



STRATEGIC
STEPS
INC

Building Great Governance Together

NSFM Annual Conference
November 28, 2024



You and Me

Role Clarity

Administration

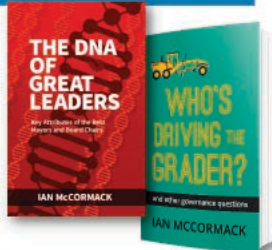
Good
Governance

You and Me

ABOUT US

Ian McCormack, CMC

- Strategic Steps operates in the space between elected and appointed officials
- Called in to assist with topics associated with good governance
 - Orientations, Mid-Term Refreshers
 - Strategic Planning, Annual Priority Setting
 - Governance, Organizational & Code of Conduct Reviews
- Author and speaker
 - Governance Voice column in Municipal Voice
 - Who's Driving the Grader, 2020
 - The DNA of Great Leaders, 2022
 - (Un)Civil Society, 2024 (in process)



www.strategicsteps.ca



ABOUT ME

Craig Pollett, MDE, VP Atlantic

- Five years in economic policy
- 22 years as CEO of Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador
- Executive Director of Atlantic Mayors' Congress
- Storyteller, but no books...yet



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KNOWING OFFICIALS' EXPERIENCE

- What types of boards (if any) have council members worked on?
 - Board member role
 - Staff support role



LEADERSHIP

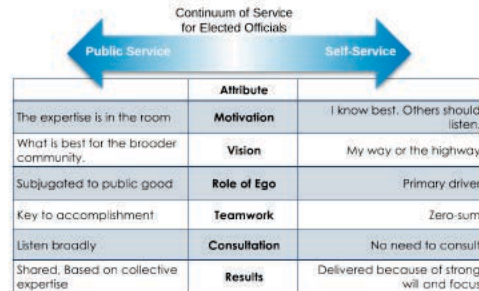
Governance vs. Working

- Focus of Council is on governance responsibilities rather than on operational matters.
- Focus of Council is on results (outputs and outcomes)

Aspect	Working	Governance
Primary Focus	Doing: events, fundraising, managing	Guiding: vision, mission, policy
Leadership	Staff led	Council led
Planning	Staff provides strategic direction, board often does much of the work	Council provides strategic direction. Staff provide operational effort
Recruitment	Board actively involved in recruitments	Council is responsible for one employee



WHY DO MEMBERS SERVE?



LOCAL GOVERNANCE

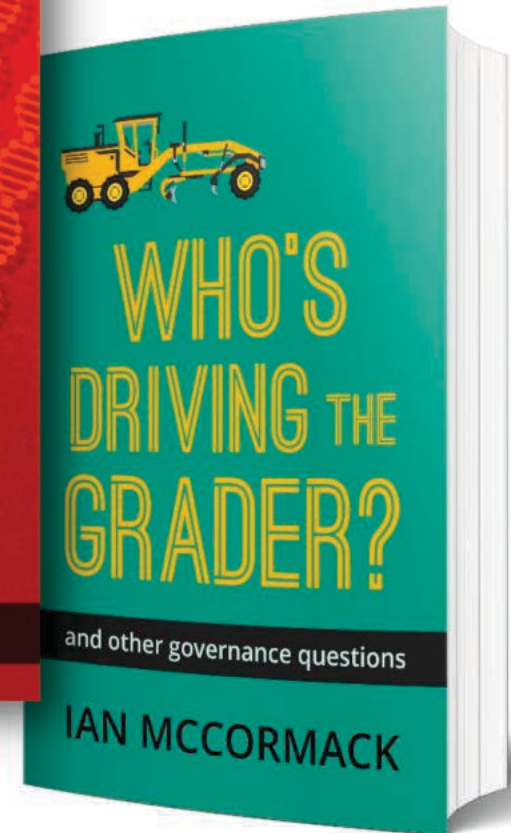
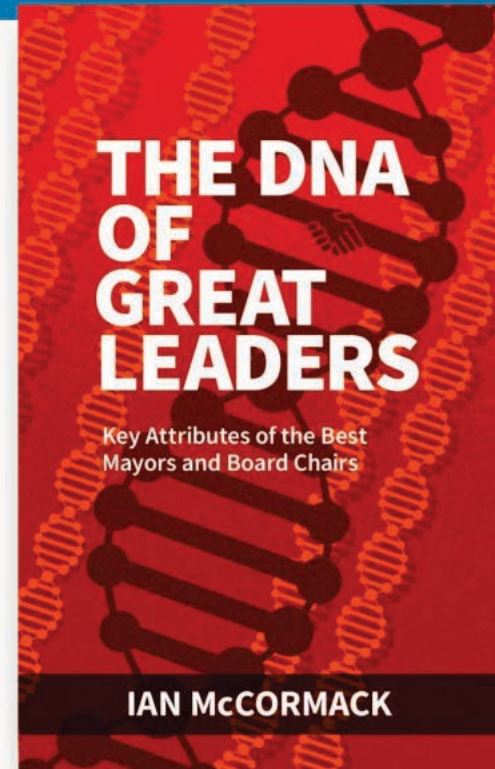
- Your job as a councillor is to work with other council members to set the overall direction of the municipality through your **role as a policy-maker**. The **policies that council sets are the guidelines for administration to follow** as it handles the operations of the municipality. Much of your time on council will be spent **considering new policies and programs and reviewing the current ones** to make sure they are working as they should.



