

PROBLEMS IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT: A SURVEY  
OF LEGISLATOR AND ADMINISTRATOR VIEWS

By

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Introduction

During April of 1972, five copies of a questionnaire entitled, "Improving Board-Administrator Relations in My County" were mailed to each of 57 clerks of county legislative boards in New York State. Each clerk was asked to complete the questionnaire himself and to distribute a copy to the chairman of the legislative board, a minority member of the board, the head of the highway or public works department and the head of the social services department. These county legislators and administrators were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in time for summarization and presentation at the annual meeting of the Association of Clerks of County Legislative Boards and Directors of Real Property Tax Services.

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\* Prepared for the Annual School of the Association of Clerks of County Legislative Boards and Directors of Real Property Tax Services, held in conjunction with Work Session 5 for county officers of New York State on problems of county management, at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, May 21-24, 1972. This session was sponsored by the County Officers Association of the State of New York with assistance from the Extension Division of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the Department of Agricultural Economics of the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (Statutory Units of the State University at Cornell University). Financial assistance was provided by a state and federal grant under Title VIII of the Housing Act of 1964 administered through the New York State Office for Local Government and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Authors are Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics and Professor of Public Administration, respectively, Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University. Appreciation is expressed to Lois Plimpton for tabulating the results, and to William W. Frank and F. Clark Hamlin for valuable assistance during all phases of this study.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain some general ideas and impressions regarding the nature and magnitude of problems of relations between county governing boards and heads of county administrative agencies. It was thought that significant problems do exist in county government and that these problems can be identified by those most closely involved with county government. If the links between legislators and administrators are to be improved, the differences of opinion between them with respect to identification of problem areas and badly needed changes must be explored and elaborated.

#### Procedures and General Results

The questionnaire, reproduced in Appendix A, contains 37 different suggestions for improving the operation, management and effectiveness of county government by improving links between legislators and administrators. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first section is concerned with ways sometimes suggested by which the county governing board can improve its effectiveness in relations with county administrators, departments and agencies. The second section deals with ways sometimes suggested by which county administrators, departments and agencies can help the board make more effective use of its time.

County officers and administrators were asked to put a number in the blank at the left of each of the 37 statements. The number indicated the importance of the problem according to the following ranking scale:

- "1 = One of the two or three most badly needed changes in  
county management in my county.
- 2 = A badly needed change, but not of topmost priority.
- 3 = A useful change, but less necessary than 1 or 2.

4 = My county has already taken care of the problem.

5 = No problem in my county.

6 = Should move in the opposite direction in my county."

This system of eliciting responses corresponds to a ranking of county problems from the most serious to the least serious as the ranks change from 1 up to 6.

Of the 285 questionnaires mailed to clerks of legislative boards, 109 usable questionnaires were received from respondents in 43 counties. The overall response rate of 38 percent was judged satisfactory based upon previous experience with mail questionnaires. Replies were received from representatives of all groups for whom the survey was designed. In addition, responses were received from both rural and urban counties, from counties with elected and appointed chief executives, from counties where the chairman of the board of legislators acts as chief executive; and, from counties with large and small legislative boards. A summary of the rankings of suggested or needed changes based on 109 responses to all 37 statements is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Ranking of Needed Changes Based on 109 Responses to 37 Suggested Changes

Rank	Replies	
	Number	Percent of total
1 First priority	471	13
2 Badly needed	502	14
3 Useful	903	24
4 Under control	458	12
5 No problem	1,280	35
6 Opposite change needed	71	2
Total	3,685	100

A total of 4,033 responses were possible. Of this total, 348, or about 9 percent, were not usable - that is, were left blank. Thus, figures in Table 1 are based on the 3,685 usable responses.

One interesting fact emerges from Table 1. About 35 percent of the responses indicated "no problem." An even larger group of responses, 47 percent, indicated either "no problem" or problem "under control" in the county. In sharp contrast was the 27 percent of responses indicating either a "first priority" or "badly needed" change.

