

The Cornerstones of Effective County Government Administration:

Governance, Roles and Best Practices

Ryan Piche,
County Administrator
Jefferson County

Ian M. Coyle, President
Pracademic Partners





Perspectives:
Village, City, County
Ohio, Michigan, New York



Outline

1

Effective Board-Staff Relations

2

Governance vs Management

3

Maintaining the *Governing* focus

4

Tricks of the Trade

5

Other Best Practices OR Things to Avoid

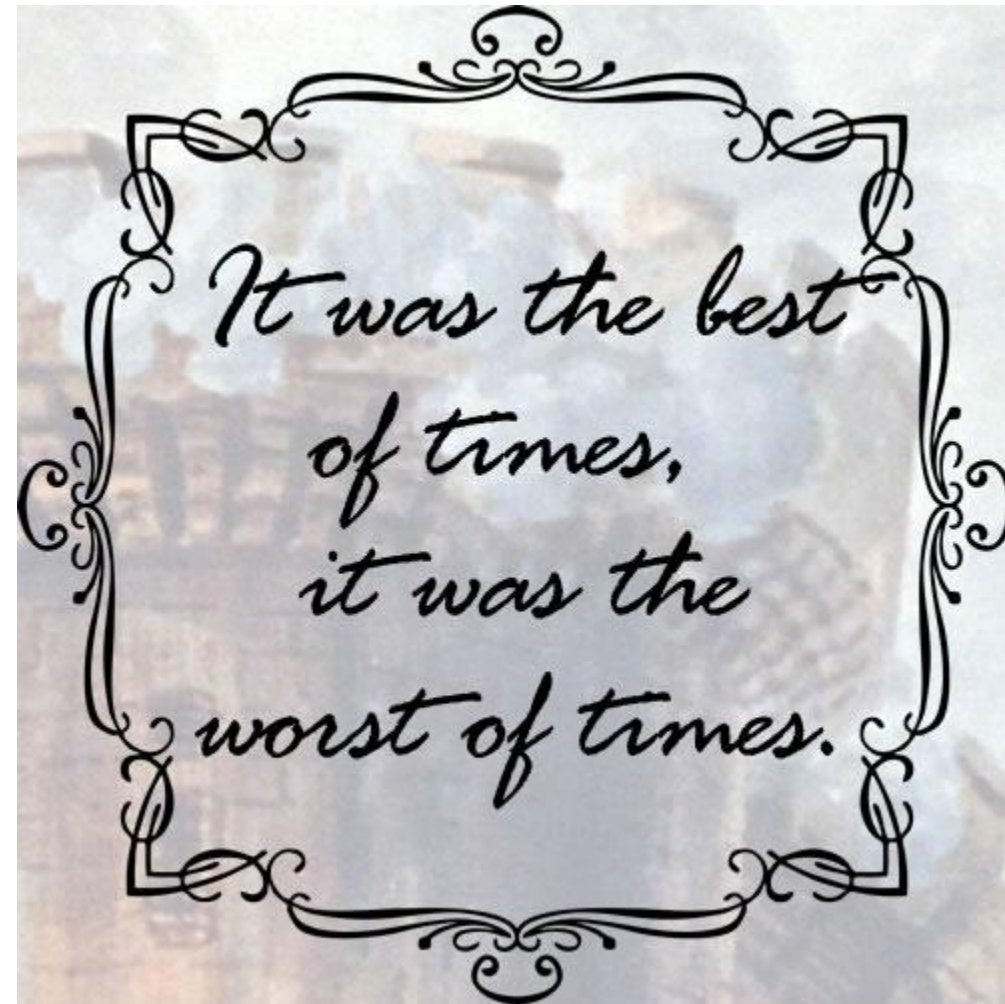
6

An Open forum - what say you?

7

Closing Remarks and Take-Aways





Mutual Respect





2

Governance versus Management





VS





Legislator & Staff Work Flight Analogy



■ Legislator Responsibility

■ Staff Responsibility

Affirm vision and purpose.	Establish goals.	Establish/prioritize action items.	Review/adopt budget conduct meetings.	Authorize contracts (of \$15k or more).	Engage w/ Community and staff.
Support vision and purpose.	Align goals with resources.	Implement priority action items.	Prepare plans and oversee functions.	Plan and complete projects.	Carry out day-to-day responsibilities.

