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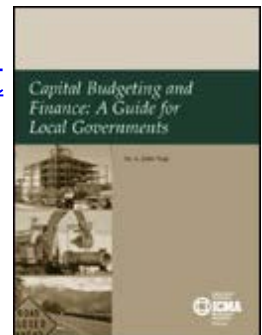
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Welcome to Our (Well-Protected) Building

by Will Gunther

In an era of terror threats, workplace violence, mass shootings, and decreasing budgets, protecting staff at city and county government facilities is extremely difficult. Although technology is a great security enhancer, it is not always affordable. Not only do budgets constrain security measures, but also the need for citizens to visit government officials and use government services limits the ability to restrict access.

Procedural measures are effective security tools and are generally inexpensive. Indeed, the foundation of any good security system is effective security procedures. This article is intended to outline cost-effective ways to secure local government offices and increase visitor control, while maintaining positive relationships between citizens and their local governments.

The biggest threat to most local governments may be an attack by a disgruntled citizen or employee. The U.S. Department of Justice claims the workplace is the single most dangerous environment. In the average workplace, disgruntled former employees account for approximately 3 percent of workplace attacks. Current employees account for 20 percent of attacks, but two-thirds of all attacks are conducted by strangers. The potential for violence increases for government employees because of their daily interaction with strangers.

Procedural changes can assist in the protection of city or county staff at relatively minimal cost. The first thing to remember when developing any security procedure is that nothing good or bad happens without surveillance. Nobody will ever attack a government employee or government facility without some type of pre-attack surveillance.

Department of Justice statistics show government workers at a higher risk for violence than employees in the private sector. Government employees constitute only 18 percent of the American workforce but make up 30 percent of victims of violence. International terrorist organizations are also a threat, but harm to employees is less probable in large cities and counties like New York and Los Angeles, which are prepared to manage such attacks. Cities of this size can have large, highly trained reactive forces that decrease the potential of such attacks. Domestic terrorism is of greater concern to city or county staff than international terrorism but is still far less probable than random attacks.

Procedural changes can assist in the protection of city or county staff at relatively minimal cost. The first thing to remember when developing any security procedure is that nothing good or bad happens without surveillance. Nobody will ever attack a government employee or government facility without some type of pre-attack surveillance.

The duration and sophistication of the surveillance may vary, but there definitely will be some type of surveillance, whether it is achieved through technology or manpower. The first place to address security and limit surveillance is in the parking lot. To be effective, security measures should work from the farthest location to the center of the facility, with its high-priority officials.

PREVENT ATTACKS NEAR BUILDINGS

Many government buildings rely on nearby parking garages for their employees, which requires workers to walk to the building either through a corridor or on the street. Particular attention should be paid to parking areas near reserved parking for government officials. Employees should be encouraged to alert security about individuals who seem to stay in their cars for too long a time, or individuals who leave the area without conducting any business in the building.

Corridor entrances should have the parking spaces near their doors reserved on all parking levels. This prevents the disgruntled citizen from parking nearby, then waiting for an official or employee to arrive and enter the building.

These spaces should be marked "reserved," but signage should not provide further information about who they are reserved for, like "City manager." This kind of designation only allows possible assailants to identify an official's vehicle

with one pass through the parking garage. Officials should rotate the reserved parking spots they use.

If possible, senior officials should use government vehicles when attending such local group meetings as chamber of commerce dinners or other official functions (see box on page 12 for further individual protective measures for local government officials and employees). Employees should be escorted to their cars when they leave at odd hours.

PREVENT ATTACKS AT BUILDING ENTRANCES

From the parking lot, the next possible places for an assailant to observe and/or attack are the immediate access points to the building itself. All vents and maintenance access points should be secured, and a maintenance check of these places should be conducted weekly to see if anyone has tampered with them. This will ensure that no chemicals have been placed in the heating and air conditioning system or other vents that could allow contaminated air to enter the building.

This check will only take about 15 minutes out of a maintenance person's day but could pay large dividends. Even if the maintenance person isn't fully knowledgeable as to what to look for, the fact that a would-be attacker observes the vents' being checked will probably prevent such an attack.

The reception area should have a tinted-glass or one-way mirror front, except for a small portion of the divider, where the receptionist interacts with visitors. This simple, low-cost approach can create an unknown element that causes a potential attacker to search for a different building to target.