After examining the responses, it was decided that the summarization process could be simplified without loss of information by combining two sets of the rankings. The "first priority" and "badly needed" ranks were combined, as were the "under control" and "no problem" rankings. The revised response groupings were as follows:

- 1 & 2 indicate a badly needed change or a serious problem area
- 3 indicates a useful change
- 4 & 5 indicate no problem
- 6 indicates change in the opposite direction is desirable.

Using these new rankings, the responses are summarized by respondent groups in Table 2. About 28 percent of the usable questionnaires were completed by the clerks, 25 percent by highway commissioners, 18 percent by the chairmen of the board, 18 percent by social services commissioners and only 11 percent by the minority board members.

Table 2. Number and Percent of Respondents, and Percent of Total Rankings, by Respondent Groups

County Officer	Respondents		Percent of total rankings				Total
	No.	% of total	1 & 2	3	4 & 5	6	
Clerks of Boards	30	28	31	24	42	3	100
Chairmen of Boards	20	18	28	24	45	3	100
Minority Board Members	12	11	39	23	37	1	100
Social Services Heads	20	18	22	22	55	1	100
Highway Heads	27	25	17	28	53	2	100
Total	109	100	Avg. 26	25	47	2	100

Minority members of boards were most critical in identifying needed changes. Of their responses, 39 percent indicated "a badly needed change" as represented by the 1 and 2 rankings. This compares to the average among all county officers of 25 percent and to the highway commissioners' 17 percent. This result seems consistent with the role of the minority in democratic government generally as "His Majesty's loyal opposition."

The administrators, i.e., the social services and highway department heads, identified fewer needed changes than the clerks or legislators. About 55 percent of the responses of the social services commissioners and 53 percent of the responses of the highway commissioners were either ranked 4 or 5, which indicates "no problem." Only 42 and 45 percent, respectively, of the responses of the clerks and chairmen of the board indicated "no problem," and 37 percent of the responses of minority members of the boards.

Responses were also classified according to three characteristics of the county of location of the respondents: (1) the type of county chief executive, (2) the population of the county and (3) the size of the board. The summary by type of chief executive is presented in Table 3. In almost two-thirds of the counties from which individuals responded, the chairman of the legislative board served as chief executive. About 24 percent of the counties had elected or appointed chief executives with the remaining 12 percent having some other type of chief executive. Problem identification did not vary significantly among counties with different types of executives. That is, respondents in counties with elected and appointed chief executives responded in approximately the same way as respondents in counties where the chairman of the board acts as chief executive. Thus the conjecture that board-administrator relations might be less troublesome in counties with elected or appointed chief executives is not substantiated by the responses to this survey.

Table 3. Number and Percent of Counties, and Percent of Total Rankings, by Type of County Chief Executive

County by type of chief executive	Counties		Percent of total rankings				
	No.	% of total	1 & 2	3	4 & 5	6	Total
Elected & Appointed	10	24	24	22	53	1	100
Chairman of Board	26	64	25	26	47	2	100
Other	5	12	28	22	47	3	100
Total	41 <sup>a</sup>	100	Avg. 26	24	48	2	100

<sup>a</sup> Responses from two counties did not indicate the type of chief executive.

The summary of responses by population of the county is in Table 4. Respondents in counties where population is greater than 150,000, as well as those in counties where population is less than 50,000, indicated "no problem" in over 50 percent of their responses. This compared with only 41 percent for respondents in counties with population between 50,000 and 149,999. To the extent that the more populous counties on the one hand, or rural counties on the other are thought to have more problems, this result is surprising.

