

Village of Oak Park Building Effectiveness Governance and Strategic Focus

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"Help is on the way"

BridgeGroup LLC
Management Consultants



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Strategic partner of The Mercer, Group Associates. BridgeGroup LLC was established in 2005, and have offices in Tucson, Arizona and San Diego, California serving clients nationally.

Mike Letcher

More than 35 years of experience in local government and consulting developing and implementing successful strategic plans in three states as a City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Finance Director and as a Consultant. Mike is an Assistant Professor at the University of Arizona's Masters of

Agenda

1. Short History of the Council-Manager Plan
2. Quick overview of history, accomplishments and the Why of the Council Manager Plan Identify potential opportunities for the Board to be more effective based on the High-Performance Board (HPB) Survey results.
3. Review specific Tools that may help improve the Board effectiveness based on the Survey results.
4. Reach consensus on the next steps, if any.



Outcomes

- Review and Discuss High Performance Board Effectiveness Survey
- Review and Discuss Board Governance and Strategic Tools
- Discuss Next Steps



The History of the Council- Manager Plan

A Governance Model Rooted
in the Progressive Movement

Origins in the Progressive Era (1890s–1920s)

- Emerged during a time of political and social reform in the U.S.
- Response to corruption and inefficiency in city governments dominated by political machines
- Progressives sought professional management and nonpartisan administration
- First implemented in Staunton, VA (1908) and Dayton, OH (1913)

Why the Council- Manager System Was Created

- Separate political leadership (elected council) from administrative execution (professional manager)
- Ensure efficiency, accountability, and expertise in municipal operations
- Promote nonpartisan, merit-based local government
- Foster public trust through transparent management



Goals & Community Benefits

- Professional, stable city management insulated from politics
- Better budgeting, planning, and service delivery
- Greater responsiveness to residents' needs
- Long-term community growth and sustainability
- Encourages citizen engagement through clear governance

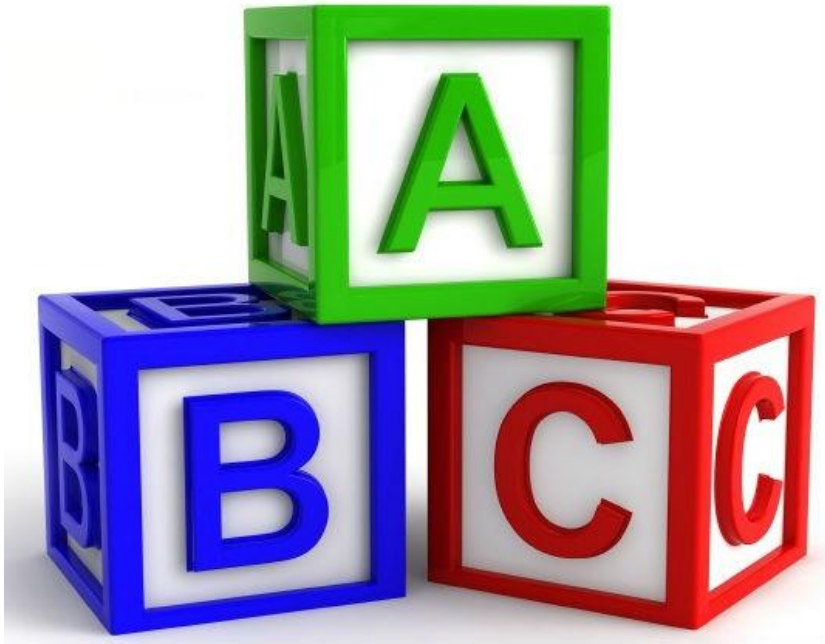
Local Government Plans



A Survey were Used to Get Your
Input

Workshop Planning Surveys

Survey Monkey



Managin g the Horizon





Managing the Horizon



Paradox
of
Routine



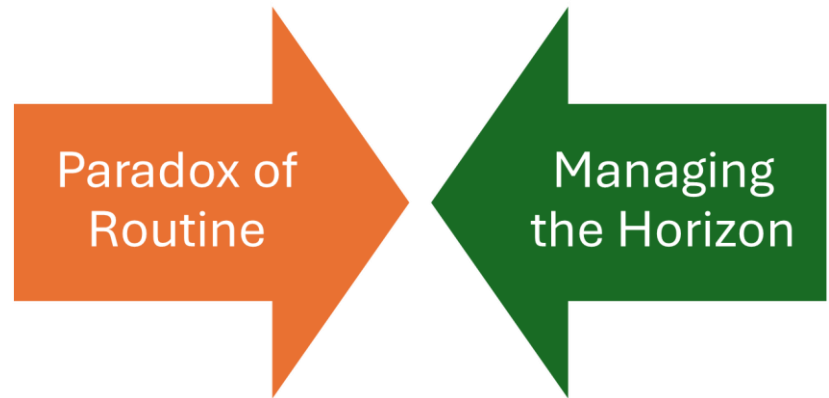
Managing
the
Horizon

Managing the Horizon

The Challenge



Paradox of the Routine



01

02

STARTING THE JOURNEY TO BUILDING A HIGH- PERFORMANCE BOARD

03

04

05

06



HIGH PERFORMANCE BOARDS (HPB)

- HPB Key Factor Matrix: teamwork, expectations, strategic focus and evaluation for assessing a Board.
- Purpose: Helps identify areas to focus on the Board's performance.



HIGH PERFORMANCE BOARDS (HPB)

Teamwork

The Board works together effectively and addresses any issues that impede collaboration.



HIGH PERFORMANCE BOARDS (HPB)

*Expectations for Executive
Leadership, Operations, and
Board Support*

The Board has identified key day-to-day and leadership expectations for the manager and how they will support the manager.



HIGH PERFORMANCE BOARDS (HPB)

Strategic Focus

The Board, in collaboration with the manager, has developed a strategic plan. More importantly, they follow the plan as intended.



HIGH PERFORMANCE BOARDS (HPB)

Evaluation of Board and Executive Effectiveness and Results

The Board annually evaluates its HPB efforts and, if necessary, makes adjustments to improve its governance.