← Long-Range Planning → ← Budget/Contract Approval →

What types of things are *governance*...

1

Policy-making

2

Planning (Strategic)

3

Big picture

4

Visioning

5

Representing the
will of the people
as elected officials

6

Oversight/Evaluation



Where does tension present?

- Micromanagement
- Prioritization
- Personnel/HR
- Equipment
- Policy Matters
- Ego
- Public Pressures
- Crisis/Emergencies



There are things **ONLY** the governing body can do (appropriate funds, long term planning and investing, economic development, community vision and direction), and some counties are in deficit on these items!



3

Maintaining the *Governing* focus





New Board Member Orientation

Issue	Proper Chain of Command	Improper Chain of Command
You receive a complaint about a pothole on a County Road.	Call the County Administrator, or Department Head, or Highway Committee Chairman to let them know of the issue. Expect follow-up.	Call the Highway Superintendent and order his crew to fill the pothole. Call an employee at the Highway Department and order him to fix the pothole.
You have concerns about the financial impact of the County's health insurance policy.	Contact the County Administrator and discuss your concerns. Contact Treasurer to get more information. Expect to be involved in health insurance policy discussions.	Begin attending every health insurance strategic planning session. Contact employees or union representatives to get their opinion on the situation.
A department under your committee is having difficulties with an employee.	Contact the Director of Human Resources and County Administrator. Expect follow-up.	Direct the department head to terminate the employee. Contact the troubled employee.

Example:

Chain of Command discussion at orientation

AGENDA/TABLE OF CONTENTS

County Administrator Presentation

Introduction

- Background
- Responsibilities-core areas and functions
- Non-partisan nature / Management Philosophy
- Availability

County Administrator Local Law*

Budget/Finance

- Current Financial Condition / Credit Ratings
- NYS Mandates
- Budget Process & Philosophy
- 2022 Challenges – Budget/Finance

Open Meetings Law, Freedom of Information Law, and Executive Session

- Executive Session
- Email

Organizations, Explanation of

- NYMIR
- NYSAC
- Association of Towns
- ICMA
- IIMC
- NYSACCLB

Policies

- Table of Contents

Salary Schedule (Review)

Unions (Contracts are on File in the Clerk's Office)

Economic Development

- Status and Current Happenings

Capital Projects

- Mt. Morris Campus Projects / Al Lorenz Park
- LCSO Training Complex
- Groveland Acreage (Resiliency)
- 5 Year CIP (copy forthcoming)

Special Projects

- Broadband/High-Speed Internet (Light Up Livingston)

Current Issues Facing the County

- Covid/Post Covid/ARPA
- CNR Sustainability
- Criminal Justice Reform
- Mandated versus Non-Mandated Programs

Clerk Of The Board Presentation

Introduction

- Background & General Duties of Clerk of the Board
- Involvement with NYSACCLB & IIMC/NEMCI
- Organizational Meeting
- Confirm paperwork has been completed
- Voice Mail
- Mail
- Government Center Access Pass
- Supplies
- Sunshine Fund
- BOS License Plates Available
- County Car use
- Retirement Reporting

Committee & Board Meetings

- NYSAC "A Practical Guide to Leadership: A Manual for County Board Members • Committees – Members/Schedule/Operating Departments/Functional Areas • Committee Meeting Policy
- Meeting Notices (Board, Human Services, Public Services, Ways and Means) • Resolutions
- Board Packet (Board Letter, Tentative Agenda, Minutes, Abstract of Claims) • Agenda Docket
- Privilege Of The Floor
- Proceedings
- Contract Approval Process

Misc. Informational Items

- Acronyms
- Board of Supervisors Meeting Pamphlet
- Civil Service Orientation
- Directory
 - Hours - Government Center & Other County Agencies
 - Department Telephone List
 - Board Telephone List
- Elected Officers in Livingston County
- Historical Pamphlet "Looking Back"
- Holiday Schedule
- Maps
 - Livingston County Campus Map
- Livingston County Facilities Map •
- Official Newspapers
 - Livingston County Government Complex
 - Livingston County Highway Map

Goals and Planning

GOALS:

1.