Table 4. Number and Percent of Counties, and Percent of Total Rankings, by Population of County

Population of county	Counties		Percent of total rankings				
	No.	% of total	1 & 2	3	4 & 5	6	Total
Less than 50,000	14	33	27	21	50	2	100
50,000 - 149,999	17	39	28	28	41	3	100
150,000 and over	12	28	22	24	53	1	100
Total	43	100	Avg. 26	25	47	2	100

The summary of responses by size of board is in Table 5. Respondents in counties with boards containing 25 or more members and those with less than 15 members indicated the fewest "no problem" responses. Respondents in counties with fewer than 15 board members had about the same proportion

of "serious problem" responses as did respondents in counties with a large board. Counties with boards ranging in size from 15 to 24 members appeared to have the fewest serious problems and the largest number of "no problem" responses.

Table 5. Number and Percent of Counties, and Percent of Total Rankings, by Size of Board

Size of board	Counties		Percent of total rankings				
	No.	% of total	1 & 2	3	4 & 5	6	Total
Less than 15	12	28	29	26	43	2	100
15 - 24	22	51	24	24	50	2	100
25 and over	9	21	30	26	41	3	100
Total	43	100	Avg. 26	25	47	2	100

#### Governing Board Changes

The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to determine some of the significant problems of county management. This survey revealed that the nature and magnitude of problems in county government differ depending upon whether the observer is a legislator, administrator, clerk, board chairman or minority member of the board. To illustrate these differences, the responses of each group to each question are presented and discussed in this and subsequent sections.

The first set of statements on the questionnaire are concerned with changes the governing board can make to improve its effectiveness in relations with county administrators, departments and agencies. There are six general statements, some of them with component parts (see Appendix). A summary of each statement and the percent of respondents indicating 1 and 2 ranks, by respondent groups, are presented in Table 6.



Table 6. Percent of Respondents Indicating 1 and 2 Ranks for Suggested Governing Board Changes, by Respondent Group

Suggested Change	Clerk	Chairman	Minority Member	Social Services	Highway
1. Spending less time on details of running county departments and agencies.	a/	30	45		26
2. Spending more time on "things that make a difference."	71	79	73	36	40
3. Relieving the governing board of responsibility for:					
a. auditing bills for payment					
b. approving new positions and job titles				32	
c. approving purchases of supplies and equipment	28				
d. correcting erroneous assessments	37			31	
4. By improving committees:					
a. reducing the number substantially					33
b. reassigning committee responsibilities					
c. calling for interim committee reports to keep the board informed	31	30	55		
d. encourage thorough committee work	32	30	27		36
e. prevent the full board from duplicating committee work	41			39	42
5. Improving communications with county administrators, departments and agencies:					
a. requesting more often a county agency to answer questions having significant relation to results and costs of performance for that agency	48	50	75	29	

Table 6. (continued)

Suggested Change	Clerk	Chairman	Minority Member	Social Services	Highway
b. greater board member study and understanding of administration	75	55	45	50	46
c. developing recognition that the board shares responsibility for agency performance and responding to citizen complaints about agency performance	40	35	50	26	31
d. finding more effective ways to transmit board communications to county administrators	25	42	58	39	
e. send administrators a copy of minutes of board meetings					
f. board or committees visiting of department activities	31	40	58	33	27
6. Conducting board meetings expeditiously:					
a. starting on time			42		
b. limiting length of meetings			36		
c. adhering to rules of board and parliamentary procedure					
d. obtaining a complete record of board meetings by tape recording					
7. Greater public exposure of important problems coming before the board:					
a. more TV and radio broadcasts of meetings			44		
b. more public hearings					
c. more evening meetings to encourage public attendance			55		
d. fewer board executive sessions and non-public committee meetings			36		

a/ Blank spaces in the table indicate that, for a particular statement, less than 25 percent of the respondents in a group felt that it was a badly needed change.

Responses to statement 2 in Table 6 indicate that many in all respondent groups thought that the board should spend more time on "things that really make a difference in the county." Of all the statements on the questionnaire, this one received the greatest proportion of ranks indicating a badly needed change. About 71 percent of the clerks, 79 percent of the chairmen and 73 percent of the minority members identified this as a significant problem area. Only 36 percent of the social services heads and 40 percent of the highway heads identified this as a badly needed change.

