

Memorandum

To: Mike Schaefer, Vice Chair
Ted Gaines, Member
Malia Cohen, Member
Betty T. Yee, State Controller

Date: January 13, 2020

From: Antonio Vazquez, Chairman

Re: Strategic Plan: Commitment and Next Steps.

Attached/enclosed for your review, discussion and possible action at the January 28, 2020 Board meeting are two documents, a *Strategic Planning Synopsis*, and a *Board Action Plan*, prepared by Eric Douglas and Karen Bloomer of Leading Resources Inc., memorializing the key points of our discussion and direction in the Strategic Planning Session held on November 20, 2019.

As these documents indicate, the Board accomplished a significant amount of work, and we now have a solid framework outlining our vision, values and future objectives. We made a disciplined effort to establish the 2-3 fundamental priorities under each of our 3 goals, as well as 7-10 action items needed to advance each priority.

The next steps involve our commitment to modify/approve and execute the action items, identify who will do what in the process, and set a tentative deadline when the draft Strategic Plan should be brought back to the Board. Although Member Cohen and I will continue to facilitate this project, and my staff and I will document all information received and prepare the draft, we need your commitment to moving forward and providing the data/information needed for the actions.

Executive Summary

Goal 1. Ensure the Board's constitutional mandates are being performed in the most cost effective, efficient and timely manner – with the infrastructure necessary for the BOE and Board Members to accomplish their workload. Of the 3 priorities and 4 action items we established, two actions need a commitment:

- (1)(c.1) Conduct a formal review/survey of BOE staffing needs/gaps, post-AB 102, and identify priorities; and
- (1)(c.2) Conduct a formal review/survey of Board Member offices' needs, identify gaps and required resources.

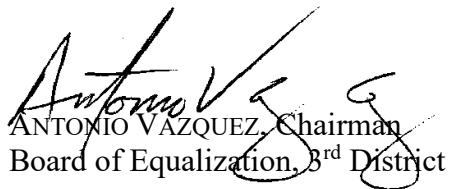
Goal 2. Establish and meet workload priorities for Members to achieve statewide objectives while ensuring maximum transparency and open discussion opportunities – with assessors, all stakeholders and through the Board agenda. Of the 2 priorities and 2 action items we agreed upon, two actions require committed effort:

- (2)(a.2) and (2)(a.3) Collect, identify and assess stakeholders' priorities from the Board's informational hearing and outline schedule/workplan to address them; and
- (2)(b.1) and (2)(b.2) Executive Director to prepare draft guidelines defining L and M Items on Board agenda; collective Board to review, refine, approve.

Goal 3. Develop an education and outreach plan – to strengthen our strategic partnerships with assessors and stakeholders, to engage in problem-solving outreach and educational conferences and workshops, and to establish outreach and communication guidelines. Of the 3 priorities and 7 action items we established, the following require commitment:

- (3)(c.1) and (3)(c.2) Gather both historical and current (post AB-102) information from the Executive Director, the Deputy Controller and the Attorney General regarding the Board's authority and options for communicating with and educating taxpayers and the public;
- (3)(c.3) Clarify Taxpayer Rights Advocate role and how Board Members can communicate with the TRA;
- (3)(c.5) Identify/list resources needed for Board Member education and outreach; and
- (3)(c.6) and (3)(c.7) Draft Annual Board Education/Outreach Plan and identify resources needed to implement the plan.

The core of our Strategic Plan outline thus far demonstrates our commitment to a strong governance for the Board, our future expectations for enhancing our service to the people of California, and the initiatives we intend to address. In the end – through our discussion, commitment and collaboration – we will have a well-thought-out strategy with a set of goals and priorities that will guide the Board for the next 3 years.


ANTONIO VÁZQUEZ, Chairman
Board of Equalization, 3rd District

**Board of Equalization
Strategic Planning Discussion
November 20, 2019
Discussion Synopsis**

Participants: Malia M. Cohen (Chair), Antonio Vazquez (Vice Chair), Mike Schaefer, Ted Gaines, Yvette Stowers (for State Controller Betty Yee)

Facilitators: Eric Douglas and Karin Bloomer of Leading Resources Inc.

I. Introduction

- Chairperson Cohen and Vice Chair Vazquez provide opening remarks and introduce facilitators, Eric Douglas and Karin Bloomer.
- Eric Douglas refers the Board to the draft strategic plan framework that the Board had previously developed and explains that he will be facilitating the Board's development of an action plan that advances the goals and priorities of the framework. He explains that the plan will reflect steps that the Board unanimously supports.
- Eric notes that Karin Bloomer will capture key concepts from the Board discussion on flip charts.

II. Board Discussion and Action Planning

- Eric Douglas facilitates a Board discussion about each goal's priorities. He asks what the priority means to the Board and ultimately asks what steps the Board would like to take to advance a given priority or the priorities for that goal collectively, as follows:

Goal 1. Ensure the Board's Constitutional mandates are being performed in the most cost effective, efficient, and timely manner with the 58 elected Assessors and California taxpayers in the forefront.

