

public comment # 29
BOS Rcvd 7/21/25
25-1312


Agneda Item 25-1312

From Lee Tannenbaum <lee.tannenbaum@gmail.com>

Date Mon 7/21/2025 2:37 PM

To BOS-Clerk of the Board <edc.cob@edcgov.us>

Cc BOS-District I <bosone@edcgov.us>; BOS-District II <bostwo@edcgov.us>; BOS-District III <bosthree@edcgov.us>; BOS-District IV <bosfour@edcgov.us>; BOS-District V <bosfive@edcgov.us>; David A Livingston <david.livingston@edcgov.us>

 1 attachment (31 KB)

CAO Selection Transparency Request.pdf;

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Report Suspicious

Dear Clerk of the Board,

Please include the attachment to agenda item 25-1312. Thanks much.

lee

Lee Tannenbaum
President, Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County
650.515.2484

Letter to El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

To: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

Cc: County Counsel, Clerk of the Board

From: Lee Tannenbaum, President, Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County

Date: July 21, 2025

Subject: Request for Transparency in the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Selection Process

Dear Members of the Board,

As President of the El Dorado County Taxpayers Association, I am writing to express concern regarding the lack of transparency surrounding the County's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) selection process—specifically in relation to Agenda Item 25-1312 on your upcoming meeting agenda. This item appears to continue a pattern of limited public visibility around one of the most consequential decisions this Board can make. As such, we request this item be formally agendized and not placed in a closed-door session.

The CAO position is the highest-level administrative role in our county government, entrusted with oversight of nearly every facet of operations, budgeting, personnel, and long-term planning. Given this, the process used to evaluate, select, and appoint a CAO must be above reproach—both procedurally and in appearance. Unfortunately, the recent appointment of CAO Tiffany Schmid raised significant concerns due to its length, opacity, and absence of meaningful public engagement.

The Public Has a Right to Know

County Charter provisions and the 2022 Personnel Rules (Resolution 166-2022) provide a framework for recruitment based on merit, qualifications, and transparency. However, we have witnessed a widening gap between written policy and practical application. The public was not given notice of the stages of recruitment, screening criteria, or candidate qualifications during the last CAO process. Nor was there an opportunity for community input on the appointment—despite the CAO's critical role in shaping services that directly affect taxpayers, families, and businesses.

Our Recommendations

To restore public confidence and align with both the letter and spirit of the County Charter, we respectfully urge the Board to adopt the following improvements for current and future CAO hiring efforts:

1. Advance Public Notice – Post recruitment plans, candidate qualifications, and the interview timeline with ample time for public awareness.
2. Stakeholder Input – Create a window for the public to submit written input or concerns, even if formal interviews are conducted in closed session.
3. Transparency in Selection – Publish a post-appointment summary report outlining how the candidate met the advertised qualifications and why they were selected.
4. Public Accountability – Within 30 days of appointment, provide a brief overview of the selection process, candidate background, and assurances of alignment with County Code and Personnel Rules.
5. Contract & Compensation Disclosure – Make public the full CAO employment agreement, including total compensation, performance bonuses, severance terms, and any other special provisions prior to final Board approval.

In Closing

The CAO hiring process should reflect the values of open government and public accountability that El Dorado County claims to uphold. When hiring decisions of this magnitude occur behind closed doors, they erode trust and give the appearance of political favoritism. Taxpayers deserve more than compliance with minimum legal thresholds—they deserve a public process that reflects transparency, fairness, and integrity.

On behalf of the Taxpayers Association, I urge the Board to demonstrate leadership by opening the CAO selection process to greater public scrutiny moving forward.

Respectfully,

Lee Tannenbaum

President

Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County