

August 13, 2022

Governing Body Retreat



Prepared By:

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I. INTRODUCTION

2021 held an election followed by two notable changes occurring in 2022 with the Governing Body. In November of 2021, Mayor Benage was elected to his second term, Justin Smith for his second term and John Welch for his first term after being appointed two years prior. In November of 2022, Greg Davied was elected to his first term with Emily Hamburg and Tyler Dehn being appointed a couple months prior to the retreat. Due to the many new faces, Mayor Benage and I felt a council retreat was in order. The goal being two-fold: education and goal setting. The retreat was held on August 13th, 2022, in Council chambers.

The morning sessions touched on the duties of the City Manager, City Attorney and staff versus Mayor and City Council members. Discussion focused on the roles of the Governing Body members as policy makers, legislators, administrators, community leaders and citizen liaisons. Policy was defined and examples given of policy maker verses management. The City Attorney competed a session on the Legalities of Local Government. Training included KOMA, KORA, meeting etiquette, actions, powers, liability, home rule, minutes, executive sessions, planning & zoning, quorum, voting, point of order, conflicts of interest and records. The Finance Director held a session on finances with points covering special assessments, property taxes, appraisals, debt limit, mill levies, revenue neutral rate, budget calendar, sales taxes and bonds. Afternoon sessions looked at how the organization was functioning, areas for improvements, successes and then goal setting. The day ended with an introduction of each Department Head and summary presentation of their department.

Prior to the retreat, Department Heads were given a questionnaire that included the following items:

1. What they liked about their job as well as the organization.
2. Challenges they see facing their department and the City as a whole.
3. Goals they have for their department in the next year.
4. What they wanted Council to know about their department and the organization.
5. Advice for the Governing body.

The Governing Body were also given a questionnaire that included the following items:

1. Introduction of themselves to the other members, why they ran for office and a legacy.
2. Shared why they moved to Bel Aire.
3. Discussed the perception of the organization, what is being done right and what can be improved.
4. Discussion ended with what challenges are facing the City over the next couple years and what needs to be done in the next year.

II. FEEDBACK

The Following is a thematic summary of the common responses received across most of the questions asked:

What the Governing Body needs to know about the organization (Department Heads):

- Employees have a great understanding of how the city works. They are educated and experienced. Trust your staff.
- Challenges of being understaffed will drive employees away.
- Trying to keep up with increasing needs for services is difficult.
- Staff genuinely care about Bel Aire and take great pride in their work.
- Employees do a great job and are key to the success of the city.
- We train and educate our employees so they can operate at high levels.

Advice for the Governing Body (Department Heads):

- Trust staff – Staff are educated, trained, and experienced. They have knowledge to share that will make your job easier.
- One or two complaints does not necessitate a change.
- Citizens often want things that benefit them. They don't consider the city as a whole. Council should always look at big picture and what impacts the majority.
- Value is important. Price verses quality should be considered.
- Each department has value and provides a service to our citizens.
- Being a service organization, it is difficult to quantify results. Daily routines and challenges vary so much with demands that it is difficult to track workloads.
- Staff has operated with minimum budgets and employees for years. Can't continue to provide quality service without growing staff.
- Share your vision.
- Invest in the future. Equipment, facilities, staffing, etc.

Why I live in Bel Aire (Governing Body):

- Small town feel.
- Close to church and schools.
- Good price for house.
- Access to highways.
- Walking distance to schools.
- Safety.
- Local city government (Not Wichita).

Successes (Department Heads):

- Consistently one of the safest cities in Kansas.
- Safe work environment.
- Police Officers are engaged in and with the community
- Making a positive impact on the community.
- A growing community.
- Providing essential, quality of life services, to our citizens.
- A great team and organization.

Successes (Governing Body):

- Safe Community.
- Recreation Center.
- Overall good job by staff.
- Communications.
- Customer Service.
- City Manager emails.

Opportunities for Improvements (Department Heads):

- Staffing imbalances – Being understaffed creates burnout and large workloads.
- Addressing the future demands of a growing community.
- Keeping up with utility needs.
- Communicating with residents. (Best ways)
- Water & Sewer Master plan. What improvements need made? How will we service all the new growth?
- Look at facility improvements. (City Hall, Public Works, Parks, Rec Center, HVAC system at City Hall, etc.)
- Balancing the need for more staff with service demands. (Need to add more staff or consider cutting services.)
- Differentiating ourselves from Wichita, Maize, Park City, etc. (Why are we special and how do we build on that?)
- Keeping up with new technologies.
- Replacing or adding equipment.
- Secession planning.
- Records management.
- Keeping up with market pay so as to retain good employees.

Opportunities for Improvements (Governing Body):

- Graffiti in parks.
- Communication.
- Construction trash along 53rd
- Technology. (Used to its fullest?)
- Public Education.
- Road Construction / traffic.
- Reviewing / updating the comprehensive growth plan.
- Water rates.
- Lack of sidewalks along arterials.
- Pool.
- Quality of street subcontracting. (Slurry verses micro seals.)
- Not seeing police officers / Seeing too many police officers.
- Gavel Roads.
- CCUA

III. CONCLUSION

Consensus among the Department Heads and Governing Body was a successful retreat. Everyone enjoyed learning about each other, their families, careers, education, and expertise. The education portion was much appreciated by the new Governing Body members. Understanding the roles, legalities and finances were a good refresher for seasoned members and appreciated by those new to the council. Department Heads meeting the Governing Body was valued by both groups.