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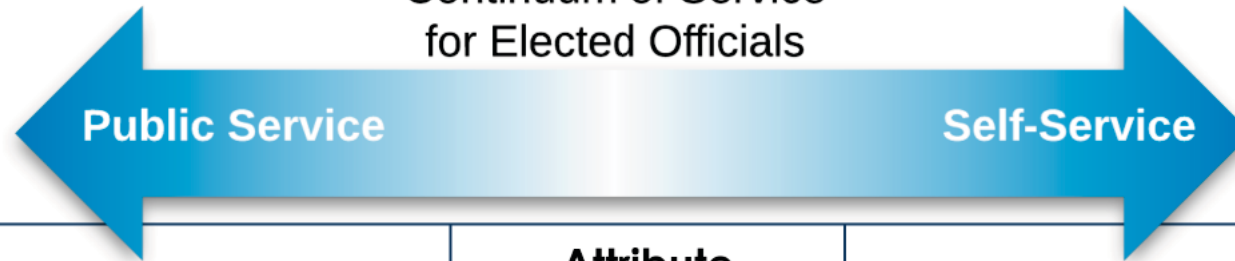
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WHY DO MEMBERS SERVE?

Continuum of Service
for Elected Officials



	Attribute	
The expertise is in the room	Motivation	I know best. Others should listen.
What is best for the broader community.	Vision	My way or the highway
Subjugated to public good	Role of Ego	Primary driver
Key to accomplishment	Teamwork	Zero-sum
Listen broadly	Consultation	No need to consult
Shared, Based on collective expertise	Results	Delivered because of strong will and focus



LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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The **policies that council sets are the guidelines for administration to follow** as it handles the operations of the municipality.

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You and Me

Role Clarity

Administration

Good Governance

Role Clarity

ROLE CLARITY

Can You Do What You Want to Do?

- Is it your issue?
 - You can't change federal or provincial legislation or requirements
 - Have you considered the issue, or just a symptom?
- The one issue candidate, or "I'm mad about something"
 - Issue gets resolved in six months; then what?
- Building a team
 - Know each other as people, community members
- Respecting roles
 - Advocate and do acting within their own legislative framework



COUNCIL'S ROLE

The Four Buckets

- Maintain the accountability of the administration
 - Develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality
 - Deal with anything specifically required by statute
- Four Buckets
- 1) Carry forward work (the pump and ion project)
 - 2) Move from senior orders of government (council's legislation)
 - 3) Crisis management (fire, flood, hacks)
 - 4) Your platform - Council's strategic plan (the stuff you really wanted to work on)



COUNCIL'S ROLE

- Look after interests of entire municipality
- Avoid conflict of interest (pecuniary interest)
- Attend Council and Committee meetings
 - Avoid informal council meetings: meeting of a majority of members to discuss business that can not lawfully be done at public meeting. This is a combination of abuse.
- Represent the community
- Professional development
- Avoidance of focus on a single issue



EXERCISE

- What's missing from the list of roles for council members?
- For continuing members of council, how much time per week did you spend on your elected official duties?
- How do you manage a work-life balance and time for family?



