Polk County Efficiency Commission Report

Letter of Transmittal

February 15, 2023

The Honorable George Lindsey III
Chairman
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church Street
Bartow, Florida 33830

Dear Chairman Lindsey:

I am pleased to submit this final report of the Polk County Efficiency Commission. The Commission has met over the fall and winter 2022-2023 to undertake its work as required by its charter-prescribed duties.

This Commission decided it would concentrate its work on major issues that had both financial and effectiveness implications. To do so it engaged in a two-stage analysis. The first stage was to determine current and on-going activities by County government that had significant efficiency and effectiveness impacts on County operations. The second was to analyze current and emerging external trends that could be of significance to future County operations.

With respect to the first stage of analysis, I am pleased to report to you that the Commission found a number of highly significant efforts already underway by the County. We discuss these in greater depth in Section 9 of our report, starting on page 39. However, by way of summary we found:

- Significant efforts to improve behavioral health services with benefits to residents and opportunities to manage behavioral health impacts on the criminal justice system
- Better security for county property via RFID tagging
- County reimbursement strategies that enhance the transportation network while reducing county costs
- Marketing of naturally produced methane from the landfill
- Use of newer leachate management systems to reduce costs
- On-going efforts to improve collection rates for EMS billings
- Use of cool-roofing technologies to improve energy efficiency

1. An opportunity to maintain existing efficiencies by preserving institutional knowledge/day-to-day understanding of county operations and smoothing the transition in Risk Management as both Safety Coordinators retire in the next several years.

With respect to the second stage, **we believe the most significant issue that could impact the efficiency and effectiveness of County Government in the future is the competition for qualified and competent staff. Large scale demographic trends mean there will be increased competition from both the private sector and other public entities for the human talent the County will need to be able to meet the needs and demands of a growing county. We provide a number of recommendations on that topic in this report to address challenges with recruitment and on-boarding of new county staff, as well as recommendations to improve the overall capacity and capabilities of HR in this environment.**

Additionally, the current Efficiency Commission has examined the future of the Polk County Efficiency Commission as a stand-alone entity. The Commission examined the changes that have occurred since the original establishment of the Commission. In that time best management practices have been established for almost every profession which encourage on-going efforts to improve effectiveness and efficiency efforts. Polk County Government continuously monitors such practices and has contributed to the development of best management practices in some fields. The internet has made access to innovative practices readily available. County staff can now easily see how other public entities are addressing the same issues that they are facing. The professionalization of the various public services the County provides has continued so that all County leaders hold various credentials, including advanced degrees.   The specialized knowledge required to provide efficient and effective services now resides in the County staff.

For these reasons, we examined the value that the Polk County Efficiency Commission could provide in the future. In addition to the status quo, we considered three alternatives for the future. These included:

1. Abolish the stand-alone Polk County Efficiency Commission and transfer its responsibilities to the Charter Review Commission
2. Reduce the costs of the Polk County Efficiency Commission by changing its terms from every eight (8) years to twelve (12) years
3. Abolish the Polk County Efficiency Commission; the Board of County Commissioners and independently elected constitutional officers will continue to seek efficiencies in local government as part of their ordinary course of duties.

The Efficiency Commission recommends that the Board of County Commissioners select one of these three alternatives considered by the PCEC as it assesses and determines the future path for the Efficiency Commission.

On a final note, on behalf of the Polk County Efficiency Commission, I would like to point out that the 2022-2023 Efficiency Commission only expended about 40% of its budgeted funds. With a budget of $500,000, the Efficiency Commission consumed $198,000. As we reviewed county operations, we sought to maintain a good example ourselves in managing taxpayer funds.

Should you have any questions, or if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Straughn
Chairman
2022-2023 Polk County Efficiency Commission

Introduction

As established in Section 8.6 of the Polk County Charter, the Polk County Efficiency Commission sits every eight years to review the organization and operation of local government in Polk County, in order to promote the "most effective and cost-efficient means" of service-delivery. At the time of this report, the Efficiency Commission remains an integral component of the Polk County Charter.

Demographic Context of this Report

At the time of the 2020 U.S. Census, Polk County contained 725,046 residents, which was an increase of 122,951 residents from the 2010 U.S. Census. However, Polk County's rate of growth in recent years has accelerated, with the county gaining an estimated 28,474 residents between April 2020 and July 2021 alone. In fact, Polk County is now recognized as the fastest growing county in Florida – and the fifth fastest growing county in the United States. Due to its favorable regulatory environment for business growth and its centralized location near key transportation corridors, as well as Polk County's on-going investment in additional infrastructure – as noted by the Central Florida Development Council – it is anticipated that the county will continue to grow at a steady pace over the next decade. The demands of this additional sustained growth have placed a premium upon the efficient use of tax dollars to fund county services, which was a consideration of the 2022-2023 Efficiency Commission as they reviewed an array of county services during their tenure.

Initial Screening of Topics

Upon their formal selection as consultants to the 2022-2023 Efficiency Commission, Analytica worked with senior management staff, including the County Manager's Office, to screen an initial set of topics for further review by the Efficiency Commission. Based

upon the consultants' initial analysis, along with feedback provided by county management, the project consultants identified potential topics to further investigate on behalf of the Polk County Efficiency Commission (PCEC). Of the topics identified in this initial screening of topics, two were selected for further analysis by the Efficiency Commission, seven were addressed by county management during the screening process, and one was already addressed prior to the completion of the screening process.

It should be noted that none of these topics should be construed as taking away from the notable job that county management has performed in managing an organization that has already faced significant change in the last fifteen years. Rather, these topics should be construed as avenues to extend and enhance the capabilities and excellence pursued by county management in recent years.

Of the two topics selected for further analysis, one topic was selected for substantive analysis by the Efficiency Commission: Human Resources, specifically recruitment and on boarding of new county staff. The other topic, Behavioral Health was further addressed by county staff, with additional information included in both Section 7 and Section 9 of this report. The other eight topics addressed by county staff during the screening process are detailed in Section 9 of this report. The one topic that was fully addressed prior to the screen process was a revamping of the county's procurement policies, which were already drafted and undergoing legal review when the project consultants were engaged.

Human Resources:
Recruitment & On-Boarding

Challenges to the Polk County recruitment and on-boarding processes have been occurring for some time. These challenges have had their roots in a multitude of factors, including employment expectations by individual employees in light of the pandemic, integration of recruitment and on-boarding functions into the Oracle platform, and a tight labor market combined with rising inflation that both increased salary demands by

prospective employees, but also gave those prospects additional bargaining power with other potential employers due to historically low unemployment levels in Central Florida and beyond.

In addition to these cyclical challenges, the recruitment and on-boarding processes are now facing an additional challenge as Baby Boomers and older Generation X employees become eligible for either full retirement or participate in the DROP program as a precursor to future retirement. Out of approximately 2192 employees, 422 are eligible for DROP and/or service retirement in the next five years. This represents about 1/5 of employees under the Polk Board of County Commissioners. Of this 422, 87 are already participating in DROP and their future retirement from Polk County generally guarantees a vacancy that will require recruitment and on-boarding of a replacement employee.

As a result of these current and anticipated challenges, the Efficiency Commission worked with both the County Manager's Office and the Director of Human Resources to develop recommendations for both a revised recruitment and on-boarding process as well as generalized HR recommendations to improve the capacity and capabilities of HR in the highly dynamic environment anticipated over the next few years.

Proposed Recruitment Process							
No Changes in Pay Grade, Job Description, or Terms/Conditions of Work							
Recommendations by the Polk County Efficiency Commission							
Step #	Step Description	Possible # Of Days Range	Target # of Business Days	Target Business Days Running Total	Maximum # of Days	Maximum Business Days Running Total Days	Notes

Phase 1: Advertising

1	Hiring Manager notifies HR by 9AM of job posting and job description request	1	1	1	1	1	Email notification

2A	HR reviews position pre-posting ensuring accuracy	1-2	1	2	2	3	Steps 2A and 2B occur simultaneously
2B	Division Director approves position posting			2		3	
3A	Posting of position (Business days; posting may occur also over weekend if critical need position determined by director)	0-10	5	7	10	13	Positions are posted on internal website, external sites and through recruitment firm. Some positions are always posted so 0 days are required.
	Sub-Total Phase 1		*7*		*13*		

Phase 2: Screening and Interviewing

3B	Hiring Manager selects interview panel and HR approves	0-10		7		13	Steps 3A, 3B and 3C occur simultaneously
3C	Hiring Manager selects interview questions and HR approves	0-10		7		13	Hiring Manager can select both panel members and interview questions from HR pre-approved lists eliminating need for HR review
4	HR Receipt and screening of applicants to transmit qualified applicants to Hiring Manager	1-5	3	10	5	18	The Hiring Manager may request all qualified candidates or

							request HR send a more limited number (no less than 3)
5A	Hiring Manager selection of candidates to interview (Minimum of 3 candidates selected for interviews)	1-3	2	12	3	21	HR may approve interviews with fewer than 3 candidates in exceptional circumstances
5B	Hiring Manager determines interview dates and communicates to HR	1-3		12		21	5A and 5B occur simultaneously
6	HR contacts candidates to schedule interviews	1-2	1	13	2	23	
7	Hiring Manager conducts panel interviews and selects preferred candidate and backup candidate	1-7	5	18	7	30	
8	Hiring Manager notifies HR of selection	1-2	1	19	2	32	Occurs on last day of interviews
	Sub-Total Phase 2		*12*		*19*		

Phase 3: Hiring and On-Boarding

9	HR makes conditional offer to preferred candidate (contingent on background check)	1-2	1	20	2	34	
10	Period for negotiation if needed	1-7	4	24	7	41	
11A	Criminal Background check 1, Level 1	1-5	3	27	5	46	A longer time may be needed

							for out-of-state candidates 11 and 12 occur simultaneously
11B	Criminal Background check Level 2	5-10	5	32	10	56	This timeline is for those positions requiring level 2. Running totals are calculated on Level 1 checks. Reflects additional days beyond level 1.
12	Wellness check, drug check, credentials check			32		56	Occurs simultaneously with 11A & 11B
	Sub-Total, Phase 3		*13*		*24*		
	Total Number of Working Days (All Phases)			**32**		**56**	

Recruitment Recommendations: These are recommendations pertaining specifically to the recruitment and on-boarding process.

1. The proposed standard recruitment process presented above be adopted by the County. It is recognized that variances in the process, such as job description modifications, will add additional days.
2. A designated "Scheduler" will be identified whose function is to track and manage the overall schedule including regular reports on schedule performance to the County Manager.
3. It will be the responsibility of the Deputy and Assistant County Managers to ensure their divisions (including HR) stay within the times listed above. This can be done with the reports from the Scheduler showing how many days it has taken at each step.

Related Human Resources Recommendations: These are more general recommendations intended to enhance the capacity and capabilities of HR in a dynamic, forward-looking environment.

1. Polk County should continue to periodically review fringe benefits — specifically leave allotments — as a function of its recruitment efforts. The issue of leave allotments is particularly relevant as county employees retire or otherwise separate from service and

Polk County competes with private sector employers and other public entities for new employees.

2. Due to compatibility issues between the County's Oracle system and the Florida Retirement System as well as other software issues the Oracle module for benefits management is problematic. It is recommended that the County Manager review an alternative software system for benefits management.

3. The Director of Human Resources, due to mid-management staffing shortages, has had to be more directly involved in operational issues than is optimal for that position. This position, along with the three other key Director positions with a county-wide focus (Budget – financial resources, IT – technology and Procurement – tools and supplies) should be focused on the continuing capacity of the county to deliver services in an ever-changing environment. The County Manager's office should monitor the work demands placed upon this position; the HR Manager's role should focus upon everyday operational matters to allow the HR Director to focus more on strategic and policy topics.

4. To support the success of mid-managers in HR or other units it is recommended that decision authority charts or protocols be developed that specify the decisions a given position can make independently, decisions for which the Division Head should be consulted, and decisions that are the sole prerogative of the Division Head. Clarity on this topic will lead to more efficient operations.

5. The effectiveness of various recruitment mechanisms should be evaluated using various media metrics appropriate to the recruitment mechanism being evaluated.

6. Evaluate additional positions that could be continuously advertised to reduce posting time requirements.

7. Review alternative advertising strategies that could increase the attractiveness of Polk County government to potential employees such as "persona" advertising. "Persona" advertising is the use of lifestyle cues to connect potential qualified applicants to open positions. A very basic example might be: Do you like fishing and spending time in the great outdoors? Check out this vacancy with Polk County Parks and Natural Resources!

8. Examine options to expand incentives for current employees to recommend potential employees.

9. Examine options to expand recruitment at educational and training institutions.

10. Increase the resources dedicated to recruitment to at least .5 percent (one-half of one percent) of the County's budget for personnel. Current funding appears to be in the range of approximately .35 percent (thirty-five one-hundredths of one percent) of personnel budget. This would equate to roughly a $300,000 additional investment in HR functions. This recommendation is based not only upon current vacancy trends, but also upon projected retirement trends in the next five years as Baby Boomer/older Gen X employees retire (or become eligible for DROP) in significant numbers. Polk County should also conduct a best practices study reviewing comparable recruitment and on-boarding budgets and develop a staged plan to achieve best practice status.

11. Establish a specified training budget for the HR Director to ensure latest professional knowledge and skills for this key role.

12. Consider engaging an HR consultant to review practices as recruitment trends and workplace needs evolve.

Topics Raised by PCEC Members

A number of topics were raised by members of the Efficiency Commission following the initial screening of topics with county management. These topics were grouped into two categories: 1) Topics of general interest that a number of PCEC members wanted to learn more about directly from county staff; and 2) Topics of specific interest that were addressed by means of written response. The topics of general interest were addressed by county staff at one of the meetings of the Efficiency Commission; the topics of specific interest that received written responses follow further below.

PCEC Survey: Topics Addressed by County Staff via Presentation

At the October 25 meeting of the Efficiency Commission, Relations Administrator (Human Services and Indigent Healthcare) Joy Johnson, along with Human Services Director Marcia Andresen, commenced a discussion on behavioral health with a system overview. It was noted that when Community Health Assessments were undertaken by Polk County, behavioral health was at the top of the needs assessment. Ms. Johnson also presented budget information pertaining to the Health and Human Services Division and further noted that the present funding level of approximately $16.5 million is a "milestone" for Polk County.

Ms. Johnson continued her presentation by referencing the Behavioral Health Strategic Plan for Polk County; Ms. Johnson also discussed the 988 hotline and its relationship to local behavioral health initiatives. With respect to 988, there is not a truly local provider at the moment. 988 is intended as a crisis care resource, but does not offer the same immediate acute response as 911. Additional enhancements in this area are being developed for future implementation.

Ms. Johnson then continued her presentation by referencing additional handouts and specifically referenced engagement with the Polk County school system as youth prevention was high on the list of community priorities. She concluded her presentation by referencing the unique population served by local behavioral health resources and community barriers encountered as a result.

Following the presentation by Ms. Johnson and comments from Ms. Andresen, Sheriff's Office Communications Director Scott Wilder presented to the Efficiency Commission, noting that jail is not the most therapeutic environment for behavioral health service

delivery. However, when other efforts are not successful, individuals end up in the Polk County criminal justice system. It is important to keep in mind that some of these individuals commit serious crimes. When individuals cross the line and violate the law, they end up in jail and are then processed through the criminal justice system.

Mr. Wilder continued his presentation by noting that behavioral health follow-up after offenders leave, jail is a normal and customary requirement of their release. Criminal behavior by these individuals cannot be excused simply due to underlying behavioral health issues. While there may be underlying issues, these issues cannot be dealt with exclusively through a medical angle when criminal activity has occurred.

Mr. Wilder also addressed the Behavioral Health Court; he noted that a key benefit of the Court was the ability to leverage the criminal justice system to guide compliance on the part of offenders with behavioral health issues. Ms. Johnson also addressed the benefits of the Behavioral Health Court.

A follow-up question was raised with respect to Behavioral Health Court. Is it pre-trial? Mr. Wilder responded that it essentially is pre-trial in that charges can be dismissed with full compliance of the Court's requirements and stipulations placed upon a respective offender.

Dr. Herb Marlowe of Analytica asked the PCEC members two questions: 1) Does the on-going work of the county regarding behavioral health add value to the local service delivery network and larger community; does the PCEC feel comfortable endorsing this approach? 2) Is there any additional analysis the PCEC would like the consultants and county staff to undertake in this area?

Following the presentations and related discussion, PCEC members unanimously endorsed the current approach being undertaken by county officials and county staff to improve and enhance the behavioral health service delivery system in Polk County. PCEC members also unanimously elected to adopt a motion encouraging stakeholders, specifically including the Human Services Division, to further explore marketing and communications for volunteer recruitment services/volunteer recruitment efforts.

Also at the October 25 Efficiency Commission meeting, Planning & Development Director John Bohde addressed a question posed by PCEC members pertaining to avenues for simplification and streamlining of building and development permitting/inspections. Mr. Bohde noted that Polk County has made significant improvements in its building and development inspection process, starting with work begun in 2018. For example, whereas previous procedures required the physical submission of 18 sets of construction drawings,

now electronic PDFs are submitted for county review. Customers can also pay-online and certain basic (non-structural) permits like window and door replacement can be auto-issued by the county's permitting system. Inspections are still mandated for those auto-issued permits. Additional online service enhancements are scheduled for implementation in January 2023.

Following the presentation by Mr. Bohde, the PCEC unanimously adopted a motion for the Planning and Development Office to review their communication and public relations efforts, with respect to building and development service delivery improvements and online services, to assess additional avenues to optimize communications about these enhancements.