Board Effective ness Survey Results



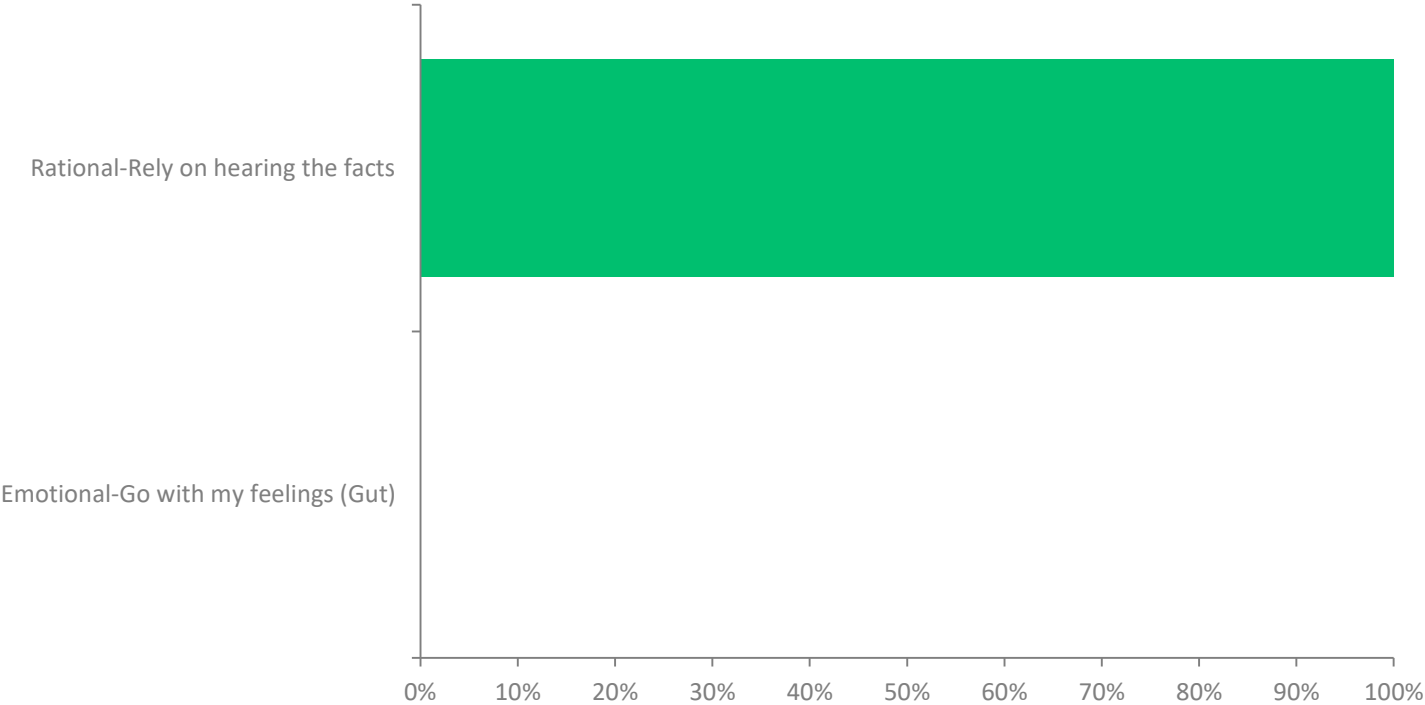
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Board Operations

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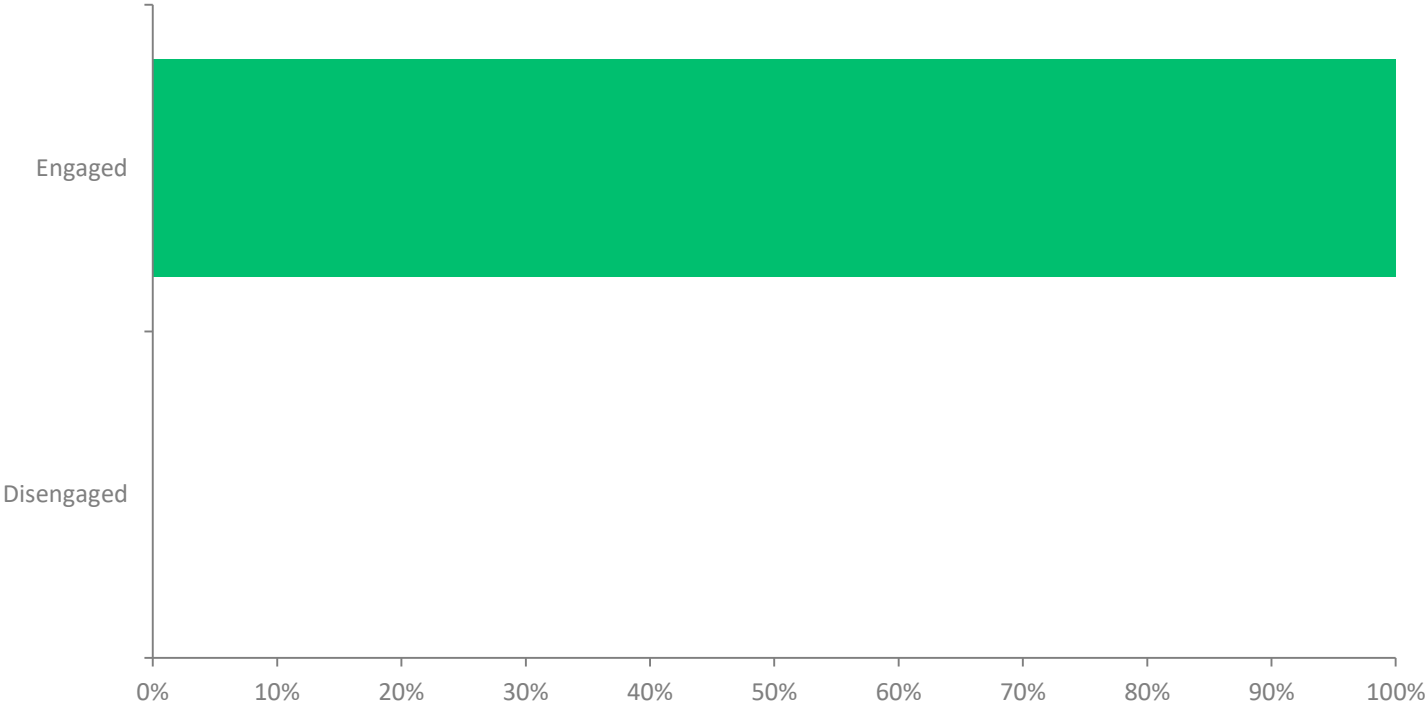
Q1: What do you rely on in making decisions as a Board Member?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



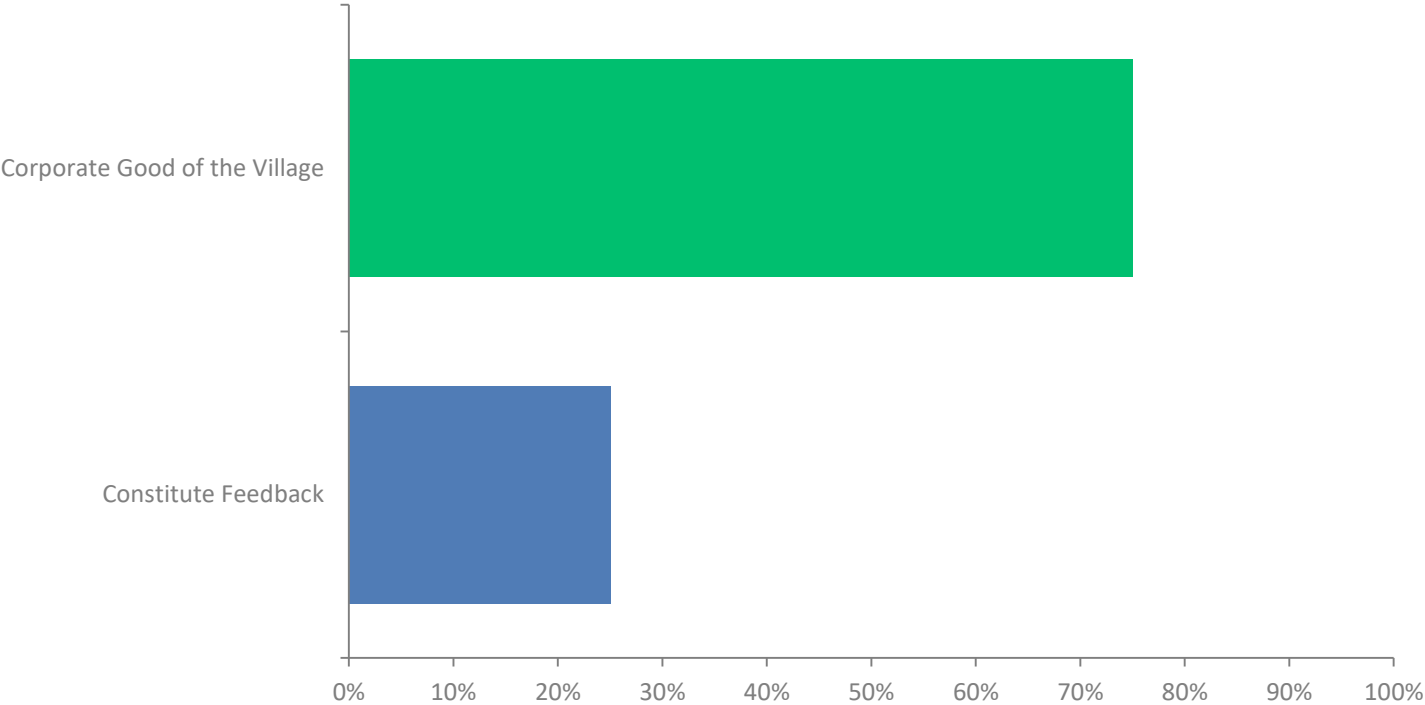
Q2: Are you engaged or disengaged during meetings on critical issues?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



