



# **Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review**



**City Council Work Session**

January 11, 2022

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review



## 2021-2024 Strategic Plan:

### Outcome

- Improved Board-Staff effectiveness

### Key Outcome Indicator

- % rating good/above
- % aligned with strategic plan

### Target

- >75% rate working relations good or excellent by 2024
- 90% of Board activities align with strategic plan by 2024

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review



## 2021 Board and Commission Survey:

- Conducted November 2021
- 35 responses (~26% of board/commission members)
- 7 open-ended questions
  - **Question 1:** In what ways is your board/commission working well?
  - **Question 2:** What are its strengths and successes?
  - **Question 3:** In what ways is your commission not working well?
  - **Question 4:** What are opportunities for improvement?
  - **Question 5:** What specific suggestions do you have to improve the functioning of your Board/Commission?
  - **Question 6:** Do you have any ideas about how to keep the City Council informed of the work of your board or commission? If so, please share those here.
  - **Question 7:** Please use the space below to share any other comments, and any information and/or issues you feel would be helpful to include in the future training of our Advisory Groups.

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review

## 2021 Board and Commission Survey Themes:

**Question 1:** In what ways is your board/commission working well?

**Question 2:** What are its strengths and successes?



# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review

## 2021 Board and Commission Survey Themes:

**Question 3:** In what ways is your board/commission not working well?



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## 2021 Board and Commission Survey Themes:

**Question 4:** What are opportunities for improvement?

**Question 5:** What specific suggestions do you have to improve the functioning of your Board/Commission?

**Question 6:** Do you have any ideas about how to keep the City Council informed of the work of your board or commission? If so, please share those here.

**Question 7:** Please use the space below to share any other comments, and any information and/or issues you feel would be helpful to include in the future training of our Advisory Groups



# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review

## Staff Feedback:

### Strengths & Successes

Engaged, knowledgeable members who care about the subject

Eager to complete work and move projects forward

Respectful debate

### Weaknesses

Distrust and disrespect towards staff

Lack of clarity of overall role of board or commission in context to larger City work

Lack of diversity in board and commission membership

### Opportunities for Improvement

Diversifying membership

More open and respectful communication

Increase awareness of board and commission work and information already available for review.

Continued/increased reliance on Administrator's Memo

Continued/increased Council representation on boards and commissions

\*5 responses (~38% of staff representatives)

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review



## Focuses of Review:



**Bylaws/  
Ordinances**

**Training/  
Guidance**

**Collaboration**



# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review



## Comparison Work to Date:

- Reviewed/compared Northfield boards and commissions
  - Bylaws and other documents/ordinances/resolutions/City Codes
  - Processes (formal and informal)
  - What necessary information or guidelines are currently missing
- Reviewed boards and commissions in comparable cities
  - What boards and commissions they have
  - Boards and commissions comparable to those in Northfield
- More in-depth review of comparable cities with similar boards and commissions to Northfield
  - Their bylaw format/content and what reference documents they use
  - Other processes they have that could be implemented in Northfield

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review



## Examples of What Other Cities Have Implemented:

- Standardized City board and commission bylaws
  - [Edina Bylaws](#)
- Training and guidelines for boards and commissions
  - [Rochester Board and Commission Online Training Course](#)
  - [Stillwater Board and Commission Training PowerPoint](#) and [Handbook](#)
  - [Fergus Falls Advisory Board/Commission Training and Orientation Manual](#)
  - [Eagan New Commissioner Orientation Packet](#)
  - [Hastings Rules of Procedure and Decorum](#)
- Formalized processes to align Council and boards/commissions
  - [Edina Work Plans](#)
- Board and Commission Recruitment Process Additions
  - [Faribault Board/Commission Brochure and Open House](#)

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review



## Overview of Current Processes:

### Bylaws/Ordinances:

- Inconsistent across boards and commissions in formatting and content
- Need to be updated to reflect new or updated processes
- Discrepancies over who has final approval of bylaw creation and edits
- Information in bylaws possibly contradicts enabling documents/legislation.

