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Introduction: Council-Manager Relations Through the Years

by **John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo**

Every so often, members of a profession look inward and question themselves:

- "What are the enduring qualities that anchor our profession?"
- "How are we changing and what is driving the change?"
- "How do the enduring elements and contemporary changes affect our understanding of who we are as professionals and what value we add to society?"

The fact that professionals engage in these questions helps a profession define its sense of worth, its members' continuing commitment, and its ability to convey to others the value of its work.

This last point—conveying to others the value of the profession—is crucial to the profession's legitimacy. Legitimacy is always rooted in the judgments of those outside the profession.

Following the urban upheaval of the 1960s, Bob Kipp, president of ICMA at that time, and the ICMA Executive Board established the Future Horizons Committee, chaired by City Manager George Schrader of Dallas, Texas. This serious, introspective examination of city and county management produced a seminal work about the profession of city management.¹ The committee concluded that the manager was a community leader who deals with an array of conflicting community values, including issues of representation and equity, and who works in a facilitative style.

Since that time, the profession has been living and developing those responsibilities in contrast with what had earlier been the orthodox view of local government managers as value-neutral implementers of public policy. As these commitments have developed, a new emphasis has rekindled the profession's origins.

What's new is captured in best practices, the profession's commitment to administrative excellence. Thus, we see contemporary local government management seeking to embody innovation and excellence within the context of community engagement.

Until the 1970s, the value of city and county management as a profession was embodied in council-manager government itself—a form of government that symbolically joined the value of efficiency with the passion of morality. Defenders of council-manager government endorsed the profession; thus, if the form of government was alive and well, so was the profession, and that would be evident to outsiders.

But, as Professor George Frederickson has shown convincingly, over time council-manager and mayor-council forms of government have undergone so many adaptations that classifying communities by form of government has become not only difficult but also increasingly meaningless to those outside of city and county management.²

The "adapted community" poses a challenge for the management profession: If the value of management is no longer reflected and represented in form of government, how is the value to be demonstrated to the members themselves and to those outside the profession?

One approach local government managers can take to looking introspectively is to see what has been written in the profession's own monthly magazine, Public Management (PM). To do this, we chose one of the most enduring questions of the profession: the relationship between council and manager. With assistance from Scott Collins of the ICMA staff, we traveled back to 1923 and found the first article addressing this theme. Forty-seven articles and 81 years later, we found the most recent.

We have read each of the articles several times, looking for what has endured and what has changed, as a way of

gathering data that might be used to help craft the contemporary story of city and county management. One article also examines the ethical issues of violating the council-manager form of government.

In a nutshell, here is what we found.

WHAT ENDURES?

Two themes emerge from this literature. The first addresses the manager's responsibilities. The local government manager is seen as an administrative leader responsible for supporting the council's policy making; carrying out innovative, effective, and efficient service delivery; and implementing policy. Throughout the articles, council-manager relations are viewed from these perspectives.

The second theme centers on the proper relationship between the council and manager. What is proper has changed over time, but the question itself endures. At the beginning, the manager was seen by some as an independent warrior, leading a battle against corruption. Then, armed with a specialist's knowledge and approach but without the passion of the Progressive movement, the manager was seen as distant from the world of politics and in a subordinate though still powerful position with respect to the council. Most recently the manager and council are viewed in partnership.

WHAT CHANGED?

In the 1970s, new themes emerged, enriching the foundation of the profession. Since the 1970s, issues like the representative nature of the council and the value of social equity have come to the fore, as have issues relating to metropolitan governance, intergovernmental relations, and innovation and excellence in service delivery. The manager is seen as a community leader. Many now discuss the manager's role of supporting diverse councils that are intent upon effecting change.

The council-manager relationship is now described in terms of a collaborative partnership, and issues of the authority and prerogatives of the manager are downplayed. The manager as a facilitative leader and consensus builder, an idea now commonly accepted, derive from the 1970s.

As the role of modern managers has become more expansive, a new understanding, reflected in Eddy's article (1972), has come with it: that individual managers should continually examine how they approach their work and their relationship with the council. This focus grew from the appreciation that, instead of clear lines and relationships between what is political and what is administrative, a manager's challenge in today's governance is finding ways to connect what is politically acceptable with what is administratively feasible.

Effective contemporary local governance depends more on connecting the two arenas than distinguishing them. Continuing work on this subject by James Svara³ and John Nalbandian⁴ helps us understand the overlapping area. Those who can effectively work in this space will add value and help define the city management profession of the future.

We chose 12 articles for reprinting here, and we have written an introduction to each article (identified by the words "2006 Comment") explaining why it was selected and what you might look for.

¹Lawrence Rutter, *The Essential Community: Local Government in the Year 2000* (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, 1980).

²H. George Frederickson, Gary A. Johnson, and Curtis H. Wood, *The Adapted City: Institutional Dynamics and Organizational Change* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2004).

³James H. Svara, "The Politics-Administration Dichotomy as Aberration," *Public Administration Review* 58, no. 1 (1998): 1-8.

⁴John Nalbandian, "Contemporary Professionals and the Conflicting Forces of Administrative Modernization and Civic Engagement," *American Review of Public Administration* 35 (2005): 311-326.

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(Year 1927) Pitfalls of Our Profession

by A. R. Hatton

2006 Comment: Dr. Hatton's article stands as an exemplar of how council-manager government was seen in the early part of the twentieth century. As you read it, you will be struck by the applicability of his advice today. We gain historical perspective from his remarks and begin to see the foundations of city management that have endured.

What Dr. Hatton uniquely reveals in this article is the way that efficiency and morality were joined in the 1920s. Science, scientific method, objectivity, and efficiency were all seen as ways of attacking social upheaval and partisan corruption. At this early point in the profession, Dr. Hatton stresses the importance of training and education for future city managers, establishing an early foundation for one of the profession's core values. It is in this spirit that council-manager government arose.

In several passages, Dr. Hatton speaks to the value of council-manager government and the "noble" role of the city manager. Selected paragraphs read like a Sunday sermon. Toward the end, he includes a section, "Scientific Method in City Government." After advising his city management audience about effective council-manager relations, he reveals what we believe are his true feelings when he says, "Strictly speaking, there is not much political leadership needed in any modern city. The government of a modern municipality is about 99 percent administration, that is, 99 percent of it consists in doing things everybody agrees ought to be done, . . ."

His faith is placed in the city manager who adheres to what were seen at the time as scientific methods. "You managers are the exemplars of a radically different idea in municipal affairs, the idea that intelligence and scientific method has a place in city government. . . ." What is noticeably missing in Hatton's seminal work is a discussion of a politics-administration dichotomy.

It may be difficult to believe, given our familiarity with the concept, but as Professor James Svara reminds us, the manager was envisioned as a powerful leader, and we suspect that, within a context that placed faith in the connection between efficiency and morality that the council-manager plan embodied, issues of accountability were seen differently from how we see and describe them today.¹

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

MR. CHAIRMAN, CITY MANAGERS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Never have I felt more complimented than when invited to address the city managers again this year. Two conventions have gone by since I have been able to meet with you and perform my allotted function of criticizing your ways, with an occasional acknowledgment that you do a few things of which I approve. I wish to assure you with all sincerity that there is no group of people that I consider it more of an honor to address than the city managers, and in saying this I am not uttering a mere pleasantry.

Most of you know that I am not in the habit of throwing bouquets. That is not my main purpose in life. By nature I seem to be fitted for hurling harder and less pleasant verbal missiles with much more accuracy and effect. But, really, the invitation to address you this year, given in the light of my known record with this association, almost convinces me that you do not want me to depart from the practice of friendly criticism which I began several years ago.

I feel complimented by another circumstance connected with the meeting this evening, and that is that the secretary in framing the subject of my address has stated it, "Pitfalls of Our Profession," thereby seeming to imply that in some way I am bound up with the managers to such an extent that I can be spoken of as one of you.

That is really a very great compliment because there is no profession more honorable or more important than yours. I feel all the more complimented because I am not a manager, I never expect to be a manager, and I do not want to be a manager. Important as I consider your work to be, I feel that the work of a councilman is far more difficult, and, for the present, far more important.

In speaking tonight of some of the pitfalls with which your pathway is beset, it is not my intention to discuss defects of human character that would lead to failure in any profession. I am not concerned with things that have caused the

failure of some managers and which have no obvious connection with the profession itself. If managers have gone into oblivion by reason of moral lapses I am not concerned with them. I am concerned only with those dangers which are more or less directly connected with the profession, this difficult and important profession of managing a Canadian or an American city.

It is true, however, that some of the pitfalls of which I shall speak are the results of personal characteristics. In the first place, there is the danger which some managers create for themselves by a lack of tact. There is no work which requires for its successful performance a larger amount of tact, tolerance, and consideration of others than that of city management.

I scarcely need to tell you that a manager should be tactful, that he should be politic but not political, for there is a vast difference between being politic and being a politician. We have all seen managers fail or come near the brink of failure by doing the right thing in the wrong manner. That is the essence of tactlessness.

THE GREAT-MAN COMPLEX

Some managers dig a pit for their own feet because they are seemingly unable to stand the importance of their position and so become afflicted with what is sometimes called "the great-man complex." Occasionally, elevation to the office of manager goes to the head of a man like the liquor we were once able to get, or perhaps more like the liquor which some people still insist on getting.

I have seen men who, upon being elevated to the position of manager and suddenly finding themselves possessed of power and raised to a position of great importance in the community, finding themselves pointed out as manager and being called upon to express opinions upon all sorts of questions from managing a city to the teething of babies, acquire this great-man complex.

Such men seem to become possessed by the idea that the city would start on the road to ruin if anything happened to them. Of course, the only thing that has ever gone to ruin by reason of a manager becoming so afflicted has been the manager himself. This has proved to be a real pitfall to a few otherwise promising managers who have not been able to stand the importance to which they have been elevated.

IMPATIENCE WITH THE PUBLIC

Another personal trait which occasionally proves a pitfall is the exhibition of impatience in dealing with the public. I will confess that if I were placed in the position which you occupy, I would probably not exhibit as great a degree of patience as most of you. Your position is a trying one. Someone suggested today that there is nothing connected with municipal work that is so trying upon the patience as to find that the public seems frequently so ignorant of the thing that you are trying to accomplish, so utterly unable to comprehend the problem with which you are confronted.

That is undoubtedly true. Nothing places a greater strain upon patience, and I have seen managers do themselves and the cause almost irreparable harm because of impatience with situations which required them to take the time to explain with care and calmness the problem with which they were confronted and exactly why the city must proceed in a given manner.

I hasten to say that I think that on the whole city managers have shown a reasonable degree of patience in dealing with the public and that it is only occasionally that I have found one who exhibited brusqueness and impatience at a lack of public understanding. When you find yourselves confronted by such a situation, I want to suggest that you try the practice of a little ritual that I have devised for myself for use under such circumstances.

I get up in the morning and say over to myself a few times, "Now, Hatton, remember that other people are not thinking about the government as much as you are." By this I do not mean to pay any tribute to my capacity, but only to remind myself that other people do not, in fact for the most part cannot, devote as much time to thinking about governmental affairs as I, because that is my special job.

I suppose that the average citizen, he who does most of the kicking and complaining, does not give five minutes a day to thinking about government. He is too busy earning his bread and butter and too much engrossed by the more pleasant and exciting things of modern life to do so. There a manager needs to acquire that patience and tolerance which will lead him to explain with care the things which are so simple that most people would understand them if they gave them as much as five minutes of careful attention.

But, after all, many of the things which seem to you so simple and obvious are really neither simple nor obvious to people not in constant contact with them. Modern life has become complex, and nothing reflects modern life as accurately and fully as a municipality. For this reason it is of the utmost importance that you continuously and patiently explain the real complexities to the people of your cities, for otherwise you will frequently be misunderstood and your motives and purposes will be questioned.

NEED OF A GRASP OF PHILOSOPHY

But these pitfalls are not the ones with which I am primarily concerned. I wish to discuss chiefly some of those which are peculiarly connected with the work of city management, and the first of these is the failure on the part of many managers to grasp or accept the philosophy of the manager system.

It seems to me that far too many city managers have undertaken their work without any initial understanding of what is implied by it and with no subsequent attempt to acquaint themselves with what this whole great movement means.

Until a manager gets himself thoroughly grounded in the philosophy of city management, as embodied in the great movement which has developed during the last 18 years, he will be in constant danger.

That is because the manager who has not grasped the philosophy of the movement will, as I said at the Cincinnati convention a number of years ago, regard his position as a job rather than look upon it as offering a career. He will approach the subject more or less from the day to day standpoint. He will not be guided by any very elevated ideals as to what is expected of him. Such a manager will necessarily fall short of the best and will disappoint the highest expectations of the friends of the movement and the people of his city.

"TALKING TOO MUCH"

The next pitfall of which I wish to speak is one which was suggested to me by one of the managers attending this convention. Since I left St. Paul with a group of managers and their wives to make the trip to Colorado Springs by way of Yellowstone Park, I have been asking managers with whom I came in contact: "What do you regard as the greatest danger to a manager?"

The first manager of whom I asked that question answered me very briefly and to the point, "Talking too much." And, really, that is a danger which may very well be labeled a pitfall. I mean by talking too much, yielding to the temptation to copious speech which your very position thrusts upon you.

In one of the discussions today someone said that, owing to his position, the manager stands out. The manager is the man who is carrying on the business of the city as directed by the council. He is the one to whom newspaper men naturally go for news stories. And until one has become pretty thoroughly hardened to the wiles of the newspaper reporter he is likely to talk entirely too much when interviewed whether he be a city manager or engaged in any other profession.

There was a time when I felt tremendously complimented and exhilarated by having newspaper men come to interview me on this, that and the other subject. Now, when I know I am going to face even one reporter, I send up a prayer that I may not be misled by the seeming importance with which he regards me so as to become expansive in my conversation and make a fool of myself by talking entirely too much. That is one danger with which managers are confronted as to talking, but not the only one.

CONSPICUOUS POSITION OF THE MANAGER

The position of manager is necessarily a conspicuous one, particularly at the beginning. To make matters all the more difficult, the first manager of a city is likely to succeed an elective mayor as chief executive, and the mayor is by tradition the city's chief talker, so much so in fact that he frequently does little else.

A manager, thrust into such a position, is inclined to do a great deal of talking in regard to the business of the city. Every organization in a municipality where the manager plan is adopted wishes to see, and particularly to hear, the manager. Presently, unless he is on his guard, he is likely to find himself discussing the business of the city with great freedom, and not merely the phase of the business for which he is responsible.

He is very much inclined to get out of proper bounds and unbosom himself to some group he is called upon to address by indicating what he proposes that the city shall do. Now it is all right for a manager to say what he thinks the city should do, if it is said at the right time and in the right place. But I have seen a good many managers get themselves into trouble by setting forth their views on new municipal policies at the wrong time and in the wrong place. I am amazed that after the lapse of 18 years of city manager government, this mistake should still be made.

As a member of a city council I deeply resent it when the manager, for whom I am partly responsible and whose action I may be called upon to defend, goes before the public of my city in advance of presenting his proposition to the council and states what he proposes that the city shall do. Any manager who does that in any city speaks entirely out of proper role and will sooner or later find himself in trouble.

But manager after manager has got himself into this sort of trouble and council after council has been irritated and put in an unfair position because an executive officer whose chief function is to carry out policies for which the council must be responsible has gone before the people and announced in advance of councilmanic action what the city is going to do.

Does this mean that a city manager can properly have nothing to do with the formulation and discussion of municipal policies? Not at all. No one with the slightest understanding of what the position requires expects or demands that a city manager be a mere administrative automaton or executive clam. It goes without saying that a manager should discuss matters freely and publicly with his council. He is expected to make recommendations to the council.

Practically every city manager charter so requires. But what some city managers have not yet learned is that it is only after they have made a recommendation to the council and had it approved that they may properly and safely do more or less talking about it in public. My own observation leads me to the conclusion that, even after councilmanic approval of a project, that manager is wisest who talks about it in public less rather than more.

COUNCILMEN SHOULD DEFEND THEIR POLICIES

Oh, I know what is running through the minds of some of you. Situations arise where the manager is better acquainted with the inevitable details than anyone else in the city, and some of you are better speakers than the members of your councils. I grant both contentions. As to the first my reply is that, after the council has approved, a

manager is always justified in getting the details of a new project clearly before the public if it will not otherwise be done.

But even in this he will usually act more wisely if he fortifies members of the council with the facts and has them do the talking if he can bring them to do so. As a member of the city council I want to testify that it is a salutary thing to require council members to explain and defend in public the policies which they have approved in council. That prevents the council from shifting the responsibility for defending a temporarily unpopular policy to the shoulders of the manager, tends to develop councilmanic leaders, and is of real educational value to councilmembers by making it necessary that they keep informed regarding the city's business.

As to those cases where the manager is a better speaker than members of his council, I have little to say. No one would contend that it is undesirable that a manager be able to speak in public and do it well. But ability as a public speaker is not without its dangers. Under proper restraint and judiciously employed it may undoubtedly be a considerable asset to a city manager. But, occasionally, a manager appears to have become so enamored of his superior ability as an expounder of municipal policies that public speaking has become an obsession.

These are sad cases and hard to cure. They remind one of nothing so much as of the person who can sing, or thinks that he can sing, and who not only insists on singing on every possible occasion but displays temperamental jealousy of anybody else who deigns to raise his voice in song. In the end, the public can be depended upon to administer the necessary corrective to an over-oratorical manager. He will realize some day, perhaps with a great shock, that the people did not employ him for his oratorical powers and that they would be far more pleased if he would let his administrative accomplishments do the talking.

Closely connected with this managerial mistake of over-talkativeness is one that by contrast may seem to be almost paradoxical. Unquestionably a pitfall of the managerial profession is frequently found in the failure of a manager to make constructive recommendations to his council. While I firmly believe that the council must be made responsible for the determination of public policies—you will notice that I am not saying "formulation" or "suggestion" but "determination"—and while I am quite aware of the fact that many members of city councils seem to feel that the manager should sit in his office and do nothing until the council acts and tells him what to do, nevertheless, no city worth living in will long tolerate a manager who is not able to formulate and present to his council constructive suggestions as to what the city should undertake.

In a good many cities I have listened to complaints from members of the council and from the public that the manager, usually a rather highly paid official, according to American standards, is failing to do any thinking for the city and failing to present to the council constructive suggestions as to the work of the city.

MANAGERS AHEAD OF COUNCIL

Another managerial failing of an opposite kind is the habit some managers have of getting entirely ahead of their councils and of their public. I have a good deal of sympathy for a manager who makes that mistake, because, as a member of a city council, I know that the council is occasionally very cold-blooded, very slow to see the things which the manager suggests, and perhaps at times very stupid. But, after all, the opinion of a city council is usually a fairer gauge of opinion in the community than that of the manager.

Therefore, with the best of intentions, a manager occasionally gets himself into rather deep difficulty by outrunning in his program and suggestions the program for which the council and the public are prepared. I have known of cases in which the manager displayed impatience with his council, and thereby caused himself trouble, because the council had a keener sense of the advance which the public was immediately willing to make and for that reason held the manager back.

Another managerial mistake which I think may very well be classed as a pitfall, occurs when the manager begins to assume work which the council itself should do. I very much fear from some of the discussions I have heard during the sessions of this convention that this is not uncommon even among the managers gathered here tonight.

I am inclined to think that some of you are assuming too much responsibility for the purely legislative work of the city, that you are letting yourselves be put in a position where you are taking charge not only of the administrative work of the city but also of its legislation. I wish to utter a warning as a member of a city council and as a long time observer of city managers and their work, that a manager is putting himself in danger when, in matters of legislation, he goes beyond the point of recommending to the council a general program of what he thinks should be undertaken.

PRELIMINARY MEETINGS

I said today at one of the meetings that I would reserve for tonight the discussion of the practice, in which I find some of the members indulging, of having their councils meet with them in executive session before the regular session of the council. That doubtless is done with the best of intentions.

It is done because the members of the council are ordinarily busy men who, in most of our cities, desire to do nothing more than pass upon general policies. For that reason a preliminary meeting is held, ostensibly, although I fear not always actually, in order that members of the council may be informed as to what is coming up at the regular meeting of the council to follow that night or the next day.

When a manager does that he assumes the responsibility of doing entirely too much thinking and investigating for the members of his council. A member of a city council who is not willing to devote some time to finding out what is

coming up at a council meeting is not likely to be a very good member. But the greater dangers of the practice lie in certain of its other aspects. In the first place, the discussion in executive session, while more or less informal, may readily result in a decision to what is to be done on the floor of the council at the regular meeting.

Therefore, at the regular meeting the program is rushed through rapidly, votes are taken, there is no discussion and so far as the public is concerned nothing can be learned from attendance upon a council meeting. As a matter of fact, if I may be perfectly blunt, the sessions of the council in the ordinary manager city are about as dull and uninspiring as anything that I can possibly imagine.

That is an undesirable situation. A public deliberative body, such as a city council or a city commission, has at least two important legislative functions to perform. It has the function of making decisions upon questions of policy. That may necessitate discussion in order that the members may enlighten themselves or it may not.

But, in addition to deciding the questions of policy, a city council should, through its meetings and public discussions, perform the function of enlightening the citizens not only as to what the city proposes to do but also as to why it proposes to do it. The moment a system is set up which minimizes discussion in open council the city government is put in danger.

A great deal of criticism has been directed against the manager form of government, in some cities because it is said that the members come into council meeting and vote on things without discussion so that the public has no means of knowing why action is taken.

POLICY-FORMING DRAMATIZED

I realize that some of the managers arrange these preliminary meetings for the very purpose of promoting discussion on the floor of the council. But I am struck by the fact that most of you seem to feel that if there is any disagreement between members of the council on matters of policy, it is little short of a calamity.

One manager told me with evident approval and pride that there had only been one negative vote in his council meetings in a period of over three years. If that should happen in our Cleveland council I should think it a calamity indeed. For my part I believe that one of the best features of the Cleveland city government is the discussion that takes place over matters of public policy. The council meetings of the city of Cleveland are said by many people to be the best show in the city.

Because of the increasing amount of discussion that takes place on the floor of the council, some of it decidedly sharp, we are attracting people to hear what is going on. The people who come to our council meetings not only know what we have decided, but in most cases they also know why. There are a few members of the council who are always willing, perhaps even eager, to get up in council, ask questions, provoke discussion and take part in it themselves. By that process the work of government is being dramatized for the people of the city.

