

Virginia Municipal League

Newly Elected Officials Conference

January 5, 2018

Carolyn W. Dull, Mayor

Steve Owen, City Manager

City of Staunton

Carolyn W. Dull, Mayor

- First elected to City Council in 2006
- Elected Mayor in 2014 and 2016 by Council
- Retired CPA. Previously served as the business manager for Augusta Correctional Center. In the past, Mayor Dull has served as Chief Financial Officer for Valley Community Services Board; business manager for the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind and accountant for King's Daughters' Hospital.
- Robert E. Lee High School, College of William and Mary, Blue Ridge Community College, and Eastern Mennonite University. Degrees: A.A.S. in Accounting and B.S. in Management and Organizational Development.

Council Duties

- Serves on the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (Past Chair), the Governor's Local Government Policy Council, and the Nominations Committee.

Professional Certifications & Awards

- Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants
- 1997 recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award from Eastern Mennonite University

Civic Engagement

- Appointed to the Criminal Justice Services Board by Governor Terry McAuliffe (2017)
- Blue Ridge Disability Services Board of Directors, past Vice-chair
- Valley Area Community Support, Inc., past Secretary and Treasurer
- Gypsy Express Mini-train Volunteer

Interests

- Mayor Dull is the founding member of the country-rock band Whiskey Creek
- Jacob, handsomest and smartest grandson, ever

Steve Owen, City Manager

- Virginia local government manager since 1981, in seven jurisdictions
 - One city – Staunton
 - Two counties – Frederick (assistant) and Powhatan
 - Four towns – Wakefield, Berryville, Leesburg (assistant), and Herndon
- Luck Stone Corporation - Northern Virginia Real Estate Manager
- Legislative Aide to former Delegate L. Ray Ashworth, 1979 Session
- B.A. in Government from the College of William and Mary
- Master of Urban Planning from the University of Virginia
- Economic Development certificate from the University of North Carolina
- Senior Executive Institute graduate from the University of Virginia
- Member and Past President of the Virginia Local Government Management Association
- 36-year member of the International City/County Management Assoc.
- 74 elected officials

Congratulations!



Perception



Reality!!!



Civics Lesson

- The City of Staunton, Virginia created the council – manager form of local government in 1908 when it hired the first city manager in the universe, we think.
- Charles Ashburner served for three years, then moved on to Norfolk, Virginia to be their first; then Springfield, Ohio; and finally Stockton, California.



Mayor-Council

- Several of the Commonwealth's smaller communities utilize this form of government where the Mayor serves as the chief administrative officer (VA Code § 15.2-1423)
- Council Committee Structure oversees daily administration above and beyond policy implementation and planning responsibilities
- Caution: Be leery of only being a sidewalk supervisor and not focusing on other policy duties

Council-Manager

- Council-manager form of government combines the strong political leadership of elected officials with the strong managerial experience of an appointed manager or administrator.
- All power and authority to set policy rests with an elected governing body, which includes a mayor or chairperson and members of the council, commission, or board. The governing body in turn hires a nonpartisan professional manager who has very broad authority to run the organization.

Council-Manager

- Typically, the mayor/chair serves as presiding officer at council/board meetings and as the ceremonial head of the town, city, or county.
- The mayor/chair is expected to provide leadership in the policy process, but the role does not include that of day-to-day management.

- Predominant form of local government in the U.S.
- Has long been the predominant form in Virginia.
 - All VA cities employ a professional manager, except Richmond, which has the Strong Mayor form
 - All VA counties have one as well. Highland County was the last, just a few years ago
 - Most VA towns do too if large enough to afford one

Working with your Manager

- Every community is different. Factors such as population, level of public services, size of staff and unique local conditions contribute to the expectations of council for the manager.
- VA Code §15.2-1541 details the required duties for a city or town manager.
- ICMA Code of Ethics www.icma.org
- An effective manager should be able to implement and communicate council's vision for the community

Working with your manager

- The manager should be capable of projecting the desired image of the community. Public perception of the manager is a direct reflection of council.
- Council should conduct a fair and comprehensive evaluation of the manager annually, or at least every 18 months.
- Communicate clear expectations to the manager, and through the manager, to employees, so that they take responsibility and ownership of their work.

Working with your Manager

- Expect your manager to treat council with respect.