Response to statement 3, which deals with relieving the governing board of responsibility for tasks that are primarily administrative, was by no means unanimous. Many of the clerks and social services commissioners agreed that relieving the governing board of responsibility for approving new positions and job titles, approving purchases of supplies and equipment and correcting erroneous assessments are badly needed changes. This is the first of several occasions when the clerk of the board, who may often view himself as an administrator, joined with the appointed administrators in disagreeing with the board.

Statement 4 is concerned with ways to improve the effectiveness of the board by improving committees. Many of the highway commissioners felt that a substantial reduction in the number of committees would be a useful change. However, responses from the other respondent groups indicated that the number of committees is no problem. Few in any of the respondent groups felt that there was a need for reassigning committee responsibilities, indicating general satisfaction with the committee structure in county government. About 31 percent of the clerks joined with 30 percent of the chairmen and 55 percent of the minority members

in calling for interim committee reports to help keep the board informed. Over 50 percent of the social services and highway commissioners felt that interim committee reports would not be useful to the board. However, the strength of the board members' demand for interim reports indicates that they might improve the effectiveness of the board. Many respondents from each group except the social services commissioners joined in the need for encouraging more thorough committee work. On the statement that committees should be improved so as to prevent the full board from duplicating committee work, 41 percent of the many clerks joined with about an equal percentage of the appointed administrators in indicating that this is a badly needed change. Only the chairmen and minority member responses indicated that this is no serious problem.

There was more widespread agreement among all groups on the need for the changes listed under statement 5 for improving board-administrator communications than for any other statement except statement 2 (already mentioned). Exactly 75 percent of the clerks, 55 percent of the board chairmen and 50 percent of the social services commissioners indicated that greater board member study and understanding of administrative problems is a badly needed change. About 48 percent of the clerks, 50 percent of the chairmen and 75 percent of the minority members of the board joined with only 29 percent of the social services commissioners in agreeing that communications would be improved if the board asked county agencies to answer more questions having significant relation to results and costs of performance for that agency. Many in the same groups thought the board should find more effective ways to transmit board communications to county administrators. Many among all groups agreed that some means other than the minutes of board meetings must be used to transmit board communications to county administrators.

Two other parts of statement 5 drew widespread agreement that they were badly needed changes. Many among all groups agreed that the board should be brought to recognize that it shares responsibility for agency performance and should be prepared to respond to citizen complaints about agency performance. In addition, many among all respondent groups indicated that the board and committees could improve communications by visiting the agencies and departments of county government.

Statements 6 and 7 in Table 6 indicate two not altogether surprising areas of disagreement between the minority members of the board and the other respondent groups. Minority members of the boards were alone in feeling that starting board meetings on time and limiting the length of meetings are serious problems or badly needed changes. Most of those in all groups agreed that adhering to parliamentary procedure and obtaining a complete recording of board meetings were low priority changes or no problem. Minority board members were alone in indicating need for greater public exposure of important problems coming before the board. Many of them agreed on the need for more TV and radio broadcasts of meetings, more evening meetings to increase public attendance and fewer executive sessions and non-public committee meetings. Most of those in other respondent groups indicated that more public exposure was not a badly needed change. In fact, some respondents expressed a desire to have less public scrutiny. For example, about 17 percent of the highway commissioners, 15 percent of the chairmen and 10 percent of the clerks indicated a desire for fewer TV and radio broadcasts. Some respondents also expressed a desire to have fewer evening meetings and more non-public committee meetings to discourage public attendance.

## County Administrator, Department and Agency Changes

The second section of the questionnaire asked the general question "How can county administrators, departments and agencies help the board make more effective use of its time?" This general question was divided into two specific statements, each with six parts (see Appendix). Responses to these statements or suggested changes are summarized by respondent groups in Table 7. Entries in the table identify the percent of respondents indicating 1 and 2 ranks, by respondent groups.