### Training/Guidance:

- Orientation and onboarding for current and new board and commission members is challenging due to the above referenced inconsistencies.
- Some processes, such as respectful workplace, are included in employee guidelines but not board/commission specific documentation.

### Collaboration:

- Not always direct links between board and commission work and the City Council's strategic goals and initiatives

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review



## Benefits to Improving Current Processes:

### Bylaws/Ordinances:

- Standardization makes it easier to locate relevant information
- Uniformity of information makes it easier for staff to give direction and guidance
- Remedy current gaps in bylaws

### Training/Guidance:

- Onboarding/orientation for board and commission members will more efficient with increased standardization
- Ability to create documents to fit gaps in current process

### Collaboration:

- Cohesive link between City Council & boards/commissions work
- Increased collaboration between boards and commissions

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review

## Suggested Revisions and Updates:

### Bylaws/ Ordinances

- Edit to follow consistent format across City.
- Standardize portions for greater uniformity.
- Identify and respond to any informational gaps or inconsistencies.

### Training/ Guidance

- Evaluate current onboarding/training/protocol needs.
- Create/edit and implement documents or presentations to meet needs.

### Collaboration

- Design and implement a process to ensure harmony between City Council and boards/commissions and to ensure board/commission initiatives tie-in to larger City strategic goals and initiatives.

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review



## **In-Process Revisions and Updates:**

- New ex parte communications policy for Council, PC, ZBA, HPC
  - Policy that “shall apply to all members of the City Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Heritage Preservation Commission, and any other City board or commission undertaking quasi-judicial proceedings.”

