

High Performance Government: Council and Staff in Partnership

I. Objectives (overhead)

A. Talk about values that drive public policymaking because they introduce the conflict that council and staff have to deal with to successfully build community

B. Talk about different perspectives that council and staff bring to these values and why each perspective is important

C. Identify a translating role for the chief administrative officer between political and administrative spheres of action

D. I'll do some talking to present some material; you will do some exercises and discussion about council-staff relations; I'll do some more talking to finish up.

II. Introduction

A. About Lawrence

1. 80,000 pop in northeast Kansas
2. 45 minutes from KC metro area with pop of 1.5 million
3. 30 minutes from Topeka, the state capital
4. full-service and free-standing city
5. Growth rate between 2-2.5 percent annually
6. council-manager form with mayor elected by council, all five council-members elected at large
7. best of all, home to the University of Kansas where I work

B. Community is very important in my thinking about local government and the role of commission and staff

1. How many of you think of your city/county as a community or as many communities

a) What leads you to describe your city as a community? Ask for examples

b) Who are the model citizens? What do they have in common? They give something back?

c) How do you invest in citizens so that they want to give something back?

2. Purpose of the partnership is community building. This is our business

a) What do I mean by community building? Trying to build a sense of responsibility to the public good.

(1) Example is voting for school bonds when you have no school age children

(2) Does the school district's performance and how it goes about its business affect that vote?

3. Can't talk about building community without talking about values and value conflicts in our communities

III. Verbal cases

A. 2+2 example

1. Your child's (or grandchild's) teacher asks the class what 2+2 equals. Some of the class say 4 and some say 5. The teacher decides to have the class vote on the answer. What is your reaction to your child's education?

2. Why the negative reaction?

a) It's a matter of fact; we don't vote on facts

b) It's a 2+2=4 problem

3. A city example of a 2+2 problem is intersection of 23rd and Massachusetts geometric improvements (**OVERHEAD**)

a) I asked if 100 engineers etc

b) He looked at me strangely, then he realized I was a prof and he needed to be tolerant of my eccentricities

c) He answered 95 percent and the other 5 percent you wouldn't want to do business with

4. For the engineer the addition of left-turn lanes is a 2+2 problem. The engineer expects the governing body to defer to expertise on this kind of problem.

a) How does the engineer feel when the mayor says, "Let's discuss and vote on it"

B. What does it take to turn a 2+2 problem into a political problem?

1. Create a situation where there are NO RIGHT ANSWERS.

a) Move from a situation dominated by facts to one heavily influenced by values.

2. A political problem, what I call a "no right answer" problem is one where even after all the facts are known, we can still disagree over the solution to the problem because our values differ.

3. Ask for show of hands: Who has run into these kinds of problems?

a) Ask for examples

4. Let's turn this 2+2 problem into one that has no right answer (embellishing). Ask how this could happen in the intersection case.

a) taking right of way (historic property/wetlands)

b) creates marginal properties in a fragile neighborhood and neighborhood association, that did not exist prior to this issue, objects and wants its interests considered

c) planning staff agrees

d) council priority is strengthening neighborhoods

e) neighborhood says "you would be listening to us more seriously if we were from the other side of town"

5. From the engineer's perspective, this is still a 2+2=4 problem because it is about traffic safety, but for the council it no longer is. The engineer is asking what is the greatest good for the greatest number over the long haul.

a) Underlying no right answer problems are differences in values

b) This is why we have politics. Politics is one way of resolving conflicts among values. Let's look at them

IV. Values definitions (OVERHEAD)(HANDOUT)

A. These values are fundamental to American politics (link values to Mass street example)

B. Representation protected in rules about how governing bodies are constituted--how many, at-large or district, public hearings so peoples views can be expressed and considered

1. The idea that the citizens would be listened to in the intersection case

C. Efficiency (note it is one of several values)

1. Cost/benefit analysis but not only about money
2. Rational and analytical thinking (like the engineer)
3. Greatest good for greatest number over the long run!
4. the engineer's solution to the intersection problem

D. Social equity protected by

1. Equal protection—no second class citizens
2. The idea of one side of town versus another in the intersection case

E. Individual rights, like property rights and civil rights, protect individuals from unreasonable or capricious acts of government

1. Due process

2. What is required to take the property for the widening of the road in the intersection case

F. Everyday expressions (HANDOUT)

G. Hand out the Everett staff memo and the planners e-mail (Handout)

H. The most important points about the values are:

1. they conflict and we need ways to resolve the conflicts—this is what politics is about
2. they are all important and that is why there is conflict and why it takes so long to get resolution.

