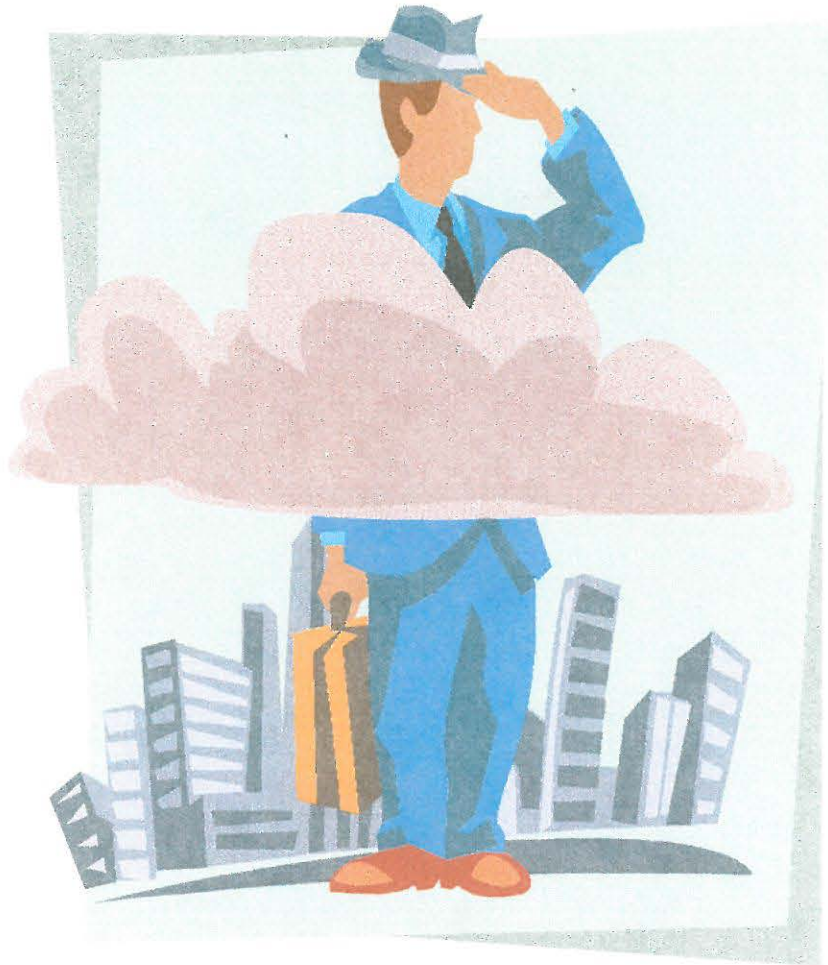# CITY COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS & COMMUNICATIONS:

NOTES, IDEAS, EXAMPLES, REFLECTIONS, FACTS, AND OPINIONS

PREPARED FOR: LOC CONFERENCE
ELECTED OFFICIALS WORKSHOP
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2001

EDITOR: KENT L. TAYLOR
               CITY MANAGER
               CITY OF MCMINNVILLE

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INTRODUCTION

Becoming a local elected official can be relatively simple. Becoming an "effective" elected official over the term of your office is another story! The business of governing can be, at any given moment, any or all of the following: dramatic, stressful, fascinating, fun, hard, easy, technical, emotional, complex, simple, legalistic, rewarding, and/or frustrating. And there is no scientific formula for success in this public business of governing and leading. The life and work of being an elected or appointed local government official is definitely rooted in art, not science! Yes, there is a set of basic legal tools, structures, and processes in place when you get elected, but after that what you do with them, how you serve the public, is largely up to you and your fellow officials and staff.

For sure, this business of governing and leading is largely about your being seen as a "real person" - i.e., a person who truly cares about citizens, other City officials, and the staff. It is about caring about the City's vision and mission and goals and trusting and working in concert with others to reach them.

