

Open Government Advisory Committee – Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2016

The first Open Government Advisory Group (OGAG) Meeting was called to order on June 9th at 4:15 pm. Jennifer (Jenny) Reed, chair of the OGAG called the meeting to order.

A copy of the agenda for the meeting was circulated.

Jenny welcomed the group and asked if members had not been sworn in. Jenny turned to Steve Walker, Director of the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments (MOTA), to do a swearing in of new members.

Steve Walker welcomed members, gave an introduction to MOTA and gave the oath to new members.

Jenny introduced herself and discussed the Mayor's focus on open government, accountability, transparency to drive improved and more efficient city services. She also noted several early accomplishments of the Mayor's administration including:

- Community engagement around the budget and a new open budget tool (available at: openbudget.dc.gov)
- Agencies publishing data
 - DMPED
 - MPD
- Videos of CapSTATs
- OCP contract information online
- Boards and Commissions and Open Meetings Act
- New Open Data Policy
- New Chief Data Officer (present)
 - Also the Vice Chair of Committee

Jenny asked all members to introduce themselves and discuss what areas they were interested in focusing on in the OGAG. Jenny also asked members that had previously served to discuss accomplishments of the previous Open Government Advisory Group.

Traci Hughes noted the need for a quorum to be established. Jenny called for a quorum:

The following is a list of members present:

- Jenny Reed, Office of the City Administrator
- Tracy Hughes, DC Office of Open Government
- Manya Shorr, DC Public Library
- Sandra Moscoso, Public Member
- Shannon Turner, Public Member
- Kathy Pettit, Public Member
- Jennifer Comey, Deputy Mayor for Education
- Tim White, Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
- Faith Leach, Deputy Mayor for Greater Economic Opportunity
- David Tseng, Office of the Chief Financial Officer
- Josh Talbert, Public Member

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- Julie Kanzler, Office of the Chief Technology Officer
- Barney Krucoff, Office of the Chief Technology Officer
- Bob Becker, Public Member
- Betsy Cavendish, Executive Office of the Mayor

A quorum was established and the meeting continued.

Jenny discussed the Mayor's charge for the OGAG which is to evaluate DC government progress toward making DC government more open and transparent, focus on the District's open data policy, improve openness and transparency in District Government, solicit input from the general public and stakeholders, identify and recommend data that should be published online, identify categories of data that should be restricted, and what data should be updated frequently.

Jenny noted that the establishment order requires that the group meet at least four times a year

For the first meeting Jenny requests the group focus on topics and projects they wanted to tackle as well to develop a meeting schedule. Jenny opened up the discussion for members to discuss ideas, projects and for members who have served during the previous administration to discuss accomplishments and challenges.

The following is a list of items discussed by the group members:

Traci:

- Previous group met twice at the end of Mayor Gray's administration
- Received open government reports from each agency
- Reports were scant in detail and did not yield much in the way the way of decision making

Bob:

- Reports were rather dismal
- Agencies were not meeting their compliance requirements
- Agency reports were focused on mission and transparency
- Need for another iteration of this government wide evaluation of compliance
- Transparency and dumping data online are not synonymous
- Info cannot simply be placed online
- Agencies need to be transparent when the community asks for/requests information
- Data is not the be all and end all of open government
- Office of Open Government should have a more pronounced role

Kathy:

- Reports were not given much thought after they were received
- Reviewing guidance or examples as to what to ask agencies would be very helpful

Bob:

- OP had a really good report

Jenny:

- Were the agency reports about how "open" they are?

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Bob:

- Intent, not end product

Traci:

- Get agencies to focus on the data they are producing and how they are protecting it
- Asked agencies to review how they were mandatorily and proactively handling FOAI requests

Jenny:

- Interesting to look at the past reports and how they relate to new open data policy
- Does it make sense to have the report criteria reviewed?

Traci:

- Old agency reports are a waste of time

Barney:

- We want to know about data but also its security
- The person who answers the FOAI questions is not who answers the data questions

Bob:

- Three years ago OCTO developed new websites for all agencies
- Agencies are required to publish certain items on this site

Betsy:

- EOM has faced the challenge that certain formats are difficult to place online; can produce a list of government salaries, but if it's not searchable, not as useful.

Barney:

- Noted OCTO can assist with making formats searchable.

Jenny:

- Noted she was taking down broad themes for the discussion; challenges, experiences, trying to bucket them; revisit buckets at the end of the meeting to see where we want to focus as group
- There is no one way to do open government; given that open government means many things to different people, I want to hear what you think this group should focus on

Sandra:

- Support agencies in publishing data
- Rigor around District government publishing data in one place
- Publishing data is a great first step but informing / communicating that data is crucial; led in schools is an example

Manya:

- Data needs to be useable, understandable to public, not just dumped online
- Public libraries are trusted sources of community information
- Glad the library is included in the conversation

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Shannon:

- Interest from local Black Lives Matter group for more information around budget spending.

