

**City of Dover Council Goal-Setting Workshop  
January 28, 2012**

*Meeting Notes*

**Opening remarks, overview of agenda and meeting orientation**

To begin, the facilitator distributed several handouts to council members, one of which was the following:

*As an elected official, you play a fundamental role in the evolution of the goals, purposes and direction of your community... Your job as an elected official is to put in place policies, programs and facilities that will help make your mission statement come true.*

*... Remember, if each person has his or her own version of the mission statement, it is going to be very difficult to agree on next steps. You and your colleagues must start your administration together; the mission statement is the critical first step.*

*...If you and your fellow elected officials are not making decisions that support the mission statement, your community will never reach its objectives.*

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To further reinforce the workshop's purpose, councilors were also provided with another passage from the same ICMA Elected Officials Handbook:

*Elected officials are also called on to make decisions about more narrow issues raised by constituents... fixing potholes in certain neighborhoods, the protection and replacement of old trees and the problem of minors hanging out in video arcades during school hours. These kinds of little issues can quickly eat up most of your time.*

*However, it is the big issues that deserve most of your time and attention.*

For this workshop, the facilitator suggested the terminology and definitions below to assure that all participants were using commonly-understood terms:

***Goals***

These are *qualitative statements* of what the business intends to accomplish over a period of years. These are "big-picture" items vital to organizational success.

***Objectives***

These consist of short and long-term *quantitative results* that directly support the goals. They should be achievable, related to the key factors for success in the business, and consistent with the goals. Objectives describe specifically *what* we want to happen.

***Tactics***

These encompass a number of separate, but related and reinforcing, steps for accomplishing the selected business goals and objectives. Tactics address the *how* element of the process.

### **Vital Issues Discussion Groups**

To begin the process of identifying the council's primary goals for the next two years, council members were divided into three groups to discuss the following question:

*What do you feel are the most vital issues that this council should address over the next two years?*

Each group then reported back to the whole, listing their identified vital issues. Discussion group results are shown below.

#### Group #1

- More revenue for the city
- Define and identify core deliverables.
- Establish a management framework and best-practices management system.
- Increase community communication.
- Better define our customers (stakeholders) and their needs.
- Improve/expand transportation infrastructure. (roads, inter/intra-city busses, etc.)

#### Group #2

1. Build cohesion with boards and committees.
2. Continue to reduce/reuse/recycle.
3. Realistic, measurable goals
4. Big-picture, including all citizens' needs – affordable
5. Use technology to increase efficiencies and reduce costs.
6. Infrastructure improvement: roads, facilities, maintenance; waiting costs more
7. Build trust within the community for government; focused, concise.
8. Industrial/residential balance; economic development continuance; waterfront development
9. Parking
10. Financial policies
11. More public outreach
12. Regular City Council/School Board interaction and cooperation
13. Regionalization/privatization initiatives
14. Maintain cooperation/interaction with education and other resources.
15. Maintain connection with CC and NH legislature and Strafford County.
16. Benchmark performance vs. other communities.
17. Use media for transparency.
18. Water quality issue in Great Bay
19. Seek grants and alternative revenues.
20. Health welfare safety

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Group #3

- Waterfront
  - › Shovel hit the ground
  - › raise property taxes
- Fiscal responsibility
  - › Balance the budget
  - › Paying off staying in front of the debt service
- Social capital responsibility
  - › concerts
  - › quality of life
  - › discussion: *Bowling Alone* and *Better Together*
  - › Top 100 Places to Live
  - › education
- Background on-line tool
  - › demonstrate over time
  - › Power-Point
  - › communications
- More detailed minutes
  - › communications
- Assign project/issue topic to a councilor
- Councilor-to-councilor
  - › workshops
  - › IT procedures... information retrieval
- Procedural tasks
  - › in-place processes
  - › orientation
- Core values
  - › 5-to-10 years
  - › recognizing who we are
  - › Department... Sewer, Fire, Recreation
  - › Budget
- Review C.M. goals presentation
- Review revenue charges

## **Goals**

With the most vital issues having been identified, councilors next consolidated these issues into four major goals. These goals were not listed in any order of perceived priority or importance.

1. Obtain a financially-and-environmentally-reasonable permit for the W.W.T.P.
2. Increase non-property-tax revenue sources and control expenses.
3. Enhance communication to all stakeholders to engender public trust.
4. Foster economic development.

## **Objectives**

In order to support the four major goals, objectives were then identified for each goal.

### *Goal #1:*

*Obtain a financially-and-environmentally-reasonable permit for the wastewater treatment plant.*

#### Objectives:

- Support and fund the Great Bay Community Coalition.
- Advocate for 8 mg/liter, based on scientific evidence.
- Aggressively utilize all means available to convey the importance of this issue to the public.

### *Goal #2:*

*Increase non-property-tax revenue sources and control expenses.*

#### Objectives:

- Review all existing revenue sources.
- Actively pursue grants.
- Expand efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Identify opportunities for collaborative efforts regarding cost-saving measures with schools.

### *Goal #3:*

*Enhance communication to all stakeholders to engender public trust.*

#### Objectives:

- Advance and promote a management framework and best-practices system.
- Conduct regular "Speak Out" sessions
- Use technology to streamline communication on critical issues.
- Enhance councilor education and knowledge.

### *Goal #4:*

*Foster economic development.*

#### Objectives:

- Support the development of the waterfront.
- Retain existing Dover businesses.
- Improve the industrial/residential balance.
- Support and fund the activities of D.B.I.D.A.
- Improve downtown parking availability

### **Concluding Thoughts**

In the waning moments of the workshop, several concluding suggestions were offered:

- Mayor Trefethen explained that each objective should be accompanied by an “achieved by” date, and that councilors will establish these in the near future.
- It was also suggested that the council consider appointing a council member who will be “responsible for” each objective. That councilor’s role will not necessarily be to do the work of the objective, but will be responsible for assuring that the objective continues to receive attention and that progress is made toward its completion.
- The council was also reminded that progress toward the major goals and their supporting objectives should be reviewed routinely, no less than quarterly, in order to keep these important matters fresh in the minds of councilors.
- As explained in the terminology on the first page of these notes, *objectives* are *what* we want to happen, while *tactics* are the *how*, the specific steps to be implemented in order to achieve the objectives. The purpose of this workshop was not to get down to the tactical level, but these will need to be established in the near future.

Which leads us to one very important final thought to keep in mind as you go forward...

*Your job as an elected official is to put in place policies...*

*In very simple terms, policy making means deciding what you are going to do, not how you are going to do it. Once you have established a policy, it is the job of your chief of staff, the professional administrator or city manager, to administer or execute that policy.*

*There may be times when you have reason to believe that council policies are not being properly administered, and in such cases it is your responsibility to find out if your suspicions are valid. That is part of your oversight role with regard to the administration of policy.*

*But do your checking through the normal chain of command. Sometimes it might seem easier to check things out informally by contacting individual employees of the government whom you know socially. But that can undermine the authority you have delegated to the chief administrator...*

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