This brief and informal collection of material on governing is meant to help you, the local government "artist," to be a more creative and effective "artist!" It is a collection of examples from several Oregon cities and ideas, suggestions, and reflections from a number of talented, experienced people on the subjects of leading, communicating, governing, community building, and effectiveness. In other words, it is a collection of thoughts about how you and I can be more effective and better serve our communities. I hope you find it helpful and practical. I especially hope that it makes you stop and reflect, just as it did for me. Feel free to reproduce some or all of it. If you discard it, remember to recycle!

Best wishes as you go out and develop, communicate, and implement your community's vision and mission. If you ever feel "lost" along the way, know that you are not alone. You'll see me for sure! And just remember this reflection and advice from the French novelist, Andre' Gide:

"One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time."

--Andre' Gide

IV.   WORKING AGREEMENTS

The following working agreements were renewed from the previous year, except for 6 and 7, which were added this year. Council members commented that these two agreements, "Agree to disagree", and "Value and maintain civility", are such an ingrained part of the Council's working relationship that they neglected to mention them when establishing the original suite of working agreements in 1999. Council wished to add them to the suite this year to emphasize the importance of constructive disagreement and civility.

It was agreed that Council should use a method of highlighting working agreements. It was suggested that Council might periodically review its own performance relative to the seven points.

1.   Sustain and build on the Council's high level of communication and cooperation.
2.   Be mindful of potential "blind spots", and be inclusive of all members.
3.   Strive for brevity.
4.   Build leadership.
5.   Foster involvement: Take initiative to communicate and create links with the community.
6.   Agree to disagree: Fully debate the issues and leave the meeting as friends.
7.   Value and maintain civility.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COUNCIL RELATIONS

1. Seek to understand one another's perspective.

2. Honor one another in public and protect each other in their absence.

3. Focus on issues, not on personalities.

4. Seek honesty and integrity in all deliberations and interactions.

To the best of my ability, I agree to uphold the above guidelines in my relations with other City Council members.

Signed *Carrell Goodall* *W.L. Nolen*

Wayne M. Lusk *Scott Yuill*

Pamela Silbernagel

Date: Aug. 11, 1993

INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL

OPERATIONS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of adopting the City Council Operations Policy is to promote effective governance by establishing a mutually agreed upon code of conduct and clearly defining roles and responsibilities of Mayor, City Council and City Manager.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- I will individually support the collective decision-making of the City Council. If I disagree with a decision made by the City Council I will voice my opinion without personalizing the issue and without eroding the collective reputation of the City Council.

- I will respect other members of the Council and their point of view. During Council deliberations I will earnestly listen to other members and I will not lobby for a position at the exclusion of others.

- I will present my views in a forthright positive manner and respond to questions clearly and directly. I will focus on the present and future.

- I will feel free to visit with other Council members outside of meetings. However, I will follow Oregon open meeting standards.

- I will give other Council members, the Mayor and City Manager advance notice of significant matters to be introduced at Council meetings. Advance notice requires information or request for information be submitted to the Manager's office one week prior to the Council meeting.

- If I have a concern or issue with another Council member or the City Manager, I will go to that person first in a private and timely manner and share that concern. If unresolved I will present the issue to the Mayor in a private and timely manner.

- I recognize that the City Council's role is to set policy, not be administrators. Significant inquiries, comments and directives related to city functions will be addressed through the City Manager.

ELECTED OFFICIALS GUIDELINES

- We will trust and respect the opinions of fellow Council members, and, we will be well informed and participate in the decisions of the Council.

- We will accept responsibility to attend all Council meetings and Council sub-committees assigned.

- We will fulfill obligations to share with other Council members the membership on the committees as required.

- If we are unable to meet our attendance obligation, we will notify the group of our absence as soon as possible prior to the meeting time.

- When asked by the public for information that is still confidential, we will so state.

- We will make every attempt to resolve any conflict with a fellow Council member.

- As a Council member, we will expect to be informed of all issues and data in a timely manner.

