The Municipal Balance of Power: Lessons from *Federalist 51*

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Abstract

The need to build constructive relationships between city councils and managers is as important today as it ever was. However, in a world of increasingly complex municipal service provision the obstacles to productive manager-council relationships loom large. This paper explores the complex relationships between elective officials and merit-based staff, with a special emphasis on understanding the variability in the sets of communication patterns that develop among city managers, merit-based staff, and their elected superiors. In the end, this paper explores the usefulness of Federalist 51 in designing and navigating the rough seas of council-manager relationships.

Introduction

As DeSantis notes, "Local government managers depend upon the strength of many relationships in fulfilling their responsibilities. None is more important, however, than the relationship of a manager and his or her council" (1998, p. 10). On the ever-changing municipal landscape the role of the city manager is in constant flux. In the world of increasingly complex service provision "the need to build constructive relationships with governing officials is a constant priority" (Seymour, 2002, p. 12).

This project explores the complex relationships between elected officials and merit-based staff, with a special emphasis on understanding the variability in the sets of communication patterns that develop among city managers, staff, and their elected superiors. We explore whether there isn't some room for institutionalized conflict between appointed city managers and their elected superiors – all in the name of good government and *Federalist 51*. And, if this is the case, can we incorporate institutional mechanisms to mediate this conflict short of terminating the city manager? As Mathis argues, "[n]o manager in our complex society is immune to the toxic intrusion of a poor relationship (2001, p. 9).

We hypothesize that there exist a range of models for channeling information among city managers, staff, and elected officials. On one end of this spectrum is a set of communication patterns where city managers encourage elected officials to communicate in person (or through some other mechanism) with city employees as often as they wish – with no interference by the city manager – an "activist" set of communication patterns that we label the "vigilante" city council. At the other end of the continuum we expect that city managers will prohibit any and all communication between elected and merit-based employees unless the city manager gives explicit approval. Under the latter model – a more "controlled" or principled approach – all communication from elected officials will be funneled through the city manager as the information "conduit." Here, the city manager acts as the "steward" of important information and the interests of city council. Any other behavior outside of a controlled communication pattern will be considered an end-run and a possible act of insubordination on the part of the employee. This we label the "stewardship" model. Of course, there will be a set of

middle-range communication patterns whereby some types of direct communication are allowed and perhaps encouraged between elected and merit-based staff. These instances would be only for fact-finding and informational purposes rather than some covert plan to circumvent the more normal administrative process.

In this paper we propose a middle ground: we suggest a return to James Madison's ideas about conflict and separation of powers as a way of understanding and reforming council-manager government. After preliminary thoughts, we will first give justification of the Madisonian model of governance for cities. This will be followed by preliminary suggestions for procedures that clearly define roles and help to institutionalize conflict in a way that can be productive for local governments.

In part, what we intend to address is what Gabris, Golembiewski, and Ihrke (2001) call "the emaciated condition of public leadership theory" (p. 90). This paper seeks to better understand the various models and communication patterns between city councils and appointed administrators, the consequences for "good government" of each model, and the political, environmental, institutional, and personal variables that give rise to individual modalities. The purpose is to shed additional light on what it means to adopt a leadership role in municipal government and how, and under what conditions, city administrators are encouraged to do so.

In part, we hypothesize that certain levels of leadership credibility are associated with certain communication modalities. Gabris, Golembiewski, and Ihrke (2001) already argue that "there is a modicum of support" for various organizational constructs and that "perceptions of high levels of leadership credibility toward

the CAO associate with higher levels of perceived innovation, intergroup cooperation, and better service performance" (p. 90). We wish for this paper to bring additional texture to this argument and use this theory to serve as a platform for additional exploration. Toward this end, this paper reviews arguments in the *Federalist* Papers as well as contemporary organizational communication literature in an effort to highlight structural challenges to some important characteristics of "good government" which are embedded in the council-manager form of government.

Background

In the United States, political struggles over structure of government are as old, even older, than the Constitution. Clearly, the form of government, the shape government takes, or the model it is patterned after, must matter. This notion is, in part, the motivation for much early American political writing. *The Federalist Papers*, penned by Publius, and the Anti-Federalist replies by Federal Farmer, Brutus, and others, epitomize this struggle. In fact, the constitutional convention held in Philadelphia in 1787 was motivated by the poor structure, and the resulting weaknesses (no independent executive, no judicial authority, and no other means of enforcing Congress's will), of the Articles of Confederation to provide for meaningful governance in a young nation besieged with problems.