THE OTHER STUFF

- Aside from mandated duties, other tasks include acting as a representative of your community - the small "p" politics:
 - Neighbourhood and community meetings and events
 - Speeches
 - Awards ceremonies, graduations
 - Community events like Remembrance Day, Canada Day
 - Advocacy with and for community/clients



KEY POINTS

- The election is long over, leave rhetoric behind. This is a new council
- The ideal council represents the depth and breadth of the community
- Council is not expected to be unanimous. Value lies in debate and collaboration of conflicting choices
 - Creates learning and buy-in
- Achieve change by creating alignment with other councillors
- Little is achieved by making speeches. More is learned by asking questions



KEY POINTS

- Council provides direction through Strategic Plan, bylaw and policy
- Administration responds with Business Plan and recommending policy alternatives. RFD for decisions
- The municipality does not turn on a dime. The process for change may be slower than you would like



ROLE CLARITY


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- Respecting roles
 - Municipal staff are acting within their own legislative framework



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 - 2) Work from senior orders of government (cannabis legalization)
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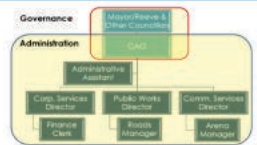
RELATIONSHIP TO ADMINISTRATION

The Two Salties


- Council legislates
 - Supports by administrative strength
- Council has one employee
 - Hire, evaluate and replace CAO
 - Endure CAO every year
- All other staff are led by the CAO
 - Best of the clerk
- Avoid micromanaging operations – they are not yours!
 - Keep your nose in and your fingers out!



TYPICAL STRUCTURE



EXPECTATIONS OF YOUR CAO



EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF

- No 'Surprise' environment for CAO and Council
- Stewardship of municipal resources – efficient operation of necessary services/programs
- Direction from Council – in order bylaw, policy, strategy, business plan, resolution
- Effective and timely reporting to by CAO:
 - Request for Decision (RFD) reports
 - Regular functional reports
 - Realistic timing for turnaround for information requests
- Service excellence that augments the municipal identity


COMMON HAZARDS

Straying into the Wrong Lane

- Potential
 - 10/14s or council members direct CAO
 - Council directs staff other than CAO
 - CAO is not aware of council members' actions
 - Staff are caught in the middle, with two bosses.
- Litigation
 - Administration acts on Council policy
 - Council must act by resolution
 - Council has its own ethics code
 - Council permits respectful challenge from CAO

