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THEY ARE NOT YOUR FRIENDS

*WORKING WITH ELECTED
OFFICIALS*

Virginia Government Finance
Officers Fall Conference

September 15-17, 2021

Omni Richmond Hotel

Richmond, VA

Background

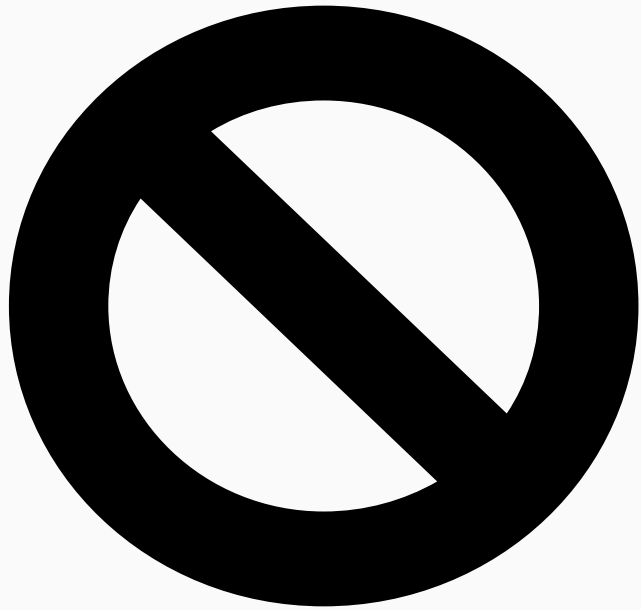


The Invitation



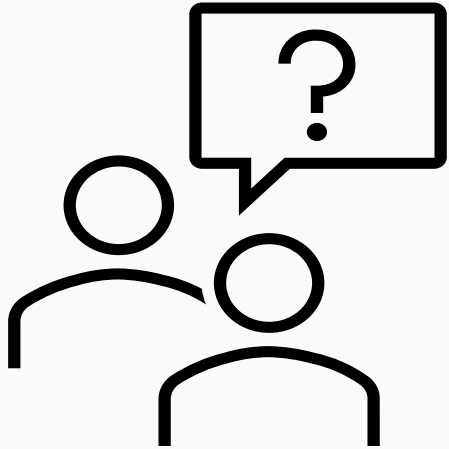
The Short (and very abbreviated) Version

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Never surprise the electeds.

The Short (and very abbreviated) Version



Any Questions?

The Longer Version...My Experience



Worked directly or indirectly for approximately 75 elected officials combined in the City of Los Angeles, Fairfax County, Town of Blacksburg and City of Lynchburg

Some Basics Regarding Working with Elected Officials ...



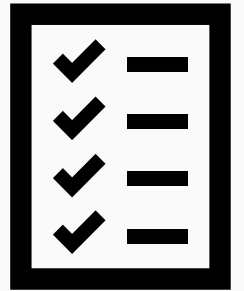
Electeds are like a box of chocolates; you never know who/what you are going to get



Accept the uncertainty of working with electeds; and sharpen your ability to adapt with election cycles

Some Basics Regarding Working with Elected Officials ...

- ★ Respect the electeds; they are chosen to serve in their roles—they are public servants, too
- ★ Be consistent in communications with electeds (or anyone!)
- ★ Look for and understand their motivation



Some Basics Regarding Working with Elected Officials ...

- ★ Understand their communication preferences
- ★ Understand what you can control

Lessons Learned...

- ★ Always remember the role of the elected vs your role as staff
- ★ Remember the electeds typically do not have *all* of the history you may have on a particular topic
- ★ Keep it simple when presenting information to electeds

Lessons Learned...



Some electeds have halos and some have horns; just accept it, it's not you



Always remember, the relationship between the electeds and staff is **professional...THEY ARE NOT YOUR FRIENDS**

Tools for *Working* with Electeds...

- ★ Remember your audience; electeds are frequently working from a political frame of reference
- ★ Anticipate questions from the electeds and include answers in your agenda report (see Resources)
- ★ Cultivate a strong relationship with your town, city or county manager

Tools for *Coping* with Electeds...

- ★ Be patient and trust the process
- ★ Prepare for the worst and hope for the best
- ★ Cultivate professional relationships, not friendships, with electeds
- ★ Remember there is always an election in the future

References and Resources



The Beginners Guide to Working with Elected Officials

by David Street, project manager, Loudoun County, Virginia

<https://icma.org/blog-posts/beginners-guide-working-elected-officials>



Mastering the Art: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing a Quality Staff Report Kindle Edition

by Tamara Letourneau (Author) Format: Kindle Edition

Two

Announcements:

1. Professional Local Government Management in Virginia Needs You!
2. The inaugural Virginia Women's Municipal Leadership Institute is coming soon!

**Comments, Questions,
and Observations ?**