

**Association of
Kootenay Boundary
Local Governments**

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON GOVERNANCE
GEORGE B CUFF, FCMC
FEBRUARY 18TH 2015

**“Great things are not done by
impulse, but by a series of small
things brought together.”**
Vincent van Gogh, Dutch artist

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What is Important (1)

- **Tone at the Top:** What messages are we sending
- **Priorities:** How/when do we establish OUR game-plan
- **Profile:** What style of Council/Board do we want to be
- **Orientation:** Was it well done; are all members up to speed
- **Communication:** How will we communicate: each other, residents, media, social media

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What is Important (2)

- **Governance:** What governance model do we prefer; what policies do we initiate/review/revise
- **Relationships:** What relationships internally/externally do we build
- **Roles:** Need to discuss how Board/Council will intersect with management, the organization & community
- **Business Plan/Budget:** What process/timing
- **Community service:** Need to maintain humble hearts

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What is Important (3)

- **Legislative/legal constraints:** Where do our powers start/stop
- **Organizational structure:** What protocols exist re: connecting
- **Fiscal health:** Key economic sustainability issues
- **Procedural bylaw:** How do we get things done
- **Council-CAO Protocols:** What authority, performance review
- **Being ethical:** What bar are we setting

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What Do I Know from Learning & Experience?

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What Do I Know? (1)

- Policy Leadership
 - Effective Councils/Boards understand that they serve best when they provide policy leadership
- Focus on YOUR Role
 - Effective Councils/Boards are not meddlers; they resist the temptation
 - Effective Councils/Boards focus more on servant-leadership than egos, sound bytes, photo ops

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What Do I Know?(2)

- Normal People Disagree
 - Effective Councils/Boards argue, disagree, speak up on the issues AND do so in a spirit of respect: in short, they are mature
 - Effective Councils/Boards respect each other: in private/public

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What Do I Know?(3)

- Respect for Professionalism
 - Effective Councils/Boards understand that the focus of their debates is with other members of Council/Board: the administration is not on the debating team
 - Having well-qualified, diligent staff a blessing

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What Do I Know?(4)

- **Tone at the Top Communicated by Leaders**
 - Community senses the tone: progressive, change, status quo, reactive, fractious, unified
 - Dialogue in Chambers an important barometer
 - Council/Board outlines its priorities; expects the system to put those into action; expects the CAO to report on accomplishments and challenges

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What Do I Know? (5)

- **Effective Management**
 - Focus on their roles
 - Show respect for their elected officials
 - Respect their CAO
 - Keen to improve their service to the public
 - Keep current in their professions

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What Do I Know? (6)

- **Decorum in Council/Board Chambers**
 - Council members agree to show courtesy to others
 - Members accept that others hold varied opinions
- **Council/Board's Community Focus**
 - Committed to engaging the "community"
 - Willing to recognize community groups as allies

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What Do I Know? (7)

- Ethical standards set high
 - Council/Board members identify ethical standards
 - Council/Board members agree to abide by such standards
 - “First step” avoided
- Council/Board members “Other-centred not Ego-centred”
 - Service not self the attitude
 - My time here is limited

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“In the time we have it is surely our duty to
do all the good we can to all the people we
can in all the ways we can.”

William Barclay, Scottish author

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What Works? (1)

- **Focus on the big picture**
- **Take time to ponder**
- **Approach issues with governance mindset**
- **Work collaboratively**
- **Don't play silly games**

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What Works? (2)

- **Focus on service**
- **Understand “the public will”**
- **Communicate frequently; clearly; by policy**
- **Support your leader; respect your colleagues**

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“Service to others is the rent you pay
for your room here on Earth.”
-- Muhammad Ali, American boxer

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What Landmines De-rail Success? (1)

- **Disregard for the law**
- **Bypassing your Code of Conduct**
- **Focusing your criticism on colleagues rather than on ideas**
- **Ego: what’s in it for me?**

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What Landmines De-rail Success? (2)

- Believing it was your expertise that elected you
- Treating administration as your “servants”
- Focus on headlines rather than progress
- Dysfunctional behaviour; split Board/Council

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Lead or Follow?

What can you do? You can complain about the current state of affairs that your Council inherited OR you can act; you can play in the weeds of administrivia OR you can do the important work of governance; you can learn to work together and accept each other's foibles OR you can accept that these folks are your colleagues and work towards real results.



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