

# Navigating Dysfunctional Councils

Jenny Haruyama, City of Beaverton  
City Manager





# Discussion Topics

# Identify the Core Issues



## Relationships

Dysfunctional  
Group Dynamics

## Engagement

Disengaged  
Councilors

## Ambiguity

Uncertainty around  
Roles & Responsibilities

# Take Time to Self-Reflect

- Have you developed and/or communicated your professional values and tenants with the Council? With your executive team and organization?
- Do you have a strong working relationship with the Mayor and Councilors?
- What are you doing to ensure positive employee morale?
- Do you have the support of your executive team?



# City Manager Commitments

<b>Support</b>	<b>Help</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Guide &amp; Develop</b>	<b>Engage</b>
Support the entire governing board to be productive and successful	Help each councilor to succeed as an effective elected official	Work collaboratively to keep the council focused on priorities and make progress	Guide and develop staff and organizational culture	Engage the community to build trust and confidence in local government

# City Manager Commitments

*Support is:*

**Remaining Neutral &  
Objective  
Treating Councilors  
Equitably  
Managing Council's  
Workload**

*Collaborate is:*

**Working with Council to  
Establish Annual Goals  
Celebrating Wins  
Updating Council Often  
about Goal Progress  
Managing Expectations**

*Engage is:*

**Valuing Inclusive  
Engagement  
Investing in Local  
Leadership Programs to  
Develop Community  
Ambassadors  
Sharing Good News and  
Opportunities for  
Improvement**

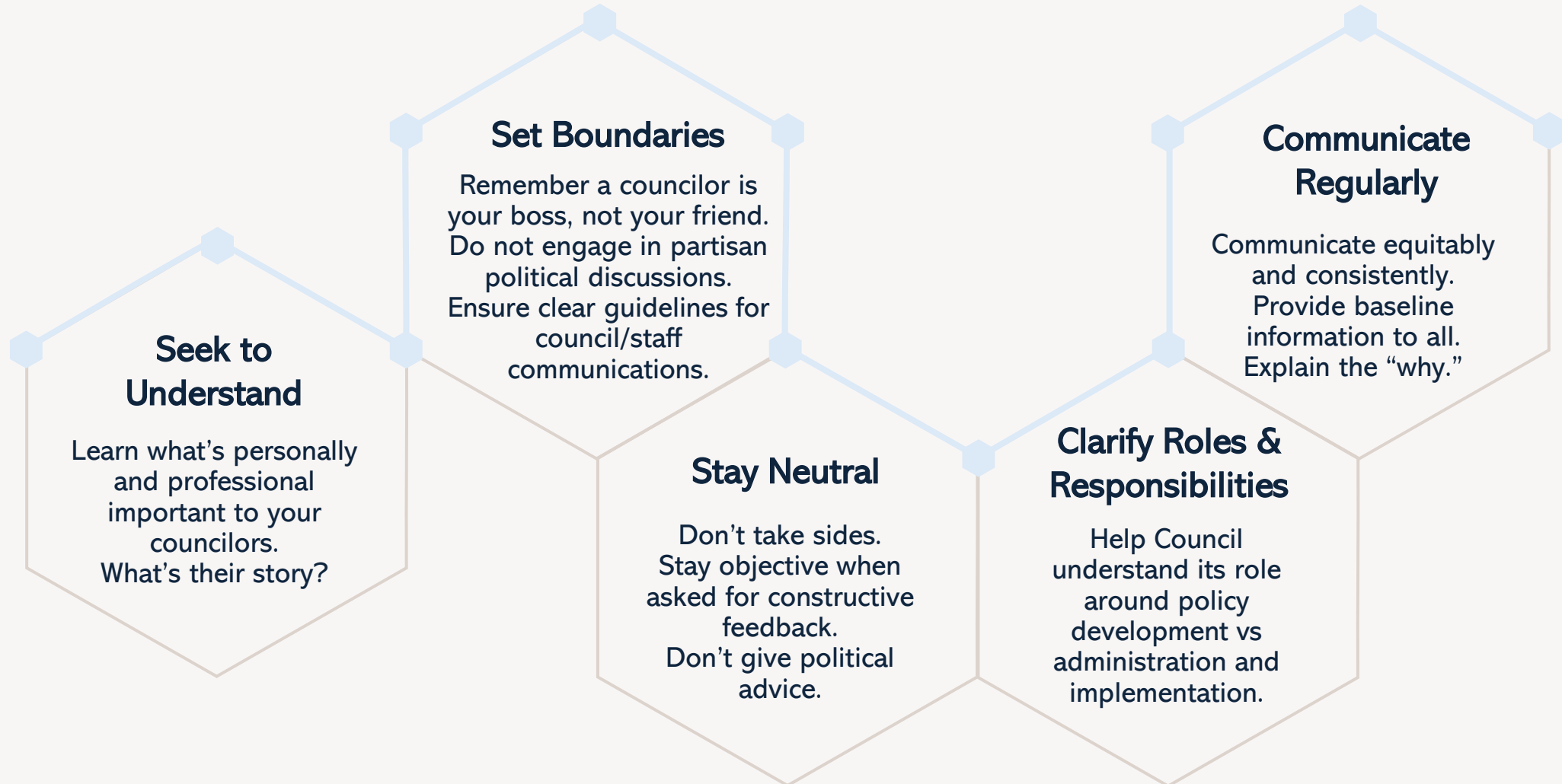
*Help is:*

**Providing Training &  
Tools for Success  
Being Constructive  
when Asked for  
Feedback  
Meeting with Councilors  
Regularly**