At the entrances to government administration buildings, there can, of course, be armed guards. The best way to help an armed guard to be effective is to supply an observation and reaction plan (sometimes referred to as "overwatch") to this guard because a crazed gunman or other violent attacker certainly will have developed a plan to deal with him or her. (Refer to the box on page 13 for some details of a reaction plan.)

Because a building is meant to be accessible to the public, the guard is required to be polite and helpful and in all likelihood will never encounter a problem. Establishing observation of the guard doesn't necessarily mean paying another guard, too. Receptionists can be positioned to observe him or her. If the receptionist is not in a position to watch, an inexpensive camera can be installed to allow observation.

The receptionist should have an audible alarm to alert others of a violent attack. Avoid using a buzzer or another sound that could be mistaken for a fire alarm. If possible, a voice alert announcing something to the effect of "Danger, main entrance" would inform everyone that there is a problem and where it is, allowing security officials to move directly to the problem while informing staff to move away.

Staff members should be taught to move everyone into specific rooms if there is a problem and to lock the doors when possible, thus limiting the number of potential casualties. The audible alert will likely take the attacker out of the offensive mode and force him or her into a defensive mode because the assailant will now expect to be approached by security or law enforcement. Clearly, someone should also be designated to alert local police when the alarm is heard. The alert system itself does not have to be an elaborate and expensive system. A few loudspeakers could be enough.

In communities with a large enough budget to afford walk-through metal detectors, certain procedures should be adhered to. Often, personal effects like wallets and keys are removed from the person and handed back on the other side of the metal detectors. Handbags and briefcases also are searched, but wallets, coffee mugs, large soft-drink cups, and cigarette packs are not checked. Consider how these items are checked in your building. A medium-sized pocket knife will fit into a cigarette pack, and a small handgun will easily fit into a large coffee or soft-drink cup.

Have visitors walk through the metal detector with these items; most cups are plastic or ceramic and will not set off the detector. Wallets should receive a cursory search to make sure there are no razor blades or other potential weapons. Again, this search doesn't have to be intrusive; to an observing potential assailant, the search itself should rule out trying to hide weapons in this way.

Discovery of any form of contraband, especially contraband that is unauthorized but not illegal to possess, should require that the owner be identified. For example, a person attempts to enter with a pair of scissors in his or her briefcase. This item isn't a weapon and is legal to possess. Scissors, however, though legal to carry into the building, might well be unauthorized by the regulations for building access.

Protective Measures for Local Government Officials and Employees

Here are some measures that elected officials and staff members can use to enhance their safety:

- Senior officials should vary their exits from the office and the office parking area, when possible.
- Senior officials should drive official vehicles to functions.
- Senior officials should avoid discussing specifics about their homes or neighborhoods during parties or functions.
- All employees should vary their parking spots and be aware of the vehicle next to them, in order to easily recognize a different vehicle during evening hours.
- Supervisors and coworkers should look for signs of possible domestic violence among subordinates and coworkers; domestic violence often spills over to the workplace.
- Employees should seek parking spots in lighted areas.

- Employees should have keys in hand when approaching their vehicles, to avoid distraction in the parking lot.
- Don't use a cellphone while moving to your vehicle! It limits hearing and greatly decreases situational awareness.

The person carrying scissors most likely has no intention of using the scissors as a weapon; however, identification of the individual should be made and logged, if legal to do so. The district attorney's staff can assist in providing legal advice on this issue. Another way to check the legalities is to visit www.lawguru.com, a Web site that offers free legal advice in a question-and-answer format. The site also has a database with thousands of previously answered questions.

Such an occurrence could be an innocent mistake or simply a method of probing security measures to see what is allowed to pass. Before the 9/11 attacks, airline passengers who forgot to remove pocket knives and other forms of contraband simply turned these items over to security agents, and the items accompanied the passengers as checked baggage.

It is possible that Al Qaeda tested the airline security system with various forms of potential weapons to determine which implement had the highest success rate of passing through security procedures. We know box-cutters were the weapon of choice and were not illegal prior to 9/11. The same method of probing could happen at a government facility.

Identifying and documenting people who attempt to get into a facility with contraband will determine repeat offenders. Requesting identification and informing a person that his or her identity is being noted also may stop any further probing and force the individual to seek other targets.

Additionally, if a group wishes to continue to probe, the group will have to be greater in number to avoid repeat offenses by the same person. As groups of criminals become larger, the possibility that information about their activities will be discovered becomes greater. Inevitably, someone always has to brag about his or her exploits.

