

# Governance: Role of Council

Presentation to  
Council orientation session  
City of Hamilton  
November 8, 2022

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## My goal for today

To provide a framework to help councillors and staff understand their respective roles, and how they can work together in the interest of their municipality.

# Overview

- Role of council
- Role of staff
- Council-staff relations
- The public service bargain



# Role of Council

# Role of council - Ontario Municipal Act

**Section 224** It is the role of council,

- (a) to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality;
- (b) to develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality;
- (c) to determine which services the municipality provides;
- (d) to ensure that administrative policies, practices and procedures and controllership policies, practices and procedures are in place to implement the decisions of council;
- (d.1) to ensure the accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality, including the activities of the senior management of the municipality;
- (e) to maintain the financial integrity of the municipality; and
- (f) to carry out the duties of council under this or any other Act. .



# Role of council - what council actually does

- Place shaping
- Understand the local political culture
- Deliberative body
- Make policy decisions
- Oversight of administration

# **Role of Staff**



# Role of staff - Ontario Municipal Act

**Section 227** It is the role of the officers and employees of the municipality,

- (a) to implement council's decisions and establish administrative practices and procedures to carry out council's decisions;
- (b) to undertake research and provide advice to council on the policies and programs of the municipality; and
- (c) to carry out other duties required under this or any Act and other duties assigned by the municipality.



## Role of staff - what staff actually does

- Provide advice to council based on professional, administrative principles
- Implement council decisions conscientiously and loyally
- Deliver services with proper regard to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness

# **Council-Staff Relations**



# Roles of councillors and staff

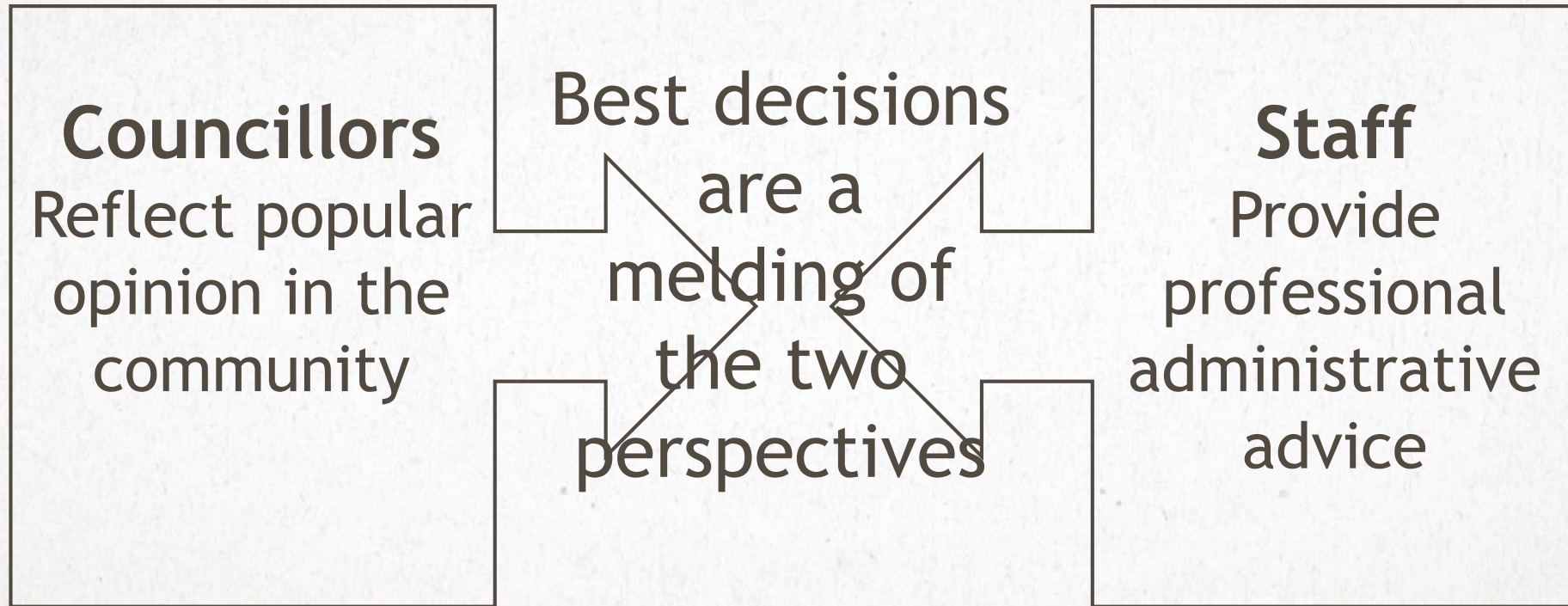
## Councillors

- Representatives of the community
- Sensitive to local political issues

## Staff

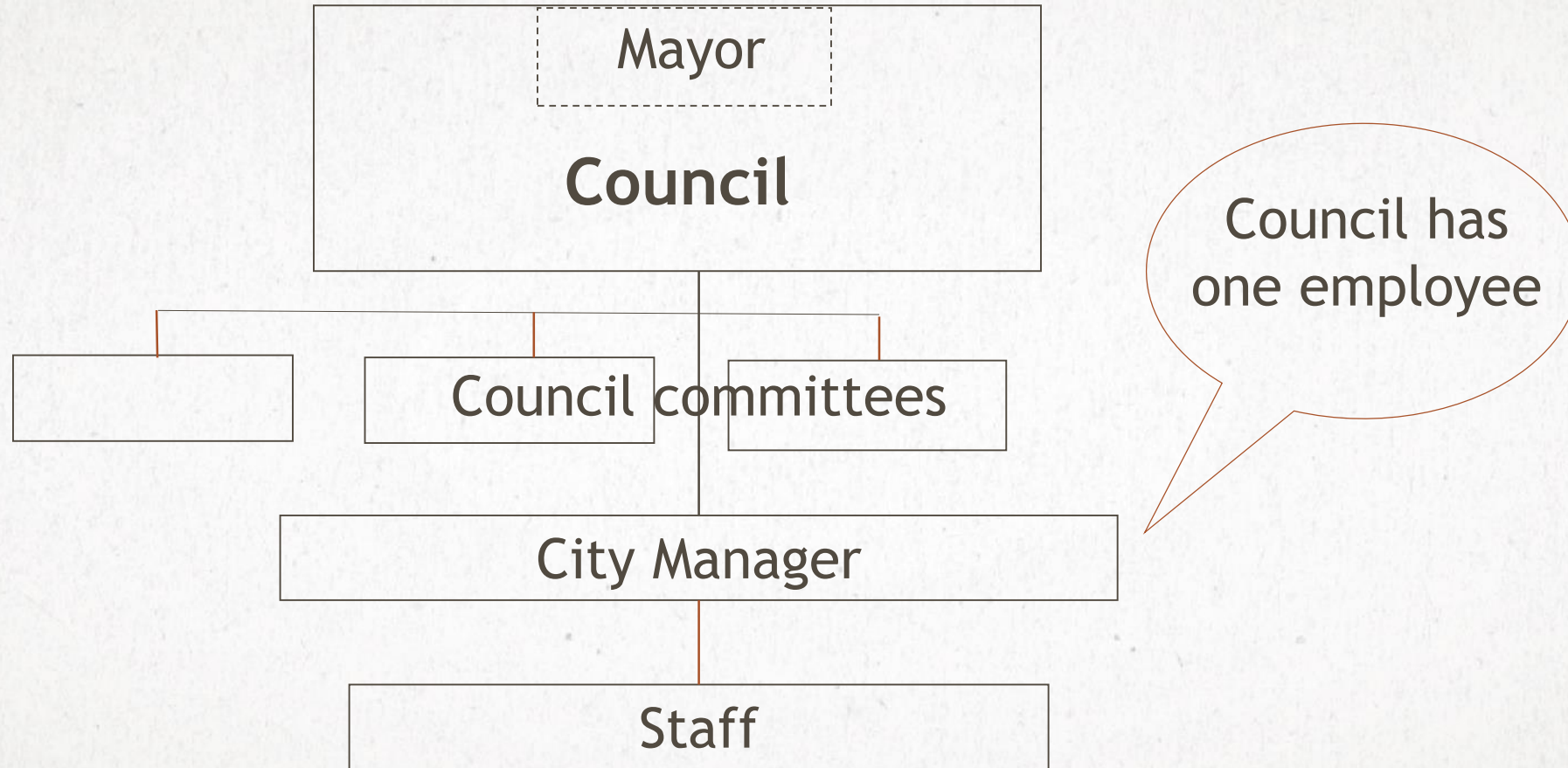
- Substantive administrative knowledge
- Professional experts