Jenny:

- Need to incorporate feedback mechanisms into open data

Kathy:

- Data catalog would be very helpful
- Noted it's important to have internal capacity to use data
- Open data will succeed if the information is also useful
- Prioritize open data around public interest and also issues of important to the Mayor

Jenny:

- Great point
- Data sets need to be prioritized for publication
- All DM Offices part of the group because they represent all the agencies across various clusters

Traci:

- Group to release recommendations that will serve as guideline to the agencies
- Palatable recs for agencies to embrace the idea of supplying government data
- Maybe refer to information as something other than data
- Agencies have a tendency to hoard information; culture needs to be shifted away from not providing information

Josh

- Rent stabilization project example; worked with local non-profit and public members to examine data on rent stabilization
- Focus on down to earth grounded projects where we can see an impact

Betsy:

- Making government open needs to be palatable for agencies
- Get at the data sets that illuminate performance in government, also contract data

Jenny:

- Noted DME design challenge around truancy as an example of collaborative government; students / stakeholders brainstorm ideas around improving truancy

Manya:

- Are there cities nationally who are doing this well and did we benchmark against them? (Referring to previous group).

Bob:

- No

Traci:

- Office of Open gov has a good idea of who is doing well

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- Group should put together a cursory review of comp cities

David:

- Many agencies were non-responsive under last admin
- Clear criteria is key

Bob:

- Discussion of high value data sets
- Public private partnerships can be used to turn niche data into useful tools

Jen:

- A needs assessment is needed to help know what agencies have and need

Faith:

- Lots of district data is out there, but what is online?
- Uniformity, usable data is important.

Jenny:

- Data is everywhere but a centralized clearinghouse is necessary

Betsy:

- DC also needs a feedback tool online; did you find what you are looking for?

Julie:

- Who are the group's stakeholders? Are we representative?
- Policy definition of data was very broad

Barney:

- Data is structure, machine readable format
- IT team is not the right group to make the decisions about what is published, non-narrative is a start though

Traci:

- Disagree
- Suggests MOCRS w/ipads to survey residents about data needs to broaden stakeholder outreach

Jenny:

- Very important to understand what community needs
- How do we engage w/the community?

Bob:

- Paper records need to be accessible too

Jenny:

- Information comes in all shapes and sizes
- We need to provide clarity to agencies

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Sandra:

- Everything is a dataset
- An easier way to manage content

Julie:

- From pdf to csv is getting mixed and muddled
- Codified data is more powerful but is it useful to the community?
- A common way to access is important for residents
- Once data has been structured it is more powerful
- If we plan to prioritize, codified data is better

Barney:

- Library example, the catalog is data
- The books are narrative
- Need to clarify what we mean when we say 'data'

Traci:

- What this illustrates, is that even a well versed group has difficulty explaining exactly what data is
- Critical for us to simplify the definition of data

Jenny:

- Introduction of David Yokum, member of the OCA Performance Team. Jenny had asked him to come and talk about how he will be using open science to be more transparent about evidence and evaluation work undertaken through OCA.

David Yokum:

- Open science discussion, approach to an evaluation, the way research questions are approached, early stakeholder engagement; all contributes to more open government.

Jenny:

- Proposed framework areas and how we will re-group
- Proposed that work goes into four key buckets; data; participation and collaboration; FOIA; transparency and civic engagement

Josh:

- Cautious about taking data too seriously
- Need to think about what open data serves
- Suggests an "information access" subcommittee
- Also suggests we carry out our own meetings as openly as possible
- Make a list of stakeholders so we can ensure proper outreach

Manya:

- Suggests library location for meetings

Traci:

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- Civic engagement tools; two ways means of communication with residents

Julie:

- First vote, should this be an open meeting?

Traci:

- These meetings are open

Jen:

- Clarification on participation and collaboration bucket

Jenny:

- DME design day as an example

Josh:

- Thinking about ourselves as resources

Shannon:

- What we build needs to be useful

Jenny:

1. Key buckets for OGAG to work on:
 - a. Set up robust framework for group being open and who are our stakeholders are and how we are engaging them
 - b. Information access
 - c. Participation and collaboration
 - d. Transparency, understandable to residents
 - e. Others?

Manya:

- A space when not to be transparent?
- Should that be part of this group's conversation?

Traci:

- Government transparency should be guided by privacy laws and FOIA

Betsy:

- School data example; releasing aggregate data actually led to being able to tell individuals data inadvertently.

Jenny:

- Serious thought into how we make data available and how it will be used
- Share meeting minutes
- Share structure of buckets and request members to sign up
- Bylaws under previous group; circulate and share

Group consensus that meetings going forward should start at 4PM.

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Meet every six weeks?

Traci:

- Meet sooner than six weeks?
- Where should information be housed?

Agreement that group will meet in one month, and then every six weeks after that.

Bob:

- Request for group's email addresses

Jenny closed out meeting with agreeing to send a doodle poll to set up next meeting, draft bylaws, meeting notes, a copy of the signed Mayor's establishment order and documentation further explaining the buckets of areas and allowing people to sign up for different ones.

At 5:43pm the meeting was adjourned by Chair Reed.