

Civic Matchmaking: Managing Boards and Commissions in the Digital Age

By Emily Bowerman, SC Women in Leadership Staff

The average county in South Carolina is responsible for appointments to 18 boards and commissions. That presents an opportunity for scores of citizens to serve by sharing their expertise and experience for the betterment of their community. It also means your government has the challenge of providing publicly available information about boards and commissions, recruiting and processing applicants, and managing board memberships at a time when digitization and web accessibility are paramount. MatchBoardsm is here to help you meet that challenge. MatchBoardsm is an online platform for managing boards and commissions that connects citizens with service opportunities in their local governments.

How does MatchBoardsm work? MatchBoardsm is a digital interface that can be embedded securely into your county's website. Citizens can:

- learn more about the boards and commissions in their area,
- message the clerk with questions,
- create a profile showcasing their qualifications and interests,
- apply for positions with just a few clicks,
- and check on the status of their applications - all within the platform.

MatchBoardsm streamlines administrative management of boards and commissions for you as well. Your board information can easily be uploaded to the MatchBoardsm platform. From there, you're able to:

- share submitted applications with other officials and track their feedback,
- review calculations on how well an applicant matches the position they're applying for,
- update the status of an application,
- make appointments with the click of a button,
- communicate with applicants,
- generate reports and more.

Beaufort, Jasper, McCormick, and Orangeburg counties and the cities of Columbia and Spartanburg are proud to be leading the way as early adopters of MatchBoardsm, a solution developed right here in South Carolina. As a non-profit service, MatchBoardsm is available for a modest annual fee of \$1,200-\$6,000 based upon your population. South Carolina Association of Counties endorses MatchBoardsm and will subsidize 25 percent of your costs for the first year.

"I've been dealing with boards and commissions for 20 years. I remember when I first came on-site, [the outgoing Clerk] handed me a five inch red binder. It was bursting

at the seams with all this historical information on every board and commission that the city had ever set up. From there, of course we evolved, but we still had a long way to go. MatchBoard not only gets rid of that binder, it gets rid of the spreadsheets, the word documents, and so forth."

—City of Columbia Clerk Erika Hammond

"Beaufort County currently has 29 agencies, boards, and commissions consisting of 211 members. The clerk's office has the daunting task of keeping up with applications, appointments, reappointments, resignations, rosters, meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes while also serving the needs of the 11 member county council.

—Beaufort County Clerk to Council Sarah Brock

McCormick County Clerk to Council Crystal Barnes knows having a paper-driven application process causes delays and disorganization and the citizens in your counties suffer. You need an easier solution.

"When they turn those [paper applications] in, they may get to my desk or they may sit on someone else's desk for a period of time by accident."

—McCormick County Clerk to Council Crystal Barnes

Without an efficient way to move applications through the appointment process, positions remain vacant, quorums can't be met, and decisions are not made.

With concurrent portals for both citizens and clerks, it creates a forum where citizens and their governments can connect and both have their needs met. In addition to presenting citizens with information about serving, MatchBoardsm is a "matchmaking" service calculating how qualified each applicant is for the positions they're applying for based on their resume and profile information. Those insights cut through the noise to ensure you have the information you need to appoint the best person to every position. SCAC Executive Director Tim Winslow summarizes it best, "The idea of MatchBoard is to marry people with their local government entities. People want to serve and local governments want these people to serve."

People do want to serve. They just may not know how. That means our counties miss out because boards and commissions represent more than just their scopes of function. They foster growth, economic

development, and inclusivity. Effective boards and commissions create strong communities, attracting business and investment.


“... one of our biggest struggles has always been to get people involved in our community, and boards and commissions are the backbone. We need to make sure that we are reaching every corner of our community—that diversity is a big part of it. We want to make sure folks are engaged and right now we see this great opportunity because so many people in our community have reached out and said ‘how can I help?’ Well number one, apply for a board and we’re going to make it easier for them ... It’s an exciting time for us, especially South Carolina with all the growth potential ... people moving here, investments coming, and making sure we’re capturing all those folks, and having them engaged... We’re open for business. We’re open for inclusion. We’re open for ideas. We’re open for innovation.”

—City of Columbia Mayor Daniel Rickenmann

Furthermore, when people step up, they need to know that the appointment process is transparent and equitable. MatchBoardsm demonstrates your commitment to open government. Orangeburg County Council Chairman Johnny Wright, led Orangeburg County

to join MatchBoardsm because, “I think MatchBoard will be a great tool for Orangeburg when trying to recruit qualified applicants for our boards and commissions. It will let citizens know that the appointment process is impartial and not political.”

Streamlining board appointments promotes inclusivity and diversity. That’s important for Orangeburg County Clerk to Council, Connie Portee, “Citizens need to know that they have a voice. Being on boards and commissions give them [the] opportunity to express their voice.”

To learn more about how your county can embrace innovation visit MatchBoard.tech or contact emily@scwomenlead.net. 



The screenshot shows the Orangeburg County website's 'Boards & Commissions' page. The top navigation bar includes 'Departments', 'Services', 'How Do I...', 'Business', and 'Elected Officials', along with a search bar. The left sidebar lists 'Election Commission', 'Planning Commission', and 'Board of Zoning Appeals'. The main content area features the MatchBoard logo and a search bar. Below the search bar, it displays 'Showing 11 results' and a 'Filter by category' dropdown. The first result is the 'Human Relations Council', which has 1 of 7 available seats and a 2-year term. The council's purpose is to promote good and harmonious relations and a healthy spirit of community. It lists current seat members: Community, Disabilities, Government, Poverty, Minority, and Social Work. A 'Learn More' button is provided for each result. At the bottom, it shows the 'Library Board Commission' with 0 of 7 available seats and a 2-year term. A 'Help' button is located in the bottom right corner.