\retreat

SUGGESTED COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT:

A. Be respectful.

B. Be tactfully honest.

C. Participate.

D. Be a good listener.

E. Praise in public; criticize in private. If I have a concern or issue with another Council member or the City Manager, I will go to that individual first in an appropriate, private and timely manner and share the concern. I reserve the right to correct major misinformation.

F. Consider needs of entire city.

G. Address remarks to council members, staff and presenters during council meeting deliberations, not the T.V. camera audience and attendees.

H. Stick to business. Council meetings should not be used for panel presentations and political rallies.

I. Encourage respect and trust in government, its leadership structures, staff and policies.

J. Recognize the power of five committed individuals working in harmony to seek solutions for complex problems.

K. Protect the council from the distractions of self-serving influences.

L. Sympathize with and understand the pressures impacting individual councilors from time to time.

M. Seek solutions within the council framework.

N. Demonstrate respect for the competent and dedicated city staff.

O. Accept the policy decisions of the council and the implementation of the staff as the appropriate actions and worthy of support.

P. Work to focus energies for the common good.

Q. Support Council goals and policies. (Council members agree not to work against established Council goals and policies.)

Revised

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS
TO COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT

R. I will individually support the collective decision-making of the City Council. If I disagree with a decision made by the City Council I will voice my opinion without personalizing the issue and without eroding the collective reputation of the City Council

S. I will respect other members of the Council, be tactfully honest, and actively participate in the city government process. During Council deliberations I will earnestly listen to other members and I will not lobby for a position at the exclusion of others.

T. I will present my view in a forthright positive manner and respond to questions clearly and directly.

U. I will feel free to visit with other Council members outside of meetings. However, I will follow Oregon open meeting standards.

V. I will give other Council members, the Mayor and City Manager advance notice of significant matters to be introduced at Council meetings.

W. Praise in public; criticize in private. If I have a concern or issue with another Council member or the City Manager, I will go to that individual first in an appropriate, private and timely manner and share that concern.

X. I support the Council-Manager form of government. I recognize that the City Council sets policy; administration develops strategies and implements policy.

Y. I am committed to work for the common good of the City, within the Council framework.

McMinnvile City Council
COMMUNICATION AGREEMENT – *1994*

To maintain OPEN and HONEST communications the Mayor and Council will allow the following rules to guide their interactions:

Respect

Understand

Listen

Etiquette

Share and Support

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCILMEMBERS DURING MEETING

- Submit items for agenda

- State opinions or feelings honestly and openly

- Stay on the agenda; also, help other to do so

- Participate actively--Speak out

- Listen actively--Seek clarification

- Support the open meetings process; facilitate problem solving:
    Know the basic meeting rules and stick to them
    Make proposals
    Support for discussion of motions
    Participate in discussions; ask questions
    Keep members on track
    Make decisions

- Protect others' rights

- Avoid disruptive communication

- Agree to stop and talk about problems, and conflicts when they happen

- Take notes on items for follow up after meetings

- Before each Council Meeting, ask yourself: *"What would help this Council move ahead and get this problem solved? What can I do to help this Council function more effectively?"*

Responsibilities of Councilmembers During Meetings

- Submit items for agenda

- Come to each meeting prepared -- read agenda materials in advance

- State opinions or feelings honestly, openly, and respectfully

- Stay on the agenda; help others to do as well

- Participate actively-- strive to be understood

- Listen actively-- seek to understand

- Support the open meetings process:
    Know the basic meeting rules and stick to them
    Be attentive; help the group to stay on track
    Support discussion of motions
    Confront and resolve conflicts as they arise
    Make decisions

- Support the strategic planning process
    Identify issues, problems and needs
    Set goals
    Establish objectives
    Support the development of plans to achieve the goals
    Fund the goals through the Budget Process
    Create a mechanism for introducing additional goals or projects
    (via an Issue Paper and Decision Package for Council
    consideration)
    Implement the strategic plan.
    Monitor progress via regular staff reports; track and measure
    outcomes.
    Communicate how City Government is serving its citizens.