*Guide/Develop is:*

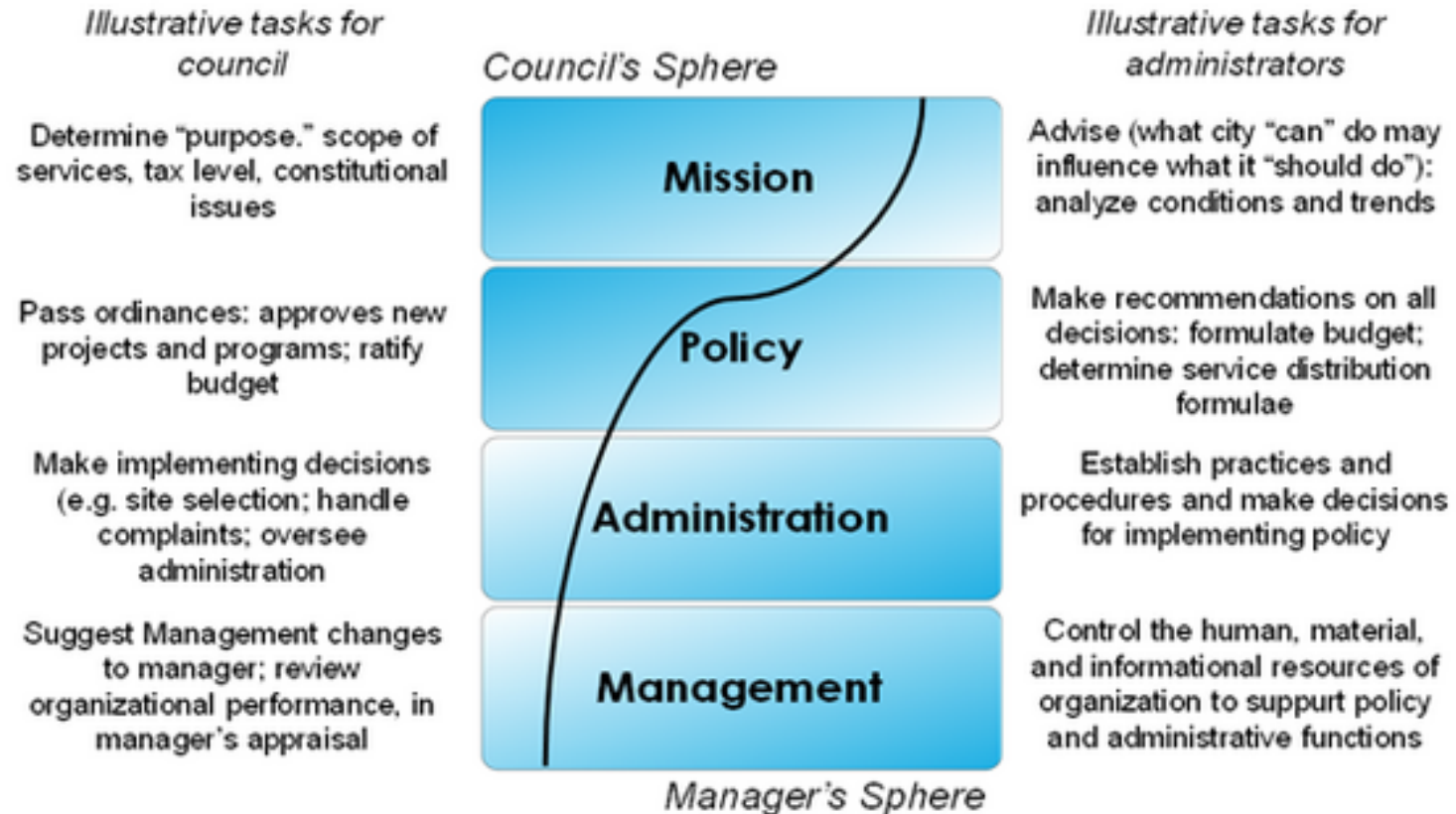
**Building Awareness of  
Council Needs/  
Challenges  
Cultivating a Service-  
Oriented Culture  
Balancing Core Services  
with Council Priorities**

# Communicating Expectations





# Dimensions of Governmental Process



The curved line suggests the division between the council's and the manager's sphere's of activity. The division presented is intended to roughly approximate a "proper" degree of separation and sharing.

Source: The Effective Local Government Manager



# Develop Governance Strategies



## Council Relations Policy

- Develop a council norms and values statement to support behavior changes
- Develop a council relations policy to reinforce the City Charter and clarify council and manager roles and responsibilities, communications, decision making, and improper use of influence, and procedures to address policy violations.



## Rules of Procedures/Council Protocols

- Update rules of procedure to include city charter provisions and clarify meeting processes
  - Who sets agenda/how items are scheduled for a future agenda
  - Who can call a special meeting and what's required
  - How Council directs the City Manager (during a public meeting and/or outside a public meeting)



## Meeting Management

- Understand bandwidth of Council
- Don't overload agenda
- Provide parliamentarian training
- Schedule complex and/or controversial items at a special meeting

# Build a Support Network

- Partner and Strategize with your City Attorney
- Contact your OCCMA and/or ICMA Senior Advisor
- Find confidants OUTSIDE of your organization
  - For public record reasons, meet in person and/or use personal cell/email to communicate.

## Resources:

- **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)** [www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org)  
Article: Essentials of Council-Manager Relationships (Kevin Duggan)
- **Institute for Local Government (ILG)** [www.ca-lig.org](http://www.ca-lig.org)  
Articles: Attributes of Exceptional Councils;  
Board/Executive Staff Communication Strategies





# Thank you

**Jenny Haruyama**

[jharuyama@beavertonoregon.gov](mailto:jharuyama@beavertonoregon.gov)

[linkedin.com/in/jenny-haruyama](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jenny-haruyama)

[www.beavertonoregon.gov](http://www.beavertonoregon.gov)