



A CAREER MANAGER AND THE BUDGET PROCESS (A)

In late 1983, Laura Schwartz age 33, became chief of the community planning section in the Planning and Development Department of a large metropolitan county in the Pacific Northwest. The county of Bend covers a territory of 2,130 square miles and had a population of 1,269,700 in 1980.

Schwartz took the job because of her interest in orderly economic development and growth and environmental protection. It appeared to her that the community planning function was well positioned in the county government structure to address the multifaceted problems and opportunities that accompany population growth. Several large urban centers were under the jurisdiction of their own zoning laws and regulations. But the balance of this largely rural county was entering a period of high development pressure and was still under county jurisdiction.

Once in her new position, however, Schwartz saw it was imperative that she improve her unit's performance. As she put it: "There was too little money, the staff was too narrowly focused, and the unit did not have the confidence of elected officials. I needed to make changes to accomplish the job I had come to do and it soon became apparent that the county budget process could be a key forum for progress on all fronts."

The following draws on an interview with Schwartz in June 1988.

The Existing Situation

Schwartz: The organization I walked into was responsible for making long-term land use decisions for the region. It had to deal with public issues such as agricultural preservation, whether to expand or contract single family areas, whether to promote high density development out in rural areas that could some day become cities. Essentially, the organization made recommendations to the county council on the future growth patterns of the county.

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The functions that existed when I showed up were basically working with a citizen committee to establish goals, then coming back to the office to apply various zones to an area based on what options were available in the county zoning code.

Interviewer: What pressures for change existed?

Shwartz: There were very few internal bureaucratic pressures for change. The change pressures were primarily coming from the public and that showed up in exasperation and anger expressed to the legislative representatives.

As a result, the county council had seemed cranky over a number of years since they couldn't respond to their constituents' cries for better environmental protection or better quality development or a better match of growth with what their community values were.

The job entailed building an organization to respond to demographic and economic changes in the county. It required a big shift in the kind of work that the staff did, and it required establishing political credibility in order to get the resources to make those changes.

Interviewer: How many staff did you have in your division when you arrived?

Schwartz: I was a section chief managing a staff at that time of about 15 members, and I reported to a division manager who reported to an agency director.

Interviewer: How well did your staff function when you arrived?

Schwartz: It didn't move. There was an odd perception of what the product was. Not only did the department think of the product as documents that were called land use plans but the budget office, the executive, and the council also thought that's what the product was. Therefore, the attention of the staff was put very much on making very nice looking documents that had extensive maps with lots of overlays and were thick and complicated and looked important. I had a staff that spent a lot of time drawing maps in back rooms, choosing their colors, and very, very rarely actually going out in the community to see what they were zoning, and never going beyond zoning into other mechanisms to respond to growth impacts.

Interviewer: How did you size up the problems?

Schwartz: I was the person to retool the staff so that it would be able to predict problems and work with communities and development interests and other public

agencies. I wanted to change it from a sit-in-an-office and read theoretical books about planning and make policy recommendations based on research, and shift it instead into active negotiations with communities, with experts in other jurisdictions and with the development community so we could develop broader growth management strategies. So, I felt like I had to shift the skills and talents of the existing staff and their priorities and values.

I also felt that I had to develop credibility with the other offices and with the core services such as personnel and budget so that I could build the staff. It wasn't large enough. And I felt that most importantly I had to get some credibility established with the county council. First of all, it made the final decisions on my budget; but, second, I needed them to support what I perceived to be the job, and I needed them to understand and agree that that was the job to be done.

Interviewer: Did your supervisor share this vision and give you support?

Schwartz: Our views of the section's mission were different.

Early Days on the Job

Schwartz: I arrived at the tail end of a budget process, which was good because I was able to witness the response of outside departments, as well as the county council and the public, to the programs that were presented for funding. What I found was very disappointing, if not surprising. It was very unclear why these products were needed or what they accomplished. There was no documentation as to why it cost what it cost to do them. And there was no documentation of who was served and in what way they were served. Therefore, the legislators and county council would grapple with choices (and this was during a recession year) on what to fund. It was very easy, with a vague product and a vague value on this set of programs, to cut this staff. It had been reduced over the last two years from about 20 to 15 and was on its way to being reduced more. I was left with the feeling after that budget process that this program would always be the one to be the least funded until there was a change in understanding of what it was on everybody's part (Excerpts from this budget presentation for the section are presented in Attachment I).

Interviewer: What did you feel you needed to do?

Schwartz: I needed to do three things. I needed to get the staff to understand what mattered and change the focus of its work. I needed to develop a way of communicating with the finance people so that they would find [our work] worthwhile and would understand why it was worth the dollars. I needed to

develop a mechanism to show the county council what was achieved that helped them as public representatives. So, I began to look at what sorts of data, what kinds of information, would deal with each one of those needs.

