

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

January 12, 2021

On-Line Meeting Via Webex

Following the

7:00 p.m. regular REDA Meeting

THE PUBLIC MAY OBSERVE THE ON-LINE MEETING BY CALLING MARCIA GLICK, CITY MANAGER, AHEAD OF TIME AT 763-531-1258 FOR LOG-IN INSTRUCTIONS. THE PUBLIC WILL BE ABLE TO LISTEN BY CALLING +1-312-535-8110 AND ENTERING ACCESS CODE 177 301 2413 . IF PROMPTED, HIT #.

AGENDA

1. CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR PRO TEM
2. ROLL CALL: Kline, Webb, Selman, Backen, Mayor Blonigan
3. INTRODUCTIONS: Craig Waldron, facilitator
4. Review plan for January 23rd Goal session – articles attached for background
5. ADJOURNMENT

Five Qualities of a 'Premier' City

By DAVID UNMACHT

As I write this column, I am traveling around the state to attend the League of Minnesota Cities 2017 Regional Meetings. My staff and I are energized by the interactions we have with city leaders from across the state.

Quite simply, it's fun to see old friends and meet new ones. More than that, though, Regional Meetings are an important component of the League's work. It is no secret that we learn as much about your issues, ideas, and concerns as you learn about our board and staff's work at the League.

Traveling with my peers offers a perfect opportunity to think and reflect. I am fortunate to have a long history of working with civic leaders from all parts of our state. Over 34 years in local government, I have witnessed firsthand the best practices of municipal government, not only in Minnesota, but across the country. Like many of you, I find that optimal learning opportunities come not from textbooks, but from the "school of hard knocks."

Over the past few years I have begun collecting, organizing, and speaking publicly about best practices in Minnesota city governments. To that end, I have created a short list of important qualities that on a macro scale define the nature of a city government's work.

To enhance the credibility and reliability of this model, I have shared these ideas in work sessions with countless city managers, mayors, councilmembers, and city staff. Here are five qualities that can define best practices in governing and leading Minnesota's cities. I refer to cities that achieve these qualities as "premier."

1. Establish clear roles and expectations.

The best cities ensure that the duties and responsibilities of each city official are clear and well-understood. The mayor doesn't try to be the city administrator, and the public works director doesn't try to make policy as a councilmember.

A leading indicator of city hall troubles is a lack of clarity and understanding in the roles of city officials. In reading about cities that struggle, take note of how often



the issue has to do with what individuals perceive their roles to be.

2. Endorse and manage change.

The best cities are not afraid of change to ensure they operate in an optimal manner. No city official wants to work in an inefficient and ineffective manner. However, the difference is clear: some officials talk and some act. Implementing change doesn't happen by wishing or wanting; it happens with deliberate and managed action.

Asking good questions about how work is done in your city is a healthy step toward ensuring that your operations are efficient and effective.

3. Emphasize communication.

The best cities understand the value and importance of communication. City officials understand that sharing information is not "an extra," but a primary purpose of their work. With the emphasis today on social media, the function of communication has changed significantly just in the past few years.

Training in media relations and communicating your message is an important priority, not fluff. Ask yourself: Is your

city ready if CNN—or even your local newspaper—shows up at city hall?

4. Share common values.

The best cities have the capacity to reach consensus through shared community values around common goals. City officials respect differences and individual opinions and work to collaborate and find common ground on important issues.

Do leaders in your city have the capacity to disagree, debate, and act without personal animosity?

5. Plan for the future.

The best cities focus on planning. This includes financial planning—balancing short- and long-term operational and capital resources.

It also includes land use plan-

ning—ensuring that zoning codes and the comprehensive plan are up to date and effective in guiding the development of the city.

How well does your city fund and plan for short- and long-term operational and capital needs? Are your zoning and land use plans up to date and current?

Remember, you won't find this list in a textbook. I encourage you to talk to your colleagues in city hall about how well you do in each of these five areas and, ultimately, ask the question: "Are we a premier city? If not, why not?"



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On the web

Share comments about this topic at www.mnccities.org. Click on "St. Paul to City Hall," and post your comments below the story.

Strategic Direction – established 2017; confirmed for 2020

- Innovating for Quality Services and Efficiencies
- Promoting & Connecting
- Revitalizing the Community
- Investing for the Future

Innovating for Quality Services and Efficiencies

- Employer of Choice – retention, attraction, tools-software-resources
- Enhanced Services
 - technology enhancements
 - Drinking water softening, water pressure improvement
 - Solid waste – options
 - Way-finding
 - Special Needs – Shared Mental Health Worker –

Promoting & Connecting

- Communication to Inform Residents
- Engage/Involve Residents
- PR Campaigns/Outreach

Revitalizing the Community

- Redevelopment Downtown
- Redevelopment Outside of Downtown
 - Point of Sale

Investing for the Future – AA+ Bond Rating Confirmed

- Park Facilities – Meeting spaces
 - Sanborn Park Building/Park Redevelopment
 - Lower Level Public Safety
 - Historic Meeting Room
- Asset Replacement & Maintenance
 - Master Plan Schedule for All Parks – 10 year CIP
 - Public Buildings- 10 year CIP
 - Street Projects – 10 year CIP
 - Water infrastructure- 10 year CIP
- Partnerships – Funding/Advocacy
 - Hennepin/State
 - BlueLine Connect Now! – LRT
 - Metro Cities/LMC/NLC – legislative priorities/policies & advocacy
 - BYR Quad Communities – Active military family support
 - Three Rivers Parks – Sochacki JPA, regional trails & trail heads
 - Youth Sports Associations (fundraising)
 - NWCT-CCX
 - Shingle Creek/Basset Creek WMO – lake/stream quality and projects
 - DNR/Shingle Creek/State-Fed/Mpls – Crystal Lake water table