

**TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015  
6:00 P.M. - CHAMBER A**

**Item 1.** Call to Order.

**Item 2.** Those Present.

**Item 3.** Discussion on future Goals for 2016.

**Item 4.** Adjournment.

## **Priorities for Next Year**

From the phone interviews, the following themes clearly emerged as Priorities for consideration in the coming year and can serve as the starting point for the discussion on December 16. The detail associated with each is what the consultants captured during the interview, but we have considered them and stated the themes a little differently to add clarity and focus.

- **Communication- Internal to the Council**
  - Keep strengthening communication between school board and Council
  - Establish better clearer 'rules of engagement', less contentiousness
  - Be open, clear, inclusive in deliberations
  - Debrief our own process
  - Focus on teamwork, inclusion, effective group practices/norms
  - Focus on a limited number of goals
  
- **Communication - External with the Community and other Groups**
  - More transparency, better communication with community; explain things so people can understand
  - Earn the trust of the community
  - Have the community see us as all pulling in the same direction
  
- **Financial Management/Budget Process**
  - Have a budget process that doesn't divide the community, eg, pit taxes against schools
  - Solidify improvements made last year in budget process
  - Look at how our budget compares to other communities
  - Have best possible budgeting process based on analysis of needs and choices
  - Have a long term plan for how resources will be used in future
  
- **Other Issues**
  - Affordable housing
  - Senior services/ Aging in place
  - Business development
  - Broadband internet
  - Ordinances
  - Parking

All of these items are important and in one way or another may be important priorities that the Council should be mindful of next year, but this process demands prioritization; therefore we suggest the following framework for the next session.

Using the above as a starting point, we suggest that the Priorities for the coming year be a combination of Goals and Initiatives. Goals are our first priority. Initiatives are less so due to several factors. To assist in this process, we suggest that Goals **must meet all** of the following criteria:

- ✓ **Does it serve our mission?**
- ✓ **Can significant progress be made in one year?**
- ✓ **Can progress be measured?**
- ✓ **Is it within our control?**

Considering this criteria, the identified items of 1) Internal Communications, 2) External Communications and 3) Financial Management/Budget Process, all qualify as “Goals”.

### **Goals:**

If the answer is yes to all four of these questions, then the matter is worthy for consideration as a goal. For each goal that is identified, **Expected Outcomes** and **Action Items** should be developed. Developing the Expected Outcomes will help define why the goal is important and may assist in the evaluation process. Action Items are very specific items that can be measured (benchmarks or metrics may be appropriate in certain circumstances). There seemed to be universal support for identifying a small number of goals and doing them well and assuming the above largely identifies the basic goals, we expect the majority of the discussion will occur around identifying the expected outcomes and specific action items for each. The details for each will be critical in the future evaluation of whether progress has been made or the goal achieved.

For example, working from the second goal identified above, the structure might look like the following:

Goal: Improve External Communication

- i) Expected Outcomes:
  - (a) Build trust in the community
  - (b) Improve transparency
- ii) Action Items:
  - (a) Create a Town Facebook page
  - (b) Establish a presence on Twitter
  - (c) Post agenda items on Friday before the meeting
  - (d) Send quarterly newsletter

**Initiatives:**

If an item fails to meet the standard of a goal, rather than simply dismissing the matter, we suggest that it be identified as an “Initiative” for the year. It may be that the list of “Other Factors” identified in the interviews fall into this category. These are important matters that deserve attention, but for some reason are not readily (or easily) attainable, though important nonetheless. They should be included only by consensus of the Council to avoid any individual “pet projects”, and it is strongly encouraged that members of the Council take some ownership and show leadership in these matters.

An example of items that fit into the category of initiatives that emerged through the interviews is affordable housing and senior issues. The former is largely out of our control and the latter is amorphous and multi-faceted and both items likely fall short of the goals criteria. In these two areas we do have committees already in place working on these issues and short of a particular strategy, the Council could simply be receptive to their recommendations and mindful throughout the year how your policy decision affect these issues.

**Homework:**

We believe we have developed a framework that will focus the goals discussion, but for it to be productive, all members of the Council needs to give these matters some thought before the December 16 workshop:

1. First, we are not limited to the goals identified in the interviews. Please give some thought to other goals, but be mindful that they need to meet all of the criteria identified above.
2. Second, if your idea falls short of a goal, then offer it as an initiative for consideration.
3. Lastly, and most importantly, please consider possible Expected Outcomes and possible Action Items for the three goals above.

Your advance work on these items is crucial, so please take a few moments and be prepared to share your thoughts.

Tom Hall  
Bill Donovan  
Dana Morris-Jones  
John Shorb