



# The Next Step

## Reducing Chaos to Establish Calm in a County Tax Office

Presented Courtesy of  
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Galveston County Tax Assessor Collector

A vibrant sunset scene over a body of water. The sky is a mix of deep blue, teal, and orange. Sunbeams (crepuscular rays) are visible, breaking through the clouds. The sun is partially obscured by a large, dark cloud, creating a dramatic silhouette effect. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky and the sun's rays.

**20 years later, I reported that THIS is the State of the  
Galveston County Tax Office today**

**(well...MOST of the time)**

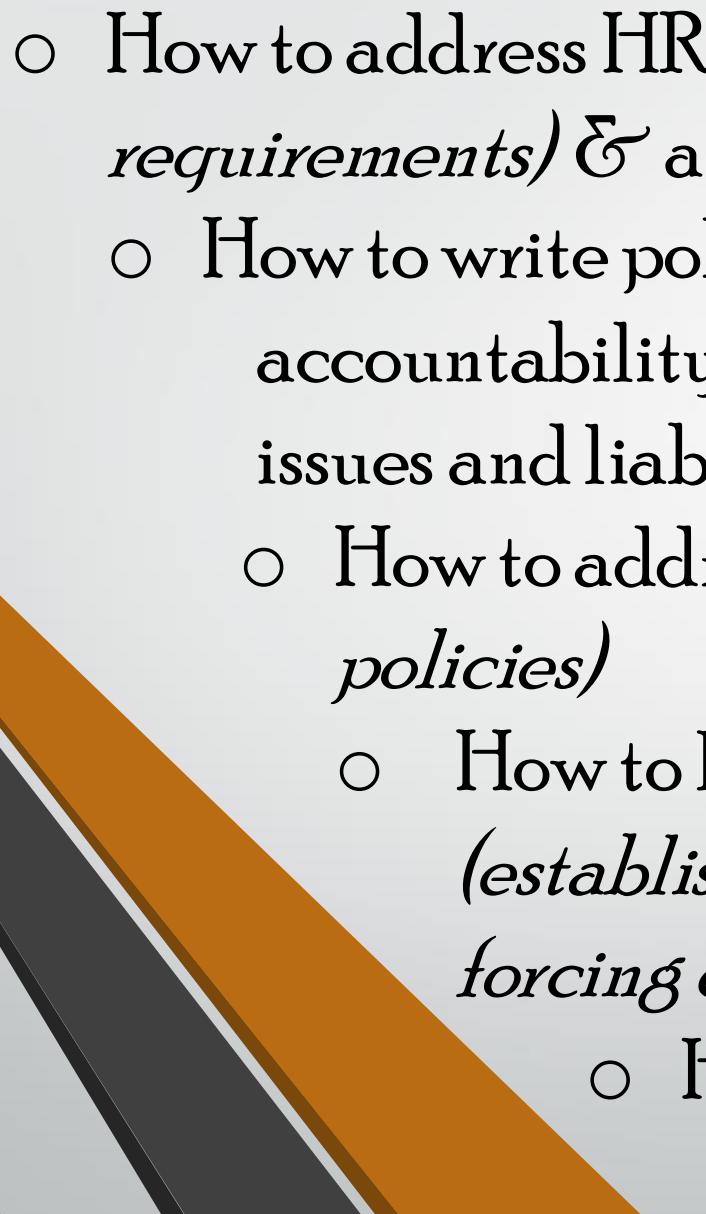


## Creating Calm (*and limiting the number of storm clouds and bumpy roads*)..

Required a set of guidelines defining actions necessary to achieve results. These guidelines/policies enable us to define actions to achieve desired results.

In Galveston County, we later developed skill sets which enables employees to perform assigned tasks and provides expectations enabling them to grow in the organization.



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- How to address HR aspects (*my office requirements vs county requirements*) & attendance
  - How to write policies that balance legal & ethical accountability & TAC discretionary power to avoid issues and liability
  - How to address resistance to change (*implementing policies*)
    - How to keep branches on the same page (*establishing policies as routine rather than forcing compliance*)
      - How to incentivize employees in a government environment



# Our Handouts Provide Supporting Documentation

- VG Young provided our org chart, policy listing, tax software utilized & GCTO Email *(in June we distributed 100 CDs of our policies...if you missed that, simply email us)* and four essential policies
  - In addition to the information provided by VG Young, I have provided copies of additional policies that will be covered today



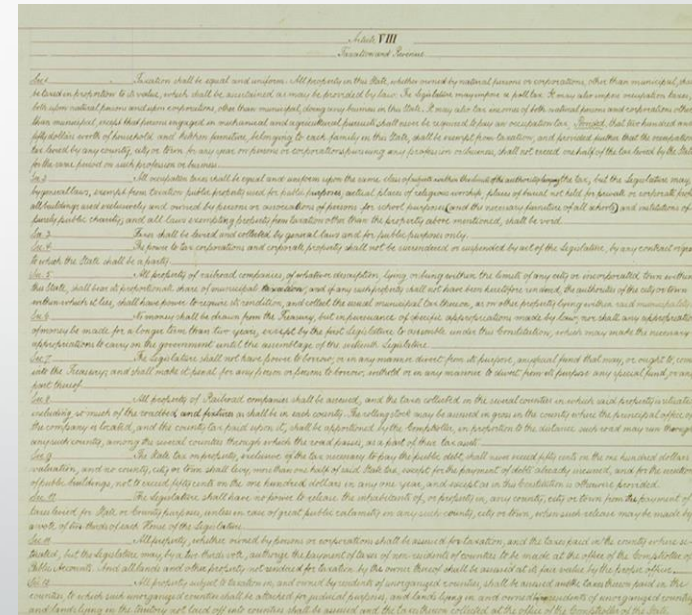
# Next Item of Additional Information

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- How to write policies that balance legal & ethical accountability & TAC discretionary power to avoid issues and liability

❖ County Tax Assessor Collectors are Constitutionally elected officials (under Article 8, §14) and have discretionary authority over their office.





