How Roles, Values, and Perspectives Drive Effective Governance

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Workshop Agenda

• Introductions
• Governing Body Working Conditions
• Competing Values in Decision Making
• Bridging the Gap Between Politics and Administration
• Governance Roles
• Tools to Foster an Effective Governing Body
Campaign vs. Governance

• What skills and circumstances got you elected?
• What did you think you would do when you were elected?
• What do you actually do now that you are on the governing body?

Based on the Research and Writing of Dr. John Nalbandian

Professor of Public Administration, University of Kansas
Former Mayor and City Commissioner in Lawrence, Kansas
Council Working Conditions

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

Do it all in public!
Public Service Values

Accountability/Representation

- Citizen petitions for government to act (or not act)
- Reminders of what you pledged to do when elected
- Community expresses desire for new facility to meet a need
### Efficiency and Effectiveness/Professionalism

- Staff presents implementation of approved parks master plan items in five-year capital plan
- Budget shortfalls that require layoffs are based on job performance
- Road location to align with existing roads from engineering perspective

### Social Equity and Diversity

- Neighborhood feels undesirable uses are placed in one section of town
- Concerns are expressed because layoffs based on seniority will impact minorities disproportionately
- Older neighborhoods express concern that newer neighborhoods are getting more infrastructure funds
Justice/Individual Rights

- Union objects to layoffs based on performance since appraisals are not equal among supervisors
- Parents demand a crossing guard as kids have the right to cross the street safely
- Road alignment with more greenspace requires more land from property owners

When Political Values Collide

Dr. John Nalbandian, Professor, University of Kansas
The Gap Between Politics and Administration

The Gap

- A gap exists and is growing between what is politically acceptable (what we want to do) and operationally sustainable (what we can do)

- Working the gap is facilitated by understanding that politics involves choices among conflicting values—no value profile is best

- And that politics and administration involve more than different behaviors; they are different ways of thinking
### Characteristics of Politics and Administration

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<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Administration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Game/allocation of values</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
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<td>Players</td>
<td>Representatives/trustees</td>
<td>Experts-trustees</td>
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<td>Conversation</td>
<td>What do you hear?</td>
<td>What do you know?</td>
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<td>Stories</td>
<td>Reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pieces</td>
<td>Intangible: Interests and symbols</td>
<td>Tangible: Information; money, people, equipment</td>
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<td>Currency</td>
<td>Power (stories), loyalty, trust</td>
<td>Knowledge (deeds)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dynamics</td>
<td>Constructive conflict, compromise, change</td>
<td>Predictability, cooperation, continuity</td>
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## Governance Roles

- Strategic Vision
- Trustee-Steward
- Representative – Constituent Advocate
- Community Builder – Bringing People Together
- Decision Maker
- Oversight

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## Effective Elected Officials
Characteristics of Effective Councils

1. Willingness to address difficult issues, often the “big picture” problems facing a community
2. Ability/capacity of Council to deal with these issues as a team
3. Maintain effective relationships with staff

Ideal Governing Body Member

- Community
- Brand
- Majority
- Unique Power
- No Right Answers
Ideal Governing Body Member

- Dual Roles
- Respect
- Partnership
- Acceptable and Sustainable
- Outcome-Focused

Practical Tools to Improve Council Effectiveness
Preparing Councils

Orientation
• Starts before the election
• Communication of non-confidential materials
• Government 101 – state laws, charter, codes, capital projects, and other major initiatives
• Tour of operational facilities
• Ask – tailor to issues, individuals

Retreats and Goal Setting
• Spend time off the dais
• Articulate shared vision
• Develop goals and objectives
• Define success
• Measure and report progress
• Setting: no regular business, 1-2 day session
• Frequency: annual
Elected Official Involvement

• Engage former elected officials
• Mentor newly elected on how to get things done
• Learn how to get issues addressed and influence other Council members

Regular Communication

• One-on-one meetings with City Manager/Administrator
• One-on-one meetings with other Council members
• Appropriate access to department heads (ask don’t task)
• Ensure elected officials provided the same information
• Provide adequate time for Council to review agenda items in advance
• Provide questions to staff in advance of meeting
Document Business Processes

- Rules of conduct for meetings – public, Council, and staff
- Customer service guidelines
- Use of letterhead and meeting rooms
- How items get placed on agenda
- How the Council will manage itself, enforce its own rules

My Actions
My Action Plan

- How can I help translate and be a bridge builder between the political and administrative realm?
- How can I use the lens of different values to weigh decision-making?
- What governance role should I help the governing body focus on?
- What can I do to be a more effective governing board member?
- What practices can our governing body utilize to become more effective?

Metaphor of the Cups

Cups and Community Building
About TNCG

- The Novak Consulting Group – trusted advisors transforming communities.
- We are local government practitioners strengthening organizations for the communities they serve and the people who work in them.
- Three practice areas:
  - Strategic Planning
  - Executive Search
  - Organizational Assessment

Thank You

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