Governance Framework and Process Manual

ADOPTED 2023 FOR THE CITY OF WATERTOWN

Table of Contents

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City Council Governance

Overview
The Watertown City Council, including Council members and the Mayor, is the governing body for the City of Watertown. The City Council is dedicated to governing well on behalf of the Citizens of Watertown.

Vision, Mission, and Values
The City Council will consider its vision, mission, and core values when developing policy.

- Vision: The City of Watertown is focused on opportunities and responsible growth.

- Mission: We will provide excellent services and opportunities for everyone to be safe, happy, and successful.

- Core values: We will lead with honesty, transparency, integrity, excellence, service, and grace.

Governance Process
The Watertown City Council shall answer to, and take into consideration, the best interests of all residents of the City of Watertown, both vocal and silent citizens, with respect paid to all residents, regardless of their economic status. Since the City is "owned" by the citizens, the Council's thinking shall be influenced by this ownership. Secondarily, the City Council shall consider the needs of anyone who regularly shops in, uses facilities of, or accesses services from the City of Watertown.

1. The Council represents the citizens. Therefore, it shall educate itself regarding the values held by the people it represents and shall always act under the influence of those values. The Council's education may be facilitated by:
   - formal and informal citizen opinions
   - formal and informal focus groups to explore specific issues
   - considering input by citizen volunteers who participate on advisory boards, committees, and commissions
   - monitoring the demand and utilization of services
   - discussions with representatives from other governmental and educational bodies
   - reviewing reports and citizen responses in the media

2. The Council shall report periodically to the citizens on its stewardship. At least once per year, the Mayor shall give a State of the City message that contains an accounting of the City's financial resources and the extent to which these funds have been translated into services, an update of policies, other significant occurrences from the previous year, and vision of the Council's priorities for the future.

Role and Responsibilities of the Council
The role of the Council, on behalf of the citizens of Watertown, is to assure that the City of Watertown according to the Home Rule Charter, SD Codified Laws, and Council Policies adopted herein.

1. The Council shall honor all requirements and responsibilities set forth in the Watertown City Charter.
2. The Council will hold public meetings and provide and encourage regular opportunities for public input.
3. The Council will define what is to be accomplished in terms of benefits, recipients, and their relative priorities. It will define parameters of activities and conditions within policy and will delegate performance on these matters to the City Manager.
4. The Council will carry out its job as a whole, emphasizing long-term strategic policy making decisions.
5. Whenever possible, the Council will minimize the use of sub-committees comprised primarily of Council embers that separate the wholeness of the Council.

The Council will review all policies annually, although the Council may also review and update any policy at any time deemed prudent and necessary by the Council. The Council expects immediate adjustment by the City Manager to any policy change instituted by the Council.

Philosophy & Public Accountability

The Watertown City Council works to achieve its mission in a prudent and ethical way and to make certain contributions to the total, which are unique to its public trusteeship role and necessary for proper governance and management of the City.

The Council will strive to govern with an emphasis on:

1. Outward vision rather than an internal preoccupation
2. Strategic leadership rather than administrative detail
3. Clear distinction of Council and City Manager roles
4. Collective rather than individual decisions
5. Future rather than past or present
6. Proactivity rather than reactivity

The Council will:

1. Deliberate in many voices but govern in one.
2. The Council will be responsible for excellence in governing. The Council will establish policy with public input and counsel of city staff.
3. The Council may use the expertise of individual members to enhance the ability of the Council as a body. However, it is not the intention of the Council to defer the group's judgment to any one Council Member.
4. Lead and inspire the organization through the establishment of broad written policies reflecting the Council's mission, vision, and values. The Council's major policy focus will be on the intended long-term impacts outside the operating organization, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those effects.
5. The Council shall adhere to its processes and policies at each meeting as defined by City Council policies.

Decision Making

Council-City Manager Linkage

The City Council must take action through a motion, a second, and a vote during a public meeting in order to give formal direction to the City Manager. Individual Council members may continue to request information or assistance from the City Manager.

