



**Date of Council Meeting: April 27, 2015**

**TOWN OF LEESBURG  
TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

**Subject:** Transparency Initiative

**Staff Contacts:** Clark G. Case, Director of Finance and Administrative Services

**Council Action Requested:** Information only at this time.

**Staff Recommendation:** None at this time. However, staff does have significant concerns about this proposal in regards to the resources needed for implementation should Council desire to discuss further.

**Commission Recommendation:** The Technology and Communications Commission has endorsed and recommended a transparency initiative per the attached document.

**Fiscal Impact:** An in-depth fiscal impact study has not been directed or conducted at this time. However, the scope and volume of work recommended in the proposal will require additional staffing and resources to implement and to operate in order to avoid negatively impacting existing core functions or work requirements. It is also anticipated that additional software and data storage would be needed to create a data warehouse outside of the Town's firewall to house and to provide access to the data. No funding is available to cover such costs in the current budget or in the recently approved Fiscal Year 2016 budget.

**Executive Summary:** On March 7, 2015, the Technology and Communications Commission (TCC) approved a recommendation that all Town information and records that are not otherwise specifically exempted from public disclosure by Virginia public records statutes be made available over the internet in an electronically searchable form by October 2019.

The TCC has requested authority to oversee the Town's efforts to achieve this goal. In addition, the TCC has requested the opportunity to present and explain their recommendation to Town Council at a future work session.

**Background:**

The TCC has been discussing the importance of government transparency over an extended period. It has reviewed the OpenGov information, web payments portal, and web content upgrades already performed by the Town. While the TCC likes what the Town has done so far, it does not believe the Town's efforts go far enough in achieving transparency in the Town's operations. The TCC has received a presentation from the Sunlight Foundation which is a nonprofit organization that promotes transparency in government at all levels.

The Technology and Communications Commission's recommendation proposes that the Town make available, over the internet, and in searchable and downloadable form, 100% of its information and databases that are not required to be kept confidential by Virginia public records law. It believes that having this level of transparency will make the Town a more desirable place for businesses and educational institutions to locate and will thus help create additional employment opportunities.

The respective recommendation includes the goal to be achieved by October 2019. The recommendation also requires a list of all sources of Town data be published by August 1, 2015, to include data type, volume of data, data format, and indicate whether the data is or is not already published to the public. The recommendation requires all detail budget reports be placed on the Town website immediately. In addition, the TCC is requesting authority to oversee the Town's transparency program.