V. Do the privatization case here (Handout)

A. Case shows values and no right answer. Key is that efficiency is one of four values

B. It shows importance of relationship between staff and council

C. Let's pay a little more attention to the values, then we will look at the council-staff relationship more specifically

VI. Why pay attention to all four values?

A. In order to build and maintain a sense of community, you have to work with all of these values

B. With community building the point in Mass Street example is that there is more to consider than just moving cars safely.

C. What if you were a political minority and the rule was the greatest good for greatest number over the long haul?

1. How do you build a community by sending a message that political minorities are to be excluded? Sometimes you have to go ahead with a quick decision or a simple majority rules decision, but you have to pay a price.
2. You cannot exclude people and still expect them to feel obligated to and respect the public good.

D. How do you build their sense of obligation to the public good?

1. You have to show that you can get things done as a government while respecting the values of representation, social equity, and individual rights (Get things done that people cannot do by themselves, and you have to do it fairly.)
2. You cannot exclude people and still expect them to feel obligated to and respect the public good

E. SHOW **OVERHEAD of Schumm chart or SKIP IT**

1. Story of “government aligned with Walmart against small business. That is why we take this action seriously and we need some political space.

VII. Now let’s look at the relationship between council and staff. Do psychological contract exercise (Overhead**) Could include Svava chart here.**

- A. Do you have the basis for a reasonably sound relationship?*
- B. Which expectation generated the most discussion?*
- C. Which expectations do you have questions about?*
- D. Which expectations are hardest to fulfill?*
- E. Which expectations could you do a better job of expressing?*

VIII. We have looked at the values and expectations, now let’s look at some of the conditions that the governing body works under. What makes work difficult for governing body? Council approaches its work and relationship with staff with a different set of concerns. May be ready to deal with the value conflicts, but the biggest difficulty is that the conditions the council works under really challenge the ability to resolve big issue, conflict, problems

- A. (**OVERHEAD** ON CONDITIONS AND**
- B. **OVERHEAD** ON STEPS TO TAKE)**

1. Roberts rules of order are a way of creating structure, but they only deal with procedural issues

C. Relationship with staff gives you:

1. Knowledge that staff has accumulated from their education, training, and experience. Knowledge passed through professionalism benefits from what others have learned.
2. Problem solving capacity of the organization--this is what council will never have on its own
3. Problem finding capacity--but it can be narrow because staff is organized into specializations
4. Effective governing bodies are those that know how to engage staff (when to provide clear direction; when to push; when to get out of the way; when to protect)

D. John Arnold gap (Overhead and handout)

1. Read from Newsweek
2. Gap means the role of the CAO has evolved in ways that require more time bridging the gap

IX. Go to politics/admin chart (OVERHEAD) (HANDOUT)

A. Activity

1. Metaphor of politics as a game; admin as a game?
2. Political game in campaigns. Campaigns are about winning and losing. E.g. story about forgetting Lynn at our meeting. Governing is not about winning and losing; it is about building consensus and finding common ground
3. On the council 4-1 with minority saying outrageous things
4. On the council 2-2-1 requires thought out reason by swing or lose respect

B. Players

1. Give physician example

C. Stories

1. Hear versus know = stories versus reports

2. Stories insert passion into the process; reports take them out
 - a) **E.g. the city caters to development on the west side of town versus a report outlining expenditures by district**
 - b) **At a panel of elected officials, I asked them to describe the differences between perspectives of elected and appointed and they said:**
 - (1) To feel the pulse of the community
 - (2) To generate enthusiasm for the project
 - (3) To sell the project
 - (4) To be sensitive to what people are saying
 - (5) We are promoters; keep people enthusiastic about the downtown redevelopment project when access to businesses is reduced
3. Passion dreams and stories versus data, plans and reports (let your mind wander when you think of these three sets: my image is of a guy walking down street in a Hawaiian shirt versus someone in a suit and tie. The Hawaiian guy says: you should loosen up; the suit and tie guy says: you need to be more serious
 - a) **Essence of difference is in the perspective**
 - b) **From council perspective staff can be seen as unfeeling**
 - c) **From staff perspective council can be seen as unthinking**
4. Functions
 - a) **Passion provides energy and motivation (doesn't have to be your own passion)**
 - b) **Dreams provide vision**
 - c) **Stories communicate the passion and dreams and the VALUES**
5. I'll come back to passion, I want to talk about dreams