Work Sessions

Work sessions are a common way for governing bodies to manage the time of formal meetings more effectively. By conducting the majority of the discussion at a work session, time allotted during the regular council meeting can be reserved for public input and formal decision making. Certain issues before the council are also more complicated than others and require extra time and in-depth discussion that is difficult to accommodate in a regular council meeting.

Work sessions can also provide opportunities for Council, staff, and members of the public to review details and options regarding various topics that will be brought to Council for their action at future meetings.

Purposes include:
- Educational information about issues
- Receive progress reports on projects
- Review pending items
- In-depth policy discussions
- Receive presentations from staff, volunteer boards, experts, and community groups

General Rules
- Open to the public
- All meetings will be televised, pursuant to city policy
- Meetings will be in the City Council chambers, unless circumstances require them to be moved
- A quorum of the Council is required to hold a work session
- Only votes on procedural items will be allowed, unless a special meeting has been called to take action on a necessary item
- Public input is allowed at the discretion of the Chair

Frequency/Day/Time
- Work Sessions will be scheduled for the second Monday of the month at 4pm, unless otherwise specified or cancelled

Agenda; process, content
- A public agenda packet will be published

City Manager Governance

Council-Staff Linkage

Role and Responsibilities of the City Manager

As the Council's primary operational link to City government, the City Manager's performance will be considered to be synonymous with organizational performance as a total. Consequently, the City Manager's job contributions can be stated as performance in:

1. Key responsibilities include executing laws, preparing the annual budget, and presenting updates on capital and financial plans
2. Overseeing the administration of city departments, offices, and agencies, as directed by the charter or law
3. Appointing, suspending, or removing city employees and administrative officers, with minor exceptions
4. Attending City Council meetings, participating in discussions but without voting rights, except during executive sessions regarding their employment
5. Providing annual reports on the city's finances and operations, keeping the City Council informed about the city's financial condition and needs
6. Signing payment warrants and contracts on behalf of the city, requiring countersigning by the finance officer after approval by the City Council
7. Additional duties include serving as the personnel director and making recommendations to the City Council

Delegation to the City Manager

All Council authority directed to staff is delegated through the City Manager. All authority and accountability of staff—as far as the Council is concerned—is considered to be the authority and accountability of the City Manager.

1. As long as the City Manager uses any reasonable interpretation of the adopted policies, the City Manager is authorized to establish all further policies, make all decisions, take all actions, establish all practices, and develop all activities.

2. The Council may change its adopted policies, thereby shifting the boundary between Council and City Manager domains. By doing so, the Council changes the latitude given to the City Manager. Council members will respect and support the City Manager's decisions and choices, whenever made pursuant to existing Council policies. Council policies shall not be contradictory to the Home Rule Charter or applicable State Statutes.

3. Only decisions of the Council acting as a body are binding upon the City Manager.

4. In the case of Council members, citizen advisory committees, or others requesting information or assistance without Council authorization, the City Manager should turn to the Council for guidance, especially when such requests will require an inordinate amount of staff time or funds or are disruptive to the efficient operation of the City.

Monitoring Executive Performance

Monitoring organizational performance in relation to Council policy is the same as monitoring executive performance. These standards will serve as the benchmark for any formal or informal performance review of the city manager. According to this strategy, assessing performance is primarily dependent on two factors: well stated policies and reasonably accurate performance measures.

1. Identifying the extent to which Council policies are being followed is the sole goal of monitoring. Data that doesn't accomplish this will not be regarded as monitoring. As little Council time as possible will be spent on monitoring, allowing meetings to focus on planning for the future rather than reviewing the past.

2. A given policy may be monitored by:
   - Internal report: Disclosure of compliance information to the Council from the City Manager
   - External report: Discovery of compliance information by an objective party who is selected by and reports directly to the Council. Such reports must assess executive performance only against policies of the Council, not those of the external party unless the Council has previously indicated that party's opinion to be the standard.
   - Direct Council inspection: Discovery of compliance information by a Council member, or the Council as a whole. This is a Council inspection of documents, activities or circumstances directed by the Council which allows a "prudent person" test of policy compliance.

