



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 4, 2013

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: **Transparency of Pima County Government**

There has been some discussion recently about the degree of transparency provided by Pima County.

It is appropriate to highlight the myriad and unprecedented ways Pima County has made information available regarding the operations of this large government system. Any suggestion that Pima County is not committed to openness is incorrect.

While not an exhaustive list, the following are examples of the information that members of the public can easily find when they visit our website at www.pima.gov:

Budget. The most recent budget is available through a link prominently displayed on the home page of the County website. Not only is the current fiscal year available; we have also provided a copy of the Recommended and Adopted Budgets for the past 10 years.

Comprehensive Audited Financial Reports. As the budget outlines a prospective blueprint for moving forward for the upcoming fiscal year, the annual financial reports show how close we came to those projections and provide the actual spending over the previous budget period. All of these reports, dating to 1997, are available online.

Detailed transactions. Do you want to know how much Pima County spends on jail food in a year? How much does Juvenile Court collect in diversion fees? How much does the Elections Department spend on natural gas utility payments? This information is all online through OpenBooks, Arizona's official transparency website, which serves as a single point of reference for citizens to view information about the financial activities of the County.

Debt reports. Anyone looking for information regarding Pima County's debt management progress and policies can find it online. Our annual debt reports are available, covering the four major kinds of debt, including general obligation, street and highways, sewer revenue and certificates of participation. Complete transcripts of all debt issues are also posted.

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Audited reports. In addition to the annual countywide financial report, the County posts all of the audit reports covering Pima County's enterprise funds, including Development Services and Regional Wastewater Reclamation, as well as the Stadium District, the Self-insurance Trust Fund and all federal and state grants.

Bond information. Voters have authorized Pima County to sell bonds to pay for capital improvements. The implementation plans for those bond programs are available online, as are any amendments to the projects. Any amendments must go through a public vetting by the Pima County Bond Advisory Committee, as well as be approved in a public meeting by the Board of Supervisors.

Contracts. See who gets contracts, for what and for how much.

Contact information. Telephone numbers and feedback forms for the Supervisors and the County Administrator are prominently displayed on the website.

Open meeting laws. Information is available to let citizens know their rights to provide oversight of their government.

County Administrator's memoranda. The County Administrator's memoranda are posted online for those seeking detailed information about County operations.

Board agenda items. To assist the public in getting a full understanding of the items before the Board, the Board agendas are posted online. Full background information for each item is available with the click of a button.

In addition, there are several ways constituents can have access to Board actions in their entirety:

- Those who are interested in watching live proceedings of Board of Supervisors meetings may tune in to Cox Channels 12 and 96 and Comcast Channel 96. Although Channel 12 is occasionally preempted by City Council meetings, Channel 96 is not.
- For those watching online, the live link is available under "Resources" on the Board of Supervisors website.
- A DVD of each Board meeting is available in the Resource Area of the Joel D. Valdez Main Library. These materials may be reserved and sent to other library locations that are geographically more convenient to patrons throughout the County.

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- If the above options are not convenient for constituents, they may contact the Clerk of the Board (724.8449) and have a DVD of the full Board meeting sent to them. Because the County is authorized to recover costs for the release of public data, we have historically charged a nominal fee of \$5 to produce and mail the DVD. Financial need, however, should never stand in the way of public information, so this fee is waived if the person making the request cannot afford the fee.

It is worth noting that Pima County, at the beginning of 2013, received the highest transparency score issued for counties in the State of Arizona, with the exception of Pinal County, under an open government measurement conducted by the nonprofit Sunshine Review. In July 2013, Ballotpedia (www.ballotpedia.org) acquired content from Sunshine Review; but the information developed for its municipal government project is still available online, as is Pima County's score of A-minus for Calendar Year 2012.

Pima County remains fully committed to openness and transparency in government. We believe constituents should have access to the full breadth of any given Board discussion so they may draw their own conclusions based on the entirety of the discussion, not simply a selected portion that could be presented without appropriate context. Incomplete information leads to misrepresentation, political gridlock and confusion; and it is important to provide the public with as much information as possible regarding government operations and activities.

We are now seeing vivid, real-world examples of excerpting sound bites in the debate surrounding the shutdown of the federal government. Too often, such excerpts are being used for political advantage rather than constituent education.

CHH/mjk

c: Martin Willett, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Hank Atha, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Economic Development
John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Jan Leshner, Deputy County Administrator for Medical and Health Services
Jeff Nordensson, Director, Communications Office