- Practice effective communication, including appropriate conflict resolution

- Take notes on items for follow up after meetings

- Before each Council Meeting, ask yourself: *"What would help this Council move ahead and get this problem solved? "*
"What can I do to help this Council function more effectively?"

Complimentary Responsibilities of Councils and Managers

COUNCIL	MANAGER

Mission Dimension

Formulate the mission for local government that reflects the needs of the entire community

Conduct planning and analysis and make recommendations regarding needs and the future development of the locality.

Policy Dimension

Clearly formulate goals, objectives and service priorities as a guide for the manager.

Advance the mission of local government in policy proposals and discretionary actions.

Review recommendations from staff with respect and care. Consider implications and future consequences of policy decisions.

Provide complete, unbiased information concerning proposals, fully elaborate potential alternatives and clarify the implications of recommendations.

Do not permit advisory committees, boards or groups to prescribe policy.

Administrative Dimension

Avoid entanglement in specific implementing decisions and complaint handling.

Faithfully translate policies into programs and services and administer them with fairness, equity and professional competence.

Provide oversight and assessment of the effectiveness of policies and services.

Provide information needed by council for systematic assessment of programs and services.

Set high expectations for staff responsiveness to citizens.

Assure that staff are attentive to citizen concerns and responsive to complaints and inquiries.

Management Dimension

Respect the manager's right to exercise executive responsibilities within the government organization.

Maintain high standards of personal conduct and promote accomplishment of organizational goals with efficiency and economy of resource use.

Support the council policy. Implement council directives.

Periodically appraise the performance of the manager and the organization and provide clear feedback of results to the manager.

Direct, manage and evaluate City operations and staff.

Appoint City boards and commissions.

Staff City boards and commissions.

STUFF I WISH I HAD KNOWN

1. **The public is not an interruption of your business, the public is your business.**

2. **Understand the difference between a good idea in the front of the room and a good idea in the back of the room.**
   Front of the room decision has consequences, both intended and unintended.

3. **Gain respect by being respectful of others.**
   Be assertive, not aggressive--- Learn from those of different viewpoints.

4. **Accept all advice---critically.**
   This applies as much to advice from friends and supporters as from detractors.

5. **Look for partners, not adversaries.**
   Other governments, fellow councilors, League, regional structures.

6. **Don't personalize differences of opinion.**
   Disagree about ideas and policy, not style or personal traits or background.

7. **Reserve the right to be brighter tomorrow.**
   The perfect can be the enemy of the good—some decisions cannot wait for more perfect information.

8. **Prevent problems rather than correct them.**
   Look ahead. "Long range planning does not deal with future decisions, but with the future of present decisions" Peter Drucker

9. **Measure program outcomes, not inputs**
   Measure success against goals met, not on dollars spent.

10. **Have fun and feel good about what you are doing.**
    Don't take yourself too seriously. Appreciate the opportunity to contribute

Communication Challenges:
Councils, Commissions, and Other Public Assemblies

Public decision-making bodies face a suite of unique and complex communication challenges. The following is a short list of some of the issues that can cause missteps and misunderstandings, or be ethical "grey areas" for such groups.

- *"Who do we serve?":* Members of deliberating bodies often struggle over whether it is their proper role to serve an entire service area or a specific constituency. Members of the same body may view their respective roles in different lights, causing intra-council conflict.

- *"For whom do we speak?":* When publicly expressing views, it may be unclear when a member is articulating a council position, and when they are speaking as an individual.

- *"Showing support for majority decisions" vs. "public accountability" and "representation of principles and perspectives":* A source of contention among Council members is often the degree to which individual members should show support for actions taken via a vote of the majority, and the latitude an individual member should have to express opposing points of view even after the vote is taken. This may be as much a matter of "how" an opposing opinion is expressed as the actual opposing view expressed.