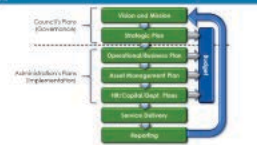
ROLE CLARITY

Steering vs. Rowing



CASCADING ALIGNMENT

Planning Tools





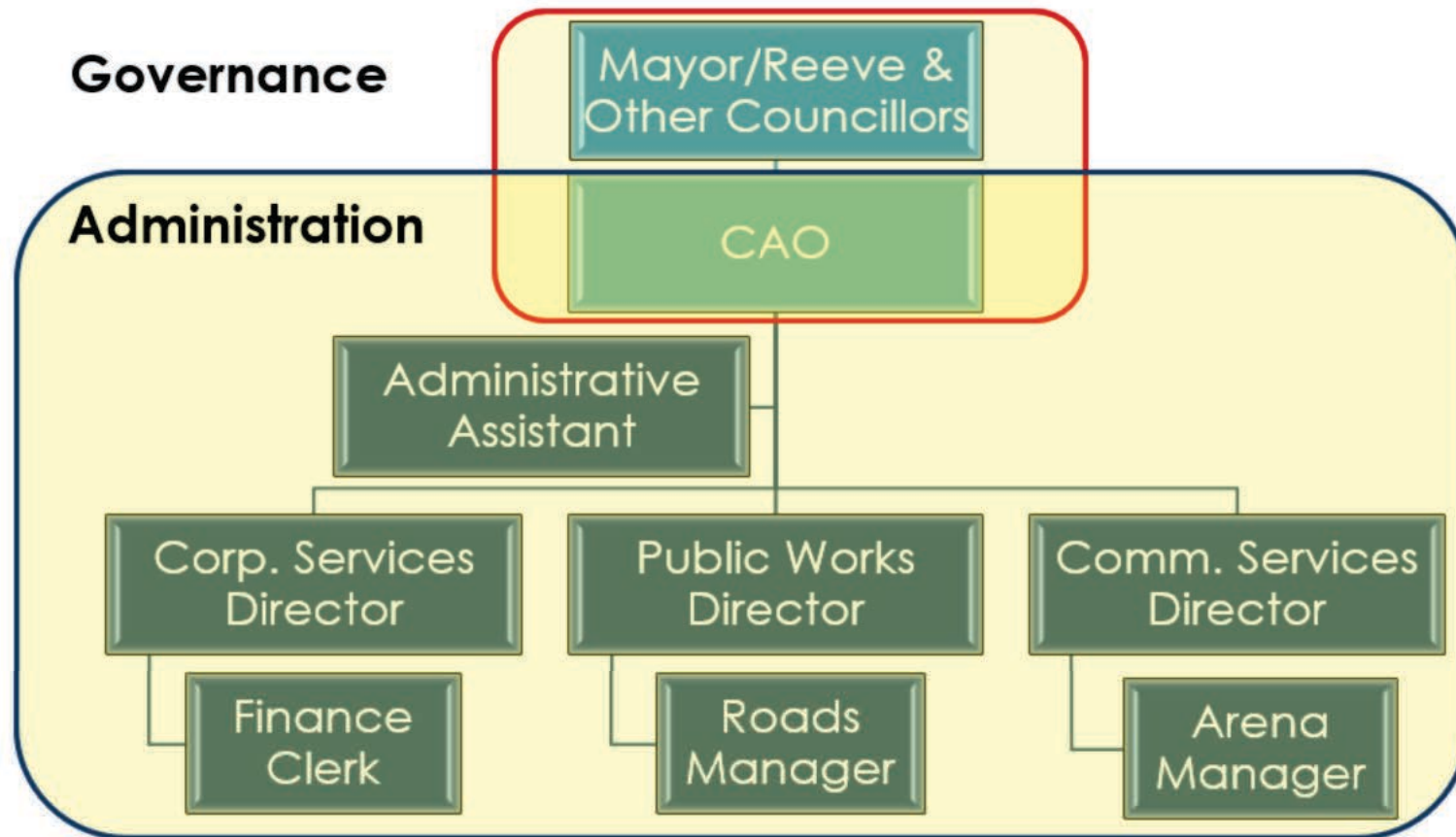