PCEC Survey: Written Responses to Questions

Responses to these questions were furnished to the Efficiency Commission by the appropriate senior managers and line managers within county government:

1. Can Polk County review how it delivers services periodically to see if service delivery arrangements still make sense as the county continues to grow? This question was directed at privatization and whether privatized services will still be the best way to handle service delivery (in one or more areas) as the county grows.

Polk County employees strive to provide the best service to our residents, as our Mission is: "To enhance the quality of life for people throughout Polk County". Our County and Division Leadership, focuses on how we provide that service as part of our Budget Process, Strategic Plans, input from residents, and working with stakeholders.

Our divisions have workload indicators that they track within each of our programs, to help ensure that we are meeting our goals and being effective and efficient with the services provided. We get resident input in our Board Meetings, Public Hearings, and community meetings throughout the year, which help us to see how the services we provide are viewed by our community.

Finally, all our Division Directors and County Management are involved in State and National organizations that help them stay on top of best practices and new initiatives. Staying involved in organizations like Government Finance Officers Association, Institute of Transportation Engineers, and National Institute of Government Purchasing, helps the County

stay on top of the best ways to provide services. We do hear from many private organizations, letting us know what they can do for the County and our Divisions listen to a number of these proposals on a regular basis to consider and decide what works best for our residents. Finally, we hire several professional service vendors through our procurement processes and working with these organizations helps us see first-hand how privatizing services can benefit the County as well as what services we are better off doing ourselves.

2. How does the County facilitate internal communications and work practices to avoid silos? What improvement options are there?

In a large organization like the County, silos are difficult to avoid. We have around 25 completely different Divisions (Business Units) that have their own focus. Many of these 25 Divisions have multiple functions, for example, the Parks and Natural Resources Division is over operations and maintenance of our active parks and passive environmental lands, aquatic plant management, Polk County History Center, Mosquito Control, Bone Valley ATV Park, and Water Resources. So even within each of the Divisions there could be silos.

There are several ways we try to keep this from happening, here are a few examples:

County Manager staff meetings that include all the Division Directors to talk about County issues and share with each other. This meeting includes input from the County Manager, but half of the time is for Division Directors to talk and share information about their divisions.

Each Deputy County Manager also has meetings with their divisions on a regular basis to keep the communication going in their areas.

There is a standing monthly meeting with our Employee Advisory Committee, where an employee from each Division is assigned to attend and learn about a different Division/function around the County. This also allows employees to ask questions of the County Manager's Office and Human Resources Division at the end of the meeting.

The Budget and Management Services Division holds a Budget Kickoff with all Divisions and holds regular meetings with the financial related employees located in the Divisions to discuss matters of financial importance.

The Procurement Division holds monthly staff meetings with divisions to have a dialogue around the status of current and upcoming procurement needs. These meetings are held with the Procurement director and Analyst assigned to the division along with the Division Director and their key project management staff.

Finally, many of the central service divisions, like HR, Budget, Procurement, IT, and Communications assign their employees to different Divisions to ensure that a member of the central service division is more knowledgeable about the needs of their assigned division, helping to breakdown any barriers between the central service division and the external looking service divisions.

3. Is there a cost-effective alternative to responding to emergency calls using the large pumper trucks?

The practice of Fire responding to emergency medical calls began several years ago. Every city and most of the smaller communities had a fire station with either a paid crew or a well-organized volunteer force. Ambulances were in the more populated areas only. Because of the increased response times to the more rural areas, the decision was made to dispatch the local fire department along with the ambulance to get lifesaving capabilities to the patient as soon as possible. On many emergency medical calls, a crew of 2, typically assigned to an ambulance, is insufficient to care for a critical patient. So, the firefighters were used to augment the EMS crew. In many cases a smaller truck could be used by the firefighters because the volunteer force was large enough to staff the fire engine for a fire call while the crew on the smaller vehicle responded to and treated the patient.

Today, the practice of responding to a medical emergency in a large apparatus is primarily due to limited staffing with no overlapping resources. Without the number of firefighters necessary to staff two vehicles at once, the practice has been to respond the fire apparatus with the assigned crew to all emergencies. The large pumper truck carries all the equipment needed for most types of calls that they may encounter. This becomes critical as the call volume increases due to growth. It is very common for a fire unit to clear a medical call and immediately be dispatched to a subsequent critical call, such as a structure fire or a vehicle accident with entrapment. If the crew were in a smaller vehicle such as a pickup, they would not have access to the firefighting, or extrication equipment on the pumper truck at the station. In addition, we piloted a program; wherein, we purchased mini pumpers to respond to calls for service in lieu of the engine(s). While it is a good tool, it limits our response to all calls without overlapping resources to staff the mini-pumpers and the engines.

Possible solutions:

Purchase the smaller (inexpensive) vehicles and staff with a crew (2) to respond with the ambulance to the medical emergencies; however, this will include an additional full-time member.

Add an additional person (Paramedic) on each ambulance to share the workload on critical patients and discontinue the fire engine response on routine medical calls.

Add several BLS ambulances to the system and respond 2 ambulances to calls. As BLS patients are a significant portion of our call volume, the required number of ALS ambulances may be reduced.

The definitive answer as to the most cost-effective service delivery model will require an in-depth cost study of each to include at a minimum; vehicle purchase price, labor cost, historical maintenance cost, fuel cost, and accident history/litigation cost. In addition to the direct costs that can be allocated to the models, there may be a few indirect savings that can be estimated. One example is retention/turnover cost. If the workforce perceives the service delivery model as desirable, the high cost of turnover will be reduced.

4. **What is the status of trash collection? The County has a pilot in-house program; what's the game plan from here?**

For the pilot program, the county took over all garbage collection services in the Southwest portion of the County. This program is unfolding as anticipated and service levels (garbage, recycling, yard waste, and bulk) have improved. Prior to the County's direct involvement, missed collections average 55 per month and under the County's leadership, the number of missed collections (quality indicator) has consistently been under 6 per month.   Going forward, the policy is to expand the County's service area to include the entire southern (south of State Road 60) portion of the County.

5. **What are the County's plans to address the growing needs for park and recreation programs, particularly youth programs? What strategies are in place or being developed to ensure that cost does not become a barrier?**

The County's Parks and Natural Resources Division is tasked with maintaining parks and recreational programming as well as planning for its growth as our population expands. This

has been and will continue to be a challenge. Funding, staffing and acquisition of property are a constant challenge with a County of this size and growth rate.

The Division does maintain a Master Plan that addresses projected needs in ten-year increments. It projects anticipated areas of growth and parks deficits. The challenge is maintaining and repairing what exists while attempting to allocate resources for future growth with limited resources, volatile real estate, and construction markets.

The County has been very cognizant of youth programs and the costs associated with them for many years. Parks and Natural Resources focuses on four types of youth programming (sports, special events, resource center programming and educational programming).

Sports – The County provides 130 athletic fields for public use. We work with 30+ youth recreational athletic leagues, 40+ competitive teams, and 50+ tournament providers annually to ensure that there are opportunities for youth athletics.

Youth Recreational Athletic Leagues – these leagues are what most identify as youth sports (baseball, football, soccer, softball). They are the community based, large sports league that most children begin playing in. No child is cut from a team because of ability or experience and most leagues have been in existence for decades. They are operated by volunteers and governed by league by-laws and seasonal agreement with the County for use of the facilities.

The County charges these leagues $10 per child/per season for use of the athletic fields. For that, they get access to a concession stand, meeting space, storage space and athletic field lighting. This fee does not capture all the expenses incurred by this activity but is expressive of the dedication the County has made to continue to provide for youth coming from diverse family incomes to participate in sports.

Competitive Sports Teams - The County provides athletic field rentals to competitive sports teams around the County when facilities are not in use by our Recreational Leagues. We have continually been one of the most accommodating of those types of rentals while maintaining affordable rental rates.

Athletic Tournament Rentals – Polk County has experienced a boom in athletic tournament rentals over the past three years. We were one of the first athletic field owners to open after the Covid shutdown. It made a tremendous impact on the County's economy but took a toll on our facilities and staff. Finding a balance is the key to providing this service to the citizens and visitors of the County.

Special Events – Parks and Natural Resources provides about 30+ special events annually around the County. They hosted at our parks, natural lands areas, resource centers and historic venues. Most special events are free of charge. The biggest challenge will continue to be getting to every community. This is a large County, and we are limited by available weekends and staffing.

Resource Center Programming – Parks and Natural Resources have been responsible for the operation and programming of five resource centers for 15 years. The centers were constructed in low to moderate income areas utilizing federal grants. Throughout this period, youth programming has been a priority.

After-school programs, summer programs, art, sports, education, and community service have been staples in the centers. The County has supported the efforts to meet growing needs for programming in these communities through funding, staffing and partnerships with non-profits that may expand our ability to serve these communities (Department of Juvenile Justice, School Board, Lk. Wales Literacy Coalition, etc.). These programs are free to the public.