- *Contacts with the media:* Different situations may dictate when is it appropriate for members to speak on a particular matter to the media. Some issues may lend themselves to ad hoc comment; other issues may be better addressed by a spokesperson.

- *"Blindsiding":* Members of bodies required to comply with public meeting laws may not have the same level of informal discussion as deliberative groups that are not similarly constrained. Public meeting requirements often have the collateral consequence of members not knowing, and being surprised by, each other's position until right before the debate or vote on an issue.

- *Lobbying outside of meetings:* Members may disagree on the purpose of the public meeting, with some members feeling that it is important and appropriate for the majority of deliberations to be held during the meeting, while others may feel that it is important and appropriate to advance the meeting or their specific positions by "lining up support in advance".

- *"Grandstanding" and "Over-talk":* Let's face it - elected officials or other constituency representatives may develop the habit of stating positions in a way that can be overly long or posturing. Once one member articulates a position, members agreeing with that position often restate the entire position rather than simply indicating support. This can significantly slow the process of meetings.

- *Policy-setting vs. management:* The degree to which it is appropriate for council, board or commission members to take a role in operational decision-making can be a source of contention among members, between members and staff, and between the council and the public, who often don't recognize appropriate limits to the council's span of control.

- *Respect and courtesy to others:* Citizens serving on public bodies often address enormously complex issues, in which no one solution will please everyone. In such an environment it is a challenge to listen with an open mind to all perspectives and show appreciation for fellow members and for citizens who, regardless of point of view, have taken the time to come to the meeting and be involved.

Ten Lessons for
Community Builders...

Lesson #1   The table gets larger--and rounder

The old-style top-down management doesn't work anymore. A new, more collaborative style is required; encouraging citizens to have a place at the table should be a given.

Lesson #2   The only thing more challenging than a crisis may be its absence

Complacency can lead to unattended problems. Smart cities can solve problems before they loom large.

Lesson #3   The agenda gets tougher

America's cities face huge questions like a growing two-tiered society and getting people of different races and backgrounds to get along well enough to solve problems together. Talking about the problems and possible solutions is an important first step.

Lesson #4   There is no magical leadership structure—just people and relationships

There is no all-purpose governance structure that works. Community governance should be based on a community's strengths--and recognizing that it is the relationships among people that get things done.

Lesson #5   No one's excused

Everyone has to chip in to make the mix work—local government, universities, professions, faith communities, the news media enrich the leadership mix.

KEZZIAH WATKINS

Ten Lessons for
Community Builders...

Lesson #6   Sometimes old ways still work

Charismatic individual leaders can still make things happen.
Respect and welcome civic-minded leaders who can make a difference.

Lesson #7   Collaboration is messy, frustrating and
indispensable

Regardless of whether traditional leaders like it, collaboration
is here to stay. Once people know they can have a voice, they
demand it. Today, cities are fumbling toward collaboration, making
mistakes, and beginning to form new, inclusive institutions that
can solve problems.

Lesson #8   Government always needs reforming, but all the
reforms need government

Most Americans say they don't like their governments, but real
change depends on good government. In all its myriad forms, and
despite its inefficiencies and problems, we still need government
as a partner for real, long-term change.

Lesson #9   Place matters

Connect to the Internet all you want--but realize that home
counts. The places that matter most today are regions,
neighborhoods and center cities.

Lesson #10   It's never over

No success is ever final. No community, however successful, can
ever rest on its laurels.

From Boundary Crossers: Community Leadership for a Global Age,
Neal Pierce and Curtis Johnson, 1997

KEZZIAH WATKINS

Council-Manager Relations & Effective Government

By James H. Svara

Effective governance and management requires that elected officials and staff work together cooperatively. To do so, officials need to understand better their distinct roles and responsibilities and look for ways to maintain positive interaction.

