

Governance: Role of Council

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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

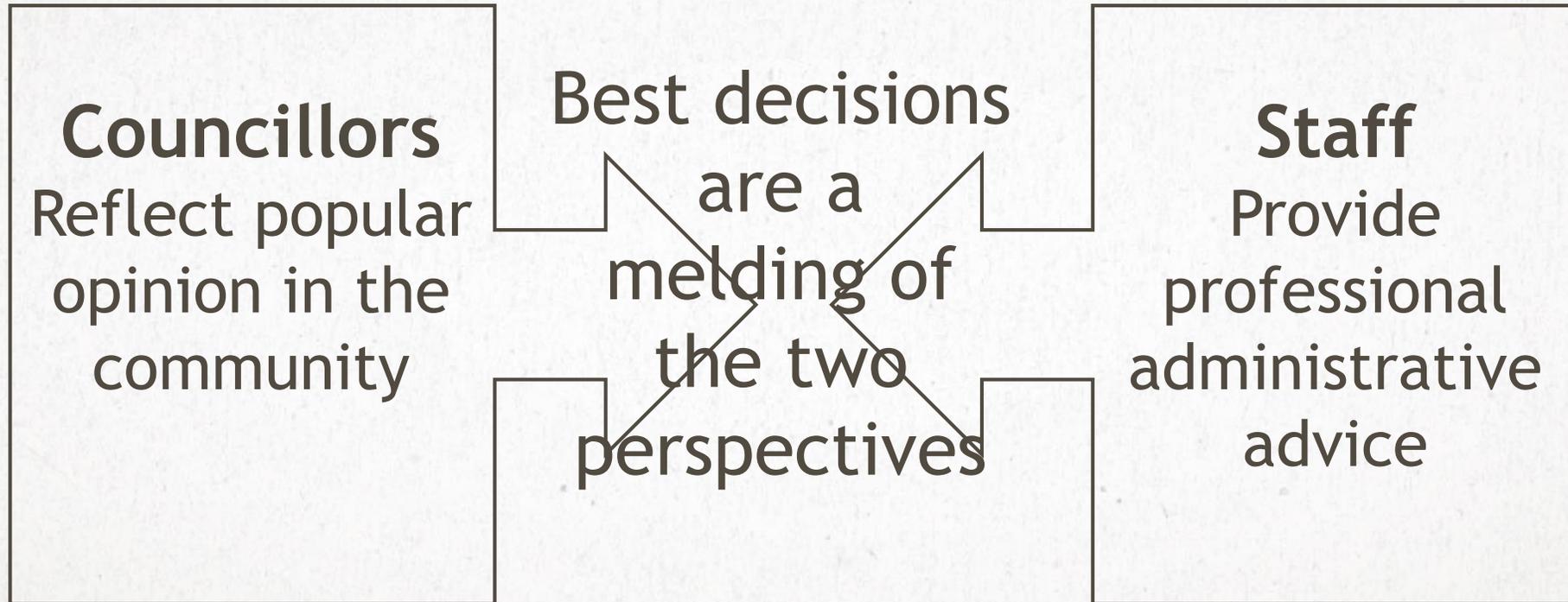
Councillors

- Representatives of the community
- Sensitive to local political issues

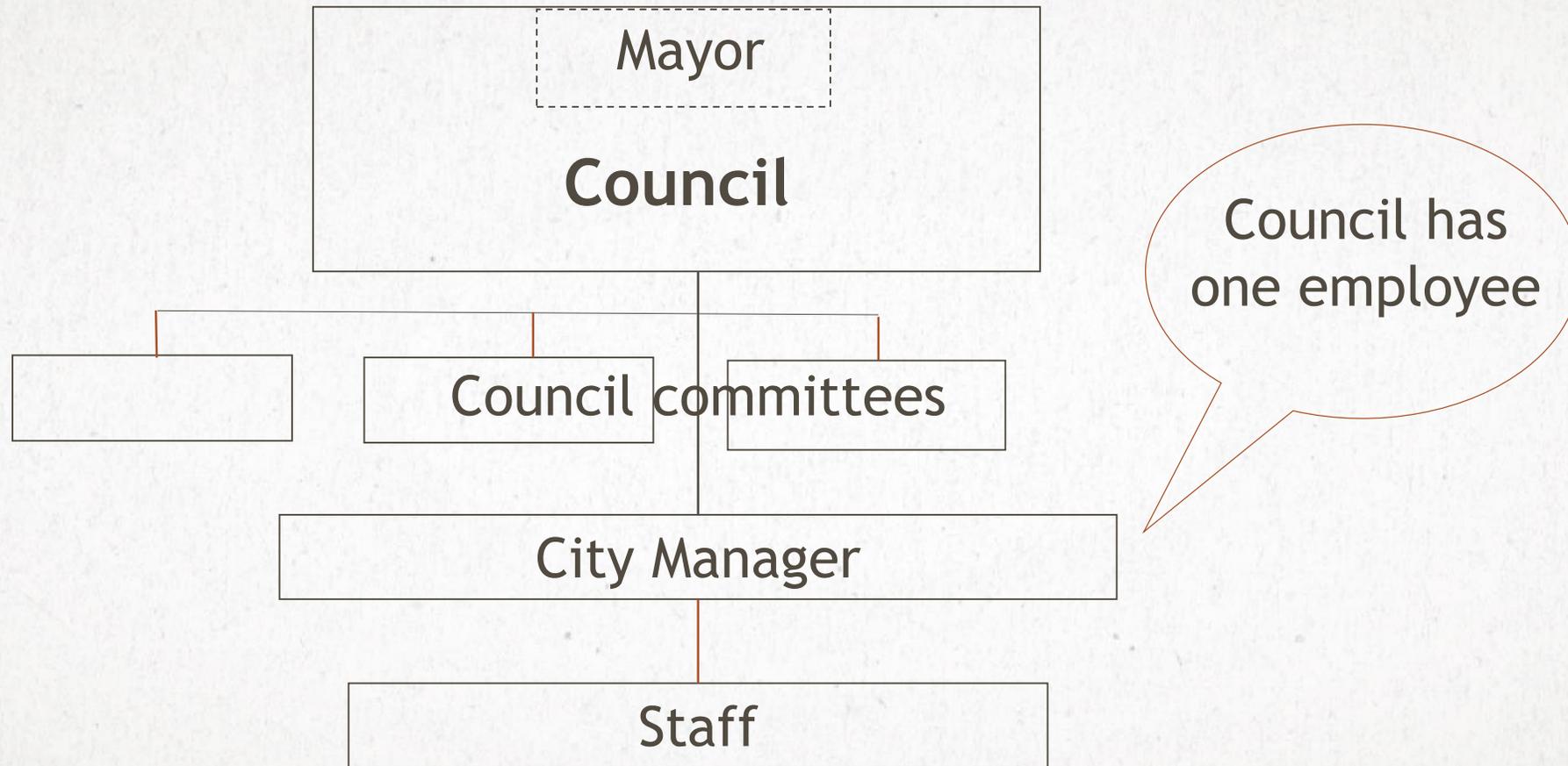
Staff