Priority 1a. Confirm the Agency has the resources and infrastructure necessary to fulfill its workload.

What does it mean?

- We as a Board need information and a process for determining whether BOE has sufficient resources, first by identifying whether there are any resource gaps, and then by assuring the organization obtains the resources it needs to fill those gaps.
- We need full authority and resources—we need to look at AB 102 and determine what authority to try to get back (e.g. HR authority)—is there a way for the Board to have a more active role in the organization's budget requests?
- The priority uses the term "confirm," which we define as the ability to assess resource needs and to assure resource needs are met.
- The Director needs all resources necessary to fulfill its mandate.

What actions does the Board want to take to advance this priority?

- See actions under Priority 1c.

Priority 1b. Assure Board Member fiscal responsibility, ethical accountability, and commitment to public service.

What does it mean?

- We must maintain these values and principles as elected officials.
- This priority includes being transparent.
- We have adopted a board governance policy and need to review and monitor it as a Board.

What actions does the Board want to take to advance this priority?

- Agendize a review of our Board governance policy at the start of each year.

Priority 1c. Institute Board Member staffing structure and administrative budget efficiencies for maximum fiscal responsibility; continually assess our efficiency and effectiveness; and maximize and leverage resources.

What does it mean?

- We must ensure sufficient budget authority and staffing to effectively represent the 10 million Californians in each of our districts.
- We need to be creative in saving money (e.g., share office space with legislative staff).
- Since AB 102 there has been no assessment of the impacts of this legislation on our Board and organization – or the consequences of it.

What actions does the Board want to take to advance this priority?

- Conduct a formal review of BOE staffing needs and gaps in a post-AB 102 environment—a SWOT analysis and identification of priorities.
- Conduct a formal review of Board member offices' needs—what we are trying to accomplish, the gaps, and a case for needed resources.
- Make our case to the legislature for needed budget authority and appropriation.

Goal 2. Establish and meet workload priorities and provide direction for Members to achieve statewide objectives and workload in a manner that ensures maximum transparency and opportunity for open discussion.

Priority 2a. Vet key issues and concerns with assessors, businesses, nonprofits, and our communities at large through informational hearings, special forums, etc.

What does it mean?

- We are currently advancing this priority via our information hearings.
- We are seeking to understand stakeholders' priorities and best practices in this diverse state.

- We need to collect, synthesize, and analyze the data from these hearings.
- We need to create a work plan from that assessment.

What actions does the Board want to take to advance this priority?

- Continue the process of conducting hearings.
- Identify and assess stakeholders' priorities.
- Develop a work plan for the Board to address these priorities.

Priority 2b. Clarify the guidelines for determining Board Agenda Items L and M as it pertains to vetting emerging issues and public policy actions by the Board.

What does it mean?

- "L" items are those that Board members want to introduce and vet with the Board.
- "M" items are the above items that are deemed "public policy" discussion items.
- Some items require analysis by staff, which is challenging due to staff limitations.
- There are no formal guidelines or protocol for Board members to follow.

What actions does the Board want to take to advance this priority?

- Memorialize guidelines that include definitions and process for L + M item vetting.
 - Executive Director to prepare draft guidelines.
 - Board to review, refine, and memorialize guidelines.

Goal 3. Develop an education and outreach plan.

What would we like to do as part of education and outreach?

- Be able to get back to forums, e.g. with non-profits and businesses.
- Be able to conduct PSAs, business bureaus, practitioner roundtables, Chamber of Commerce roundtables.
 - Board members' role: Articulate common priorities and inspire agency staff to execute on some of these.
- Be able to visit high schools and educate about taxation.
- Be able to convene forums to educate taxpayers and other constituents.

Priority 3a. Expand and strengthen our strategic partnerships with assessors, taxpayers, nonprofits, legislators, and others who depend on statewide guidance and problem solving.

What does it mean?

- Education and outreach is named as a constitutional duty of the Board.
- Now that AB 102 has passed, what legally can Board members do and ask of agency staff?
 - We need new legislation to free us from constraints.
- Need to develop better relationships with assessors.

- Outreach: how can the BOE help you?
 - See priority 2a for stakeholder information hearings.
- Conduct needs assessment about assessor education.
- Conduct needs assessment of our own staff training.
- Revive informational hearings to educate stakeholders.
- We want to:
 - Establish a vision for proactive outreach.
 - Conduct outreach as individual Board members.
 - Coordinate with agency staff.
 - Optimize use of taxpayer rights advocate position (clarify and elevate).
 - Clarify how Board members can interact with the advocate.

What actions does the Board want to take to advance this priority?

- See actions under Priority 3c.

Priority 3b. Fully engage in effective communication, and explore and engage in practical problem-solving through outreach, workshops, assessors' conferences, legislative hearings, etc.

What actions does the Board want to take to advance this priority?

- See actions under Priority 3c.

Priority 3c. Establish outreach and communication guidelines.

What does it mean?

- We need clarification on what is permissible and not, and the budget available.
 - Challenging to take outreach to scale.
 - What can we do with various stakeholder groups?

