



Elected Board Relations

ILCMA Leadership Issue for the New Manager/Administrator

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Presenters:

► Mayor Dr. Rita Ali

- Mayor of Peoria (2021 to Present)
- Peoria City Council (2019 - 2021)
- Former Vice President of Workforce and Diversity at Illinois Central College

► Patrick Urich

- City Manager, Peoria, IL (2011 to Present)
- County Administrator, Peoria County, IL (2001 - 2011)
- Assistant County Administrator, Senior Research Analyst, Lake County, IL

What Should Elected Officials Expect From The Manager?

▶ Excellent Communication

- ▶ Timely, relevant, accurate and reliable
- ▶ What you say to one, you say to all
- ▶ E-mail, texts, memos, telephone - determine best method for each elected official
- ▶ NO SUPRISES!!!

▶ Competent Recommendations on all Policy Matters

(ICMA Code of Ethics Tenet 5)

- ▶ Up-to-date information
 - ▶ Stay current with emerging trends in public administration (ICMA Code of Ethics Tenet 8)
- ▶ Information to council fully vetted
- ▶ Be politically astute, but not political (ICMA Code of Ethics Tenet 7)
- ▶ Clear and concise presentation of information (pros and cons)

What Should Elected Officials Expect From The Manager?

► Responsiveness

- Quick and complete response to council concerns and questions
- Timely and effective response to citizen inquiries and requests
- Explanation when and why a response might be delayed

► Personal Integrity

(ICMA Code of Ethics Tenet 3 and Tenet 12)

- Council wants a Manager that is respected in the community and the organization
- Successful leaders need to be trusted and must earn the respect of others
- Personal issues of the Manager can taint the elected officials
- Ethical behavior at all times
- Be clear with the elected body that your personal ethics are non-negotiable

What Should Elected Officials Expect From The Manager?

▶ Sound Management of Operations

- ▶ Careful and prudent fiscal stewardship
- ▶ Competent management of employees
 - ▶ Work hard to avoid messy personnel issues (ICMA Code of Ethics Tenet 11)
- ▶ Excellent service to constituents (ICMA Code of Ethics Tenet 2 and Tenet 4)
- ▶ Keep the community informed on local government affairs (ICMA Code of Ethics Tenet 9)
- ▶ Effective leadership within the organization
 - ▶ Set a positive example

▶ Public Support

- ▶ Support the decisions of the elected body even when you disagree
- ▶ Never publicly demean or criticize elected officials
- ▶ Your job is to make the elected body look good!

Adaptability: A Key Skill

- ▶ Make sure your style meshes with the elected body's needs and preferences
 - ▶ Some elected bodies prefer the Manager to be highly visible and out-front while others prefer the Manager to stay behind the scenes
- ▶ The relationship with the Mayor, Board Chair, or President is a special one that needs to be carefully defined and cultivated
- ▶ Some elected officials may be uncomfortable with the relationship between the Mayor and Manager
- ▶ Understand that your style may have to change in response to the changing composition of the elected body. It is the Manager's job to adapt to changes in the elected body, not vice versa
- ▶ Give all credit to the elected body. Compliment staff publicly. Avoid taking credit or self-congratulatory comments

Other Best Practices and Good Ideas

- ▶ Stay on top of financial matters
- ▶ Always be prepared for council meetings
- ▶ The elected body should never learn of important information from the news media
- ▶ Give the public time to digest new projects and initiatives
- ▶ Respond to media requests promptly, succinctly, and truthfully
- ▶ Keep the elected body informed of the progress of important initiatives and projects
- ▶ Don't hide bad news from the elected body. Deliver it early and accurately.

Other Best Practices and Good Ideas

- ▶ Take care in correcting misstatements made by elected officials in public meetings. Don't inadvertently embarrass them.
- ▶ Understand and manage the hot button issues of specific Council members.
- ▶ Protect your staff from Board member intervention and abuse. Be polite and respectful, but establish clear boundaries for Board member communication and behavior with staff (ICMA Code of Ethics Tenet 10)
- ▶ Don't play favorites. Be careful of those Board Members that demand a lot of attention.
- ▶ If necessary to confront an elected official for inappropriate behavior or comments, do so privately and respectfully. It is OK to be firm.

QUESTIONS?