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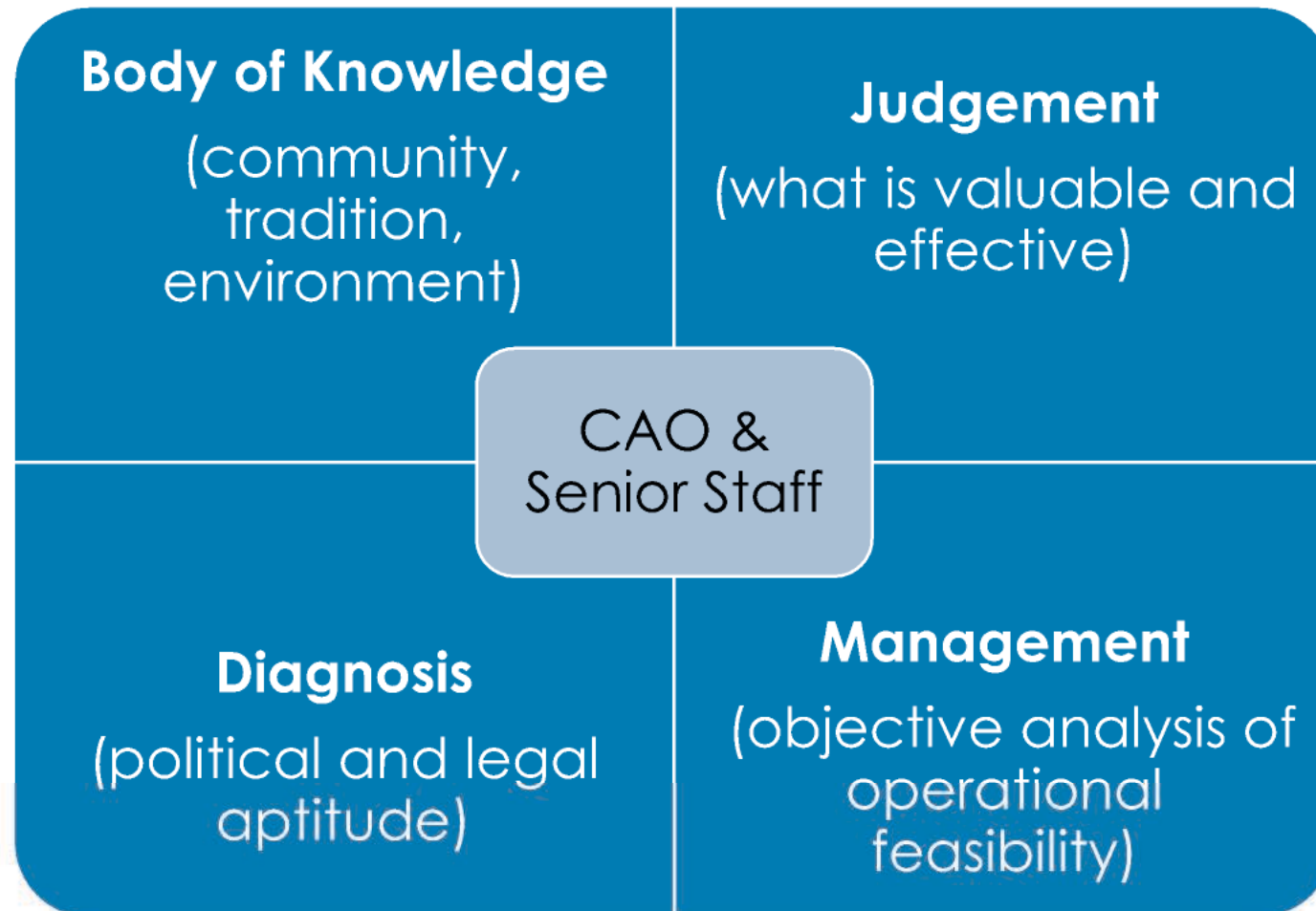
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