**Write this down!!**

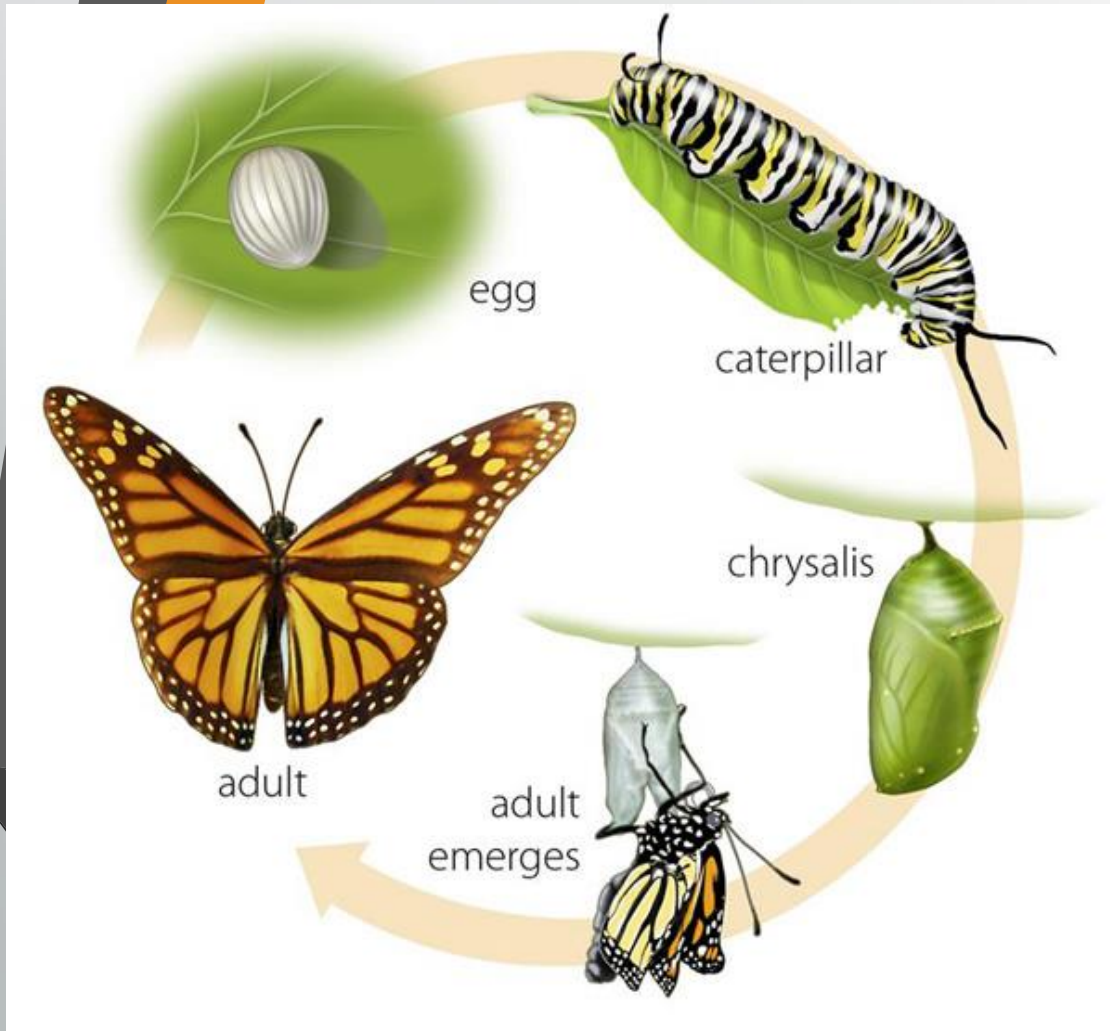
- ❖ Multiple AG opinions (GA 0308, JC 0214, DM 0440) have upheld Commissioners budgetary authority but discretion over those employed remains with the county officer. Also, Commissioners may not invade our sphere of authority or interfere or usurp our authority in performing the duties of our offices.



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My philosophy is  
**without change..we would not  
have butterflies**

My expectation is that everyone on  
**my team** embrace that philosophy (or  
find a different place to work)  
because change is inevitable (and  
often out of our control)!



It took seven years to secure support of Commissioners to fund pay for performance incentives. In the meantime, we:

1. Created a personnel evaluation tool and performed evaluations methodically. They were used to support position pay grade increases until P4P was approved
2. Created career ladders within each department enabling successful employees to obtain promotions during the year
3. Provided SIT Supplements