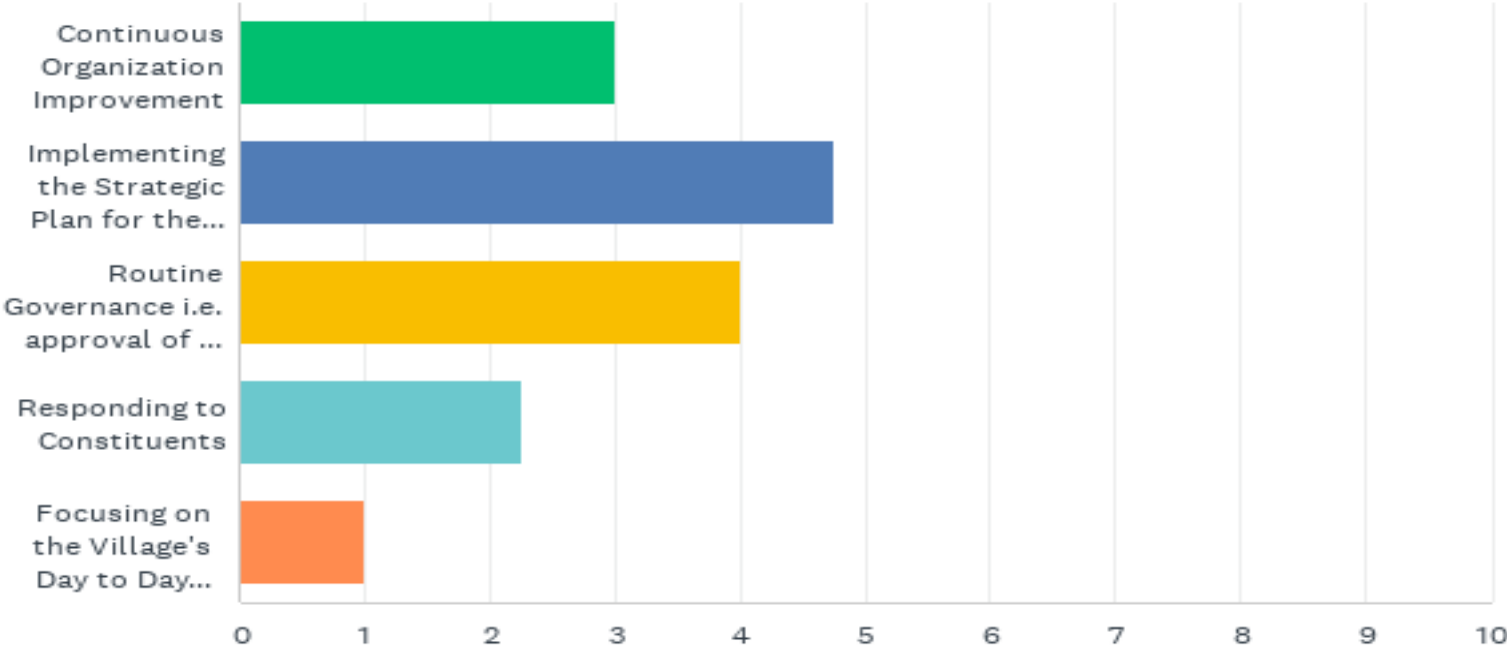
Q3: Does the corporate good of the Village or constituent feedback drive your decision making?

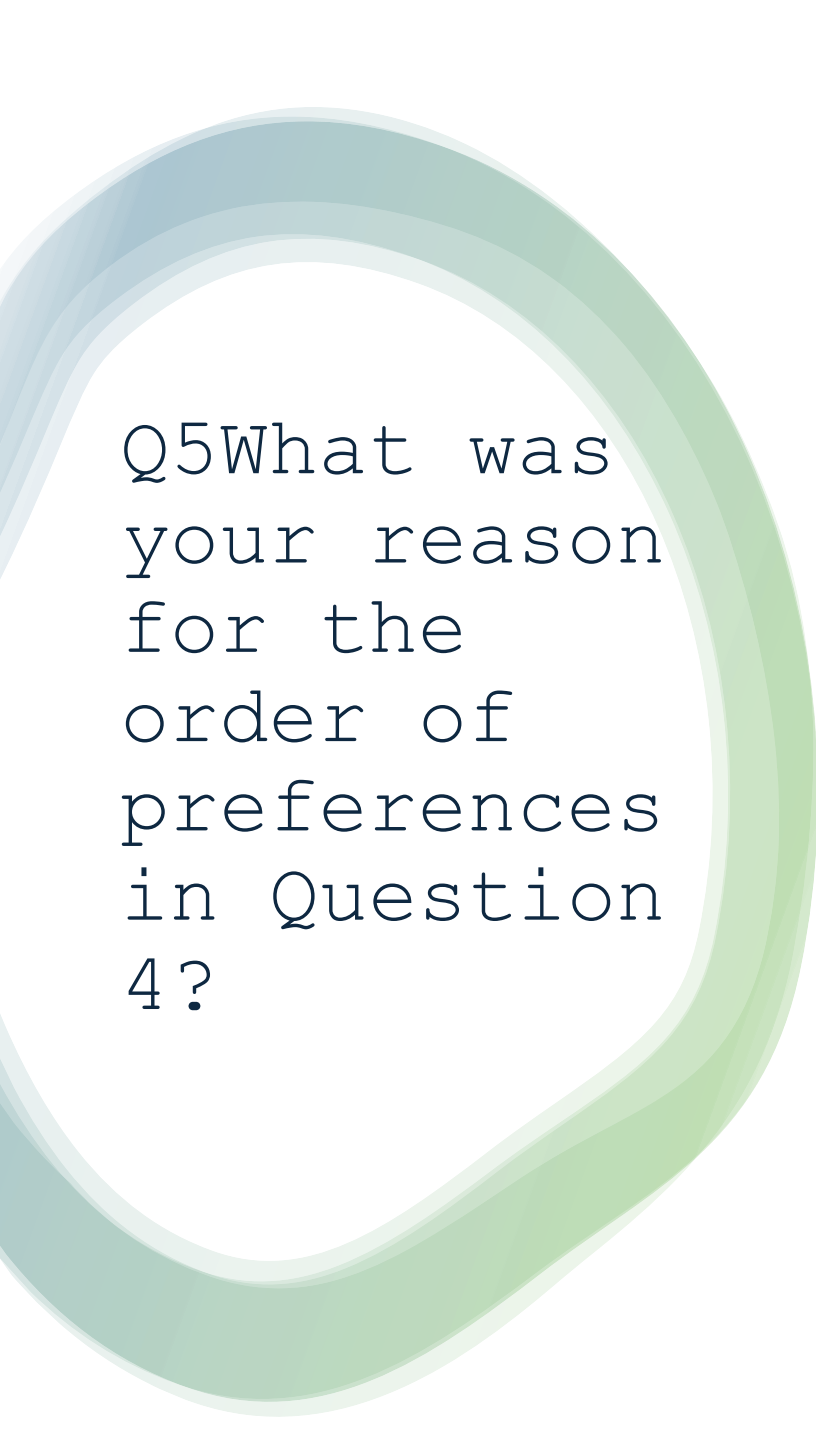
Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



Q4: What should be the major focus of the Board. Please rank the following 1-5 based on your preference.

