



ROLE CLARITY

September 28, 2021



1

WELCOME FROM CITY COUNCIL

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead



2

TOPICS FOR THIS PUBLIC SERIES

- Overall
 - Overview of the role of local government for citizens and organizations
- September 15 – recording on city website
 - What the city can and can't do
- September 28 - today
 - Understanding roles in the city
- October 5
 - Engagement in local government
- October 20
 - City finance

Please ask questions or make comments as we go. Raise your hand or put question in the chat box

3

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



3

SESSION DECORUM

Working Together in an Online Environment

- Online is not ideal – some extra grace and patience is requested
- Listen and respect different ideas and diverging opinions. This is where much of the value lies
- Individuals who share inappropriate comments or content will be asked once to refrain. If the behaviour continues, the individual will be removed from the session.
- The session is being recorded for posting to the City's website

4

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



4

OUR TIME TOGETHER

- This is your time
- This is not a lecture; it's more of a seminar – add your thoughts where you like
- There are lots of routes up the mountain of great governance
- Everyone brings something to their community, whether public, elected or appointed. That's the best team.
 - You want each other to be successful for the citizens, businesses, and organizations in Stratford
- Disagree with opinions or interpretations if you like

5

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca

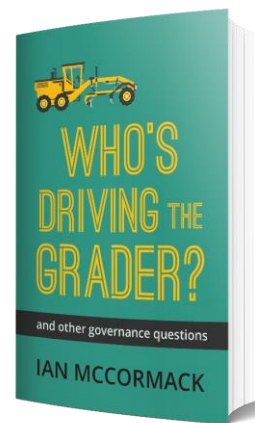


5

CONVERSATION FACILITATOR

Ian McCormack, CMC

- President of Strategic Steps Inc.
- Operates in the space between elected and appointed officials
- Called in to assist with topics associated with good governance
 - Orientations
 - Strategic Planning
 - Governance, Organizational and Code of Conduct Reviews
- Author and speaker
 - Governance Voice column in *Municipal Voice (SUMA)*
 - *Who's Driving the Grader* published in 2020
 - Book on the aptitudes of the best mayors coming out this winter



6

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



6

THE NEXT BOOK

The Best Functioning Mayors – The DNA of Great Leaders

- **Personal Aptitudes** – what's in you already.
 - No playing favourites
 - Reflect often
 - Make mistakes – move on
- **Community Leadership** – where you came from.
 - Humility
 - Vision
 - Know the rules
- **Governance Skills** – what you can learn.
 - Focus on strategy
 - No tolerance for abuse
 - Collaborate broadly

7

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca

7

QUESTIONS FROM LAST SESSION



8

ANY FOLLOW-UP TO DO?

- Session one dealt with what the city can and can't do.
- Relevant legislation
- Planning and setting priorities
- Council's levers – bylaw, policy, budget
- Citizen involvement
- Budgeting

9

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca

9

QUESTIONS FOR THIS SESSION

- What questions do you have about the role of each part of your city government?
- Is there anything specific you want to cover in our time together?

10

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca

10

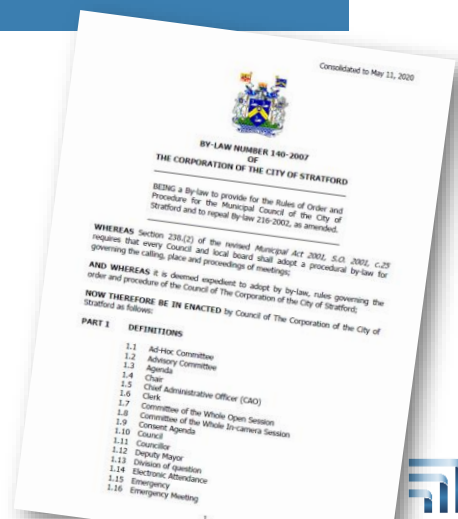
ROLE CLARITY



11

DISTINCT BUT OVERLAPPING ROLES

- Established and governed through provincial legislation and city bylaw
 - Council
 - Councillor
 - Mayor
 - CAO
 - Administration
- Detail is added through governance and administrative policy



12

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



12

COUNCIL



13

BOARDS

Governance vs Working

- Focus of Council is on governance responsibilities rather than on operational matters.
- Focus of Council is on results (outputs, outcomes)

14

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



14

KEY DIFFERENCES

Working vs Governance Boards

Aspect	Working	Governance
Primary Focus	Doing: events, fundraising, managing	Guiding: vision, mission, policy
Leadership	Staff led	Board (Council) led
Planning	Staff provides strategic direction, board often does much of the work	Board (council) provides strategic direction. Staff provide operational direction
Recruitment	Board actively involved in recruitments	Board (council) is responsible for one employee