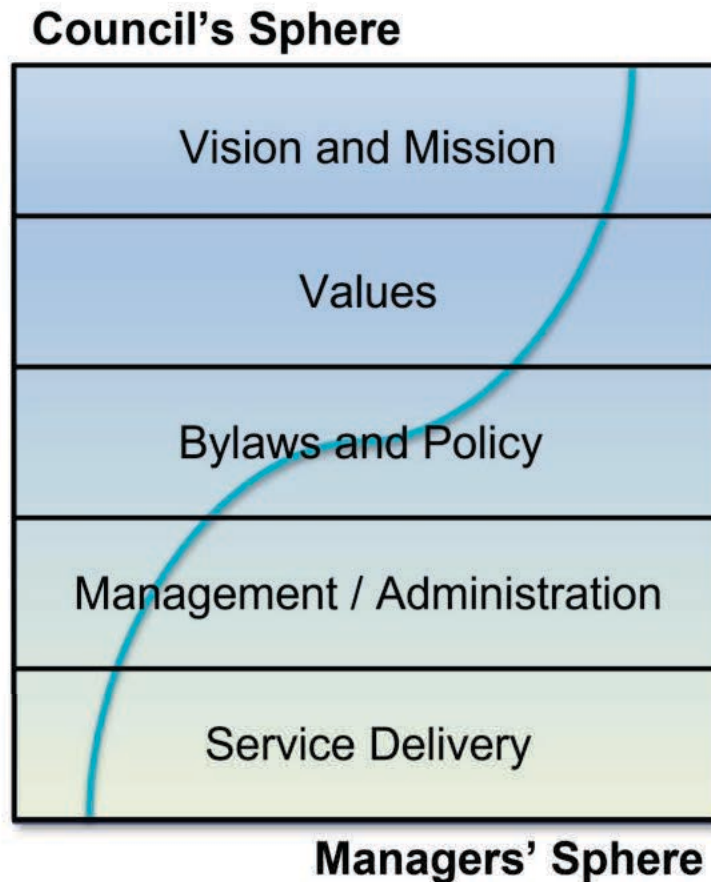
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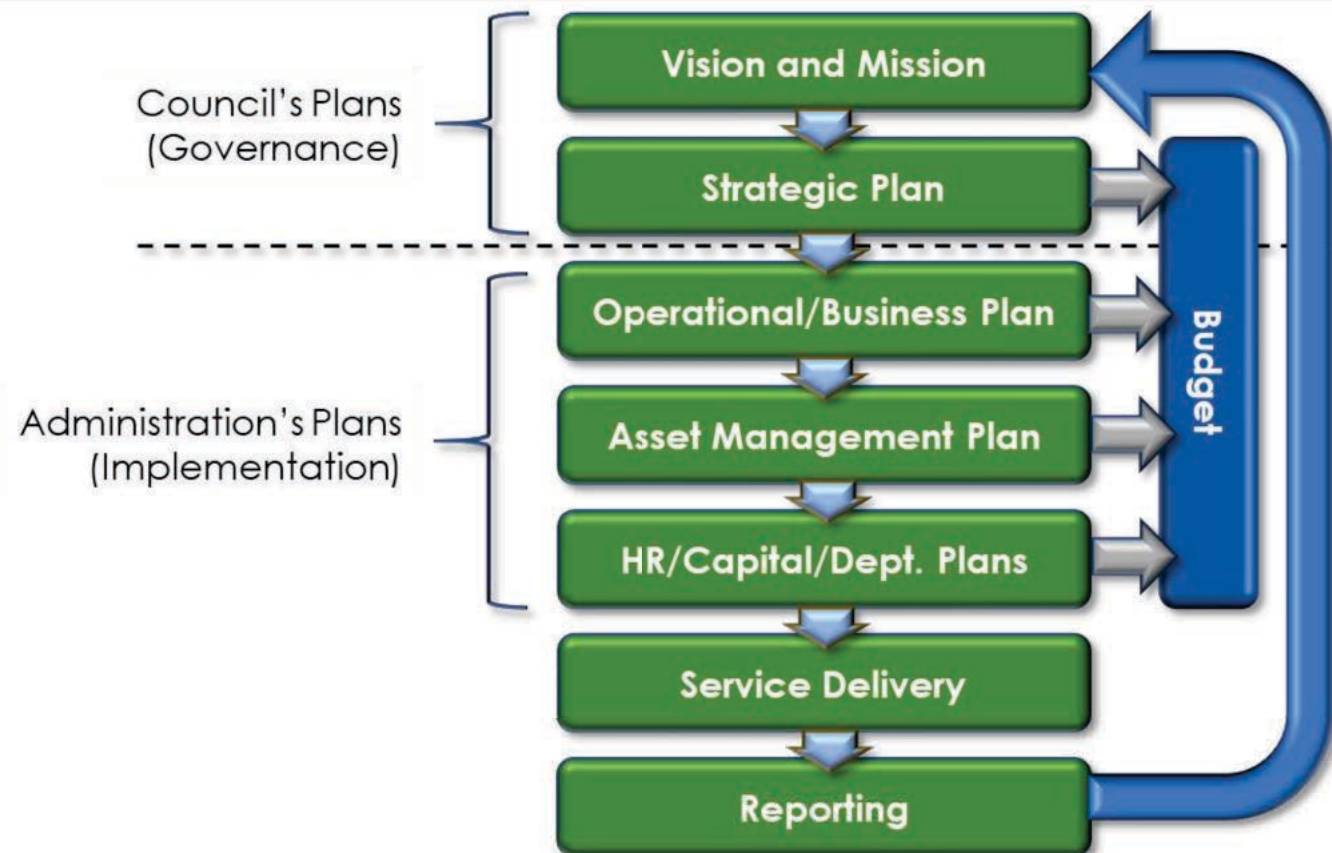
Steering vs Rowing

