

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL RETREAT

AMES, IOWA

JANUARY 4, 2014

The Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor Ann Campbell at 8:33 a.m. on the 4th day of January, 2014, in the Parks and Recreation Office, 1500 Gateway Hills Park Drive. City Council Members present were Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Matthew Goodman, Chris Nelson, and Peter Orazem. City Manager Steven Schainker, City Attorney Judy Parks, Assistant City Manager Melissa Mundt, and Management Analyst Brian Phillips were also present. *Ex officio* Council Member Alexandria Harvey was absent.

WELCOME: Mayor Campbell welcomed the Council Members and staff. She introduced Donna Gilligan, who would facilitate the sessions. Ms. Gilligan provided an overview of the two sessions. The first session would serve as a way for the Council Members to understand the decision-making process and get to know each other. The next session to be held on January 11, 2014, will address the goals for the coming year.

DISCUSSION OF EXPECTATIONS: Ms. Gilligan asked the Council Members to state what they expected to get out of these sessions. The following comments were offered:

- Build more personal relationships
- Increase comfort so we can hit the ground running
- Gain understanding of individual strengths
- Figure out where we're going
- Establish trust and respect
- Find out what we think our greatest needs are as a city
- Find ways to develop an engaged and inclusive way to problem solve
- Empower each other to be who we are and capitalize on it
- Articulate our roles as we interact with the community
- Build courage and confidence to do our work
- We don't just pay lip service; we establish goals and commit to achieving them
- Build relationships so we can provide and receive constructive feedback
- Prepare for changes in social capital
- Establish each other as a support network
- We leave with a level of excitement/energy to do our work over the next two years

VIEWING OF "BRAIN POWER": Ms. Gilligan showed a short film, entitled "Brain Power." Following the film, Ms. Gilligan asked the Council Members to write down their reactions to the film. There was a discussion of how the principles shown applied to the City Council's work.

The meeting recessed at 9:55 a.m. and was called back to order at 10:07 a.m.

GETTING ACQUAINTED EXERCISE: Ms. Gilligan asked the Council Members and City staff present to introduce themselves and describe their family, occupation, hobbies, greatest accomplishment, and why they chose to serve on the City Council.

The meeting recessed at 10:40 a.m. and was called back to order at 10:50 a.m.

PERSONAL STYLE INVENTORY: Ms. Gilligan handed out a worksheet containing examples of different actions. The Council Members and City staff completed the worksheets and discussed the results with partners. The results were shared with the entire group.

The meeting recessed at 12:15 p.m. and was called back to order at 12:45 p.m.

EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING: Ms. Gilligan asked the Council Members to consider what makes for an effective decision-making body. Council Members were partnered together to discuss and report out what they had decided. Characteristics reported were:

- Supporting the process even when not all in the majority
- Not micro-managing
- Actually making a decision
- Searching for a broad perspective
- Respecting professional opinions of staff
- Making decisions impartially in pursuit of common community good
- Appropriate choices within the purview of the Council

Effective

- Prioritize
- Timely
- Forward looking
- Collaborating/Deliberative
- Fact-based
- Consistently predicable, but not mindless repetition
- Big picture, not micromanagement
- Truly local issues

Government vs. other decision making

- Public good
- Long term
- Transparent
- Open to all

Further discussion occurred as to why these characteristics were reported. Discussion occurred on the differences between being responsive and being responsible.

The meeting recessed at 2:45 p.m. and was called back to order at 2:55 p.m.

ROLE OF THE MAYOR, STAFF: Ms. Gilligan asked Mayor Campbell to describe what she thought the role of the Mayor was in meetings. Mr. Schainker was asked to describe the role of City staff.

CONCLUSION: Ms. Gilligan reviewed what occurred at the meeting and provided a brief overview of the next meeting. The next meeting will revolve around the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the City. Ms. Gilligan asked to conduct a plus/delta review of the meeting:

Plus

Honest, forthright discussion
Personal style discussion was worthwhile
Discussion on effective meetings was helpful
Increasing comfort level
Role of Mayor/staff

Delta

Style exercise doesn't reveal our strengths
Spent too much time discussing the length of meetings

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting concluded at 4:10 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Brian Phillips, Recording Secretary