15

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



15

ORIENTATION TO A COUNCIL

- Council becomes 'first team'
 - Electors created the team that has to work together.
 - Council has more knowledge than anyone else
 - Privity to confidential information
 - More focus on civic business than other citizens
 - Diversity has power
- Ongoing Updates, Professional Development, Refreshers
 - Conferences
 - Courses of study
 - Invited speakers
 - Team building

16

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



16

ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES, WORKLOAD

Council's Role

- Look after interests of entire city
- Avoid conflict of interest (pecuniary interest)
- Attend Council and Committee meetings
 - Avoid informal council meetings: meetings of a majority of members to discuss city business that are not duly called public meetings. This is a contravention of statute.
- Represent the community
- Professional development
- Avoidance of focus on a single issue

17

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



17

ROLE OF COUNCIL

- What is Council's job?
 - Be strategic, think governance
 - Start with Vision and Mission, use Values as a filter
 - Pass bylaws or policies
 - Provide direction to administration
 - Appoint, suspend or revoke the appointment of the CAO (city manager)
 - Adopt the city's operating and capital budgets
 - Budget reflects priorities.
 - Council reviews variances

18

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca

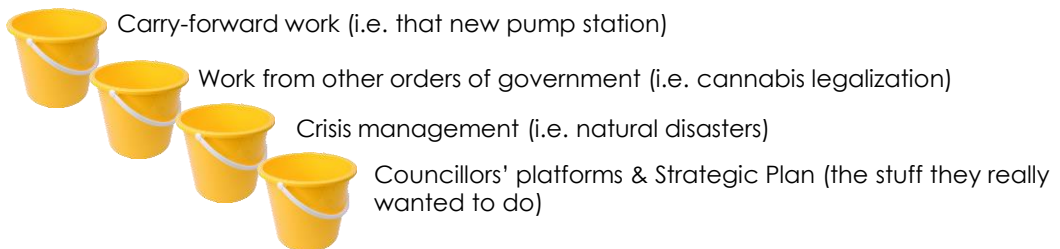


18

THE FOUR BUCKETS

What councils get to deal with

- Maintain the accountability of the administration
- Develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality
- Deal with anything specifically required by statute



19

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



19

DECISION MAKING

- Every decision council makes has political implications
- There is always a trade-off
 - Finances and staff capacity are limited
 - Is the municipality known as a good place to work? Do staff have a realistic work-life balance?
- How does council react when staff say 'no'

20

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



20

CHANGE COMES WITH A COST

- Governance is about change – moving from now to later.
- Strategic plans are also about change, understanding that previous plans will have implemented new programs, services, offerings that still continue to require attention and dollars.
- Unintended consequences sometimes happen:
 - Provincial or national regulatory burden increases over time.
 - Capacity to deliver is reduced every time something is added, unless something else is changed or removed.

21

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca

21

COUNCILLOR



22

ROLE OF THE COUNCILLOR

- A single voice on a council
- What is the job of individual council members?
 - Consider interests of city as a whole
 - Develop and evaluate policy
 - Participate in meetings
 - Direct CAO
 - Keep confidences (closed or in camera)

23

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



23

COUNCIL IN PROCEDURE BYLAW

Section 32.

- a) **represent the public** and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality;
- b) **develop and evaluate the policies and programs** of the municipality;
- c) **determine which services** the municipality provides;
- d) **ensure that administrative policies, practices and procedures** and controllership policies, practices and procedures are in place to **implement the decisions of Council**;
- e) **ensure the accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality**, including the activities of the senior management of the municipality;
- f) **to maintain the financial integrity** of the municipality; and
- g) **carry out the duties** of council under the Municipal Act or any other Act.

24

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



24

MAYOR



25

STATUS OF A MAYOR

- Mayor is a member of council
 - Same voting weight as all other councillors
 - Mayor is a voting member of all city committees in Stratford (not universally so)
- 'Weak' mayor system
 - Parliamentary (Westminster) system vs. Ontario local government
 - Is 'first among equals' really true?
- A deputy mayor will assume the mayor's role if the mayor is not available or in a conflict
 - The role tends to rotate on a regular basis through the term

26

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



26

ROLE OF THE MAYOR

- Chairperson of council
- Primary contact for groups wanting to meet with council
- Consensus seeker amongst members of council
- Liaison with senior staff Advisor to council
- Member on all council committees unless council directs otherwise
- Key representative with regards to ceremonial responsibilities
- Liaison with other orders of government
- Advice with regards to policy development

