

# Don't do the Same Things Differently Do Different Things

Ed Everett

ICMA Conference Presenter



# This Financial Crisis is a Gift

- Requires us to rethink what we do
- Provides pressure so we can make changes
- Gives us cover to implement changes
- Keeps others from resisting changes
- Frees you, lightens your load, reduces your stress and makes you happier
- Allows your city to reach its potential!

# Look at this issue from 30,000 Feet

- Big Problems require Big Solutions
- Examine new concepts
- Don't do the same things differently
- Do different things
- Shift our role not our focus

# Old Paradigm Regarding Role of Government and City Manager

# Center of Universe Model or Superman Model



# Old Paradigm Thinking (Content)

- City
  - ✓ be all things to all people
  - ✓ responsible for Quality of Life of cities
  - ✓ solve people's problems
  - ✓ require little of their residents
- Councils: elected to serve people
- Residents are "customers"
- City Mgrs: make all the above happen

# Old Paradigm Thinking (Process)

- Staff has the expertise to solve all problems.
- Residents don't have expertise, time or persistence to solve problems.
- If you involve the public you can't control the results and it often turns into chaos.
- Council members were elected to make decisions.

# Old Paradigm Thinking (Attitudes)

The Public is:

- Uninformed and won't come to meetings
- Arrogant and entitled
- NIMBY driven
- Self-interested not community-oriented
- Shouts and fights at meetings
- Finds fault and blames others

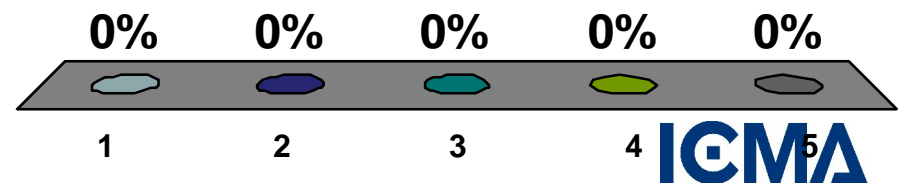


# The Old Paradigm Doesn't Work Well!

- We faked it when we had money.
- Problems were not quite as wicked.
- We haven't had to consider alternatives.
- We are slow adaptors.
- We do what we are comfortable doing.

The old paradigm represents an outdated role and way of thinking for government and city managers.

