

The Policy Role of Council

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Jon B. Pierce, Ph.D.

Fellow, The Riley Center for Livable Communities
College of Charleston

What is Public Policy?

- “At its core, policy is a course of action intended to accomplish some end. The term policy needs to be able to embrace what is intended and what occurs as a result of the intention. (Heclo)
- “Policy is whatever government chooses to do or not to do.” (Dye)
- “Policies are statements of what is valued. Policies provide direction and guidance for society and those charged with administering government. The ultimate policy statement is the budget. We spend our money on what we value.” (Pierce)

Public policy often addresses three questions:

- What good will we do?
- For which people?
- At what cost?

Types of Public Policy

- ❑ Substantive
- ❑ Procedural
- ❑ Distributive
- ❑ Regulatory
- ❑ Self-Regulatory
- ❑ Redistributive
- ❑ Material
- ❑ Symbolic
- ❑ Collective Goods
- ❑ Private Goods

Anderson, Public Policymaking

County Policy

- What are the major areas in which counties are involved in making policy?

Participants in the Policy Process

□ Official Policymakers

- primary
- supplementary

□ Unofficial Participants

- interest groups/organized groups
- political parties
- research organizations
- media
- individual citizens

County Policymakers

- Who are the major actors in county policymaking?
- What is the CAO's and staff's role in policymaking?

Role of Council

The essential and unique role of council is to envision the future and to provide direction toward that future.

Ed Thomas and Jon Pierce, Institute for Public Service & Policy Research, USC

Councils Roles and Responsibilities

While one could develop an extensive listing of the roles and responsibilities of a council, the role can be reduced to three contributions that are uniquely the council's. These contributions comprise a job description of council:

- provide linkage to the ownership
- articulate organizational policies
- assure CAO performance

Adapted from John Carver, Board That Make A Difference

Organizational Policies

- The organization's "ends" or outcomes
 - What good is the organization going to do? For what people or needs? At what cost?
- The most important "ends" policy statement is the organizational mission statement. Budget should reflect this mission.
- Governing values
- Limitations on CAO authority
- Council-staff relationships (note form of government)
- How the council will govern; conduct its business

Mission Statements

- If used, a meaningful and well thought out, consensus mission statement can:
 - provide significant direction for the council, county government and its employees
 - serve as a means for communicating direction and focus to citizens and customers
 - be an excellent mechanism for measuring the performance of the county and its employees, as well as council.

Who's Responsible?

The Policy Framework

(Jones, An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy)

- public problems exist as a result of perceived needs
- some people have problems in common
- some of these organize and make demands or demands are made by those who seek to represent people
- demands are perceived and judged by those with authority
- decisions are made and enforced
- public problems are affected by these decisions
- some people have common reactions
- demands are made **And So Forth**

The Policy Process

(Rushefsky, Public Policy in the United States)

Caveat: Although presented in a linear fashion, the reality is clearly much more complex.

- problem identification
- agenda building
- policy formulation
- policy adoption
- budgeting
- implementation
- evaluation
- policy succession

How Does An Idea's Time Come?

(Kingdon, Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies)

- “policy primeval soup”
- political, problem and policy streams
- policy window
- policy entrepreneurs
- coupling - hooking policy onto “problem of the moment”
- spillover - opportunity for somewhat related policy

Types of Policy Agendas

- Systemic
- Institutional/governmental
- Decision

Criteria for Survival on the Agenda

- technical feasibility
- value acceptability
 - policy is value laden
 - values impact policy
 - policy may impact values
 - as society's values change; policy may change

The Policy Environment

The environment in which policy is made has a major impact on policy.

Environments:

- Institutional
- Political
- Societal/Demographic
- Fiscal
- Regulatory/Legal
- Technological

Determining Policy Impact/Outcome

- How do you know whether a particular policy has had the intended impact or achieved the desired outcome?
- What is required to be able to answer this question?

Performance Measurement

- Performance measurement is a process by which an entity objectively measures whether it is achieving the intended outcomes of a program, service, or policy.
- Performance measurement can:
 - insure a connection between actual performance and intended outcomes
 - provide an early warning system
 - assist in future planning and provide decision-making information
 - improve communication with customers and stakeholders

Types of Performance Measures

- Inputs
- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Efficiency/productivity
- Quality