



To: Kaukauna Public Library Board of Trustees

From: Library Director Ashley Thiem-Menning

Date: 8/10/22

Re: League of Wisconsin Municipalities Mutual Insurance Management Skills Academy

On August 2, at the invitation of the City, I participated in a LWMMI workshop. The training was held in Green Bay for a full day and included a workbook and interactive group sessions.

The beginning of the training focused on leading with purpose, helping us to identify influential leaders who motivated and inspired us. We were then asked to identify our purpose, so that our employee's feel empowered by the what, how and why of our daily tasks.

The next section focused on prioritizing the work. We were asked to think in a highly effective mindset and write down our "big rocks" or the big priorities. Then we were asked to identify the difference between important and urgent; urgent being an activity that requires immediate attention versus important, which represent the mission, roles, values and goals. Then we filled out a sheet indicating which tasks we do that are urgent and important, urgent but not important, not urgent but still important, and not important and not urgent, in an effort to find areas where we are completing tasks that we should not be doing.

We were also encouraged to begin to set aside time with no distractions to work on our "big rocks," because it is very likely that while we are managers, we are likely spending too much time on things that are not urgent and important, or that could be delegated. Delegating was the next topic, which used the image of a tree to show work delegation. The roots are the manager, whose task is to keep the system healthy and feed the team. The trunk represents the work the manager directs, the priorities you are orchestrating. The branches represent project or areas your team works on. The leaves represent the work a team can do independently. There was also a brief discussion on negotiation or acquiescence, a technique used to lean into a project together. Instead of one entity completing all the tasks, using this tactic, both entities collaborate together to share the workload.

The next section was about communication with an exercise that included us drawing something while being given verbal instructions. Naturally, no one in the room actually drew the right picture, the point made regarding how verbal instructions can easily be confused or not detailed enough to communicate the actual need. This is one area that I think we can definitely improve and adapt on. While it may take time to draft instructions, the time saved in delegating the task and it being done correctly is considerable when taking this extra step.

We also learned about building a good team environment, looking at some successful workplace culture models. Further, we looked at how to develop and coach our team and ways that we can show appreciation for hard work. We were given some tools for giving employee feedback and how to have coaching conversations with staff. They featured the Grow Model, which stands for Goal, Reality, Options, Will, which asks staff to clarify their desired goal, observe the reality of that goal, and assess their options to reach their goal and a way forward to that goal. The last portion of the workshop was about self-care for managers, having to identify what take up most of our emotional and physical energy at work.

