

# THE STATE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY REFORM (STAR) COMMISSION

## **General**

What should be done to ensure that the entity is still needed, and if it is not, how do we determine next steps? The commission should think about the plausibility of periodic reviews to identify potential mission creep, similar to processes that Bainbridge Development Corporation and Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority have undertaken.

Strategic plans are utilized by some of the entities. How important is it for an organization to have a strategic plan, and should it be required?

Oftentimes, serious problems surrounding accountability and transparency do not immediately surface. What processes and guidelines can be put in place to prevent wrongdoings from happening?

When it comes to existing procedures surrounding personnel, salary, and procurement, what should the standard be? Should agencies be required to follow the state's guidelines and be exempted if they can justify it, or should current exemptions stay in place?

## **Financials**

Many of the commission's discussions and questions did not specifically deal with financials, but the commission could think about what level of financial information should be made available to the public. Should every entity be required to submit their financials and budgetary information to the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of Legislative Services?

## **Audit**

Many entities utilize external auditors to conduct their annual audits, which focus primarily on financials, but only a select few have internal auditors on staff. Additionally, the Department of Legislative Services' Office of Legislative Audits only regularly audits a handful of them. The commission should contemplate the type of audits that these entities should receive, and determine if internal auditors should be utilized and who that auditor should report to within the entity. The commission should also consider the size of some of the entities when discussing recommendations.

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## **Board**

The boards for the respective entities range in size, from 7 to 23 members. Should boards be limited in size, and what factors should determine the size? What role should agency employees and ex officio members play, and should they be able to hold officer positions on the board? The commission can also discuss term limits and if they should be implemented. How do you balance institutional knowledge against wanting healthy rates of turnover on a board? What roles should all boards have - should they be responsible for approving an agency's budget prior to submission, expense report approval? Additionally, should boards have standing audit subcommittees? The commission should consider what training requirements (ex. Diversity, ethics, onboarding) should be conducted and required for board members.

## **Compensation/Performance**

How should severance be awarded, particularly if an agency head moves from one quasi-governmental entity to another or a state agency? Should there be clawback provisions in place for certain circumstances? What policies should be in place when it comes to expense reimbursement, and should they be uniform among all entities?

The commission should contemplate how performance evaluations of the executive director/heads of agencies be evaluated, and who should perform that evaluation? What metrics should be considered?

## **Governance and Accountability**

What levels of transparency should be implemented for these entities? The commission could contemplate live streaming capabilities for open meetings, archived livestream videos, meeting minutes, and agendas. Another aspect the commission could discuss is if boards should be periodically evaluated to determine their effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses. The commission should think about conflict of interest policies and how they should be created and what is necessary to include, as well as who they should be submitted to. How frequently should governance policies, procedures, and by-laws be reviewed? Further, should all entities be required to submit an annual report, and if so, what should be included, where should it be submitted, and how can the public access it?

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## **Status of Entities**

What should the future of these entities, and others we have not looked at, look like? Are there entities that should be merged into existing agencies, whether a governmental agency or other quasi-government? Are there any entities that would do best in the private sector? Should these entities be evaluated periodically to determine if they are meeting their mission and/or not experiencing mission creep outside of their statute?

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## STAR Commission Areas of Concentration and Facilitators

Area of Concentration	Coordinating Member
General	Linda Singh
Audit	Karen Srylo
Financials	Brian Feldman
Board	Bobbie James
Governance/Accountability	John Williams
Compensation/Performance	Marc Korman
Status of Entities to remain Quasi-Governmental, or become Private or Governmental	Addie Eckardt Kathy Szeliga

Recognizing that the Commission has received and considered a vast array of information, there will be separate meetings to discuss the identified Areas of Concentration. All members will be asked to participate in the conversation regarding these areas. The coordinating members will be asked to facilitate the conversation work with staff to summarize the general thoughts of the Commission members.