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## EDITORIAL

# Good management helps government be more efficient

By *Maria Walls*

CONTRIBUTOR



**Maria Walls**

There are many contentious issues in our nation today related to government and how it is run.

One of the underlying problems is that government has become a bureaucracy.

The definition of “bureaucracy,” according to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, is “a system of government or business that has many complicated rules.”

For the simple reason that government earns none of the dollars it collects, it should be an entity that serves the people it represents.

Applying business-like principles through a spirit of service can result in reduced budgets, lower taxes, efficient processes, convenient services, and a positive experience for the taxpayer.

Although it is often an unpopular concept, going against the usual stereotypes and grain of government culture, when a government operates in such a manner, common sense and business-like principles are not difficult to implement.

I know this firsthand.

Over the past four and a half years, the Treasurer’s Office transitioned from a bureaucracy to a government department serving our community with innovation and enthusiasm using business-like practices to improve our efficiency and services.

Of course, as leaders in government, we have a responsibility to understand the parameters in which we can operate. When that is understood, private sector practices can yield great results in the public sector.

Employee evaluations create opportunities for positive development and better performance, outside-the-box thinking eliminates antiquated practices and increases accuracy and response times.

Customer-service driven operations earn the trust of our taxpayers.

Our staff is well trained, the atmosphere is pleasant and, through the use of technology, we are not only more transparent than any other Treasurer’s Office in the state, we were also able to reduce staffing and budgeted expenses by over \$580,000 from a \$2.5 million budget.

Many of these practices are just good management; they are not copyrighted principles for the sole use of the private sector.

What is unfortunate is that government being “run like a business” is labeled as such because so few government entities implement common-sense management practices.

When good management is the norm in government rather than the exception, public trust and accountability will increase and the cost of government will decrease.

In the end, whether a bureaucracy or an effective, representative government, the consequences of government conduct is borne by the people we serve.

Taxpayers should expect to walk into a clean, organized office, and be greeted by pleasant and knowledgeable staff who can guide them through a process with minimal inconvenience.

The question really is, are your government leaders, elected or appointed, serving you or perpetuating a bureaucracy?

*Maria Walls, CPA is the Treasurer of Beaufort County. [www.BeaufortCountyTreasurer.com](http://www.BeaufortCountyTreasurer.com)*