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0





Q5What was
your reason
for the
order of
preferences
in Question
4?

- Professional staff should manage day-to-day operations and constituent concerns, while the board focuses on long-term vision and direction.
- The board's role is to listen to community priorities and shape a thriving future for Oak Park.
- As the legislative branch, the board must lead strategic visioning while ensuring routine tasks are handled and processes improved.
- Board goals, alignment of vision with the budget, and active listening to constituents, commissions, and staff are seen as key responsibilities.
- Some view responding to constituents as important but secondary compared to core duties like governance, vision, and accountability.

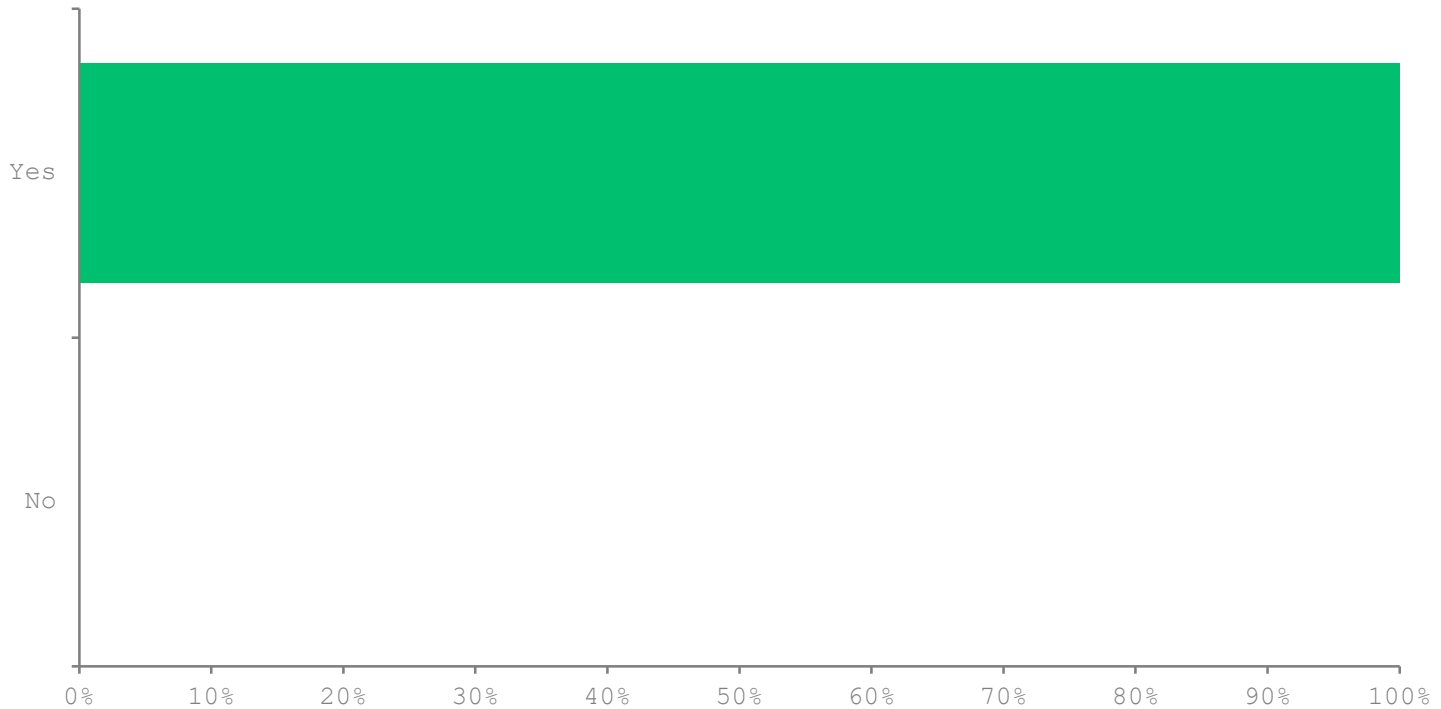
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Board Teamwork

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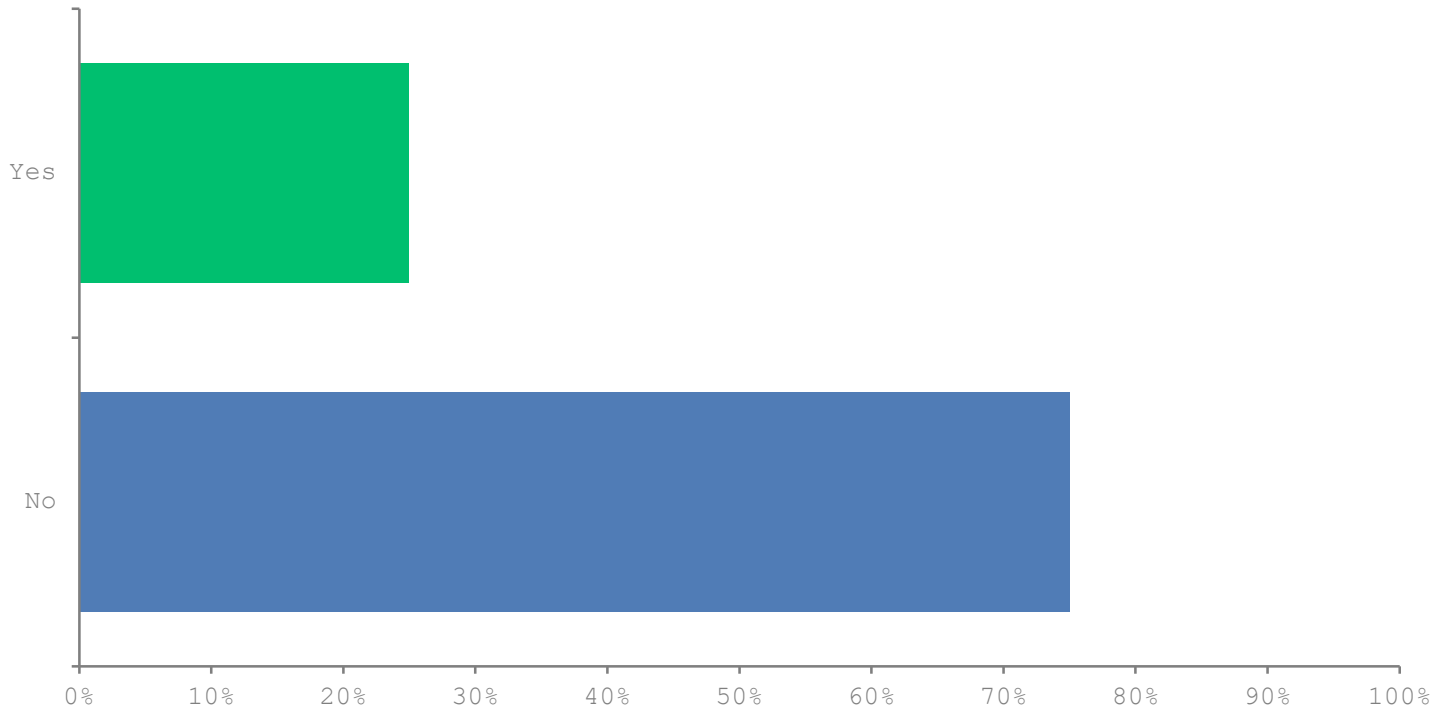
Q6: Are you comfortable with voicing your concerns or opinions in Board discussion?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