FIRST STOP: RECEPTION AREA

The reception area should have a tinted-glass or one-way mirror front, except for a small portion of the divider, where the receptionist interacts with visitors. This prevents visitors from seeing how many personnel are in the receptionist's space, whether an armed guard is present, if monitors are in place, and whether any other security measures are in place. This simple, low-cost approach can create an unknown element that causes a potential attacker to search for a different building to target.

Receptionists should give badges to those visitors who are going to a specific office. Badges don't have to be elaborate, just simple paper ones that are computer-generated and then laminated. They can be color-coded for certain floors and even have a letter on them to denote certain wings or sections of a building. Individuals walking in the wrong wing or on the wrong floor can be quickly identified and assisted. This measure enhances customer service while decreasing the potential for a potential attacker to be "lost" in the building while actually checking security measures. Individuals wishing to meet with senior officials should wait in the lobby until someone from the desired office comes down, greets them, and escorts them to the office.

A Reaction Plan

One way an armed guard can help provide building security is to follow an observation and reaction plan, sometimes referred to as "overwatch." Here are some suggestions for such a plan:

- One individual who can see the entrance guard should be designated to call law enforcement in the event of a confrontation. This precaution avoids the possibility that everyone will react to the immediate situation and no one will contact additional help.
- The person designated to call authorities should have a report procedure sheet on his or her desk. The report sheet should include such items as the point of confrontation (which entrance), how many attackers, what types of weapons they have, any threats or violent comments made, and vehicle description, if known. This information will assist police in immediately providing the necessary resources.
- An alarm should alert office workers to move to safe areas, avoiding the crisis area. It should alert other security officials in the building to move toward the crisis area.
- Guards who are hired to overwatch the entrance guard should be armed and trained to react to confrontation; otherwise, they are merely additional, salaried observers of impending destruction.

Receptionists should also have a stress word or phrase in the event that they are held captive and forced to call someone to the lobby. This stress word or phrase should not sound out of the ordinary, so as not to alert the attacker. The receptionist might use a specific name to address an administrative assistant in case of trouble. The name "Gertrude," for example, could be used to alert any person that there is a problem. The conversation should sound perfectly normal to the attacker: "Hi, Gertrude, this is Mary in the lobby. Could you let the deputy mayor know he has a visitor?"

DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF FORGOTTEN VISITORS

Finally, such visitors as contractors installing new carpet, who employees may feel are safe just because they are working in the building, should be routed through certain stairwells or elevators. They, too, should not be allowed to

wander over the building. A sexual predator who looks the part of a contractor could easily choose a potential victim and then be able to find the victim's name, office location, potential parking spot, and vehicle over the space of a few days.

Employees begin to trust individuals they see or converse with for several days without actually knowing anything about them. Ninety-nine percent of the contractors a person ever comes in contact with are nice, trustworthy people.

A stranger you know, however, is always far more dangerous than the one you don't. Channeling the access of contractors protects them and staff. Contractors kept in one specific area can't be accused of theft or other crimes in places where they are not authorized. Once again, a simple badge worn daily would identify the area they are authorized to work in.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Security staff should always concern themselves with all potential attack points. This includes not only the main entrance and any other pedestrian entrances but delivery entrances as well. Because loading docks and delivery entrances offer unlimited potential for the introduction of weapons or other contraband, delivery personnel should be escorted and vehicles randomly searched. It is extremely easy for a delivery person to leave a weapon hidden somewhere for future use.

In the case of a terrorist group, the weapon may be delivered for use by a staff worker inside. All food-service and other employees with access to deliveries should be subject to background checks whenever financially possible. At a minimum, food-service and other receiving areas should be checked frequently by security personnel.

Security personnel should also get into the habit of observing visitors' shoes. Shoes are the most often-overlooked item when individuals attempt to disguise themselves. A would-be attacker, for example, may dress nicely to lower suspicion when moving around the building but may have left his or her workboots on.

A person wearing a contractor's overalls may have on running shoes that are not commonplace with the normal contractor's staff. Also, contractors often bring tools and other supplies to the sites where they work. These toolboxes and other containers should be inspected daily.

TECHNOLOGY: IS IT WORTH THE MONEY?