Cooperation requires that officials work toward common goals and find satisfactory ways to coordinate their efforts. The council-manager form of government ensures that officials are working toward the goals set by the council. Cooperation also requires a workable division of responsibilities between the council and manager. Each set of officials needs a clear understanding of what they are doing and how they can best contribute to getting the job done.

Division of responsibilities along the lines of "policy" and "administration" has been the common guide to determining who does what in local government. With the growing complexity of local government and the increasing contributions of professional staff, however, the simple division between policy and administration is not a complete description of the real contributions of officials.

It is useful to think about the governmental process in terms of four dimensions: mission, policy, administration and management. The formulation of mission can be distinguished from more specific decisions about policy. Administration, defined as implementation, is distinct from management. The dimensions blend together to be sure, but seeing them separately helps to clarify how local officials work together.

Four Dimensions in the Governmental Process

Governing the community requires that officials decide on goals, translate those goals into programs and services and implement those programs. Underlying these decisions and essential for smooth operation is management, the foundation of governance.

The term mission refers to the organization's purpose and its scope of activities. In local government, aspects of mission include the purposes of government, the scope of services provided, the orientation to development (e.g., pro-growth versus limited growth) and "constitutional" issues such as changing the method of electing council members or the division of functions between a city and county government.

Any organization needs to have clear goals toward which it strives in order to be successful. This point has been made repeatedly, yet it often gets lost in the shuffle of more pressing tasks and immediate decisions.

The formulation of mission is particularly difficult in local government. Local governments have a wide range of purposes and potentially conflicting priorities. Because the future is unknown, officials naturally will sometimes focus on continuing to do what they have always done and respond to crises when they occur. A reactive approach however, makes local governments vulnerable to disruptive changes which could be anticipated and reduces their ability to compete for jobs and investments with other localities. As changes in intergovernmental relations bring more responsibilities to local governments and fewer dollars, it becomes even more evident that local officials must make critical choices about what they want their governments to do.

Policy can be understood as the actual programs undertaken within the parameters shaped by mission. The policy dimension refers to middle-range policy choices that define the details of purpose, create programs and specify plans. The budget, a land use plan and a federal government grant application are policy matters, but they are usually addressed within the broad framework that has been established in mission. For example, a proposal for a community center in a neighborhood with few facilities expresses the locality's goal to provide readily accessible recreational services to all residents.

Administration concerns the process by which a local government completes projects (e.g., building the community center), operates programs and delivers services. Most policies are not self-implementing. Additional decisions are required to fill in more details and determine who receives services at what level. This is administration or implementation.

For example, resolving to address housing needs is a mission decision, and a housing rehabilitation program for low-income residents in target neighborhoods is a program or policy. To implement this program requires definitions of eligibility (how much money can you make and be considered "low income"), grant levels, target neighborhood boundaries, and application and screening deadlines and procedures. Such administrative decisions have policy implications and must be consistent with the spirit of the policy decision if the intended purpose is to be accomplished. Thus, policy and administration are intertwined in decisions about the specific provisions of programs and the delivery of services.

Management concerns the control and coordination of resources within the organization. Management includes the internal organization and assignment of authority; methods for hiring, developing and appraising staff; systems for budgeting and fiscal control; procedures

for purchasing and contracting; systems for information storing and processing; and the technical details of performing tasks.

To look at the housing rehab program once more, no matter how well the program is defined in general or translated into a set of requirements and procedures, it can fail if housing inspectors do not do their jobs properly, plans for improvements have technical deficiencies or poor contractors are selected. The management dimension, therefore, determines whether it is possible to meet a goal by marshalling resources and controlling their use toward that end.

Poor management undermines governance: a city has difficulty accomplishing its goals and implementing programs if money is wasted, staff are hired improperly or inadequately supervised,

or departments are disorganized or poorly led. By the same token, a smooth functioning, well-managed organization will be directionless and ineffective if the governing dimensions of mission, policy and administration are not well handled.

Division of Responsibility

The division of responsibility found in local governments both reconfirms and departs from the traditional model of separate spheres. Although there are differences among local governments, typically both separation and sharing of responsibility between council and staff exist at the same time.