May I suggest to the managers that they can take under consideration no more important question than that of making their council or commission meetings interesting and intelligible to the citizens? We should not forget that it is not only important that we make city government honest and efficient but that it is equally important that we make it interesting and instructive to the people.

COUNCIL IS IMPORTANT

In this connection I want to make another suggestion as to a duty which I believe lies chiefly upon the manager. I quite agree with what Dr. White said today, the future of the manager movement is largely bound up with the question of the type of council that we shall be able to procure.

The great problem for the future of manager government is the city council. Therefore, if the managers persist in doing the work which should be done by the city council and persist in a procedure which leads the people to feel that, after all, the council is of no great value because the manager decides everything, then to a greater and greater extent it will become difficult to get the right type of person to be a candidate for council.

No man or woman of consequence, no man or woman who thinks for himself or herself wishes to be a member of a body which is a rubber stamp. People of the type that we must have in city councils if we are to succeed will consent to serve only in a body of power and importance.

One of the reasons why city councils have declined in public estimation is because, over a long period of years, they were gradually reduced to such an insignificant part of the government that men and women of quality were not willing to be candidates for election to them. Thus we have all but destroyed our city councils, in spite of the fact that there is no successful popular government anywhere that is not based upon some properly chosen deliberative body.

We might as well make up our minds that we can't do without city councils. If we are to get the best results we must bend every effort and employ every honorable device to make it clear to the people that the council is a body of importance and thus entice men and women of ability into it. I still have enough faith in democracy to believe that if men and women of the right type will offer themselves for election to city councils a reasonable percentage of them will be chosen.

BOYCOTT OF POLITICAL OFFICE

I deeply regret that we have had in this country now for nearly a half century what is equivalent to a boycott of office

holding by the best brains and characters in our American communities. The only place, I am glad to add, in which I can discover any improvement in the quality of deliberative bodies is in the city councils, and there chiefly in the councils of city manager cities.

On the whole, the councils of our manager governed cities are of a distinctly higher type than those under other forms of government. I am convinced that this is because the manager plan has restored to the city council something of that power and importance which are necessary to attract persons of ideals, character, and ability. I am anxious that we shall not lose this substantial gain by unwittingly drifting into defective practices.

Another pitfall is created when the manager lets the council refer everything to him, lets the council put him in the position of defending councilmanic policies before the public, in other words lets the council shift to his shoulders all unpleasant or unwanted responsibilities which it desires to avoid. That is the last position in which a city manager should permit himself to be placed, a position in which when public criticism arises as to a matter of policy, the council can say that the manager is responsible for it.

I think that most of you are old enough and now wise enough in experience to be careful that the council shall stand squarely behind any policy which you are called upon to administer, and that if a policy adopted by the council is to be defended to insist that it is the business of the council and not of yourself to do the defending. Of course, if you have recommended a policy to the council you should be willing to say that you believe it to be sound.

But if I were a manager I would not let my council escape the clear duty of defending an unpopular policy, or a policy unpopular in certain section of the city or among certain classes, just because members of the council didn't want to take responsibility. I would insist that it was their job that they had voted for it and had asked you to carry it out, and therefore they must defend it. Don't make the mistake of letting the council shift their responsibility to your shoulders.

There is another danger that has threatened some managers but which, I think, does not arise very frequently. I have known of a few managers who have been getting on with their work fairly successfully who, figuratively speaking, have been taken up on the high mountain of political ambition and have had it said to them, "If you will fall down and worship me—the political boss or political organization—you shall have the nomination for governor, United States senator, or some other high political office."

MANAGER MORE IMPORTANT THAN SENATOR

I can think of nothing more dangerous than such a temptation presented to a man weak enough to yield to it and I cannot think of anything more foolish and futile than for a manager to yield to it even though thereby he could secure such a position as that of United States senator.

To be manager of any city of considerable size requires so much more ability, is so much more important, means so much more to the future of American political institutions, opens opportunities for so much greater accomplishment than to be United States senator that there is no comparison. I would rather be the city manager of Colorado Springs than to be the United States senator from the State of Colorado, because it requires more ability and offers greater opportunities for service to the country.

If you think that I am speaking strongly on this point I wish that you would analyze the situation. We are now an urban country. Our future depends upon the sort of life, the sort of political institutions, and upon the political practices and political ethics that we shall develop in American cities during the next few years. Certainly this government, local, state, or national, cannot continue with any degree of success, if indeed it can survive at all, unless we are able to bring into the administrative side of public business in the municipality, in the state, and in the nation, men who know public administration, who are devoted to public administration, and who are to a greater or less degree professionally trained.

That fundamental change has to begin with the municipality and has already begun in the manager cities. Thus, the training ground for the future of our citizenship, and the proving ground for this necessary change in administrative practice, lies in the American city and nowhere else. That is why I say that to be the manager of any city of considerable size is, for the present at any rate, the most important public position that any man or woman can be called upon to hold. Yes, even if distinction in public service is what most allures you, there is no other public position in which the chance for distinction is so great.

DANGERS OF POLITICAL AMBITION

When I have seen a few managers tempted by the prospect of high political office I have first been amazed at their lack of vision and then saddened that they have utterly failed to grasp the superior importance of the position which they already hold. Thank God, that is not a temptation that comes to many of you because most of you in the managerial field do not have political ambitions.

I would not want to be understood as casting aspersions upon people who have political ambitions. I wish more men and women of the right quality had political ambitions, because, as I said not long ago in an address delivered elsewhere, the thing which disturbs me most under present conditions is that the problem of government has probably increased in difficulty tenfold since our institutions were founded, while human intelligence has not increased at all.

At the same time, we are probably not getting into our public deliberative bodies as large a percentage of our most intelligent people as we did a century ago. That is one of the things that should cause us to give careful consideration

to the future of our institutions, but it has no special place in what I am trying to say to you tonight.

There is another danger which is quite disconnected from any I have so far discussed. When the manager system comes into existence in a city it usually enters as the enemy of the type of political control and management which immediately precedes it. At first this enemy, having been recently beaten, is quiescent but not dead.

The people who had previously managed or mismanaged the city have an interest at stake, frequently a financial interest, in seeing the manager fail. This financial interest consists in the possible pickings from petty graft, control of contracts, dispensing of jobs, tribute from vice and from all the unfavorable and undesirable conditions which have formerly flourished. If the manager does a really good job, conducts the business of the city effectively, gives the city a dollar's worth of return for a dollar spent, and looks after the real interest of the city, he will be difficult to attack fairly but he can be attacked.

After a few years under the manager form of government, usually from three to six, I have come to expect that a process of sniping at the manager will begin. Some of you managers have already undergone it. All of you will sooner or later have to endure it. Some of the fellows whom you have pushed out of control and whom the people have all but forgotten will begin raising objections to the things that you do.

They will begin the circulation of stories as to things that are supposed to have happened. They will begin making subterranean, lying, attacks and, unfortunately, lies travel fast and are hard to overtake. You can ultimately overtake a lie if you have time enough, but if those who start the lies keep on telling new ones fast enough it is pretty hard to kill them off as rapidly as they appear.

This is a situation for which the manager is in no sense responsible. It marks no defect in him. It comes about largely because the manager is doing a good job for the welfare of the city. Nevertheless, it is one of the real pitfalls of the manager profession and one of the difficulties which the honest, straight-forward, citizens of our cities ought to be prepared to combat because, sooner or later, combatted it must be. Watch for it. Give some consideration as to how it may be met. If we know the evil is to come we can at least be prepared for it.

One other pitfall, if it can be denominated as such, and then I am through with pitfalls and will close with brief reference to another problem.

LACK OF TRAINING

For my part I think one of the dangers to the manager profession is in the lack of initial training of the men who assume the position of manager. I mean the lack of training of those who enter the field for the first time, and I must confess that I am a little disquieted to find in some managers evidences of that Jacksonian spirit which seems to assume that, having been appointed manager, they must by reason of the appointment be able to measure up to the position.

Now managing a modern city is the most complex and difficult job that can be assigned to any person. It is more difficult than to be the head of any private enterprise of similar magnitude. On several occasions I have said in the city of Cleveland that if the head of one of our prominent banks should die, or if the head of one of our great industries should resign, there would flash into the mind of every citizen whose attention was called to the fact the question, "Where will the person be found of sufficient ability to fill that job?"

We at once recognize that there is required for such a position an unusual degree of ability and either special training or long experience. The fact is that the difficulty of being the head of a bank or other private enterprise is comparatively insignificant as compared with the difficulty and intricacy involved in the job of managing a city. In other words, to be equipped for the management of a city really calls for a higher degree of ability and a wider degree of experience and training than to be the head of any other type of institution whether public or private.

It is my opinion that the time has come, with the manager movement having assumed the proportions which it has, when we can no longer look with equanimity upon merely picking out of private life the best person that we can find who is willing to take the job and putting him in the office of city manager. Why, if the largest bank in this city lost its executive head the directors would not just look around and pick up for the place some well intentioned person of reasonable ability who had been successful in his business.

In most instances, they would turn to some person with training and experience in the business of banking. The same would be true of other private institutions. How long can we continue to advance the movement for city management unless we are prepared to offer to people who expect to enter this work such preliminary training as the best brains and best facilities can provide?

That we have so far succeeded as well as we have is, in my opinion, more a testimony to the low quality which had previously marked the government of American cities than to any inherent or acquired executive ability which city managers possess, although the average manager possesses far more executive ability than the average mayor.

THE APPRENTICE SYSTEM

I believe that we have reached the time in this great movement when the managers themselves must seriously consider how preliminary training can be given to those who are being recruited for the field of city management, those who are to take the new positions as the movement spreads.

Perhaps that could be done in part by the apprentice system. I wish that the managers would carefully consider

whether those of you who have been in the field a considerable length of time, who know the work, its difficulties and pitfalls, should not assume the responsibility of taking into your offices and departments a certain number of promising young men and women and letting them there get the experience under your direction which would ultimately make them available as city managers. I know that would cause some trouble.

I know that you all dislike having amateurs fooling around at a job in which you have become expert. We all do. But I want you to remember that you are the pioneers. Adequate training is as yet offered nowhere in the schools and universities of the United States. Fairly good work is being done, but adequate training is not being offered. If the managership is a profession, and you all believe and insist that it is, then it has reached the point at which professional training for that work is needed and must be provided.

I am inclined to think that just now we are at that stage in this new profession that the medical and legal professions had reached 50 or 75 years ago. Then if a young man wanted to be a physician he began to read medicine in the office of a practicing physician. If he wished to become a lawyer he read law in the office of a lawyer.

By watching his guardian angel, by reading and being permitted to assist his mentor, he gained enough knowledge of law or medicine to be granted a certificate to practice. How can you do your full duty to this wonderful new profession unless you are willing to protect its future by admitting to your offices, just as the old lawyer and old doctor admitted to their offices, apprentices who can learn, under your tutelage and by observation, a few of the rudiments of the work.

But even that will not suffice for very long. The time has come, indeed it is now here, when we must consider training on an even more adequate scale. Such training should not only consist of lectures and reading and observation, but of training which will permit men who wish to enter the profession to get practice under supervision in municipal offices.

I have discussed in a rather random and unsystematic way some of the things which I have observed in the manager movement and which seem to me to need attention at this time. I have chosen to speak of these things as pitfalls and some of them certainly are that. Now permit me, in closing, to say a few words in regard to the movement in general and the trend of city government in the United States.

DEVELOPMENT OF MORALE

I listened with the utmost interest to the admirable address given by Dr. White today. I think that in what he said to you in regard to some of your failings he was entirely right. For instance, I do not think that the managers have so far, perhaps because of lack of time as Dr. White suggested, made very much contribution or paid very much attention to the technique of management or to the creation of morale.

As to the latter may I say that any manager who thinks that he can get the proper morale among his subordinates through his power to hire and fire, which is the thing that in a spectacular way seems to appeal most to the public, the manager who thinks he can secure a high morale through fear will ultimately fail.

You can get a degree of obedience and a certain degree of attention to duty because your subordinates know that unless they toe the mark you will give them their walking papers. But no manager of a city or manager of a private enterprise ever rose to a very high morale among his subordinates or won their devotion to himself or to his work, by the use of fear alone.

I agree with Dr. White that the time has come when you should give some consideration to the question of how you can best bring into right relationship to yourself and inter-relationship with each other all the subordinates who work with you and under you. I am not sure but that is one of the largest problems confronting you.

On the other hand, I am not at all afraid of any recrudescence of the strong mayor type of government. Dr. White knows that I am in mild disagreement with him on that point. I do not find in the United States any movement counter to the manager plan in the direction of a return of an elective mayor with great power.

I am inclined to agree that the contest between types of municipal government in the future will be between the manager plan and the strong mayor type, but I do not find that the strong mayor type is gaining ground. Indeed, I am inclined to think that type of government is rapidly losing ground in the best of the mayor-governed cities, and there are not many of them that can even be called good.

After all, there is a lot of myth in this idea of an elective mayor and his alleged political leadership. A good deal has been said from time to time in our meetings in regard to finding or developing political leadership in manager governed cities. Strictly speaking, there is not much political leadership needed in any modern city. The government of a modern municipality is about 99 percent administration, that is 99 percent of it consists in doing things everybody agrees ought to be done, and it is only occasionally that the question of doing some new thing arises which may divide the electorate and lead to controversy.

I used to do a good deal of talking in regard to the necessity of political leadership in the manager cities. But as I survey the manager governed cities in comparison with the mayor governed cities, I do not see that the manager governed cities suffer at all by comparison. About all that is now claimed for the mayor as against the manager is that the mayor furnishes an indispensable element of political leadership.

But suppose you cast your eye over the history of American municipal institutions and ask yourself how many of the men who have held the position of mayor have proved to be great or even reasonably effective political leaders. I

venture to say that you can count them on the fingers of one hand even if you go back 50 years. The truth is that what the mayors have usually contributed has not been political leadership but just plain politics.

Such political leadership as mayors have contributed has usually been of low quality. So I am no longer much concerned with this question of political leadership in our council-manager cities. The leadership that a modern municipality most needs is that which arises from a continuous study of the problems of the city, long distance planning as to the work of the city, and a progressive and persistent presentation of recommendations by someone whose immediate concern is not the winning of a political campaign.

Leadership of that type cannot be furnished by an elective chief executive such as a mayor but can be, and is being, furnished by city managers. I am inclined to think that under managerial government our American cities are going to make progress so steadily that we shall not have those great surges forward and backward that were so characteristic of the old political system.

SCIENTIFIC METHOD IN CITY GOVERNMENT

What city manager government is doing is to give the city steady progress by taking up its problems as they arise and solving them one by one. Most of the things we fought over under the old political system were not worth fighting over anyway. We fought under the old political system because, if the mayor was for a project and we were for the mayor, we were favorable toward the proposition; but if we had not voted for the mayor we considered it our duty to be opposed to what he wanted. That was illogical, childish, emotional and unsound.

You managers are the exemplars of a radically different idea in municipal affairs, the idea that intelligence and scientific method has a place in city government and that it is not necessary to disrupt the entire administrative service and reconstruct it on a basis of partisanship just because the voters may be divided upon a question of public policy. For this reason you have laid upon you as heavy a responsibility as was ever laid upon any similar body of men.

From time to time I find myself wondering whether as managers of American cities you really understand that you are being called upon to play the leading part in what is perhaps the greatest constructive movement in democracy which the world has seen in more than a hundred years. It is a constructive movement because it is a movement which tends to fit government to the facts of modern life. It is a movement which had to come if democracy was not to fail.

Do you realize that among American city executives you are the only ones approaching your work from a professional standpoint, the only ones interested in placing your work upon a scientific basis? Since you are the only group of public officials of whom that can be said, upon you is laid the burden and responsibility of the pioneer, the responsibility of blazing the way in the application of these new but sound principles, not only in cities but ultimately in state and province and nation. I ask you, therefore, never to underestimate the importance of your work upon the future of self government, never to forget the heavy but inspiring responsibility which is yours.

As for myself I look upon the small part that I have been able to play in the city manager movement with more satisfaction than anything that I have ever done. I think that I may have 25 years more of good work in me. When I come to the end of my next 25 years I do not expect that even then I shall be able to look back upon anything that I may have done that I shall think as important as what I may have been able to do in furthering the city manager movement in this and other countries.

That is how seriously I feel about this work. Are you surprised that I sometimes find myself wondering whether the manager himself regards his work as seriously as that, or whether he merely thinks of himself as called upon to do a specific job which he proceeds to do as well as he can.

If I could get every manager here to feel the responsibility which rests upon him of furthering this great movement, not merely because of its importance to his own city or all cities, but also because of what it means to the future of our institutions and the success of self government the world over, I would feel that it had not only have been worth the time and effort of coming out here very pleasantly by train but that it would have been worth walking all the way to Colorado Springs in order to say to you what I have said tonight.

I would not have you feel too much elated or become egotistical or self-satisfied by reason of what I now say to you. You are the pioneers in a fundamentally great movement. From the standpoint of the development of efficient democracy I believe that you are today the most important body of men in this hemisphere. In view of the responsibility which this entails, may you keep yourself free from self-satisfaction and face with humility the great task before you.

¹James Svava, "The Politics-Administration Dichotomy as Aberration," *Public Administration Review* 58, no. 1 (1998):1-8.

Editor's Note: A. R. Hatton, Ph.D., was councilman, Cleveland, Ohio, when he wrote this article.

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(Year 1942) The City Manager's Relations with the City Council

Principles underlying a sound working relationship between council and manager and some suggested procedures for establishing such a relationship.

2006 Comment: This article makes a clear distinction between the legal and political relationship between council and manager and suggests that much has changed since Hatton's time. Hatton's faith in the "science of management" captures an orthodox view of city management that did not fully develop until the 1930s. The faith in objective principles of management was so strong that city management became divorced from politics—that arena of subjectivity, negotiation, compromise, and the general thrust toward what is acceptable.

Most legislation that creates the council-manager form of government makes a legal distinction between political and administrative functions and clarifies the division of rights and responsibilities between council and manager as if the worlds of politics and administration can be separated. As we have come to know, however, there is no such dichotomy in practice.

In this article, the importance of legal and political relationships is stressed in part in deference to the value of scientific management. That discussion is followed by practical advice for managers about how to work with the city council in a number of situations. Although the discussion of patronage may make this appear dated, most of this article is timeless.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

The city manager, as the chief administrator, represents the administrative organization in its relations with the city council. The fact that the manager is appointed by the council and holds office at its pleasure makes the relationship between the council and the manager more direct, flexible, and simple than the relationship between the council and an elected administrator. Because of this direct responsibility of the manager, the council can afford to delegate considerable discretion to the manager, to call upon him for advice and information, and to depend upon him to make specific day-to-day decisions that are necessary to put the council's program into effect.

DIVISION OF WORK

The administrative relationship between the city manager and the council is a problem quite distinct from their legal and political relationships. It is misleading to think in terms of one of these relationships while discussing another. The legal relationship of the council and the city manager may be prescribed by state statute, city charter, and ordinance. Legal provisions, in more or less specific terms, usually grant certain rights and powers or distribute certain duties among the council, the manager, and various administrative officials.

But such provisions merely give officials the right to do their jobs and do little or nothing to indicate administrative relationships in getting things done. It may be necessary for the manager to consult with the council while making decisions that are within his legal powers. And it is usually necessary for the council to depend to a great extent on the advice of the manager in exercising its legal powers.

The political relationship between the council and the manager involves the allocation of power and responsibility. The council, being elected by the people and having the power to appoint and dismiss the city manager, has exclusive power and responsibility. (As a matter of practice, the council can either follow or disregard the principles of the council-manager plan, regardless of the affirmation of those principles by charter provisions; thus the political and legal relationships between council and manager are quite distinct.)

The council-manager plan is a plan of unification, not of separation, of powers. By putting a city manager in office and keeping him there, the council assumes full political responsibility for the conduct of the municipal government, both for the policies that are followed and the way in which they are administered. The council may rely to a great extent on the advice of the city manager in determining its policies, and it may give him a free hand in administering those

policies; if it does so, it does not surrender its political power or evade its political responsibility. To point out this fact, however, tells little or nothing about the administrative relationship between the council and the city manager.

The council and the city manager will always have to take law and politics into consideration as limitations within which they must proceed; but they should work out their administrative relationship according to tested principles of organization, with the primary and positive purpose of making the city government a more democratic and effective instrument for furthering the welfare and happiness of the community. To do so, they will have to avoid legal and political pitfalls while following the general procedure that will best enable the council to determine policies intelligently and the city manager to put those policies into effect.

The subject matter of municipal government cannot be divided into two categories, policy and administration, in order to define them as exclusive provinces of the council and manager, respectively. The council and the manager must work together on the same problems. For example, the city manager prepares the annual budget and makes recommendations to the council. However, the council may propose changes and additions to the budget and may modify, reject, or adopt any plan or system it wishes.

All through the process it is the manager's duty to recommend, but the council is responsible to the people for whatever action is taken. The council by collective action may give the city manager orders setting forth general objectives it wishes to attain, but it is not the function of the members of the council to attempt to administer personally the policies that it determines, nor to influence administrative officials charged with the execution of those policies. The manager on the other hand should not attempt to guide or control the selection of councilmembers by the voters or to bring to bear political influence in any form on the decisions of the council.

A city manager may find himself in disagreement with members of his council over their administrative relationships. For example, if the city manager is under political attack by a minority of the council he should be careful to maintain an attitude of personal neutrality toward those who are attacking him. In such cases, if the city has a mayor who is a strong legislative leader, the manager may deal with the mayor on legislative matters and depend upon him to further the policies of the administration with the council.

The manager also is in a difficult position when groups outside the council attack him or his relationship with the council. For example, the manager may be attacked for what seems to outsiders to be an unwarranted assumption of the legislative function. This indicates the lack of public understanding of the principles of the council-manager plan, and it is the function of the council to explain to the public the reasons for the manager's actions and the fact that the actions were taken at the wish and with the support of the council.

AGREEMENT WITH COUNCIL

To come to an understanding of the fundamental principles of their administrative relationship is the first step that should be taken by the council and the city manager. The city manager who has a frank discussion with his council on the principles that its members intend to follow has a much better chance to work in harmony with that council thereafter.

After the appointment of the city manager, it is a desirable practice for him to have an informal meeting with the councilmembers to come to a somewhat more complete and detailed understanding on the procedures and relationships that are to be followed. Both before and after his appointment, the city manager should make it clear that he wishes to have control over the administration only to put into effect more efficiently the desires of the council itself, and that he disapproves both of detailed administrative decisions by the council as a whole, and of interference by individual councilmen only because they detract from the ability of the council to get its broad policies put into effect.