Many organizations invest in security cameras as part of their overall security plans. Often, however, there is too much emphasis placed on this capability. When using cameras, ensure that the personnel designated to view the monitors aren't overwhelmed by being required to watch too many monitors. Too many monitors to watch often results in none of the monitors' being observed adequately.

Security staff should be rotated through monitor stations. No one has the attention span to observe monitors for eight hours or more. Have guards change positions throughout the shift. Guards at the entrance will appreciate the overwatch of the guard in the monitor station and will be more likely to reciprocate and pay closer attention when it is their turn to monitor.

Cameras do not stop violent crime by themselves. They must be supported by security personnel able to react quickly to confrontations. And the first camera expense should be designated to the parking lot. Employees leaving work can notify the security officer in the monitor station as to where they are parked, so the relevant camera can be watched. When possible, call buttons should be placed in the parking areas to enable employees to alert security to anything suspicious.

A public-address system in the parking area allows security officials to react immediately with a verbal warning to potential attackers that law enforcement is coming. This may be enough to save a victim during the initial stages of an attack. An attacker will immediately realize that he or she is being observed and that the escape window is closing quickly. Monitors alone will only allow law enforcement to report the type of vehicle and possible description of the attacker, but the victim still could be kidnapped or assaulted.

Though preplanned kidnappings and assaults generally take two minutes or less, a voice over a public-address system is faster than any security force in deterring them. The next place where a camera should be placed is in the main entrance, observing the entrance guard and reception area.

This article has described just a few examples of how cities and counties can protect their staff members without draining their budgets. Good security can be inconvenient, but security managers and consultants should be able to suggest cost-effective methods that have a minimal impact on the everyday functions of an organization. Obviously, larger communities have larger security budgets for some of these security measures, but the reality is that procedures are the first line of defense, and effective procedures don't have to be expensive. PM

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Ethics

THE ETHICS OF COUNCIL-STAFF TEAMWORK

By the Institute for Local Self Government

Question: I am a newly elected city councilmember, and I ran on a platform of "taking care of the basics" in our city. Being action-oriented, I requested a meeting with our public works director immediately after I took office to discuss some concerns that my neighborhood has had about the condition of our streets. I think this is a situation that needs addressing now.

During the meeting, I noticed she was very uncomfortable. Furthermore, I got frustrated because she refused to commit herself to any plan of action to address my concerns. I lost my temper when she suggested that my concerns should be discussed with her boss, the city manager. The public works director has worked for the city for more than 10 years and should be able to respond to my concerns competently. Frankly, this is the kind of nonresponsiveness that I ran against in my campaign. What gives?

Answer: First, congratulations on your election and your willingness to spend time engaged in public service to your community. Public service is complex and holds some traps for the unwary, as you discovered in your meeting with the public works director. There are probably several things triggering her discomfort.

HOW DECISIONS ON STREET REPAIRS/IMPROVEMENTS ARE MADE

As a city councilmember, you are now part of a multimember governing body that collectively makes policy decisions for the city. These policy directives are typically communicated to the city manager, who then provides appropriate direction to staff to follow up.

For example, regarding the street issue, the city may already have a capital improvement program. This program probably has a schedule or agreed-upon standards and/or an engineering evaluation of the condition of city streets. These objective criteria guide staff on how to prioritize repairs for those streets most in need. These criteria likely have already been approved by the council as a whole and are subject to a budget also adopted by the council.

The public works director's discomfort may have resulted from a concern that you were suggesting that the city deviate from its already adopted policies and budgetary priorities. It may be that you don't agree with the city's present approach or priorities, but these concerns need to be addressed to and by the council collectively. You can imagine the chaos that would result if each councilmember could individually direct the activities of city departments.

This is not to say that staff members do not appreciate hearing from councilmembers about conditions of which the city should be aware. The key is to communicate this information in a way that does not direct or appear to direct staff to act.

THE MANAGER'S ROLE

This distinction between providing information to staff and providing direction is key in local governments with a council-manager form of government. In such places, the council provides direction to the manager, who then relays that direction to staff. The general role of the manager is to promote partnerships among council, staff, and the public in developing public policy and building a sense of community.

The reason that your public works director suggested that you talk with the city manager is that, by law, this is the way the council-manager form of government has been set up. Because the manager recruits, hires, and supervises the city's staff and carries out the council's policies, it is appropriate for the manager to direct staff.¹ In fact, most staff members are trained to do exactly what the public works director did-suggest that you contact the city manager. This enables the manager to hold staff accountable on the council's behalf for implementing the council's policies and directives. The entire council, in turn, holds the manager accountable for staff's overall performance.