The identified success by each group were very closely aligned. Both the Department Heads and Governing Body value communication, customer service, positive interactions with the public, quality of life importance and the good job done by all those employed by the organization. The Department Heads did want to share how much they enjoy their jobs, working for the organization, and the work environment.

Opportunities for improvements were more diverse between the Department Heads and Governing Body. Department Heads looked both internally and external for needed improvements. Council was more focused externally in dealing with constituents. However, a number of similar goals were shared.

IV. ACTIONS:

As City Manager, here are my goals for the next year taken from the opportunities for improvements:

1. Graffiti in parks – PD and Parks will work together on identifying the perpetrators. A trail camera may be used and staff will share when graffiti

appears so that PD can increase patrols. Parks staff will continue Monday inspections of parks to make any needed repairs from over the weekend.

2. Communication – Tristin is working on filling the open part-time position. This person will take some of the HR duties off her plate and assist with improving communication. They will also be a backup when Tristin is out which we currently do not have.
3. Construction trash along 53rd Street – Code Enforcement will continue working with builders to make sure they cleanup their trash that blows off the property. Public Works will work with Sunrise Christian Academy as well as look for other organizations to volunteer picking up trash.
4. Technology (Used to its fullest.) – I will visit with each department regarding the software they use, is it being utilized fully and then set a timeline for full implementation. I will also make sure all staff is trained on the technology we have implemented. Ted will be looking at new software for his department that may increase efficiencies using ARPA funds.
5. Comprehensive Growth Plan – I will work with Jay to makes sure the plan is reviewed and update within the next year. I have also requested he bring a revised zoning code to be considered within the next 12 months.
6. Public Education – Tristin will be assisting with more education or delegate this to her new hire.
7. Road Construction / Traffic – Woodlawn is set to be completed the summer of 2023 which will solve that issue. Council has set a robust street preservation and replacement program so we will likely be seeing road work for many years to come. We will work with contractors to minimize traffic inconveniences as well as increase public education.
8. Water rates – We have been successful in keeping water rates level for many years. That will continue to be a goal. New customers do help spread the cost of operations over more people. But at some point, the new demands may increase the need for CCUA plant improvements that will impact rates from added debt service.
9. Lack of sidewalks along arterials – Woodlawn completion will solve one piece of that. Staff is working on bids to finish the sidewalk along Woodlawn from Central Park to Isely this year. This will create the ability for someone to walk from 53rd street to 37th street, the entire length of Woodlawn. Any other new arterial street improvements will be designed with a sidewalk to increase walkability.
10. Pool – Rec staff will bring bids for a new liner as well as new plaster this fall. Improvements should be done before the pool opens in 2023.
11. Quality of street subcontracting (Slurry verses micro seals). PEC is currently working on the street repairs for 2022 and will bring bids with various surfaces for council to consider. Using a different application may help with the public appearances.
12. Not seeing police officers / Seeing too many police officers – This is a typical response for most services we provide. Some people are rarely out and don't

see officers driving by. People who are out often may think they see too many. The data shows we are under served by police officers and council is adding staff to meet the Sedgwick County average. There is little that can be for public perception of seeing too many officers or not enough. We'll work to improve public education on the services we provide to create a base line for citizens to understand.

13. Gavel Roads – Council circulated petitions for each subdivision containing gravel streets. If there is a 51% no vote, council will need to determine what, if anything, changes. The 2023 budget contains \$10,000 for maintenance. Staff will work continue to look for new material, grading and other ideas.
14. CCUA – I will continue working with the team in place to finalize the performance and financial audits in 2022. The team will then make recommendations to the Bel Aire City Council and CCUA on how to make supply, operations and debt service more equitable based on usage. The goal is for this to be completed in 2022.
15. Staffing imbalances (Being understaffed creates burnout and large workloads): Council added three positions in the 2023 budget. I will work with Department Heads for efficiencies or changes that could also be made to reduce workloads.
16. Update City Hall HVAC – I will ask Keith and Ted to get bids for the replacement of the HVAC system at City Hall. We will also evaluate the cost of repairs over the last few years to determine the best option of moving forward.
17. Water & Sewer Master Plan – Anne will be bringing RFP's to Council for an engineering water and sewer master plan study in 2022. This will evaluate pressures, main sizes, capacities, etc. of the current system and make recommendations for future improvements to meet the growing demands of the community.
18. Look at facility improvements – The 2023 budget did include a preliminary design and cost estimate for a new public works facility.
19. Balancing the need for more staff with service demands – I will work with the Department Heads to determine if there are organizational changes that might be considered to meet service demands.
20. Differentiating ourselves from Wichita, Maize, Park City, etc. – Tristin will use the benefits outlined in the retreat section on why you live in Bel Aire. I know those are a good representation of our citizens vies as well. We'll increase marketing efforts using those benefits.
21. Secession planning – Council has addressed this with the City Manager. I will work with the Department Heads to identify those who may be retiring in the next five years and how we are planning for succession.
22. Keeping up with market pay so as to retain good employees - Ted and I are working on a revised pay plan to present in 2022. This will include new market data. Council included a 5% pay increase as well as bonus program for 2023 to address this issue.