The councilman who asks the city manager for a special favor for a personal friend is infringing less on the authority of the city manager than on the authority of the council; the council that occupies itself with petty details is interfering less with the city manager than with its own general purposes. On this basis, the manager may ask for a grant of broad discretion and authority in the administration of policies laid down by council action. The council should assume full responsibility for every action the manager takes in putting its policies into effect; otherwise the public is given the impression that political power and responsibility have been taken from the council by the manager.

There are instances in which a manager may find himself in disagreement with members of his council. For example: (1) The council or some of its members for personal or political reasons may want the city manager to appoint a certain person to office or to buy materials from a certain merchant. The city manager should discuss such instances with the whole council and attempt to get the order withdrawn because it clearly has nothing to do with the objectives of policy. The city manager is justified in refusing to obey the order and staking his job on the question of principle.

And (2), the council may make a decision on question of policy in such detail that the administration of the policy is made less effective. For example, it may enact an appropriation ordinance in such detail that the manager cannot make desirable transfers. In such cases the manager should point out the general principles involved and the practical and technical considerations that make self-restraint in legislation desirable.

INFORMING AND ADVISING THE COUNCIL

To interpret the technical aspects of local government to the council is one of the principal tasks of the manager. It is his duty to initiate recommendations for legislative action. He cannot avoid the responsibility of giving advice and

recommendations on every important issue, even on controversial matters.

Municipal policy is often determined by administrative experience, and the city manager, in the process of rendering advice to the council, should give the council the benefit of that experience. Some managers attempt to avoid any positive recommendations of policy, but this tendency runs contrary to the apparent trend in modern governments on all levels. Positive recommendations without any undue pressure on the part of the manager are essential to the formulation of sound municipal policies.

The manager cannot yield to popular prejudice and refuse to advise the council and the community on controversial questions of municipal policy merely because they are controversial. At the same time the manager should be careful not to come into public conflict with the council on controversial issues. He should not publicly criticize the actions that the council has taken, and he should not make talks on undecided controversial issues, as such talks are likely to embarrass the councilmembers.

The manager's proposals are of course subject to review, and he must not take opposition to his suggestions as a personal affront or ask for support for his ideas as a personal favor. He must meet hostility and suspicion with a willingness to provide information and unbiased advice. The manager should make it clear both to the council and to the public that the ultimate decision, however arrived at, is the council's policy rather than his own.

The city manager should make clear that he is responsible to the council and should not compete with its members for public attention. The manager should take care that due credit is given to the council when a report is released to the newspapers on matters of public policy. In order to educate the public to the understanding that the council determines municipal policy, it may be desirable to have initial news stories on municipal accomplishments reported to the public through the council rather than directly by the manager.

The manager need not hesitate to discuss matters on which the council has made a decision with which he agrees. If, for example, the council has voted a bond issue which requires approval in a public referendum, the manager may publicly advocate the passing of the issue.

The city manager also is free to act as a community leader in a great majority of municipal policies which do not involve political controversy. For example, a city manager may induce the city council to adopt a new municipal service, but in this as in other cases he should make it clear that the council is responsible for the action taken.

CONDUCT OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

The city manager discusses municipal problems with the council in private and public meetings and prepares periodic and special reports for the council.

The Agenda. The city manager should prepare, or at least review, the agenda for council meetings. If the city clerk prepares the list of petitions, requests, and communications which are to come before the council, the manager may prepare a list of the items which he wishes to bring up. In any event, the manager should be familiar with every item of business or report that the council is to consider.

Since the manager is the administrative officer for the council as a whole, he generally should not discuss with individual councilmen matters on the agenda or which may come before the council at some early date. It is unwise, city managers almost unanimously agree, to take up with individual councilmen any matter of a controversial nature before discussing it with the entire body. In cities where the mayor occupies a position of leadership in legislation, the manager may feel free to discuss with him matters which he would not discuss with other individual councilmembers.

Informal Council Meetings. In order that councilmen may have an opportunity to ask informally for information and to discuss municipal affairs without the restrictions of procedural regulations, many city councils hold informal preliminary meetings before their formal public meetings. Since no official record is kept of such meetings, councilmen are more likely to come to a complete understanding and decision in a short time. These meetings are primarily for discussion and the exchange of ideas, and councilmen should have an understanding that any decisions reached in them are only tentative and subject to change in the public meeting. Some councils invite the public and the press to these preliminary meetings.

Regular Council Meetings. The city manager always attends council meetings; department heads generally are present only at the request of the manager. When submitting any matters to the council, the manager should address his remarks to the whole council and not appear to be making a defense against remarks of one or more councilmen. When the manager submits to the council a matter requiring study on their part, he may find it desirable to send each member a memorandum on the subject sufficiently in advance of the meeting to permit careful consideration.

The city manager should anticipate the questions that councilmen will ask and discuss such matters in advance with his subordinates who are informed of the considerations and point of view which shape the manager's policy on important issues. When a councilman raises questions on which a manager does not have adequate information, he may request the council to permit him to bring in a complete answer after further investigation and study.

Periodic and Special Reports. To keep the council informed on municipal affairs, the city manager should make periodic written reports, as well as oral reports at council meetings, and submit special reports on matters referred to him by the council.

Most of the manager's periodic reports to the council are submitted monthly, the most common report being a financial statement showing expenditures and unexpended balances of all budget accounts, sometimes supplemented

with statistical information on the activities of the city departments, principal accomplishments of the month, and progress on special projects. The inclusion of comparable data for previous years and months facilitates interpretation.

Some of this material may lend itself readily to graphic presentation. The report can also direct attention to impending developments and future plans. The manager generally knows when the council needs a detailed report on a problem and he should supply whatever information is desired.

The information for the manager's reports may come from departmental reports received by the manager. He generally condenses the material from such reports, but quite often a detailed report of a department head is submitted with the manager's endorsement. Department heads should report orally to the council only when requested to do so by the manager. Administrative opinions of department heads should be presented in the light of the city manager's point of view on the question at issue and in relation to other divisions of the government.

No general rule can be made as to the uses for which a written report is better than an oral one. The written report is more satisfactory for the presentation of statistics and charts; it serves as a permanent record; and copies may be released to the press if the council desires. The oral report, on the other hand, may often serve better in making an explanation to the council; it permits a more personalized relationship, and it usually requires less effort in preparation.

Effective reporting generally calls for both oral and written presentation. If copies of reports are mailed to councilmen in advance of the council meeting, the manager can call attention to the most significant features or can stimulate inquiry and discussion. Managers should not release copies of written reports to the press or other parties until after the report has been officially presented in open meeting.

In addition to periodic reports on activities and finances, the council frequently needs reports on special subjects. A simple oral statement may be sufficient in the case of minor items but reports dealing with important matters or containing recommendations of the manager should be written and made a matter of record.

Certain matters initiated by the manager also call for written reports. Among them are requests for transfers between appropriations, the tabulation of bids for contracts requiring council approval, ordinances and resolutions drafted by the city manager, and any special subjects upon which the manager wishes to present recommendations.

Most of the special reports need contain only a few concise statements of the essential facts and possible course of action (perhaps with statements pro and con), and the city manager's recommendations, leaving other details to be supplied orally during discussion at the council meeting.

COMMITTEES IN COUNCIL

Council committees are nonexistent in most council-manager cities, the council depending on the manager for technical advice. Both standing and functional committees generally are undesirable and unnecessary except in very large city councils which may be too unwieldy to transact business effectively without them. Even temporary special committees should be avoided whenever possible; but if appointed, they should be dissolved when their immediate tasks are finished.

Council committees have the disadvantage of encouraging subordinates of the city manager to deal directly with members of the council, thereby short-circuiting the manager's authority. Matters which require detailed functional consideration can be referred to the city manager, who in turn may refer them to department heads for study and report. If the council consists of nine members or less, there need be no committees at all except the committee of the whole.

Whenever a council committee is created, the manager may be added or should at least meet with most committees. A few councilmembers may thus become familiar with the problem being considered even though they usually arrive at the same conclusion as recommended by the manager. Occasionally a council committee may lend force to the city's dealings, as in the case of a franchise committee dealing with a utility company.

Also, if the council is large, certain advantages may accrue from having the manager sit down with two or three councilmen and go over propositions more carefully than he could do with the council as a whole. Thus committees which have to do with general policy or legislative procedure are often a great help to the council, but other committees are a definite hindrance to administration.

ADMINISTERING COUNCIL'S POLICIES

A municipal council may work most effectively if it concentrates its attention on major aspects of municipal policy. It can get its policies administered most effectively if it entrusts that administration to the city manager, without interfering with his work. These two ideas are fundamental assumptions under the council-manager plan.

LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Many city councils legislate on a great many details that are not questions of public policy-but are rather decisions that should be made as a part of the routine of administration. Even though action may have been authorized by the approval of the budget as in the case of street or sewer improvements, the council may have to act later more than a half dozen times on a single improvement. To enact such detailed legislation makes it impossible for the council to devote adequate attention to public policies and handicaps the work of the city manager. Several remedies that may be applied are:

1. The manager may secure the help of the city attorney in avoiding any legislative action that is not absolutely necessary. The city attorney's attitude may determine whether numerous repetitive actions by the council must precede administrative action, or whether the council need only to lay down the lines of general policy and entrust its administration to the manager. The manager should point out to the attorney the differences between public and private law and help him to understand the administrative point of view.
2. The council may delegate to the city manager power to issue rules and regulations. It is impossible for the council to pass ordinances covering minute situations in which citizens come into contact with the administration. The manager should ascertain through the city attorney just what power the council can delegate to him along this line. Only in those cities where delegation of rule-making powers is illegal will the council have to enact the rules drawn up by the manager. But even when such delegation is permitted in principle, standards sufficiently definite to guide and control administrative decisions should be established by the council.¹
3. The council and city manager may distinguish between legislation involving policy determination and legislation that is formally necessary for the administration of that policy. When the council has once made up its mind on a policy, it is useless and unwise for it to take that matter up for deliberation every time a technicality requires legislative action. Some councils have been able to cut a great deal of legislative red tape by enacting as expeditiously as possible the routine legislation required to carry out a policy already determined.
4. The council may seek legislative or charter amendments to remove the necessity for detailed legislation. When other remedies are inadequate the city manager may suggest to the council the necessity for taking this step.

DEALINGS WITH SUBORDINATES

The council that wants to hold its manager responsible for the administration of its policies must give him adequate authority to take administrative action. Some recommendations are:

1. The right of the city manager to appoint department heads and other subordinates is one of the essentials of administrative authority. Every city manager should make sure that the council understands this principle before accepting appointment as manager.
2. The city manager should request the council to secure from him, rather than from subordinates, information about all but strictly routine aspects of administration. Neither the council nor any member of the council should give orders to any subordinate of the manager, either publicly or privately.

Employees should either refer inquiring councilmen to the manager or report promptly to the manager whenever it has been necessary to give information to a councilman. This of course does not apply to routine facts and figures which may be furnished councilmen as well as private citizens, without formality or need of reporting to the manager.

3. Citizen petitions to the council should be referred to the manager by formal action if they deal with administrative matters under his control, and the manager should report back to the council on their disposition. Likewise the council should refer to the manager those citizens who desire to make a complaint on any matter properly subject to administrative decision.

The council may establish a rule that complainants must arrange with the manager or city clerk in advance to have their complaints on the agenda. This will give the manager an opportunity to talk to the complainant and perhaps remedy the situation before it reaches the council meeting.

The council should hesitate to give a detailed hearing to a person who has not made a reasonable effort to exhaust the administrative remedies.

4. The city manager should have a regular procedure for handling complaints. Each complaint received through a councilman should be dealt with as efficiently as any other, but the employee dealing with the complainant should never give the impression that the complainant is getting anything more than the consideration he would have obtained if he himself had notified the complaint clerk. Whenever a councilman refers the complainant instead of the complaint to the manager, it is good practice for the manager to notify the councilman by telephone or memo of the action taken.
5. The manager should set up a simple but formal system for insuring that matters referred to him by the council are promptly handled by department heads. An excellent practice is for the city clerk to refer to the manager separate matters which require action or further report by the manager.

In one city, three galley proofs of council minutes received from the printer one day after the council meeting are cut up and pasted on printed forms. The clerk keeps one copy and two copies go to the manager. The bottom of the form is used by the manager for any suggestions he has to pass on to department heads as to the manner and time the work is to be done. The original copy is then sent to the department head, the assistant or secretary to the manager keeping one form for follow-up. Any communication the manager submits to the council is reviewed first by all department heads affected.

CONCLUSION

The city manager and council should have a mutual understanding of the basic principles involved in a working relationship. The primary responsibility for bringing about a proper relationship rests with the council. The city manager, however, may contribute to establishing such a relationship if he keeps in mind his responsibility to the

council as a collective body for the whole administration, if he avoids participation in factional disputes, and if he lessens the effect of partisan politics on government by intelligent leadership. This relationship is the keystone of effective council-manager government.

¹"Administrative Codes, Rules, and Regulations," *Public Management*, January, 1942, pp. 13-18; see also Ambrose Fuller, "Limits on Administrative Discretion," *Public Management*, August, 1939, pp. 234-35.

Editor's note: This was the sixth of a series of articles based on a survey made by the International City Managers' Association. Helpful comments and suggestions for this article were supplied by C. A. Harrell, J. Bryan Miller, Don K. Price, and H. L. Woolhiser.

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(Year 1946) II. Relation of City Manager to Council

This is the second of a series of articles in which a number of city managers indicate the what, how, and why on specific questions.

2006 Comment: This very short article was published in 1946, just following the end of World War II. At that time, cities were expanding into what would eventually be called suburbs, and metropolitan areas were developing. With this growth came a multitude of council-manager-plan adoptions.

In this article, several well-known managers of the time respond to questions. What takes place is a classic discussion of the council-manager form of government that reflects sensitivity to the proper relationship between council and staff during the policy process. We see here a discussion of the orthodox view of the politics-administration dichotomy within the city management profession.

Although Dr. Hatton's uplifting words (from the first article) are absent, the spirit of scientific management is present. Look for the discussion of the development and presentation of information. The discussants back in 1946 saw this not only as a key role of the manager but also in some ways as the quintessential act of leadership—as if knowledge and thoughtful presentations alone could promote rational policy choices.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

What has been your experience with standing or special committees of the city council? To what extent do they hinder or help the handling of public business? Are they a help or a hindrance to your control over administration?

John H. Ames (18 years' city manager experience), Ames, Iowa, population 12,555: We have six standing committees of the council, a carry-over from the practice in effect before the council-manager plan was adopted 25 years ago. Relatively few matters are handled by council committees. When matters are referred to a committee for action, the manager is usually added to the committee or meets with them.

I would say that in actual practice in this city such committees have been helpful in the handling of municipal affairs as it is often possible to secure final action on matters which might otherwise need to be carried over to a later council meeting. At no time has there been any attempt on the part of such committees to interfere with the administrative duties of the manager.

George E. Bean (nine years' city manager experience), Pontiac, Michigan, population 65,945: Standing or special committees may be desirable when there are seven or more councilmen, or perhaps in a large city. In general, however, I think a more satisfactory solution of the problem of keeping the council properly informed is the informal meeting of the council as committee of the whole. It takes no more time on the part of the administrative staff to gather data and make reports to the council as a whole than it does to a committee of the council and in my experience the material when thus submitted by the staff is readily accepted and understood and much time is saved.

Council committees tend to project the councilmen further into the details of administrative operation than is the case when information is submitted by the city manager and department heads at an informal meeting of the council. If a city has a good charter and the council has confidence in the manager, there should be very little need for special committees of the council.

L. P. Cookingham (19 years' city manager experience), Kansas City, Missouri, population 399,178: In the first three cities which I managed, there were no standing committees. The first two of these cities were less than 5,000 population and the third was a city of approximately 90,000. In my opinion, standing committees were not necessary in those cities because of charter provisions and because the volume of work made it possible for the manager to work closely with the legislative body as a whole rather than through committees.

In Kansas City, the city council has six standing committees. Occasionally, special committees are appointed to handle

specific matters not readily referable to any of the standing committees. The manager is not a member of any standing committees but oftentimes, the mayor designates him as a member of a special committee.

The standing committees of the council conduct public hearings on all ordinances presented to the council.

At the first reading of an ordinance, the mayor refers the same to an appropriate committee, and if a public hearing is necessary the committee conducts the hearing and reports its findings to the council. I believe the need exists in a city of this size for standing committees in order to maintain liaison between the public and the legislative body. The department heads and other city officials attend the council committee hearings and furnish advice and counsel to committees in behalf of the city government.

The department heads and staff employees who attend the hearings are designated by the city manager's office on a form prepared for that purpose. As soon as an ordinance is introduced the department is notified of the date of the hearing and requested to have a staff member present who can furnish any information desired by the committee.

C. A. Harrell (16 years' city manager experience), Schenectady, New York, population 87,549: My experience has been that standing committees of council are helpful in dealing with controversial or technical questions. It is much easier to sit down at lunch or in the office with two or three men and thoroughly thrash out a proposition which the committee can then support in the council as a whole, than it is to attempt to sell the entire council on some new controversial matter without support within the body itself.

I also find it advisable at times to discuss major administrative policies with a standing committee if the adoption of such policies may have an unfavorable public reaction. Most matters, however, are considered by the council acting as a committee of the whole. Committees hesitate to take the responsibility of coming to a decision and making a formal report to the council. Invariably they choose to delay making recommendations until the matter has been discussed again with the entire council and this means a repetition of all the detail.

Russell E. McClure (four years' city manager experience), Wichita, Kansas, population 114,966: Standing or special committees of the council have never been used in Wichita. We have only a five-member council, and it has been our opinion that there would be no advantage in the use of council committees.

Henry A. Yancey (20 years' city manager experience), Greensboro, North Carolina, population 59,319: I have had standing committees in only one of the four cities I have served and this was because of the large council of 13 members. Here in Greensboro, there are no standing committees but occasionally a special committee is appointed to look into a particular problem. By working through the mayor, I have been able to reduce the number of special committees. The difficulty with such committees is that they frequently either are reluctant to submit a final report or hang on to the point when they are a hindrance to action.

INFORMING COUNCILMEMBERS

Do department heads give information on administrative matters to councilmen or council committees, or must such information go through the manager?

John H. Ames: In general, information on administrative matters is given to the councilmembers by the manager. Department heads are not, however, prohibited from furnishing information to individual councilmembers. The information sought by councilmembers from department heads usually relates to some routine matter and this method of securing the information is followed to relieve the manager of some detail.

There should be an understanding between the councilmembers and the manager that only routine information is to be secured directly from the department heads. In case such an understanding is being abused, the manager would then in my opinion be justified in instructing department heads to refer all requests for information on administrative matters to him.

George E. Bean: In Pontiac, all information on administrative matters is channeled to the councilmen through the officers who are appointed by the council. This includes the city attorney, city assessor, finance director, city clerk, and city manager. When I was in Escanaba, Michigan, a city of 14,830 population, all matters were channeled through the city manager except when a department head may have been called on by the manager to give special information. I believe councilmen should feel free to get information from department heads, but the manager should try by good reporting to make it unnecessary for them to do so very frequently.

L. P. Cookingham: Department heads give information directly to councilmen and council committees and oftentimes the manager refers a councilman directly to a department head where all information desired can be more readily obtained than through the manager's office. The department heads are instructed to furnish to the manager's office copies of all correspondence on matters of information which are sent to the councilmen, as well as to any others on problems in which the manager's office is interested.

The volume of work and mass of detail in an organization the size of this city make it impossible for all matters to clear through the manager's office, and therefore, so long as good relationships prevail, there are no restrictions on dissemination of information by department heads.

C. A. Harrell: All formal communications to councilmen and all matters of major concern clear through the office of the city manager. The city manager, however, has no objection to a councilman and a department head conferring with regard to major items. This, however, I think, is largely dependent upon the degree of confidence and loyalty which exists between the department head and the city manager.

Russell E. McClure: Department heads clear information for the councilmen through the manager. Occasionally, on routine matters, such as a specific question concerning the handling of a complaint, a department head who is called by a councilman answers the question. As a general principle the manager provides all the information for the councilmen.

Henry A. Yancey: Department heads do not give information to councilmen on administrative matters. Council committees do not meet without the manager, and department heads generally appear only at the manager's request.

AGENDA FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS

Do you prepare the agenda for the council meetings? If prepared by the city clerk, do you look it over before the council meeting?

John H. Ames: The practice in this city is for the city clerk to present to the council such routine matters as petitions, applications for licenses and permits, etc., which have been filed in his office requiring council consideration. The manager then discusses with the council such matters as he may have on his agenda after which general policy matters requiring council action are considered.

George E. Bean: At the present time no formal agenda is prepared for the council, but the city clerk and I expect to collaborate in preparing one. Resolutions are now prepared for the council meeting on all action which can be foreseen. This procedure reduces to a minimum the time spent in discussion and makes clear to the council and to the public the policy recommended. The major portion of the material presented at council meetings is submitted by the manager and the city clerk. The manager submits new material affecting policy and the clerk submits petitions and other routine material.

L. P. Cookingham: A council docket prepared by the city clerk includes all matters coming before the city council. The docket is usually completed by 3 p.m. of the day of the meeting, and copies are furnished to the council at the pre-council meeting which is held in the manager's office. No matter can be placed on the docket after 12 o'clock noon except by special action of the city council suspending one of the rules.

An agenda is also made up for the pre-council meeting. This agenda is prepared by the city manager and lists all the subjects which the manager desires to discuss with the council. Listed also on the agenda are items which the councilmen or department heads desire to discuss at the informal meeting. Items are placed on the agenda by calling the manager's office or are requested to be placed on the agenda at the previous pre-council meeting.

The agenda indicates the subject to be discussed, the estimated time required to discuss the problem, and the names of the participants in the discussion. The participants and members of the administrative staff are notified by the manager's office of the time their subject is to be discussed in the manager's office at the pre-council meeting.

C. A. HARRELL: THE CITY MANAGER PREPARES THE AGENDA FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING.

Russell E. McClure: The city clerk prepares the agenda from data provided by the manager on all new matters to come before the council. The city clerk also prepares his own section of the agenda which contains the follow-up routine actions which have been previously determined by the council. Every new item clears through the manager before it is placed on the agenda, and the complete agenda is reviewed by the manager before the council meeting. I believe it is necessary for the manager to be thoroughly familiar with every item appearing on the agenda.