The first statement in Table 7 is concerned with potential actions and changes by administrators designed to improve agency-board relations and at the same time, improve the effectiveness of the board as an arm of county government. Responses to the six parts of this statement illustrate quite clearly the need for more effective communications and coordination between the board and administrative agencies of the county. For example, many among the clerks, chairmen and minority members of the board agreed that county departments and agencies should demonstrate to the board an awareness of agency purposes and objectives; should develop standards of performance that are defensible before the board and board constituents; should display the ability to answer those who are critical of departmental actions; and, should display the competence to resist board interference with details of administration. Most of the administrators, on the other hand, both in social services and highway departments, indicated that none of these suggested changes represented serious problem areas.

Almost 60 percent of the social services commissioners, heads of one of county government's most often criticized agencies, indicated that the ability of their agency to answer constructively those who are critical

of departmental actions was no problem. Almost 42 percent of the clerks, 47 percent of the chairmen and 58 percent of the minority members indicated this to be a badly needed change. On the other hand, social services commissioners joined with clerks and chairmen in suggesting that agencies should assist the board in distinguishing the extent to which local operations are mandated by state and federal regulations.

Table 7. Percent of Respondents Indicating 1 and 2 Ranks for Suggested Administrator, Department and Agency Changes, by Respondent Group

Suggested Change	Clerk	Chairman	Minority Member	Social Services	Highway
1. Encourage the board to focus on "things that make a difference in the county."					
a. demonstrating to the board an awareness of agency purposes and objectives	44	35	58	a/	
b. developing standards of performance that are defensible before the board and board constituents	41	42	50		
c. showing to the board an awareness of changing requirements and conditions and of the consequences of major alternatives	46	35	55	35	
d. displaying the ability to answer those who are critical of departmental action	42	47	58		
e. distinguish the extent to which county operations are subject to local control compared with state or federal requirements	42	53		29	
f. displaying the competence to resist board interference with details of administration	38	42	58		

Table 7. (continued)

Suggested Change	Clerk	Chairman	Minority Member	Social Services	Highway
2. Displaying willingness to communicate regularly with the board concerning purposes or objectives and the extent of their achievement:					
a. encouraging board members to visit departments	41	43	42	53	30
b. working closely with committees to reduce needless discussion by the entire board	40		50		
c. collecting and providing information in a form that the board can use to judge departmental performance and problems	52	43	67		
d. preparing information useful to the board in explaining agency operations to board constituencies	38	33	42		
e. organizing information for the board in a condensed form that makes effective use of the board member's time	58	43	50		
f. assigning staff members to work with board committees where appropriate		29	25		

a/ Blank spaces in the table indicate that, for a particular statement, less than 25 percent of the respondents in a group felt that it was a badly needed change.

Statement 2 in Table 7 is concerned with changes agencies can make to improve board-agency communications. Many among all respondent groups agreed that agencies should encourage board members to visit departments. However, on the remaining five parts of statement 2, the board-agency dichotomy reappeared. Many among the clerks, chairmen and minority members agreed that agencies should collect and provide information in a form that



the board can use to judge departmental performance; should prepare information useful to the board in explaining agency operations to board constituencies; and should organize information in a condensed form that makes effective use of the board member's time. Administrators failed to indicate any of these as serious problem areas.

To illustrate the magnitude of disagreement, 67 percent of the majority members, 52 percent of the clerks and 48 percent of the chairmen indicated that agencies should do a better job of providing information in a form that the board can use to judge departmental performance. Over 61 percent of the social services commissioners and 50 percent of highway chiefs felt that they were doing an adequate job in this area. Apparently the agency administrators feel that they are doing a satisfactory job of communicating with the boards, but many on the boards feel that some significant improvements can be effected.

