

2026 City Attorneys Spring Conference

Friday, May 15, 2026



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

Calm in the Chaos: City Attorneys Facing Incivility

Attorney Development & Succession Committee
Essential Skills Subcommittee

Calm in the Chaos: City Attorneys Facing Incivility

Attorney Development & Succession Committee

AND

The Essential Skills Subcommittee

Attorney Development & Succession Committee

- **Develop and enhance**
 - the legal, technical, practical, & interpersonal skills necessary to succeed as a city attorney or senior member of a City Attorney's Office
- **Provide opportunities**
 - for members to build & expand their knowledge of both substantive & essential skills integral to municipal law practice
- **Engage and connect**
 - experienced municipal practitioners with newer attorneys to encourage mentoring, effective knowledge transfer, & succession planning
- **Encourage**
 - municipal law practice in our law schools through panel discussions, internships, mentorship, and programs

Attorney Development & Succession Committee

- **Subcommittees**

- Substantive Law
- Essential Skills
- Law School / Early Career Outreach

- **Upcoming Events**

- 08/07/26 Essential Hour: Charter Cities
- 11/06/26 Essential Hour: Your First Government Tort Claim

Welcome to the **City of Pettysburg!**

- **Follow:** The ***Trials and Tribulations*** of the Pettysburg City Attorney
- **See:** How he handles ***Incivility in Local Government***
 - Aggressive & Unreasonable Attorneys
 - Difficult Staff Members
 - Disruptive Members of the Public
 - Contentious Councilmembers

Calm in the Chaos: City Attorneys Facing Incivility

Aggressive ATTORNEYS

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ATTORNEYS

- Do not disparage opposing counsel.
- Do not make threats.
- Extend common courtesies.
- Use the discovery process appropriately.

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Difficult STAFF

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STAFF

- Be a role model with city staff when it comes to civility.
- Avoid disparaging others, especially around city staff.
- Be an unbiased, plain-language “educator” on the applicable legal issue/standard.
- Plan ahead with staff on how best to deal with the public
- Be supportive of staff when they face incivility.

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CITY COUNCIL AND THE PUBLIC

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CITY COUNCIL AND THE PUBLIC

- Have a good civility policy and rules of procedure.
- Familiarize yourself with the limits of the First Amendment and the requirements of the Brown Act when it comes to public meetings and educate the City Council.
- Have a game plan.
- Consider other arenas for public education and discourse.

Calm in the Chaos: City Attorneys Facing Incivility

Thanks to our cast and panelists!

Michael Barrett, Partner, Burke, Williams & Sorensen

Celeste Stahl Brady, Of Counsel, Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth

Brian Byun, Deputy City Attorney, San Diego

Derek Cole, Partner, Cole Huber

Michael Conneran, Partner, Hanson Bridgett

Michael Guina, City Attorney, Burlingame

Dan Hentschke, Assistant City Attorney, Santa Barbara

Michelle Hugard, Deputy City Attorney, Santa Monica

Jennifer Mizrahi, Partner, Cole Huber

Zayna Moussa-Milward, City Attorney, Vernon

Merete Rietveld, Deputy City Attorney, Los Angeles

Dan Sodergren, City Attorney, Pleasanton

Elaine Zhong, Deputy City Attorney, Los Angeles

Calm in the Chaos: City Attorneys Facing Incivility

Thanks to

Katy Wisinski, Assistant City Attorney, Pleasanton

Contributing Editor

THANK YOU



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