Henry A. Yancey: One part of the agenda, consisting of petitions, official papers, and requests from citizens, is prepared by the clerk. The balance of the agenda, consisting of committee reports prepared by the manager, is submitted by the manager. The clerk and manager usually check with each other prior to the regular council meeting.

INFORMAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

To what extent do you discuss with individual councilmen items of business not yet considered by the whole council? Prior to the council meeting do you go over the agenda with the council or with the mayor? What is your practice along this line and how has it worked out?

John H. Ames: Very rarely are matters for the consideration of the council discussed with individual councilmembers before they are presented to the council. In some instances, where an individual member has a special interest in some subject to be considered by the council, the subject is discussed in a general way with such member, but if the subject is controversial in nature I attempt to confine the discussion to a statement of facts and to see that all councilmembers are given the same information before any action is taken.

There must be a basic understanding between the manager and council as to their respective obligations. The manager must be attentive to the wishes of the councilmembers for information pertaining to matters in which they are interested, but at the same time refrain from any actions on his part which might be construed as favoritism or partiality to any individual councilmember. Having served this city under eight different councils, I have yet to experience any serious difficulty in this respect.

George E. Bean: In Escanaba, informal council meetings were held and very little material was given to individual councilmen, although all felt free to drop in and discuss any matter concerning the city. In Pontiac, there is a tradition against informal meetings and the only method of informing councilmen is by letter or in open discussion at the

council meetings.

In my opinion this practice unnecessarily delays action and has a tendency to create uncertainty in the minds of the councilmen. This condition can only be changed by a great confidence of the people of the city in their local government. Among many other factors which affect this problem is proper reporting.

L. P. Cookingham: I try never to discuss an item of business with individual councilmen before it is considered by the whole council unless the item concerns one of the council committees, and then only with members of the committee. This plan gives all members of the council an even chance to think through the problem.

The council meets every Monday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. in informal session. These meetings last until about 6:30 p.m. when the entire council and the city manager have dinner together at a downtown hotel and return to the city hall for the formal meeting at 8:00 p.m. At the pre-council meeting matters which do not require legislative action are discussed with the city council by the manager or by department heads at the invitation of the manager.

The council also discusses the docket for the formal meeting and if there is any controversy concerning provisions of pending ordinances, these matters are thoroughly discussed. The manager always attends the informal meeting and more or less leads the discussion of subjects before the council. The meetings are held in the city hall. Newspaper reporters are always admitted and through these meetings obtain a considerable amount of background for the news stories which break following the adoption of ordinances or the decision on certain matters of policy or programs which are under consideration.

When the council wants to discuss matters which should not be given publicity, the newspaper reporters are requested to refrain from publishing the discussion, and so far as I can recall the confidence of the city council has never been violated. After the formal meeting of the council the city manager usually spends some time with the reporters in discussing more fully the problems considered by the council at the pre-council meeting, as well as legislation which has been before the council at the formal meeting.

C. A. Harrell: Although it is not strictly followed, all matters to be taken up with the council are theoretically supposed to be in the office of the city manager with the proper reports, supporting data, and legislation 24 hours prior to the council meeting. Actually, many of these items in their final form reach my desk only a few hours before council meeting although I have been in touch with them during their preparation, etc.

On Thursday or Friday night preceding the formal council meeting on Monday, the council meets as a committee as a whole and carefully reviews matters to be taken up at the formal meeting. At this meeting councilmen usually determine what their action will be upon any matter, although there have been times when the informal agreement on policy has been changed on the council floor by individual members because of statements made either for or against a certain proposition at a public hearing.

These informal meetings of the council, while not open to the general public, are largely attended by citizens who have matters which they wish to discuss with the council as a whole and by department heads whom the manager wishes to have present in connection with some particular item which may be under consideration. This practice works out very satisfactorily.

Russell E. McClure: I do not discuss with individual councilmen items of business not yet considered by the whole council, unless an individual councilman calls me and asks some question about the item, or has some special information or interest that will help provide me with a better background of information on the subject.

Any items of special interest are reviewed with the entire council in a 30-minute informal meeting in my office just prior to the formal meeting in the council room. In my opinion, this informal meeting ahead of the regular meeting is very important and serves to clarify any questions and expedites the action at the regular meeting.

We also have an informal meeting after the regular meeting, at which we discuss items that may be coming up for future consideration. Any interested department heads are available for this discussion. This gives me an opportunity to review any questions or complaints councilmen have received and provide any information that may be needed. This discussion is also important in our working program and serves its purpose well.

In addition, we have occasional luncheon or dinner meetings of the council with all department and division heads at which we discuss future activities. In all of the informal meetings; I serve as the coordinator and prepare the lists of subjects to be presented by the administrative officials.

Henry A. Yancey: Should any councilmen visit the manager and open discussion on a subject, I usually discuss it with considerable freedom. Under no conditions, however, are individual councilmen invited to the manager's office as it is highly important that the manager deal with the council as a whole whenever possible. Sometimes, however, the manager may be justified in discussing with the mayor or committee chairman certain matters before they are presented to the council as a whole.

When serving with small councils it has been my practice to go over the agenda with the council prior to the council meeting in order to enable individual members to act intelligently on the subject and also to help the manager.

HANDLING CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Are citizens' petitions requiring council action submitted through the mayor, through the clerk, or direct to the council by a citizen group?

John H. Ames: Citizens' petitions are always submitted to the council through the city clerk. In many instances these petitions are received by either the mayor or manager, but they are always placed in the hands of the clerk for presentation in the regular manner.

George E. Bean: All citizens' petitions in my experience have been submitted through the city clerk on forms prepared by city agencies. They are presented to the council by the city clerk at regular meeting. Since councilmen in Pontiac are elected from districts, citizens are quite frequently aided in the preparation of petitions and advised concerning procedures by the councilmen.

The individual councilman frequently gets complaints from citizens concerning city services. This is a natural out-growth of the district system and has been aggravated to some extent in the past by the fact that the city government is so underfinanced that the operating departments are unable to give adequate service in their attempt to overcome complaints. The answer to the difficulty lies in more adequate financing, a more modern charter, and an administrative code.

L. P. Cookingham: Citizens' petitions are submitted in many ways. In some cases, they are filed directly with the city clerk; in others, with a councilman who presents them at the formal council meeting; and in other cases, they are presented directly to the council by a representative or representatives of the petitioners.

The council has a rule which prohibits anyone from discussing a matter at the formal council meeting unless prior arrangements have been made with the council. In case prior arrangements are not made with the council and a person appears and desires to discuss a matter, it is necessary to obtain approval of a majority of the council before the matter can be presented from the floor.

In many cases petitions are filed directly with the city manager, and if legislative action on the matter is necessary the city manager places the petition on the docket for the next council meeting for consideration by the council. If no council action is necessary the manager handles the situation as he deems advisable.

C. A. Harrell: Petitions may be submitted through the mayor, the city manager, the city clerk, or any member of the council. As a matter of fact, the vast majority may come to the desk of any one of these officials although addressed to the city council.

Russell E. McClure: Citizens' petitions for public improvements, such as a street or sewer, are generally received by the director of public works or city clerk. These projects are investigated by the director of public works and manager and a recommendation is prepared for the consideration of the council when it is presented.

Other citizens' petitions are generally submitted to the manager to be included on the agenda. If a petition is received by the mayor, a member of the council, or the city clerk, it is referred to the manager. If the manager has not had an opportunity to study the matter, action is delayed until a report and recommendation is received.

Henry A. Yancey: Citizens' petitions may be submitted to the council by being directly presented by the citizen or group of citizens concerned, or by the manager, or by the mayor, or by the clerk, but in most instances petitions are handed to the clerk by the manager and mayor.

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(Year 1949) Leadership Functions of the City Manager

These comments on specific problems will help guide city managers and councils in determining proper relationships.

2006 Comment: In 1949, a group of managers and others familiar with council-manager government responded to the enduring questions about proper roles and responsibilities of city managers. Their personal views, reprinted here, provide the context for an insightful and candid observation by Donald Price: "I think that the fundamental principles of the council-manager plan permit the city manager to do quite a few things which might get him fired."

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

To what extent and in what ways should the city manager be a leader in his community? Specific suggestions on this perplexing problem were outlined in the presidential address which C. A. Harrell, city manager of Norfolk, Virginia, delivered at the 34th annual conference of the International City Managers' Association at Mackinac Island, Michigan, in September 1948, and which appeared in *Public Management* for October 1948.

His address was based in part on the suggestions of several specialists in the field of public administration to whom he had sent a questionnaire in the summer of 1948. The replies of five city managers and of two well-known authorities on the council-manager plan are reproduced with permission. Replies to seven of the 13 questions appear in this issue, and the remaining replies will appear in a future issue.

1. Should the city manager influence policy by offering a positive program for council's approval, or should he merely present alternative solutions?

John H. Ames (city manager, Ames, Iowa, since 1927, and president of the International City Managers' Association): I prefer to present alternative solutions with supporting data to the council rather than make a definite recommendation concerning a matter of policy. In a few instances where no alternative solution seems possible, I have recommended a definite course of action. If requested by the council, I do submit a definite recommendation as to the solution I consider most desirable.

Louis Brownlow (formerly city manager, Petersburg, Virginia, and Knoxville, Tennessee, and for many years director of the Public Administration Clearing House, Chicago): Certainly, he should submit a policy program. However, he should make his recommendations in such a way as to leave the council free from pressure, and if the council adopts a policy at variance with his recommendations, he should then submit a revised program in accordance with the action taken by the council.

If that action is such that he cannot in good conscience conform to it, he should resign. In any event, his advice to the council should be definite, and he should not put the council on the spot by asking it to choose among alternatives submitted to it by him, without indicating his own preference by positive recommendation.

L. P. Cookingham (city manager, Kansas City, Missouri, since 1940, and formerly city manager of Clawson, Plymouth, and Saginaw, Michigan): The manager should influence policy by offering a positive program for council's approval. In most cases the positive program should be directly related to administration. In cases where the proposed policy affects the conduct of individual citizens, such as regulatory ordinances, perhaps alternate suggestions may be desirable. The individual situation confronting me would be the determining factor in my recommendations, that is, I would decide on either one recommendation or alternate plan on the basis of the problem before me.

Russell E. McClure (city manager, Dayton, Ohio, since 1948, and formerly city manager of Wichita, Kansas): There is no categorical answer. Many times, on a basis of his knowledge and experience, the city manager has strong

convictions that certain policies will best meet the needs of the city, and in these instances a positive program should be recommended to the council. In other instances, such as an activity that involves a new field in which authorities differ, the city manager should present alternative solutions with his views as to the probable results.

Don C. McMillan (city manager, Pasadena, California, and formerly manager of Ventura and Alameda, California): The manager should, in my opinion, offer positive programs for approval, but in all instances where there would be some controversy he should have alternate programs for the council's approval.

Lyman S. Moore (city manager, Portland, Maine; formerly assistant to the city manager of Kansas City; and assistant administrator of the National Housing Agency): He should certainly offer a positive program; that is almost his most important function. As to specific problems, most of the time he should offer a single positive recommendation. Occasionally, there may be alternate solutions between which he has no choice, in which case he might offer both.

Don K. Price (associate director, Public Administration Clearing House, and in 1937 was one of three persons who made a nationwide study of the operation of the council-manager plan): I think he should do both. On the one hand, he should not put the council on the spot by putting up his own recommendation in such a way that the councilmembers have to take it or repudiate him publicly.

On the other hand, they ought to have the benefit of his definite advice. This would take the form of a straightforward recommendation, with a statement of the possible alternatives and the pros and cons of each. He should, I think, maintain a close understanding with his council so as to be aware of their general attitude, since he certainly cannot expect to be a city manager and carry on active opposition to the main policies for which the council stands.

2. In your opinion, should a city manager ever attempt to mold public opinion concerning a particular issue prior to any deliberation on the part of council? If so, when or under what conditions?

Ames: I believe the city manager should not attempt to mold public opinion concerning a particular issue prior to the deliberation on the part of the council. He is an employee of the council and as such will be called on to administer whatever policy the council may determine.

If he has attempted to mold public opinion along a certain line and the council adopts some other policy, he is in a very embarrassing position in securing its satisfactory execution. It is not always possible to avoid discussions with citizens on future matters of policy of the council. The manager should be quite careful in discussing matters of that kind with citizens to warn them that the council has not considered the matter, and, until it has been, he should not be quoted.

Also, they should not assume that the discussion will in any way affect the carrying out of any policy which the council might adopt. I find it difficult to avoid situations of this kind where individuals whom I have known for many years come to me to discuss something which they would like to see the city do but which has not been definitely before the council for consideration. I try to give such individuals any information that I have that would have a bearing on the matter but avoid, insofar as possible, indicating to them what policy I thought the council should follow.

Brownlow: It depends on the character of the issue. If it is one of major importance, he should of course wait until he has the knowledge gained, perhaps informally, of the attitude of the council before he does anything of the sort. On minor day-to-day issues he cannot avoid saying things that will have the effect of influencing public opinion. For instance, he could not give out a statement on public health matters without influencing opinion. In major issues where the council has taken formal action it seems to me his active intervention is indicated.

Cookingham: I do not know of any case when I would attempt to mold public opinion concerning a particular issue without prior discussions with the city council. I am very particular to discuss matters of policy with the city council before I discuss them publicly. It is possible that the manager might drop a hint to a newspaper man or to an individual councilman on an issue which he has in the back of his head before formal discussion by the council, but in these cases he should keep in the background.

McClure: No, he should first obtain the views of the council, and its members should assume responsibility for molding public opinion.

McMillan: No, definitely the city manager should not attempt to mold public opinion without first having the approval of the city council. Matters of policy are definitely under the city council and the city manager in my estimation has no right to supersede his council in this matter.

Moore: Hardly ever.

Price: On major issues I think the city manager should informally find out the general attitude of at least the leading council members before attempting to mold public opinion on an issue. I do not believe he is obliged to wait for a formal action or deliberation. On subordinate issues I should think he could be much more free.

On an issue on which he thinks it probable that the council would disagree with him, I do not believe it is unethical for him to try to persuade the public to adopt his point of view; he should, however, be aware of the risks of such a procedure and be prepared to take the consequences.

For example, a city manager, ethically speaking, should be perfectly free to tell the public that it needs to spend more money on public health services, even though he knows the council does not want to do so; he ought not to feel surprised or hurt, however, if he gets in trouble for such a course of action. I think that the fundamental principles of

the council-manager plan permit the city manager to do quite a few things which might get him fired.

3. Would it be desirable, in your opinion, to attempt to combine in the city manager the community leadership features of the strong-mayor plan along with the technical efficiency of the manager plan?

Ames: In my opinion, it would not. Under the strong-mayor plan the mayor is an elective officer responsible to the electorate directly and this is not true of the manager. I believe it would be very unfortunate for the manager to attempt to assume such community leadership.

Brownlow: The manager has his place as a community leader, as has been demonstrated in many cities, but it perhaps differs from the type of leadership exerted by elected mayors under strong-mayor charters. The essential difference is that the manager is responsible to a group of the elected representatives of the people, while the mayor is responsible directly to the electorate, frequently through a party or factional organization. As the city manager and the strong mayor do not meet in the same city at the same time, this differentiation of the type of leadership need not cause much worry. In any event, the personal qualities of leadership will show through no matter what the framework of the structure.

Cookingham: I do not think it would be advisable to attempt to combine in the city manager the community leadership features of the strong-mayor plan because this defeats the basic principles of the city manager plan and certainly would involve the manager in political discussions. I believe the manager, however, can provide community leadership if his leadership is within the bounds of administrative policy which has been adopted by the council.

For instance, he could assume some leadership in the promotion of a bond program after approval by the council, or on any other matter on which the council asks him to do some promotional work, I believe, however, it would be very bad for an attempt to be made to combine over-all community leadership in the administrative head of the city government.

McClure: Not if this implies that the city manager is to assume responsibility for policy decisions. I feel that the city manager must continually recognize that his position is one of a technical advisor for those who provide the community leadership, and that he can best perform his service by stimulating his mayor and council to advocate, determine, and defend policies that will best meet the needs of the community.

McMillan: No. I definitely feel that the manager's position is to operate the city as efficiently as possible and that the obligations of the elected officials definitely should be to furnish the community leadership.

Moore: I think this has to do with the function of the mayor under the council-manager plan. In the bigger cities I feel certain that the manager must be backed by a "strong" mayor who exerts positive political leadership and that these two functions cannot be combined in a single individual.

Price: I think that the better city managers ever since the plan began have been community leaders in one way or another—some by very unobtrusive tactics, others by public speaking and a more conspicuous role. On important municipal policies I think they have probably been no less effective as community leaders than mayors, even though they have generally not taken public positions in electoral campaigns. I do not think that the public should always expect the city manager to be the principal community leader, but that the proper balance should be worked out in each case by the manager and his council.

4. Do you think that, while refraining from public discussion of pending councilmanic matters, the city manager should point out publicly various desirable ways of improving community life which have not yet come before the council?

Ames: I think it is possible in some instances for the manager to bring to the citizens' attention certain desirable improvements which would affect community life. He must weigh carefully his remarks as indicated by my answer to the second question. It has been my own experience that the council has never resented my offering suggestions before groups for ways in which community life could be improved as long as such suggestions were not the subject of public controversy or matters upon which the council or members thereof had taken a very definite stand.

Brownlow: The manager should be frank in talking with individual citizens and with bodies of citizens, but he certainly should not attempt to build up sentiment in favor of a program which he himself intends later to try to persuade the council to adopt. It would be folly to try to answer this question by laying down a strict rule of conduct. The manager ought to have common sense and good taste; if he has, then there will be no trouble with this question.

Cookingham: I see no reason why the manager could not talk in general terms about the over-all improvement of community life, but the basic principles which he is promoting should certainly be concurred in by the council. In the final analysis the manager cannot promote policies or programs which in any way violate or do not coincide with the thinking of the legislative body.

McClure: Again, I believe that any matter worthy of a public statement by the city manager is of sufficient importance to discuss with the council first to obtain at least its informal approval of any views he may desire to present publicly.

McMillan: No, I feel that the manager should have a clearance from the city council before undertaking any public expressions of improving the community.

Moore: The manager cannot help but discuss the city's future but he can always do so in such a manner as to avoid committing the council in advance on specific projects.

Price: In answer to this question and question 5, I do not believe that managers need follow any absolute rule. I think that they should not be prohibited from discussing with private citizens and groups of private citizens all aspects of possible community improvement. At the other extreme, I do not believe they should attempt to bring about such improvements by supporting one or another individual or faction in the election of councilmen. Between these two extremes they have to handle matters with tact and judgment, respecting the position of their councils but exercising their right to discuss the whole range of municipal problems on appropriate occasions.

5. In your opinion, would the council-manager movement profit or suffer if managers suggested publicly the existence of various desirable goals prior to presenting them to council?

Ames: In my opinion, the council manager movement would suffer if the manager did attempt to influence public opinion in matters which are properly of council concern.

Brownlow: A manager should set for himself, for his council, and for his city, certain long-range goals of community betterment. He should be known as an expositor and an advocate of these goals. The particular short-range approaches to these several goals are matters with which he should keep in step with his council-neither running ahead nor lagging behind.

Cookingham: I do not believe the city manager movement would suffer if managers publicly suggested desirable goals before presenting them to the council, provided such goals were not of the type which would arouse the ire of the council or be contrary to the views of the residents of the community. We do this in the preparation of a master plan which embodies or should embody all phases of community life, including the physical, the cultural, economic, etc. I still feel, however, that the manager must know pretty definitely the attitude of the council concerning the over-all program before he does much promoting of it.

McClure: If these goals were expressed in other than the general terms of the city charter and the previous acts of the governing body, I believe the city manager movement would suffer. Any new goals or any new specific action within existing goals should certainly be presented first to the council.

McMillan: No.

6. Considering the fact that administration is about 90 percent of city government, should the city manager assume the responsibility for developing popular support of the government?

Ames: Directly no, indirectly yes. There are many ways in which a city manager can support good government without doing so through the press or through public addresses. The most important way is to have a well-administered city which in itself will develop popular support. I think if the manager does his job properly in administering the city, there need be no great concern on his part as to the support of the public for good government, and I do not feel it is the duty of the manager to try directly to sponsor such support.

Brownlow: If administration be 90 percent of city government, and if the manager is a good administrator, it would be difficult in my opinion for him to avoid trying to get the public support for the government. Doing the 90 percent which is entrusted to him, and doing it well, could hardly be hidden from the public. If the government is attacked, as it frequently is, because of improvements in administration, then the manager should lead in defense of what is being done, and in the attack on those who would subvert it.

Cookingham: Popular support of a government in my opinion can be accomplished through a good public relations program. Public relations is certainly a management function, and the city manager should assume responsibility for a good public relations program. I have often told the city employees that they are salesmen of municipal service. We have 4,400 of them, and they should be able to do a good job of developing popular support for the program.

McClure: Yes, keeping in mind the basic fact that good public service is the first prerequisite to popular support. Factual reports about the performance of the municipal services within the policies established by the council are the responsibility of the city manager and his administrative staff. It should be recognized by the council, however, that its members also have a very important part in the public relations of the city.

McMillan: I do not believe that this is the sole responsibility of the city manager but is the duty of all city employees. The city manager of course should play his proportionate part in the work.

Moore: He cannot take the responsibility but almost everything he does bears on popular support-his budget, his handling of complaints, his public contacts, his employee relations, etc., etc.

Price: In answer to this question and questions 7 and 8, the more help the city manager can get from the council in supporting and defending the conduct of the administration, the better. Generally, I think he should avoid irreconcilable stands on those public policies that are likely to be campaign issues, even though this may not always be avoided. He ought not, however, to avoid taking a public stand in defense of the basic principles of the council-manager plan, including the city manager's responsibility for administration.

7. Should the city manager publicly defend the legally enacted policy or should he leave this task to the council?

Ames: Largely the council should defend their own actions, but it is inevitable that under certain conditions the manager will be called upon to defend the policy of the council because the administration of the policy is usually involved. We have had situations of that kind occurring in this city in which the city council has taken some legal action establishing a policy which proved to be unpopular.

In such instances, I have attempted to administer the policy in such a way that there could be no reflection upon the administration of the activity, but I have not sought to mold public opinion in favor of or against the policy as adopted. In some instances, I have been personally opposed to the policy which was adopted, yet have made a sincere effort to administer it as I thought the council desired.