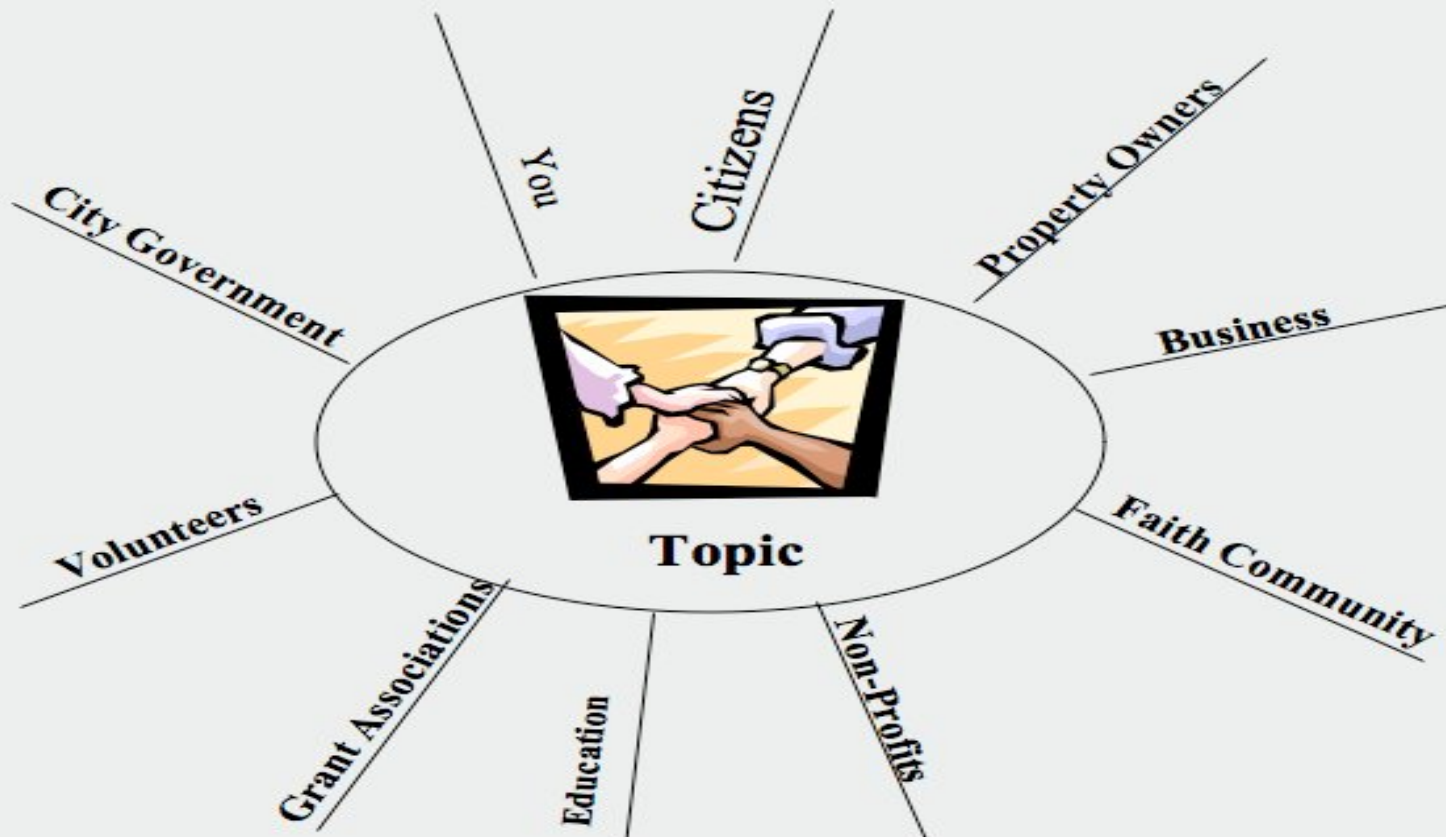
1. Agree
2. Mostly Agree
3. Neutral
4. Mostly Disagree
5. Disagree



# New Paradigm Regarding the Role of Government and City Manager

# Partnership Model

**Partnership Wheel**



# New Paradigm Thinking (Content)

- City: can't solve all problems and never could
- City: only partially responsible for Quality of Life
- Citizens: have most responsibility for Quality of Life
- Citizens: are very different from customers
- Residents: are sometimes customers but mostly citizens
- Wicked problems will only be solved by a partnership
- City, citizens, city managers, councils have new roles

# New Paradigm Thinking (Process)

- Citizens have different expertise than staff and both are essential to solve problems.
- Cities don't always have the best answers.
- Partnering with the public yields better decisions and faster implementation.
- Trust your citizens to help solve problems.
- City manager's role should be to facilitate problem solving not SOLVE the problem.
- Managers need to move control from **making** the decision to establishing a problem solving **process**.

# New Paradigm Thinking (Attitude)

## The Public:

- Has interest and expertise
- Is much smarter than we think
- Will become involved and develop creative solutions
- Will be civil and responsible if good civic engagement practices are used
- Is your friend and partner, not your enemy

# Old and New Paradigms

Old

New

Center of Universe Model

Partnership Model

Customer

Citizen

City is lone "Decider"

Civic Engagement

City org. centric

Community Building

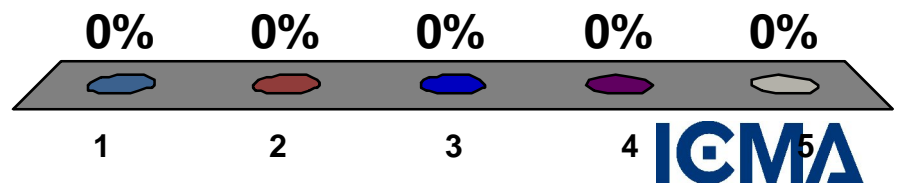
Public necessary evil

Public as partner



# My Reaction to the New Paradigm:

1. Embrace the concept and thinking behind it
2. Seems mostly correct
3. Is neutral
4. Have reservations
5. Disagree with this approach



# Two Most Important Skill Sets for Future Success in New Normal

- Civic Engagement skill sets
- Community Building skill sets

Without these 2 skills sets your future success will be significantly limited.