This "chain of command" feature of the council-manager form of government is typically embodied in the city's charter or ordinances. Elected officials who have disregarded this feature have found themselves in legal hot water. For example, a mayor in the San Francisco Bay Area was convicted in 2002 of violating this aspect of a city charter by asking that city employees do favors for him that advanced his personal investment objectives.

The issue also came up in litigation involving a southern California city and a land use matter. Homeowners argued that the city's actions with respect to a nonconforming use were legally flawed because a councilmember had passed along a constituent's concerns about the structure to the city's planning director.² Ultimately, the city prevailed, on the argument that the councilmember's communication was an inquiry and not a directive. But it was an arduous process. The court also implied that the result might have been different had the councilmember's communication been a directive to staff.

This is not to say that lawsuits or criminal prosecutions will follow all communications with staff. These two cases, however, do underscore that the particular division of labor envisioned by the council-manager form of government is one that has the force of law and needs to be respected for the city to operate smoothly. The bottom line is that, if your city has a council-manager form of government, it appears that your conversation broke the law.

CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST ISSUES

Another possible reason for the public works director's discomfort may relate to the fact that the street improvements were in your neighborhood. Under the state's conflict-of-interest rules, you need to be especially careful about becoming involved in city issues that affect your neighborhood if you own or have a long-term lease on property in the vicinity.

The conflict-of-interest rules preclude you from being involved in governmental actions that affect your economic interests. Under these rules, you have an economic interest in real property in which you, your spouse, your dependent children, or anyone acting on your behalf has invested \$2,000 or more, and also in certain leasehold interests. The analysis can be complex and involve determinations of whether your property will receive improved street services (as opposed to merely repaired streets). A conversation with your agency counsel can help you understand the law's application to your specific circumstances.

Remember, too, that the law only sets minimum standards for ethical behavior in public service, and public perception plays an important role in public service ethics. Whether or not you legally need to disqualify yourself from becoming involved in these discussions, think how it will look to the community in general if one of your first priorities as an elected official appears to be one that involves some kind of personal benefit in terms of improved streets in your neighborhood.

This can be an ethical dilemma in and of itself if one of your campaign pledges involved a promise to get the streets fixed for your neighbors. On one hand, you told people you would take steps to address a problem (promise keeping is an ethical value); on the other, you now have a responsibility to act in the community's best interests as a whole.

One approach to balancing these conflicting ethical values is to learn how decisions concerning street repairs and improvements are made in your city. It may also be that other areas of the city have the same needs as your neighborhood. Talking with the city manager about whether this issue can be put on the agenda for discussion by the council, or whether the city can sponsor a community workshop to hear residents' concerns, are two options to move forward on your goal of following up on campaign commitments. This also gives your fellow councilmembers an opportunity to participate in the conversation.

TREATMENT OF STAFF

Staff can be a valuable source of expertise and background on these issues, which is why it is unfortunate that you lost your temper with the public works director. Experienced and loyal staff are a precious resource for any organization, and the public sector is no exception. As you can tell from the above analysis, the public works director was trying to do her job and keep you from stepping over legal boundaries by referring you to the city manager.

As a general matter, keep in mind that asking staff for special favors—even those that do not benefit you personally—puts staff in an awkward situation. Staff generally are dedicated to their jobs and want to work with elected officials to improve their communities. Forcing them to choose between doing something an elected official wants them to do and established city practices, protocols, and policy erodes that trust. Add the fact that staff may worry that their livelihoods are on the line no matter which approach they take, and the damage to the relationship goes even deeper.

Why should you care? There are two sets of reasons. In terms of ethics, respect is another key ethical value. There are ways of communicating the depth of one's concern and frustration without giving in to the anger that may accompany that frustration. Sure, you have the power as an elected official to scold staff about something, but ethics is not about what we can do; it's about what we ought to do. This is why most cities have protocols or other requirements that any criticisms of staff members be made only in private to the city manager.

Communicating with Staff: What's OK and What's Not?

In localities with a council-manager form of government, the typical ordinance provides that elected-official inquiries and information exchanges with staff are OK, but "directives" are not. Typically, this means that an elected official can share information with staff members and seek facts from them but cannot tell them to do anything. The lines can become blurry, however, when an elected official is inquiring about a problematic situation, because there

usually is a strong and natural correlation between an elected official's being aware of a problem and wanting that problem addressed.