Brownlow: Both the manager and the council should defend. However, if the defense of such a legally adopted policy becomes an active issue in a campaign for election of members of council, then the manager should be silent. Even in this event, however, he should not remain silent with respect to the basic principle of the council-manager plan, including the acceptance of responsibility for administration by the manager.

Cookingham: I see no reason why the city manager should not publicly defend a legally enacted policy. In most manager charters the manager is entitled to a seat in the council and entitled to debate in it, and therefore almost becomes a member of the council. He is certainly looked to by the public as the one who is informed on policy, and there seems to be no reason why he should not defend the policy legally adopted. He may not agree with it in toto but he would be disloyal to his council if he did not uphold the policy.

McClure: One of the basic principles of the council-manager plan is that it is the responsibility of the council to defend its policies. Certainly the city manager should assist by providing any information that may be needed, but the public defense of a policy should rest with the council.

McMillan: The city manager is appointed to uphold the policies and carry out the policies of the city council. If he cannot defend legally enacted policies he should not burden himself upon the community. I feel that he definitely has a responsibility to defend any policy the council has taken providing of course that the policy is honest.

Moore: He should expect his council to defend publicly a policy which may be under attack. But often he must do so too.

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(Year 1959) Perspectives in City Management

by **Arthur W. Bromage**

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL BANQUET OF THE 45TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CITY MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, ON OCTOBER 28, 1959.

2006 Comment: As indicated in the editor's note following this article, Professor Bromage served as both councilmember and political science professor. His remarks, offered in 1959 following the large-scale adoption of council-manager government after World War II, shed light on the issues of that time.

We see evidence that by 1959 the prominent role of the city manager that Dr. Hatton suggested in 1927 had become suspect, perhaps owing to the increasing popularity of council-manager government and the commensurate visibility of city managers in policy making. Bromage painstakingly tried to educate his listeners by posing what had become by that time the prevalent issue: How can a manager lead without stepping into the council's arena?

It is difficult to imagine that so much had changed since Hatton's time in actual council-manager relations to warrant Bromage's attention. Hatton wrote in 1927 that the manager would formulate, suggest, recommend, and raise important policy questions for the council's consideration. Was that so different from what subsequent managers were doing? We suspect that, although the behavior of managers did not change very much over time, by 1959 the context within which managers worked had changed. Issues of accountability took on a different shape as the council-manager plan distanced itself in time from the Progressive movement. Thus, we see Bromage trying to chart out the different forces.

Bromage does introduce two new issues into the dialogue. First, he acknowledges the growth of metropolitan areas as well as the development of what he calls "satellites." He also draws attention to intergovernmental relations, another area not discussed in earlier articles.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

Perspective means the interrelationship in which the parts of a subject may be viewed. The capacity to see things in their relative importance is becoming more necessary in looking at city management as its individual aspects increase. We cannot see the city manager as he really is by looking down upon him from cloud 47. Nor can we gain perspective by being constantly at the level of operations.

One reason for annual conferences is that they enable us to get a broader view of the situation. City management has always to deal with points where politics and administration meet. Now is a good time to get some more perspectives on the art of government and the science of administration.

Politics is to a high degree an art; management is to a considerable degree a science. It is difficult to tell a councilman how to be a councilman. One can urge him to vote by principle; to delay until he knows the facts; to weigh alternatives; to time his actions; to sell the public, if possible; to keep up his public relations; to be on the alert with press, radio, and TV; to be a leader in policy; and to try for a record leading to reelection.

Here is where the art of politics comes into play. By leading on certain policies, a councilman may engender voters' responses that will send him down the drain politically. The councilman cannot escape politics even when he tries to do an objective job, guided by principle and fact.

The point is that the highest type of councilman, not only the lesser type, is liable to political pressures. Not all councilmen, however, are objectively motivated. A few are self-seekers and others act as spokesmen of group interests. But, in my experience, most councilmen are trying to perform a task in the public interest.

Management is concerned with the science of empirical analysis of over-all costs and performance. It is, for instance, concerned with the advancement of techniques in policing and fire fighting. It utilizes engineering skills to improve the city's physical environment. It must promote the betterment of living conditions through such activities as public health, housing, and urban renewal. Management must oversee many functional operations which involve diversified

skills.

The city manager cannot coordinate his departmental specialists without broad knowledge of their problems, programs, and procedures. From the vantage point of his position, the manager knows when two departments are wrangling over functional jurisdictions and must act to resolve the conflict. At the same time that he fulfills this administrative function as leader of the administrative hierarchy he is the one closest to any political storm which sweeps over the council chamber.

As head of the administrative team, he is subordinate to a political collegial group, the city council. When councilmen fall to fighting over zoning changes, political structure of the community, dog ordinances, or social mores, managers know that forward motion may be temporarily stalled. This is the time to head for the hills, to amass technical information, and to wait for the resumption of the forward motion.

Although we talk about politics and management in the abstract, it is only by your application of general propositions to specific cities that progress is made. Some of you are old-timers versed in the lore of the profession; others are newcomers taking the shock of the first managerial position. The communities in which managers serve include the small to the large; suburban and central core; single-purpose and diversified industrial; bedroom satellite and independent industrial; nonpolitical suburbia to hot political cities. Yet all managers, in the basic sense, face similar problems of interrelationships between politics and administration.

MANAGERS AND POLICY

Critics of the council-manager plan are raising their voices against managerial leadership in policy matters. Their attack is two-fold. First, it is pointed out, the council-manager system provides for a collegial "board of directors" to "make" policy, yet councilmen often fail to lead in policy making. Second, policy then tends to result from the recommendations of the city manager and his staff. So it is asserted, sometimes with alarm, appointed managers are making the policy. This, it is implied, is somehow wrong because policy motivation and leadership belong more appropriately to a strong mayor elected by the people.

Assuming that councils tend to be reviewing, debating, and revising bodies on matters of policy, rather than innovating and leading, managers do face a dilemma. They are damned if they do, and damned if they don't. If managers don't push policy matters upward for review and decision, stagnation may follow or outside groups become the innovators. Then if the council fails to decide policy questions, or makes a few "wrong" decisions, the manager will hear about it as well as the councilmen when the public reacts.

The alternative course of action, and one which many a manager appears to follow, is to recommend policy as a community leader but to exercise discretion in waiting upon council decisions. If a manager has stood for reasoned and sound policy, the council and community will benefit. To be sure, professional critics of the council-manager plan will then assert that the appointed executive is running the town from "under the councilmanic table."

The plain fact is that top administrators in communities are almost inevitably resource persons for policy formulation. Clarence Ridley in his recent monograph on the manager's role in policy formulation¹ has gone a long way to document the facts and suggest an appropriate course of action. Therein, managers define the kinds of policy questions in which their initiative is deemed proper and necessary.

Judged by Ridley's summary, many managers also have self-imposed limitations as to certain partisan, hot political, and highly controversial regulatory problems where they either remain aloof or merely furnish technical information. You can't stay out of policy questions, but this is quite a different matter from out-and-out participation in partisan and highly controversial issues. A manager is inevitably and properly heading for positive policies in his budget, but this is quite a different matter from trying to tell a council that election at large is to be preferred over the ward system or any other system.

What is responsible for the failure of many councilmen to innovate and lead in policy? Certainly, we can't explain this situation solely by pointing at managers. The roots of this problem lie deep in the democratic process in our cities. A city which isn't eager for policy change will not likely produce a dynamic and progressive council. We have to take councilmen as we find them. But a manager can be at fault if he becomes intolerant of the struggling and wavering councilman, who zig-zags because of political pressure.

The trained manager who has been through many decisions in his own mind may become restless in waiting for councilmen, new or old, to vote yes or no. Councilmen often delay to see where the facts and forces are heading. Watchful waiting by the administrative staff in the council chamber is often the order of the day. Managers do better to let other councilmen deal with the laggard than to prod from the administrative side. When the elected representative obstructs decision-making beyond reason, it is for the voters to decide if this particular councilman is useful in terms of the public interest.

Managers know from experience better than to expect every councilman to perform as a nonpartisan, objective director of the municipal corporation. City councils are elected and politically responsible to the voters; they are not hand-picked for their capacity as directors. This is where politics comes in at the crossroad of decision-making.

Whatever the quality of a council, a manager cannot escape some role in helping to shape policy, in the budget, for instance; in administrative matters; in regulatory ordinances; in urban renewal and social welfare. If cities are to advance and the manager profession is to prosper, the positive attack in many policy matters is essential. This is to be

preferred to a negative, feet-on-the-desk approach to a city's basic policies. Critics will assail you if you are too forward in policy innovation, but remember that other critics will arise if you are too backward in making recommendations. So you have to choose among the critics who will be ever present.

THE POLITICAL PROBLEM

How to structure councils so as to ensure the presence of innovators and leaders is a political problem for each community. Many suggestions have been made such as directly electing the mayor; increasing the powers of the mayor; or using partisan elections in the hope that parties will produce leadership in policy.

The plain fact is that we don't know enough about what makes councilmen lead or fail to lead. We haven't yet had enough tests of existing situations to enable us to reconstruct from scratch the system that will be most productive of leadership. In the absence of any magic formula communities have to find their own solutions.

For practical reasons not all councils can be compressed into the small, nonpartisan, elected at large, board-of-directors stereotype. For some cities larger councils, elected by wards and by partisan ballots, will be more acceptable, and managers will have to adjust accordingly. At the same time, we cannot discount the nonpartisan ballot and the small council elected at large, for many of our council-manager cities have adopted such norms and continue to use them.

For certain great cities management will be structured in terms of the strong-mayor-administrator plan as in San Francisco, Philadelphia, and New Orleans. Does this system rival the standard council-manager plan? Perspective suggests that it be regarded as an improved version of the strong-mayor system. If a community favors the strong-mayor form, it makes sense to assist the mayor with an established and legally recognized chief administrative officer who can coordinate administration.

The important thing is to make clear in the public mind the distinction between the council-manager plan and the strong-mayor-administrator plan. American municipal government has always been marked by experimentation in structure both politically and administratively. The council-manager plan continues to gain in adoptions, and there is plenty of room for its development in the new communities which adopt it year after year.

THE BASIS OF SUCCESS

Continued expansion of the council-manager plan rests upon constant accommodation of management to the democratic process. How a council is structured and the councilmen who serve on it is a matter for the voters. Managers have to do the best job possible in view of political conditions in the council and in the community. But, in any event, managers must play some role in policy innovation. The key question is the impact of this old but expanding role on the managerial profession.

City management will be concerned as ever with the science of administration and to a greater degree with political behavior. In political science, in psychology, and in sociology, empirical evidence is being accumulated, for example: as to the power structure of communities; as to the characteristics of suburbia;² and as to the motivations of political behavior. Robert C. Wood's recent book *Suburbia*,² for instance, appears to be required reading for managers who deal with satellite communities in metropolitan areas. Managers can never have too much understanding of the voters for whom the budget is drafted and the services provided.

The profile of the modern city manager includes, I am sure, some frustration resulting from an urge to get forward with policy and an attrition which appears in the process of recommending policy to council. The managerial profile also includes a compulsion toward long hours of work designed to produce administrative efficiency in the city's functional operations. Whether this profile also includes enough urgency to study and comprehend political behavior is a question which I must leave with you.

Some of your critics think you are becoming so adept politically that you run communities rather than being run by them. They may be barking down the wrong trail so far as many managers go. Every year a few managers are sacked, and others decide to resign. Still other managers find themselves forced to carry forward inadequate programs in municipal administration because the dominant group on council wants current operations and capital improvements kept within a limited fiscal pattern. The study of political behavior will develop better understanding of such situations and promote council-manager teamwork.

Cities are for people and the fulfillment of their urban needs from streets to social welfare. Managers have an obligation to survey all aspects of service and redevelopment in a city with an eye to policy, revenues, and administrative implementation. Often the end result is a political compromise between taxes and needs.

Voters frequently demand tax rates which restrain the expansion of basic services and inhibit the inception of new ones. If this is the prevailing climate in the community you serve, this becomes a limitation on progressive management. But once a community elects to forge ahead, you have the technical know-how to implement advances in facilities and functions.

Managers increasingly will have to give thought to the kinds of cities in which they can best serve as individuals. Whether one prefers a relatively nonpolitical suburb or a city with many political and policy problems is something to be thought out. All cities have their problems, but some are more aggravated than others. How much aggravation can you take as a manager? This is something to be considered in moving from city to city.

With policy as well as administrative management to the fore, managers must likewise consider how long to serve in a particular city. One extreme is sticking in one place too long, beyond the opportunity to be of effective service. The other extreme is the technique of moving about rapidly. The rapid-mover may not linger long enough anywhere to do more than keep an administrative mechanism operating. In a good market effective managers can determine the pace of their own advancement. But the pace ought not to be so swift as to leave a number of discontented "stepping stones" where little was accomplished in formulating policy or in improving administrative management.

Managers are increasingly involved in external as well as internal policy. The United States is moving rapidly from an urban to a metropolitan society. This is a phenomenon with which you are all familiar: the central city and the satellites. The evidence is such to date that the persistence of numerous satellites for years to come is probable. Consolidation and federation of local units within metropolitan areas are not likely to develop readily for a variety of economic, social, and political reasons. Meanwhile more great metropolitan authorities may come into being to deal with port development, mass transit, water and sewerage, for instance.

Managers will do well to keep an open mind with reference to these forces and proposed solutions whether they be federated supergovernments or metropolitan agencies limited in function. The need for horizontal intergovernmental relations between communities in metropolitan areas is growing. In time, these interlocal relations may be just as important to a manager's life as vertical intergovernmental relations with state and federal governments are today.

Since the inception of council-manager government, policy has become a more complex problem in our cities. It is no longer merely a question of keeping politics out of administration through effective management. The council-manager plan was originally a reform device, and its efficacy as such has long since been demonstrated.

Administrative management issues will always be with us in finance, personnel, purchasing, policing, fire fighting, public works, and utilities.

But critical policy questions push increasingly to the fore. For example: the redevelopment of downtown business districts, urban renewal and public housing, traffic strangulation and mass transportation, programs for youth and for the aged. The public has come to expect effective administrative operations under managers and is likely to judge management increasingly by the efforts to resolve critical problems within communities. Every year you must demonstrate anew the workability of the council-manager plan, for the public is a hard taskmaster.

¹The Role of the City Manager in Policy Formulation (Chicago: International City Managers' Association, 1958).

²Suburbia: Its People and Their Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959).

Editor's note: Arthur W. Bromage was a professor of political science at the University of Michigan when he addressed those who attended the banquet at ICMA's 45th annual conference. He had taught at the university since 1929. In addition, Professor Bromage had served four years on the city council of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and had written several books on local and state government. He was an Honorary Member of ICMA.

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(Year 1962) Is the Manager a Political Leader?—Yes

by Gladys M. Kammerer

The city manager is in politics because of his influential role in proposing public policies to the city council.

2006 Comment: In 1961, Professor Gladys Kammerer and H. G. Pope, executive director of the Public Administration Service, spoke to the ICMA conference in Miami Beach. They addressed the topic, "Is the Manager a Political Leader?" ICMA published their remarks in PM in 1962; this article and the next reprint their exchange.

On the basis of her 1962 research on city manager tenure and termination in Florida, Professor Kammerer answered the question with an unequivocal "yes."¹ From a classic political science framework, influencing policy in ways city managers commonly do constitutes political action and, in that sense, city managers thus are political leaders. Further, her research showed that with factionalized councils, it does no good for a manager to remain silent on controversial issues because silence will be construed as support for the majority.

This article is a must read for those who find themselves attracted to the opposite argument—that although city managers may influence policy making, they are not political actors.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

A definition of terms is essential in debate in order that the frame of reference may be established and discussion may be to the point. It is the term "politics" that must be defined. A number of eminent political scientists, including Charles E. Merriam, George Catlin, Harold Lasswell, V. O. Key, Jr., and many others have defined politics as the process of governance or the process and practice of ruling, thereby applying the term to the workings of governments generally, their impact on the governed, their manner of operation, and the means by which governors attain and retain authority. In much the same view David Easton defines politics as the authoritative allocation of values in a society.²

The common conception of politics as merely a "dirty business" is unrealistic and nonoperational. It offers no explanation whatsoever for the process by which governmental improvements are effected in a democracy and only "explains" deviations from our values. Yet there are still many individuals, especially journalists, who choose to warp and twist the definition of politics to describe only the "bad" processes of government. The "good" processes are apparently "civic" activity, not politics. In this vein, a leading Florida newspaper recently stated:

The business of city government is to run a municipality efficiently and serve the people to the best of the establishment's ability. There is no "issue" in this. There is nothing "political" about drainage, sewers, street lights, police and fire protection, and so on. On the contrary, if they are injected into the field of politics, we are bound to lose efficiency and economy down the drain which runs through the pork barrel. . . .

Certainly we want no "boss" rule, no partisanship in fundamental municipal affairs, no "spoils" system and no political approach to routine affairs.

Yet normal controversy in this very city did make issues out of proposals for financing storm sewers and for urban renewal and defeated both programs. Presumably such defeat was not "politics," according to the local newspaper, because that city had no politics. But one is thereby left without the foggiest notion of how to describe the behavior of this city.

The political process cannot be limited, as some would do, to elections and campaigns. Elections are only a single aspect of political behavior, which also includes discussion of public affairs, writing letters to public officials about policy, and acting in and through groups to influence public policy.

ROLE OF THE MANAGER

The city manager is a political leader for the following reasons: (1) he is a leader in proposing public policy for his city; (2) the role perceptions councilmen and citizens have of the manager are those of a political leader; and (3) long-term managers, in Florida at least, either have been major members of the political faction in control of the council or have possessed some independent base of political power, and they can be distinguished thereby from short-term managers who either were not included in the dominant political clique or had no base of political power of their own to provide policy support while they were forced to act as political leaders.

Public policy advocacy puts one into politics for the reason that the policies adopted in any jurisdiction embody the authoritative values of that polity. Public policy therefore is central to politics as the two words come from the same root—the Greek word polis for city. Easton says on this point, "We are said to be participating in political life when our activity relates in some way to the making and execution of policy for a society."³

The political process is a continuous process centered around policy making. At the heart of this process in a council-manager city are two institutional components: the council and the manager. The manager is expected under the terms of the Model City Charter to propose policy for the council to consider. In practice, some managers are delegated considerably more policy-making power than this statement would imply, and they are expected to establish and not merely propose policies on many matters.

But even where the manager is expected to limit himself to proposal rather than final decision on policy, the public has learned over the years to assess the manager as an "influential" in making political decisions. He thereby becomes identified with certain policy positions in the eyes of the public to an even greater extent than are some councilmen who may shy away from issue or policy involvement out of a general sense of political insecurity.

Many city managers have themselves espoused the notion of the manager's role as one of policy leadership. For example, one of them was quoted in a recent study as declaring, "There is no question in my mind that the city manager has an inescapable responsibility to his council and his city in participating and assuming proper leadership in shaping municipal policies."⁴

In all but one of the study cities involved in our research into the tenure of Florida city managers, we found that the manager played a significant part in proposing or killing policy proposals. He was indeed expected to play this role and was subjected to criticism in some cities if he was timid about coming forward with new policy concepts. The one city that was clearly an exception was a boss-controlled city where the boss brooked no ideas from others.

The word "leader" can of course give one some trouble. Definitions of "leader" or "leadership" are about as numerous as the political scientists and sociologists who grapple with this dimension of behavior. The examination of the making of major policy decisions on various issues to discover what persons were most influential is regarded by a number of political scientists as one of the operational measures of validating leadership.⁵ Political leadership is found to exist where the content of a public policy decision is influenced positively or negatively by an individual.

It may well be that in a council-manager city neither the councilmembers nor the manager is at the apex of the power structure. But whether the city manager is a major influencer or a subleader in the final decisions on public policy, the fact that he makes policy proposals to the council and to the public on public matters places him in the political process willy-nilly.

In a democratic system of government it is just as important to discover the perceptions of the community with respect to a particular public office as it is to unearth the perceptions the incumbent has of his position. With respect to the city manager it is vital to identify the perceptions of community leaders, the press, other communications figures, and councilmen with respect to the role of the manager before one can start separating myth from reality.

PERCEPTIONS OF COUNCILMEN

We found in our Florida study that the councilmen in each of our cities, except the one boss-controlled city, identified managers as policy proposers or vetoers and hence as principal political figures in their cities. The identification of political leadership was particularly clear and explicit in the instance of managers they opposed because they found it easy, for one thing, to affiliate such a manager with the rival political clique and, secondly, even to attribute a leadership role in that political clique to the manager.

Frequently he was the very embodiment of all they disliked in the opposition for the reason that politics was so unstructured in most of these cities that the councilmen who initially had suggested a policy themselves "turned tail" in the face of opposition and allowed the manager to become the focus for public opposition.

In contrast, councilmen who agreed with their manager politically did not at first assign him a major political leadership role. Rather they thought of the policies he espoused as their policies, with the leadership resting in their own hands. Only when they were questioned on specific issues of government, did they reveal that the manager actually played an important leadership role in bringing forward policy notions, clarifying their own ideas, or vetoing proposals.

In the course of their discussion of the manager's role in policy formulation, they usually came to the conclusion expressed very clearly by one young councilman who described his manager as "knowing so much more about city government than any of us, he usually decides what we need to do and we go along with him." In one city, the councilmen of both factions identified the manager as having a major base of political power in the form of a voter bloc that could affect their futures.

Both the press and civic leaders similarly identified managers whose policies they opposed as playing an avowedly political role and those they supported as merely having influence on policy. Naturally this identification did not always coincide with that of the councilmanic majority use of the terminology of "political" and "policy making." But it did coincide in terms of identification of political ideology and alignment of the manager with the particular faction that shared that political ideology and also in terms of the degree of influence exercised by the manager within that faction.

TENURE OF MANAGERS

The reasons for agreement in perception of the basically political dimension of the manager's role on major issues may be that managers who achieved long tenure usually were "local boys" who either were major members of the majority clique or had been co-opted into that clique as they in time solidified their policy front with that of the council majority, which was itself well entrenched in control.

In contrast, short-term managers were frequently professional managers recruited from outside who had a strong policy orientation that appealed to a clique which had suddenly gained power in an electoral overturn in a highly unstable town and which wished to push through a program expeditiously. However, such a clique in several instances tried to save themselves from defeat by trying to tie policies that proved politically unpopular in the town to the manager alone, and at times they even went so far as to fire a manager in a vain attempt to stave off defeat.