3. The Council recognizes that, at times, non-compliance with a policy may be necessary and prudent in the short term. However, in order to monitor the performance of the City and to modify policies that need improvement, the Council must be constantly aware of compliance issues. The Council expects monitoring and reporting compliance or non-compliance to be the City Manager's highest priority. To promote regular monitoring, the Council asks the City Manager to follow these guidelines:
   - All policy will be monitored by the City Manager who is expected to be responsible for achieving and maintaining compliance.
   - Any non-compliance of material significance shall be reported to the City Council as soon as practical; and such non-compliance shall be monitored and corrective actions taken by the City Manager to re-gain compliance.

4. At a minimum annually, the Council will institute a formal evaluation of the City Manager.

5. The Council expects that, at a minimum annually, the City Manager will institute formal evaluations of Department Heads and file said evaluations with the Human Resources Department.

Ends Policy Framework

Operating Philosophy

The City Council aims to adopt successful business models and practices in addition to government approaches, focusing on innovative systems and attitudes for city operations. The following are some of the main topics the Council chooses to focus on:

1. Benchmarking. The Council wants to constantly compare City performance with other cities and other departments to be sure Watertown is operating in not only an efficient but creative and innovative manner. The Council is aware that Watertown is unique at times. The City's emphasis and direction will, and should, differ considerably from other cities. However, information about best practices from other communities will help the Council make better choices.

2. Continuous improvement. The Council expects measurements of performance to challenge the status quo through the use of continuous improvement processes. Since the needs of our citizen customers are constantly changing so should our practices.

3. Goal setting. The Council expects each department to set challenging goals focused on excellence and improvement.

4. Accountability. The Council expects the City Manager to hold City employees to standards that encourage excellence in operations and service to each other and citizens of Watertown aligned with the City's core values.

Municipal Services

The City Council deems City services, along with fiscal management, to be the highest priorities of the City Manager and city employees. There is no more important function of city government than to serve the citizens of Watertown in a friendly, effective manner.

In terms of overall operations, the City Manager will:

1. Repair infrastructure in a timely manner
2. Approve changes in alignment with the city's strategic and master plans and continually strive to improve operational efficiencies
3. Manage the budget to ensure the best possible quality of services
4. Establish, model, and enforce the highest standards of exceptional customer service and professionalism among city employees, document ongoing citizen satisfaction, and conduct performance reviews for services provided
5. Seek opportunities to share facilities with other entities, anticipate foreseeable needs, and use foresight in developing services
6. Deliver services in a timely, quality manner, and consider citizen complaints and emphasize a user-friendly approach
7. Apply technology whenever beneficial to improve operational efficiency and service delivery
8. Maintain personnel at established baselines to ensure effective operations and provide appropriate equipment to maximize the safety of personnel

9. Enforce ordinances and laws and prevent controllable situations that may increase insurance rates for citizens or the City
10. Coordinate and collaborate with the fire or police chief in emergency situations

The City of Watertown has unique enterprise funds including Solid Waste, Wastewater and the Regional Airport. In terms of enterprise operations, the City Manager will remain aware of and knowledgeable of all the finances and operations of these enterprises.

Economic Development

The Council understands and intends to emphasize the importance of a healthy economy in Watertown and the surrounding area. For the entire community, a healthy economy is critical to a high quality of life. Because of its great importance, there are many entities involved in economic development in Watertown. As the City is a significant funding source for much of the economic development efforts in Watertown, it is the Council's intention to spend economic development dollars in the wisest, most productive manner possible. For purposes of this policy, Economic Development is defined as growth and/or expansion in residential, commercial, industrial and retail sectors, and developing supporting infrastructure.

The City Council's desired goal is to have an economy that is healthy and growing with enough activity to support and fund public services and expand the tax base. To achieve this end, the city will implement and maintain an economic development master plan that gives direction for municipal funding and economic development partnership expectations. The plan will include goals, metrics, and indicators of success.