2.

Jefferson County Legislative Strategic Priorities 2025

Adopted by the Board of Legislators – February 4th, 2025

General Services Committee

1. Support airport capital projects including terminal project, fuel farm project, and parking lot paving. Completion by end of year.
2. Support the county's physical plant improvements funded in 2024 and 2025, specifically the PSB parking lot, Employment and Training upgrades, and Human Services Building upgrades.
3. Address land use, permitting, and taxation policies regarding clean energy development.
4. Work towards new state standards for dog control shelter.
5. Work towards eliminating blight, and vacant properties, including revisiting the county's role in condemnation and unsafe structures.
6. Develop lease policy for 9-1-1 towers.

Health and Human Services Committee

1. Improve security conditions at Human Services Building.
2. Support homeless initiatives.
3. Support housing initiatives.
4. Execute customer service training across forward-facing county offices.
5. Solve medical examiner vacancy and reduce coroner transportation costs.
6. Build and deploy a bi-county Mobile Crisis Team.
7. Support Public Health department in its pursuit of public health accreditation.
8. Support DSS efforts to improve performance metrics.

Finance and Rules Committee

1. Revisit purchasing and auditing policies to allow for the integration of credit cards, and improved tracking of purchase orders and contracts.
2. Settle union negotiations.
3. Explore options for election polling places throughout the county.
4. Implement an employee appreciation program and employee assistance program.
5. Regular updates for budget and audit.
6. Develop plan for bed tax fund balance, and revisit 1986 bed tax local law.
7. Increase engagement on economic development initiatives, including plan for economic development fund.
8. Hire new health insurance consultant and issue RFP for provider.
9. Develop NYS Legislative agenda and advocacy plan, including visit to Albany.
10. Improve the county's cyber security posture through adoption of two-factor authentication.
11. Develop a more formal six-year capital plan, including a detailed fleet-management plan.

Jefferson County Legislative Strategic Priorities 2025				
Adopted by the Board of Legislators - February 4th, 2025				
	Department Ownership	Estimated Completion	Committee Presentation	Status
General Services				
Airport Capital Project	Airport	December	March	Complete
Physical Plant Improvements	Buildings & Grounds	December	June	Scheduled
Solar Land Use/Taxation Policy	Planning & IDA	April	April	Scheduled
Dog Control Standards	Dog Control	Ongoing	Ongoing	TBD
Blight/Vacant Properties	Codes & County Attorney	July	July	Scheduled
911 Tower Lease Policy	Emergency Management	May	May	Scheduled
Health & Human Services				
DSS Security	Buildings & Grounds	December	March (and one more)	TBD
Homeless Initiatives	DSS & Community Services	Ongoing	March (ongoing)	Complete
Housing Initiatives	DSS	Ongoing	TBD	TBD
Customer Service Training	Administration	December	TBD	TBD
Medical Examiner Vacancy	Public Health	December	TBD	TBD
Mobile Crisis Team	Community Services	December	April	Complete
Public Health Accreditation	Public Health	December	February	Scheduled
DSS Performance Metrics	DSS	December (ongoing)	TBD	Scheduled
Finance & Rules				
Purchasing Policy/Credit Cards	Administration	March	February	Complete
Settle Union Negotiations	Human Resources	December	Exec. Sessions (Jan, etc.)	TBD
Polling Places	Board of Elections	March	March	Complete
Employee Appreciation/EAP	Human Resources	December	August	TBD
Budget/Audit Updates	Administration	November/July	October/July	Scheduled
Bed Tax/Short Term Rentals	Administration	April	April	Complete
Health Insurance Consultant/RFP	Insurance	January/?	January/?	Complete
NYS Legislative Agenda	Administration	May	March	Scheduled
Cyber Security Posture	Information Technology	December	May	Scheduled
Economic Development Initiatives	Administration	December	TBD	TBD
Six-Year Capital Plan	Administration	September	September	Scheduled
Completed: 7/25 = 28%				
Scheduled: 10/25 = 40%				
TBD: 8/25 = 32%				