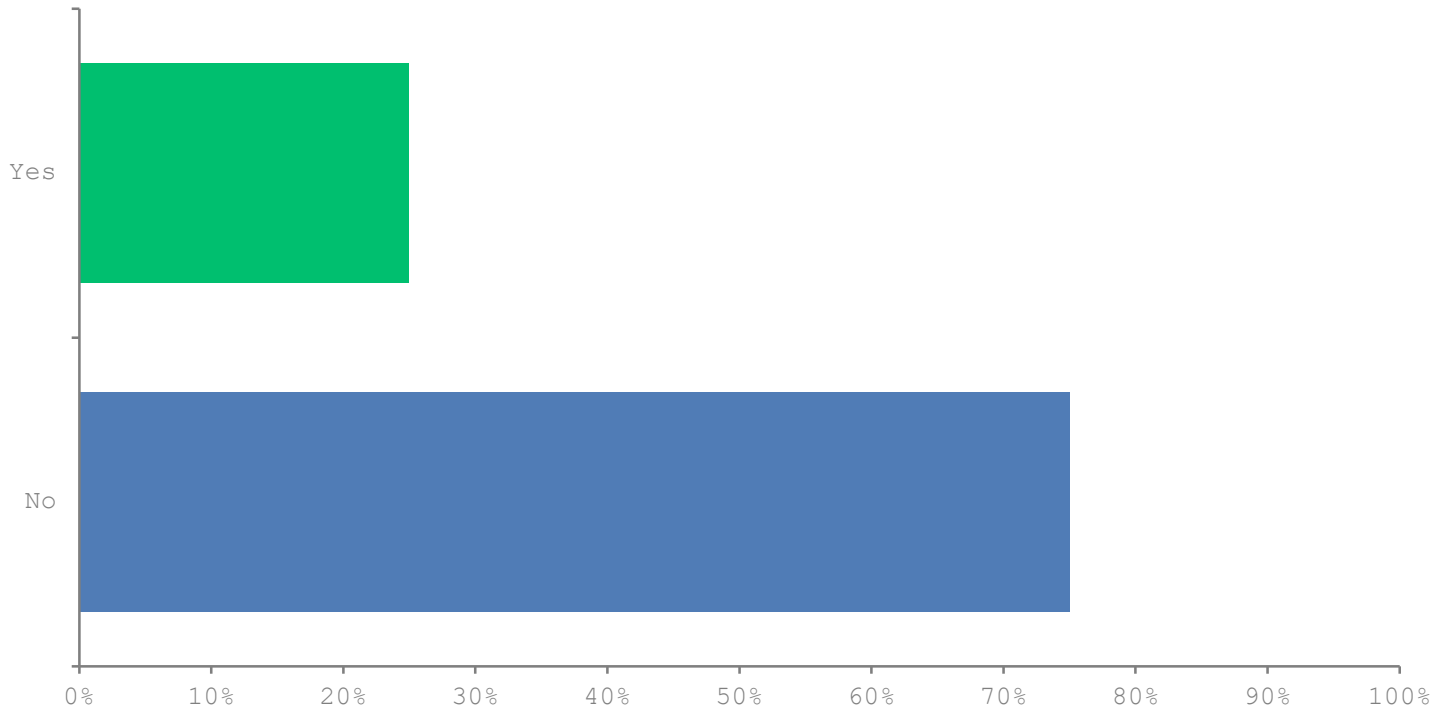
Q7: Do you feel there is trust among Board members?

• Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



Q8: Do you think the Board avoids conflict instead of addressing it directly?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0

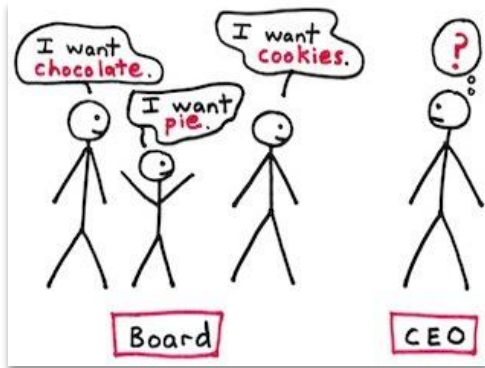




Some
Tools
Board

Effective
ness





Multiple or Changing
Directions

WHY IS STRATEGIC PLANNING IMPORTANT?



Balance



Doing and Achieving?

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN?



Dreaming and Hoping?

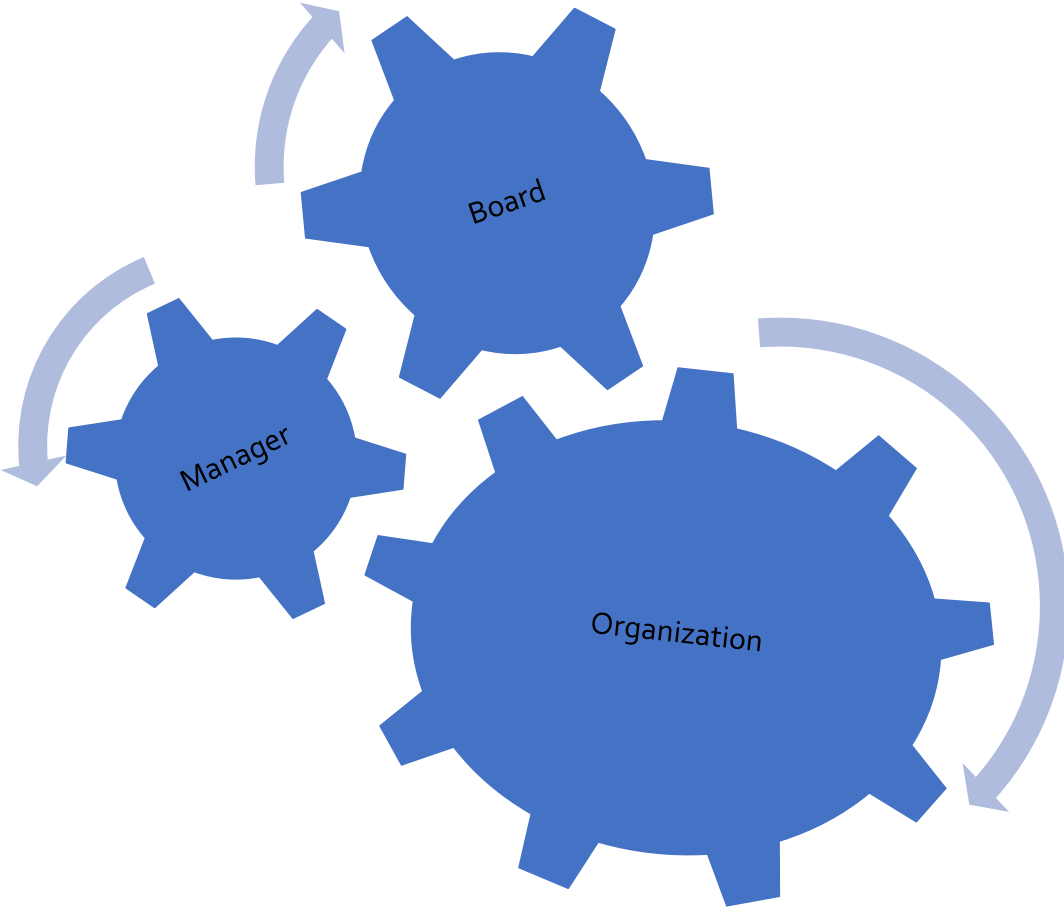
STRATEGIC FOCUS

- Provides Organizational Priorities based on Purpose, Function, Process and Structure
- Prevents Distractions
- Drives Policy
- Community Priorities are the Foundation