There are several challenges facing this form of programming.

The Resource Centers are small facilities (the ranging from 5,000 to 13,000 sq. ft.), thus limiting the types of programs and the number of residents that may be served.

The County only owns and operated five centers leaving many communities without this service.

No new centers are programmed for construction.

Educational Programming – Parks and Natural Resources provides educational opportunities at several venues for both young and old. These opportunities are mostly free to the public and first come/first serve basis.

Circle B Bar Reserve – Patrons of all ages can discover and learn about the flora and fauna that is native to Central Florida when they visit Circle B. It offers a Discovery Center, trails, wildlife watching and a beautiful lakefront. Staff provide tours, youth outdoor field study classes, summer camps, events, and other opportunities to learn about our ecosystems.

Historic Venues – The Polk County History Center and Homeland Heritage Park provide learning opportunities through events, tours, ancient technique art classes and reenactments.

Resource Centers – These centers provide many education opportunities including art classes, homework assistance, dance classes, GED classes and job training.

Future Development – While the traditional youth sports programs (baseball, football, softball, soccer) are expected to remain steady there will be a growing demand for alternative and diverse recreation activities such as disc golf and cricket. To address and provide the facilities for the alternative activities, staff monitors the usage and surrounding demographics at the parks and budgets funding annually to re-purpose and/ or renovate. In addition, the Master Plan indicates the need for future land purchase for regional parks on the eastern side of Polk County in the next five to ten years. While an attempt is being made to set aside funding for the land acquisition of the future park areas, it seems current needs prevent for appropriate annual funding set asides.

The ability for Polk County's citizens to participate in recreation and educational opportunities has always been a priority for the Board of County Commissioners and Parks and Natural Resources Division. We assure that they are affordable through user fees studies, the utilization of grants, developing partnerships with public and private agencies and an extensive volunteer program. Managing costs and development will always be a challenge, especially when the County is growing at an unprecedented rate. Effective planning through the Master Plan process, using best business practices and searching for alternative sources of funding will be essential as we deal with an ever growing and demanding citizen base.

6. Could the development project review and approval process be simplified and made more predictable by reducing/eliminating the Planning & Zoning Board review and placing more authority in staff review?

The Planning Commission reviews items that have been deemed necessary for public input through a public hearing. These items allow public notice of a land use case being contemplated and allow members of the public to attend and/or comment on the item. This is done through compliance with the Florida Sunshine laws. Many of these items are required to be conducted through a public hearing by Florida Statute. A review of the Florida Statutes and the County Land Development Code could be conducted to determine if any item being reviewed by the Planning Commission is eligible for administrative review and discuss whether it is in the public interest to do so.

7. How are inspectors evaluated for customer service? Is there a direct feedback mechanism? What training is provided for inspectors on working with diverse customers?

Formal customer service training has not occurred over the years with the Building Inspectors because of the high volume of building inspections that range between 700 – 1,000 inspections per day. However, management will get phone calls from builders, contractors, and citizens if an

issue arises with the customer service of a building inspector, and both the Building Division Director and Building Official meet regularly with the Polk County Builders Association at the Liaison meeting and we discuss building and industry related issues and ideas. During this meeting, staff solicits comments from the attendees on if there has been any issues or concerns from the building inspection standpoint. Management takes the input we received throughout year and uses that in the annual evaluation process. In addition, the Building Official will address issues at the monthly building inspector meeting and emphasizes the importance of customer service and how to say and not say things. Disciplinary actions will occur throughout the year if warranted and that can range from a verbal discussion, written warning and up to termination. Management will evaluate formal customer service trainings available that could be conducted with staff to enhance their customer service skill sets.

Land Development does not have a formal customer service evaluation process. Staff is in constant contact with site contractors and Engineers of Record for projects in the construction phase. Management does get phone calls and emails when issues arise, which tend to lead to meetings to discuss and find a resolution. Management has proposed setting up a biannual working group to meet to discuss trends/issues in the site contracting realm. We anticipate that this group will convene in the next few months. This meeting is intended to enhance communication between the contractors and the inspectors.

8. Can there be a master punch-list of various inspector requirements/findings so that all issues can be addressed rather than an issue at a time?

An inspection checklist has been provided to the Polk County Builders Association (PCBA) and is on the PCBA website. The Building Division cannot post the inspection checklist on the County website at this time because of ADA requirements. In addition, once an inspection has been conducted, the Building Inspector will provide a list of outstanding items/issues to the contractor/customer that need to be addressed prior to a follow up inspection. If the list is going to be ten items/issues or more, we will essentially restart the inspection process because that magnitude of outstanding items/issues is unacceptable and brings the construction job into question. At this point it's important to restart that inspection because it ensures that the customer/consumer is getting a product that meets the Florida Building Code.

The Land Development inspectors attempt to provide as comprehensive of a punch list of items as possible, however there are different items that require inspections throughout the construction process. These steps are often cumulative rather than concurrent, meaning one

part of construction needs to be completed before moving onto the next. Each job is slightly different as well so the exact steps may not be the same. All Land Development projects require a pre-construction meeting, where specific details and requirements are discussed. However, staff could research creating a template of the common steps to serve as a guide.

9. How is the impact of the various social media and communication tools used by the County measured? What metrics are used? How can resident awareness of services be increased?

We study the analytics of all our social media accounts, websites, and email blasts and track deliverables on direct mail. We track the trends in growth of followers on our platforms and their engagement with our posts. Lack of resident awareness of services the county provides is not because the county doesn't have the tools/technology to get out messaging. Increasing awareness would require additional investment into staffing and marketing budgets, which are discussed each year as part of our budget discussions.

What email lists does the County have or use? How are such lists developed? Staff Respondent:

The county currently has 85,969 email addresses in our database across 78 active lists. Most email subscribers are enrolled on multiple lists. Lists are developed by divisions obtaining email addresses from their customers and by the public, who can go to the county's website and self-subscribe to newsletters or information they may be interested in receiving.

10. What procurement assistance is provided for small and MBWE businesses? What outreach efforts are made? What efforts are being made to ensure a diverse and inclusive approach?

Office of Supplier Diversity and the Procurement Division provide formal and informal vendor training to small and woman/minority vendors, including training on how to do business with Polk County.

The Office of Supplier Diversity receives all bids when posted and shares the information with the Community Relations Advisory Council, the Central Florida Diversity Council, and other community leaders and diversity organizations. They also encourage vendors to register with

the County to receive copies of bids and are instrumental in providing one-on-one woman/minority vendor registration training.

The Office of Supplier Diversity coordinates and facilitates the Minority Business Input Team meetings and addresses any barriers or perceived barriers for MBWEs in the procurement and bid process that may hinder MBWEs from doing business with the County. It is also the policy of the Polk County Board of County Commissioners that Women and Minority Business Enterprise (W/MBE) vendors shall have maximum feasible opportunity to participate in the County's Procurement process through two initiatives.

The first is the Vendor Preference policy which affords vendor preference to woman or minority owned entities in the award of bids. In summary, if the second lowest bid is submitted by a W/MBE vendor and is within a certain percentage of a non-W/MBE vendor bid, the W/MBE vendor will be asked to match it. If they will, then the W/MBE vendor will be awarded the bid.

The second is the Sheltered Market policy which applies to bids where the anticipated cost is projected to be under $ 1 million. Before the bid is issued, a detailed description of the bid is sent to only W/MBE vendors located within:

Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Manatee, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sumter

This outreach asks if the W/MBE vendor qualifies to perform the work outlined and if they plan on submitting a bid.

If three or more W/MBE vendors respond that they are qualified and plan on submitting a bid, the bid will be presented to the County's Minority Business Input Team for approval to go out "sheltered". This means that the bid will only be sent to the W/MBE vendors located in counties referenced above as well as to local Polk County vendors.

11. Would it be advantageous for the County and Constitutional Officers to jointly conduct compensation and benefit studies? Are comparable positions paid the same across County and Constitutional positions?

The BOCC and Constitutional Officers have their own job descriptions, pay plans, organizational structures, and budgets that would make a jointly conducted compensation study very complex. The BOCC is currently working with a vendor on a compensation study that should be completed in November, and we will be glad to share the findings with any of our Constitutional Officers, who may find some commonalities that they can benefit from. Polk County's Constitutional Officers and Elected Officials have good professional working relationships and, in the past, have tried to work together on raises to be somewhat consistent. There are times though, where each entity needs to make decisions on difficulties within their organization, for example, the Sheriff's Office may need to increase his deputies pay more to keep from losing them to another agency, when the BOCC may have the most difficulty hiring the Building Inspectors.

We do have common benefits, like health insurance and deferred compensation plans, which all Constitutional Officers participate in. There are regular meetings for both the insurance and deferred compensation that include members of all offices to learn about different options, discuss the plan status, and decide on changes to take to our elected officials for final approval. When we do go out for bids or RFPs on these benefits, all Constitutional Offices are welcome to have staff participate in the process.

