

# Effective Governance

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CML Executive Director, Kevin Bommer

# Workshop Materials



# CML Executive Director, Kevin Bommer

## Two basic features:

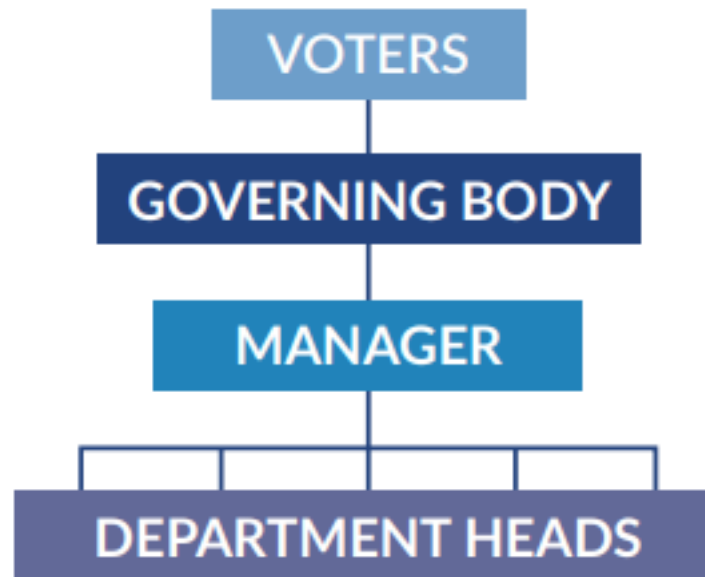
- An elected council to decide policy questions, and;
- A professionally trained manager hired by council to govern the municipal administration

## In practice:

- The city council paints the big picture, and;
- Entrusts the details of administration and implementation to direct reports

# Council-Manager Form of Government

## The Council-Manager Form



Source: ICMA

# Roles of Elected Office

1. Set public policy
2. Be professional
3. Be accountable
4. Be a big-picture thinker
5. Be a good steward
6. Be an advocate
7. Be a community builder
8. Be a decision-maker
9. Provide oversight
10. Be ethical



# The public expects and deserves your best

Honesty

Decisions that  
put the  
community first

Open and fair  
decision-making  
process

Respect for  
individuals &  
the community

Accountability

Decorum and  
professionalism

Personal  
character

Lawful, ethical  
conduct

# Your Role in the BIG Picture

- When you were elected, you became the ultimate insider!
- Misunderstanding your role can:
  - Increase the risk of liability for the city and for you
  - Reduce your own effectiveness
- Being part of an effective decision-making body requires **collaboration** and **consensus-building** among often diverse personalities and beliefs
- **Civility. Civility. Civility.**

# Appropriate Conduct

- Your conduct impacts your effectiveness (+/-)
- Incivility and divisiveness need not be a part of nonpartisan local government
- You are viewed as:
  1. Leaders in the community; and
  2. Top representatives of the municipality as an employer
- You set the example and tone for the entire organization



# Appropriate Conduct



As municipal elected officials:

- You hold both actual and “perceived” powers
- You are the center of the organizational universe
- Your words and actions may have an unintended but huge impact on others



No matter what, you can never put aside your elected official persona

# The Ultimate Challenge



Each elected official has different goals and priorities



It is **impossible** to reconcile everything that a group of different people want



The members of the governing body must sort out the goals and priorities of you and your colleagues. Listen to different views.

- *What is most important to you?*
- *Where are you willing to compromise?*



Then establish a singular set of goals, priorities, and directions for your manager and other direct reports

# In closing...

*“Two things define you: your patience when you have nothing and your attitude when you have everything.” – George Bernard Shaw*

1

Recognize roles when they are changing roles – both yours and others

2

Stay in your lane!

- Stay within your “job description”
- Stay out of those of others

3

Act as “WE,” not “I.”  
You are on a team!  
So be a team!

4

Be cautious about citizen pressures; be deliberative

5

Check your personal motives. Decide what you believe is best for the city/town – now and in the future