

THE TEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE CITY COUNCILS

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Reasons For This Topic

- After 47 years in City Government – 23 years as city manager & 24 years as a municipal consultant.....
- Why are some cities so successful?
- Why do some cities struggle and fight?
- Observation of “cycles of success & failure” in cities

Disclaimer & Comments

- Not every successful city adopts all ten habits
- Cities that struggle may follow some of these habits
- General rule.....Adopt these habits and the probability of success will increase
- Added bonus – Your job maybe more enjoyable

General Overview of Session

- Review Ten Habits – 5 minutes each
- Offer your suggestions – Name of your city
- Ask your questions
- Send us your examples or model documents

1. Start with the Basics

- Brief & concise mission statement
- Develop a vision statement for the City’s future
- Develop long range goals & objectives
- New Council Members’ Orientation

2. Understand the Elements of Teamwork

- Council – Collection of diverse people
- Only Power – Act as one entity
- Working together to accomplish a specific purpose
- Key - trust, openness, & mutual respect

3. Master Small Group Decision Making

- Ability to work with others
- Knowledge to do the job
- Ability to deal with issues rationally
- Remember the “dignity of the office.”

4. Clearly Define Roles and Relationships

- Mayor, Council, and Staff Roles
- Know the functions – specific responsibilities
- Expected performance – behavior of the person in the role
- City Council Code of Conduct

5. Establish and Abide by a Good Council – Staff Partnership

- Council – establish the vision, goals, policies, and empowerment
- Council – define the needs to be met and outcomes to be achieved
- Staff – carryout directives, complete the tasks, and provide feedback
- Key - trust, communication, & evaluation

6. Systematic Evaluation of Policy Implementation

- Periodic feedback on policy results
- Reports, staff memos, & newsletters
- Policy amendments as needed
- Work sessions to review results

7. Allocate Council Time and Energy Appropriately

- Goal setting – annual retreats
- Study or work sessions – analysis of issues
- Community relations – interaction with citizens and agencies
- Prepare a capital improvements plan (CIP)

8. Set Clear Rules and Procedures for Council Meetings

- Conduct effective and productive meetings
- Adopt rules and procedures
- Conduct business – orderly, disciplined and productive manner
- Avoid political partisanship
- Meetings are the city council’s “image to the world”

9. Seek Assessment of the Public Concerns & Evaluation of Performance

- Seek feedback – surveys, questionnaires, public hearings, etc.
- Information on City website
- Use of social media
- Make adjustments, as needed

10. Practice Continuous Learning & Development

- Read the Mayor & Council - Policy Leaders' Handbook
- Attend League conference & workshops
- Read Cityscape magazine & League reports
- Networking with other cities
- Staff training and education too!

For copies of publications of the Iowa League of Cities that were referenced..... Go to

www.iowa league.org (You will need your city's password.)

- Go to Page marked – Resources
- Go to the category - Administration

For copies of other publications or models referenced during this presentation – Contact:

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Note: Send your city's "model documents" to the speaker to distribute.

Administration

28E Agreements

Appointing City Officials

Beginning of Year Checklist

Boards and Commissions

Campaign Events on City Property

Charitable Giving Laws

Chart of Accounts - An Accounting Aide

Citizen Engagement

Citizen Surveys

City Clerk Resources

City Government Glossary

Clerk Contingency List

Clerk Mentor Program

Closed Sessions

Codification

Conflict of Interest

Construction Bidding Procedures

Construction Managers

Contracting for Services

Council Meeting Procedures

Council Member Compensation and Performing City Work

Council Teamwork and Effectiveness

Council Vacancies

Cyber Liability

Debt Collections

Drone Regulations

Effective Elected Officials

Elections

Employment Agreements

Flag Etiquette

Grant Resources

GrantFinder

Guide to Gift Giving

Home Rule

Incompatible Offices

Index of Iowa Laws

Iowa Public Information Board

Liquor Licensing

Media Relations

Minutes

Newly Elected Officials

Notary Requirements

Oath of Office and Public Official Bonding

Open Meetings

Open Records

Planning and Completing Public Improvement Projects

Prayer at Council Meetings

Project Plans and Specifications Guidance

Public Hearings

Public Improvement Contracts

Public Notices

Reimbursement Resolutions

Researching State and City Codes

Risk Management and Insurance Basics

Roles in Municipal Government

U.S. Census

Volunteer Management

Voting Requirements and Regulations

Working with Angry Viewpoints