

Council Member Roles and Responsibilities

*New Mayors & Council Members Governance
Workshop – Webinar Series*

June 4, 2020

Los Angeles County Division



ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DIVISION

- The largest of 16 regional divisions in the League of California Cities®
- Representing 86 cities and over 11 million people in Los Angeles County
- Covering 4,500 square miles
- Over 450 Elected Officials
- Thousands of City Staff
- Membership includes the smallest in population (Vernon) to the largest (Los Angeles) of the state's 482 cities

ADVOCACY

- Bill Tracking and Advocacy
- Legislative Scorecard
- Engagement on County and Regional Issues
- Ballot Measure Engagement
- Appointments to League Policy Committees and County Regional Board and Commissions

NETWORKING

- Regular Countywide Membership Meetings
- All Cities Holiday Reception
- Division Networking Events at League Conferences

EDUCATION

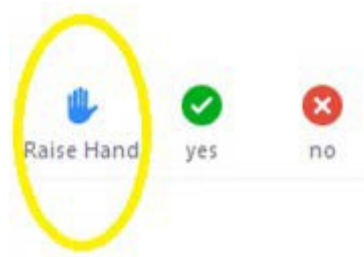
- Newly Elected Governance Workshop
- Countywide City Managers Meeting
- Issue Specific Training Sessions

COMMUNICATIONS

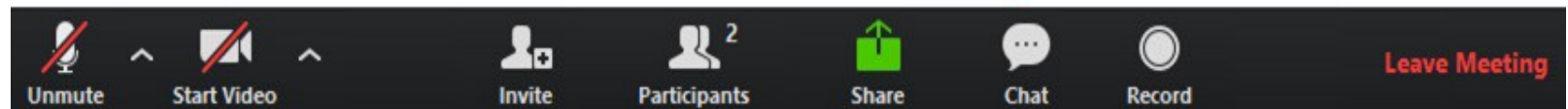
- Monthly Newsletter
- Personal and Electronic Outreach to Mayors, Council Members, and City Staff
- Social Media Engagement and Outreach

How to Ask a Question

- To verbally ask questions, use the ‘Raise Hand’ feature.
 - Click on the icon labeled “Participants” on the Zoom Menu.
 - Look for the little blue hand icon labeled “Raise Hand”.



- To write questions, you may put it in the ‘Chat’ and a moderator will pose the question to the presenter.



Speakers

Ron Bates, Ph.D.

***Past President, League of
California Cities & Retired City
Manager***

Pat West

***Retired City Manager, City of
Long Beach***

Becoming an Effective Leader at City Hall

1. Council Staff Relationship
2. Codes of Conduct
3. Council Leadership Practices
4. Effective Council Meetings

Congratulations!

You ran a successful campaign, worked hard, and won. Now what???



Build and Strengthen Relationships



- People vote for and do business with people they like and trust.
- New council members must now build relationships with new colleagues and community members to achieve success.
- Collaboration and civility are keys!!

Take the Opportunity to Learn



- You may feel pressure from your constituency to produce results...but begin slowly.
- You don't have to prove anything.
- Get the lay of the land.
- Listen, listen, listen...then listen some more to your colleagues and city staff.

Collaborate

You can be a standout Councilmember and a solid team player too!

City Government is a team sport.

It's all about collaboration, persuasion and relationships.



Council and Staff

How to Maintain a Healthy Working Relationship with City Staff

Council and Staff

City Manager / Council Relationships

- Council sets policy and overall direction.
- City manager implements council policy and day-to-day operations and offers policy advice.
- In discussions with city manager and council, recognize those roles and both stay within your area of responsibility.

Council and Staff

City Manager's Goals

- Make the council, as a whole, productive and successful.
- Help each councilmember to succeed.
- Meet the council's goals and make the city an effective service provider.
- Help keep the council together and make progress.
- Guide and develop staff and a positive organizational culture.

Council and Staff

Councilmember Role

- Encourage a professional relationship and meet with your city manager periodically.
- Your city manager can be your greatest asset in reaching your goals.
- Want to get things done? Ask the city manager, not the staff.
- Hold city manager accountable.

Council and Staff

Council Goal Setting

- Encourage council to work with the city manager to establish annual goals:
 - City staff supports the annual goals.
 - Quarterly updates provided by staff.
 - Budget priorities follow goals.
 - Evaluate accomplishment of goals.

Council and Staff

Evaluating the City Manager

- Hold the City Manager accountable for Council goals.
- If there is conflict around an individual councilmember's request, then the city manager needs to work to resolve the conflict.
- Best not to publicly criticize the city manager or staff - take up your disappointments privately with the city manager.