What actions does the Board want to take to advance this priority?

- Establish what we as Board members can and cannot do in regard to outreach.
 - Obtain historical context from the Executive Director and Ms. Stowers.
 - Obtain legal interpretation from the Attorney General's Office regarding the Board's authority under AB 102 to conduct outreach and education, including partnerships with assessors.
 - Clarify the role of the taxpayer rights advocate and how Board members can interact with this position.
 - Agendize this topic for Board discussion.
- Establish what resources are needed for education and outreach within the Board's legal authority and fold this analysis into staffing analysis under Goal 1.
- Develop an annual Board outreach and education plan that reflects a consistent and shared approach.
- Determine resources needed for robust outreach and education plan implementation.

III. Discussion of “Parking Lot” Items

- During the course of the discussion, Board members raise two issues that are set aside until the end of the planning session: branding campaign for the agency, and staggered terms for Board members to preserve institutional memory.
- Eric Douglas invites Board members to discuss each item, as follows:
 - Branding campaign for the agency
 - We need a communications director (see Goal 1 for staffing needs assessment).
 - An awareness-building campaign would be excellent and important because we are a newly configured agency – a campaign that explains what we do and for whom.
 - It will also help us recruit capable talent.
- Eric Douglas asks Board members if this should be a Board priority. The Board responds affirmatively.
 - Staggered terms for Board members to preserve institutional memory
 - Over time, staggered terms will return via attrition.
 - This would require amending the Constitution.
- For these reasons, the Board determines this is not a Board priority.

IV. Conclusion

- Eric Douglas notes that Board has completed its action planning.
- He offers to compile the work into an action plan for the Board.
- Chair Cohen thanks Eric Douglas and Karin Bloomer for their assistance in Board planning.

Board of Equalization
2020 Board Action Plan
Last Updated November 20, 2019

- 1. Ensure the Board’s Constitutional mandates are being performed in the most cost effective, efficient, and timely manner with the 58 elected Assessors and California taxpayers in the forefront.**

Priority	Actions	Lead	Timeframe	Status Update
1a. Confirm the Agency has the resources and infrastructure necessary to fulfill its workload.	<i>See actions under Priority 1c.</i>			
1b. Assure Board Member fiscal responsibility, ethical accountability, and commitment to public service.	1b.1. Agendize a review of our Board governance policies at the start of each year.			
1c. Institute Board Member staffing structure and administrative budget efficiencies for maximum fiscal responsibility; continually assess our efficiency and effectiveness; and maximize and leverage resources.	1c.1. Conduct a formal review of BOE staffing needs and gaps in a post-AB 102 environment—and identify priorities.			
	1c.2. Conduct a formal review of Board member offices’ needs—what we are trying to accomplish, the gaps, and a case for needed resources.			
	1c.3. Make the case to the Legislature for needed budget authority and appropriation.			

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2. Establish and meet workload priorities and provide direction for Members to achieve statewide objectives and workload in a manner that ensures maximum transparency and opportunity for open discussion.

Priority	Actions	Lead	Timeframe	Status Update
2a. Vet key issues and concerns with assessors, businesses, nonprofits, and our communities at large through informational hearings, special forums, etc.	2a.1. Continue the process of conducting informational hearings with stakeholders.	Board members		
	2a.2. Identify and assess stakeholders' priorities.	Board work group		
	2a.3. Develop a work plan for the Board to address these priorities.	Board work group		
2b. Clarify the guidelines for determining Board Agenda Items L and M as it pertains to vetting emerging issues and public policy actions by the Board.	2b.1. Prepare draft guidelines.	Executive Director		
	2b.2. Review, refine, and memorialize guidelines.	Board		

3. Develop an education and outreach plan.

Priority	Actions	Lead	Timeframe	Status Update
3a. Expand and strengthen our strategic partnerships with assessors, taxpayers, nonprofits, legislators, and others who depend	<i>See actions under Priority 3c.</i>			

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Priority	Actions	Lead	Timeframe	Status Update
on statewide guidance and problem solving				
3b. Fully engage in effective communication, and explore and engage in practical problem- solving through outreach, workshops, assessors' conferences, legislative hearings, etc.	<i>See actions under Priority 3c.</i>			
3c. Establish outreach and communication guidelines.	3c.1. Obtain historical context from the Executive Director and Ms. Stowers regarding what Board members can and cannot do in regard to outreach.			
	3c.2. Obtain legal interpretation from the Attorney General's Office regarding the Board's authority under AB 102 to conduct outreach and education, including partnerships with assessors.			
	3c.3. Clarify the role of the taxpayer rights advocate and how Board members can interact with this position.			
	3c.4. Agendize Board discussion of the information gathered on outreach.			
	3c.5. Establish what resources are needed for education and outreach within the Board's			

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Priority	Actions	Lead	Timeframe	Status Update
	legal authority and fold this analysis into staffing analysis under Goal 1.			
	3c.6. Develop an annual Board outreach and education plan that reflects a consistent and shared approach.			
	3c.7. Determine resources needed for robust outreach and education plan implementation.			