# Civic Engagement Skill Set

- Knowing what C.E. really is and what it isn't
- Designing C.E. processes
- Facilitating C.E. meetings
- Asking questions vs. providing answers
- Letting go of complete control of final solution
- Trusting in citizens and the process
- Leading using C.E.

InFocus Report for specifics (out shortly)

# Community Building Skills

- Understanding the power and importance of building community
- Changing the culture of your community
- Understanding that community is your most important infrastructure
- Being a leader in building community
- 4 city roles in building community
  - Raising consciousness
  - Catalysis
  - Convener
  - Facilitator

IQ Report (Vol. 41/#4 2009) for specifics



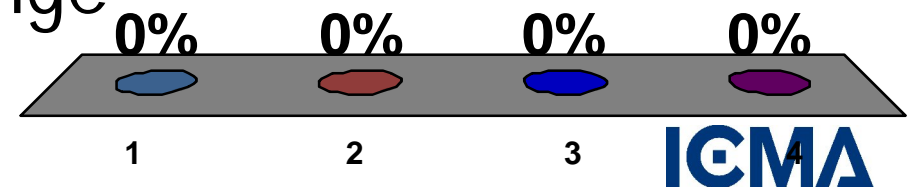
# No One Said It Will Be Easy

## We Must

- Change our attitude toward the public
- Relax our control needs
- NOT manage out of fear or anxiety
- Embrace our discomfort with change
- Be Leaders and not just Managers
- Learn the skills of C.E and C.B
- Educate our councils
- Educate and learn from our citizens

# The Most Difficult Change for me will be...

1. Changing my attitude toward the public
2. Relaxing my control needs
3. Letting go of my anxiety and or fear
4. Embracing my discomfort with change



# It Takes Time!

- Allow 3 to 5 years to change the culture of your organization.
- Allow 5 to 7 years to change the culture of your city.
- If it were quick and easy, it wouldn't be worthwhile.

# Silver Lining of New Normal

- Rid ourselves of old ways that don't work.
- Unshackle ourselves from out-of-date thinking and old expectations that hinder us.
- Develop cooperative processes that ease your burden.
- Turn Customers into Citizens.
- Remake your job into something more enjoyable and reduce your stress.



Don't waste this opportunity by nibbling at the edges

Embrace this opportunity by shifting the roles of government and citizens while making your job easier and more rewarding.

Have Fun!!

**ICMA**

# Resources

- Community Building
  - Peter Block: “Community”
  - Peter Block/ John McKnight: “The Abundant Community”
  - John McKnight: Asset Base Community Development Institute at Northwestern University
  - Robert Putman: “Bowling Alone” “Better Together”
  - Margaret Wheatley: “Finding Our Way”
  - Ed Everett: ICMA IQ Report “Community Building” vol. 41/Number 4 2009
  - Website: [Nextdoor.com](http://Nextdoor.com): Free website that will build community within your neighborhoods.

# Resources

- Civic Engagement
  - Margaret Wheatley: “Turning to One Another” “A Simpler Way”
  - Kimberly Pearce: “Public Engagement and Civic Maturity”
  - Anne Kubisch et al: “Voices from the Field” Aspen Institute.
  - Paul Loeb: “The Soul of A Citizen” (skim this one)
  - Ed Everett: ICMA InFocus Report (soon to be released)
  - Websites: [peakdemocracy.com](http://peakdemocracy.com) (good website for organized engagement over the web)

# Questions/Comments?

Additional Information...



**ICMA**  
**97<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE**



**Milwaukee**  
**WISCONSIN SEP 18-21 2011**