

“What the County Council Wants from the County Administrator”

(by Bob Myhr, Council Member, District 6)

Speaking as an individual Council Member, I believe that the County Council is working diligently in our transition to new Charter government. Following the provisions outlined in the Charter, we have selected a part-time, temporary County Administrator, David Goldsmith, who is doing a good job in helping us in the initial phases of the transition. We have initiated the recruitment process for a full-time Administrator whom we hope will be on the job by May.

As we move forward, the Council is developing new ordinances and guidelines for conducting county business. One key aspect of these guidelines is the relationship between the “Legislative Body” --- the County Council ---and the “Executive Branch” --- the Elected Officials, County Administrator, and Department Heads. Ever since the passage of the Charter last November, I have been thinking specifically about the good working relationship we want between the Council and the Administrator and the guidelines for that relationship.

Below are outlined some of my conclusions as to what the County Council wants from the County Administrator:

- Carry out the objectives mandated by Council policy initiatives
- Manage administrative offices consistent with Council strategies
- No surprises
- Keep the Council well and fully informed on all key issues
- Weekly email and/or in-person briefings for the Council
- Be extremely sensitive and open to public input on execution of policy directives
- Rotate meetings among the major islands
- Use technology for bringing island meetings together with teleconferencing
- Eliminate any duplication of tasks among County offices and departments
- Stable land use planning
- Enforcement of the Comp Plan
- Attendance at most Council meetings
- At least quarterly reports on revenues and expenditures
- Balanced budgets
- Expand county reserve funds
- Keep the Land Bank independent
- Good coordination among Department Heads and all Elected Officials
- Good relations with our labor union
- Develop a countywide campus facilities plan
- Support a Council-initiated study on the key driving factors of the islands’ economy
- Visionary outlook for the future of the natural and scenic values of the San Juans
- Non-interference in the organization and management of the Council

- Require all documents circulated among Elected Officials, County Administrator and Department Heads, and County Council to be in electronic form whenever possible

I reiterate that these are my views and will part of my thinking as the Council develops guidelines for the changing relationship among our “branches” of county government as we move forward to effect a smooth, timely, and successful transition to our new Charter government.