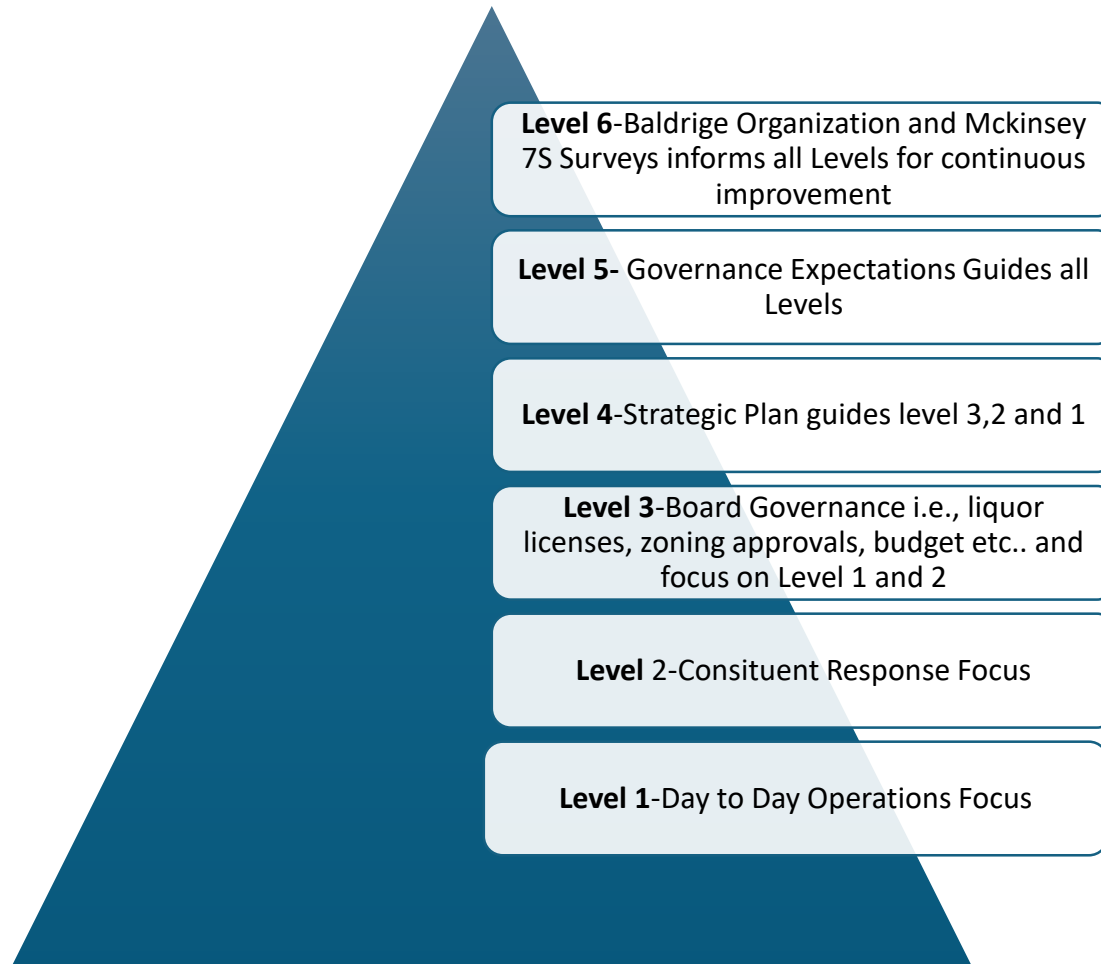


INTEGRATION IS THE KEY



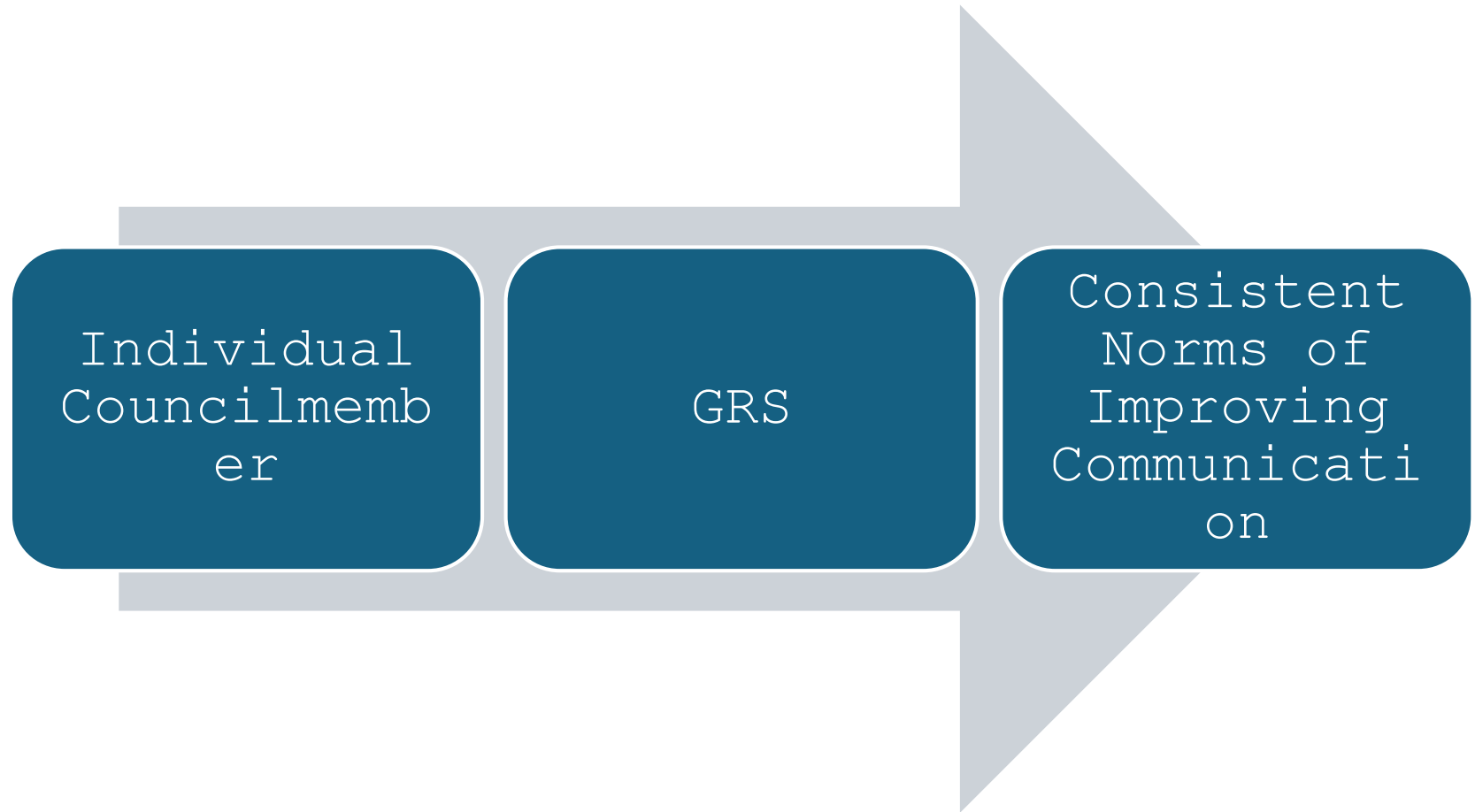


Shared
Expectations

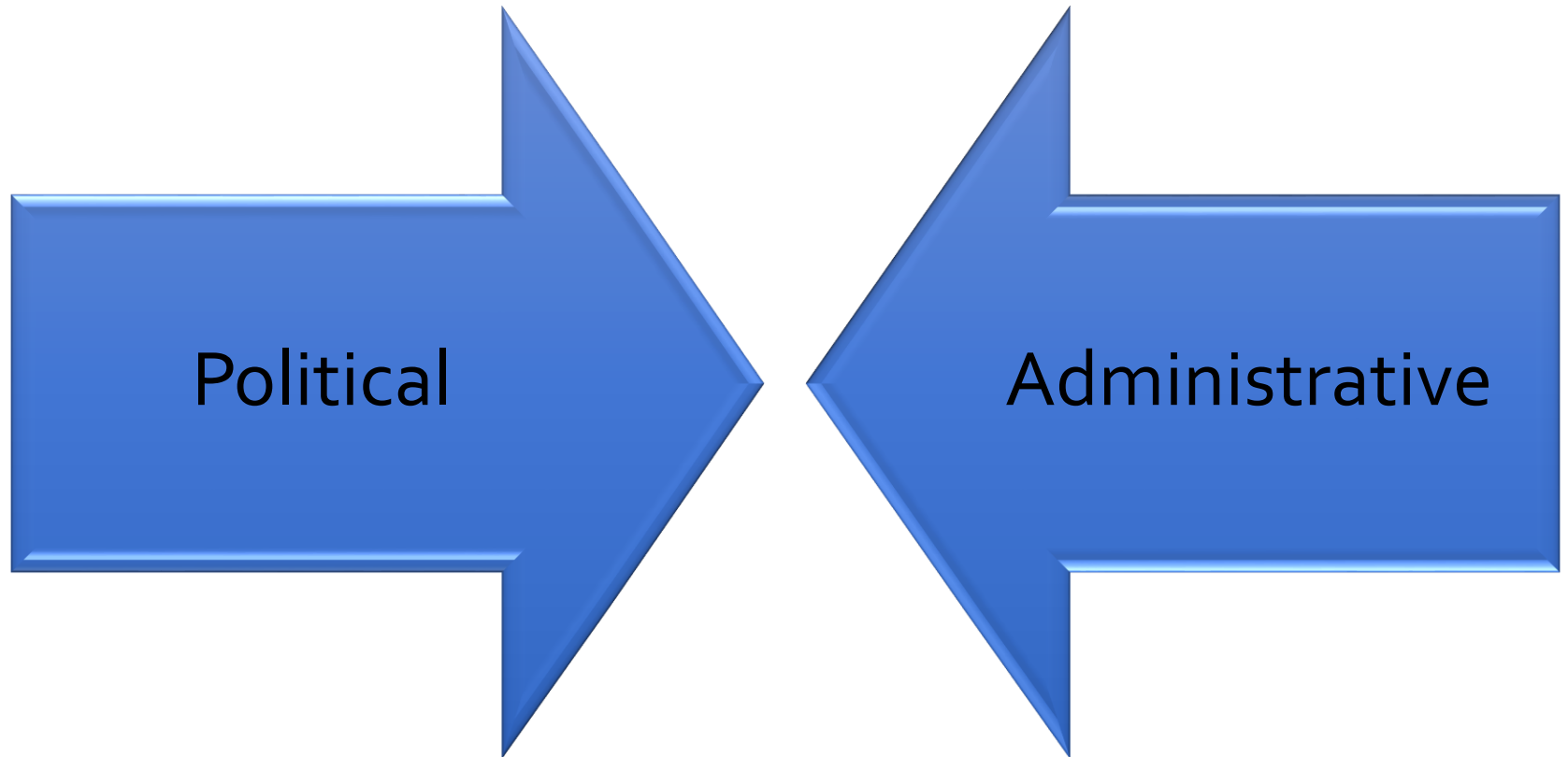


Level 6 Governance-
