

Minutes

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE

March 24, 2021 – Meeting 04
Zoom Webinar

- I. Call to order**
 - Meeting was called to order at 1:06 EST
- II. Roll Call**
 - A quorum of members was present.
- III. Update on local elections research requested by the chair**
 - Rebecca O’Hara from Florida League of Cities provided an overview of the materials provided to the task force related to local elections.
- IV. Presentation and consideration of potential task force initiatives**
 - Task force members agreed to make recommendations on the following topics:
 - Election cycles
 - Requirements for public notices
 - Second reading for municipal ordinances
 - Unfunded mandates
 - Local government reporting
 - Review of pension plans
 - Local Business Tax Occupancy Licenses
 - Reporting requirements for local governments
 - Chair Whitmore called for stakeholder input related to task force initiatives
 - Matt Walsh from The Observer provided comment on public notices
 - Edward Labrador from Florida Association of Counties (FAC) provided comment on reports submitted to the state
 - Task force members agreed to not make recommendations on the following topics:
 - Electronic permitting
 - Local government facilities
 - Special districts, including water management districts and stormwater management districts
- V. Task force next steps**
 - Members selected Wednesday, April 21st, 1-4 PM, for the next meeting.
 - OPPAGA will provide the task force with a draft report that consolidates the recommendations members agreed upon at the meeting.
- VI. Other business**
 - Chair Whitmore called for other business items from the task force.
 - No other business was presented
- VII. Public comment**
 - Chair Whitmore opened the floor for public comment
 - Justin Thames provided comment regarding financial reporting
 - Edward Labrador from FAC provided comment regarding local business tax revenues
- VIII. Closing remarks**
 - Meeting adjourned at 4:04 EST

From: [Paul Caragiulo](#)
To: [LEVENTHAL.EMILY](#)
Subject: Fwd: Something to share with the group
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 11:44:28 AM
Attachments: [American Tradition -Diagram for OPPAGA.pdf](#)

Hi Emily, Hope you are well, this was sent to me from a gentleman from the newspaper industry. I believe he may wish to participate in public comment today if the task force is willing to hear from him.

Thanks
PC

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Matt Walsh** <mwalsh@yourobservers.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 24, 2021 at 10:35 AM
Subject: Something to share with the group
To: Paul Caragiulo <pcsrq1@gmail.com>

See attachment

Matt Walsh // Editor / CEO / Owner

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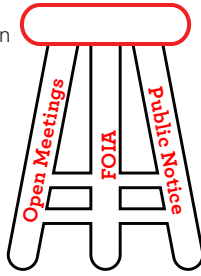
[website](#) // [newsletter](#) // [email](#)

Our Mission: To inspire our communities with extraordinary local content and to help our partners prosper.

Why Public Notice Should Remain in Newspapers

Along with open meeting and freedom of information laws, public notice is an essential element of the

three-legged stool of government transparency



Newspapers remain the primary vehicle for public notice in **all 50 states**



This is not about “newspapers vs the internet”.

It’s newspapers and newspaper websites vs government websites

and newspaper websites have a much larger audience. Moving notice from newspapers to government websites would **reduce the presence of public notices on the internet**

Since the first U.S. Congress, public officials have understood that newspapers are the best medium to notify the public about official matters because they contain the

essential elements of public notice:



Accessibility



Independence

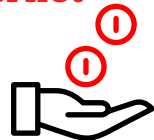


Verifiability



Archivability

Publishing notices on the internet is neither cheap nor free





Newsprint is inherently superior to the internet for public notice
because reading a newspaper is a serendipitous process.

We find things in newspapers we weren't expecting to see. On the internet, we search for specific information and ignore everything else.



Citizens continue to learn about vital civic matters from newspaper notices.

Documented examples of people taking action and alerting their community after reading a newspaper notice are reported on a regular basis. (See page 10)

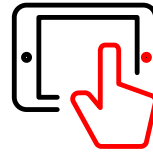
Verifying publication is difficult-to-impossible on the web.

That's why the courts subject digital evidence to far greater scrutiny than evidence published in newspapers



Significant numbers of people in rural areas still lack high-speed internet access.

Those who are older than 65 or who have lower incomes or lack high-school diplomas are also cut off from the internet in far higher numbers than the average.



Moreover, the real digital divide for public notice is growing due to the massive migration to smartphones and other small-screen digital devices



Requiring independent, third-party newspapers to ensure that public notices run in accordance with the law helps

prevent government officials from hiding information

they would prefer the public not to see

Governments aren't very good at publishing information on the internet. Unlike newspaper publishers,

public officials aren't compelled by the free market to operate effective websites.



Public Comment Report

Topic

Local Government Efficiency Task Force Meeting 04

Question	Asker Name	Asker Email
<p>1 Fire Chief Gene Rogers here. I am on the zoom call via computer but signed in on the phone for audio. I submitted a letter written by our Chairperson, Mr. Larry Hirshman, into the record for the meeting. I would like the opportunity to read that letter on Chairman Hirshman's behalf if the panel is so inclined, and if your time allows this to occur. I am calling from 239-433-0080. number suffix may be different based on available outgoing lines on our system here.</p>	Gene Rogers	grogers@southtrailfire.org
<p>2 Good afternoon, I would like to make a comment regarding the financial reporting topic.</p>	Justin Thames	justin@ficpa.org
<p>3 Thank you</p>	Justin Thames	justin@ficpa.org
<p>4 Based on the comments and actions just offered. I will forego any public comment at this time. I appreciate the work of this committee on all subjects, not just the one I highlighted. Thank you. I appreciate everyone working on this.</p>	Gene Rogers	grogers@southtrailfire.org
<p>5 No comment from Chairman Larry Hirshman at this time. Thank you again for the work of the committee.</p>	Gene Rogers	grogers@southtrailfire.org

All Meeting Participants

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