27

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



27

MAYOR IN PROCEDURE BYLAW

Section 3.1

- a) act as **chief executive officer** of the municipality;
- b) **preside over council meetings** so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively;
- c) **provide leadership to the council;**
- d) without limiting clause c) to **provide information and recommendations to the council** with respect to the role of council described in 3.2 d) and e).
- e) **represent the municipality** at official functions;
- f) **carry out the duties of the head of council** under the Municipal Act or any other Act; and,

28

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



28

MAYOR IN PROCEDURE BYLAW CONTINUED

Section 3.1

- g) as Chief Executive Officer of the municipality, the Mayor shall:
- I. **uphold and promote the purposes** of the municipality;
 - II. **promote public involvement** in the municipality's activities;
 - III. **act as the representative of the municipality** both within and outside the municipality and promote the municipality locally, nationally and internationally; and
 - IV. participate in and foster activities that **enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being** of the municipality and its residents.
 - V. to **act as Council's representative when dealing with other levels of government**, their agencies and the private sector;

29

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



29

CITY MANAGER



30

RELATIONSHIP TO ADMINISTRATION

- Council legislates
 - Supported by administrative strength
- Council has one employee
 - Council hires one expert
 - Hire, evaluate and replace CAO or City Manager
 - Evaluate CAO every year
- All other staff are led by the CAO
 - CAO hires subject matter experts
- Avoid micromanaging operations – city staff are not Councils!
 - 'Keep your nose in and your fingers out'

31

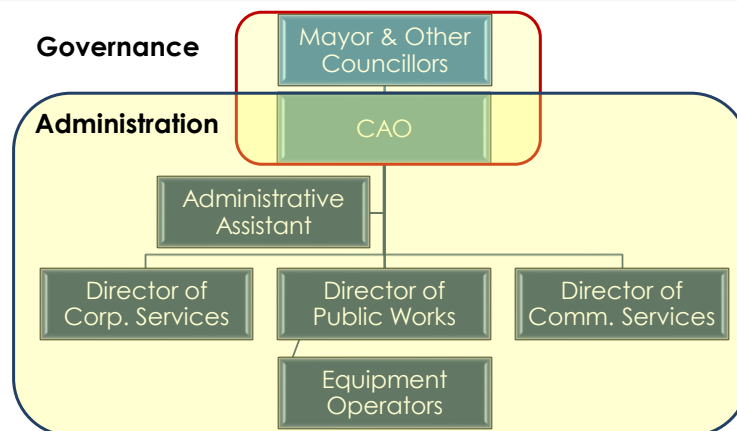
ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



31

TYPICAL STRUCTURE

The Two Solitudes



32

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



32

INFORMATION FLOW

Getting Council to Make Decisions

- Administration provides information to Council so they can make decisions
 - Tip: there is rarely 'all the information'
- Result can be bylaw, policy, directive
- Request for Decision (RFD)
 - Issue
 - Background
 - Impact on strategic plan, city values, budget
 - Options
 - Recommendation and alternate recommendations
 - RFDs are based on administrative expertise, background, culture

33

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



33

HAZARDS FOR COUNCIL TO AVOID

- Potential
 - Individual council members direct CAO
 - Council directs staff other than CAO
 - CAO is not aware of council members' actions
 - City staff are caught in the middle, with two bosses
- Mitigation
 - Administration acts on Council policy
 - Council must act by resolution
 - Council holds each other in check
 - Council permits respectful challenge from CAO

34

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



34

STAYING FOCUSED – CITY MANAGER

- What interests Council fascinates the CAO
- Annual evaluation should include
 - Look-back at past year
 - Look ahead to next year
 - Set of measurable goals
 - Evaluations over the years provide a benchmark and trends
- Evaluation is done in camera
- Other staff evaluated by CAO or their managers

35

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



35

STAYING FOCUSED - COUNCIL

- Council gets formally evaluated every four years
- Ongoing evaluation can include
 - Engagement with citizens
 - Formal board effectiveness self-evaluation
 - 360 Feedback
 - Comments from CAO
- Measure against other municipalities or an agreed-upon ideal state

36

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



36

NEXT TIME



37

NEXT TIME WE MEET

Role Clarity

- Topics for our next time together
 - Engagement and communication between the city, council, public
- Review of today
 - What worked for you?
 - What needs to change?
 - What would bring you the most value?

38

ian@strategicsteps.ca / www.strategicsteps.ca



38



THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
ONGOING
INTEREST IN
YOUR
COMMUNITY



www.strategicsteps.ca
ian@strategicsteps.ca
780-416-9255

