

June 26, 2013

Task Force Members

Kelly Allen – Present
Marilyn Coffey – Present
Pastor Michael Cole – Present
Jim Marshall – Present
Jack Schrauth – Present
Tom Shaw – Present
Bill Wadsworth – Present

Also Present

Special Assistant to the City Council – Danny Langloss, Jr.

Call to Order by Marilyn Coffey

Approval of Minutes

Approval of 06/19/2013 Minutes: Jim Marshall moved to accept minutes seconded by Kelly Allen. Unanimously approved.

Handout: Ottawa GTF Recommendation

Discussion with Tom Ganiere, Ottawa

Mr. Ganiere brought a copy of the recommendation to the GTF to review:
A previous study is attached as an appendix to the recommendation that was given to the Ottawa council.

The mayor of Ottawa recommended looking into changing the Commission Form of government. He found that only 3% nationwide that have this form. There was not a agent that evoked the need for a change. The city council elected a 5 member committee to research and recommend a new form of government. The committee originally asked for 18mo. but found they needed 21mo.

There was a strong support from the mayor and one other council member, however could not get quorum.

Currently, Ottawa does not have a City Administrator.

Q: Reviewing health of the community, how is the community fared had they made the change?

A: They would have notice savings. It would have allowed the mayor more time to look at economic development.

Q: How would the City have saved money?

A: Part of the recommendation was to hire a City Administrator. This means that one person would be hired to oversee the entire city, seeing a bigger picture bringing professionalism and being business minded even though running a government is not like running a business.

Q: What was your process?

A: Originally met 2 to 3 times a month, sent out surveys (every city in the state that had a similar population). Looked at each different form of government and hypothesized how it would work in Ottawa. Toward the end of the process we met once a month. The extra three months the committee took was time dedicated to review the final document.

Q: What would have increased the chances of the changing the outcome (the recommendation was not taken)?

A: The council needs to be on board with change. Three of the four commissioners didn't want to hear the recommendation.

Q: Is the current council in Ottawa the same as when the recommendation was made?

A: Not a whole lot of change on the council.

Every city needs to have some kind of professional to run the city. Mayor Eschbach acts as the city administrator. The added role does not give him time to focus on economic development.

Q: What was the highlight of the surveys?

A: The Aldermanic Form of government gives the citizen a feel of being heard.

Q: Had there been a well organized citizen campaign, would there had been a change?

The question was originally from the newspaper to mayoral candidates. The commissioners are mostly upper-middle-aged white males. Couple of really good female commissioners in the past. You need to have your council support change.

Q: Any younger candidates?

A: Yes, but not elected.

Q: What would you encourage us to do?

A: *After review of the current process...* I think that you have defined your process clearly. Make sure that you have an understanding of the ordinances. You have to make sure that you keep the following questions in the forefront of your recommendation:

What do you think is best for the city of Dixon?

What can you get the citizen of Dixon to do?

The education process is key. In most cases, if the elected officials aren't behind then the voters will not be onboard.

Regarding the surveys that you sent out...was there a specific questions that you asked?

Not necessarily. Remember to allow yourself plenty of time. Be aware of your timeframe.

Q: Were the meetings covered in the media (open meetings act)?

A: Yes.

Q: Did the citizens report back about the value of your recommendation?

A: There was not a big outcry from the citizens. The newspaper had mildly endorsed the plan.

Q: What is the current salary of the Council

A: The mayor is at approximately \$70,000. He is an attorney by trade and still works at law firm.

The commissioners still \$12,000.

*no longer eligible for health insurance (commissioners grandfathered in still receive health benefits).

Q: If there is a lack of resources, why is there a need to pay elected officials more when they can have a City Administrator?

A: For the way it's being run in Ottawa the rates of pay are not unreasonable. The mayor works the hours of a fulltime employee and the council are considered active employees.

I will be leaving the report. I believe that it is still relevant for today.

End Conversation

Discussion with David Plyman, City Manager from Rochelle

It doesn't matter whether the title is City Administrator or City Manager. You can't just rely on the title to see what the individual can do. It's about the business of relationships. It's the connection to the council. There is some overlap: the elected officials and Department Heads have a lifetime connection to the city.

There isn't one best way of managing a city. It depends on the people that are elected and employed by the city. How you blend the groups together.

Q: How does Rochelle operate?

Q: Electric, Fiber (telephone), Data Center, Railroad, Water, Sewer, etc. Rochelle has many businesses. There are many facets to the government in Rochelle with many business enterprises run by the city.

Being the City Manager of Rochelle gave me the opportunity to be part of a larger organization.

City Manager Form was instituted by referendum in 1990

Q: Are your treasurer and City Clerk elected?

A: The Finance Director is appointed and reports to City Manager and the Council and Mayor appoint the City Clerk.

Q: Do you have a Human Resource director?

A: The City of Rochelle has a robust professional staff. We have a Finance Director, a Human Resource Director, Business Financial Analyst (engineering), Economic Development Director with 5 employees.

Do you practice under a code of ethics?

City Managers have a "strict code of ethics" at a state and national level (**Membership in CM/CA groups).

No political activity what so ever.

Q: Does the council embrace a self-imposed code of ethics?

A: I don't think so.

The City Manager needs to realize that he/she is an employee of the council. It's not my place to impose that the board to do anything. The City Manager is at the organization at the pleasure of the council. The City Manager should be thinking about the needs of the community and making sure that they and the staff are doing the right thing.

Q: Do you attend City Council Meetings?

A: Yes I attend. I also attend committee meetings.

Each council member also sits on different committees. The Council desires to be more engaged in the city business. I was able to facilitate that for them. The Council asked for guidance and we went through process of getting them appointed to committees.

The city council is going to be as engaged as they want to be, regardless of the form of government. The Council should reserve themselves for the bigger picture. However, this does not mean that they can't be involved on a community level.

Q: Are council members paid?

A: Yes.

Q: How diverse is the City Council?

A: No young people. All middle-aged.

**In cities that I have worked for in the past, some have had younger council members.

Q: How is the mail delivered?

A: An employee picks-up the mail and other employees open (different).

Q: Do you engage in Strategic Planning and how are you and the council involved in the budget?

A: I bring in a facilitator to guide the council through the strategic planning process. Department Heads are left out. Questionnaires were given to Department Heads as well as the commissions and boards. The reason that they are not more involved in the strategic process is because they do not have the same vote as a council member. The Council has to have its own team building exercises that are not influenced by the community, so we bring in someone that has absolutely no connection to the community. A good facilitator will be able to get people to open up.

Council decision making should be a group exercise. Get away and do team building.

Ultimately the community get the government it elects, not that it hires. Your elected officials should hire people that will fit their expectations.

As for budgeting, I have all the Department Heads speak directly to council. Then City Manager comes in and offers a balanced budget (decisions made in office). Then council comes and approves or denies.

The reason that I have the department Head's speak directly to the council is that I realize communication is going to occur in the organization – I have the communication happen in the open.

Q: How many officials are elected in Rochelle?

A: 7 members

Q: How often do you communicate with the council?

A: Mayor – every Monday morning

Council – couple times a week. If I see them around and I'm on my way to a meeting, I sometimes will pull them in with me.

Q: How do you feel about a large council vs. small council?

A: If it runs to small you run into a problem with Open Meetings Act.

Q: Do you feel that the City Manager was essential to Rochelle's growth?

A: Average tenure for a City Manager is 5 to 6 years. A City Manager offers consistency for staff and for the community. When you start blending executive and legislative it starts getting muddier. Need to make sure the mayor and managers are working well together.

Q: What form of government do you see that works well?

A: Having a City Manager is important (having professional oversight). BUT, the people ought to decide what government should run the community.

Remember: If you change the government by referendum, you can only change by referendum.

I do advise against a Community Coordinator – The title will deter some people from applying.

Q: How do you feel about Dixon hiring interim? As a City Administrator would you apply for this position?

A: No. It's difficult come into a climate with new City Administrator position. There is usually a power struggle.

It might be harder to move from a City Administrator form of government than a City Manager form of government.

The citizens need to decide – intentionality is key to get the community behind the recommendation.

END Conversation

Public Comment:

Tom Ganiere: If you give a City Administrator too much authority, the government can become a de facto City Manager form of government. The only way to change it back is by referendum.

Plans for next meeting:

July 3, 2013 9am in the Council Chambers: Discussion with the Commissioners and Mayor of Dixon

Adjournment:

Michael Cole moved to adjourn with a second from Jack Schrauth. Unanimously approved.