

New Mayors and Council Members Academy

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Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

Developing an Effective City Council and City Manager Team: The Key To Good Governance and City Success

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Karen Pinkos, City Manager, El Cerrito

Panelists:

- Hon. Gabe Quinto, Mayor Pro Tem, El Cerrito
- Karen Pinkos, City Manager, El Cerrito
- Moderator: Pat Martel, ICMA West Coast Regional Director, Retired City Manager



Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

-Henry Ford

Session Overview

- The Foundation of Effective Governance
- Elements of Successful City Council/City Manager Relationships
- Strategies and Best Practices to Strengthen Communication
- Building a Cohesive Council Manager Team

Good Governance is About...



- Effective leadership by the Mayor and City Council
- Responsive management and leadership by the City Manager
- Meaningful communication: honest, direct, respectful, proactive
- Understanding roles and expectations
- **Fostering mutual respect and building trust**
- Focus on Ethics

Attributes of High Performing Councils

- True partnership between Members, City Manager and staff.
- Clarity and respect for roles and responsibilities
- Civility and respect for all
- Conduct effective meetings
- Hold each other and City Manager accountable
- Practice continuous learning

Elements of Successful Council/Manager Relationships

- Mayor, councilmembers and city manager develop a sense of team, working together in furtherance of common purpose
- The team values diversity of leadership style and perspective
- Clear and mutual understanding of respective roles, responsibilities and stated expectations
- **Develop and sustain effective communication** between the chief executive and governing board
- Trust is a crucial characteristic in any successful relationship and **communication is essential for fostering trust**

It's All About Communication



Make time for council/manager conversations and meetings



Clearly define communication expectations



Communicate consistently and equitably



Baseline information provided to all



Clear guidelines for council/staff communications

A dramatic landscape featuring a steep, layered rock face in the foreground, with snow-capped mountains in the background under a hazy sky. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The rock face shows distinct horizontal geological strata. The snow on the mountains is patchy, revealing some of the underlying rock. The overall mood is majestic and serene.

**A team is not a group of people that
work together. A team is a group of
people that trust each other.**

Simon Sinek

Commitments

Mayor/Council

- Hold the City Manager accountable for achieving Council goals, priorities, and implementing directives.
- Provide direction to the City Manager and s/he directs staff-chain of command.
- Avoid public criticism of the City Manager or staff- discuss concerns privately. Fix the issue not the blame.
- **Model positive behavior to demonstrate effective governance and maintain relationships.**

City Manager

- Support the entire governing board to be productive and successful.
- Help each Councilmember to succeed as an effective elected official.
- Work collaboratively to keep the council focused on priorities and making progress.
- Guide and develop staff and positive organizational culture.
- Engage the community to build trust and confidence in local government.

Leading Your Community: The Challenges

- Technology has changed the governing environment.
- Feedback is instant.
- National and local politics are closely connected.
- Resources are often scarce to meet increasing needs.
- Teamwork is essential.
- Governing is messy.
- You can't please everyone.
- There are no single right answers or perfect solutions.

Emerging Roles

- Models of civility and cooperation
- Messengers who encourage residents, businesses, the media, community organizations and others to play an active role in community building.
- Shapers of processes to connect and their local government in productive ways.
- Leaders who bring people together and build trust.