Council Code of Conduct

- Above all develop trust and respect.
- Come to meetings prepared.
- Avoid gifts and favors.
- Make decisions based on merit.

Council Code of Conduct

You are part of the City's Team

- Play nice, be fair, be patient, be kind, no surprises.
- Avoid squabbling and personal attacks.
- Maintain a formal decorum and be respectful.

Effective Council Leadership Practices

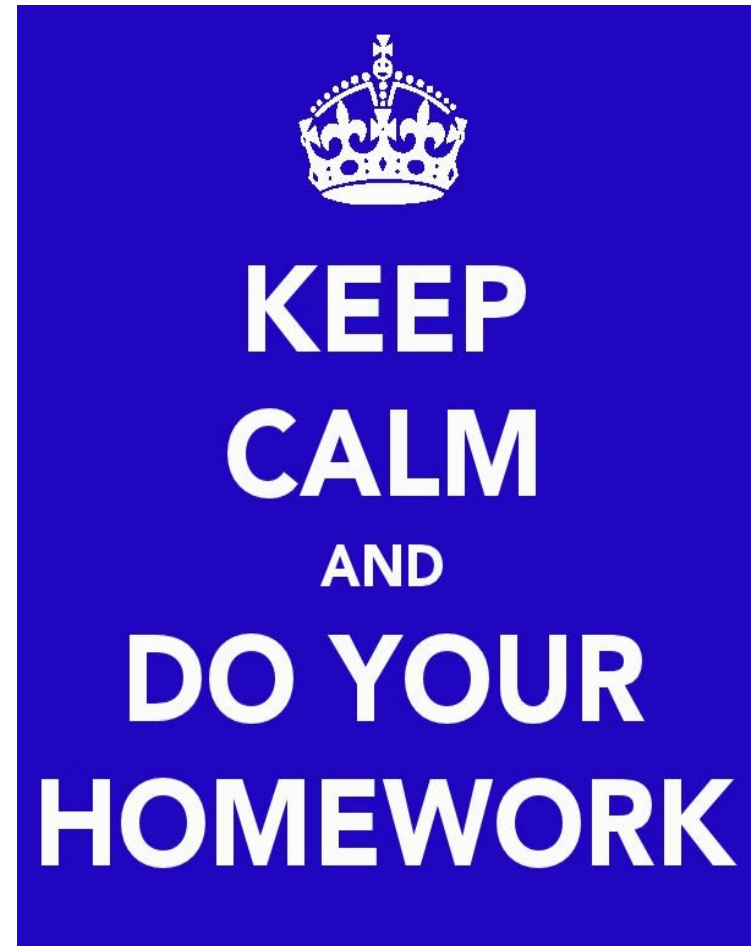
Neither City Managers nor City Councilmembers Can Do It Alone!

- Learn to compromise - take the long view.
- Think strategically.
- Always remember your values; why you ran for office or entered public service.
- Put the community first on all matters.

Effective Council Leadership Practices

Do your Homework & Be Prepared

- Read agenda and supporting materials.
- Ask questions in advance when possible.
- Analyze alternatives.
- City manager should share information equally with all council members.
- Set clear rules, policies, and procedures for council meetings.



Effective Council Leadership Practices

Have Fun!

- Celebrate success.
- See the humor in your mistakes and learn from them.
- Enjoy your work experiences-you worked hard to get here!

Effective Council Meetings



Effective Council Meetings

- Hold the City Manager responsible for working with the Mayor and organizing an effective agenda.
- Stick to the agenda when possible. Don't wander off. Keep discussion relevant to the agenda item.
- Try to relax, be diligent and move the Council Meeting along.
- Allow sufficient discussion and engagement by Councilmembers. When members start repeating the same points it may be time to move on.
- Allow for adequate public input without allowing the meeting to be hijacked.
- Answer simple questions from Councilmembers and the public when they are asked – don't delay the answers until later on the agenda or at the end of the meeting.

Questions?

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Pat West

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Helpful Resources

Los Angeles County Division

www.lacities.org

League of California Cities

www.cacities.org

California City Finance

www.californiacityfinance.com

Institute For Local Government

www.ca-ilg.org

Don't Forget to Join Us!

Financial Responsibilities & City Revenues

Thursday, June 11, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

- Financial Administration: Your Role as a Council Member
- Ins and Outs of City Funds
- The Budget and the Budget Process

Pat West, Retired City Manager, City of Long Beach