



# Governing Body-Staff Roles Balancing Policy and Administration

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## Governing body/Staff Roles

- Characteristics of Effective Governing Bodies
- Obstacles to Success
- Ways to Overcome Obstacles
- Defining Expectations



## Characteristics of Effective Council's

1. Willingness to address difficult issues – often the “big picture” problems facing a community.
2. Ability/Capacity of Governing Body as a team to deal with these issues.
3. Effective relationships with staff



## Obstacles to Success

1. Competing Values
2. Working conditions of governing body
3. Perspective of Staff



## Four Fundamental Values

- Representation
- Efficiency
- Individual Rights
- Social Equity



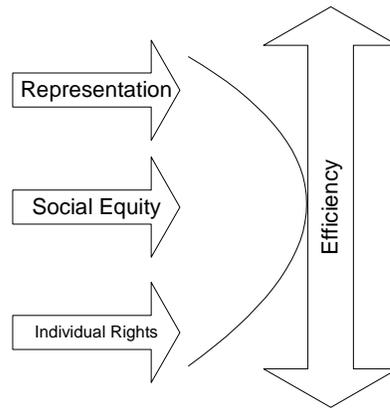
## Values Conflict

Representation

vs.

$$2+2=4$$

## When Values Collide



## Governing Body Working Conditions

- Vague task and role definition
- No hierarchy
- No specialization
- Little feedback or performance evaluation

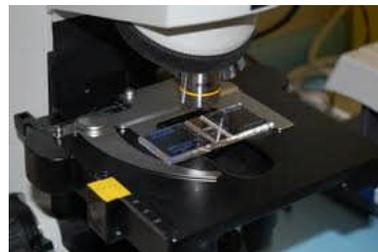


## Governing Body Working Conditions

Do it all in public!



## Values Conflict Under a Microscope





## Anxiety Produces

The flight response: It is much easier to deal with smaller more manageable problems AND constituent services.



## "We're Here to Help"

"Properly harnessed, staff knowledge and problem solving capability can be a tremendous help."



## Helping the Senior Cross the Road The Staff's Perspective

- Newly signalized intersection
- Crosswalk timing not long enough for elderly residents
- Staff studies the intersection
- Traffic Studies indicate that the light timing should not be altered.
- $2+2=4$



## Helping the Senior Cross the Road The Governing Body Perspective

- Attend a neighborhood meeting
- Crossing the intersection represents independence and mobility
- Certainly we should help seniors maintain personal dignity!
- $2+2$  DOES NOT EQUAL 4!



## Whose Right?

- Doesn't matter who is "right" but we know that neither perspective is wrong...the approach is just different.
- Need language to work through the values conflict to determine the best solution for this situation.



## Council Working Conditions

- There are natural incentives to avoid these conflicts, especially when smaller, more manageable issues are available to deal with.
- It is easier to be effective helping citizens deal with their individual problems on an ad hoc basis, than to build and maintain a sense of community by addressing big-picture issues.



## Overcoming Obstacles

- Clarify Roles and expectations
- Develop and Follow Practices and Procedures Protocols
  - ground rules on how to work together
  - Procedures for interacting with and evaluating the City Manager
- Establish vision and set goals – use Retreats
- Develop relationship with the staff



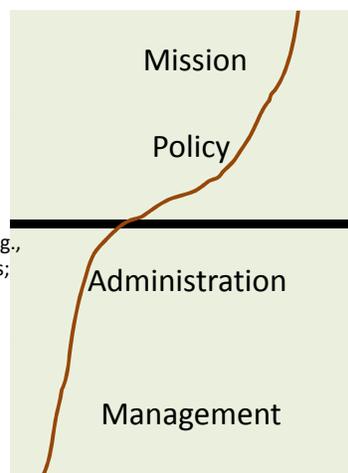
## The Politics/Administration Dichotomy

Determine “purpose,” scope of services, tax level, constitution issues

Pass ordinances; approve new projects an programs; ratify budget

Make implementing decisions (e.g., site selection); handle complaints; oversee administration

Suggest management changes to manager; review organization’s performance in manager’s appraisal



Advise (what city “can” do may influence what it “should” do); analyze conditions and trends

Make recommendations on all decisions; formulate budget; determine service distribution formula

Establish practices and procedures and make decisions for implementing policy

Control the human, material & informational resources of organization to support policy and administrative functions

### Manager’s Sphere

Source: Jim Svava, Dichotomy and Duality: Reconceptualizing the Relationship between Policy and Administration in Board-Manager Cities, Public Administration Review, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp 221 – 232)



## Local Governance System

When goals are clearly defined and assigned (goals/organization), you can determine effectiveness. When resources are clearly set and staff/contract/volunteers properly assigned (fiscal/personnel), you can measure efficiency. When rules and processes are developed and feedback and report systems (procedures/information), you can establish control without “over controlling”, “meddling” or “micromanaging”.

From Local Government Policy-Making Process, MRSC of Washington.



## Local Governance System

	Goals	Organization	Fiscal	Personnel	Procedures	Information	
"What"	Vision and Values	Community	Bonds and tax levels	Service levels	Elections and initiatives	Newsletters, television and press	Policy Level  Administrative Level
	Strategies and goals	Board	Budgets and debt management	Salary and benefits	Ordinances and resolutions	"State of the city"	
	Master work plan	Manager	Budget and finance plan	Hire and fire	Policies and procedures	Annual report	
"How"	Department work plan	Department heads	Budget control	Training and development	Standards and benchmarks	Monthly, quarterly reports	
	Team work plan	Operation managers	Service delivery	Supervision and discipline	Operating procedures	Progress reports	
	Individual work plan	Service employees	Individual services	Personal responsibility	Job checklist	Status report	
	Effectiveness		Efficiency		Control		

From Local Government Policy-Making Process, MRSC of Washington.



## Articulating Expectations



## Setting Expectations

- What does the Governing Body expect from the staff?
- What is the Governing Body willing to give the staff?
- What does the Staff expect from the Governing Body?
- What is the Staff willing to give the Governing Body?