

ITEMS DISCUSSED

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CALL TO ORDER / ACCEPT AGENDA

Mayor Bonkowski called the meeting/retreat to order at 5:44:56 PM with Councilmembers Blair, Blossom, Hytopoulos, Lester, Ward and Mayor Bonkowski in attendance. Ron Holifield of Strategic Government Resources led the retreat. There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

MAJOR TRENDS IN COUNCIL INTERVIEWS

Ron Holifield identified the major trends that emerged in Council interviews: Council interaction is more productive; the City Manager is doing well; there is some anxiety over the pace of change; and there is some concern about roles and responsibilities.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Ron Holifield started the discussion by asking Council what they are doing well. Council members commented that Council dynamics have improved. Other areas of improvement include the addition of regional committee reports to the agenda, better management of the agenda, and other adjustments made to Council meetings.

Council discussed the dais configuration and agreed to have the City Manager sit at the end next to the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem.

Councilmember Scales arrived at 6:30 pm.

Broad Topics

Communications. 6:29:20 PM The first topic discussed was communications. The topic included improving communications with the community, using a community survey tool, the use of devices at the dais, providing broadband service, the level of formality at Council meetings, community broadcasting, stronger communications from departments, and Council and community communications with the City Manager. Ron Holifield recommended the social media program of Bayside Village, WI.

Council discussed form of government restrictions in participating on local boards. Ron Holifield discussed Council/City Manager dynamics and the importance of protecting the integrity of the process. 6:57:24 PM He recommended that each Council member meet with the City Manager at least once a month on individual basis.

Questioning Staff. The next topic discussed was questioning staff. 7:17:59 PM Ron Holifield said it was important to strike a balance between trust and questioning. He said the role of Council is to question to get information to inform decisions, but the motive must be to get information. He added it is best to make information requests in advance of a meeting. He said the City Manager gives Council his advice and then supports the Council's decision. 7:32:51 PM

Council adjourned for a five-minute break at 8:03 pm.

Roles and Responsibilities. 8:09:28 PM Ron Holifield reported that Council feels that there has been progress made in adapting to the Council/Manager form of government. He recommended streamlining the agenda and letting the City Manager handle the details. He said there was some concern about how boards and commissions interact with staff and citizens. Council discussed Council liaisons on committees and approving committee and commission work plans. 8:28:29 PM

Council discussed streamlining the agenda. Ron Holifield recommended building trust and moving Council's focus up to policy. He said Council doesn't need to focus on low risk (political risk, public safety risk or financial risk) items.

Ron Holifield suggested that they determine measures for success. Council discussed implementing citizen surveys. City Manager Schulze discussed a technological solution for managing complaints.

Pace of Change. 8:55:29 PM Ron Holifield said that it typically takes 3-5 years to change the culture. Council discussed the pace of change.

One Team. 9:11:19 PM Ron Holifield said that one issue that was mentioned was that subsets of Council members meet prior to Council meetings to plan actions. He recommended Council shift their focus to the future and strive to have a board that is a single team and can disagree with integrity.

Operational Efficiencies. 9:14:02 PM Ron Holifield said that items raised under this topic include ongoing operational assessments; consideration of outsourcing; more innovative thinking; and right-sizing the organization.

Customer Service. 9:26:57 PM Ron Holifield said that Council should determine policy to set level of service. Council discussed reduced counter hours.

Work Plan Accountability. 9:28:57 PM Ron Holifield recommended that Council commit to the work plan and have regular reporting in place. He said that Council should recognize that the addition of new issues distracts from the work plan achievement. Council discussed how to manage changes to the work plan and the frequency of status reports on the work plan.

Community Visioning Process in 2014. 9:36:11 PM Ron Holifield said that included in this topic is determining a water plan for the long-term. Council opted to focus on process rather than particular issues for this retreat.

Specific Issues

9:37:19 PM Specific issues raised by Council members during interviews, but not discussed at the retreat, include water utility, Rockaway water supply, budget amendments, cultural arts funding, and consolidation of Police Station into City Hall. Council agreed to address these issues at future study sessions.

CITY MANAGER EVALUATION 9:39:14 PM

Council discussed the City Manager evaluation process with Ron Holifield, who will return to assist with the process.

AGENDA 9:44:06 PM

Mayor Bonkowski went over the agenda for the February 27, 2013 City Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m.


Christine Brown, Deputy City Clerk/Paralegal


Steven Bonkowski, Mayor