12. It has been reported that the 211 system is difficult to navigate. Should the County seek to determine if this is a valid or shared concern? What role, if any, should the County take in addressing this issue?

The County, through Indigent Health Care administration, has initiated and led multiple conversations involving United Way of Central Florida, Heart of Florida United Way, Peace River Center, and the Polk County Sheriff's Office leadership to discuss this very issue. Indigent Health Care administration is engaged in several collaborative initiatives to plan, coordinate, and fund the delivery of health care services throughout the community.

While the focus of control of 211 lies with United Way's Board of Directors, there is conversation, engagement, and interest on enhancing the navigational experience. An initiative being piloted between the County and United Way includes County funding to United Way of Central Florida to stand up a Health Care Navigation Team to break down silos and reduce fragmentation. While the focus of the team is to direct residents to County funded health programs, it brings an added benefit of Navigators being informed and educated on other non-County funded programs. This pilot provides boots on the ground locally and can work

unilaterally with the Heart of Florida 211 system to receive and follow up on calls to either coordinate care or case manage clients as needed and whom may be having difficulty navigating the system. It is through this pilot that much will be determined in terms of effectiveness, efficiencies, and opportunities going forward.

13. **What one-stop services does the County offer? What are any opportunities for improvement or increase?**

Polk County is a large county as you know, which would mean a need for multiple one-stop centers to get services close to where people live. As an example, we are finalizing construction of the Northeast Government Center in Lake Alfred that will move several services closer to the residents that live in the northeast portion of the county. The new facility will open in the first part of 2023 and will house numerous BOCC services as well as two courtrooms and an office for the Tax Collector.

Polk County also strives to address service opportunities with technology so that we can offer services without making people come into a one-stop shop. For example, our Building Division now offers several services the people used to have to come to Bartow for, including submittal of digitally signed and sealed plans and online permitting. In addition, we have new software to do virtual inspections, saving our inspectors and residents time in the permitting and inspection process. Another new technology initiative will be completed in the first quarter of 2023 in our Utilities Division that will allow customers to monitor their water usage, add service, cancel service, change service, and pay bills all online.

In our Health and Human Services Division, residents can apply for the Polk Healthcare Plan online and find help for health and social needs with a simple call to United Way (211). One of our newest initiatives is to partner with United Way to help train staff that will navigate people to health, food, and other social needs, keeping people from having to make trips and calls to multiple agencies before they find what they need. Finally, we coordinated multiple COVID related funding programs over the last couple of years, we set up websites and phone numbers for people and businesses to apply for Federal assistance funds, keeping tens of thousands of people from having to come into an office. In our large county, technology is the best way to provide services to a large portion of our residents.

Results of the PCEC Best Practices Survey

As a function of its responsibility to ensure effective and efficient service-delivery, the Efficiency Commission commissioned a Best Practices Survey to better ensure that no potential opportunities for greater operating efficiencies were overlooked during the tenure of the 2022-2023 Efficiency Commission.

The implementation of desired best practices requires careful balancing between current fiscal resources, operating efficiencies attained as a function of implementing the respective best practice(s), and the net fiscal impact (net savings or net expenditure) required to implement the respective best practice and attain the projected benefit(s). *No fiscal analysis has been conducted by the project consultants in conjunction with these proposed best practices.* To the extent that any proposed best practice would have a net fiscal impact upon county revenues or expenditures, fiscal analysis would be required in conjunction with the county's budgeting process.

Best Practices Survey responses by operating divisions of the Polk County BOCC are as follows:

Indigent Health Care

1.   Are there any industry-standard best practices (including NaCO or ICMA) you are presently in the process of implementing? If so, please briefly describe.

No, the Indigent Health Care program has already implemented an evidence-based practice as it developed and stood up the Helping HANDS jail transition and community reentry program, it is the APIC Model, APIC stands for Assess, Plan, Identify, and Coordinate short term strategies to improve transition and reentry of jail populations.

Furthermore, the County, through the Indigent Health Care program, was the recipient of the Florida Association of Counties Best Practices in County Government Award for the Helping HANDS Jail Transition program.

Moreover, the County, through the Indigent Health Care program, was also the recipient of the National Association of Counties Achievement Award for Best in Category of Criminal Justice and Public Safety for the Helping HANDS Jail Transition program that honors innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

2.   Are there any industry-standard best practices you are aware of -- but have barriers to implementing -- which would improve service delivery efficiency or effectiveness in your division? If so, please briefly describe.

No

2a.   With respect to Question 2 above, what barriers prevent implementation of these best practices? For example: Are they fiscal, staffing, or legislative/regulatory in nature? Will any off-setting efficiencies result in a net-zero additional cost to the general fund budget or special fund budget covering the cost of the respective changes/best practices?

N/A

2b.   With respect to Question 2 above, please specify how the implementation of the best practice(s) outlined above will improve operating efficiency or effectiveness in your division.

N/A

3.   If the best practice detailed above is implemented, will you be able to evaluate its impact on efficiency or effectiveness? In other words, is there a metric or objective indicator that will show whether implementing the best practice(s) detailed above have made your division more efficient or effective?

N/A

Equity and Human Resources

1.   Are there any industry-standard best practices (including NaCO or ICMA) you are presently in the process of implementing? If so, please briefly describe.

No, not at the present time.

2.   Are there any industry-standard best practices you are aware of -- but have barriers to implementing -- which would improve service delivery efficiency or effectiveness in your division? If so, please briefly describe.

Yes, utilization of the Bentek application for benefits for retirees and active employees is a best

practice.

2a.   With respect to Question 2 above, what barriers prevent implementation of these best practices? For example: Are they fiscal, staffing, or legislative/regulatory in nature? Will any off-setting efficiencies result in a net-zero additional cost to the general fund budget or special fund budget covering the cost of the respective changes/best practices?

While my staff and I believe the cost is reasonable, it may be a barrier to the Bentek implementation. Yes, possible electronic invoices may off-set the cost of mailing invoices and lessen the amount of time and cost to manually enter payments received. We are currently putting together the pros and cons and have done a Fit/Gap Analysis that we will use to discuss with County Management.

2b.   With respect to Question 2 above, please specify how the implementation of the best practice(s) outlined above will improve operating efficiency or effectiveness in your division.

The implementation of the Bentek application will allow retirees and active employees to receive information about their benefits with greater accessibility and not have to come into the office or otherwise wait for staff to contact them, which is more effective and efficient for our customers

3.   If the best practice detailed above is implemented, will you be able to evaluate its impact on efficiency or effectiveness? In other words, is there a metric or objective indicator that will show whether implementing the best practice(s) detailed above have made your division more efficient or effective?

Yes, by updating manual processes to an electronic process which will eliminate the required staff time to complete the processes such as, notice of intent to terminate benefits and processing notices for retiree medical plan participants becoming Medicaid eligible.

Communications

1.   Are there any industry-standard best practices (including NaCO or ICMA) you are presently in the process of implementing? If so, please briefly describe.

Communications is in the process of building a new website and implementing a chatbot service on the website, with text messaging capabilities and text alerts to smartphones.

2.   Are there any industry-standard best practices you are aware of -- but have barriers to implementing -- which would improve service delivery efficiency or effectiveness in your division? If so, please briefly describe.

No implementation barriers currently; management has been supportive of our initiatives.

2a.   With respect to Question 2 above, what barriers prevent implementation of these best practices? For example: Are they fiscal, staffing, or legislative/regulatory in nature? Will any off-setting efficiencies result in a net-zero additional cost to the general fund budget or special fund budget covering the cost of the respective changes/best practices?

2b.   With respect to Question 2 above, please specify how the implementation of the best practice(s) outlined above will improve operating efficiency or effectiveness in your division.

3.   If the best practice detailed above is implemented, will you be able to evaluate its impact on efficiency or effectiveness? In other words, is there a metric or objective indicator that will show whether implementing the best practice(s) detailed above have made your division more efficient or effective?

We will have the ability to track the numbers of hits and questions that the chatbot helps answer, which is an efficiency that saves staff time from a phone call or question that they would have to address.

Parks and Natural Resources

1.   Are there any industry-standard best practices (including NaCO or ICMA) you are presently in the process of implementing? If so, please briefly describe.
As part of the 2019 Parks Recreation and Preserves Master Plan, the Parks staff investigated best practices of the National Parks Service, United States Forestry Service, numerous State Park Systems, and independent organizations like Trust for Public Land, in the United States and Canada. The standards with the greatest "degree of fit" for Polk County were those of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The NRPA's Commission for Accreditation of

Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) has set The National Accreditation Standards for parks systems within the United States of America. www.nrpa.org/CAPRA

With the importance of parks and recreation not only to residents' quality of life but to the economic impact of tourism, the Parks and Natural Resources Division is concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. CAPRA accreditation provides quality assurance and a quality improvement process. However, CAPRA accreditation is expensive to maintain and staff labor intensive. The Division has chosen to adhere as closely as possible to CAPRA standards without expending monies for compliance or hiring additional professional staff to comply with the standards.