Perhaps the most articulate argument supporting the notion that structure mattered to the framers was offered by Publius in *Federalist 51*. The purpose of this essay was to discuss the various mechanisms required to control the abuses of government. Publius argued that people are the primary control of government. He recognizes, however,

that "experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions," i.e., formal structure (Cooke 1961, 349). In an effort to lay the foundation for this new brand of constitutional government, Publius articulates the important component of checks and balances which will become a hallmark of the new national government. Publius writes, "… the constant aim is to divide and arrange the several offices in such a manner as that each may be a check on the other" (349). This, as noted in the text of the essay, is essential to the preservation of liberty and is a direct reflection of the writings of an earlier political philosopher, Montesquieu.

Montesquieu, born in 1689 and writing in the early 1700s, wrote that, "[t]o prevent the abuse of power, things must be so ordered that power checks power. When both the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person or body of magistrates, there is no liberty" (Richter 1977, 244-245).

Furthermore, in an effort to support bicameralism, Publius notes that in a republican form of government, the legislative authority necessarily dominates. Therefore, the remedy is to "divide the legislature into different branches; and to render them by different modes of election, and different principles of action" (Cooke 1961, 350). Finally, in support of federalism, or a "compound republic," Publius contends that a double security arises because power is divided between two distinct governments (351). According to Publius, "[h]ence, a double security arises to [protect] the rights of the people. The different governments will controul each other; at the same time that each will be controuled by itself" (351). These concerns were important; so important that, in general principle, the Anti-Federal Brutus agreed to divided power.

The structure of the new government mattered to the framers of the Constitution. The internal structure served as a mechanism through which public policy would develop in a particular kind of way. This method of governance was not designed to be rapid or impulsive. Rather, it was designed to foster debate, dialogue, and reflection. In addition, this system fosters citizen participation through multiple access points; opportunities abound for the policy process to be halted, abruptly, by a contentious legislature or citizenry. The drafters of our Constitution deliberately designed an intricate system in order to ensure deliberation and prevent precipitous action. The resulting fragmented institutions had the added benefit of permitting opportunities for environmental and citizen interaction.

We recognize that the council-manager system is well entrenched in local American politics and arose to respond to the problems of corruption and complexity in local government. Under this system, the professional manager, who by being non-partisan, could administer government in an impersonal, fair way. Partisan rancor could be replaced by more professional goal setting, efficient service production, and long-range planning which would all be performed in the public interest. Our contention here is that the council-manager system, which responds to specific urban difficulties, seemingly works most purely with little conflict, when a generally passive elective body is under the stewardship of a strong and competent city manager. We wonder if operating in a more harmonious and cooperative mode where the council takes a back seat to the city manager is desirable simply because there is little or no conflict between the manager and the council. Does social and political peace necessarily mean good government? The stewardship form has the virtues of efficiency, consensus, and limited time and involvement for councils, but it may lack in openness, the sharing of

information, and the operation of messy but necessary democratic processes a la *Federalist 51*.

Even if we were satisfied with the efficiency of the stewardship system, we would still suggest that reform is needed because as time passes we see more and more vigilante systems of local government where the council members have become more assertive. What seems to be occurring in many American cities is that a more active group of elected officials, who, by their assertiveness, have shown the structural flaws in a system designed for harmony and homogeneity. What these activist council members have exposed is the lack of useful procedures at a city's disposal to deal with moments of conflict between the manager and her or his executive functions and the council with their legislative functions. Vigilante systems can have the advantage of quicker responsiveness to public demands, more open discussion and more council participation. The down side is that vigilante councils and city managers have few rules to help manage their communication and conflict. The result, in part, may be the high turnover rate of city managers due to miscommunication and mistrust.(1) For the most part, conflict in council-manager systems is rarely looked at as a structural problem, as we choose to treat it here. Instead, conflict is viewed in more personal terms as a symptom of bad management, bad leadership, or a dysfunctional council. It is important to look for sources of conflict in political structures, not simply in personality, in order to reform the system and slow the revolving door for city managers.