Some managers had refrained from taking a public posture on policies. But this avoidance of positive policy commitment was to no avail in preserving the manager when a change of factional control occurred. Electorate and councilmen alike who strongly favored certain policies equated the manager's neutrality as hostility to their own beliefs on municipal program. Thus it appeared to be impossible for the manager to avoid clique identification, for silence was held to be as indicative of political preference as public enunciation.

A manager dismissal is normally an occurrence of great political significance in a community. Because the manager is inevitably coupled with certain policy stands, his dismissal may articulate the issues in a way that the blurred lines of councilmanic elections frequently fail to do. For example, in one city last year the ruling clique of developer interests was compelled to admit that the then manager was being dismissed because he was "too zealous about planning and zoning." This public admission brought into the open the clash of interests in the community that overturned a councilman in the ensuing election and has boiled up into a first-class local power struggle.

THE PARLIAMENTARY APPROACH

Both the theory of council-manager government and the learned response of the manager to repudiation by the council on a major policy proposal call for him to submit his resignation. This is the behavior required of the most political of governmental figures: the prime minister in a parliamentary system of government. It is a denial of reality to call a city manager nonpolitical, yet structure his role to have him make policy proposals and then expect him to resign upon rejection of such proposals.

This is a different set of expectations and standards from those built up around the career administrator in a civil service system, for such an administrator, when asked to make policy proposals, is expected to continue in his employment regardless of whether his proposals are acted upon favorably or unfavorably by the highest policy-making organs of government.

The civil servant is expected to exhibit a "deadpan" sang-froid about policy and find it just as easy to work within the framework of one policy as another. But the manager, while accepting the notion of the elected councilmen as the highest policy-making organ, is assumed to be ready to resign when his own policy notions do not get majority support from the councilmen.

The city manager cannot allege to be nonpolitical and at the same time take a policy stand. The very nature of his work as chief administrator of his city requires him to have policy ideas and public positions on those policies. This role is inescapable. By the same token the requirements of his job as policy leader make him a political leader. Leonard D. White, in his classic study of early city managers, was correct in predicting that once the manager started taking policy stands, he would rise and fall in tune with acceptance of his political leadership.⁶

This we found true in Florida, and the rise and fall of managers in this state has been especially rapid because population growth has added new economic and social interest groups to many Florida cities, unsettling their political equilibrium and causing power to fluctuate from one group to another with each municipal election. Many of our cities are now going through the throes of trying to decide what kind of a city they are to be—a question settled decades ago in older parts of the country—and this seminal question brings to the fore many significant issues of municipal government that must be fought and refought. The manager is inextricably caught in these stresses and is made a scapegoat for the pains of change.

We do not exercise an adverse judgment against the explicitly political role the manager is compelled to play. Even in our most unstable cities persons interested in public policy development will be impressed by the concrete achievements that can be attributed to manager leadership.

Undoubtedly there has been lost motion, human waste, and sacrifice of good men as managers in all the turmoil of municipal instability in Florida. But most of our cities have been better cities because their city managers have been willing to assert political leadership when councilmen frequently have been unwilling or unable to do so.

¹David Easton, *The Political System* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), pp. 106, 129.

²*Ibid.*, p. 128.

³Quoted by Paul Kelso in *A Decade of Council-Manager Government in Phoenix, Arizona* (Phoenix: City Council, 1960), p. 14. See also C. A. Harrell, "The City Manager as a Community Leader," *Public Management*, October 1948, pp. 290-94, and Charles R. Adrian, "Leadership and Decision-Making in Manager Cities: A Study of Three Communities," *Public Administration Review*, Summer, 1958, pp. 208-13.

⁴See Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 89-220.

⁵Leonard D. White, *The City Manager* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), pp. 299-303.

Editor's note: In 1962, Gladys M. Kammerer was a professor of political science, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, and director of the Public Administration Clearing Service. She was the coauthor, in 1961, with John M. DeGrove, of *Florida City Managers: Profile and Tenure*. Her Ph.D. was from the University of Chicago. This and the following article have been condensed from addresses presented on November 29, 1961, at the 47th annual conference of the International City Managers' Association held in Miami Beach, Florida.

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(Year 1962) Is the Manager a Political Leader?—No

by H. G. Pope

The city manager's job involves developing plans and proposals for the city council, not involvement in partisan political issues.

2006 Comment: H. G. Pope acknowledges Professor Kammerer's facts but draws different conclusions. Pope distinguishes between policy making and electoral politics when describing the manager's political activity. The former is appropriate; the latter is not, he states.

In earlier years, the Kammerer-Pope debate would have been regarded as less important because in earlier times the word "politics" meant partisanship—participating politically during and after elections to support candidates and award jobs and contracts on the basis of political preferences. Council-manager government was designed as a force to eliminate such partisanship from city government.

Because that was the context of early city management, it was a virtual contradiction for a person to be seen as a professional city manager and to be political. Unequivocally, city managers were not political leaders. Pope's article helps distinguish among administrative leadership, community leadership, and political leadership.

The Kammerer-Pope debate anticipates the contemporary issue of whom these two are trying to convince or, at least, whom they see as their audience. We know the following; the more knowledgeable an audience is about a subject, the more sophisticated the argument that can be set before them. We suspect that Pope's argument met with nods of approval from city management audiences; Kammerer's would have had more appeal to political scientists and possibly to the general public.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

Dr. Kammerer says the manager is a political leader but avoids a judgment as to whether he should be. I say he is not a political leader and freely offer the judgment that he should not be.

A subject such as this tempts one to use the available brief time to quibble over definitions of a political leader. Were I addressing people without official responsibility for government, or a direct personal stake in it, I might do so. Here, however, I am talking to people who have, in the course of their careers, repeatedly sweated out political campaigns and election nights.

By this time, you know what a political leader is and have become radar-equipped to detect him. Similarly, though less expert, the citizens in the small town where I live know who their leaders are and, at least biennially, are vigorously reminded of who their political leaders are.

The same situation prevails even in Chicago, a city almost a thousand times the size of the town where I live. Its three and one-half million people know what a political leader is, and, I might add, they even know who he is. As long as the voters, in whom the ultimate political power resides, have their own notions about what and who their political leaders are, any definitions we technicians and theoreticians may devise become relatively academic.

I do not quarrel with Dr. Kammerer's classic definitions any more than I would quarrel with a philosopher's concept of the universe. I simply can't accept her definitions for this discussion any more than, were I an astronaut, I could use the philosopher's concept of the universe for interplanetary navigation.

KINDS OF LEADERSHIP

I do say that, as commonly understood and practiced under the council-manager plan, administrative leadership, general community leadership, and political leadership are not one and the same.

Political leadership is invariably aimed at controlling governmental policy and of-ten governmental patronage. Unlike general community and civic leadership, it cannot limit itself to influencing decisions on selected questions. It will be forced by circumstances to undertake more broadly based activities, including electioneering. Factional political

structure and process are not confined to particular municipalities or particular subjects. Rather, these particulars are part of the whole fabric of political structure—city, county, state, and federal.

It would be naïve to theorize that effective political leadership, with its ambitions, obligations, and rewards, can be contained within a particular municipality, or limited to a specific issue, or turned on and off like a spigot. Effective political leaders must play for keeps on a court whose boundaries are not neatly outlined by specific issues, and always with an eye to the rewards and retributions that are part of the entire political process.

I am not among those who, as Dr. Kammerer says, define politics as merely "dirty business." I am well aware that the United States Constitution makes no provision for political parties, that so distinguished a person as George Washington admonished us against them, and that they are anathema to many reformers. Nevertheless, I feel that our history demonstrates that political parties are a requisite of democratic government on a large scale.

ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

In the United States, parties are essential to the selection of alternate policies or alternate groups of leaders. Without them it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to nominate candidates and conduct contests that insure that the most relevant, as well as many irrelevant, facts and views are presented to the voter for consideration and choice. Political parties also do much to give the citizen a sense of participating in the enormous complex of government.

Again, it may be argued that political parties contribute some needed coordination and cohesion to our federal system of a national establishment, 50 sovereign states, and innumerable local units, including home rule or otherwise partially autonomous entities. And last but not least, without organized partisan political parties, bureaucratic power might so extend itself that we would be governed by a bureaucracy rather than democratically.

Collectively, these arguments persuade me that the practice of politics should be improved and enlarged and its leadership strengthened. It does not follow that, in municipalities, this political leadership can or should be furnished by the city managers.

I know that there are those who hint that the efficiency in municipal services attributed to the council-manager plan is ignoble and that a more important reason for the existence of municipal corporations is the strengthening of our state and national political machinery. Certainly a lively citizen interest and participation in local government will strengthen democracy generally and without regard to level of government.

Admittedly, federal and state action through grants in aid, regulatory measures, and otherwise have great impact on local government and with interlocking political implications. It does not follow that the political structures and processes we use for policy decision should be monolithic from bottom to top and that city managers should be the operators of the local units.

I consider it unlikely that it will become fashionable for politicians to hire outsiders to do their political chores. Also, of the hundreds of managers that I have known, relatively few have had the equipment to deliver a political clout. And, if a manager has it, one could not expect it to be readily transportable from one community to another—any more than one would expect Mayor Daley, a highly effective administrative, legislative, and political leader, to get the same comfortable majority in another city that he gets in Chicago.

Most managers would shy away from extracurricular political activity, which would have to be personal rather than official, and most would expect that, if they made personal forays into the political arena, they could not enjoy the privilege of retreat into the sanctuary of professionalism when the going gets rough.

POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

Discussion of political leadership must include a word on the distinctions between policy determination on the one hand and policy execution on the other. Clearly, the two require different kinds of judgments and actions, arrived at differently and employing different kinds of resources and considerations. Consequently, a sensible case can be made for some reasonable measure of separation of policy determination from policy execution, with advantage to both.

Yet, it is impossible to establish a sharply defined line between policy and administration. Instead there is an area in which the interdependence which typically characterizes the two becomes an intermingling that requires a close working relationship between the executive and legislative branches.

As a practical matter, an effective city manager has a significant influence on policy decision, and an effective council has a significant influence on administrative action. Also, argument about the line between policy and administration can easily be pursued past the point of diminishing returns since it is irrelevant to much of a city's business.

Most municipal business is characterized by routine made possible by the mutual confidence between manager and council and by established patterns of legislative and administrative practice resulting from a combination of law, habit, and practical requirements. This is, of course, among the reasons that effective municipal government is entirely practical in many communities without highly organized political factions.

PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

I am fully aware of the importance of the municipality in our social and political scheme. Also, I would be the first to insist that the city manager is something special among the professional public administrators appointed to administer our governmental affairs. However, there are entities within our governmental structure that are not cities, and there

are appointed professional public administrators who are not city managers.

We can, in some measure, determine the propriety of political leadership by the manager by relating this concept to these other appointed professional officers. I shall choose only a few of the many examples from government to make this point.

For example, I expect top professional soldiers, educators, whether state university presidents or local superintendents of schools, health authorities, engineers, and others with important roles in the present-day scheme of things to exercise full executive leadership with respect to the men or functions under their direction. I expect these top professional people, who normally have devoted a lifetime to their respective professions, to plan for their programs and to present to policy makers considered views on what is needed and how it is to be employed. I expect them to be positive, even vigorous, in the presentation of judgments to the policy makers.

Otherwise, how can the average legislator know what he needs to know in order to make responsible policy determinations in these fields? Additionally, these administrators have general leadership obligations in the communities with which they are identified. This obligation for community leadership does not mean, however, that they should be partisan political leaders, and when they do so it is to the discomfort and even dismay of others in their professions.

This particular standard of proprieties, developed to help make our democracy work, is not limited to government. Rather it is almost a part of our national manners. In most private corporations there would be an inclination to frown upon an appointed executive who bypasses his board of directors to indulge in factionalism among stockholders. The pastor who assumes leadership of a clique within his congregation may well find himself in an untenable position.

To take an example closer to home, I might note that my experience of more than 25 years of membership in this association leads me to believe that its members would frown if their director were to assume a leadership role in relation to factions that might, as sometimes happens in organizations, develop over important issues. These are roles for members of the governing boards to assume in our private institutions, just as they are appropriately roles of elective officials in our governments.

ROLE OF THE MANAGER

It may be worth while to remind ourselves that the council-manager plan was developed to eliminate the intermingling of administrative and political leadership. The stature and effectiveness of the manager depend in no small part on his earning and maintaining an image of integrity, competence, and objectivity. These qualities must, of course, be exercised with an awareness of and a sensitivity to the realities of political conflict but without direct personal factional involvement.

Even those who are disappointed in the council-manager plan and propose the alternative of a chief administrative officer responsible to the mayor do not suggest that the chief administrative officer should exercise political leadership. Instead that officer is justified on the grounds that he will improve administrative performance without impairing the political leadership exercised by someone else.

A sound organization requires that everyone be responsible to someone. City managers commonly expect that department heads should recognize their responsibilities to the manager. Similarly, the manager must recognize his responsibility to the mayor and council. In doing so, he forgoes the privilege of political leadership, which automatically implies involvement in factionalism among citizens to whom the mayor and councilmen are responsible.

To grant the manager a license to use his administrative resources for political partisanship would be intolerable. Since elections are related more often to candidates than to issues, there would quickly be created the deservedly unpopular picture of the manager selecting his own council. Once this notion, even though distorted, has been sold by enemies of the council-manager plan, the plan's greatest persuasion would be gone.

This persuasion lies in the fact that the council-manager plan, while centralizing administrative authority, remains safely democratic—since the manager serves only at the pleasure of a council elected by the people of the community without political leadership on the part of the manager. Should it become fashionable for the manager to assume political leadership responsibilities and prerogatives, it would, indeed, become hard to answer the cry of dictatorship now so popular with enemies of the plan.

This does not mean that the manager is free from politics. What he does will always be political news, and whether he is the man who should fill the position will often be the principal political issue in a municipal election campaign. He may create political issues through his work in preparing a budget or in recommending particular courses of action for decision by the community's policy makers.

However, it is one thing for a manager to develop and present proposals, plans, and solutions to his council, sometimes with alternatives and projections of their probable effects, and to discuss and support his views. It is something else for him to assume political leadership among the voters and to be identified with and particularly responsive to selected special-interest groups.

Participation by the manager in partisanship, an essential to honest, effective political leadership, would not merely modify but would basically change and destroy the council-manager plan. This would be unfortunate because the proof of council-manager government lies not only in its theory but in its results, and these results have been good enough to warrant continued growth of the plan until a better one is devised. Such growth cannot be expected if the

managers violate the proprieties our society has established for professional appointive executives.

Editor's note: H. G. Pope was executive director, Public Administration Service, Chicago, Illinois, when this was written. Mr. Pope held engineering and law degrees and had earlier served as city manager of two Michigan cities. He joined the staff of Public Administration Service in 1939 and was appointed executive director in 1943.

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(Year 1972) Interpersonal Relationships Between Councilmen and Administrators

by William B. Eddy

An examination of some of the dynamics involved in the council-administrator relationship, and suggestions for understanding the issues and difficulties involved. . .

2006 Comment: We have included Eddy's 1972 article because it is the first that challenges city managers to look within themselves as part of their examination of council-manager relations. He wrote that the beginning of a study of any relationship should start with oneself. He asked probing questions of a kind that had not previously appeared in PM's literature on council-manager relations.

Eddy ended by observing that very little has been done to assist administrators and councilmembers to develop their interpersonal relationship. This comment is interesting for two reasons. First, it emanates from the emerging organizational development movement, in which Eddy played an important intellectual role, that saw its popularity rise significantly in the 1960s and early 1970s. This movement emphasized learning organizations, self-reflection, team building, and action theory and research.

This article is of interest for a second and related reason: Eddy's discussion takes us out of the democratic theory and accountability context and into an organizational effectiveness context, where the council-manager relationship is seen as a partnership. As the partnership metaphor increases in salience, it creates an alternative to the politics-administration dichotomy. These paradigms do not compete, however, because their proponents come from very different intellectual origins. One has to do with effectiveness; the other with political accountability. Both have made a significant impact on the legitimacy of city management.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

The human relationships and transactions between the municipal administrator and his council occur within a complex of political, economic, cultural, and ideological factors. Thus, when conflict arises or communications break down, it is not always possible to sort out those factors which are primarily *interpersonal* in nature.

Pressures of a multifaceted administrator's role, partisan differences, and complexities of managing a governmental system certainly influence council-administrator relationships. Nevertheless, a significant portion of the difficulties that arise between council and administrator is interpersonal. That is, they stem from the "humanness" of the individuals concerned—their needs, feelings, styles, and habits—rather than solely from the political or other environmental differences which may be present.

Administrators often discuss strategies for minimizing interpersonal problems with councilmembers. "Should the administrator develop close personal ties with councilmembers, or should he remain more distant?" "Should he relate to councilmembers on a one-to-one basis, or only to the entire council as a group?" "Is it appropriate to socialize with councilmembers?" "How much information should he provide beyond what is specifically requested?" "How do you respond to anger or hostility expressed by a councilmember?" "Should the manager take a dominant or a subservient public role in relation to the council?"

In any collection of municipal administrators, one would hardly find consensus in relation to any of the above questions. And, most authorities avoid laying down hard and fast guidelines, knowing full well that situations and personalities vary considerably. It is possible, however, to examine some of the dynamics involved in the council-administrator relationship, and to suggest ways of understanding more clearly the issues and difficulties involved.

Goals, needs, and interpersonal style—An examination of the questions posed above indicates that most, if not all, involve attempts to predict the other party's behavior. "If I do so-and-so, then he is likely to respond in such-and-such a way." We tend to carry around our personal theories about the other fellow, based on our own past experiences, preferences, information, etc. Usually we have a less clearly defined theory about our own needs and behavior.

A good rule of thumb for beginning the study of any relationship is to start with one's own self. Thus, an examination of the administrator-council relationship can fruitfully begin with the administrator asking himself some questions.

What are my goals in developing relationships with the council?

What kind of relationship is my day-to-day behavior directed at building?

Is this my definition of an "ideal" relationship?

Some individuals have clear-cut notions about the kind of relationship they desire. Others seem satisfied with any relationship which is not so conflict-ridden or tenuous that it is likely to be severed. It is an issue worthy of serious thought.

More specifically, the administrator should ask: Am I striving to build a co-equal, collaborative relationship with council, or do I really primarily seek to maintain control? Do I want a harmonious and amicable relationship, or do I place higher value on expression of differences and a certain amount of healthy conflict?

Do I seek an orderly, tightly administered relationship, or do I want a looser, more open-ended situation? Am I seeking to help build the council into a more effectively functioning team, or do I view their cohesiveness and strength as a threat to my autonomy and leverage? What other characteristics of the relationship seem most important?

Only by clearly identifying his goals for a relationship with the council can the manager evaluate his progress and revise his strategies. If, for example, his goals turn out to involve largely maintaining amicability, his strategy will be quite different than if his goal is to develop the most open communication possible.

The second set of issues revolves around the general question, What personal needs of my own is the relationship with the council satisfying? It is an obvious, but often ignored, fact that most of us conduct our affairs in order to meet our psychological needs. For example, there is indication that many municipal administrators have high needs for power and control. They feel best when they are in command, and tend to de-emphasize co-equal collaborative relationships.

Other individuals may have a great need for recognition and prestige, and seek out arrangements which enhance these factors. Others may find conflict highly disagreeable and even threatening, and seek to avoid it. Still others have needs for close personal ties, support, and appreciation in contrast with another group which seeks to maintain more cool, aloof, and distant relationships with others. Whatever one's preponderant needs may be, they are likely to influence the kind of interpersonal relations he strives for, including those with the council.

Another significant question is: In what ways does my style in dealing with the council reflect my goals and needs? Our needs and goals are, of course, expressed in day-to-day behavior. It is this behavior that others observe and react to. Good intentions and idealized views of our own potential do not count. Often they serve only to observe the reality of our impact. Neither does scapegoating. Many of us tend to blame difficulties in relationships on others or upon external and uncontrollable forces, rather than owning up to our own part in the problem.

Thus, the administrator should further ask: Am I able to own up to my behavior as it affects councilmembers? And, am I willing to take responsibility for my style?

The previous analysis holds for the council as well as for the administrator. The councilmember well may ask himself the same questions. "What are my goals for a relationship with the administrator?" What needs of mine does, or could, the relationship meet? What behaviors spring from my needs, goals, role, and style? What portion of the difficulties in relating productively with the administrator must I own?

The final and most significant questions involve the interaction between the needs, goals, and style of the administrator and those of the councilmembers. **Does the administrator's behavior contribute to councilmembers getting their needs met, or does he frustrate their needs? Does his style help develop a set of rewarding relationships, or are the relationships characterized by failure?**

Unmet needs and the frustration-aggression hypothesis—When human needs are aroused but are prevented from being satisfied, frustration is the usual outcome. For example, a councilmember pursues a project popular in his district, becomes committed to it, and anticipates support, recognition, and encouragement from his constituents. He is prevented from reaching his objective by the administrator who cites valid and rational reasons why the project is economically or legally unfeasible. The councilmember feels frustrated, and thus behaves hostilely and aggressively toward the administrator.

It does not matter that the administrator was acting responsibly and accurately. The councilmember, as is true of all humans, feels frustrated because his goal attainment was thwarted. And, aggression follows frustration. A councilmember may experience need frustration because of inability to influence the performance of the administrative system, because the administrator's strivings for prestige and power conflict with his own, or for many other reasons.

Under other circumstances, the administrator may himself feel frustrated and aggressive toward a councilmember. However, his options for expressing the hostility and aggression usually are fewer—since custom constrains administrators from overtly expressing negative feelings to councilmen. Thus, his aggression may be expressed more covertly or passively (by avoiding the councilmember, for example). Or, it may be "swallowed" or turned inward—not a very healthy solution to frustrations over the long run.

Building positive relationships—Very little work has been done in assisting administrators and councilmembers to develop more healthy and productive relationships. It is possible, however, to suggest some of the characteristics of such a relationship and some ways of working toward it.

Both parties need to address themselves honestly to two questions: 1) Do we have any common goals for the relationship? 2) Are we willing to commit ourselves to building more positive and effective relationships?

Councilmembers and, occasionally, administrators may reject the possibility of greater collaboration because of a belief in the adversary model. The assumption is that cooperation may lead to collusion and ultimately to disservice to constituents. Most groups, however, fairly readily can divide their relationships into "areas in which we must disagree" and "areas in which we would clearly be better off collaborating."

In other words, some aspects of the relationship between council and administration (or among the councilmembers, for that matter) are necessarily "win/lose." Different interests compete for scarce resources, people perceive realities differently, what is good for one group is not necessarily good for others.

