

Fostering Effective Mayor– Council–Manager Relationships

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Joe A. Helfenberger
City Administrator



Communication

- ▶ Verbal and non-verbal messages are sent between the mayor-council-and city manager when there are face-to-face meetings
 - Daily with mayor and manager
 - Weekly with manager and council members
 1. Discuss Ottumwa Reports
 2. Review meeting agendas
 3. Address issues
 - Phone calls



Communication Cont'd

- ▶ Written messages between mayor–council–city manager
 - Weekly Ottumwa report
 - Memorandums
 1. Address major issues
 2. Inform in a timely manner
 3. Send by email and hard copy
 - Not all council read both formats
 4. Pass through information from staff, governments, businesses, and residents



Promote Trust

- ▶ Know your material
- ▶ Project confidence through voice and mannerisms
- ▶ Educate if other official is unfamiliar with a topic
- ▶ Be consistent
- ▶ Communicate with the other person's point of view in mind
- ▶ Promise only what you will deliver



Interaction with Staff

- ▶ All communication with city staff goes through city manager except minor, routine matters
- ▶ Written correspondence goes to city manager, who forwards it to mayor and council
- ▶ City council can go directly to department heads to ask brief questions, but cannot direct any work to be done
- ▶ City manager handles requests for information by mayor and council



Handling of Complaints

- ▶ City manager promptly handles complaints received by mayor and council members
 - Emails or texts department heads with complaints and problems
 - Manager sets deadline for resolution by department head
 - Department head reports back to city manager
 - City manager reports back to mayor and council



Formal Presentations

- ▶ City manager:
 - Solicits concerns from mayor and council
 - Takes concerns to executive management team
 - Prepares PowerPoint, taking into account mayor, council and staff suggestions
 - Presents PowerPoint at council meeting
 - Solicits feedback from mayor and council



Working through Difficulties

- ▶ Give attention to all council members even if they are openly critical of city manager or mayor
- ▶ Continue supporting council members who vote in the minority
- ▶ Find ways to help council members and mayor accomplish their priorities that also support city goals
- ▶ Disagree courteously when necessary



No Hidden Agendas

- ▶ Be open and honest with council and mayor
- ▶ Be flexible in accepting that your solution may not be chosen by mayor or city council
 - If you adequately explain your recommendation, the rest is up to council and/or mayor
- ▶ If you don't know an answer, admit it
 - Commit to a response by an agreed time frame
- ▶ Be who you are
 - Hold to the same values in whatever role you have



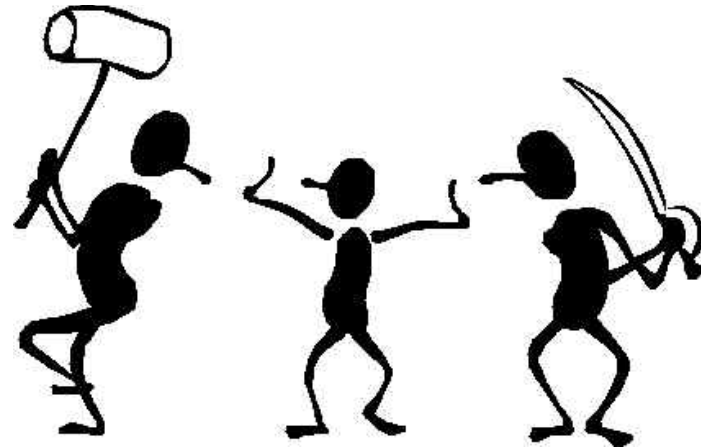
When Problems Arise

- ▶ Establish council code of conduct
- ▶ Use facilitator to mediate
- ▶ Communicate controversy early and often
- ▶ If council member is creating a hostile work environment:
 - First time, issue warning
 - Second time, turn matter over to county attorney



Leadership

- ▶ Care for mayor and council and be a useful resource for them
- ▶ Pay attention to what is really important to your mayor and council
- ▶ Build consensus whenever possible
- ▶ Mediation can be difficult between elected officials



Comments / Questions

- ▶ Contact information
 - Joe Helfenberger, City Administrator
 - City of Ottumwa
 - helfenberger@ci.ottumwa.ia.us
 - (641)–954–2130