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review

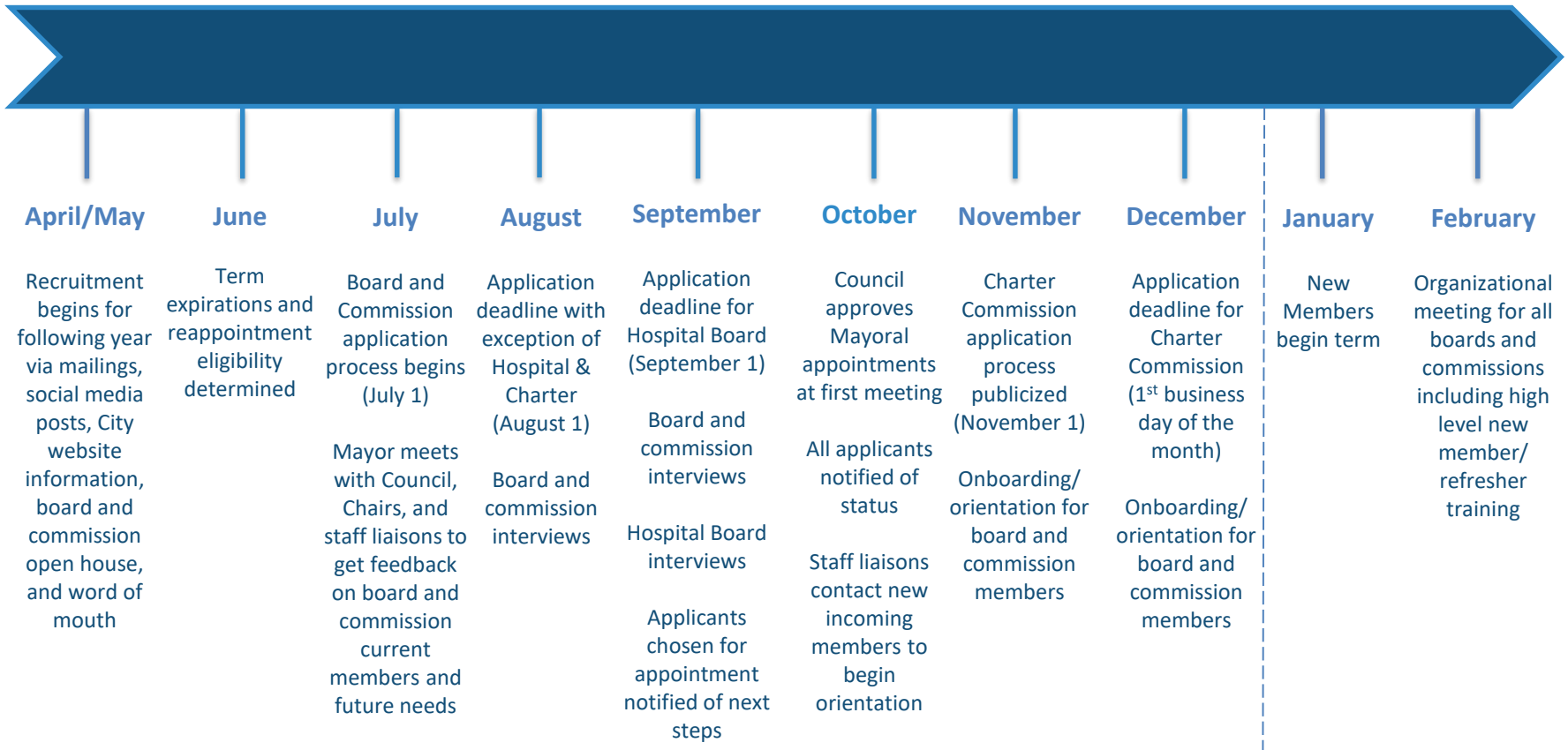


## **In-Process Revisions and Updates:**

- Personnel Policies referencing Council and Volunteers (including Board and Commission Members) to be removed from employee handbook
  - Respectful Workplace
  - Legal Hold
  - Ethical Standards of Conduct
  - Travel and Training Expenses

# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review

## Recruitment, Interview, and Appointment Timeline





# Board & Commission Governance Effectiveness Review

## Next Steps and Proposed Timelines:

| Bylaws/Ordinances               |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Determine Format                | Responsible Party: Staff<br>Expected Deadline: February 2022                            |
| Establish Standardized Sections | Responsible Party: Staff; City Attorney<br>Expected Deadline: March 2022                |
| Edit with Unique Information    | Responsible Party: Board Member; Staff Liaisons<br>Expected Deadline: April 2022        |
| Final Review                    | Responsible Party: Staff; City Attorney<br>Expected Deadline: May 2022                  |
| Final Approval                  | Responsible Party: Staff; Board & Council Approval<br>Expected Deadline: June/July 2022 |
| Implementation                  | Responsible Party: Board Leadership, Staff Liaisons<br>Expected Deadline: July 2022     |

| Training/Guidance       |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Determine Content Needs | Responsible Party: Staff<br>Expected Deadline: May 2022                      |
| Determine Ideal Format  | Responsible Party: Staff<br>Expected Deadline: May 2022                      |
| Create/Edit Documents   | Responsible Party: Staff; City Attorney<br>Expected Deadline: July 2022      |
| Final Review            | Responsible Party: Staff; City Attorney<br>Expected Deadline: September 2022 |
| Implementation          | Responsible Party: Staff<br>Expected Deadline: October 2022                  |

| Collaboration                      |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Determine Scope & Needs            | Responsible Party: Staff<br>Expected Deadline: March 2023               |
| Determine Ideal Format             | Responsible Party: Staff<br>Expected Deadline: March 2023               |
| Obtain Board & Commission Feedback | Responsible Party: Staff<br>Expected Deadline: May 2023                 |
| Final Version of Work Plans        | Responsible Party: Staff; City Attorney<br>Expected Deadline: June 2023 |
| Final Review                       | Responsible Party: Staff; City Attorney<br>Expected Deadline: July 2023 |
| Implementation                     | Responsible Party: Staff<br>Expected Deadline: August 2023              |