

May 16, 2021

Dear Board of Commissioners:

Please accept this letter as public comment regarding the proposed creation of new Finance and Human Resources Departments within county government. My objection is not to the creation of new departments; I object to the lack of leadership and process. In fulfilling one's responsibility to the public, consideration in creating an ongoing structural cost to the county requires one to be deliberate (ie, clear on the need and the long term financial liabilities) and open in establishing such a financial burden. This is the board's leadership and fiduciary responsibility.

Perhaps the deliberation was provided to the public and the Enterprise failed to report. We do know that one county leader, an elected official, was not informed or consulted on the proposed changes. This is poor leadership by the board. The Enterprise reporting did not include any comment from the County Administrator, the person who would be the logical source for such an administrative restructuring proposal. To my knowledge, as often shared by commissioners, the county is extremely well run with praise from auditors highlighted in commissioner comments to the public. One is left wondering about the source of urgency and "late additions" to the Commissioner's agenda to make a change in a reportedly well-functioning operation.

Without proper and open deliberation, the board will fail in its fiduciary responsibility. Not consulting with the elected and employed leaders of county operations is a failure in your leadership role. It is not too late to have a thoughtful and thorough process involving those closest to the perceived (by someone) problem. Adding the departments may indeed be the best choice but, a circumvented process will always leave a stain if not corrected.

Thank you for your attention and service to Leelanau County.

Dean Manikas  
Leelanau County resident