

February 29, 2016

TO: Council Members, Merced City Council
FROM: Michael Belluomini
REF: City Manager Evaluation Form Changes

This memo explains some of the city manger evaluation form changes I asked to discuss and are on the agenda March 7, 2016. The proposed changes are organized by section of the evaluation form.

I. RELATIONS WITH THE CITY COUNCIL

I recommend adding a new question 'D': Does the City Manager take direction from Council and follow that direction? This is a critical question.

For the council to be effective and responsible to its citizens it only has two city employees it can direct to make changes. This question is very different from the evaluation question regarding whether he accomplished the council goals. He could accomplish a council goal through methods not authorized. A hypothetical example is to offer labor contract settlement terms that are more expensive than authorized by council. He could be slow to provide information the council requests and needs to formulate goals. If the manager does not take or follow direction to provide information then the council is not able to work effectively for its citizens.

III. ORGANIZATION SKILLS

I recommend adding a new question 'F': Does the City Manager function well as the City Clerk? Under the City Charter the city council can appoint and evaluate an independent city clerk. In order to reduce expenses, the city manager has been given the city clerk's position. Acting as clerk to the council can be critical to the council's options and legal exposure. The failure to properly post public notices or to do so in an untimely fashion can constrain the council's effectiveness. When council wants to postpone a decision for two weeks to the next meeting so it can receive more information, but is told it cannot because the funding deadline, contractual deadline or legal limit for council to act on an appeal is within the week, then council options to effectively meet its responsibilities are limited by the preparation of the council agenda. When draft council minutes are presented four months or later after the meeting, it can be difficult for council members to agree on or make progress on what was decided months before.

VII. MANAGEMENT SKILLS

I recommend rewording question 'A' which reads "Does the City Manager have the ability to resolve the conflicts inherent in a public agency?" These words can mean many things and so examples of such inherent conflicts should be listed to ensure council members are considering the same things when doing the evaluation. I do not know what these "inherent conflicts in a public agency" are, but perhaps other council members or staff can list the conflicts or provide a definition.

INSTRUCTIONS ON CALCULATING THE OVERALL RATING

The evaluation procedure instructions direct that each evaluation question be rated between 7 (Exceeded expectations) through 1 (did not meet expectations) for each of the 44 evaluation questions. These scores are then totaled and divided by 44 to achieve an overall score. This procedure gives equal importance mathematically to all 44 questions. Seemingly redundant questions are given exaggerated importance and ought to be considered by council as to whether one of the questions should be eliminated. Redundant questions are VI-A and VI-D, promoting teamwork among managers; and VII-D and VII-E, maintaining enthusiasm in spite of stress.

I recommend staff consolidate questions VI-A and VI-D into one question and questions VII-D and VII-E into one question.

Should question VIII-F receive more importance and points because it references the manager meeting council goals over the year?