<https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/insight-guide-your-council-out-weeds?zs=9hdsb1&z1=8nKp7>

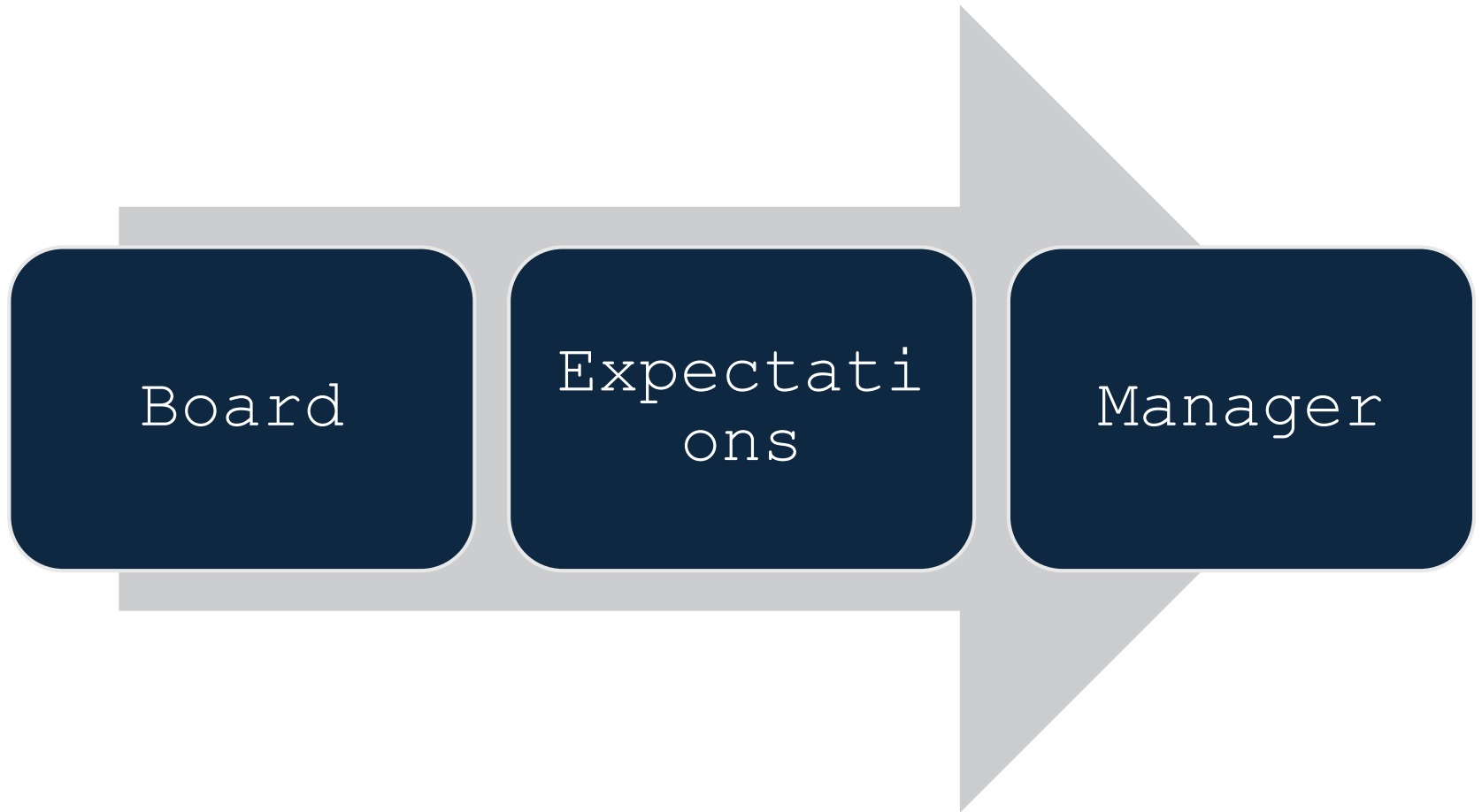
Governance Relations System (GRS)



