

Good Fences Make Good Neighbors

Leadership Skills for Town Officials

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**LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
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BRINGING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TOGETHER TO SERVE

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Bringing Local Governments Together to Serve

Local Government Institute

- Wisconsin Towns Association
- Wisconsin Counties Association
- League of Wisconsin Municipalities
- Wisconsin Alliance of Cities



Local Government Institute

Purpose:

Collaborate with others to find solutions for the efficient delivery and funding of local government services consistent with the needs of our citizens.

Collaborate

What do you think of when you hear the word “collaborate” or “collaboration”?

Is it positive or negative?

Roadmap for Government Transformation

Lessons Learned:

- Collaboration is “in the genes” of local government – long history
- Collaborations must be voluntary and organic – not mandated. One size does not fit all.
- Focus on the way services are delivered, not the number of local government units.

Roadmap For Government Transformation

- Collaboration can result in significant efficiencies over long-term, but not in short-term – not a quick fix
- Not all services are suitable for collaboration. Factors include:
 - Association with community identity
 - Geography: Scope and Limitations
 - Operating & Capital Costs
 - Ratio of Line Staff to Customers
 - Mandates

Roadmap For Government Transformation

Obstacles to collaboration include:

- Turf
- Competition for Revenue/Growth
- Perceived Differences
- Perceived Loss of Identity, Access, Reduced Control and Accountability, Threat to Employees



Roadmap For Government Transformation

Many obstacles can be overcome, but it takes nearly all of the following:

- Demonstrate improved service
- Clear fiscal benefit
- Shared perception of need
- Community support
- Trust
- Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative Leadership

- Set of skills and attributes needed to deliver results across organizational boundaries
- Brought about by the need to use strategic alliances and partnerships to more effectively mobilize capital and deliver better results to customers

Collaborative Leadership

“A collaboration is a purposeful relationship in which all parties strategically choose to cooperate in order to accomplish a shared outcome.” – Hank Rubin

“Collaboration needs a different kind of leadership; it needs leaders who can safeguard the process, facilitate interaction and patiently deal with high levels of frustration” – Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Collaborative Leadership

“Getting value from difference is at the heart of the collaborative leader’s task... they have to learn to share control, and to trust a partner to deliver, even though that partner may operate very differently from themselves.” – David Archer and Alex Cameron

Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leaders accept responsibility for building - or helping to ensure the success of - a diverse team to accomplish a shared purpose .

Collaborative Leadership

Tools are:

- the purposeful exercise of your behavior, communication, and organizational resources in order to affect the perspective, beliefs, and behaviors of a collaborative partner
- the structure and climate of an environment that supports the collaborative relationship
- Facts and evidence are the foundation of successful collaborations

Collaborative Leadership

What is your experience with collaborations?

How did collaborative leadership express itself?

Break

So, What's The Deal With Fences?

Let's use fences as a metaphor for agreements with our neighbors

Types of Fences

Defensive Fence



Neighborly Fence





Fencing Protocol

- Fence or no fence?
- Observe boundaries
- Respect limits
- Share your plans
- Put the best face outward
- Fences are shared responsibilities

Collaborative Leadership & Good Agreements

- Who I am as a person is the core of who I am as a leader
- Leadership is about service to your community and enabling others to use their own initiative and experiences

Qualities of Collaborative Leaders

- Willingness to take risks
- Eager listeners
- Passion for the cause
- Optimistic about the future
- Able to share knowledge, power and credit

Key Lessons for Collaborative Leaders

- Find the *personal* motive for collaborating
- Find ways of simplifying complex situations for your people
- Prepare for how you are going to handle conflict well in advance
- Recognise that there are some people or organisations you just can't partner with
- Have the courage to act for the long term
- Actively manage the tension between focusing on delivery and on building relationships
- Invest in strong personal relationships at all levels
- Inject energy, passion and drive into your leadership style
- Have the confidence to share the credit generously
- Continually develop your interpersonal skills, in particular: empathy, patience, tenacity, holding difficult conversations, and coalition building.

What Are Your Opportunities?

- Break into groups
- In your group talk about opportunities for new collaborations you have with other units of government
- Select one opportunity and describe what needs to be done to make it happen