Committee/ Date	January 21	February 11	March 11	April 15	May 20	June 17	July 8	August 19	September 16	October 14	November 25
General Services	Committee Goals; County Infrastructure Grant	Solid Waste Loan & Capital Project	Airport Project Update and Finances/Upda te and/or Accept Bids for Sewer Project & County Infrastructure Project Award	Solar Taxation and Land Use	Lease Policy for 9-1-1 Towers (After Ad Hoc Discusses)	Blight and Unsafe Structure Plan	Buildings and Grounds Project Progress	Bus Transportation Update	Meeting at Airport w/ Tour of Project	Six-Year Capital Plan & Fleet Plan	
Committee/ Date	January 28	February 18	March 25	April 29	May 27	June 24	July 29	August 26	September 30	November 5	December 2
Health and Human Services	Committee Goals	Public Health Accreditation Presentation	DSS Security Plan & Homeless Update	Bi-County Mobile Crisis Team	Childcare Funding & OFA Goals	CPS/APS Presentation	Veterans Position Replacement & DSS Quarterly Numbers Update	Public Health Paramedics In Home Visits	Report on Customer Service Training	DSS Quarterly Numbers Update	
Committee/ Date	January 28	February 18	March 25	April 29	May 27	June 24	July 29	August 26	September 30	November 5	December 2
Finance and Rules	Insurance Discussion (Health, Property, & Casualty) & Committee Goals	Purchasing Policy, Credit Card Policy, Fixed Asset Policy	Election Polling Places Plan	Corey Fram - Bed Tax Plan, Local Law, Vendor & Occupancy Fund Balance Plan	Cyber Security Briefing (Executive Session)	JCC Budget Presentation	Audit Presentation	Employee Appreciation and EAP - Big Picture Finance	Budget Capital & Personnel & New Health Insurance Provider	Budget Workshop	Adopt Budget

Use Structure to Establish Boundaries

- Committee Structure**

- Agenda Management**

- Resolution Management**

- Capital Planning & Purchasing Policy**



Tactics and Strategies

Don't

Force
Boards/Legislatures
into *bad votes*

Interrupt process

Underestimate
meeting
management

Do

Hold leadership
meetings

Engage the
community

Make the
Board/Leg look
good

Enforce

Roberts Rules

Decorum and
civility

Tact



Board Surveys



KYP!

**Know
Your
Personnel**



4

Tricks of the Trade and Roadmaps





LP Cookingham's Guideposts

Board Will

Policy Execution

Servant Leadership

Ignore Cranks

Listen First

Humility

Press Relations

Give Credit

Pace

Employee Relations

Code of Ethics

Peer Networking





1

We and Us versus I and Me

2

Communication and Messaging

3

Remember, not everyone _____

4

Be Politically Savvy, not Political

5

Use Criticism Constructively

6

Boundaries are OK, but...

7

Display the Value of Board Input

5

Other Best Practices and/or Things to Avoid



Protocols

Clarity on roles,
responsibilities, the relevant
local law and department
head interactions

Communication

Regular touchpoints;
Involving everyone, no
selectivity; No surprises

Thick Skin

Take the arrows and
deflect or share the praise

Excel

Do a good job; Display the
value of professional
management; Exemplify
Public Service; Get stuff done





1

Make time for the Board / Staff

2

Help each other become better
(train)

3

Always aim for clarity

4

“Faithfully Implement”

5

Mini Milestones = Snowball effect

6

Maintain professionalism & TRUST

7

Election cycle management /
acknowledgement

Things to avoid?

1

Being too “big”
for some task

2

Working with just
some of the board

3

Making
assumptions

4

Neglecting
performance
appraisals

5

Making gray the
lines of authority

6

Not promoting
Board/Legislature
training



6

**Open Forum - What
did we miss? What
say you?**

