

Council Staff Relations

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Where to start?

Let's go with the obvious ...

Council Staff Relations



Role of Council



Council is elected by the people.

Council makes policy.

Role of Staff



Staff is hired for their expertise.

Staff implement policy.

Council Staff Relations

Everyone lives happily ever after.

THE END



Council Staff Relations

Wait ... maybe there is more.



Council Staff Relations

I will give you my personal perspective on this, and some may think it idealistic and some may think it's hokey ...

But ...

It worked for me.



Members of Council

- Are elected to represent the people of the municipality.
- We often come with an agenda.
- Some of us are elected by wards and some by general election, but getting elected does not make us any smarter.
- In my quarter century or better in office, this is one of the biggest challenges some folks face.



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- In my opinion, the ward system is just a manner of election.
 - Once elected, we are there to represent the whole community.
 - The Oath of Office is to the community, not to a ward or to any particular group.
 - We may have an agenda that got us elected but now have to look at the bigger picture.

I was elected Alderman to represent the citizens of Ashburnham Ward in 1978.

Like most ward representatives, my challenge was to see the big picture.



The Municipal Act, s. 224



The Municipal Act, s. 224 states a Councillor's duties are to:

- Represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality;
- Develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality;
- Determine which services the municipality provides;
- Ensure that administrative policies, practices and procedures are controllership policies, practices and procedures are in place to implement the decisions of council;
- Ensure the accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality, including the activities of senior management of the municipality;
- Maintain the financial integrity of the municipality; and
- Carry out the duties of council under this or any other Act.

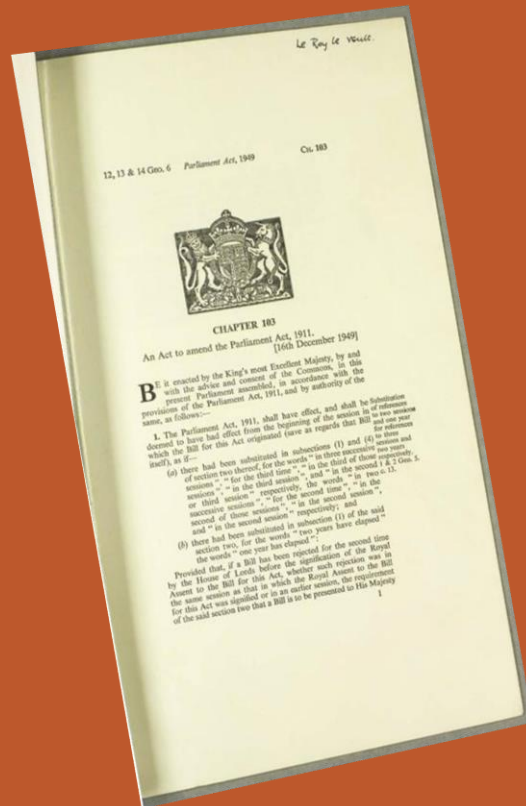
Municipal Staff



Municipal staff are:

- Hired for their expertise.
- Offer professional advice to Council.
- Prepare reports based on council priorities.
- Prepare reports to council on issues facing the municipality.
- Administer the day-to-day operations.

The Municipal Act, s. 227



The Municipal Act, s. 227 states officers and employees of the municipality:

- Implement Council's decisions and establish administrative practices and procedures to carry out Council's decisions;
- Undertake research and provide advice to Council on the policies and programs of the municipalities; and
- Carry out other duties under this Act or any other Act and duties assigned by the municipality.



But human nature (being what it is) elected people who, for the most part, want to be re-elected.

So, how do we keep our ward constituents happy (to get re-elected)

- + While also doing our duty to the community?
- + Knowing we have a limited time?
- + Realizing the staff we are dealing with have no term limit and are entrenched in their jobs?

I must tell you that, during my time on council, I faced another challenge in Council Staff relations.



- I had a brother at the Fire Department;
- A brother in public works;
- A brother at the public electrical utility; and
- A brother and sister-in-law at the Police Department

Family gatherings sometimes got a little tense.



But here is my secret ...

RESPECT

But it's like a bank account ...

Before you can draw on it, you have to make a deposit.



Give respect **Get** respect

Lesson #1

My first important lesson ...

(the Goldenrod Memo Pad)

Lesson #2



It's nice if someone gives you a pony, but then you have to feed it.

Lesson #3

Asking staff to do a task, whether it is preparing a report or doing a study or whatever ...



Lesson #4

Get to know your staff.



Lesson #5

Be open;

Be prepared to compromise to
move projects forward;

BUT NEVER lose sight of your
values or beliefs.



10 commandments that I believe will guarantee you success in dealing with staff ...

1. Set the right example by your actions.
2. Be consistent so staff know how to read you.
3. Be fair and impartial.
4. Show an interest in them, but don't become too familiar.
5. Seek their counsel on matters that affect their jobs and respect their judgement.

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6. Allow them as much individuality as possible, as long as the end result is there.
 7. Make sure they always know what you expect of them.
 8. Appreciate their efforts and praise their accomplishments.
 9. Use every opportunity to teach them how to advance their skills and responsibility.
 10. NEVER ask them to do anything you would not do yourself.

Thank you.

