The City Manager/ Police Chief Relationship: **Lessons Learned**

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Agenda

1. Speaker Introductions

2. The Importance of the City Manager/Police Chief Relationship

3. Ensuring Effective Law Enforcement in your Community

4. Enhancing Public Trust with Law Enforcement

5. Allocating Resources to your Police Department

6. Developing Policies

7. Responding to Crises

8. The Importance of Performance Management

9. How to Overcome Challenges/Disagreements

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Presenters

Dan Brown, MPA, Chief of Police (Retired), Former City Manager

Dave Nelson, MBA-ARM, Former Chief of Police, Former City Manager

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"So goes the Police Department, So goes City Hall."

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The Importance of the City Manager/Police Chief Relationship

- Problem-solving partnerships between the Police Chief and City Manager are critical to success

Questions:

1. Why is the CM-Police Chief Relationship unlike any other in municipal government?

2. What are the similarities between the roles of Police Chief and City Manager?

3. What are the differences?

4. What are the hallmarks of a constructive CM-Chief working relationship?

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The Importance of the City Manager/Police Chief Relationship

- There are often two types of dynamics that impede the CM-Police Chief relationship:

  1. CM is too 'hands-off' abdicating responsibilities of oversight

     – Some Managers are not knowledgeable about police procedures and can be intimidated by the language, uniforms, and methods of the police departments

  2. CM is too 'micromanaging' interfering without sufficient knowledge of daily police operations

- The Manager needs close communication with the Chief and to have full confidence in the Chief's abilities, integrity, and commitment to the whole of the community and organization

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Ensuring Effective Law Enforcement in Your Community

- Managers and Police Chiefs must share similar visions and values for their police departments. Building trust BEFORE a crisis unfolds is critically important.

- These two highest ranking executives must understand each other's perspectives and support one another. **What does that look like?**

  – Acknowledge and discuss with your communities the challenges you are facing

  – Be transparent and accountable

  – Take steps to reduce bias and improve cultural competency

  – Maintain focus on the importance of collaboration and be visible in the community.

  – Adult and youth police academies, sports teams or "Police Athletic Leagues," Ride-alongs with officers, Police involvement in local school activities, and Police participation in (or Police-led) community events

  – Promote internal diversity and ensure professional growth opportunities

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Enhancing Public Trust with Law Enforcement

Lasting collaborative relationships between local Police and the public are essential

- Reinforce community policing with emphasis on protection, procedural justice, and dignity for all. Foster cooperation, community engagement, and positive non-enforcement activities

- Avoid tactics that stigmatize youth, while supporting youth leadership and life skills training, and provide incentives for officers to involve themselves as role models for youth

- Avoid practices that lead to disparate impacts on segments of the community. Prohibit racial profiling, sexual harassment or misconduct, and quotas or other incentives for arrests, citations, or tickets generating revenue

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Allocating Resources to Your Police Department

Most law enforcement agencies are small with half having fewer than 10 officers and nearly three quarters with fewer than 25 officers

Budgets are tight

Managers and Chiefs should be alert for ways to share resources with other local agencies, especially in training and advocating for state and federal assistance

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Developing Policies

- Clear, comprehensive policies addressing scenarios such as use of force, mass demonstrations, consent before searches, gender identification, performance measures, and collection of data need to be in place and must be reflective of the communities served

- Be open to new technology, but think through policies of use with transparency, accountability, and privacy in mind. Unless policies are worked out in advance that address accountability, transparency, and privacy, technology outstrips policy every time. Body-worn cameras, drones, social media, less-lethal weapons, and facial recognition software are just some of the new technologies that are increasingly common, yet often are not accompanied by standard policies

- Emphasize de-escalation and alternatives to arrest, crisis intervention, use-of-force, interagency collaboration, shared services, and regional training

- Hiring policies and practices must conform with best practices

Responding to Crises

Crisis Communication and Social Media

Question: How can the Police Chief and City Manager communicate effectively during a crisis and present a unified message to the public/media? How do elected officials interact with crisis communication?

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The Importance of Performance Management

- Routinely evaluate the performance of the police department using criteria accepted by the City Manager and Police Chief

- Identify and manage the risks of operating a police department in the present environment of limited municipal resources

- Pay attention to the types of training the police department focuses on:

    - Mental health (internal/external)

    - Use of Force

    - Legal Updates

    - Pursuits

    - Internal Investigations

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Six Ways to Overcome Challenges/Disagreements

1. Regular Communication

   - Reporting. What are your officers doing? How long does it take them?

   - Have the City Manager and Police Chief agreed on how often reports should be prepared and how much detail the reports will include?

2. Defining Expectations

   - City Managers and Police Chiefs understanding and respecting each other's role as defined per charter or statute

   - Agreeing on common goals: public trust, safety, justice, equitable treatment for the entire community. Clearly defined performance assessment to evaluate police department

   - How are members of the department, up to and including the Chief, held accountable?

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Six Ways to Overcome Challenges/Disagreements

3.   Operational Consistency

- Clearly defined written departmental policies and standard operation procedures (SOPs)
- Do department members read and adhere to the policies? How is that process verified or tested?
- Do you enforce policies and SOPs? Do you report on discipline, corrective action, corrective training, and outcomes when violations occur?
- How is consistency among shifts monitored and supported?
- Are discipline reports shared with the City Manager regularly, or only when something blows up?
- How will potential conflicts of interest during discipline or the appeal process be acknowledged and avoided?
- Does the City Manager look at violations and ensure there is training, education, and follow-up, including discipline and possible termination?
- Require department heads to attend the annual conference of another discipline

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Six Ways to Overcome Challenges/Disagreements

4. Preparedness

   - Putting plans and contingencies in place before crises occur

   - Participating in tabletop emergency management exercise and response scenarios

   - Developing, evaluating, reviewing, and updating strategic management for departments–especially police–to get in front of developing issues

5. Cooperation

   - Do the Police Chief and others throughout the department know and build relationships with the fire and EMS, public works, water, code enforcement, and social services departments?

   - Interaction to develop team solutions to problems–utilizing not just police but department heads from other disciplines

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Six Ways to Overcome Challenges/Disagreements

6. Community

   - Require an engagement report from the Chief and department on how they serve and protect the community–not how they occupy

   - Do they walk the neighborhoods and meet the people where they are assigned? Do they attend neighborhood associations? School board meetings? Sports and recreation?

   - Public engagement strategies such as citizen academies or school resource officers.

   - Engage with the faith community. Most clergy are excited to participate, and they can intervene during crisis, especially when there are fatalities, suicides, family issues, or other sensitive events

   - Does your department look like the community?

   - When events occur, does your command and team quickly engage the community or sit back and wait? Do they have connections to the neighborhoods, populations, and leaders in your community? It's too late to develop these connections after an event

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Key Takeaways

Trust and **transparency** are needed for a City Manager and Police Chief to define the scope of the working relationship to create a unified effort to best serve their community. A first step to build trust is understanding. When each side can speak and listen, common ground can be discovered.

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