James Madison's Insights

We recognize that the city manager and the city staff do not represent a separate "branch" and do not, in

principle, function within a framework of separation of powers. However, given particular environmental conditions and the exigencies of professional life, the chief executive and his or her staff seems to have a separate "branch-like" flavor. We understand that this was not part of the intended model of council-manager government, but feel that this separation is de facto in this form of government and it would be useful to review Madison's views on the subject. We go back to the *Federalist Papers*, in particular the well-known *Federalist 51*, where Madison writes that

> [t]he great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in giving to those who administer each department, the necessary constitutional means, and personal motives, to resist encroachments of the others. The provision for defence must in this, as in all other cases, be made commensurate to the danger of attack. Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place (*The Federalist*, 1961, p. 349).

In the Hobbesian tradition, Madison believed that ambition expressed through competition might be the best that we could hope for. "It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to controul the abuses of government. But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary" (*The Federalist*, 1961, p. 349). If Madison is correct, inevitably there will be conflict between branches of government with different functions, even in council-manager systems

where the executive is an at-will employee of the legislature.

Svara (1999) has indicated "[t]he Council-Manager form of government has typically been associated with cooperation and positive relationships among officials" (p. 173). But, he also notes that harmony has been attributed to the suppression of conflict – a theme we will return to later – "the explanation more appropriately lies with unique structural features that promote the blending of distinct perspectives and the coordination of effort between elected officials and administrators (ibid). Does this mean that Madison is irrelevant here? (See also Felts and Schuhmann 1997). Or, does this mean that Madison was wrong because you can have rival departments, but cooperation can work between departments with rival interests and ambitions? We need to explore these problems one at a time.

The council-manager system does reflect two departments with possibly rival goals, but the difference is that the head of the executive branch is hired by the legislative branch and serves at the behest of the legislative branch – a parliamentary model. This suggests that power lies with the governing body that hires and fires the city manager. The short tenure of most city managers is indicative of the risks involved with the job and that the power does indeed lie with the Council – especially if the manager gets out of step with the city council. In vigilante government cities where there is great instability, the city manager has to be acutely attentive to the council and is given little latitude to develop policies and carry them out without always being placed underneath the council's policy microscope.

At the other extreme, however, are the cities where

the councils view their biggest task as hiring a manager to run the day-to-day functioning of government. Much like the Public School boards, Corporate Boards, Hospital Boards or University Trustees, the elected officials are often told to stay out of the day-to-day functioning of the unit and leave those tasks to the appointed administrative official. As in the case of one school district with which we are familiar, the long standing school board members tell the newly elected ones to stay out of the schools and not interfere with the superintendent who is hired to run the schools. In most cases, being a university trustee, school board member, or a corporate board member is not a full-time job as it is for the administrator and the elected officials are not in position to know as much as the hired professional. There is typically little conflict (until something goes wrong) because the boards hire the administrators and she or he simply creates the policy agenda for the elected officials to consider and provides them with the "relevant" information.

The "successful administrator," in this example, is the one who convinces the board that he or she is fully competent to run the whole operation. The tradeoff for the elected board member is that he or she gets the prestige of being elected to the board, but does not have to commit too much time to the job – the professionals are full time and will do that. Under this stewardship model there is little conflict. This kind of division of labor is often seen in city councils where members open their information packets at the beginning of city council meeting and their rubber bands are still wrapped around the papers the staff prepared for the council and sent out days in advance. This system can run smoothly and under the aegis of democratic principles. Elected officials are there to do the job of watchdogs in case things do not go well; hence, managers have to anticipate council's reactions, a form of democratic

check. Frequently, elected officials are passive and pass on their job of watchdogs: the manager is hired to carry out his or her job and the elected officials stay out of the way as long as the public is satisfied with the outcomes. DeSantis (1998) provides a good example of this when he notes "[i]n years past, roles were more sharply defined throughout society, and in local government, the council and the manager 'knew their places'" (p. 10-11).

Thus, we have two polar systems, the vigilante system where council members are extremely active in checking up on the job of the city manager and searching for information from staff. Here, the administrative and political environment is likely characterized by instability and, perhaps, mistrust. The other kind of system is where the administrator, with more time on his or her hands than the elected council and a greater knowledge base, convinces the council that business is basically being taken care of and that elected officials can leave the city in good hands. This we call the "stewardship" system. Both of these are possible under the council-manager plan (with most of the space between these two poles having some combination of the two).

