



The Leadership Legacy

LGLA Elected Officials Seminar

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George B. Cuff, FCMC



Introduction to George B. Cuff, FCMC

- A professional consultant/advisor/speaker to local governments for 35 years; former department head; former Mayor; former President of AUMA & FCM; received Award of Distinction from both
- Author: Magazine articles since 1979; two books “Cuff’s Guide to Municipal Leaders”, Volumes One and Two; 3 books of articles “Off the Cuff”; articles on governance monthly



Introduction to George B. Cuff, FCMC

- Reports for approximately 500 organizations; another 500 seminars in all 10 Provinces, 3 territories
- Reports in BC for such communities as Terrace, Kitimat, Lillooet, Tumbler Ridge, West Vancouver, Victoria, North Vancouver, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Courtenay/Comox/RD



What I Will Not Reiterate! (1)

- ❑ Effective Councils understand that they serve best when they provide policy leadership
- ❑ Effective Councils are not meddlers; as much as they may be convinced they could do better than skilled and experienced administrators, they resist the temptation
- ❑ Effective Councils focus more on servant-leadership than egos, sound bytes, photo ops



What I Will Not Reiterate! (2)

- ❑ Effective Councils argue, disagree, speak up on the issues AND do so in a spirit of respect: in short, they are mature
- ❑ Effective Councils understand that the focus of their debates is with other members of Council: the administration is not on the debating team

What Does Dysfunction Look Like? (1)

- Meetings where the primacy of the table is ignored
- Dialogue based on innuendo, ill will, angry outbursts, personal attacks
- Councillors bashing administrators
- Council allowing the public to bash administrators
- Council-administration role confusion



What Does Dysfunction Look Like? (2)

- Advisory committees which do not advise (or are not heard)
- Delegations without rules
- Public governance without policies
- Social media without guidelines
- Bullying without consequences
- Mayoralty powers without restraint



What Do Effective Councils Look Like? (1)

- Respect for the views of others
- Ability to focus & appear polite
- Every member expected to contribute
- Citizen input welcomed, respected & possibly heeded
- Administration & their reports given a fair, respectful hearing
- CAO (City Manager) highly regarded



What Do Effective Councils Look Like? (2)

- ❑ Role of the Mayor/Chair respected
- ❑ Council/Board with a clear vision
- ❑ Council/Board establishing bridges to centres of influence
- ❑ Council/Board taking the time to ponder
- ❑ Council discussions robust; strategy granular & not vanilla (i.e. one strategy fits all)



Leadership Metrics at the Local Level

- What is Essential?
- Who is the Client?
- What Will You Accomplish?
- What Makes the Difference?



What is Essential

- Council with a sense of vision & priorities
- Absolute focus on those priorities
- Clarity of purpose: what will be the legacy of THIS Council/Board?



Who is the Client?

- Who does this Council/Board serve?
- Do all citizens feel like they are on your agenda?
- Are you reaching out to the community groups who are serving so many in your districts/cities?



What Will You Accomplish?

- What will be your “Legacy Markers?”
 - Vision with meaning
 - Priorities with action
 - Passion with purpose
 - Meetings with meaning
 - Community with connectedness



What Difference Will You Make?

- ❑ The “tombstone test”: how will you fill in the hyphen?
- ❑ Being on Council ought to be more than busyness, meetings, conferences
- ❑ An elected official has power to build a better governance model for future



What Difference Will You Make?

- ❑ Leadership understood as the competitive edge
- ❑ Council concerned about the “long game”:
how are we positioning for future success
- ❑ Council/Board seen as “nose in, fingers out”



**There are two critical challenges to meet:
the management of trust and organizational
integrity**



“The world is not interested in what we do for a living. What they are interested in is what we have to offer freely - hope, strength, love and the power to make a difference! ” Sasha Azevedo, actress



“I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough, we must do.”
Leonardo de Vinci (1452-1519)



Story of the lady found dead on the floor of a newsroom in a Florida newspaper office. She was one of their regular writers contributing her homespun wisdom weekly. Clutched in her hand was a list of ideas for her next 15 articles. She was 92. She was pressing on...not hindered by age or the perception of others. She was about doing for others, making a difference in her world.



“How wonderful that no one need wait a single moment to improve the world.”

Anne Frank (1929-1945)

So what are the leadership challenges?

- ❖ Rise above pettiness
- ❖ Focus on the future
- ❖ Break the die/mold
- ❖ Enlarge your territory
- ❖ Practice transcendent leadership
- ❖ Build your community's awareness

In Summary

Civic leadership requires much more than an election: we rely on men and women of goodwill doing for us what may not be accomplished otherwise; making decisions which are “other-focused”; utilizing the strengths of the city/district to raise the bar on citizen assurance: “we are living in the right place!”

