



MAKING THE MOST OF COLLABORATING WITH STAFF

Thursday, February 6, 2020

8:30 am – 10:00 am

10:30 am – noon

Small group discussion

In the group at your table use the next 25 minutes to discuss the questions below.

Choose a spokesperson and be prepared to give a short 1 minute summary of your group's conclusions.

What are some of the ways you collaborate effectively with staff?

What do you do when you feel you and your staff are on different pages and the collaborating isn't going so well?

What is one thing you can do differently when you return to your organization to collaborate effectively with your staff?



TOP 10 TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF COLLABORATING WITH STAFF

LGLA Leadership Forum February 2020

Embrace your role of governance

You are the elected officials and decision makers – authority rests with you as the governing body. Embrace the role: set the strategic direction, allocate your resources, both human and financial, manage risk to your organization, engage and report to your community.

Give clear direction to staff through council/board motions and decisions

Councils and boards exercise their authority by resolution or bylaw meaning that virtually all decisions and actions of council/board are to be made collectively and must be formally decided on through a resolution or bylaw. Give clear direction to staff by making clear motions and voting on them.

Commit to responsible conduct

UBCM helped to develop the Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct: integrity, accountability, respect, leadership and collaboration. Demonstrating responsible conduct will go a long way to building a strong and constructive relationship with your fellow elected officials and your staff.

Know when to reach out and where to go for assistance

Sometimes councils and boards can resolve conflicts in-house but when that doesn't work, know when to seek outside help from external professionals or colleagues who specialize in team building, organizational reviews, and dispute resolution.

Support the non-partisan role of staff

In Canada and British Columbia, there is a long history and culture of a non-partisan public service. Local government staff in BC who are members of the Local Government Management Association (LGMA) are required to uphold the LGMA Code of Ethics which includes a commitment to, "Carry out his/her duties with impartiality and equality of service to all."

Be clear that the role of staff is to give advice to council/board and to manage operations

Staff's role is to give elected officials professional advice and to implement council/board decisions. Don't allow staff to stray into the governance role and don't let council/board stray into managing operations.

Adopt the one employee principle

Most BC local governments adopt the "one employee principle" where council/board oversees the organization through a single employee – the chief administrative officer (CAO) who is then responsible for leading and managing all other staff. Adopting this principle helps to clarify the roles of elected officials and staff, which is key to building a strong and constructive relationship.

Recognize and rectify conflict

Things don't always go smoothly, and conflicts do arise – be prepared to recognize conflict at your council/board table and with staff. Seek ways to manage and resolve conflicts before they become unmanageable.

Collaborate and learn to work with your fellow elected officials

Because councils and boards give direction through collective decisions, individual elected officials need to work together even when their perspectives differ. Strive to work and collaborate with your fellow elected officials at your council or board table.

Evaluate and give regular feedback to your CAO

CAO performance evaluation and regular feedback set out performance expectations that are assessed on a regular basis and provide an opportunity for open and honest dialogue between the CAO and Council or Board. Performance evaluation and regular feedback is critical as it establishes an environment of trust and respect that can enhance the CAO-Council/Board relationship.

Think about how you can work to build a more collaborative and constructive relationship with your fellow elected officials and staff.....what's one thing you will do more of or do differently when you return to your organization?

When I return home, I will commit to:
