

Best Practice

Carver Governance Model

CONTACT

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Project Date: 2004 (ongoing)

THE PRACTICE

Kindersley Town Council adopted Carver Policy Governance in 2005, creating a policy manual that lays out Ends policies, Governance Process policies, Council-CAO Delegation policies, and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Limitations policies. Each month, Council reviews and updates their policies, and receives a written monitoring report from the CAO on all policies except governance. Council then provides feedback to the CAO on the reports, serving as a form of CAO performance monitoring.

THE PROCESS

A local focus group was initiated among some Council members and the business sector in 2004, which discussed how to relate Town Council policy to what was actually happening in the community. A few Town councillors became aware of the Carver model being used by the local Health Board. In 2004, Council engaged Carver facilitator/coach, Caroline Oliver, to facilitate a weekend (2 day) workshop, where they could listen and decide whether to adopt this model. The weekend started with policy development (ENDS Policies) and a working session (other policies). During that weekend, Council discovered that Carver Governance had a

formal process for CAO/Administrator monitoring, which they were seeking. The model had criteria to evaluate the CAO/Administrator through monitoring reports.

A Public Meeting was held to get the public's views on the model. Participants in this public meeting were predominantly business people, who agreed Carver Governance was a good idea for Town Council. Council invited School Board and Health Board representatives and the public to review the chosen Mission Statement and to help develop ENDS policies. This meeting also included a review of the previously developed 2004 Kindersley Community Plan (long and short-term community vision and goals).

Council formally implemented Carver Governance after the 2004 workshop and public meeting/s. A local Carver coach, who had attended the Janice Moore workshop weekend, started to attend, monitor and evaluate Council meetings.

Council revamped its agenda, created an Annual Reporting Agenda (SCHEDULE A) for monitoring reports, and started its own monthly policy review at working sessions, where the local Carver facilitator often assisted.

With the transition to long-term planning and with their policy as compass, Council implemented an annual paving levy and a Tax Incentive Policy for community and economic development. Reviews of administrative performance under the Carver model led to a somewhat difficult two year human resource transition within the Town Administration between 2005 and 2007. CAO monitoring reports were underway, but changes in the CAO position also created gaps in this reporting. Three new councilors were elected in 2006, recognizing the benefits of the Carver model and that the Town Council and Administration were undergoing extensive

“change management”. This change was driven by Council’s commitment to its new way of governing and the Town’s new way of operating.

THE RESULTS

Specific measurable outcomes of this practice include:

- Carver Policy manual developed, reviewed and updated on a regular basis; including an Annual Reporting Agenda for monitoring reports
- Ongoing CAO performance monitoring through monitoring reports
- Annual CAO performance review
- Council Public meetings shortened to 1-2 hours, through focusing on Council-related business: policy, resolutions, and bylaws
- Council retreat/orientation (immediately post-election)
- Development of 5 year strategic plan – 2009-2014
- Increased number of new regional municipal partnership initiatives, including airport, medical clinic, regional infrastructure planning, WaterWest, etc.

LESSONS LEARNED

For Carver governance to be successful, buy-in is required from both Council and Administration. When changes start happening as a result of adopting a formal governance structure, resistance may occur in the organization and community. If major changes are required, Council and the model may be blamed, but Council must remain committed to the long-term overall goal of improving their governance and the Administration which serves the community. Some tough and unpopular decisions may be required.