As an ethical matter, it's best not to try to walk too closely to the line, for example, making it clear in the tone and phrasing of your "inquiry" that you would appreciate/expect some form of action, while carefully avoiding anything that literally would be a "directive" or a request for action. Basically, such an approach violates the spirit of the rule against councilmembers' issuing directives to staff. Violating the spirit of any rule is rarely, if ever, ethical. If what you want is action on a problem, talk with the manager.

The second set of reasons to care about staff's loyalty is more pragmatic. Your success as an elected official depends on the assistance of capable staff who know your community. Savvy leaders cultivate their relationships with those in a position to help them achieve their goals. You want to motivate staff to apply their expertise, energy, and creativity to the problem you want to solve. As management guru Ken Blanchard counsels, "The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority." As a steward of the city's resources, you have a responsibility to concern yourself with the long-term implications of city practices in general.

On the staff relationship issue, veteran recruiter John Shannon (now with CPS Executive Search) says he has observed the difficulties that public agencies have in attracting top-notch individuals if the word gets out that their working environments are abusive, unstable, or unfair. (And be assured that, with e-mail, word travels fast if members of a profession feel that one of their own has been mistreated.)

In fact, when organizations have had this problem for awhile, they become subject to a sort of downward spiral of mediocrity that becomes difficult to overcome. This is not the direction in which you want to take your city.

Finally, encouraging talented individuals to make a career in public service is an even more long-term and global issue. The question of where the next generation of local government professionals will come from is significant enough that the city managers' organization has a committee dedicated to grappling with it.

The Manager's Ethical Obligations

This month's column discusses the ethics of elected officials' dealing with staff. What about the city or county manager's ethical obligations to serve elected officials? Managers who are members of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) subscribe to a lengthy Code of Ethics that includes a number of tenets on this topic:

- Tenet 5. Submit policy proposals to elected officials, provide them with facts and advice on matters of policy as a basis for making decisions and setting community goals, and uphold and implement local government policies adopted by elected officials.
- Tenet 6. Recognize that elected representatives of the people are entitled to credit for the establishment of local government policies; responsibility for policy execution rests with the [ICMA] members.
- Tenet 7. Refrain from all political activities that undermine public confidence in professional administrators. Refrain from participation in the election of members of the employing legislative body.

ICMA promotes ethical conduct through its Code of Ethics, publications on ethics issues, and training programs for local government professionals. For more information on ICMA's ethics program, issues and advice, or enforcement of the ICMA Code of Ethics, visit the "Ethics Program" section of www.icma.org.

WHAT TO DO?

Cartoonist Lynn Johnston described an apology as the "superglue of life" because it can repair almost anything. Do what the public works director suggested: talk with the city manager about what happened, and explore options. Then, ask to meet with the public works director to apologize for losing your temper.

Experienced staff appreciate that elected officials may not be accustomed to being part of a collective decision-making body. They also understand that you are just becoming acquainted with how city councilmembers can advance both their policy goals and constituents' concerns. Being a person who acknowledges this point can get you off on the right foot with the city's staff in your new position.

¹See, for example, Section 5 of the typical ordinance establishing a council-manager form of government offered on the International City/County Management Association's Web site: www.icma.org (providing that "Except for the purpose of inquiry, the council and its members shall deal with the administration solely through the city manager, and neither the council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinates of the city manager, either publicly or privately.")

²Levy v. City of Santa Monica, 114 Cal. App. 4th 1252, 8 Cal. Rptr. 3d 507 (2d Dist., 2004).

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ethics.

ILSG is the nonprofit research arm of the League of California Cities. For more information about the institute's ethics resources available to local officials, visit the Web site at www.ilsig.org.

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DEPARTMENTS

On Retirement

THE VALUE OF EDUCATION

For years, there has been growing evidence that a great many Americans are not doing an adequate job of managing their personal financial situations, including their investment and retirement planning programs.

As the population ages—especially the enormous baby boomer generation—it is increasingly clear that millions of people are ill prepared for retirement. In addition, surveys show that people generally lack confidence in their ability to make informed decisions about their personal finances and investments, and that a lack of time and knowledge is a significant contributing factor.