Major responsibility for mission is exercised by elected officials. Although staff make substantial contributions in the form of recommendations, identifi-

cation of problems and planning, and assessment of the feasibility of alternative "futures," the major decisions concerning purpose, scope and direction are made by the council. The local government's goal with respect to growth or the decision to add or eliminate a major service, such as the local government's assumption of mass transit or the privatization of garbage collection, are determined by the council. These decisions through the years create the framework within which specific policy choices are made.

Responsibility for management, on the other hand, is largely the responsibility of the manager and staff. This is not to say that the council is not interested in operational matters. Change in management practices may originate in the council. Councils are also legitimately

interested in questions concerning organizational design and performance, e.g., productivity improvement. The manager, however, takes the lead in providing quality staff and effective management systems. Councils usually refrain from interference in operational details such as who gets jobs, raises or contracts. Management is the chief executive officer's area of responsibility, although the council is an interested observer potentially capable of intervening when problems arise that the manager is not correcting.

Responsibility for middle-range policy is shared. Although the council is ultimately responsible for all policy decisions, many of them are made or shaped by staff. The manager exercises discretion to make some policies, and staff are largely responsible for determining the formula by which services are distributed, for example, which streets get paved or how many library books go to branch A as opposed to branch B. Furthermore, the council looks to the manager for a host of recommendations, the most important of which is the budget which contains the policies of the local government in dollar terms. Thus, councils do make all policy. Managers also contribute to policy making. As long as the manager makes choices within the framework determined by the mission of the local government, democratic control is maintained.

There is also considerable sharing with respect to the implementation of policies. Staff are largely responsible for administration, but councils are and should be interested in how policies are translated into programs and how services are delivered. The council evaluates programs and exercises oversight to insure that the delivery of services is effective.

Furthermore, council members frequently receive complaints from citizens and must decide how to handle them. Council members should see to it that citizens receive the same treatment from staff when complaints are referred directly to staff as when they come through a council member, and they may want a follow-up report on the action taken. If the council members intervene with staff to get corrective action, on the other hand, they will interfer with administrative performance and create confusion among staff about who is in charge.

Councils also make specific implementing decisions, for example the placement of a facility that is part of a larger project. Councils are usually informed by the manager about the development of program "regulations," such as definitions of eligibility for a program, and have the opportunity to accept, reject or revise these recommendations. Councils need to be careful, however,

not to get bogged down with specific choices they may be poorly suited to make.

Thus, two dimensions are handled separately and two are shared. The ultimate responsibility for mission rests with the council and for management with staff. Both the council and manager contribute to policy and administration. The interactions are complex. Most councils and managers handle their respective roles well, but there are some shortcomings that can commonly occur.

Strengths and Problems with Interaction

Most councils and managers feel there is a positive working relationship between them. In surveys of city managers in North Carolina and Ohio, virtually all managers report they have a good working relationship with the council. Also, most managers (around 80 percent) feel the council effectively draws on the expertise of the professional staff and refrains from making excessive demands for reports, studies or information. Most managers also feel council members have good relationships with each other and that the mayor works well with the rest of the board.

The overall relationship among all officials in most of these local governments is positive. It is rated good or very good by more than two-thirds of the managers in both states. Still, cooperation is not universal. Approximately three managers in 10 in these states feel that the relationship is no better than satisfactory and could be improved.

The sources of dissatisfaction can lie with the council or the manager. Council members are sometimes critical of the manager for the following "sins" of commission or omission:

— failure to respond to council concerns or share council priorities,
— attempts to steer the council toward approaches favored by staff,
— lack of responsiveness to citizens
— lack of innovation in organization and methods
— waste, inefficiency and rigidity.