The Polk County History Center has achieved the American Alliance of Museums Accreditation subscribing to the highest standards of museum management.

The water resource laboratory has been accredited under The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference Institute (TNI) standards since 2002. These consensus standards meet ISO 17025 requirements and address all areas of laboratory operations, including quality systems, ethics, data integrity, and much more. This certification is mandated by the Florida Department of Health (64E-1, F.A.C.) as well as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (62.160, F.A.C.) for environmental laboratories. Ongoing certification is maintained by successful participation in bi-annual onsite audits, semi-annual proficiency testing, and completion of ongoing demonstrations of capability for all analysts. The use of the Department of Environmental Protection's Standard Operating Procedures for Field Activities (DEP SOPs) is mandated by 62.160 F.A.C. It specifies methods of collecting water quality samples for lakes, streams, and projects, sampling soil and other matrices, and performing biological assessments.

Polk County Mosquito Control uses Integrated Mosquito Management (IMM) for our mosquito control operations. The concept is adapted from Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which is an ecology-based strategy for long term pest management and uses a combination of techniques such as biological, chemical, physical, etc. to minimize damage caused by the pest, while also minimizing the risk to human health, beneficial, and non-target organisms, and the environment.

The Best Management Practices (BMP) in Integrated Mosquito Management that we use in Polk County for our operations was developed by mosquito control professionals and leading industry experts after the Zika outbreak in 2016. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention spearheaded this endeavor and funded it with the help of the American Mosquito Control Association.

Regarding stormwater management for Polk County outfalls, we must follow Polk County's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit. This is an EPA program that is administered by Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Indications are there may be additional requirements for "best management practices" or to show improvement in stormwater regarding water quality.

2.   Are there any industry-standard best practices you are aware of -- but have barriers to implementing -- which would improve service delivery efficiency or effectiveness in your division? If so, please briefly describe.

Meeting all of CAPRA standards may improve service delivery efficiency or effectiveness in Parks and Recreation. CAPRA accreditation is a five-year cycle that includes three phases, development of the agency self-assessment report, the onsite visitation, and the Commission's review and decision. If accreditation is granted by the Commission at its meeting following the onsite visit, the agency will be revisited every five years. Within each of the four years between onsite visits, the agency will submit an annual report that addresses its continued compliance with the accreditation standards.

The costs involved in staff time and site visit team is significant. Staff must continuously audit all the practices of the organization, which takes about 2 years from the application. When the internal audit is finished, and all CAPRA standards are met a Site Visit Team from CAPRA will conduct an external audit which costs between $5,000 and $10,000. To make this happen and to monitor standards, it is not uncommon to hire additional staff. For example, Sarasota County, a recent CAPRA accredited Parks and Recreation Department hired a full time Accreditation Coordinator ($54,000- $74,000) to work with NRPA to maintain accreditation.

There are 197 Parks and Recreations departments CAPRA certified in the United States of America.

Part of the Parks and Recreation Master Planning process used information from the National Recreation and Parks Association and the Florida Benchmarking Consortium to review Staffing levels

County	2020 Population	Total Park Acreage	Number of Maintenance Staff	Park Acreage per Staff	Maintenance Staff Per Capita
Polk	**725,046**	**3,499**	**55**	**64**	**13,183**
Hillsborough	1,459,762	2,365	53	45	27,543
Lake	383,956	491	30	16	12,799
Orange	1,429,908	1,612	135	12	10,592
Pasco	561,891	817	96	9	5,853

Polk County staff are responsible for more acreage per staff than these other counties.

Regarding the Polk County History Center, the following is a statement as part of the 2018 review, "The museum demonstrates a commitment to providing the public with physical and intellectual access to the museum and its resources," and "All aspects of the museum's operations are integrated and focused on meeting its mission." – American Alliance of Museums, *Standards and Best* Practices (2018)

Although we have achieved success in retaining our audience using traditional communications methods, the Polk County History Center has not advanced to meet the needs of contemporary prospective audiences. The missing piece is relevant ongoing delivery of the museum programs and services. Additional staff with the skill set to use technology and develop these innovative programs would assist in closing the gap.

There are new technologies that are making their way into mosquito control. Although these are not yet standards, they show great promise for effective mosquito management. Example of one such technology is the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). Another is the use of Genetic Methods such as the Sterile Insect Technique and Genetically Modified Mosquitoes.

2a.   With respect to Question 2 above, what barriers prevent implementation of these best practices? For example: Are they fiscal, staffing, or legislative/regulatory in nature? Will any off-setting efficiencies result in a net-zero additional cost to the general fund budget or special fund budget covering the cost of the respective changes/best practices?

Efficiencies through technology and equipment may reduce gaps in level of service, however, there is a need for additional staff related tremendously to the past 5 years of growth and expectations of visitors and residents that services should be at a municipality level over the entire County. These needs will be discussed during the county budget process each year.

CAPRA certification would as illustrated above, have considerable expense for accreditation and maintenance of accreditation. The CAPRA National Standards that can be adopted without incurring expense, are currently being enacted. Implementation of any more "best practices" would require additional staffing and funding, which would need to be discussed in the budget process.

The addition of new stormwater treatment systems will require evaluation of the level of services required to maintain the new infrastructure with existing practices and staffing.

In our mosquito program, our major constraint is staffing. Polk County is a large County with over 2,000 square miles. We have 7 full time field technical staff to address the myriad of mosquito problems in the county. The County is also rapidly expanding in terms of population and new developments, putting an extra demand for mosquito control services, especially as some of the new developments are in marshy mosquito habitats.

In the case UAVs, or drones, recently passed legislative measures in Florida basically brought to a standstill the use of drones in government agencies, unless those drones are purchased from specific government endorsed vendors, which are limited and have not yet included vendors that manufacture drones that are specific for our needs. The Florida Mosquito Control Association (FMCA) and the AMCA are working in resolving these issues as there are manufactures of these types of drones in the United States, using parts produced in the United States.

For the Genetic Methods, they are usually cost prohibitive and usually runs in the millions of dollars to implement and labor intensive. Although, we are not advocating for such techniques in our program, one way in which several mosquito control programs could benefit from such a technology in a cost-effective way is to establish a couple of centers in Florida, where the technology could then be transferred from the center to local programs.

For the Division, software programs to track and provide reports to assist managers with evaluations of programs is an ongoing slowly maturing process. The different sections at Parks and Natural Resources Division require many different programs to be used. In addition, it

requires a tremendous commitment of staff time to enter data and retrieve data and with limited staff, we tend to address immediate daily issues. Security IT concerns limit flexibility in selection of software and payment methods but is understandable. The information generated will assist us in tracking information to make better informed decisions on effectiveness and efficiency.

2b.   With respect to Question 2 above, please specify how the implementation of the best practice(s) outlined above will improve operating efficiency or effectiveness in your division.

We do not have qualitative or quantitative data to support CAPRA certification as a means of improved operating efficiency or effectiveness. However, many parks and recreation departments report improving services through following NRPA national accreditation standards.

Intellectual access to the museum includes being part of our audience and community. Our current methods for messaging have limited our audience to those who are already in touch with us, which is not sustainable for growth. We would seek to push out integrated messaging that promotes the divisions work as a valued, 24/7 experience, from recreation and mosquito treatments to wildlife viewing and genealogy programs.

3.   If the best practice detailed above is implemented, will you be able to evaluate its impact on efficiency or effectiveness? In other words, is there a metric or objective indicator that will show whether implementing the best practice(s) detailed above have made your division more efficient or effective?

CAPRA accredited agencies are required to report yearly and must recertify every 5 years, using NRPA national accreditation standards. This supplies both the qualitative and quantitative data by which impacts can be measured. We do not have sufficient staffing or the tools in place to measure and determine how our current implementation of best practices is affecting operations.

The best metric for success for the History Center and other areas is audience numbers along with data showing you achieved your target audience. With a more pointed and timely messaging the audiences for our virtual and in-person programs should increase and actual daily attendance in the museum or inquiries should increase. We can also monitor digital traffic to our website and google business listing.

For the whole Division, if the obstacles to getting appropriate software, staff dedicated and trained in entering data and having and running relevant reports is obtained, then evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness will be greatly enhanced through a metrics.

Building Division

1.   Are there any industry-standard best practices (including NaCO or ICMA) you are presently in the process of implementing? If so, please briefly describe.

Response: N/A.

2.   Are there any industry-standard best practices you are aware of -- but have barriers to implementing -- which would improve service delivery efficiency or effectiveness in your division? If so, please briefly describe.