#### Summary and Conclusions

A mail questionnaire was used to solicit the views of legislators and administrators regarding the problems of county management related to improving relations between county governing bodies and county agency administration. Respondents to the survey included clerks, chairmen and minority members of legislative boards, in addition to social services and highway commissioners. Each respondent was asked to place a rank, which was designed to indicate the magnitude of the problem, beside each of 37 statements regarding problems of county management.

An interesting result emerged when all responses were grouped according to rank. Almost 35 percent of the responses to the 37 statements indicated "no problem." An even larger group, over 47 percent, indicated

either "no problem" or problem "under control." Only about 26 percent of the responses indicated a "first priority" or "badly needed" change.

Some of the most needed changes by the board that were identified by respondents to the questionnaire are (1) to spend more time on "things that really make a difference in the county"; (2) to improve communications between the board and county administrators by requesting more often county agencies to answer questions having a bearing on costs and performance; (3) to encourage greater board member study and understanding of administrative activities and issues; (4) developing a clearer recognition by the board that it shares responsibility for agency performance and for responding to agency critics; and (5) to increase visits to county agencies. Some of the ways in which county agencies and departments can help the board be more effective include (1) demonstrating to the board an awareness of agency purposes and objectives; (2) demonstrating to the board an awareness of changing requirements and conditions and of the major practical alternatives and their consequences; (3) displaying to the board the ability to answer constructively those who are critical of agency actions; (4) encouraging board members to visit agencies or departments; and, (5) collecting and providing information in a form that makes effective use of board members time and can be used to reach judgments on departmental performance or problems.

Members of the board and administrators frequently took opposite positions on specific improvements listed in the questionnaire. For example, while many clerks, board chairmen and minority members agreed that a number of changes designed to improve communications between the board and administrators would be useful changes, most administrators indicated that no such changes were necessary. The general disagreement between

board members and administrators emphasizes the communications gap that exists between them.

Minority members of the board often disagreed with other board members and administrators. The most serious area of disagreement concerned the need for more public exposure at board and committee meetings. All other respondents expressed a desire for less public exposure.

One might speculate about peoples' reactions to questionnaires asking them to be, to a certain extent, critical of an organization in which they have a vested interest. Perhaps, under those circumstances, respondents are less inclined to identify problems or admit that existing problems are serious. Although the percent of responses indicating serious problems was low, respondents did identify a number of areas in which change is needed. In addition, responses to the questionnaire serve to emphasize the communications gap that exists between legislators and administrators. Alternative approaches to narrowing that gap and thus improving board-administrator relations are also suggested.

## APPENDIX A: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

## Problems of County Management

## Work Session 5. Consolidating the County Management

Team: Improving Links Between Legislators and Administrators

to be Discussed on May 22, 1972 at

School for Clerks of County Legislative Boards

and

Directors of Real Property Tax Services

Improving Board-Administrator Relations in My CountyA Rating Scale

Will you please complete these sheets and return them in the self-addressed envelope by May 10 to: Professor Harry Mapp, Department of Agricultural Economics, 156 Warren Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14850?

Harry Mapp and helpers will summarize the returns for presentation at the Work Session on May 22, and discussion by those attending. The individual returns we regard as confidential. You do not need to identify yourself. For organizing returns into similar groups, it would help if you would check the appropriate items immediately below:

Your position: (check one) Does your county have: (check if applicable)

<input type="checkbox"/> Chairman of Board	<input type="checkbox"/> An elected Chief Executive?
<input type="checkbox"/> Member of Board	<input type="checkbox"/> An appointive County Manager?
<input type="checkbox"/> Head of Highway or Public Works Department	<input type="checkbox"/> A Board Chairman as chief administrator?
<input type="checkbox"/> Head of Social Services Department	<input type="checkbox"/> Other chief administrator?
<input type="checkbox"/> Clerk of Board	How many members on County Board? _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Listed below are some ways that are sometimes suggested for improving the effectiveness of county governing boards in relations with county administrators, departments and agencies. Please put a number in the blank at the left of each statement which indicates the importance of the problem according to the following scale:

1 = One of the two or three most badly needed changes in county management in my county.