Some of these complaints may reflect the general distrust Americans have with "bureaucracy," rather than actual performance problems. Others may be traced to shortcomings in the council's performance. It is hard for managers to respond to council directives if they are unclear or ambiguous. Still, managers must be alert to shortcomings in their own performance and that of staff. An appraisal process for feedback from the council can help the manager know whether expectations are being met.

When the council's performance is examined, the results are mixed. Most

managers feel the council provides sufficient direction and overall leadership to government. There are, however, a number of shortcomings as well. Many councils focus excessively on short-term problems, neglect long-term concerns and are viewed more as a reviewing and vetoing agency rather than as being a leader in policy making. Some councils have difficulty making clear decisions and do not organize their time well to deal effectively with important policy issues. Council members themselves feel they do a better job representing their constituents than handling broad policy making.

In a national survey done by the National League of Cities in 1980 almost all council members gave themselves high marks for responding to citizen needs, but only half felt they were highly effective at establishing long-range goals for their cities. Most council members and managers alike would prefer that the council devote more attention than it does to developing the mission of their government.

Most managers feel the council understands its role in administration. Some councils, however, deal with too many administrative matters and not enough policy issues, and some are too involved in administrative and management activities. Managers would prefer that councils be more involved in evaluating program impact and spend less time handling citizen complaints.

A key council activity is evaluating the performance of the manager. This may be done formally or informally at a fixed time each year, at intervals or whenever it happens to come up. Managers are fairly evenly divided in their assessment of whether the council's appraisal is satisfactory in depth and frequency. Although the opportunity for the council to evaluate the executive officer is a unique feature of the council-manager form of government, adequate feedback is not being provided in approximately half of the cities. Managers would like to have more feedback about how they are doing their jobs.

Complementary Responsibilities of the Council and Manager

In order for council members and managers to work together and for local government to perform well, each must hold up their end of the relationship. The job of the council and manager consists of complementary responsibilities that dovetail in the four dimensions of the governmental process. They are summarized in the chart on the previous page.

In the mission dimension, councils need to give more attention to formula-

tion of mission: consideration of questions of purpose, change in the scope of services and planning the community's growth and development. The manager provides extensive advice and information based on planning and analysis of the community's needs and its prospects for future development.

In the policy dimension, the council should make clear decisions and establish priorities and objectives for the manager and staff. Council decisions are often made in response to recommendations from the manager. Councils should carefully deliberate and avoid accepting some proposals without sufficient examination and subjecting others to unreasonable scrutiny.

The council also should organize its policy making more coherently. Many local governments have an annual goal setting process which guides the manager's development of the budget and other policy proposals. When councils clearly articulate a policy agenda, the manager and staff can respond more appropriately.

In the administrative dimension, councils do a lot of "checking," but typically this occurs in the form of specific inquiries and implementing decisions, pursuing individual complaints and making random probes. Councils often need to shift their attention from the specific to the general, for example, broad over-

sight and assessment of the effectiveness of programs and services. The manager and staff need to faithfully translate policy into action and provide the council usable information for oversight. The manager should also assure that the staff provide good response to citizen complaints and inquiries so council members do not feel they need to personally take care of them.

In management, councils need to respect the manager's prerogatives as chief executive officer and refrain from interfering in operations. Managers, on the other-hand, need to run the municipal organization in such a way that organizational goals are accomplished with efficiency and economy.

The council also should regularly evaluate the manager's performance. Managers want more feedback about their performances and should work with the council in setting up and carrying out a useful appraisal process.

Summary

In conclusion, officials can ask themselves the following questions to assess the quality of governance and management in their locality:

—Do we know our purpose? Do we know in what direction we want the locality to go and where we actually are going?

—Are we doing the right things to accomplish our goals?

—How well are we doing? How effective are our programs and services?

—Are we as efficient and economical as possible given our goals?

In addition, there is another broad question concerning the governmental process: are we getting the best contribution from each official, elected and appointed? Answering this question leads to efforts to improve the effectiveness of municipal teamwork. The result can be higher involvement by both council and manager and more effective governance and management in council-manager governments.

About the Author

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