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Clackamas County
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PUBLIC & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)
FROM: Nancy Bush, Interim Director, Department
RE: ABC Bylaws Approvals
DATE: September 9, 2026

REQUEST: Informational only. This work will require future Board action to review revised bylaws.

BACKGROUND: Clackamas County's Public and Government Affairs (PGA) team is leading a comprehensive update of all Advisory Boards and Commissions (ABCs) bylaws. The goal is to align with governance best practices and improve systemwide consistency, clarity, and usability. This work builds on the Board's discussions over the years. In a 2013 policy session, the Board concluded that all bylaws should, at minimum, include defined term limits, public meetings law, Robert's Rules, and quorum requirements. Still, guidance was needed on details such as how many consecutive terms a member can serve and the process for removing a member who is not attending meetings. In recent discussions, the Board requested more detailed conflict of interest (COI) language.

PGA did a review of 60% of ABC bylaws to learn how pervasive missing information was and how clearly each ABCs purpose and goals were defined. In our sample, 1 in 3 ABCs did not clearly state their purpose. 27% had vague goals. 54% lack term renewal limits. 81% lack COI language.

When a question comes up, staff and ABC members first look at the bylaws. The bylaws often lack the information needed. By clearly defining the purpose, goals, roles, responsibilities, and operational structures, this update will help volunteers, staff, and the public easily understand how each ABC functions, allowing members to focus on their vital advisory work.

All advisory boards & commissions will require BCC approval as they become ready. PGA will group these approvals together to present during future Issues meetings.

RECOMMENDATION: Information only.

Respectfully Submitted,

Interim Director, Public and Government Affairs.

Attachments: Revision Details and Process Document

ABC Bylaws Revision Details and Process Document

This document details the changes to streamline and clarify advisory board and commission bylaws.

Future Board Action

The revised bylaws will be brought to the BCC for approval in batches on a predictable schedule, proposed to occur every other month beginning in September 2026.

Bylaws Revision and Approval Process

The following is the process a set of bylaws will go through to get revised and approved.

1. Department leadership uses the pre-audit tool to assess their ABCs.
2. The revision begins, and departments discuss the purpose, role, and goals of the ABC. (PGA is available for consultation.)
3. Department staff convert existing bylaws to the new template.
4. Department staff submit the first draft to PGA for review. PGA will provide feedback and questions, and staff and PGA will work together on revisions. This process will produce a final draft of the bylaws to share with ABC members.
5. Most ABCs will review and vote on the final draft before it moves forward. In limited cases, consultation with County Counsel may be needed first.
6. After ABC approval, PGA will work with County Counsel for their review. If substantial changes are required, the draft may be returned to the ABC for further consideration. If no substantial changes are required, the bylaws will move forward.
7. PGA submits the bylaws to the BCC for approval.
8. Once approved, PGA will notify staff that the process is complete. Liaisons should then inform their ABCs and begin using the updated bylaws.

Changes to the Bylaws Template

PGA created a revised bylaws template, which County Counsel reviewed.

The following are streamlined changes and checks to all ABCs:

- 1) Purpose and Goals
 - Clearer language on the advisory nature of ABCs, how information comes to ABC members, and that recommendations will be considered but will not direct staff or the Board. (There are some exceptions.)

- Advocacy - [ABC] may *not* provide written or oral testimony in support of or in opposition to proposed legislation unless it is explicitly authorized by the county Public and Government Affairs Department. Members may propose topics or identify legislation of community importance to the [Department/ Division]. The Division will bring those recommendations forward to PGA. Members may provide written or oral testimony as individuals that reflects their personal views and positions, not affiliated with the [ABC].
- Information on if the ABC is mandated by the state

2) Membership

- How members are appointed
- Reappointments, consecutive limits, wait times
 - Composition details
 - Process of vacancies (serve the remainder of the term)

3) Officers (commonly missing consecutive term language and serving as an officer again)

4) Meetings

- Public Meetings Law section County Policy - Detailed meeting notice: submit 9 days in advance of the meeting (7 days per county policy on advisory bodies and 48 hours for the web team to post)
- Code of conduct
- Conflict of Interest definition
- Community engagement guidelines
- Reviewed quorum and voting
- Ability for PGA or County Council to amend the bylaws to be able to update bylaws for technical purposes such as a change in county policy or state laws without Board approval. Notice will be given. An example is if an OARs number changes

Unique Changes

In addition, departments will examine each ABC's purpose and goals language. This may result in unique changes that are outside of the changes discussed above.

Other individual changes may occur as departments adjust to mirror their public engagement needs, reflect actual work, or clarify other parts of the bylaws.