a) Dreams serve three purposes

- (1) Foundation for a compelling political agenda (fears can do this, too)
- (2) Connect the past and the future
- (3) Require more than one person to carry them out

b) KC, KS dreams of renewal reflected in simple stories: “One last chance” “no movie theater for our children,” “Our hearts are racing”

c) Crucial question for staff is: “What opportunities have you given for your council to think in terms of and express its dreams?”

- (1) E.g. talk about growing up and what you remember positive about your community that you wish you could capture. Answer the question at your table. Share at your table. What did this exercise do for you? What would happen if your council had a similar conversation?
- (2) Talk about growing up and what you remember negative about your community and hope you can avoid.

6. Stories communicate the passion and the dreams

a) Everyday stories: Weed control and environmental code inspector story; big government; inefficient government; government that doesn't care about the everyday citizen; government should be more like a business

b) Noble stories: MLK, We shall overcome

c) The most powerful stories are those about identity—who we have been, who we are, what we can become

d) The politician tells people stories they want to hear; the statesman tells stories that ask us to dream about what we can become

7. Passion

a) Go to passion/data slide and discuss

b) Note the natural flow of what citizens are interested in and what institutions are prepared to do and to work on

**c) When these come together we say “The timing was right!”
Now we know what timing is. It is the alignment of data and passion of institutional capability with community will.**

D. Analysis

1. Biggest challenge is that each side is prone to expecting the other to define and approach problems as it does.--analytical
2. Staff sees council as a committee, and council wants staff to be as flexible as it is.—feeling, compassion
3. Role of CAO is as **translator** and to help with **alignment** of expectations that reflect the different perspectives.
4. We need a translator--in some cities this will be the CAO; in others the mayor. Increasingly, this is a role for senior staff

a) Take council's work and transform it into problems for the staff to work on and policy options that, if approved, will give staff direction

b) Take staff's work and make sure it is conveyed to council as a series of choices so council can do the values work that citizens expect of them (go back to the Schumm example)

5. **ALIGNMENT (OVERHEAD don't use in Florida because it refers only to city managers)**

a) Two places where alignment is necessary

(1) The problems the staff is working on with the council's priorities

(2) The expectations that council has of the staff with what the staff can give to the council; the expectations that staff has of the council with what the council is willing to give to staff.

(3) Passion and data/ community and institutions

6. Clearly, as we explore the chart we see the need for a partnership between elected officials and staff--both bring needed perspectives to a problem

a) The staff can bring options and can solve problems and provide information; but the staff cannot define the city's priorities; only the council can do that; the staff can raise "no right answer problems" and can give alternatives, but only the council can decide what solutions should be adopted for no right answer problems

X. Summary (OVERHEAD) (HANDOUT)

A. Role Of Governing Body Is Community Building

B. Promote Inclusion and Accomplishment

C. Good Politics Is About Values Not Right Answers; No Set of Political Values Is Better than Another

D. Value Conflicts Require Compromise and Negotiation

E. Cannot Ignore Any Value Over a Long Period of Time

F. Democratic Process Is "Messy"

G. Politics and Administration = Different Ways of Thinking

H. Role of Translator Is Critical; alignment is crucial and is continuing task

I. In order for council to value staff, Staff must Contribute to Governing Body in ways that council sees as Useful

XI. PI Michigan street story:

A. She called

B. Went and viewed and 5 became 50

C. They were not angry

D. Politics is just being there

E. Political window of opportunity/stormwater utility

F. Hired engineer to prioritize and Michigan street was first on the list

G. Took class to visit

H. A simple handshake is as important as the utility—the combination captures what politics means to me