Education seems to be a big part of the problem, but it may also open the path toward a longer-term solution. Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, noted recently, "No matter who you are, making informed decisions about what to do with your money will help build a more stable financial future for you and your family." His sentiments were echoed by Dr. Edward Gramlich, a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, when he said, "Americans of every income and educational background want additional tools and training to address the complexities of personal finance."

The belief that people need help with the complexities of personal finance is not only the opinion of experts but also of the public. Baby boomers say they lack confidence in their money management skills. In an American Association of Retired Persons 2004 poll, 27 percent of boomers surveyed said they were worse at handling money than their parents.

Clearly, public employees want and need more help in managing not only their retirement plans but also their financial affairs in general. Often, employees look to their employers for help with retirement planning, and employers also assume a measure of fiduciary responsibility for their employees' retirement security. Public managers, therefore, have been looking to their plan providers for more effective ways to better educate their public sector employees.

One answer is making education part of an integrated program that starts with understanding individual needs and requirements, developing products and services that respond to these needs, and incorporating personalized education programs addressing these same needs and requirements.

What is distinctly different about this approach is that, by linking education programs through personal education, it offers the potential to transform participants into better investors, retirement planners, and financial managers.

Free White Paper

To receive a free white paper and learn more about the pressing need for greater personal financial and investment education, along with a review of the highlights of ICMA-RC's education initiative, contact Robert Barkin, vice president of communications and public relations, at 202/962-8212. Refer to document AC: 0105-47.

In the long term, we are seeking to:

- Promote active participation in retirement programs.
- Communicate the need for adequate savings levels.
- Stress the desirability of diversification in investment portfolios.

One solution to the diversification issue may be target-date funds, now available to public sector employees who are uncomfortable with managing their own investments. Investors simply pick a fund close to when they want to retire or begin withdrawing funds. Fund managers furnish a diversified portfolio, automatic rebalancing, and automatic asset allocation.

The end-goal is to allow investors to obtain the information they need and desire in a way that is most comfortable for them. More important, public managers and plan providers will be helping to elevate the level of financial literacy

and to empower individuals and families to better plan and manage their financial affairs.

It is said that education is a lifelong process. Elevating people's knowledge levels and transforming their habits will come but only as the result of a long-term effort of public managers and plan providers. It is a formidable task but one in which we can look forward to making progress in the years ahead.

—Joan McCallen
CEO and President
ICMA Retirement Corporation
Washington, D.C.

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Profile

NEARING TWO DECADES AS MANAGER, MOUNT DESERT ISLAND MAN STAYS ON AN EVEN KEEL

The road to Dana Reed's office was a long and winding one. The town manager came to Bar Harbor, Maine, in 1986 by a path through Ohio, Michigan, Oregon, Montana, Connecticut, Vermont, and central Canada.



Dana Reed is town manager of Bar Harbor, Maine.

He might still have been in Canada—where a young, long-haired Reed and a hitchhiking buddy showed up at the border on foot—had it not been for a big, hairy wolf spider nestled in one of their backpacks that sent them hightailing it back to the United States.

Reed laughed at the memory Thursday during a rambling interview in his Cottage Street office, where some of his staff shared holiday treats and hot, strong coffee before leaving for the Christmas weekend.

A lover of the outdoors since childhood days as a Boy Scout in Shelby, Ohio, Reed was "tired of looking at corn" in Vassar, Michigan, when he decided to apply for town management jobs in places where he could fish, hike, bike, ski, and fish some more.

After managing Vassar for about six years, he applied in the Northeast and the Northwest and waited a month in the Midwest to find out that he, his wife, and his two children were going to make a new home in the famed resort town of Bar Harbor. "It's a lovely place to live, a good place to raise a family, a good town to work for, [where] the residents and councilors are supportive," he said. "We have our problems, but ours are good problems to have."

Against all odds, Reed is still in Bar Harbor. The odds were bad for two reasons: elected officials sometimes change managers as often as their shoes, and the town of Bar Harbor, where the stakes are so high for everyone, sometimes can be the prettiest little controversial town in Maine. "There are high stakes in all resort communities, and there is also high risk and a high profile," Reed said. "But people are people no matter where you go, and it's inevitable that you will have conflicts."

In the past few years, Reed has often been at the core of a very public conflict between the town and hotel developer Thomas Walsh, who owns more than 100 hotels around the world and whose Bar Harbor properties alone are assessed at more than \$35 million. Reed's critics have portrayed him as a vindictive and deceitful manager who lives to foul up Walsh's projects, run up his building costs, and generally harass him.

