

Todd Schmidt

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Wisconsin Association of Municipal and County Assistant Managers
WAMCAM
Conference Minutes
March 6, 2002
Pioneer Inn, Oshkosh

WAMCAM held it's first professional conference as a joint effort with WCMA consisting of 2 breakout sessions the day prior to the start of the WCMA conference followed by President's Reception at Fratello's Restaurant and tour of the Fox River Brewing Co.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: (We were fortunate to be joined at the WAMCAM breakout sessions by Municipal Administrators.)

Newsletters and Websites: How to Get the Word out

- April Little, Information Specialist, City of Janesville presented "Getting the Word Out through a Municipal Newsletter", focusing on tools, content, design and production.
- Todd Schmidt, Assistant Village Manager, Village of Brown Deer, presented "Local Government Web Sites Basics", focusing on pre-planning, resources, building the site, and tips & tricks.

Assistant Managers Round Table

- ***The Manager Interview Process: Do's, Don'ts and Expectations*** with panelists Dr. Steven Hintz of Public Administration Associates; Ray Ellingen, Village Administrator, East Troy; Dave Frasher, City Administrator, Ashland; and Christine Pugh, Village Administrator, Union Grove.

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- Ask good questions (use notepad), listen a lot
- Scan local newspapers for names in the news
- Stay organized
- Be succinct, concise
- Have extra copies of resume at the ready
- Dress professional, not intimidating
- Make interview 2-way conversation
- Think in professional terms, not political
- Deal confidently with weakness, turn into strength
- Be honest, credible, it's ok to concede a point
- You can't do too much research. Call clerk for council minutes
- Have other professionals critique resume
- Use cover letter to emphasize particular strength or address anomaly
- Recognize interview begins when you arrive and ends when you leave
- Don't stay assistant too long (make the leap to Admin, psychological achievement)

The Successes, Failures and Pitfalls of the First 6 months after Appointment as a Manager/Administrator:

- Embrace smaller community
- Find ways to make other's jobs easier
- Ask lots of questions, advice, background
- Get to know community ASAP
- Don't try to change too much too soon
- Do your research: newspaper archives, Internet
- Establish good media relationship right away
- Know duties of job, how much expected of you
- Crystallize expectations of timeframes, priorities
- Establish rapport with Council
- Emphasize positives
- Review files
- Leave ego at home
- Memo to staff (all City Employees) with self Intro, "I Don't anticipate a lot of changes. Realize this is an anxious time for employees and City... As we get to know one another...each of you no doubt have strengths/skills that I'm unaware of. Please prepare a copy of your resume..."
- Memo to Mayor/Council, "I'd like your thoughts on what you hope to accomplish while in office, issues of concern. Please contact Clerk to arrange one on one meeting."
- Meet every employee in each department in person
- Roam, be informal, take advantage of newbie status
- Don't reinforce existing lines in the sand
- Make no major changes unless crisis first 3-6 mos.
- Don't reveal confidences
- Contact Chamber of Commerce to do business walk about in town. Present business card and discuss concerns
- Maintain communications with electeds

The breakout sessions provided useful information and invaluable insight. Holding the breakout sessions in conjunction with WCMA also provided networking opportunities with Municipal Admins.

Overall, a success!

Respectfully submitted
 Tina Salzman, Secretary
 3/13/02