There are other areas, however, which are potential win/win situations. Hardly ever are interpersonal problems-blocked communication, hostility, jealousy, group disintegration, inability to deal with issues-seen as necessary or useful to anyone in the long run. They drain off energy and time that are needed for constructive work; they obscure important data; they lock people into untenable positions; and they certainly dampen effective problem solving. These are the areas on which to work.

The ingredients of productive and positive interpersonal relationships include an open and honest exchange of communication, maximum amounts of trust and respect, sharing of responsibilities and successes, and mutual support.

Also critical is a recognition of the inevitability of conflict and frustration and the development of mechanisms for dealing with them. Some organizations attempt to provide legitimate opportunities for discussing frustrations in a receptive and private atmosphere. Conventional wisdom to the contrary, the best solution to conflict often is to face it and deal with it-rather than turn away or smooth it over.

Editor's note: William B. Eddy was associate director, Federal Executive Institute, Washington, D.C., when he wrote this article.

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(Year 1977) Mayors and Councils—The New Breed

by Robert A. Kipp

2006 Comment: In this article we see a significant shift in the focus of city management and council-manager relations. Following the urban upheaval and political turmoil of the 1960s, we encounter for what may well be the first time in the history of council-manager government a point where the profession's history provides inadequate guidance to council-manager relations.

Race relations come to the forefront of the political agenda, and issues of representation and equity join efficiency and individual rights to complicate not only policy making but service delivery as well. Court-ordered district elections create a context for racially diverse and more representative councils, conflict among councils, councils elected to promote change, challenge to citywide orientations, and mayors with strong policy goals and political ambition. All still present challenges, especially in larger cities.

Even if the changes would not have affected suburban communities as much as urban cities, the challenge to management's traditional practices in larger cities shakes the whole of the profession. No longer is there a Dr. Hatton arguing that 99 percent of a city's work is administrative.

The contemporary role of the city manager as community builder rather than community leader can be traced to this transition that Kipp outlines.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

"In America, not only do municipal bodies exist, but they are kept alive and supported by town spirit. The township of New England possesses two advantages which strongly excite the interest of mankind . . . namely, independence and authority. The New Englander is attached to his township, not so much because he was born in it, but because it is a free and strong community, of which he is a member, and which deserves the care spent in managing it."

—Alexis DeTocqueville, "Democracy in America"

The relatively homogenous "board of directors" city councils that often existed prior to World War II are largely creatures of the past. Today, for city councils and city managers alike, it's a new ball game.

The modern-day mayor and councilmember did not seek office merely to take part in occasional high-level decisions and then sit back. Today's mayors and councilmembers are activist-oriented. They insist on continuing opportunities to exercise policy judgment and to be deeply involved in issues. They are highly motivated and politically active.

The modern council also is a much more diverse group than its pre-war predecessors. It is diverse both in its reflection of interest groups heretofore unrepresented—including women, minorities, and neighborhood organizations—and in its greater geographic representation.

The result of these changes in the makeup and conduct of councils has been to strengthen the democratic process that DeTocqueville found so meritorious.

But the changes have brought about a fundamental change in the city manager's role as well and have presented a new set of challenges.

Many citizens—and a few city managers—hold the mistaken belief that the manager's role is to "run" the city government. That may have been true once in some cities, but not today.

THE MANAGER AS FACILITATOR

Today, the manager's role in the local governing process is that of a facilitator and a source of support to the council as it takes new directions and steps into new areas. The manager's task is to make the bureaucracy work when the council wants it to work and to give the council the information it needs to operate.

The manager also must develop and nurture an equally special relationship with the mayor, to whom citizens attribute a great deal of political responsibility in today's atmosphere. Mayors' official functions differ widely depending on the city, but common to all of them is the mayor's opportunity to set the tone for the council and to provide a sense of political direction. The manager, if he or she is to fulfill the proper role, must be able to support that leadership.

Some managers may see the new breed of mayor and councilmember, with its activism and desire for involvement, as an intrusion on what was once considered their turf. Their egos may suffer when they find the council out front and themselves in the low-profile, supportive role.

Such a manager is destined to be frustrated.

Moreover, that manager overlooks the indisputable fact that the city government works better, the citizens are happier, the council is happier—and the manager's own job is easier—when the council's active involvement is facilitated than when it is discouraged.

Not only is the job made easier, but the key attribute of council-manager government is enhanced—namely, the availability to the council of a skilled professional administrator who is able to make the organization responsive to the council's direction.

THE COMMITTEE BENEFIT

In Kansas City, the benefits of an active and involved council have often been most apparent in the results produced by committees—groups sometimes seen as anathema by city professionals.

Kansas City's Council has four standing committees: Finance and Audit, Plans and Zoning, Operations, and—more recently—Policy and Rules. The chairmen and members of these committees have developed many areas of expertise within city government and, in fact, are often better informed on a particular issue than the manager.

The Finance and Audit Committee, among other things, has gotten deeply involved in the city's public transportation system, monitoring the city subsidy to the Area Transportation Authority and helping to form a transportation service for the elderly and handicapped. The Plans and Zoning Committee, along with many day-to-day duties, plays a major role in the job of revising the city's zoning code.

The Operations Committee recently took the lead in establishing the city's priorities for use of local public works allocations from the federal government, and is studying the reorganization of the liquor control function of the city government.

And the Policy and Rules Committee—established to analyze long-term implications of specific council decisions—has taken a deep interest in the broad subject of program evaluations. It is one of the forces behind a more extensive city budget document emphasizing program objectives and results; it has led to the institution of an annual citizen survey that seeks to measure residents' opinions on city services; and it helped design an Action Center for citizens' use.

This committee approach makes extremely good use of the councilmembers' talents and interests. It also gives them in-depth exposure to issues and key staff members that they could get in few other ways.

One committee's work that illustrates the far-reaching benefits derived from council involvement in a specific issue concerns Kansas City's Fire Protection Improvement Plan.

The Fire Protection Improvement Plan is a comprehensive attempt to make the Kansas City Fire Department more modern and efficient, and it includes several sweeping changes. One calls for putting firefighters on a 40-hour work week, working five consecutive eight-hour shifts, and abandoning the old system of working 24 hours straight followed by 48 hours off.

After the council approved this plan in 1975, the city manager and staff could have set out unilaterally to implement it. Instead, the administrators, the council, and the mayor joined hands. While the staff handled details, the mayor appointed a special council committee whose members have, for the past year, overseen implementation, made ongoing policy decisions, met with neighborhoods, gone before the public to explain the plan, and in many other ways made constructive and valuable contributions. Major parts of the plan—including the new work hours—went into effect smoothly in May.

If the steps leading to this first stage of implementation had been handled strictly as an administrative matter, with the council's role relegated to saying "go" or "no go" at a few key junctures, it is likely the plan would have failed. It worked because of the continuous interlocking of administrators and elected officials, because of the council's continued sensitivity to the public climate and public opinion, and because the council committee worked so hard to carry the message of the plan's benefits to citizens.

TRENDS IN COUNCILS

The partnership approach, then, and the modern-day council's tendency to involve itself heavily in issues clearly have numerous advantages. Notwithstanding these advantages, however, this new kind of council also brings with it new difficulties, challenges, and frustrations for the city manager.

One of the difficulties is that the modern council, with its diversity of interests and values, has active needs for information. This means the manager, sometimes on very short notice, must be able to provide councilmembers with information on a wide range of subjects he or she may know nothing about.

A second difficulty is that because today's councilmembers represent more defined geographic areas than in the past, there can be a tendency for councilmembers to use their deep involvement for the benefit of their particular districts. The challenge for the manager is to be able to look out for the total interest of the city, develop citywide approaches to various problems, and still be able to work with individual councilmembers.

Yet another problem can develop when a councilmember gets deeply involved in the implementation of various programs. In doing that, the individual also may develop an interest in making decisions regarding the personnel who are operating those programs. Although a councilmember's advice is frequently valuable, the manager has the responsibility to make personnel decisions—and to make them on the basis of merit rather than political considerations.

A far more apparent difficulty for the manager in working with the new post-war council is that harmony among councilmembers often is fleeting.

Because the members represent diverse interests and different areas of the city having different needs, there will be frequent friction as the elected officials seek to get a fair share of programs and services for their respective constituencies. Philosophical differences and political ambitions also will cause disagreements.

If the city is to move ahead, there must be give and take on the council. Both the manager and the mayor have roles in helping to find grounds for compromise and consensus, and the means for doing this will vary with the situation. The challenge for the modern-day manager is to keep a total city perspective in helping find this consensus, and on a more personal level, to have a thick enough skin to operate in the volatile, highly charged atmosphere that results from the council's struggles to formulate policy.

Along with a thick skin, the manager in today's world must be willing to depart from the status quo in order to serve the council well. The modern-day council not only is diverse in its membership and activist-oriented in its approach, but also in its search of change. It reflects the prevalent view in most cities that change—sometimes dramatic change—is needed to solve the major problems. The manager must be change-oriented, and must have the skill and knowledge to overcome the natural tendency of the bureaucracy to resist new policies and approaches.

Examples of this resistance, big and small, occur regularly in every city government.

In Kansas City, an example that comes to mind centers around creation of the Action Center—an unobtrusive little office that performs an enormous service to both the council and citizens by functioning as a central complaint-handling and question-answering agency within city hall. The council endorsed the idea in late 1973 and the center opened five months later. Even today, however, there are occasional difficulties getting employees to respond promptly to requests for service and information forwarded by that office.

The city's affirmative action program is another example. There clearly was a mandate from the Kansas City Council to implement an effective affirmative action program, but it has been a long process to get people within departments to move ahead with the hiring of additional minority and female personnel.

In both these instances, and in many others, it has been the administrators' challenge to make the system keep pace with the council. When the council mandates change—as today's council surely will—failure of the system and the manager to respond can cause only frustration.

Frustrations can be expected in any event. The task of the city manager has never been an easy one, and tomorrow's city manager will face even greater challenges than today's. But it seems certain that mayors and city councils will continue to diversify and seek active participation in the decision-making process. It appears equally certain that the manager's fundamental role will continue to be that of insuring that the elective leadership not only has access to information but also that it becomes really involved in the workings of city government.

Where this is done, the municipal body will indeed be "kept alive and supported by town spirit," free and strong communities will thrive, and the attractiveness of the council-manager form of government will continue to grow.

Editor's note: Robert A. Kipp was city manager of Kansas City, Missouri, when he wrote this article.

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(Year 1977) Council-Manager Relations and the Changing Community Environment

by Arthur A. Mendonsa

2006 Comment: In 1977, City Manager Arthur Mendonsa further charted the new world of the modern city manager. Mendonsa elaborated on the social issues that Kipp raised, and he went further to discuss the increasing technical expertise of the city staff and greater intergovernmental relations. Mendonsa described environmental changes faced by the city manager, and then he focused on the role of local government in intergovernmental relations and the range of issues and concerns on which the manager would be expected to advise the council.

Finally, Mendonsa introduced the expectation that councils and citizens would look for managers who aggressively pursue productivity improvement programs. This anticipated the contemporary wave of interest in best practices.

Mendonsa and Kipp's articles can be contrasted even though they appear in the same issue of PM. Mendonsa, in typical city management fashion, turned the energy and passion behind Kipp's comments into another series of problems to be solved—the city manager's traditional bailiwick.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

The relationship that exists between managers and their councils does not lend itself to easy description. Under most council-manager charters, the manager is the chief executive officer. In theory, if not always in fact, this means the manager has the authority and power to execute the programs and policies established by the council.

As part of this executive authority, the manager appoints and removes personnel, recommends a proposed annual work program and a budget to carry it out, oversees the efficiency and effectiveness of the municipal operations, and performs other executive functions.

Although the power and authority of a manager comes from the charter of the local government jurisdiction, a manager is not an independent agent. He is appointed by the council and serves at its pleasure. This reality has an obvious effect on the manager's relationship with the council. A manager can execute but must always be sensitive to the politics of execution. He can appoint and remove department heads but must recognize the potential for public controversy such actions can generate. He or she can advise on policy issues and recommended policy actions but must not forget that the constituents are the councilmembers and not the public.

Public management is an exciting, challenging, and rewarding profession. It is also a profession with a high potential for stress. The stress potential is a product of the relationship that exists between the council and the manager. As long as mutual respect and trust exist between the two parties, there is no problem. When the council begins to intrude on the manager's authority and responsibilities, however, or the manager places himself in competition with the council for public support on conflicting policy stances, the stress factor increases. It is usually resolved by the council asking the manager to look elsewhere for employment.

The very nature of the council-manager system invites conflict between the council and the manager, conflict on administrative issues, and conflict on policy issues. Remarkably, in spite of this, the council-manager system survives and continues to become more popular.

Perhaps the reason for its survival is its adaptability to the changes taking place in the community environment in which it operates.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Before the 1960s, the concerns of municipal government were relatively simple and uncomplicated. There were no

pressing and demanding social, political, and economic issues requiring the attention of municipal officials. There was little contact with state government and even less with the national government. The primary concern was *community housekeeping*. Municipal governments provided police protection, put out fires, picked up garbage, collected sewage, supplied water, cleaned and maintained the streets, and did little else.

In this environment, managers were viewed and dealt with more as technical experts in public works management than as trained professionals in public administration. They were seen as the council's administrative officer rather than as the government's chief executive.

Their primary concern was to achieve and maintain efficiency and economy in performing the housekeeping functions and to keep the municipal government in sound financial condition. They gave little or no attention to intergovernmental relations and often were discouraged from dealing with other units of government.

They seldom concerned themselves with social issues or with economic or community development problems, and usually did not offer direction or guidance on these issues. They gave advice on community issues when requested, but otherwise remained silent. They were not seen as community leaders and usually had very little public identity.

A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

But, in the 1960s, the community environment in which municipal governments operated began to change. Social issues, environmental issues, economic, and community development issues all became local government concerns. At the same time, intergovernmental relations became a vital and ongoing activity of the municipal operation.

A number of developments prompted these changes. The first was the civil rights movement. With very little advance warning, local communities and the nation had to deal with the disruptions and turmoil brought on by the highly effective confrontation strategy of civil rights leaders in their determined efforts to gain social, political, and equal opportunities for blacks. This strategy worked.

Blacks have been elected to Congress, to state assemblies, to school boards, and to municipal and county councils. Federal legislation has been adopted prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Federal programs have been created to help minorities move into the economic mainstream. Poverty programs have been established to help overcome the problems of unemployment and unresponsive social services.

A second development was the rise of political groups concerned with the environment and the preservation of this nation's cultural and historic heritage. The efforts of these groups produced federal legislation mandating state and local governments to act against water pollution and other environmental problems. These efforts also produced legislation making consideration of cultural and historic protection needs the pre-requisite for obtaining a variety of federal funds.

A third development was the acquisition of political strength by urban communities. The impetus was the Supreme Court's "one-man-one-vote" decision. This decision made it possible for urban communities to gain representation in state assemblies and in Congress.

As a result of these majorities, both the states and Washington, D.C., have become more responsive to urban needs. Significant changes have been made in state and federal aid programs. More attention has been given to the financial plight of urban communities and to programs designed to strengthen the management capacities of the local governments serving these communities.

Another development was the shift from federal categorical grants to block grants. Under the categorical programs, local communities had little discretion in establishing and pursuing community priorities. Priorities were dictated by which of the categorical programs had funds available for distribution rather than by community needs.

Complicating the process was the competitive nature of the categorical grants. Those communities that excelled in grantsmanship received the money—those that did not have grantsmanship skills lost out. In recent years, block grants have been substituted for a number of categorical programs. As a part of these, grant administrative oversight has been shifted from Washington to the local communities. This has placed new and increased responsibilities on local governments, both in policy making and in performance control.

In recent years, a new set of concerns have imposed themselves on municipal governments. Energy shortages have hampered the reliable delivery of public services. Inflation has accelerated municipal costs and given a renewed impetus to productivity improvements. The recession has created high unemployment rates and hurt local economies. Equity issues are forcing local governments to re-examine the distribution of service benefits in the community.

In addition to the external forces, there has been a change in the interests and concerns of managers. Before 1960, most managers were preoccupied with public works issues. Beginning with the 1960s, they became more conscious of social concerns and more sensitive to the changing political environment. They began to take the initiative on community development, the environment, equal opportunity, intergovernmental relations, and other public issues of direct concern to municipal governments. In taking these initiatives, they were supported by councils that were better educated and better informed about public issues than in earlier times.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

These social, political, and economic changes have greatly altered the interests and concerns of municipal governments. These changes, along with the increased political strength of urban communities, have elevated

municipal governments to a critical position in the intergovernmental system.

The states, as well as the federal government, recognize that it is one thing to *make policy* on such issues as community development, environmental protection, social and political equality, and economic opportunity, and it is another to *make these policies operative*. They are not equipped or geared to make these policies a reality. This must be done at the local level, the place where the government meets the people. This recognition has increased both state and national support for programs that will strengthen and improve local government management capacities.

A NEW COUNCIL-MANAGER RELATIONSHIP

The social, political, and economic changes of the 1960s and 1970s; the changes in the qualifications and sensitivities of managers and councils; and the political ascendancy of urban communities in the intergovernmental system have all worked to change the nature of the concerns of municipal governments. These changes have affected the relationship between councils and managers.

Managers are no longer viewed as public works specialists by councils. They are expected to be knowledgeable about the whole range of problems and concerns that confront municipal governments. They are looked to for advice and recommendations on social issues, community development concerns, environmental problems, and economic growth. They are expected to be knowledgeable about grants-in-aid programs of both state and federal governments. They are encouraged to be active in intergovernmental relations and to develop and use state and federal agency contacts that can benefit the communities they serve.

Equally important, they are looked to for guidance in state and federal legislative matters which might affect their communities. They are encouraged directly and tacitly to become more actively involved in community affairs and to speak out on issues of council concern.

They are no longer passive observers in the policy development process. They actively participate in this process, proposing policy, advising on policy proposals initiated by councils, and supplying information on which policy decisions can be made.

Managers are also expected to aggressively pursue productivity improvement programs. Moreover, as the concerns about equity receive more attention, they are expected to design and administer service delivery in a manner that will ensure equity in both service levels and service benefits. Finally, both councils and the public expect and want competent people to administer public service programs. Managers are now supported in their efforts to attract and hold competent people, even if it means going outside the community to find them.

Managers are also expected to keep their councils informed about public issues and to assist them in learning more about their jobs and responsibilities. They inform their councils about training programs and join them in attending these programs. Managers have a much closer working relationship, too, with their councils than in the pre-1960 era.

They look to their councils for advice and suggestions on administrative issues that are politically sensitive. They are more inclined to keep their councils informed about administrative problems and, in the sensitive affirmative action area, they discuss programs and strategies by which affirmative action [can] be made more successful.

Today, managers and councils work as a team. They must. The problems and issues are much too complex and difficult for councils to work in the policy areas without a full understanding of the administrative issues. Moreover, the complexity of the issues is such that councils need and expect the advice, information, and assistance the manager can provide in dealing with these issues. Equally important, many administrative issues are much too politically sensitive for the manager to proceed without keeping councils fully informed.

The council-manager relationship is no longer an arms-length relationship. Instead, it is a complementary and mutually supportive arrangement built on respect and sensitivity to the role each plays in the governmental process. Only through such a relationship can council-manager systems continue to be effective and responsive to the changing character of the community environments in which they operate.

Editor's note: When he wrote this, Arthur A. Mendonsa was the city manager of Savannah, Georgia.

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(Year 2002) Councilmanic Interference: When a Councilmember Crosses the Line

by Kevin Duggan

2006 Comment: This article reflects the core strength of council-manager government and the ethical commitments of professional local government managers. We can travel all the way back to Dr. Hatton's article in the 1920s to find the roots of the "manager as warrior," which in this situation Duggan was. Duggan comes across as low-key yet resolute, one who continually harbors the hint of self-doubt essential to a life of humility. His is the essential profile of a professional city manager.

We highlight two points in this article. First is the enduring obligation of a professional city manager to promote good government. This obligation has been passed on through the decades. Note that this outcome could not have been accomplished without an effective ICMA. Second, we see in Duggan's strategy the way the relationship between the manager and the council has evolved into a partnership. Although Duggan took the lead, the council's support—even if silent—cannot be discounted.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

Of all the things I thought I would encounter in my career, testifying in front of a grand jury and then a superior court jury on the history and purpose of the council-manager form of government and on how a councilmember had violated it, was not one of them. This is the story of a city manager dealing with one of the most challenging professional experiences imaginable—reporting a councilmember for misconduct.

Those of us who have chosen the profession of local government management recognize that establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with councilmembers can be among our most important and challenging responsibilities. I never anticipated, however, that the issue of a councilmember's attempts to thwart the principles of the council-manager form would become one of the toughest episodes in my own professional life.

Any of us who have been in this business for any length of time have encountered a few councilmembers who choose to "push the envelope" in influencing the administrative/management side of local government. Always, I have tried to avoid the politicization of basic local government services while understanding that councilmembers must be informed about and relate to some of the nonpolicy aspects of governing.

In most cases, we can find a reasonable balance. Even when a councilmember clearly crosses over into the area of an inappropriate attempt to influence staff's administrative responsibilities, the issue can generally be resolved through the manager's diplomatic yet clear explanation of the problems being caused. Often, councilmembers do not fully understand the impact that they are having on staff and will commit themselves to taking a different approach once they do. I also believe that most of us in our profession pride ourselves on helping councilmembers succeed in their roles and "keeping them out of trouble" when necessary.

This story is about what happened when the above-noted techniques did not work and a manager was faced with a tough choice between undesirable options. In this particular case, the impasse resulted in a decision by the city attorney and myself to report a councilmember's (the then-mayor's) misconduct to the district attorney. And this move eventually resulted in the councilmember's removal from office.

A byproduct of the decision was an attempt by this councilmember and his attorney to put the management of the organization on trial, together with, effectively, the council-manager form of government.

THE PROBLEM

While issues concerning the councilmember's conduct came to a head early in his second four-year term, problems with his conduct manifested themselves earlier in his tenure.

Understanding that Mountain View is in the middle of Silicon Valley but that the community's heritage is farming, it's helpful to know that the difficult councilmember came from a longtime local farming family, had longstanding ties to the community, and ran on the platform that he would be a "neighborhood councilmember."

Though he had a rather direct interpersonal style, the first year or two of his first term were without major stumbling blocks. Then, a series of increasingly problematic behaviors brought the councilmanic interference issue to a peak during the latter part of his first term and the early part of his second term.