If we get back to the question of whether this is the type of situation that Madison envisioned where checks and balances should be operant, we believe that it certainly could be. As Svara (1999) indicates, large council-manager systems have conflicts as to who should be interested in long-term interests, day-to-day management and policy issues, among others. The reason is that the legislative branch feels it is responsible to individual citizens and must insure their happiness and I order to do so, council members often feel the need to delve into the bowels of city government. Simultaneously, the managers do not want the council members prodding too much into the day-to-day

management and complex, technical policy issues, among others. To assume that one institution proposes and the other disposes is far too simple a schema for understanding a modern, complex council-manager city. One of the real rubs lies with the idea that a city manager generally runs the city but can be replaced by a dissatisfied council. Since, as Svara (1999) again points out, council members are interested in short-term time horizons and the idiosyncratic interests of their constituents, it is difficult for them to stay out of the day-to-day management and agenda-setting of a manager. For the stewardship model to work, there either has to be a great faith in the abilities of the manager, and/or the council has to be convinced that it is not their role to participate in the day-to-day affairs of the city administration (which resonates more with the organic principles behind the council-manager plan).

In many places the stewardship system works, but we cannot assume that absence of conflict is good government. For instance, today people are questioning the role corporate governing boards where the part-timers on the boards are supposed to oversee operations. What we know is that they have neither the time nor frequently the inclination for oversight, but merely collect the prestige of being on the board. In Colorado, the Saint Vrain school district found itself deeply in debt and repeatedly the same questions were being asked of the school board: "Where did the money go?" Do school board members have to admit that they trusted the school administrators because, after all, they were the ones in charge? This is where the potential problems emerge.

Jeremy Bentham's Plans

If we look at the system from Jeremy Bentham's perspective, we can try to show why Madison was

prescient, i.e., that government departments will clash with one another and that his assumptions about government and human nature were correct in these circumstances. The council-manager system as conceived greatly resembles Jermy Bentham's early utilitarianism, where he felt that scientifically minded bureaucrats were now in a position to make key decisions of government. They could become the experts on the pleasures and pains of the people and impersonally assign values to each policy alternative so as to implement an approach that would maximize pleasure and minimize pain. To do so with scientific objectivity would take the politics out of government. Without going into a long critique of Benthamite government, it suffices to say that precisely measuring pleasures and pains of politics was simply not a matter for sophisticated scientific measures. Nor could we rely on science to deliver value free evaluations on the means to enhance pleasure and minimize pain.

Most important, the democratic impetus was, as Tocqueville later asserted, irresistible, and people would want their representatives, as James Mill observed, to represent their pleasures and their pains. What happened is that Bentham's original engineering scheme of pleasures and pains gave way to the idea that through the vote you could ascertain the pleasures and pains of the populous; thus, the utilitarian calculus was democratized. The council-manager system working best as a system of stewardship is really a system of Bentham's original proposal – a scientific bureaucracy with the potential democratic check by a more inactive elected body. The argument could be forwarded that cooperation and the division of labor works when both parties accept the Benthamite model. Again, this does not suggest that this form of government, government by cooperation and the division of labor, makes for "good government" (or bad

government for that matter). If the insertion of elected officials occurs in the day-to-day operations of city government then we have to assume that the government works more along the lines of Madison. In fact, the short terms of city managers indicates that it works mostly on Madisonian principles.

We would conclude that the Madisonian distinction is still relevant in the council-manager system, although things can work "smoothly" as long as one branch takes or is convinced to take a decidedly back seat to the other. There can be cooperation and social peace, but we are relying on the structural factors of tradition and lesser involvement of elected officials to make this happen. Structurally, however, there is nothing to insure that this cooperation lasts, or that it is ultimately good for the community. Procedures should be in place to deal with the possibility that conflict will occur and that a Madisonian world will accrue. If it does, then good will is not enough to provide for the resolution of organizational conflict.

