

Bill Madsen,
Mayor

Clint Kinney,
Town Manager



COUNCIL-MANAGER RELATIONS

CML's Effective Governance Workshop

Fun “Facts” about Bureaucrat

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- We are people too
- We don't get to play favorites.
 - In the private sector it's called building relationships.
 - In government the same actions are called the good ol' boy network, favoritism, or corruption.
- We do not get to be outright passionate about things.
 - We must balance our passion with objective outlooks
- We need to find the balance between a lot of competing interests.

Fun “Facts” about Elected Officials

- We are People too.
- We ran for office to make our neighbors, friends and family happy by making the community a better place.
- We learn that by simply being a good elected official, (by making choices, compromises, and tough decisions) it is very difficult to make all your neighbors, friends and family happy.
- There are key distinctions between winning an elections and the governing of a municipality. You win by yourself; we govern as a team.

WHAT MAKES GOVERNING HARD

COMPETING INTERESTS

- Short term vs long term needs
- Individual rights vs. community benefit
- Efficiency vs. Effectiveness
- Flexible vs. Consistant
- Demand vs. Need

MAKING SAUSAGE

“the play of conflicting interest in a framework of shared purposes is the drama of a free society. It is a robust exercise, and a noisy one, not for the faint hearted, or the tidy minded.....” John Gardner (1912-2002) Secretary of Health

**IF EVERYONE AGREED ALL THE TIME, YOU
WOULDN'T NEED 5 OR 7 PEOPLE ON THE
COUNCIL.**

REMEMBER THE BIG PICTURE



GOVERNING IS NOT ABOUT FINDING RIGHT ANSWERS. IT IS MORE ACCURATELY DESCRIBED AS FORGING ALLIANCES AND COMPROMISES AMONG ADVOCATES OF DIFFERENT, OFTEN TIMES, CONFLICTING, VALUES WITH THE GOAL OF (GETTING THINGS DONE AND) BUILDING AND MAINTAINING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

John Nalbandian

Staff is professional, politically neutral, and committed to serving whoever is elected to Council.

Our goal is to be a useful resource to the elected officials and provide objective information to the matters at hand so that the Council can make informed decisions.

As staff, we strive to provide each member of Council the same level of respect, courtesy and—most importantly—the same information.

ROLE OF STAFF

The authority of a Council comes when members are collectively sitting behind the dais, making motions, and taking formal votes.

The authority is a result of the Council working together through an issue and taking a vote or giving clear direction from the majority.

ROLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIALS

As a Council it is important to work through issues in a collective and concerted fashion. The Council is a collective body comprised of individual members. Councilors were elected to a Council, not to an independent seat. Constituents expect the Council to function effectively as a team.

Each Town Council member should feel comfortable expressing an opinion and defending or discussing a point. The key is to show respect for fellow Council members, be willing to move ahead once the issue is thoroughly discussed and live with the vote of the Council.

Once a decision is made by the Council, all members are expected to acknowledge (and hopefully support) that collective action as if spoken by one voice regardless of their personal position.

ROLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIALS

This responsibility of a Town Councilor is sometimes difficult to abide by, especially following an election process. The election process generally involves an individual stating, “I will do this,” or “I won’t do that.”

Once on the Town Council, individual elected officials quickly realize that an individual “I” can’t do anything, and that it takes a **majority** of the council to achieve community goals.

It is critical to learn to work with fellow Council members to create a consensus/majority. To be effective, the “I” must become “we,” and the Council must work as a true team.

The most effective Council members are constantly working with the other members to develop consensus.

ROLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIALS

WHO IS SUPPOSED TO DO WHAT?

MISSION

POLICY

ADMINISTRATION

MANAGEMENT

MISSION
POLICY
ADMINISTRATION
MANAGEMENT

WHO IS SUPPOSED TO DO WHAT?

James Svara

Council's Sphere



Manager's Sphere

Council's Sphere



Manager's Sphere

WHO IS SUPPOSED TO DO WHAT?

You know it's a political issue (or the job of an elected official to decide) when after all the facts are known, we can legitimately disagree on the answer to the problem. More information is not going to solve the problem. John Nalbandian

THERE IS NO SINGLE RIGHT ANSWER TO POLITICAL PROBLEMS. THERE ARE LOTS OF POTENTIAL RIGHT ANSWERS.

-Thus feedback from advisory boards and the community is needed and these decisions should be made by elected officials.

-If there is a right and a wrong way to do something, or a better or worse way, or more information will lead to a better answer, it is generally an administrative or management issue to be dealt with.

Someone working in government complaining about politics is the equivalent to a pilot complaining about gravity... it doesn't make sense

Hans Bliker

RULES OF THUMB

In order to keep lines of communication open between the Manager and the Council there are a few rules of thumb that we have found to be effective

RULES OF THUMB

In most communities, the manager works for the entire City/Town Council. A critical part of the manager's job is assisting Councilors. Please don't hesitate to ask your manager for assistance. She or he is there to help.