Response: Building Division staff has been meeting all statutory and regulatory requirements in issuance of building permits and Certificate of Occupancy's (CO). However, ensuring that we have an adequate internal network infrastructure is critical in implementing our division's mission and technology enhancements.

2a.   With respect to Question 2 above, what barriers prevent implementation of these best practices? For example: Are they fiscal, staffing, or legislative/regulatory in nature? Will any off-setting efficiencies result in a net-zero additional cost to the general fund budget or special fund budget covering the cost of the respective changes/best practices?

Response: Staffing has at times been a hindrance with implementing our mission of issuance of permits and Certificate of Occupancy's in a timely manner, but we continue to recruit externally and train internally along with some operational modifications, which has allowed us to comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements.

With the housing industry having compounding challenges with high material and supply costs along with high mortgage interest rates, a slowdown has occurred and is anticipated to occur throughout the FY 2022/2023. Therefore, we are being cautious in our hiring of vacant positions

because the Building Division is basically self-funded, and we are trying to be fiscally responsible in our operational spending while still maintaining operational efficiency.

2b.   With respect to Question 2 above, please specify how the implementation of the best practice(s) outlined above will improve operating efficiency or effectiveness in your division.

Response: N/A

3.   If the best practice detailed above is implemented, will you be able to evaluate its impact on efficiency or effectiveness? In other words, is there a metric or objective indicator that will show whether implementing the best practice(s) detailed above have made your division more efficient or effective?

Response: N/A

<div align="center">**Waste and Recycling**</div>

1.   Are there any industry-standard best practices (including NaCO or ICMA) you are presently in the process of implementing? If so, please briefly describe.

Waste & Recycling benchmarks its practices with the private sector and makes the necessary improvements through innovation and technology.

2.   Are there any industry-standard best practices you are aware of -- but have barriers to implementing -- which would improve service delivery efficiency or effectiveness in your division? If so, please briefly describe.

Typical barriers are related to understanding the waste industry at the decision-making level. The route Waste & Recycling has implemented to overcome this challenge is through education at the decision/policy making level. Along with education, implementing a vertical integration business model is critical to the success of Waste & Recycling. Point in case, a research and development project recently approved by the Board of County Commissioners is the engineered leachate treatment project, which will serve as the basis for a future deep injection well at North Central Landfill.

2a. With respect to Question 2 above, what barriers prevent implementation of these best practices? For example: Are they fiscal, staffing, or legislative/regulatory in nature? Will any off-setting efficiencies result in a net-zero additional cost to the general fund budget or special fund budget covering the cost of the respective changes/best practices?

Since the waste industry is heavily regulated at the federal and state levels, innovations are key to reducing and/or maintaining competitive cost level long-term, as well as ensuring long-term disposal capacity. Polk County has approximately 150 years of disposal capacity at North Central Landfill.

2b. With respect to Question 2 above, please specify how the implementation of the best practice(s) outlined above will improve operating efficiency or effectiveness in your division.

Leachate is liquid generated by precipitation and waste moisture content. Therefore, this liquid is an inherently regulated by-product of landfill operations. Historically, leachate has been treated offsite at public and private water treatment facilities. These facilities, however, have been under regulatory pressures and leachate treatment and disposal have become a very expensive operating expense for municipal landfill such as North Central. By not being in control of this by-product, landfill owners and operator find themselves unable to forecast treatment and disposal costs. To maintain reasonable operating costs and disposing fees at North Central, Waste & Recycling partnered with the University of Florida to develop a long-term, effective onsite closed system solution to treat these liquids. After year of research, Waste & Recycling obtained the Department of Environmental Protection's permit to build and operate an engineered leachate wetland system at North Central Landfill.

3. If the best practice detailed above is implemented, will you be able to evaluate its impact on efficiency or effectiveness? In other words, is there a metric or objective indicator that will show whether implementing the best practice(s) detailed above have made your division more efficient or effective?

Yes, the fiscal and environmental impact is measurable and verifiable.

Federal and state regulations require a 30-year financial responsibility for the care and maintenance of landfill once they cease operations. This will require the treatment of millions of leachate.

The NPV of outside treatment and disposal for 30 years is over $124 million versus $11 million for the onsite engineered wetland treatment project. This represents a potential savings of $113 million.

Procurement

1.   Are there any industry-standard best practices (including NaCO or ICMA) you are presently in the process of implementing? If so, please briefly describe.

Procurement is currently in the process of implementing options for submitting bids electronically. Electronic bid submittals provide for many benefits including:

Vendors not needing to mail, or hand deliver bids, resulting in a more efficient process

No opportunity for the bid to the delivered to the wrong address or after the date and time it is due because of a mail carrier error.

Already having the documents in PDF form eliminating the need to scan them later, resulting in more staff time efficiency.

2.   Are there any industry-standard best practices you are aware of -- but have barriers to implementing -- which would improve service delivery efficiency or effectiveness in your division? If so, please briefly describe.

N/A

2a.   With respect to Question 2 above, what barriers prevent implementation of these best practices? For example: Are they fiscal, staffing, or legislative/regulatory in nature? Will any off-setting efficiencies result in a net-zero additional cost to the general fund budget or special fund budget covering the cost of the respective changes/best practices?

N/A

2b.   With respect to Question 2 above, please specify how the implementation of the best practice(s) outlined above will improve operating efficiency or effectiveness in your division.

N/A

3.   If the best practice detailed above is implemented, will you be able to evaluate its impact on efficiency or effectiveness? In other words, is there a metric or objective indicator that will show whether implementing the best practice(s) detailed above have made your division more efficient or effective?

N/A

Additional Topics Raised and Addressed in the Initial Screening

A number of identified topics have experienced considerable work already being undertaken to accomplish day-to-day improvements in operations, a function of a pro-active response on the part of county management. The topics in this section, while still in the process of active improvement, were largely already identified by county management prior to the engagement of the Efficiency Commission, and have either been addressed by county staff or are in the process of being actively addressed by staff.

A. Reassess operating behavioral health model, including 911 call triaging:

Optimizing the behavioral health model in Polk County, including 911 call triaging, will likely optimize county-funded resources across BOCC-funded entities. Optimization efforts require on-going participation (buy-in) from multiple stakeholders in the behavioral health system, including Health & Human Services staff, the Fire-Rescue Division, the Probation Division, and optimally the Sheriff's Office, including jail command staff.

At the present time, the marked surge in demand for behavioral health services, on both an involuntary and voluntary basis, outpaces intermediate and long-term capacity of both Fire-Rescue and the Jail Complex to address service delivery demands relative to call volume/case volume for non-violent/no immediate threat of harm to self/no threat of harm to others. Perhaps a majority of inmates at the Jail Complex exhibit signs of behavioral health challenges. Where possible, and where feasible, efforts should be undertaken to address non-violent behavioral health bases through a 911 call volume triaging process. Obviously violent individuals committing crimes must be handled in an appropriate manner befitting public safety. The intent of this triaging approach would be to divert non-violent behavioral health calls to trained professionals, so First Responders

can be deployed to calls involving threats to public safety, including calls involving threats of imminent harm to self or others.

As noted above in Section 7, full implementation of the Polk Vision strategic plan for behavioral health and corresponding initiatives, including additional communications efforts between agencies and between agencies and local residents, will prospectively lead to sustained improvements in this area.

B. Expansion of RFID tagging on county equipment and consumable items:

Expansion of RFID tagging on county equipment and consumable items of a sensitive or high-dollar nature (e.g. EMS medications) will both reduce losses from theft and misplacement as well as promote additional public confidence in county stewardship of taxpayer funds.

Polk County already maintains standard equipment and inventory control processes as a function of day-to-day division operations. As an improvement on these existing initiatives, expansion of RFID pilot efforts, currently in Fire/EMS, to all operating divisions (where equipment is mobile/in-the-field) will reduce lost and damaged equipment. It is anticipated that over time, savings from losses and greater operating efficiencies, from not having lost time due to equipment replacement delays, will generate a positive return-on-investment (ROI) relative to RFID tagging costs.

C. Maximizing resource utilization for localized transportation improvements that integrate with the county's transportation network in combination with a continuous reassessment mechanism for roadway improvement prioritization and optimized use of funds.

In recent times, developer constructed improvements that have contained a county-reimbursement component have tended to cost markedly less than county-sponsored improvements. Obtaining and maintaining efficiencies in transportation project delivery will likely pivot upon employing the nimblest delivery options for projects. Maximized use of developer constructed project delivery mechanisms will require the ability to flex reimbursement funds to projects that can be delivered quickly at a lower cost to taxpayers, relative to other project delivery methods.

As Polk County continues to grow in a rapid fashion, the county's need for infrastructure improvements, including on-system transportation improvements benefiting the traveling public will continue to increase, even as plans to address current infrastructure deficiencies are implemented over time. Maximizing utilization of this less costly project

delivery system will enhance project completion capabilities. If maximizing transportation project improvements while maximizing stewardship of taxpayer dollars is set forth as a primary objective in transportation project delivery, then flexibility of local projects and local transportation dollars is essential to attaining this efficiency objective.

