to address pressing issues impacting residents of the region. Some of these issues are clearly within the County of San Diego's (County) jurisdiction, such as when responding to storm impacts on the county-maintained road network, while others are more national or global in scope like the immigration crisis, so-called "book bans" or the impacts of climate change. The range of complex issues that often dominate the discourse at our Board of Supervisors (Board) hearings has led to a significant amount of local action on our part over the past few years. This has included establishing new offices, creating new staff positions, adopting new ordinances, frameworks, and policies, preparation of numerous consultant studies, supporting various state and federal bills, etc. While these actions are often noble and demonstrate this Board's commitment to addressing the needs and concerns of communities throughout the county, we must also ensure we don't inadvertently compromise our ability to provide and maintain high-quality, efficient customer service levels across the County's various departments. Staying on top of pressing issues is important; however, it is equally important that we periodically take stock of our capacity to deliver on core functions and responsibilities.

The County supports the day-to-day needs and activities of residents and businesses throughout the region through what today's item will refer to as "core functions." In this case, core functions are meant to be understood as bread-and-butter programs and services that deliver on critical government services and that more broadly help maintain public welfare, safety and quality of life. These may be either internal processes or public-facing services; what matters is if they support or directly contribute to delivering on the bread-and-butter programs and services. Examples include maintaining county roads, conducting restaurant and food safety inspections, issuing building permits, processing adoption requests, testing beach and bay waters, operating libraries and parks, managing sensitive preserve lands, providing fire protection and law enforcement services, conducting elections, issuing birth certificates, ensuring price accuracy at the gas pump, and providing in-home supportive services. People rely on the County every day to ensure their food is safe to eat, to support an aging parent, to trust that elections are fair, to know when it's safe to enter the water, and to trust their communities will be safe from crime.

To remain focused on these everyday needs of residents and businesses, today's item requests a review of the various core functions that are served across the County's four major groups - Public Safety Group (PSG), Land Use & Environment Group (LUEG), Finance & General Government Group (FG3) and Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA). Each of these groups and the various departments housed within them are responsible for carrying out the daily operations of our government and directly interacting with the public we serve. As we continue to grapple with broad, often national issues affecting society (potentially prompting the further expansion of County programs and services), it's important that we don't overextend our resources or otherwise compromise our ability to provide and maintain high-quality customer service levels across the County's core functions.

Put more straightforward - at the heart of today's item is a simple question: are we exceeding, meeting, or struggling to meet mandated service levels that members of the public count on? For each instance in which the answer comes back either "exceeding" or "meeting" - what can we learn from these cases and how do we capture those processes and procedures for use across the enterprise? For each answer of "struggling to meet" - what are the root causes and how do we improve? To the extent specific departmental thresholds are already in-place (e.g., 80% of phone calls returned within 24 hours), those should be used to determine if certain service levels are exceeding, meeting, or struggling to meet service levels. To help answer the guiding question, today's item directs the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to conduct a review and report back within 180 days on core function service levels across the four major County business groups - Public Safety Group (PSG), Land Use & Environment Group (LUEG), Finance & General Government Group (FG3) and Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA).

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### **SUPERVISOR JIM DESMOND**

1. Direct the CAO to conduct a review and report back within 180 days on core functions across the four major County Groups - Public Safety Group (PSG), Land Use & Environment Group (LUEG), Finance & General Government Group (FG3) and Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). This review should include identifying programs that deliver these core functions and provide information on the service levels of these programs. This may include using existing metrics such as departmental performance measures, and other metrics as deemed appropriate.
2. Direct the CAO to compile and document the costs of Board directed actions since 2020 that expand beyond the County's core functions, and that have: 1) established new offices; 2) funded outside consultant research/studies; and/or 3) created new policies and ordinances, particularly as it relates to land use (e.g., "Right-of-Way Done Right," etc.).

## **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

People across the region, no matter their political, ethnic, sexual or religious background rely on the County every day to deliver core services that directly benefit their lives. Ensuring appropriate service levels are maintained should be the number one priority of the County. Every San Diegan deserves to know their food is safe to eat, that their communities will be free from crime, that their parents can age with dignity, and that prices are accurate at the gas pump and grocery stores.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The County's commitment to sustainability requires us to consider the long-term consequences of our actions on the environment, economy, and social well-being of communities throughout the region. As we continue investing time and resources into solving complex issues beyond the traditional scope of local government, we must always stay focused and support County core functions that help maintain public welfare, safety and quality of life.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with these recommendations. There will be no change in General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

## **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**ACTION:**

A motion was made by Supervisor Desmond, for the Board of Supervisors to take action as recommended.

*(Motion failed due to lack of a second)*

NOT PRESENT: Anderson

State of California)  
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed  
by Andrew Potter