Formal vs. informal speech is a perfect indicator:

Carolyn

Mayor Dull

Madam Mayor

Fred

Fred Dog

Dr. Smith, Mr. Smith - or - Councilman Smith

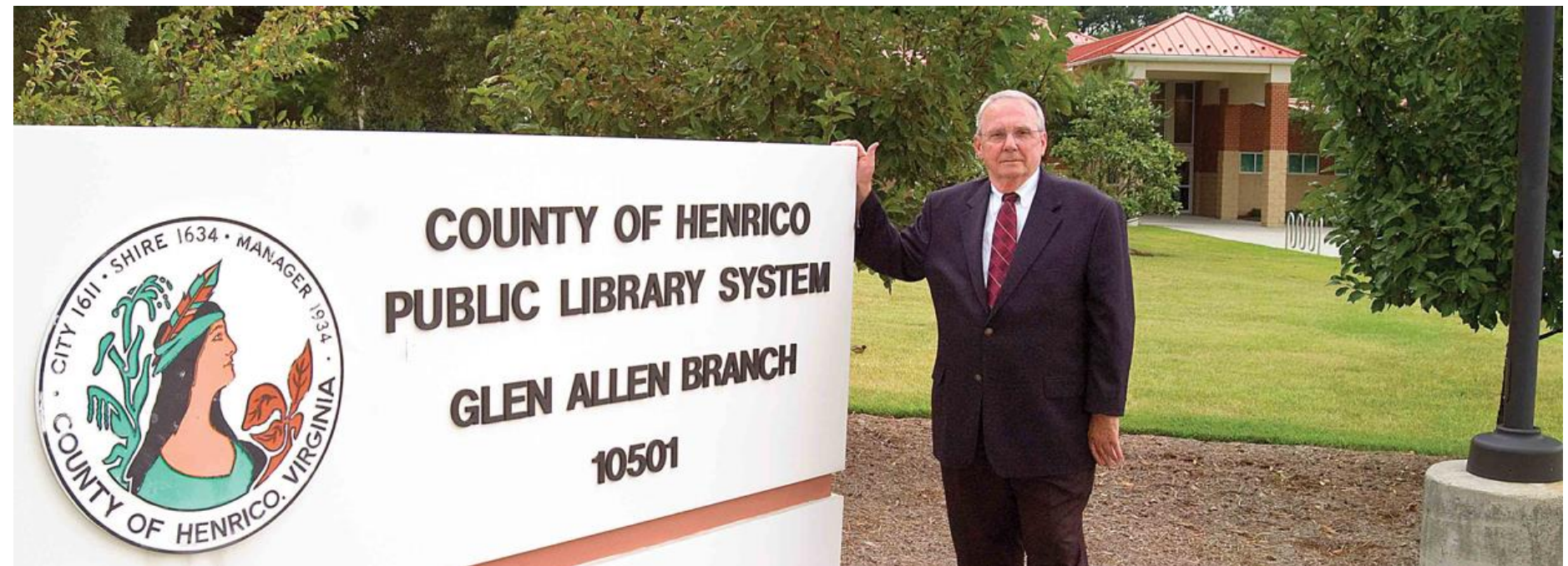
- Expect your manager to stay out of individual council disagreements or politics.
- Expect your manager to be disciplined in follow-up on council issues.
- Seek advice from your manager and give it
- Establish a staff communication protocol with your Manager – clear expectations!

Working with your Manager

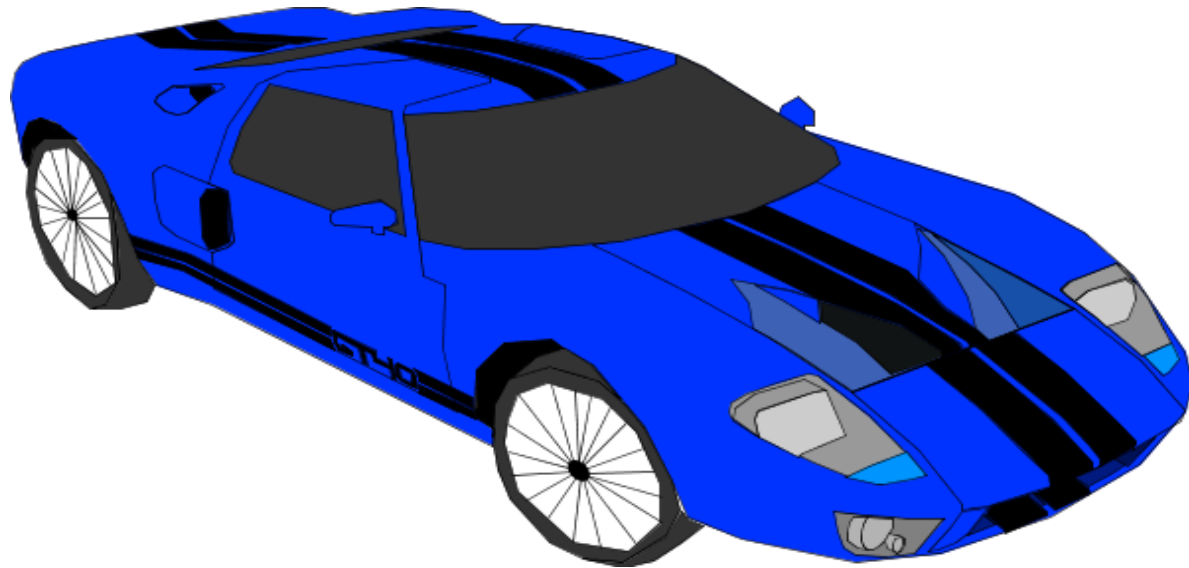
- Expect the manager to provide clear policy alternatives that are thoughtful, well researched, and doable. Your manager should give you credible information and detailed advice to allow you to make the best decisions for the community.
- Expect your manager to meet with Council members as regularly as they wish in a one-on-one setting.

