SMALL COMMUNITIES QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP DETERMINE WHETHER A PAID PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATOR/MANAGER SHOULD BE RETAINED:

Cost-Benefit Analysis

$_____   What is the approximate value of grants, loans. and other outside intergovernmental revenues that may have been or are currently available, but which the city leaders have not been able to pursue because they do not have the expertise to apply and/or lobby for them?

$_____   How much is paid to outside planners and/or engineers to perform routine or non-technical tasks (meeting with citizens, writing grants or letters to developers, managing contracts and projects, supervising bidding, etc.)?

$_____   To what extent would the city's annual legal service fees be reduced if there was a professional administrator/manager employed by the city?

$_____   Has the city ever had to pay a fine or penalty to a state agency because it has not made timely submission of a report, permit or other document? If so, what was the dollar value?

$_____   What is the differential cost between professional service contract fees (by % of base service) negotiated by the city, compared to similar contracts negotiated by management professionals in nearby communities?

$_____   Has the city ever had to pay a financial settlement to a former employee because his/her involuntary termination was not handled properly or because they made an allegation of discrimination and the city did not have proper policies in place to respond? If so, what was the dollar value?

$_____   Has the city ever received an adverse or "qualified" opinion from its outside auditor based on incomplete accounting practices or the condition of its financial records? If so, the auditor can identify the cost of these shortcomings to the city and estimate the auditing fee added to sort out the problem(s) and reorganize records.

Lost Opportunity Analysis

_____   Have there been development projects, land use planning decisions (to limit or encourage growth comprehensively or reactively on a site-by-site basis), construction project planning, opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation, etc. which have proceeded (or not proceeded) because the community did not have the technical expertise, the negotiation skills, or the ability to foresee positive or negative impacts?

_____ Are there any areas of technical expertise that council members believe the city lacks, and that it has not been able to obtain at reasonable expense through its staff, elected officials, and community volunteers? E.g., does the council have a plan for funding mandated infrastructure?

Process Analysis

_____ In the opinion of the City Council and/or citizens, is the organization's response(s) to problems, opportunities, requests, and complaints timely?

_____ Is vital information communicated to all the members of the governing body so that they have the whole story and understand the "big picture"?

_____ Is there one person charged with making sure that actions of one department are consistent and compatible with those of another department? Is this communication effective and in accordance with the governing body's general directions?

_____ Are proper risk assessments ever delayed because staff or elected officials are uncertain about how to assess and/or manage risk?

_____ Does the City Council believe that its directives are being implemented in a timely manner by the parties responsible for their enactment?

_____ Does the city budget realistically account for the costs of future needs?

_____ Does the City Council believe it spends too much time at council and/or committee meetings discussing small details and technical issues, rather than policy, contracts, planning, and general community improvement?

Political (public perception & council motives) Analysis

_____ Are council members perceived by the public as leading or reacting?

_____ Are form-of-government discussions motivated more by a desire to increase the separation of powers between elected officials and the staff or by a desire to more effectively use power?

_____ Is the city's current organizational structure advancing the governing body's short and long term goals and objectives or is it a barrier to their implementation? (Focus on form and structure, not on individuals.)

_____ If the answers to the questions above (cost-benefit, loss opportunity and process analyses) were objectively set before local citizens, would a majority support changing to a manager/administrator form of government?