- Council Governs – ‘what’
 - Strategic plan
 - Vision, mission, values
 - Governance policy development
- Administration Delivers – ‘how’
 - Implement policy
 - Manage the municipality
 - Delivery programs, services, facilities, amenities



CASCADING ALIGNMENT

Planning Tools





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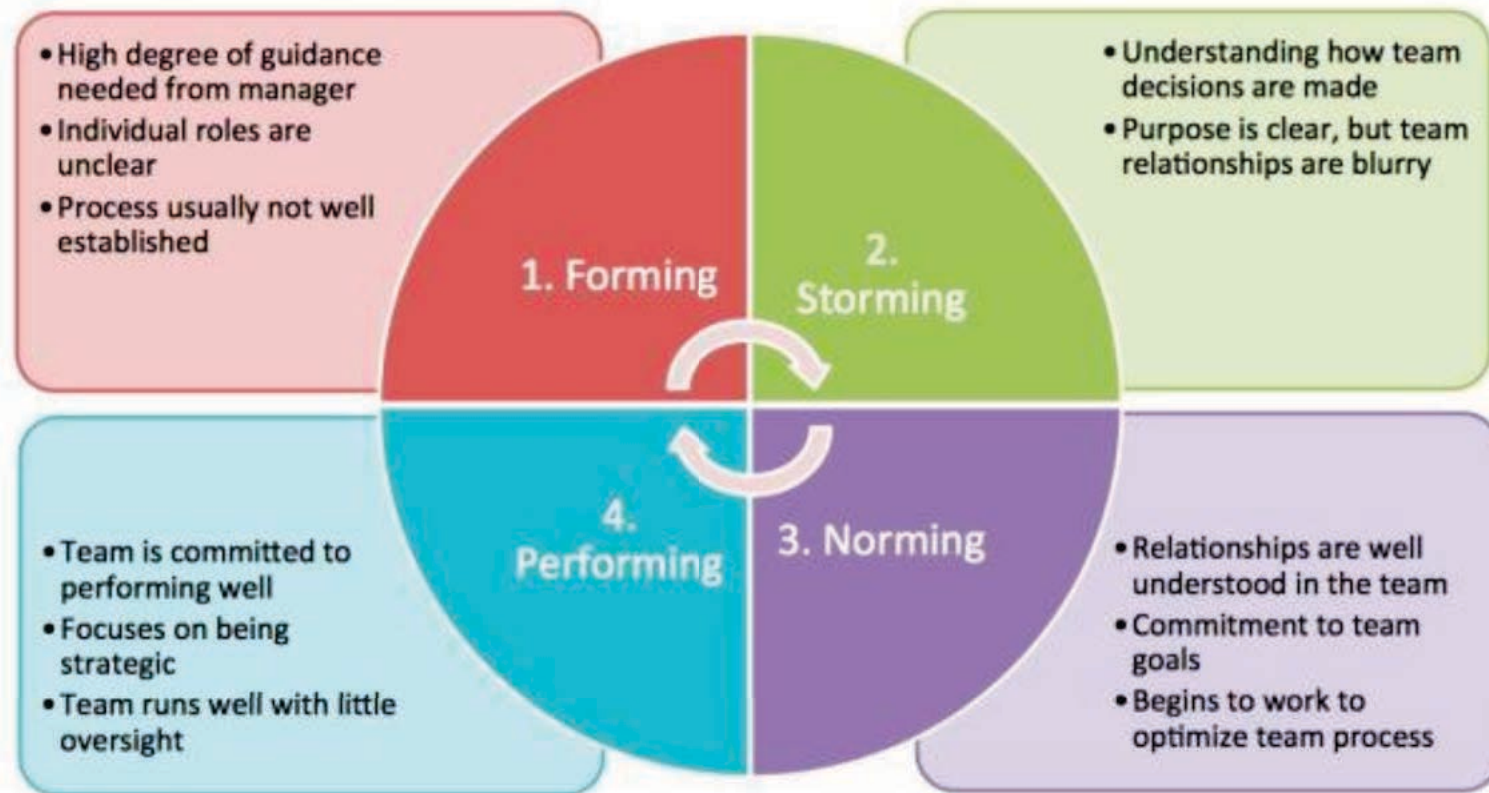
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A NEW COUNCIL IS A NEW GROUP



<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/tuckmans-guide-group-development-robert-knight/>



SUCCESSFUL TERM OF OFFICE

- Be **visionary**: reach for a higher plain, stay out of the mud
- **Policy**, Policy, Policy: ask lots of questions, examine alternatives, think about the whole
- Be a **team player**: identify and build on each other's strengths
- **Communicate** internally and externally
- **Build bridges** and partnerships - repair problems
- Remember, the **buck stops with council**



ETHICS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Ethical practice often encompasses:
 - **Conflicts of interest** – declare and recuse
 - **Inside and outside influence** – influence over decisions of local government or external organizations
 - **Exceptions from conflict restrictions** – committee appointments
 - **Gifts** – often over a minimum dollar threshold
 - **Contracts** – legacy from your non-elected life
 - **Use of insider information** – from your time in office*
- Penalties for unethical conduct exist

*From GoBC



CHECKLIST FOR ETHICAL DECISION MAKING*

- 1 • Will my action be legal?
- 2 • Does my action comply with my Role?
- 3 • Is it in the best interests of the municipality as a whole?
- 4 • As a decision maker, do I have a conflict of interest?
- 5 • Would I tell my colleagues or my family?
- 6 • Am I doing the right thing?
- 7 • Can I justify my course of action?