Chain of Command = Chain of Communication

...a story



Council-Manager (Staff) Relations are like Driving a Car



City Council

Creates the Vision

- Steers the Car - where the city wants to go
- Hits the Gas – how fast they want to go
- Hits the Brake – when they want to slow down
- Steers the Car – when they want to change direction (even make a U-turn)

Manager and Staff

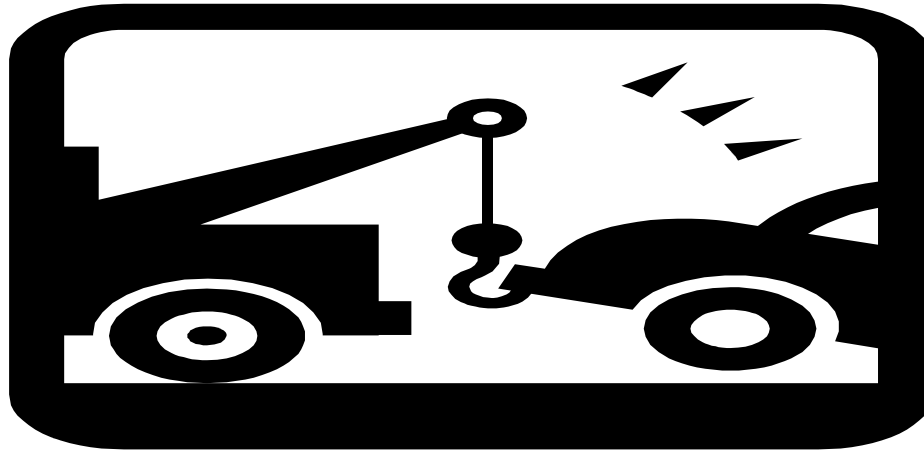
Keep the Car Running

- Full Gas Tank – Money (Fiscally Stable)
- Air in the Tires – Trained Human Resources
- Smooth Running Engine– Vehicles and Equipment
- Washed and Waxed – Maintain the Infrastructure
- Regular Tune-ups – Prepared for Emergencies

“People who work together will win - whether it is a football game or addressing the issues facing a community.”

Vince Lombardi

Council Roles to Avoid Crashing



- Follow the Money – Where it comes from and where it goes
- Learn how to read and understand an audit

Council Roles – Maintain Legal Limits

- Public Official's Liability
- Conflict of Interest
- Open Meetings
- Freedom of Information
- Ethics
- Dillon's Rule

Council Roles to Improve the Drive

- Tell the manager where to go – Create the Vision
- Build consensus
- Have a spokesperson
- Keep everyone informed – No Surprises
- Respect your employees
- Do your homework – Respect everyone's time
- Do something – No one was elected or appointed to collect dust

- Develop trust (between council and manager and among council)
- Win and lose with class
- Learn how you as a council want to share leadership with your manager
- Accept that politics is a part of your role as an elected official; Learn how to work it to your collective advantage

Manager Keeps the Car Running Smooth

- Understand and implement the Council Vision
- Keep ALL of Council informed – No favorites
- BUT, the Mayor is the first among equals
- Prepare the agenda with council input
- Present issues from a neutral perspective
- Keep up to date and keep council up to date
- Review progress on issues and programs regularly
- Be the Quiet Mechanic – Let the driver(s) shine

More Tips From the Driver's Seat

- Be realistic about how much can staff undertake simultaneously
- Keep staff on the road – Review performance regularly
- Be informed – Participate in VML and know what's happening here and elsewhere
- Communicate - Communicate - Communicate

Manager expects of Council



Manager expects of Council

- Don't surprise the manager in public.
- Don't criticize the manager and staff in public meetings. Private individual meetings and/or closed sessions allow for appropriate handling of personnel issues.
- Be sensitive to your manager's time on weekends and evenings.
- Support the professional development and continuing education needs of your manager.

Manager expects of Council

- Conduct a fair and comprehensive evaluation of the manager.
- Do not use your manager as a political weapon or a shield.
- Do not let problems between the council and the manager fester. Reach an understanding through clear expectations on both ends.
- Read manager/staff reports before the council meetings.
- The Point: All on the same team

Questions?