# Complementary roles of council and staff





# Council-Manager structure



**Staff works for council**

# Principles of council-staff relations (Council-Manager system)

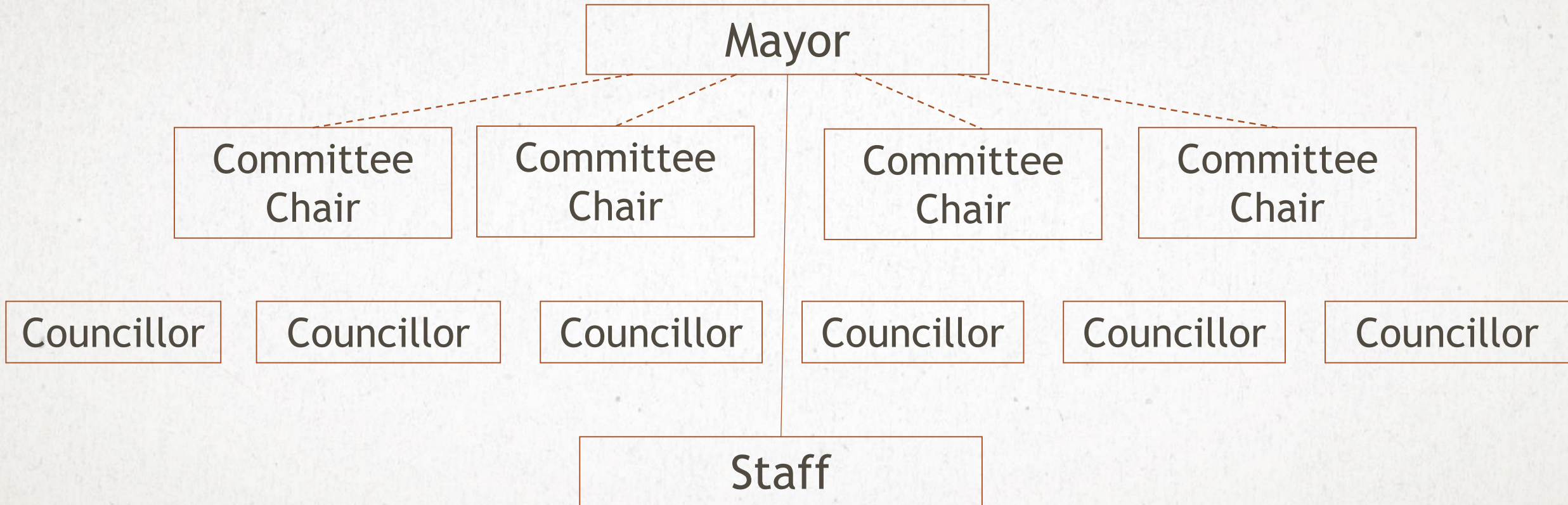
- Staff works for council
- Staff implements policies of current council conscientiously and loyally
- Staff shares information equally with all members of council
- Staff avoids preferential relationships with members of council



# Council-Manager structure

- Council does what it does best - deliberates and makes policy
- Council communicates that policy to its one employee
- City Manager ensures that policies are coordinated across departments
- Council can hold its one employee accountable for service delivery

# Organization of council (Strong mayor system)



**Staff works for the mayor**



# **The Public Service Bargain**

# The public service bargain

- Bargain between council and staff
- Establishes rules of interaction
- Creates mutual expectations
- Implicit bargain - avoid legalisms
- Each side gives up something in exchange for gaining something else



# The policy advice bargain

Staff members will provide their best professional, administrative advice without regard to the political implications of that advice.

Council will consider staff advice in a respectful manner. If council chooses to reject that advice, it will do so without public, personal criticism of staff.

# Importance of the policy advice bargain

- Best policy decisions are made when each side fulfils its role
- Council needs honest professional, administrative advice
- Staff must feel comfortable providing professional, administrative advice



# The management bargain

The city manager will have reasonably complete authority to manage the public service including the ability to supervise, hire, promote, discipline, and fire staff on a merit basis.

Council can hold the city manager accountable for the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service, but council refrains from becoming involved in managing the public service.

# Importance of the management bargain

- Council has one person who is responsible for quality of management
- Council does not need to become involved in details of management
- Council can focus on policy-making
- City manager has authority to build an effective management team reporting to city manager



# The overarching bargain

Staff will be loyal to the current council, provide professional advice, and carry out the instructions of council in a conscientious and loyal manner.

Council will consider staff advice carefully, treat staff with respect, and provide staff with security of tenure based on proper performance of duties.

# Importance of the overarching bargain

- Council benefits from a high-quality, professional staff that carries out council directives in a conscientious and loyal manner.
- Staff benefits from working in a respectful environment where they can present their advice without fear of unfair criticism
- The result is good decisions that are reflective of both the local political culture and professional, administrative advice



# Conclusion

## My original goal

To provide a framework to help councillors and staff understand their respective roles, and how they can work together in the interest of the municipality.



# Importance of good council-staff relations

- Council and staff have separate, but complementary roles
- Council works well as a deliberative and policy-making body
- Staff members are experts in advising on policy and delivering services
- Working together maximizes benefit to residents of the municipality