**Adapted from document of the same name, Institute of Certified Management Consultants, 2019*



COMMON ISSUES

- Boiling frog scenario - doesn't seem too hot at first, but by the time the water is boiling, it's too late
 - What started out innocently enough now causes trouble
- Feeling of entitlement grows over time
 - I put in lots of time for this community. I deserve...
- Not holding each other to account
 - It's always been this way
 - We are all in this boat together



STARTING WITH ME

- Have supports in place - family, friends, colleagues, administrators, professional coaches, previous ethical elected officials
- Principle – keep local government business public unless there is a reason not to. Don't only release what must be released
- Follow the spirit of the law, not just the letter



INTRA-COUNCIL CONFLICT

- There will be conflict
 - Council members don't have to be friends, but they do have to deal with one another for the next four years
- Work to build effective teams
 - Regular, conscious team-building exercises
 - Style analysis



COUNCIL LANDMINES

- Managing, not leading
- Dysfunctional council – CAO relationship
- Lack of consensus building
- Confusion with role of boards/committees
- Overreacting to issues
- Misuse of confidentiality
- Misuse of position
- Favoritism with public or staff
- Family ties and influences



ACCOUNTABILITY/TRANSPARENCY

- What does transparency mean to you?
 - In making decisions
 - In spending money
 - In who you meet or engage with
 - Are you still transparent when things aren't going well?
- *“more user-friendly government websites, greater access to government data, the extension of freedom of information legislation and broader attempts to involve the public in government decision making.”*



ACCOUNTABILITY/TRANSPARENCY

- Accountability:
 - *The principle that the municipality will be **responsible to its stakeholders for decisions made and policies implemented**, as well as its actions or inactions.*
- Transparency
 - *The principle that the municipality **actively encourages and fosters stakeholder participation and openness in its decision making processes**. Additionally, transparency means that the municipality's decision making process is open and clear to the public.*



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Strategic Direction

- Require a vision, mission and a long-term plan
- Stick to the plan, and review the plan
- Align the municipal budget to strategic priorities
- Don't check out once your issue has been dealt with
- Don't assume government is a business, or a non-profit, and should act like one



GOOD GOVERNANCE

In Council Meetings

- Follow Procedure Bylaw or council policies
 - Respect the formality of the meeting
 - Don't chat with people in the gallery
- Trust administration
- Don't openly blame or call out administrators
- Don't accuse administrators of being biased or politically motivated



GOOD GOVERNANCE

In Council Meetings

- Don't ask questions with the intention of making someone look bad – 'gotcha'
- Don't make decisions or act without information
 - There will be cases where you will not have 'all' the information
- Provide alternate viewpoints
- Base arguments on issues rather than personality
- Act in the public interest and without pecuniary interest
- Don't speak ill of other orders of government



GOOD GOVERNANCE

As a Council Member

- Act as a member of a team, rather than an individual
- Foster trust in each other
- Focus on governance and not operations
- Don't interpret disagreements as personal attacks
- Hear all the information before you make up your mind
- Accept results of split votes as 'council decisions'
- Don't force your agenda



GOOD GOVERNANCE

As a Council Member

- Keep information provided in closed meetings confidential
- Volunteer to sit on an appropriate number of committees and rotate through committees depending on local practice
- Don't use your council role to get special treatment
- Seek professional development opportunities



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Representing a Regional Centre

- Meet with surrounding municipalities and Indigenous groups
- Don't say anything ill about the provincial or federal government
- Don't expect people to always come to you



GOOD GOVERNANCE

As a Community Leader

- Don't expect deference
- Don't speak poorly about council colleagues , administrators or citizens publicly or on social media
- Attend community events
- Communicate with the community regularly
- Respond to emails, phone calls, social media enquiries in a timely manner





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