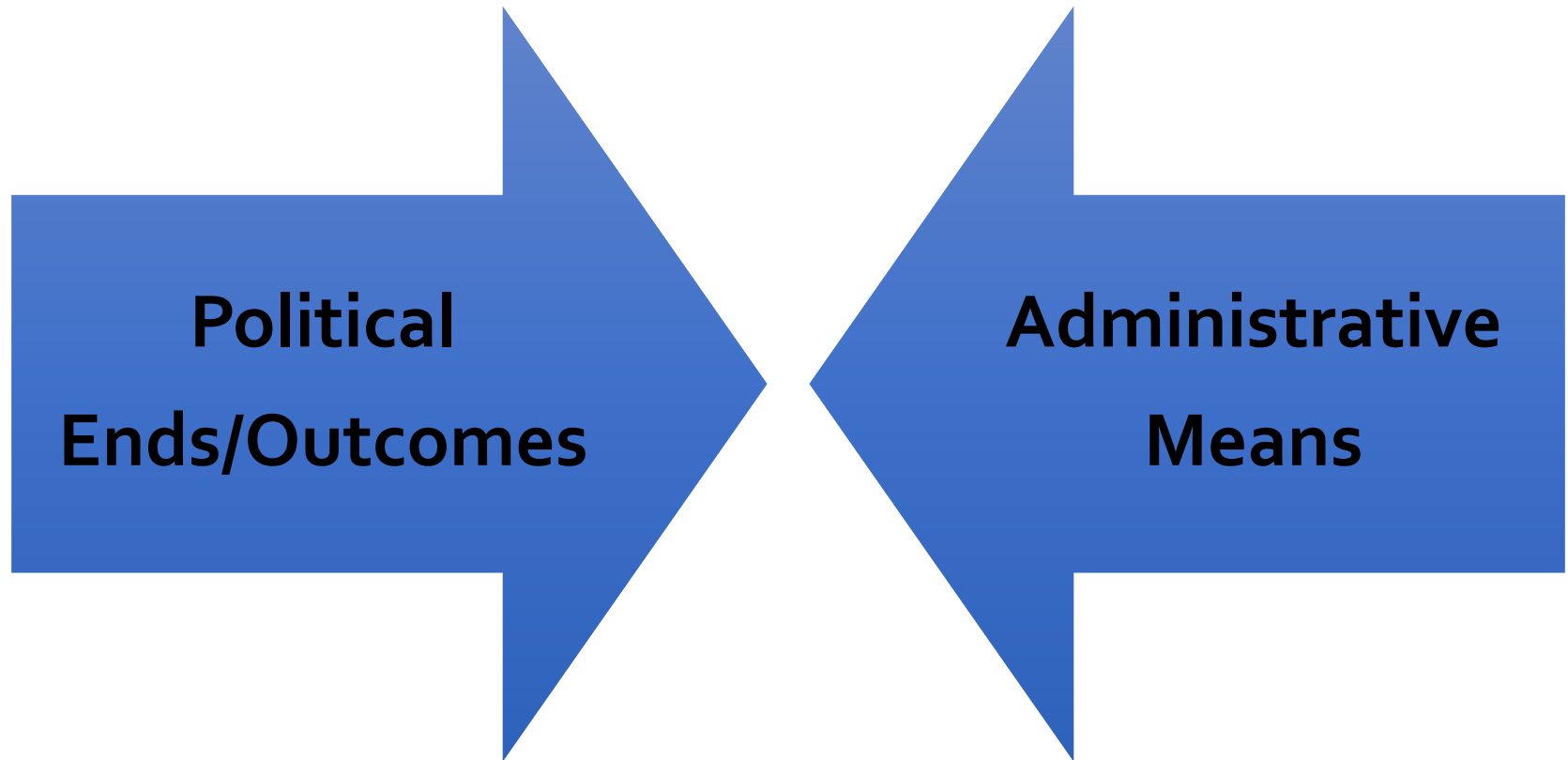
The Challenge



How to Address the Challenge



These seemingly opposite
objectives can coexist



WHY THE GRS?



How can a Board work effectively with each other AND the Manager without having expectations for themselves and the organization?

Are the political and management expectations for your Village consistent with one another?

GOALS OF THE GRS



Clearly defines governance and organizational expectations

Improves organizational culture and performance

Benchmarks improvements through annual or bi-annual surveys or evaluation

ORGANIZATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

- Executive Management Team is committed to the developing and empowering employees
- Focus on developing a learning organization
- Continuously improve internal processes and procedures



MANAGER EXPECTATIONS

- Any written information provided to one Board Member will be provided to all members
- Plan ahead, anticipate needs, and recognize potential problems
- Ensure attention to detail to avoid errors or things “slipping through the cracks”



BOARD EXPECTATIONS

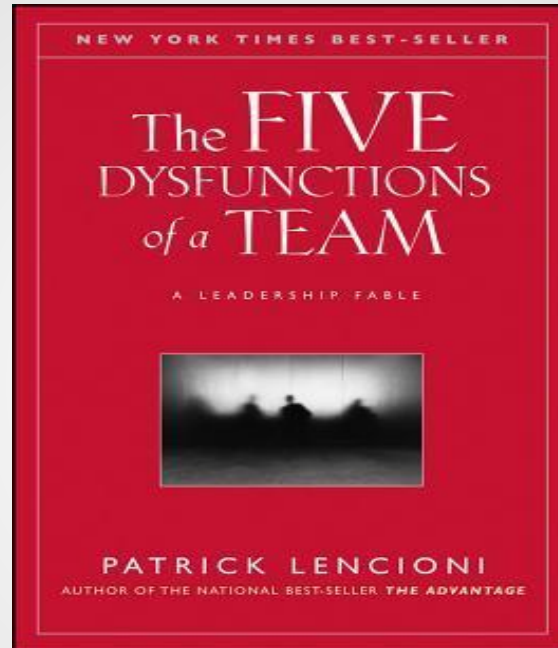
- Focus on outcomes and not positions
- No operational interference
- Disagree with the vote, but do not undermine the will of the Board
- Do your homework
- No public criticism of staff at meetings



CUSTOMER SERVICE AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

- Civic Engagement
- Educate citizens on services
- Timely responses





Creating Board Teamwork

Interdependent





Interdepen
dent

Five Dysfunctions





WIRE

WIRED



Why do it?

Staff needs to answer the "Why"



What are the Issues and Information?

Board members need to express their issues and need for Information.



Do the Responses address my Issues and Information needs?

Staff needs to respond to the Board on their issues and need for information. Board members need to indicate why it is or is not enough for them to vote.



What are my Expectations for Executing this issue?

Staff needs to address any concerns with execution.





Board Meeting Discussion Framework



1. Statement: Support or Non-Support of the Issue

- **Purpose:** The statement from a Board member should clearly articulate their position on the issue (support or non-support).

2. Understanding the Issue

- **Purpose:** A Board member should aim to fully understand the issue through thoughtful and relevant questions.

3. Clarifying the Issue

- **Purpose:** Board members should aim to clarify specific aspects of the issue that may be ambiguous or misunderstood.