Reed doesn't say that the accusations hurt, but the Boy Scout in him is offended by the idea of being unethical or untrustworthy. "I am open, honest, and ethical," he said quietly. "I'm a Boy Scout, and I'm proud of it."

Reed strongly denounced the idea that he and Walsh are archenemies as "absolutely invalid." He said he has survived so long in Bar Harbor, even after well-publicized legal fights with powerful people and companies, because he listens carefully and does what the council and town meeting tell him to do.

"The town, long before I got here, decided you needed building permits and that you have to comply with your building permits," Reed said of the very issue that has caused so much angst between the town and Walsh in recent

years. "In most cases where you have a landowner without permits, once he's told, he gets the permits," Reed said. "But for some reason, [Walsh] doesn't do that."

Instead, the hotelier sometimes builds first and asks later, which frustrates more Bar Harbor residents than just the manager. To be exact, Walsh has built without permits 25 times in recent years, from small jobs to luxurious ones, and asked for the required documents later. "He does some very nice projects," Reed said of Walsh, a self-made business giant who grew up in Bangor and Brewer, "but the Bar Harbor voters have decided there are certain rules they want followed for land development."

Town Councilor Ken Smith, who was among the councilors who hired Reed in 1986, said the elected officials chose Reed over scores of other applicants because of his strong financial background, which included bailing Vassar out of debt in just months at the age of 29.

Reed had to lay off a third of the city staff to do it, he recalled, but that was the only time he was forced to put people out of work. "I think the good things he does offset the bumps in the road that he's had," said Smith, who has served on the council off and on for 20 years since 1980. "He's really been an asset to the community," Smith said, "and he is well respected in the community and by his staff."

But what about those public disagreements that Smith, among other officials, hates seeing in the newspaper? "Part of [Reed's] persona is his ability to go with the ups and downs and weather the storms that happen," Smith said. "No matter who you get, you're going to have some of the same things happen."

Smith said both managers and elected officials are typically liked by half the town and disliked by the other. "I'm 50 percent wrong when I get up in the morning," said Smith, a longtime Bar Harbor businessman.

Smith agreed with Reed's own theory about his longevity and success in Bar Harbor: he communicates well with councilors, he treats them all equally, and he does what they ask him to do. "As a longtime chair [of the council], I know his attitude is 'I work for seven people, not one or two,'" Smith said.

Reed wasn't sure Thursday whether he would finish out his career in Bar Harbor, but he did know he isn't ready to leave. "I have never considered moving on," he said.

—Liz Chapman
Staff Writer
Bangor Daily News
Bangor, Maine

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Fast Facts

Benefits of E-Government

- Nearly 70 percent of local governments report improved communication with the public as a result of their e-government initiatives.
- 56 percent cite improved customer service.
- More than 99 percent of local governments have Internet connectivity.
- All reporting jurisdictions with a population of 250,000 or more have a Web site.
- Close to 60 percent provide downloadable forms, online communication with elected and appointed officials, employment information and applications, and codes and ordinances on the local government Web site; nearly 76 percent post council agendas and minutes.
- Fewer than 30 percent of respondents accept online requests for local government records or services (such as pothole repairs), provide GIS/mapping data, or send electronic newsletters to residents and businesses, but 50 percent to 62 percent of these respondents plan to provide these services in the future.
- The most frequently cited barriers to e-government initiatives are lack of financial resources (64 percent) and lack of technology/Web staff (63 percent).

Statistics taken from ICMA's 2004 E-Government Survey. Aggregate results are available on [ICMA's Web site](#). Complete survey results, downloadable for analysis, are available at <http://bookstore.icma.org> (select "E-Documents" from the lefthand menu).

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ICMA Fund for Professional Management 2004 Annual Contributions

2004 Annual Contributions ICMA established its Fund for Professional Management in 1986 to support and promote the council-manager form and professional local government management. Investment interest from the Fund is used to support communities interested in adopting council-manager government, to assist in efforts to retain the council-manager form when it is challenged by ballot referendums, and to raise public awareness of the benefits of professional local government management. Annual contributions ensure that the Fund for Professional Management can continue its good work for the future of the profession. ICMA gratefully acknowledges the following contributions made in 2004 by 507 ICMA members, state associations, and other supporters of the profession. Public Management n April 2005

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