

# Welcome to Charlottesville

And Congratulations on being here

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# Contact information

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# Advice for early days

- ★ Talk to your Clerk of Council, your City manager and your city attorney.
- ★ Get to know them, what their jobs are and how they work best with councilors.
- ★ Get to know other councilors, their desires for their time on council, their personal lives.
- ★ Make sure you know who you as a council supervise and what their job descriptions are.
- ★ Talk to your communications department about help with press interviews and media inquiries.
- ★ Know your policies and procedures
- ★ Meetings
- ★ Financial policies (especially credit cards and expenditures)
- ★ Ask the clerk for an old meeting script
- ★ Familiarize yourself with the abbreviated Robert's Rules of order and find out what meeting rules your locality uses and be familiar with those..

# Understanding Roles

## Council

- ★ Set the vision for the city/county
- ★ Pass Ordinances and Resolutions
- ★ Regulate Land use through zoning laws
- ★ Communicate policies and programs to residents.
- ★ Respond to constituents needs & complaints.
- ★ Represent the community to other levels of government. Supervise and hire employees who directly report to the council.
- ★ Represent the council on a variety of boards and commissions, & then communicating with compatriots what is happening.

The vision for the city

<https://www.nlc.org/resource/cities-101-council-powers/>

## City Manager

- ★ Implement the council's vision for the city/county
- ★ Prepare ordinances and resolutions that enact the councils vision.
- ★ Manage city staff.
- ★ Communicate to council the progress of ongoing concerns and projects as well as internal issues.
- ★ Manage emergency situations and provide updates to council in a timely manner
- ★ Prepare the yearly budget- must be balanced local and state governments must have a balanced budget every year.

The running of the city

# It is all about Teamwork

- ★ Ask Questions
  - Staff, current councilors, former councilors.
- ★ Work as a team toward each person's strengths, let someone else take charge where you are not as strong.
- ★ Remember the power dynamic.
- ★ There is nothing wrong with saying "I don't know, but I will find out."
- ★ Elected officials come from different walks of life, learn from each other the different perspectives and talents each bring.



# Communication is Key, but not as easy as you think

- ★ Communication is the most important part of being a counselor.
- ★ Communicating with Staff
  - City Manager, Clerk of Council, Communications Team,
- ★ Communication with other counselors
  - Always be aware of FOIA and the Open Meetings law.
- ★ Communication with constituents

## Barriers to communication

**FOIA & Open Meetings Act-** There will be a whole training on this, it is very important. When in doubt ask your Clerk of Council or your City Attorney or your FOIA officer.

**Time-** Effective communication takes time and multiple channels (social media, in person, email, phone, press, city wide press releases)

**Different ideas and agendas-** because of restriction about meeting privately it is easy to make a mistake in the game of telephone. Try and really listen to what your colleagues are saying when talking to them. Also unless a colleague (staff or council) has shown you a reason to not trust them try and give them grace and simply correct the miscommunication

**Personal conflicts** - The hardest thing to resolve, do your best.

# Emails and other communications

- ★ Infrastructure and other basic problems.
  - Reply all, then connect the person to the appropriate city staff (the city managers usually have a preferred structure for this)
- ★ Items coming up on the agenda
  - My general rule- I dont reply to form letters, I try and reply (even a thank you for your email) to emails people wrote themselves.
- ★ Social media
  - A Blessing and a Curse
  - Keep a public account and a private account
- ★ Remember communication is intentional and active (not passive) especially during Covid.



# Personal Advice



- ★ Get an Umbrella Policy
- ★ The work demands and communication demands are intense- set time aside for personal and family rejuvenation
- ★ Get some trusted advisories
- ★ Have a group of friends who you don't talk to about politics.
- ★ Find a person who truly understands the confidential nature of your position to talk to at times.
- ★ Get the city cell phone or a google number.



# Dillon's Rule- The Cow in the Room

**Between a City Manager form of Government and Dillon's Rule what can council do?**

- ★ **Get involved with state and national organizations to advocate for your locality.**
- ★ **The issues that you ran to solve, what policy changes will make those happen.**
- ★ **Help constituents navigate government.**
- ★ **Connect people.**
- ★ **Make sure your representatives know your name, and make sure you also know their legislative aides.**