Among the behavior patterns and actions that were problematic were:

- Directly contacting staff at various levels of the organization suggesting, and sometimes demanding, that certain things be done or not done.
- Displays of anger and temper directed at staff members at various levels of the organization.
- Attempting to influence code enforcement activities on properties near his home, including some properties he wanted to buy for personal or family financial gain.
- Communicating the clear expectation that he was entitled to rights and privileges above and apart from other residents because he was "a member of the city family."

Among the incidents that got the most exposure in the press, once the grand jury had issued "accusations" in this case, were these:

- A demand that the police chief be fired for not giving him advance warning of a search warrant to be served on his home as part of a criminal investigation of a family member.
- An order to code enforcement staff to pursue action against a neighboring property owner whose property he wished to acquire.
- Refusal to pay for the replacement of a fire hydrant destroyed by a family member, and outrage displayed when he was billed for the damage.
- Numerous questionable city-charged expenses, including the purchase of a \$700 tuxedo.
- A confrontation with the building official, in which the councilmember demanded that a multimillion-dollar, private construction project be shut down immediately because he thought the construction crane being used was unsafe and that the developer was too influential in the community.

As if the actions described above were not enough, the incidents that brought the interference issue to a crisis were his demands that staff block the development of a property he wished to acquire, immediately adjacent to property already owned by his family. He made it clear that he would see to it that both the planning director and I would be fired if the project were not blocked.

The conclusion that the situation was hopeless came when he asked me into his office one afternoon (while serving his one-year term as mayor) and told me that conditions needed to be placed on the development of the property in question. His aims were to discourage the current owner from proceeding, to lower the value of the property, and to increase the likelihood that the property owner would be willing to sell to him! Interestingly enough, this meeting took place just four hours before my annual council performance evaluation. The implication was clear: how I responded to his demands would influence his approach to my performance evaluation.

INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL

Throughout the period of this conduct, both the city attorney and I met individually with this councilmember many times in attempts to correct and modify his behavior. At first, we hoped that our efforts to inform him of the problems and likely consequences of his conduct were succeeding. In one case, when his belligerence had been directed at another council employee—the city clerk—the council was informed of his conduct and intervened to prevent a recurrence.

I even used my closed-session performance evaluation meetings as opportunities to express to the council the increasing need I felt to take action over the improper conduct of a councilmember because of the impact his behavior was having on my ability to carry out my responsibilities.

My goals were to modify the behavior and specifically to protect staff from his attempts to influence their work through confidential, one-on-one meetings. (He recognized the damage that would accrue to the city, the council, and the staff if the matters discussed in the private meetings had to be dealt with publicly.)

When it became apparent that his inappropriate behavior was escalating, that it had crossed legal lines, and that staff could not be shielded from his conduct, the city attorney and I concurred in a decision to report the conduct to an appropriate authority, regardless of the consequences. While we understood that it was not our role to determine what should be the outcome of any investigation, we felt we were obligated to disclose that the conduct was occurring.

The city attorney and I expected that the day would come when we could not adequately mitigate this conduct. We believed our recourse would likely be to report the conduct to the rest of the council. Because the conduct had become so severe and the legal implications so serious, however, we decided that referring the matter to the district attorney was an option that needed to be considered.

One of the drawbacks of referring the matter to the council was that this move would require that accusations be

made public prior to an independent investigation. Because of the "sunshine" laws in California, the council would have to consider the allegations in open session.

Additionally, any such investigation begun by the council would likely have been seen as politically motivated by this councilmember and his supporters. After consulting with two other councilmembers and the vice mayor (because the councilmember in question was mayor), we decided that the city attorney would consult with the district attorney of Santa Clara County. Each councilmember, including the mayor, was notified of this referral.

Based on his independent review of the facts, the district attorney chose to investigate the matter. Surprisingly, during the five-month investigation, this activity did not leak to the press. Needless to say, we found it extremely awkward working with the mayor during this period; also, many city employees had to be interviewed by a district-attorney investigator as part of the probe.

While the district attorney considered filing criminal charges on a number of counts, he finally determined to charge the mayor under a little-known and rarely used provision of California state law that provides for the removal from office of an elected official for misconduct. This procedure requires that a grand jury find sufficient basis for "accusations" to be filed against the elected official, then for a superior court jury to find the elected official guilty on the same standard of proof as required for a criminal conviction (unanimous agreement "beyond a reasonable doubt").

What followed were the closed grand jury proceedings, which involved the testimony of several city employees. In my case, testimony included an extensive explanation of the council-manager form of government and its adoption in the city charter.

One month later, the grand jury issued its "accusations" against the mayor for corruption and willful misconduct. The grand jury transcript also was released, detailing all the instances of misconduct. Next came a media frenzy that covered the entire San Francisco Bay area. Living through this media blitz and being personally featured in the coverage were unpleasant experiences for me and for other staff members.

Anticipating the action of the grand jury, the mayor already had hired one of the most high-powered defense attorneys in Santa Clara County, who immediately began his media campaign to question the motivation of the mayor's chief accusers, namely, the city attorney and myself. The mayor also had used the period of the investigation to prepare his key supporters to take the offensive. The "spin" was that the city manager and city attorney were out to "get" the mayor for a variety of reasons, ranging from our desire to control city government to our fear for our jobs, as he claimed that he had been critical of our performance. However, no such criticism was ever evident to us, either within or outside the context of our annual performance evaluations.

Of particular note was the premise of the defense attorney that, since council-manager government did not allow this councilmember to directly intervene in the organization on behalf of his constituents, he could simply ignore the city charter and its council-manager provisions in order to address citizen concerns.

This attorney also suggested that, since some communication and contact with city staff are permitted, primarily to respond to routine inquiries, there had been no clear demarcation line to determine "councilmanic interference."

Meanwhile, the mayor was able to pack one council meeting with supporters who made it clear that they felt he was being unjustly prosecuted. For the first time in my career, I had members of the public saying the city attorney and I should resign for overreacting to the mayor's behavior. Not only was it evident that the mayor was not going to resign, but also that he was going to fight the charges vigorously and accuse his accusers in the process.

For a manager who prefers a low-profile approach to city management, this was quite a turn of events. What ensued was four months of media coverage leading up to the public trial. Having my own integrity and job security challenged in the media by the mayor's attorney and supporters was to me particularly frustrating. The councillor's (through the normal rotation process, he was again a councilmember at the time of the trial) legal defense strategy was to put his accusers on trial.

During the lead-up to the trial, it was important to me that the matter not become too great a distraction from the organization, or a significant impediment to the work of the city. I needed to avoid appearing distracted and preoccupied if city staff were to continue to function effectively. Also, the city attorney and I had to deal with the anxiety of staff members who were subpoenaed to testify at the trial.

The trial started off on a less-than-positive note, with the district attorney needing to drop three of the four accusations (counts) brought against the councilmember relating to the property conflict of interest. Bizarrely, it was determined that the defendant did not "technically" have a conflict of interest relating to his family's property (even though he and his family lived there) because it was held in trust by his father.

The lone remaining count was violating the city charter by interfering with the responsibilities of the city manager. Therefore, in actuality, the council-manager form of government, and how it functioned in Mountain View, were put on trial. Testimony stretched out for more than two weeks and was covered daily in the media. To say that this was a stressful period is an understatement.

Testifying on the history and purpose of C-M government was certainly one of my most interesting professional experiences. The case clearly became a testing ground for the principles and values inherent in the form. Specifically, it was a testing ground for our professional obligation to shield city staff from political interference and demands for

special treatment by an elected official.

The defense attorney attempted to make the case that any councilmember contact with city staff that was condoned by the city manager "opened the gates" for his client's conduct.

More personally, I had the unique experience of being cross-examined about confidential memos I had submitted to the council during my own annual performance evaluation. Also, to counter misinformation from the defense, I took the unusual step of giving the district attorney my most recent performance evaluation to present to the jury!

At the conclusion of the testimony, the wait for the verdict began. After almost four days of deliberations, the jury returned a verdict of "guilty of misconduct in office."

Newspaper editorials called the verdict a "victory for honest government" and suggested that this councilmember was lucky not to have been criminally prosecuted. Ironically, the main reason he was not being prosecuted in this way was his lack of success in getting city staff to do what he wanted. So, in effect, we had saved him from being more legally liable than he would otherwise have been.

Some of his political supporters continued to defend the councilmember, claiming he had been convicted only on a "technicality." In a further attempt to make public relations points, the councilmember resigned one day before the superior court judge was scheduled to sign the removal-from-office order. The judge, however, refused to acknowledge the resignation as sufficient and issued the removal order anyway.

LESSONS LEARNED

For both the city attorney and myself, opting to publicly accuse a mayor/councilmember of misconduct was one of the hardest decisions of our professional lives. In advance, we knew that this course of action would be difficult and professionally risky. On the one hand, we felt we had no other choice consistent with our professional ethics, but, on the other hand, we realized that the consequences of our action were likely to be significant for the community and for ourselves. While this move was difficult to make, we concluded that we had to act.

Although we as individuals were willing to put up with this councilmember's threats and attempts at intimidation as long as we could block his efforts, when it ultimately became evident that we could no longer fulfill our obligations to the council, staff, city charter, and community without disclosing his behavior, the appropriate course of action became inescapable (regardless of any personal consequences). We saw clearly that the staff could no longer be shielded from his conduct and that we must inform the council that one of its members was acting in a manner not consistent with their stated values, with the city charter, and, most likely, with state law.

The most difficult aspect of these types of situations is determining when the problematic conduct has gotten to the point where there is no alternative besides public disclosure.

Looking back on this experience, we would offer the following observations:

- Recognize that it can be extremely difficult to determine when your personal intervention with a councilmember has not been sufficient to fulfill your professional and ethical obligations to your organization and community.
- Don't underestimate the ability of a core group of supporters to rationalize the behavior of "their guy" and to take the offensive on his behalf.
- Clearly understand at what point you must disclose illegal/unethical conduct, even though you may not play a role in determining the appropriate remedy for the conduct.
- Appreciate that our ultimate responsibility as managers is not to individual councilmembers, but to the council as a whole and to the employees of the organization, the community, the ethics of our profession, and the laws governing the form of government in which we serve.
- Understand that attempts to establish reasonable flexibility in setting administrative/policy boundaries can later be attacked as removing all such distinctions.
- Appreciate that the value of having a strong working relationship with your city attorney cannot be minimized.
- Develop a mature understanding that doing what is right will often not be easy, may subject you to personal attack, and may have negative personal and/or professional consequences.
- Recognize that, although they probably won't be as vocal as your critics, many members of your community will have increased confidence in you and in the organization for your willingness to confront unethical behavior.
- Realize that acting ethically will resu It in local government employees' acknowledgement of your willingness to "walk the talk" in regard to principled conduct.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental to our service to our communities and our professional values is the need to consider thoughtfully when we as managers are morally, ethically, and/or legally required to confront misconduct. While our primary goal should be to educate those we work with to prevent misconduct, this priority does not absolve us of an obligation to take more drastic action if we are unsuccessful in preventing it.

Our greatest risk is the potential to rationalize that we don't really need to take action when confronted with the negative consequences of doing so. We need to reflect seriously and carefully on this point if we are to be prepared to act.

As we have heard over and over recently in relation to corporate and organizational scandals, the leaders of

organizations should be held accountable to answering three questions when illegality or corruption is exposed:

- What did you know?
- When did you know it?
- What did you do about it?

If we are to strive to be leaders of ethical organizations, we must be prepared to respond to these questions. As difficult as my experience was, it meant a chance for our organization to prove its commitment to the values we espouse. And, to say the least, it furnished some unusual and unexpected forums in which to explain the structure and value of the council-manager form of government.

Editor's note: Kevin C. Duggan was the city manager of Mountain View, California, when he wrote this.

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PM MAGAZINE

FEATURE

(Year 2004) Don't Drop the Ball with Your Council!

by Bill Garrett, El Cajon, California; Janice Schreuder, Rancho Cucamonga, California; and Bill Mathis, Napa, California.

2006 Comment: We have included this last article to show how instrumental the relationship between council and staff has become. The roles, responsibilities, and values of the city manager can be taken for granted, which marks the maturity of the profession. On the other hand, the article provides a cautionary note that "councils count," warning the members that, despite the value that professional management adds to a community, the role and legitimacy of council are crucial to long-term community well-being.

—John Nalbandian and Shannon Portillo

The nature of the job for elected officials puts their local government business into the combined time squeeze of work, home life, family, and recreation. Unless the elected official enjoys "retirement," the juggling act for the citizen-turned-elected-official can be chaotic if the local government manager, staff, and citizens do not support the effort to govern.

Managers can develop consistent and helpful strategies for supporting their elected officials (referred to as the council in this article) and for dispelling fears that things may fall through the cracks or that council won't follow up.

They need to remind staff that councilmembers are the elected officials of their communities and tend to get busy and distracted. Neglecting this point has gotten a lot of staff and local government managers into trouble because they took their elected officials for granted and, as a result, council did not feel respected.

We get busy with hectic schedules and crises, and there doesn't seem to be enough time in the day to get our own things taken care of. When everybody has his or her own important agenda to carry out, it becomes easier to work with and see a councilmember as "just another city employee" who may become disregarded, or one we hope to avoid if possible. A councilmember might, after all, have yet another request, suggestion, question, or something that may take too much time, and maybe we can't really help. That could be even worse.

Unhappily, there has been more turnover in localities' managers and assistant city managers as councils have become disillusioned with top management. Some of this could have been avoided if councilmembers had felt and believed that they mattered to management and that management listened to them, took notes, and followed through for them, then got back to them so they knew they were being heard and responded to.

BASIC GROUND RULES

Honor confidentiality and fairness. Treat each councilmember fairly and equally. (This is nothing new, just sometimes overlooked.) Do not play favorites with councilmembers; this will spell disaster for the manager. Do not repeat confidential conversations with councilmembers to others. If and when necessary, have the local government's attorney or the manager's confidential assistant present when issues need to be documented. Councilmembers will understand this. Have your police chief present if a meeting involves information regarding crime or follow-through on crimes.

Sometimes, councilmembers will share gossip, frustrations, or what grates on their minds. There is no problem in just listening to what is being said and not feeling the need to answer or "do something." In a few cases, however, councilmembers will share concerns that cannot be kept in confidence, such as suspected illegal activities, malfeasance in office, or dishonorable public practices, and these concerns must be acted on with either the council or the city or county attorney. Also, it is important for the manager to give guidelines to councilmembers after each new election.

Keep confidences. Confidences often add up to councilmembers' expressing ideas just to hear how they sound and to ruminate or practice on the manager before presentation in public. These confidences should be kept and valued because they indicate trust in the manager's wisdom and ability to appropriately analyze an idea.

Managers should not develop the idea that "if you tell me, it should be shared with all members of the council to show fairness and equity." Telling everyone would undercut the council's view of the professional manager—who can listen and assist them in expressing their views better.

Communication is not enough. Take notes at every meeting. There are no informal meetings when councilmembers or board members are present. Make sure that you always have pen and paper with you or a designated staff member who understands the members' initiatives to take notes of all suggestions, requests, and ideas during a meeting.

Discuss and delegate certain topics to staff for more information after the meeting. Staff may already have information available because a councilmember has mentioned the topic earlier. Then, follow through in another conversation to make sure that any request is still valid. If it was just an idea for the moment and not a heartfelt request, the matter may end there.

Take notes during telephone calls from councilmembers. Don't blow an elected official off as just another caller who likes to hear himself or herself talk. If councilmembers prefer to send e-mail messages, make sure these messages are followed through on, too. Delegate requests to the department heads who can follow up. And get back to councilmembers.

When giving information to a councilor, give the same information to the mayor first and then to all councilmembers. Be fair and equal. Elected officials need to be oriented to how a manager processes ideas and concerns. An understanding of the manager's thought process will help councilors appreciate the manager's sincerity, organization, and willingness to listen actively and then respond.

COUNCIL'S DESIGNATED STAFF MEMBER

Managers should be savvy enough to designate an intelligent staff member to the councilmembers, one who can serve them in several ways. The staff member should be able to:

- Understand their needs.
- Understand all personalities.
- Serve as a concierge.
 - Provide directions to the places they will travel.
 - Make hotel reservations (with confirmation numbers).
 - Reserve automobiles (get councilmembers' vehicle preferences).
 - Make airline reservations.
 - Make conference reservations, and confirm them.
 - Keep an extra copy of all reservations, confirmations, phone numbers, and addresses in case councilmembers want this information again.
- Notify mayor and all councilmembers of public events, meetings in town, or functions requesting council's presence.
- Follow through for mayor and councilmembers on all city or county events.
- Follow through on council's e-mails, and respond to them.
- Clue in the manager on what is going on. Do not leave the manager out of the loop on anything.
- Copy the manager on councilmembers' requests and messages to department heads.
- Prepare a room for all meetings with any and all councilmembers in the local government building or specified place of meeting.
 - Have coffee or desired beverages ready prior to meeting time.
 - Have paper and pens on hand.
 - Be prepared for councilmembers; think ahead for them.
 - Prepare councilmembers for their meetings, and solicit questions before meetings.

When bad things happen or a crisis occurs, make sure the elected body is informed by you, the manager, and not by the press, other staff members, or callers. No elected official wants to be out of the loop, with no answers and no strategies, when something goes wrong or a crisis occurs. Keep your councilors informed up-front. Also, be prepared with strategies and options for councilmembers so they can be reasonably prepared to make a response to whatever might take place.

TWO SYSTEMS THAT WORK

Complaint Tracking System. One manager reports: "Our citizen complaint process is processed through the manager's office. (In an attempt to lessen the negativity of the word "complaint," the term has been modified to "customer service request.") The idea is not only to have a centralized processing area but also to ensure that the manager's staff is aware of the issues presently of interest to the community. It also provides us with the opportunity, for example, to track trends of issues and problem areas."

When asked how a complaint management system works, the manager replied: "The staff processes the requests using a Microsoft Access program and records a service number, department(s) to whom the request is routed, service address, description, name of person making the request, and his or her telephone number.

"Generally speaking, we do not accept anonymous comments. If the staff person believes the issue is compelling enough to investigate—for example, an allegation of a major health or safety issue—we will notify the appropriate department and ask that it be checked out.

"The department is expected to respond to the request and report back to the manager's office of their findings within 10 days. Additionally, the department is required to notify the requestor that the investigation has been completed and if action has already been or will be taken to remedy the concern. If no response is received by that date, a reminder is sent to the department. This is rarely necessary.

"If a service request comes through a councilmember on behalf of one of his or her constituents, we use the same process. In this case, of course, we would notify the councilmember of the results as well."

Calendar Reminders. The biggest complaints from staff usually involve a councilmember forgetting or losing a reminder about a significant community date or event. The biggest need for a governing body might be a centralized calendar and special automatic reminders, such as wake-up calls at hotels, signals of upcoming civic events, memos of appointments, and the like. A busy council will designate highly sophisticated systems to complete this task.

Regular e-mail contacts or daily cellphone reminders often work well. This activity should not be considered babysitting but a necessary part of tracking business for elected officials.

PANDERING OR BABYSITTING VERSUS SUPPORT

To a great extent, if a councilmember believes that a certain level of support is important to him or her or to his or her constituency, it doesn't matter if staff members consider it pandering, babysitting, or anything else they might want to call it. Staff members must realize that they look at the world through different-colored glasses than do elected officials.

Managers are the professionals who ensure that things are done as efficiently and effectively as possible, whereas elected officials look at things from a political perspective and want to see results that will enhance their political positions. It is imperative, however, that administrative staff recognize that councilors have indeed been elected by the residents of the community and are the ones that know the pulse of the constituents.

So, from the management perspective, as long as a councilmember's request doesn't violate any local rules or regulations or the ICMA Code of Ethics, the manager is going to make sure the elected official is accommodated (even down to the question "Where are we going to dinner tonight, now that we're at the league's annual conference?"). From a jaundiced perspective, managers are sometimes indeed the "hired help."

WHAT ARE THE SMALL IRRITANTS THAT COULD BECOME LARGER?

Here are some personal statements that answer the question "Do small things matter?"

"I know a manager who was fired because, although he was great with the big-picture items, he didn't get the potholes fixed that councilmembers had told him needed to be done."

"Councilmembers frequently pay a lot of attention to their pay and benefits packages. If they don't think they're getting all they're due, staff is sure to hear about it."

"Councilmembers want to be sure they're treated with the respect they think they're due because of the office they hold. If they don't think staff respects them, things can get really tough."

"An offhand remark at a public gathering that's perceived as being negative toward a councilmember will invariably get back to that councilmember and can easily come back to bite you."

FOLLOWING THROUGH ENSURES YOUR CREDIBILITY

When your councilmember has a request, mandate, or suggestion, make sure it is followed through on immediately, even before the job has been completed. Many times, it will take several hours, days, or maybe weeks before the request can be completed. The councilmember, however, should be notified as soon as the task is delegated, concerning the timeline, the work backlog, and the equipment needed.

Councilmembers need to know that their requests were taken seriously and that they were heard. Seeing that this is so will save a lot of frustration and misconceptions down the road.

SHOW UP!

One of the comments most often heard from an elected official is that the manager doesn't show up at public events. Managers need to make an effort to pick the events that are most important to be seen (by council) and to attend them. For many events, designate the assistant manager or deputy manager and, in some cases, a department head to attend. Managers need to be seen by the mayor and councilmembers as being participants in the community.

COUNCILMEMBERS SHOULD KNOW THEY COUNT

Councilmembers feel more comfortable when they know they count as their localities' elected officials. They also need to know they count as people; they have feelings, and they know when they are being brushed off and disregarded. They are the bosses; they are elected to make changes and to make a difference, and staff members are hired to follow through for them.

The council's "pet peeves" should not be revisited over and over again. A manager should remember what they are. The manager also should make sure that councilmembers know they have been heard, that action will be taken when needed, and that there will be follow through.

Council and the manager's staff form a unique and eclectic partnership that is chosen by the electorate. The manager must develop staff members to be able to meet the challenges inherent in their jobs. The ideas identified in this article represent some of the most common issues and resolutions.

You certainly don't have to drop the ball when it comes to your elected officials' needs.

Editor's note: When this article was written, Bill Garrett was president of the California City Management Foundation (CCMF) and city manager of El Cajon, California. Janice Schreuder had served as the deputy city manager of Pomona, California, and was a human resources consultant in Rancho Cucamonga, California. Bill Mathis, Ph.D., was a CCMF board member and a management psychologist in Napa, California.

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