

**Open Data Advisory Group  
December 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

**Introduction**

A meeting of the Open Data Advisory Group (ODAG) was held on Dec 13 2018 from 6:30-8pm at 2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Conference Room 600. The following Members and County Staff were in attendance:

***Members***

David Bain  
Duke Banks (Acting Chair)  
Alyssa Doom  
Jesse Emery  
Elizabeth Grossman  
Christopher Hedrick  
Scott McGeary

***County Staff Liaisons***

Richard Archambault  
Jack Belcher  
David Herlihy  
Bryna Helfer  
Emily Hughes  
Jaime Lees (Staff Liaison)  
Jim Schwartz

**Summary of Discussion Topics**

- **Introductions**
- **Arlington Wallet demonstration**
- **Relationship between Open Data and FOIA**
- **Follow-up discussion of proposed privacy recommendations**

**Administrative Updates**

*Introductions*

The County Manager appointed one new ODAG member – Elizabeth Grossman. The Department of Technology Services hired a new Division Chief for Information Security, Privacy and Regulatory Affairs, Richard Archambault. All ODAG members introduced themselves and shared their professional and personal backgrounds related to open data.

*Arlington Wallet demonstration*

Emily Hughes, from the County’s Department of Management and Finance, introduced the County’s upcoming publication of financial data.

- “Arlington Wallet” contains fiscal years 2014-2018 and July thru November of FY2019
- Prescribed by the County Manager in support of open government and in advance of possible legislative requirements
- Governed by Governance Board who determines rules for publication and redaction
- Graphical representation of data and ability to “drill down” to look at desired subsets
- Support includes self-help tools, training videos and staff support
- Outreach plan will kick off when the data is published, focusing initially on to communicate the data availability and focusing on “how-to”
- Phase 2 - additional transaction-level data – will be published in summer/fall of 2019

Members asked questions about precedents set by earlier-adopting jurisdictions related to privacy, matching up data across data sources, ability to view the details of particular projects, and what inquiries to staff will need to be handled as FOIA requests. Overall response to the demonstration was positive.

### **Relationship of Open Data and FOIA**

Acting Chair Duke Banks raised the discussion topic with a statement that there is a lack of understanding in the community about the relationship between open data and information requested under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The contention is that the community does not know what type of data the County has, whether it is open data, what FOIA requests contain open data, whether open data requests could replace FOIA requests (and therefore incur no costs to the constituent). Mr. Banks provided the example of the number of FOIA requests related to the Amazon HQ2 bid, and concerns in the community about receiving credible, consistent information with clarity on the costs to obtain this information.

Bryna Helfer, Assistant County Manager for Communications and Outreach, shared an internal County memo issued by the County Manager on November 1, 2018 in which the County's FOIA Officer is charged with implementing uniform labor and materials charges across the entire County government. These uniform charges include an hourly rate cap and uniform copying and supply costs. All costs incurred will be shared by way of uniform cost estimates and invoicing for final payment, which will be published to the County's FOIA webpage. Continued efforts are underway to identify additional areas for improvement in preparation and publication efficiencies.

Member Liz Grossman noted her federal agency employer requires open data publication upon receipt of three or more FOIA requests for the same information. Questions were asked about the exact citation of this requirement and also how this requirement works when requests include records, not just data.

#### *Requested Action Item*

1. Provide language for open data publication requirement. (Elizabeth Grossman)

The question was raised whether there is or should be a communications strategy around FOIA – and what role the ODAG should play. The ODAG will consider in future meetings a recommendation to clarify and communicate what information will still need to be obtained through FOIA (e.g., personal information about yourself, records) even with comprehensive open data publication, as well as whether published FOIA requests should be reviewed for extraction of open data content.

#### *Requested Action Items*

1. Consider recommendation for Open Data and FOIA communications strategy. (ODAG Members)
2. Consider recommendation to publish appropriate FOIA responses as open data. (ODAG Members)

### **Follow-Up Discussion re: Privacy Subgroup Proposed Recommendations**

ODAG privacy subgroup members Alyssa Doom and Christopher Hedrick accepted questions and comments on the initial set of recommendations presented at the September meeting and noted that little feedback had been submitted by members since the last meeting. Members did not have additional feedback except to note that data privacy concerns need to be balanced with on-going commitment by government to publish open data.

County staff related conversations underway within government to consider data privacy policy – what it should look like, how it can be developed and what timeframe should be set. A potential role for the ODAG is helping to galvanize the community regarding the appetite for data privacy policy, input on the direction it should go and the key issues to be considered. Risks in continuing to publish open data in the absence of a data privacy policy were also noted.

Additional topics raised related to new types of data being collected, both within and without government control, defining what will not be published and why and opt-in/out options.

*Requested Action Item*

1. Decide next/final steps for privacy recommendations. (ODAG Members)