Communication Problems

Councils and managers perceive different communication challenges based on different goals and different political and organizational constituencies. For example, local interest groups frequently perceive city managers as the most powerful force in the city and people gravitate toward her or him to initiate policy or to promote a particular project. In addition, the manager is a "single contact point" and is often the lightning rod for citizen complaints. On the other hand, councils sometimes hear from the same groups, but more often they hear the immediate complaints of individuals because citizens believe that these council people are the "representatives" of the citizens. Thus, councils and manager are barraged by

similar groups, sometimes under a different guise, and/or are approached by different citizens because of the perceived differential in these two institutions' ability to "get problems solved."

Further, individual council members lobby the city manager with various projects and complaints and, of course, this causes difficulty if the requests are conflicting. On the city council, each member is a potential boss, ally, or foe when the time comes for contract negotiations. Appeasement doesn't work in case when views clash (see, for example, Hubbell and Homer 1997). The difficulties come with the more insistent council members who follow through on their demands of the manager. If the manager chooses in one direction or another, she or he can be accused of playing favorites. A common pitfall for city managers, notes Good (1999), is "taking sides with some policymakers against others" (p. 13).

A stressed administrative staff may prevent the manager from taking up new innovations from the council and these merit-based employees are not well understood by members of city council who feel they were elected to fulfill specific promises made to the voters. At times it may not be so much as a stressed staff as a conservative attitude toward change. Administrative staff often note: "we have seen all these proposals before; there is nothing new in all of this." As well, there is the feeling that the city council is naïve and can easily be dissuaded from their current propositions if they are simply provided with expert advice and information that suggests a contrary approach. Finally, it may simply be a power struggle with the manager feeling that she or he is the proposer of policy and council should simply go along with the plan. The point, here, is that these issues present important communication problems for city managers, staff, and elected officials.

What types of communication should be allowed and under what conditions? What are the repercussions of elected officials traveling deep into the bowels of city administration searching for unfiltered information on city problems?

Svara (1999) again notes that there are a good number of obvious conflicts between managers and councils. In his interviews with council members and managers he finds that both agree that: councils have difficulty making clear decisions, councils focus on short-term issues and give too little consideration to long-term concerns, and council members agree that intervention by a council member is necessary in order to get staff to directly respond to citizen's complaints. Further, both managers and council members agree that city councils try to get special services and benefits for their constituents. But when elected officials start poking around well below the city manager level, can staff know the difference between a legitimate request for information, an act of personal pork barrel, or an attempt to get information on a city manager who is currently out of favor with this particular elected official?

One can view these and other differences of opinion between councils and managers as simply part of the nature of the job, but it is our contention that local governments should be structured to anticipate problems and have structures and procedures in place to make certain that the interests of the different "branches" of municipal government can be played out in well thought out forums with consistent rules.

To be sure, municipal environments are becoming increasingly complex to manage and there seems to be a related increase in the potential for managers to get out of

step. As DeSantis (1998) argues, "more than ever before, council members are being asked to deal with value-laden issues, and it is left to managers to help frame the issues by distilling complex information and clarifying the various perspectives and options" (p. 11). This role of clarifying value-laden issues is just the type of situation that is prone to get the manager into trouble from various groups or alliances within the council. Elected officials can see intolerance and prejudice by the manager toward other elected officials as a major obstacle, preventing views from being accepted. This is the place where mistrust can develop, end-runs to staff can occur, and general administrative and communication confusion can erupt.

What we do know is that good relationships are good for government. Mathis (2001) makes it clear that practitioners recognize having a good working relationship with city council is important to improve goal setting and achievement, enhance policy direction and alignment, and limit conflict, which enhances public trust in government (7).

Embedding Conflict

A poorly functioning council-manager system may stem from ignorance or malice on the part of one or all parties to this form of government, but what we so far have done is concentrated on the structural dilemmas built into the original design of this form of governance. There are, however, ways to minimize these problems, clarify the roles of all participants, and to find ways to allow for open disagreement in the best of the Madisonian tradition.

For instance, councils should have work sessions to initiate ideas for ordinances or policy changes they wish their city would pursue. This means that the city manager

will not have to bring everything forward suggested by one individual or one faction on the council. On controversial issues, it is council's responsibility to give majority direction to city staff during these work sessions. The manager should, however, be allowed to present controversial issues in these "council work sessions" without fear of reprisal. Managers should do so in order to get an idea of council's general disposition toward these issues. Without such an ability, a manager ends up negotiating (usually on an individual basis) with council members, which is frequently interpreted as an "ambush" by the other members. Normally, this process can happen at an annual council retreat, bit it is better to go over these issues as they come up and bring them to council work sessions where ideas can be thrashed out in detail, beyond the more general level of agreement in a retreat.