- Substantive administrative knowledge
- Professional experts

Complementary roles of council and staff



Council-Manager structure



Staff works for council

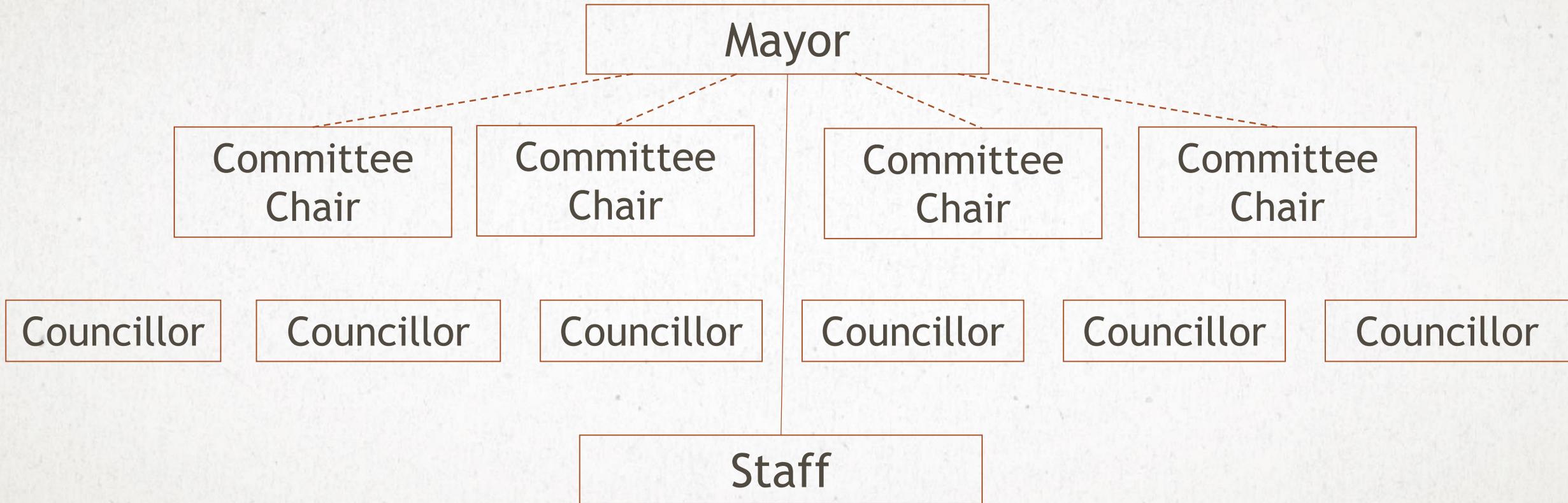
Principles of council-staff relations (Council-Manager system)

- 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