



Agenda Report

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Citizen Recommendations

C.6.

3/3/2025

Subject:

Sarah Hodge - CEER #2025014

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Dept/Office:

N/A

Requested Action:

N/A

Summary Explanation and Background:

Sarah Hodge submitted CEER #2025014. Recommendation is attached.

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

N/A

Horst, Rachel

From: CEER@brevardfl.gov
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:33 PM
To: Horst, Rachel
Subject: A new CEER Recommendation has been submitted as ID #2025014

Recommendation # 2025014

Dear CEER Administrator,

Speak Up Brevard Recommendation ID #2025014 has been submitted. Please login to the CEER Application to start the recommendation evaluation workflow.

Contact Information:

Group/Organization

Name Sarah K Hodge
Address 390 SANDERS LN, MERRITT ISLAND FL 32953 3295
Phone (321) 452-3340
Email hodge_sarah@yahoo.com
Alternate Email hodge_sarah@yahoo.com

Recommendation Information:

Recommendation ID 2025014
Recommendation Title Brevard County Public Records Need to be Put on the Internet
Areas Affected
Department Affected
Current problem

I would like to see Public Records put on the Internet for all to see without the cost and delays when trying to get them from the County or Cities. Sometimes you can not get them before the item is voted on . Many years ago Florida Today had to pay \$30,000 to get records from the School Board. Florida Today paid it to get the records and then sued and won in Court and got all their money plus fees back. The School Board Sued to stop them and the Taxpayers had to pay for the School Board's lawsuit fees too. All wasted Taxpayer money because they did not want to release Public Records! The Clerk of Court has its records on the Internet. Why can Brevard County not do the same for the Public? It would save Staff time and the huge costs People have to pay to get records. There is a problem with getting records in advance of meetings and sometimes items are voted on before the records are obtained by the Public.

Recommendation

I recommend that Public Records are accessible to All the Public on the Internet. The benefits are that it would reduce cost of Staff having to obtain the records for the Public requests, reduce delays for the Public in receiving the information and being informed for the meetings, proper notice of Agenda Items to the Public that they need

to speak to at the County Commission Meetings and other County Meetings, Possible Lawsuits from the Public that did not have access to Their Public Records before the Items are voted on before they have had the opportunity to speak for or against the Item on the Agenda.

Attachments

No Documents were attached.

Please do not reply to this e-mail, as it will go to an unmonitored mailbox.

Mascellino, Carol

C. b.

From: sarah hodge <hodge_sarah@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 2, 2025 9:56 PM
To: Commissioner, D4
Subject: Put The County Records Online

Categories: Carol

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I would like see public records put on the internet for all to see without the costs and delays when trying to get them from the County. By doing so it would free up County employees time from doing so many record requests.

The more records available online the fewer requests are needed and costs to the public. This adds to the efficiency and effectiveness of the County, as well as the public perception of transparency and open government. The Clerk of Court has their records available on the internet. Why can Brevard County not do the same for the public? It would save staff time and the huge costs people have to pay to get records. Some requesters have problems and delays with getting records in advance of meetings and sometimes items are voted on before the records are obtained by the public. Last year at this time the County charged (2) residents \$35/hour just to review the Speak Up Brevard binders in the County Attorney's Office!

I recommend that the County post more records online, add hyperlinks to any department records that are already online, and track the number, percent and type of records that are added online each year which could be included in the County's annual budget update. I would also like to see the records policy revised to increase the amount of minutes that staff provides to the public before records are charged for. Currently the public is charged for anything over 15 minutes as excessive time. I would like to see the County post online the amount of money that is charged to the public plus the amount of dollars collected by the County each year for fulfilling records requests. This information could be posted on a monthly and annual basis so that the public can monitor how much we are being charged for public access to our public records.

I think saving money by having fewer records requests would be a huge benefit to the County in a time when you are trying to find budget money. This would be a benefit for Everyone! Residents deserve easy, convenient and no-cost access to our public records. Please put all the County records online and make them easy to locate for residents.

I request that my statement be added to the minutes for this Workshop meeting.

Sincerely,

Sarah Hodge
390 Sanders Lane
Merritt Island, FL. 32953

Cib.
Mascellino, Carol

From: sarah hodge <hodge_sarah@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 2, 2025 10:17 PM
To: Commissioner, D1; Commissioner, D2; Commissioner, D3; Commissioner, D4;
Commissioner, D5; Abbate, Frank B
Subject: Consent Agenda
Categories: Carol

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good evening Commissioners,

I have submitted a recommendation that I think the county can improve on the visibility and function of the consent agenda. Currently the numerous items listed on the consent agenda are voted on as one block with commissioners occasionally stating that they are voting no to a certain item. The current process does not provide a chance for meaningful discussion by the commissioners or the public, and raises concerns about transparency and visibility of the county business.

There are sometimes more than 2 dozen items of county business that are voted on in a single meeting under the consent agenda. These consent agenda items are not read out loud, and the public has no idea what is being voted on by listening to the meeting or when viewing it on the streaming platforms.

I propose the following changes to the consent agenda:

- The county manager or the county attorney should read each consent agenda item out loud and into the record as is done at other local meetings including Titusville and Cocoa Beach.
- The dollar amount of each action voting item should be clearly stated during the consent agenda reading and on the written agenda, as well as the total dollar amount of the items being approved under the consent agenda.
- Fewer items should be placed on the consent agenda, as consent agenda items are defined as being routine and non-controversial in nature.
- Commissioners that are voting no on a consent agenda item should pull the agenda item and state why they are voting no on the item, as is done on Cape Canaveral.
- Commissioners should more frequently pull items to add visibility, and publicly raise the concern that many items do not belong on the consent agenda and should be placed on the regular business agenda before the meeting.
- A brief statement could be read out loud at each meeting and placed on the projector that informs the public that background information for every agenda item is available online on the county website.

With the new commission there is an opportunity to improve the handling of the consent agenda to make it more transparent to the public. Commissioner Feltner, I request that you spearhead these visibility and transparency changes in your new role as the current board chairman. These proposed revisions would make a difference to residents and can be implemented immediately.

I request that my statement be added to the record of this workshop meeting, and included in my CEER recommendation. I am also presenting a copy of this statement to the Clerk to the Board.

Bill Hodge
390 Sanders Lane
Merritt Island, FL 32953

Email: billhodge@juno.com