There should be some general agreement that during the stage where proposals are thrashed out and recommendations put forth by management that individual council members stay clear of process issues and not try any end runs around the city manager to the city staff. In an effort to stave off individual end runs, council may appoint committees to oversee the process, making sure that the council's concerns are considered; thus, providing a check on individual forays into the staff's day-to-day business.

Staff should not be prohibited from talking to council members and, indeed, council has a "right of inquiry" according to the International City Management Association (ICMA, 1994 p. 39). However, an "hour rule" might be employed. If a staff member is asked by a member of council to complete a task that will take more than one hour, the city manager should be notified and she or he make the determination if the work should be carried out (City of San Buenaventura, 1998, p. 25). (Depending

on the size of the city, council may go to sub-department employees for information or, in smaller cities, perhaps the city manager is the place where requests for information are initiated.) Often, Council's requests are generated by complaints from constituents and cannot fully be answered unless the staff is questioned. In other words, the manager and staff are coming up with recommendations and the council should have access, but not be able to obstruct, delay, or distract the staff from their day-to-day responsibilities.

Finally, policy up for consideration should come before the council with a variety of recommendations where there has been disagreement among the staff and the manager. The council can decide to have department heads or sub-department heads at the meeting and the written recommendations should have reasons in writing by the staff and manager. Or, the recommendation may be a series of questions that the council might want to consider before making a decision. Here, city council is assured that policies are vetted properly and that they have been presented with a range of possible alternatives. This has the effect of increasing trust between elected officials and management, contributing to elected official's policy awareness and knowledge of what is "possible."

Conclusion

The idea of institutionalized conflict is a very old one. For example, we can find ideas surrounding the issue of conflict as good for government in Aristotle's *Politics*. Here he discusses mixed forms of government and their importance in checking the interests of different groups. The idea of a "polity," for example, may be a way of balancing the interests of an oligarchy with the democratic

populace. Locke and Montesquieu indicated the clashing of different interests to give a form of mixed sovereignty, but it was Madison who fully worked out the logic and found it necessary to work for good government. Madison, thoroughly modern, suggested that "ambition be made to counteract ambition."

For those who proposed the lessening of conflict through ideal systems, this was a far cry from correcting structural problems so that people could live in perpetual peace. There was some of that idealism in the progressive movement to bring peace through a division of labor; the city council would set policy and the city manager would make sure that the policy would be carried out. Each branch would be happy to divide the functions, i.e., the council to compress public wishes into ordinance and the city manager to carry out these wishes.

The system worked best when the city manager was a steward and the council was socialized to follow the lead of their manager while enjoying the prestige of their elected position. Where the systems begins to stumble is when the council becomes a "vigilante" council where members decide that they should play a more active role not only in public policy making but also in the strategies for policy implementation. Ambition shows its head and we are reminded that Madison comes back into view – when citizens and councils are more active than honorary.

What this paper argues is that the trend is to more active councils and we are best to heed Madison's advice to account for people's ambitions. Once the vigilante council becomes active it is difficult to push her or him back into a subservient role. We now have to be much more attentive to relations between manager and city council in order to institutionalize conflict that we used to successfully ignore

because of the quiescence on the part of council.

This paper explored grounds for revisiting council, manager, and staff relations. As Gabris, Golembiewski, and Ihrke (2001) note, "board/staff cooperation does not emerge in a vacuum. It must be carefully and skillfully nurtured by professional administrators who understand effective leadership practices" (p. 89). Further, Mathis (2001) contends that "while elected officials' unhappiness with local government managers doesn't spell disaster, unresolved unhappiness often begins a negative cycle ending in dysfunction… or separation" (p. 6). This, clearly, is not good government. Perceptions of being "manipulated" by the manager "can contribute to negative impressions of the manager or to unhappiness with his or her methods. When a councilmember feels disrespected or discounted, trust in the manager is the first trust to disappear from the relationship. Miscommunication at this level is difficult to repair (Mathis, 2001, p. 8).

Notes
1. According to the ICMA, in 1999 the average tenure of a city manager nationwide is 5.9 years (Davidson and McMahon, 1999).

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