In terms of the staff, there was very much a need to make clear what the product was. I took a number of steps to shift the thinking and the attention of the staff. I talked a lot about the mission of the organization. Eyes would get big when I would use phrases such as "this is the staff that is going to protect the quality of life for the future of the residents of the county because this is the staff that makes the decisions on environmental protection and on growth." There wasn't full staff agreement on this dramatic view of their work. I spent a lot of time with individual performance feedback and appraisals; and I tried to get the staff to stick their necks out and make mistakes so that they wouldn't fear change and would understand that mistakes could be corrected.

I began to speak of the issues as interconnected problems which would require teams rather than individual staff members to resolve. For example, instead of defining an issue: "Should the zoning in this two square miles change from zone A to zone B," I broadened the issue to a larger community. The question then would be how is the community going to deal with what the growth trends are showing. How shall we deal with the transportation impact and the environmental impact, yet allow the growth and provide for the growth. By changing the definition of a job, I could use that as an excuse to develop teams so people were not working alone with their maps and books, but instead were having to collaborate as a group. The teams, through the team leader, were asked to put together a clear set of goals, a clear set of target dates; and I worked with each team to define the process by which it would get from A to Z. That was slow going the first year—shifting a staff that was thinking on a one person, one job basis to a team basis.

Interviewer: How did your staff react?

Schwartz: There was the usual great fear of change and the usual personnel problems. It was tempting to slow down in some cases because of the stress that some of the individuals were feeling. Yet one of the advantages of change was that those that couldn't get comfortable with it left, changed jobs, or I would help them find another job. And I was able to use the project management system to get interim goals and deadlines to put the pressure on the individuals that used to get by without producing. As a result, I had data on people, and overall between one-third and one-half left within the first year. Only one of those left fairly involuntarily. The staff was small enough that I could spend time with them. It was very much an honest "this is what the job is now, this is what it's

going to take to do it; if you don't want to do it, let's work to find you something else that fits." That allowed me to bring new people in.

Interviewer: How did the people who remained from the old staff react to the changes?

Schwartz: The interesting thing was that they were mutually supportive because the group was so tight knit. There had not been much turnover in the previous decade really; some of them had worked 8-12 years there. There was a lot of regrouping, people would come in to me asking me not to lean on people, telling me life was getting hard for their friends; but when someone left, I would get a larger group of people that would say thank you, that was great, that was right, this is better, we're better off, that individual didn't want to work, wasn't carrying an equal load. So in the long run I think it was used by the rest of the staff in a very positive way. Mainly those who got ignited by the change in mission were ready to put up with almost anything.

Changing the Budget Process

Interviewer: You mentioned earlier that another piece of what you were doing required you to reach out to the budget staff and other people in the agency to get support for what you were up to.

Schwartz: That operation was very much the laughing stock. The budget office was a very active player in slowly whittling it down. Some of these planning documents that I referred to earlier would take six years to develop, so it wouldn't be unusual for one of those documents to cost \$400,000 by the time you paid for staff, the EIS consultants, and everything else. The budget office was not impressed with these big ticket bottom lines, seeing, at the end of the process, only a fancy printed book too boring to read.

I thought long and hard about ways to communicate to that office. They have their own set of rules, they need to be able to answer tough questions by the county council, by their boss, and by the county executive; and their questions tend to be data, numerical, quantitative kinds of things. Yet the products that we had were very theoretical, very policy based, and very long in coming.

Since I knew that getting more funds was going to be crucial to my making changes quickly, I spent time right away getting to know the budget staff just so that I would understand whether these were quantitative people, program oriented, computer buffs, or what, so that I could focus my next year's budget to them in a way that they could best understand. I knew that there are lots of ways to skin a cat and with one package of proposals there are probably a

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hundred different ways I could present the information. What I found is, I think, typical of the budget office, and that is the need to be able to show dollars per hour and what you get for cost per product.

I also looked at what the political side needed, what the elected officials needed in order to say we will fund these planning and community development operations instead of another jail bed. I needed to be able to show that their constituents got benefits from our work.

Attachment 1 (Cont.)

1982 Objectives

1981 Highlights

1. To work with the Council through the adoption of Community Plans and Area Zonings for East Columbus, Monroeville, and Arlington-Tweed Heights.
2. To print and distribute the East Columbus, Monroeville, Arlington-Tweed Heights adopted Plans and Area Zonings.
3. To prepare the Bedford Center and Crawford Valley Business District Development Guides. This includes Council adoption and the publication of a final document for each.
4. To print and distribute the Lincoln City and Moose Creek Profiles.
5. To begin the planning process, committee orientation, selection of land use alternatives, in Lincoln City and Moose Creek.
6. To provide ongoing planning coordination, assistance, and implementation for unincorporated areas of Bend County.

1981 Accomplishments

By the close of 1981 we will have worked with the Council through the final adoption process for the Mitchell Area Zoning, the Beverly Plan and Area Zoning, and the Northfork Plan Revision and Area Zoning. We will have completed work with the Council on the adoption of the Beverly, Cooksville, and North City Business District Development Guides. We will have also participated in the Sheridan, Chester, Bend County Land Use Study, as well as the adoption of the Master Plan Development Ordinance. We will have begun the monitoring necessary for the Beverly Water Study and the Shady Pass Route 2 Corridor Study, and will have completed the consultant monitoring on the Lincoln City and Moose Creek Plan Profiles. Finally, we will have printed the final adopted documents for Beverly, Northfork, and Mitchell.