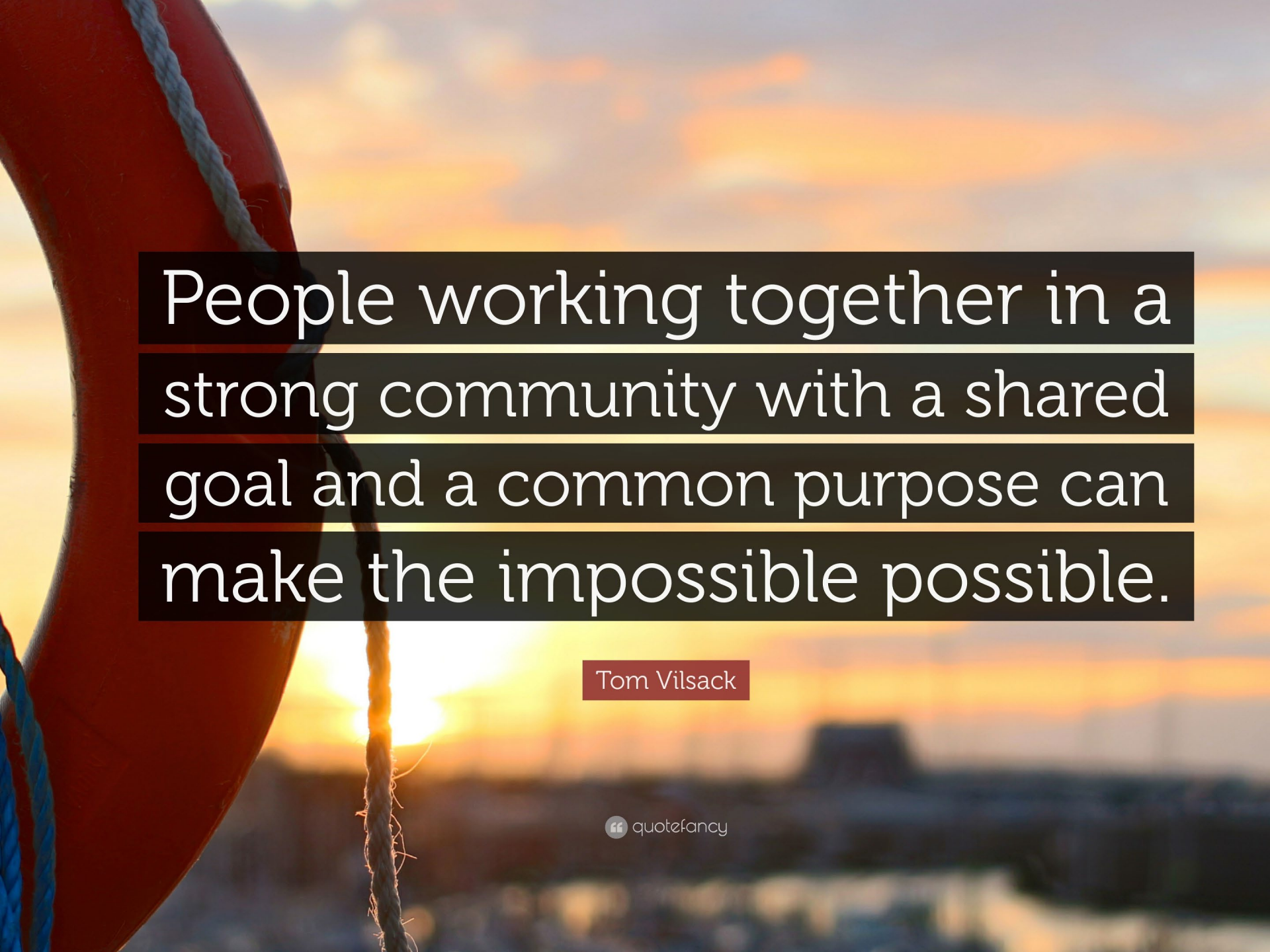
Challenges to Effective Teamwork

- ✓ Lack of commitment.
- ✓ Misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about group processes and norms of behavior.
- ✓ Poor communication.
- ✓ Personal conflicts.
- ✓ Political grandstanding.
- ✓ Unwillingness to see or consider different perspectives or compromise.
- ✓ Representation of only one perspective or one group regardless of the issue.

Successful Council/Manager Relations Deliver Positive Results

- Organizational effectiveness
- Mutual success and fulfillment
- Positive staff morale
- Heightened accountability
- Enhanced community confidence
- Successful community outcomes



A red lifebuoy with white rope is visible on the left side of the image. The background is a sunset or sunrise scene with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over a body of water and distant buildings.

People working together in a strong community with a shared goal and a common purpose can make the impossible possible.

Tom Vilsack

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Online Organizational Resources:

- Cal Cities: calcities.org
- ICMA (International City/County Management Association): icma.org
- ILG (Institute for Local Government): ca-ilg.org

RESOURCES

- Duggan, K., Conduff, M. (2016). Making It Work: The Essentials of Council-Manager Relationships. Retrieved from URL <https://www.icma.org/council/relations>
- Institute for Local Government. (2016). Attributes of Exceptional Councils. Retrieved from URL <https://www.ca-ilg.org>
- Institute for Local Government. (2015). Board/Executive Staff Communications Strategies. Retrieved from URL <https://www.ca-ilg.org>

Additional Resources

- Institute for Local Government. (2015). Leadership & Governance: Tips for Success. Retrieved from URL <https://www.ca-ilg.org>
- Michael, D. (2016). Navigating the Ups and Downs of the Council-Manager Relationship. Retrieved from URL <https://www.westerncity.org>
- O'Connell, G. (2007). Council-Manager Relations: Finding Respectable Ground. Retrieved from URL <https://www.icma.org/councilrelations>

Leading Your Community

A GUIDE FOR



LOCAL ELECTED LEADERS

ICMA

National League of Cities

ICMA

**INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**