- 2 = A badly needed change, but not of topmost priority.
- 3 = A useful change, but less necessary than 1 or 2.
- 4 = My county has already taken care of the problem.
- 5 = No problem in my county.
- 6 = Should move in the opposite direction in my county.

I. How can the county governing board improve its effectiveness in relations with county administrators, departments and agencies?

- \_\_\_ A. By spending less time on details of running county departments and agencies.
- \_\_\_ B. By spending more time on "things that really make a difference in the county."
- \_\_\_ C. By relieving the county governing board of responsibility:
  - \_\_\_ a. For auditing bills for payment.
  - \_\_\_ b. For approving new positions and job titles (except for major administrative, professional and technical positions).
  - \_\_\_ c. For approving purchases of supplies and equipment (except for major installations, such as a computer).
  - \_\_\_ d. For correcting erroneous assessments.
  - \_\_\_ e. For the following additional things:
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ D. By improving committees:
  - \_\_\_ a. Reducing the number of committees substantially. (What is present number? \_\_\_)
  - \_\_\_ b. Reassigning committee responsibilities without reducing the number of committees.
  - \_\_\_ c. Keeping the board informed on progress of committee work by calling for interim committee reports.
  - \_\_\_ d. Work on other ways to encourage thorough committee work.
  - \_\_\_ e. Work on a system which prevents the full board from duplicating work of committees.
  - \_\_\_ f. In the following additional ways:
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_

E. By improving communications with county administrators, departments and agencies:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Requesting more often a county agency to answer questions having significant relation to results and costs of performing the county services of that agency - i.e., exercising more frequently the board prerogative of seeking information bearing on policy, and quality and costs of performance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Greater board member study and understanding of administrative activities and issues.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Developing clearer recognition among individual board members and by the board as a whole that it shares responsibility for agency performance and for responding constructively to citizen complaints about agency performance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Finding more effective ways to transmit board communications to county administrators.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Sending administrators a copy of minutes of meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Board or committee visiting of department activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. In the following additional ways:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

F. By conducting board meetings expeditiously:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Starting on time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Limiting length of meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Adhering more strictly to rules of the board and of parliamentary procedure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Obtaining a complete record of board meetings by tape recording.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Doing the following additional things:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

G. By greater public exposure of important problems coming before the board:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. More TV and radio broadcasts of meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. More public hearings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. More evening meetings to encourage public attendance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Fewer board executive sessions and non-public committee meetings.

e. By other means:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

H. By the following additional board actions:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

II. How can county administrators, departments and agencies help the board make more effective use of its time?

A. By encouraging the board to focus its interest on policies and "things that really make a difference in the county."

- \_\_\_\_\_  
a. Demonstrating to the board an awareness of agency purposes and objectives.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Developing standards of administrative or departmental performance which, although less than perfect, are still defensible before the board and board constituencies.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Showing to the board an awareness of changing requirements and conditions and of the major practical alternatives or options and their consequences.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
d. Displaying to the board the ability to answer constructively those who are critical of departmental actions.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
e. Helping the board to distinguish the extent to which county operations are subject to local control compared with state or federal requirements.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
f. Displaying to the board the managerial competence and firmness to resist board interference with details of administration.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
g. In the following additional ways:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. By displaying willingness to communicate regularly with the board concerning purposes or objectives and the extent of their achievement.

- \_\_\_\_\_  
a. Encouraging board members to visit the departments or agencies.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Working closely with the appropriate committee to reduce needless discussion by the entire board.

- c. Collecting and providing information in a form that the board can use to reach judgments of departmental performance and problems.
- d. Preparing information useful to the board in explaining departmental operations to interested people among board member constituencies.
- e. Organizing information for the board in pointed, condensed form that makes effective use of board members' time in conveying the information.
- f. Assigning staff members to work with board committees where appropriate.
- g. In the following additional ways:

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C. By the following additional administrative actions:

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