Employee Training and Development

The Council values City staff as representatives of the city and aims to provide a supportive work environment that encourages growth, skill development, and excellence. Compensation, benefits, and training will focus on ensuring safety and helping staff exceed expectations.

Deviations from the below stated guidelines must be reviewed and approved by the Council.

Guideline A:
Training should equip employees with the attitudes and behaviors necessary to achieve excellence. Based on this guideline, training shall:
1. Commence immediately upon hiring and continue throughout the career of the employee, providing specific tools for optimal performance and productivity
2. Emphasize continuous improvement of employees and processes
3. Enhance an employee's opportunity for promotion
4. Emphasize customer service
5. Focus on effective technological practices

Guideline B:
Compensation ranges will be objectively determined by the City Manager in accordance with this policy. Research shall compare compensation and benefits with those of other public entities with whom the City may compete for qualified employees, along with private sector organizations that have similar positions in the surrounding area.

Infrequently, full market surveys may be required to evaluate and implement necessary modifications to the City's pay system. Full market surveys that might require the services of a consultant to evaluate the City's compensation levels will be completed only upon recommendation of the City Manager and approval by the Council.

The organizations to be included in the market research for non-exempt positions will consist of other public sector entities primarily in South Dakota, as well as private sector organizations in the local region that have similar positions. For management and professional positions, the market will include many of the organizations previously identified as well as similarly sized cities in surrounding states that the city would compete with for applicants, as identified by the City Manager.

It is not intended that the market will include significantly larger South Dakota cities, such as Sioux Falls and Rapid City, unless the market conditions clearly suggest the need to do so. In order to ensure that there is consistency in the methodology used when determining the compensation ranges and benefits, the City Manager will follow the guidelines below.

In addition to infrequent full market surveys, periodic checks of benchmark positions will be completed as directed by the City Manager to monitor and maintain the City's compensation program. To maintain compensation levels that are comparable to market, the City Manager will identify and select benchmark positions and organizations to survey on a timetable appropriate to the upcoming budget year. Efforts will be made to survey the same or like organizations as in the previous survey unless an exception to this policy can be justified.

In order to maintain the internal equity of the compensation system, the following criteria will be used in evaluating the internal equity placement of City positions:
1. Scope of Supervision: Measures both the level of supervision required as well as the number of individuals supervised
2. Job Knowledge: Measures the extent and nature of knowledge required to perform the duties of the position
3. External Contacts: Measures the nature and frequency of external contacts
4. Decision Making: Measures the level of decision-making and independent thought required
5. Job Complexity: Measures level of analytical ability required in the position and the complexity of typical situations faced
6. Physical Working Conditions: Measures the nature of the physical working environment and the frequency in which employees typically work in that environment
7. Exposure to Hazards: Measures employees' typical exposure to health and physical dangers and frequency of such exposure

The Council will not assume an obligation to automatically increase pay ranges without justification. Justification will rely on a review of the Midwest CPI and specific salary data received/obtained from sources as determined appropriate by the City Manager. The purpose of this process is to develop a pay system that is fair and within market and to provide a process that is consistent and reproducible.

In summary, this policy provides further definition to the following Council policy. It is the intent of the Council for compensation to:
1. Be commensurate with individual productivity within the market range
2. Be systematic, with defined ranges, with consistent span in the pay ranges where feasible using the median of the maximum rate of pay of surveyed positions as a benchmark

3. Be used as a reward and motivation to achieve excellence
4. Be attractive to top candidates
5. Be adequate to retain top performers
6. Exceed standards only when justified by exceptional performance
7. Be structured, when appropriate, to allow staff attrition to maintain market rates

Intergovernmental Cooperation and Relations

The Council wishes to coordinate efforts with other governmental bodies, to mutual benefit, whenever possible. The Council will work closely with any governmental body seeking to serve the best interests of the citizens of Watertown in a more integrated manner.

Staff must remember their importance in establishing and maintaining rapport with scores of governmental agencies and groups. At times, one staff person is the only representative of Watertown to encounter a given government official. Regardless of the size or length of the interaction, the Council expects staff to conduct themselves in a manner that would be respectful.