D. Address opportunities for significant fiscal optimization and cost savings through alternative management and utilization of flammable gas (methane) created as solid waste by-product; and market naturally occurring landfill methane through connection to local natural gas pipeline, as opposed to venting or flaring methane gas:

Developing opportunities to market methane gas through connection to the natural gas distribution network offer significant opportunities to market a product that in previous years was vented or flared to remove harmful concentrations from solid waste landfills. Whereas in the past, energy market conditions did not merit pursuing this alternative, analysis by county staff indicates current and anticipated future energy market conditions allow for implementation of methane gas marketing and utilization through the local natural gas pipeline.

E. Address opportunities for fiscal optimization and cost savings through alternative management and quality control improvements of leachate generated as a solid waste by-product:

Newer leachate treatment methods will reduce treatment costs and are more environmentally sound than existing leachate treatment methods employed in previous years. Polk County has already incorporated projects to implement these projects into the Community Investment Program (a/k/a Capital Improvement Program). Benefits include cost savings and reduced risks of environmental problems with contained leachate or contained leachate that migrates beyond containment dams. Please also refer to additional information from the Waste & Recycling Division in Section 8 on this topic.

F. Re-evaluation of EMS collection rates for ambulance billing:

While already demonstrating a high-level of proficiency with an EMS ambulance billing rate of 68 percent, a target billing rate of 70 percent would enhance fiscal stability of Fire/EMS. Greater use of field technology (e.g. use of iPads being presently phased-in by Fire/EMS to better capture health insurance billing information in the field) may allow for this increased collection rate. Improving EMS collection rates from 68 to 70 percent would yield a potential 2.94 percent increase in ambulance billing revenues, based upon the aforementioned expansion of iPad use in the field.

G. Continued expansion of cool roofing technology to reduce energy utilization in county facilities:

In an environment of both increasing energy costs and heightened demand upon the county's electric grid, cool roofing technology can provide both cost savings and improved comfort while somewhat reducing demand upon the electric grid.

Based on information furnished by the Facilities Management Division, the use of cool roof technology in Polk County will reduce air conditioning costs, improve ambient comfort for areas not air conditioned, such as garages, service bays, or covered porticos. By reducing air conditioning during peak energy use hours (e.g. 4-8 pm weekdays), this obtained efficiency can also reduce strain on Polk County's electric grid.

H. **Maintain existing obtained efficiencies in risk management by ensuring seamless succession of Safety Coordinators in the Risk Management Division, thereby preserving organizational capabilities. This is an example of a more expansive topic relating to the response matrix of having to maximize responsiveness in a rapidly growing community while working within anticipated resource constraints:**

Due to the forthcoming retirement of both Safety Coordinators within the next 2-3 years, it is advisable to consider hiring a 3rd Safety Coordinator to learn alongside the two long-time incumbents. When one or both of the two incumbents do retire, the decision can be made by county management whether the 3rd safety coordination position should be retained.

The understanding of the project consultants is that the two safety coordinators intend to retire within the next 2-3 years after having been at the county for approximately a decade or more. Apparently this was the safety coordinators' second career. In the last decade, the two Safety Coordinators have amassed a great deal of knowledge to maintain operational safety and enhance efficiency by appropriate safety training and safety management across operating divisions. Loss of this internal knowledge could result in temporarily greater occupational hazards and increased claims (worker's compensation and property/casualty) as new staff – without the benefit of the outgoing incumbents' experience and institutional knowledge – becomes acclimated to county operations. County management, specifically the Deputy Managers and County Manager have the authority to flex positions under their authority, provided they stay within approved budgetary authority. Accordingly, county management is already reviewing options to address this need.

Future Status of the PCEC

As noted in the Letter of Transmittal, the 2022-2023 Efficiency Commission has carefully weighed the costs and benefits of maintaining a stand-alone Efficiency Commission that meets every eight years. Virtually all of the current Efficiency Commission's work could have been accomplished by county management staff either working on their own, or directly with project consultants, without maintaining a separate body to oversee this work. Over the last two decades Polk County's management capabilities have continued to grow, particularly in the areas of operating efficiencies and cost reductions.

The so-called Great Recession of 2008-2009 and its lasting fiscal impacts necessitated that county management staff devise and implement multiple rounds of cost reductions and efficiency attainment. Some of this work was accomplished directly by county management staff; other work was accomplished by county management staff working with consultants. As a result of this work, a significant question has been raised by both the previous 2013-2014 Efficiency Commission and the current 2022-2023 Efficiency Commission as to whether the Commission should continue to exist in its present form. The previous Efficiency Commission voted to recommend abolition of the Commission, which failed to garner sufficient voter support in 2018 and 2020.

The 2022-2023 Efficiency Commission examined the value that the Polk County Efficiency Commission could provide in the future. In addition to the status quo, the Commission considered three alternatives for the future. These included:

1. Abolish stand-alone Polk County Efficiency Commission and transfer its responsibilities to the Charter Review Commission
2. Reduce the costs of the Polk County Efficiency Commission by changing its terms from every eight (8) years to twelve (12) years
3. Abolish the Polk County Efficiency Commission; the Board of County Commissioners and independently elected constitutional officers will continue to seek efficiencies in local government as part of their ordinary course of duties.

After further careful study, the current Efficiency Commission recommends that the Board of County Commissioners select one of these three alternatives considered by the PCEC as it assesses and determines the future path for the Efficiency Commission.

Summary and Conclusions

The work of the 2022-2023 Efficiency Commission can ultimately be placed into three categories:

1) Work that should be undertaken from this point going forward, which would incorporate the PCEC's recommended actions regarding the Human Resources recruitment and on-boarding process, as the twin challenges of navigating both a highly competitive labor force and a wave of upcoming retirements among current county employee continue to influence recruitment and on-boarding.

2) Topics that have been identified and work being presently undertaken to address available strategic opportunities, which specifically incorporates the topics enumerated in Section 9 and in the process of being addressed by county staff.

3) Opportunities for potential future strategic improvement and opportunities for possible future efficiencies, which have not been fully assessed from a fiscal analysis or feasibility analysis perspective at the time of this report. These opportunities, such as various topics raised by both PCEC members and through the Best Practices survey may yield important contributions to future organizational effectiveness and overall efficiency. However, it is beyond the scope of this immediate report to assess the degree to which these topics will meet county fiscal analysis and feasibility analysis standards.

Overall, as noted in the Letter of Transmittal, the single most important finding of the 2022-2023 Efficiency Commission relates to significant opportunities to improve the recruitment and on-boarding process. These opportunities for systemic improvement of this process are particularly important given the forward-looking challenges of a competitive labor force, especially in Central Florida, and future retirements among county staff. Addressing the recruitment and on-boarding process will likely yield not only operational efficiencies, through better utilization of county staff compared to specialized on-call vendors, but also a more effective staff as responsiveness can be potentially better enhanced by using available county staff compared to specialized on-call vendors that have other commitments aside from county work. At the same time, the above statements apply only to authorized and approved positions and do not reflect more generally upon the broader policy decisions of using county employees versus contract employees for specific, targeted functions. That policy decision is beyond the scope of this report.

Furthermore, the important work being accomplished by county staff and local officials in the area of behavioral health should be underscored as well. The Polk Vision strategic plan for behavioral health offers a roadmap for on-going improvements in this area, the PCEC believes

that sustained efforts should be undertaken to realize the recommendations of that strategic plan as a means of not only improving early access to behavioral health services (thereby offering greater effectiveness) but also as a means of reducing reliance on the criminal justice system as a provider of last resort for behavioral health services (thereby offering greater efficiency). There are an array of demands being placed upon the criminal justice system locally; every hour and each dollar that can be redeployed from providing behavioral health services in a criminal justice setting can be used to provide law enforcement and other public safety services to a growing population.

The other topics and their respective discussions in this report largely speak for themselves. While many of these topics will require further fiscal and feasibility analysis to test their viability in a Polk County context, the general guidance here is that continued growth and increasing demands for greater delivery of services will require sustained efforts to attain greater efficiencies and greater effectiveness in county services. The additional topics in this report may offer specific opportunities to accomplish certain improvements. However, the overall message is also that present county staff is capable of performing both in-house assessments and assessments in conjunction with consultants going forward. Accordingly, this belief underscores the recommendation that the Board of County Commissioners select one of the three alternatives considered by the PCEC as it assesses and determines the future path for the Efficiency Commission.

On a concluding note, the membership of the Efficiency Commission express their appreciation to the Board of County Commissioners for their confidence in the membership to undertake this review and make the foregoing recommendations. The PCEC would also like to express its appreciation and confidence in the many county staff members, including the County Manager's Office, which assisted the PCEC in its deliberations and recommendations.

Approved and adopted in final form by the Polk County Efficiency Commission
February 15, 2023