Attachment 2 Anticipated Grant 1982

Instructions

Show names and numbers.	Homefund: # _____ :		Grant Fund # _____
If grant fund org. # is not assigned, leave blank.	Department: # <u>35</u> _____ :	_____	Grant Org # _____
	Division: # <u>Planning</u> _____ :	_____	
	Section: # <u>Comm. Planning</u> _____ :	_____	
	Group: # _____ :	_____	Prepared by: _____
	Unit: # _____ :	_____	_____

Phone Number: _____

Usual name of project.
Short name of ARMS
limited to 17 spaces.

Title: Business District Assistance Services _____

Identify : New or cont.
 : # of Years

_____ ARMSname.....
 New : Years 1 of 1 Years.

Briefly state: Goals of
Project, intended products
and benefits expected to be
realized.

Purpose: To provide products and services which will aid and improve commercial areas and individual businesses. Major components include: a handbook of development guidelines for commercial areas, focused studies of specific commercial areas such as Berryville, the integration of commercial analysis into the development of the Lincoln City Plan, assistance in capital project implementation, in areas with adopted Business Districts Guides, and business assistance to individuals/groups, i.e., market study, loan packaging.

Briefly state: Methods by
which you will achieve
intended goals, products
and benefits

Description: Assess problems of specific areas through public involvement, prepare handbook based on County policy and identified problem areas, provide commercial analysis during the development of the Lincoln City Plan, provide market research on request, provide assistance in loan packaging, management, accounting and marketing to individual businesses on request.

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What responsibilities will the County incur from this project following its completion. Describe briefly and estimate costs incurred, or savings gained

County Liability: The handbook and the business assistance to individuals/groups would create no on-going County responsibilities. The commercial area studies, and the efforts in the Lincoln City area could result in guidelines to be used by Permit Processing and Development for the review of building and other development permits. The assistance in capital project implementation could result in financial commitments in terms of the County's CIP Program.

Attachment 3
Anticipated Grant 1982
 (Business District Development Programs)

51110, 51300		
Salaries/Benefits		\$25,897
Planner		30,661
Planner	Sub-Total	<u>56,558</u>
	20%	<u>11,311</u>
	Total	\$67,869
52110		
Office Supplies		1,100
53110 Postage		
(2) Bus. Districts 5,000 @ 10.4		520
55010		
Motor Pool		500
55260 Printing (inside)		
(2) Bus. Dist. Plans (300 copies each) - 1,200		
Handbooks (300 copies) - 90		
2 Meeting Notices (2,500 each) - 50		<u>2,150</u>
	Total	\$72,139

**Attachment 4
County Planning Division 12 Month Work Program for
Community Planning Section**

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Covering Time Period

6/19/81

From: Jan, 1982

To: Dec. 1982

Signature

Date

Signature of Division Manager

Date

State Section Purpose:

County-wide

Goal Number	Staff Your Section	MTHS REQ Other Sections	Bar Chart Calendar Time of Performance					Major Product(s)
			Jan/Feb Nov/Dec	Mar/Apr	May/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	
Business District Assistance Program								
1. A.	Prepare a handbook of commercial development guidelines	CL-2 1/2	---	---	---	---	---	Handbook of commercial development guidelines
B.	Prepare a study of Berryville business district.	CL-1 TO-1 1/2			_____			Adopted Berryville Development Guide
C.	Prepare analysis of incorporated towns and rural centers within the Lincoln City Community Plan area.	CL-1 TO-2 1/2				_____		Commercial subsection of Lincoln City Community Plan
D.	Provide market research to individual business on request	CL-1/2 TO-1 1/2		--	---	---	---	
E.	Assist in capital project implementation based on previous studies.	TO-1/2					_____	

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F.	Provide additional services to businesses on request.	TO-1	---	---	---
			-	-	-

Attachment 5
Difference Between 1981 and 1982 Current Expense Budget

		<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>		<u>Difference</u>
51100	Salaries	\$254,994	\$255,229	+	235
51300	Benefits	50,668	51,046	+	378
51120	Extra Help	11,400	7,700	-	3,700
52110	Office Supplies	7,610	7,700	+	90
53104	Consulting	13,000	-0-	-	13,000
53220	Postage	4,788	10,608	+	5,820
53310	Travel	500	500		-0-
53318	Private Auto Mileage	2,000	1,000	-	1,000
53390	Misc. Transp. Serv.	300	-0-	-	300
53806	Printing (Outside)	10,500	10,000	-	500
53890	Misc. Serv. & Charges	2,500	1,600	-	900
55010	Motor Pool	3,307	1,500	-	1,807
55021	System Services	3,061	3,887	+	826
55260	Printing (inside)	43,689	34,975	-	8,714
		<u>\$408, 317</u>	<u>\$385,745</u>	-	<u>\$22,572</u>