RULES OF THUMB

When staff distributes information to the Council, 99% of the time that information should go to all Council members in an effort to make sure everyone is equally informed. On rare occasions if the information is very specific to one Council member, the staff may just give it to the pertinent Councilor or ask the Mayor for guidance. However, 99% of the time all information/answers to questions go to all elected officials equally so that everyone is operating with the same information.

RULES OF THUMB

Direct communication between Council members and Department Directors can be important and necessary. Individual Council members should be welcome to contact individual Department Directors to gain information on specific topics. However, elected officials need to be careful not to make demands of any Town staff or assign work to them. The rule of thumb TOSV asks Department Directors to go by is this: If a Council member asks for information or makes a request of the Director that the Director (or their staff) would normally follow through on for any member of the general public, then do it for the Council person (and let the Town Manager know about it so the Manager can make sure all the Council members have the information that was provided). If the request/inquiry from the Council person is not something the Department Director would do for any member of the public, the Department Director needs to direct the Council member to the Manager to make arrangements. This helps the Manager assure that the Council member receives the information that they requested.

RULES OF THUMB

Council Members and the Mayor need to remember that the Manager works for all Council members equally. Because of that, a Manager and should not and cannot always simply “do” what one Council member wants done.

In order to be fair to all elected officials and perform the Manager’s job well, a Manager needs to “do” what the majority of the Council wants done, not just individual Council members

It is not easy for a Manager to tell a boss “no, not until you get more votes.” But this is something a Manager needs to do to make sure that a Town Manager work for the entire governing body, not just individual Council members.

To be clear, this is not to say a Councilor can’t ask specific questions of the Manager, or get clarification, or ask for assistance, or pass off citizen requests. **That is the job of the Manager.**

However, for big issues a Manager will require direction from the majority of the board.

RULES OF THUMB

Following these few rules of thumb will hopefully keep the lines of responsibility relatively clear between the Town Manager who manages the day-to-day operations of the Town, and Council's responsibility to set guiding policy for the Town.

COMMUNICATIONS

As a Council person you will frequently be approached about a variety of issues and hear plenty of speculation and rumors. Please remember there are usually at least two sides to every story. If you hear about or are informed of issues that concern you, please let your Manager know so he or she can then make sure the issues are addressed or at least your questions are answered.

No reasonable person expects you as a Councilor to know all the answers all the time. It is perfectly acceptable to tell a constituent, “I don’t know, and I’ll get back to you.” Managers do that all the time.

COMMUNICATIONS

While a Manager will put forth a great deal of effort to ensure the Council is up to speed on community happenings, the Manager greatly appreciates it if the Council would keep us informed of issues you are hearing about or topics that are on your mind. The Town Manager position can get pretty insular, so it does help to know what Councilors are hearing and to understand what Board priorities are.

COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD/PUBLIC HEARING PROTOCOL

Most Council's have included an agenda item at each meeting to allow Public Comment on issues. This has proven to be an effective tool to allow the public to "bring up" issues of which the Council may not otherwise be aware.

Unfortunately, this time on the agenda can also be a time for members of the public to grandstand and use valuable Council time. When controversial topics, complaints or other similar issues are brought up, it is usually best not to react immediately. If warranted, direct staff (or whomever) to meet with the individual to address the issue. This allows for quick action and also allows equal time to other scheduled issues on the agenda.

Along these same lines, when people make comments during public hearings it is also usually not a good idea to interrogate the person making the statement, or for that matter let them interrogate the Council. These sections of the meeting are there for people to speak their mind, not hold a speech and debate forum.

It is the Mayor's job to keep these issues under control, but the Council can certainly assist.

Passion vs Facts
HOW TO
IMPLMENT A
Project/Vison

		Is There Passion?	
		Yes	No
Is There a Need/Facts?	Yes	Action	Report on shelf
	No	Danger	

FINALLY

As a Council Member it is your job to set the tone and the vision for our community.

YOUR POSITION IS TRULY ONE OF LEADERSHIP

It is a difficult job, one that very few people outside the position understand, but it also provides great opportunities for accomplishment.

You will no doubt, at some point, be faced with a crowd of people at a Council meeting that do or do not want something to occur. When this happens, try to remember that your job is to lead and make good decisions for the entire community, not necessarily react to the will of the crowd of people. Try and remember, if 100 people showed up to a public hearing, which would be a lot of people, they would still be representing a very small percentage of the residents of your community.

As a Council person, one of your hardest jobs will be to base your decisions on the overall good of the community, not just the squeaky wheels. That is a lot easier said than done.

