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TO: City Council
FROM: Sam Anselm, Interim City Manager
DATE: 9/19/2014
RE: Weekly Report

Good afternoon, everyone. In lieu of the traditional update, I wanted to take this week's memo and provide a recap of my trip to ICMA's 100th anniversary conference held in Charlotte, NC.

ICMA sessions attended:

- *From fragile to agile: a smarter approach to economic growth and vitality* – the speaker discussed the role that technology can play in community building to help recruit talent and new business.
- *Fiscal health modeling* – this was a demonstration of an online financial tool that cities can use to determine how healthy their budgets are, and allows for users to manipulate the data to make projections on how potential programs or expenditures can be affected by changes. This tool was initially offered to the city for use, for free, immediately after the tornado, and was not used at the time due to the lack of time to use it. However I have confirmed that the offer still stands to let us use the tool for free, so we will be working on this. It will take about a month to fully implement.
- *The risks of crowdsourcing: how to ask for ideas without asking for trouble* – this was an interesting discussion about how to solicit input from residents vs. soliciting ideas from residents, and the potential pitfalls of each. This presentation was based on an online citizen engagement tool called Open Town Hall by Peakdemocracy. We utilized this tool in the previous city I worked for. But our current website allows for a similar conversation with our residents, that we can possibly use to solicit ideas for the next round of CDBG-NDR funding that I emailed you about yesterday.
- *Priority-based budgeting* – This was one of the highlights of the entire conference – the room was packed to hear the presentation from the co-founders of the PBB Center. It hit the high points of the conversation that staff and I had with the PBB folks several weeks ago, but attending the session allowed me to speak with the co-founders in person and get some additional information. I also spoke with other cities who have begun implementing the process and they had nothing but good things to say about it.
- *From red tape to green tape: improving due process in local government organizations* – this session presented preliminary research results on the impact that due

process/disciplinary processes can have on the workforce. The final research report won't be available until March of next year, but there have been some surprising preliminary results that are somewhat counter-intuitive in the world of HR.

- *Becoming a tourism magnet* – this session was presented by Buxton, a well-known firm in the public sector that focuses on retail development in communities by helping them assess their population/demographics to attract new retail opportunities. The focus on tourism is a bit new for them, however, but I didn't really hear anything new that our CVB isn't already doing to promote our city to potential tourists.
- *Mastering multisector leadership* – of all the sessions I attended this was probably the biggest let-down, at least for the first two-thirds of the meeting. The last speaker was from a county in Florida, which came up with some good ways to utilize existing buildings in the county system to allow non-profits to use county facilities to provide public services that the county itself could no longer afford to do as a result of the recession.
- *Public libraries and community building* – following the previous session was one of the better ones I attended, where I had an opportunity to discuss the role of public libraries in community building. In light of our EDA grant, it was a timely discussion and I heard some great ideas that other communities are doing/pursuing that may help in the overall success of our new library.
- *What we share: successful collaborations* – this session dealt mainly with shared services and agreements that cities and counties have entered into, ranging from economic development in North Carolina to communities in England, where one administrator revealed that over 80% of the services they offer are shared with other communities, from parks and recreation to law enforcement, and points in-between. As budgets tighten this may be an opportunity for communities in our area to explore.
- *First-time administrators meeting* – this was a meeting with the executive director of the ICMA as well as several seasoned managers to meet and discuss the challenges that many first- and second-year administrators face.

There were also several other networking opportunities and an exhibition hall where vendors could showcase their wares. I talked with several vendors that could possibly help with selling surplus city equipment, designing/constructing the replacement parking deck at 6th and Virginia, and helping improve our communication systems in our public safety vehicles, among others.

In summary, it was a well-attended, and well-presented conference overall. Handouts from most of the sessions are available online and I intend to download those from the sessions I was unable to attend, yet had an interest in doing so. Having Brian there was also helpful because we were able to cover more ground (as he details in his report which follows).

Budget:

Just a reminder about the budget work session on Monday night at Memorial Hall. Dinner will take place at 5 p.m., we'll start at 5:45 and I have scheduled a break at 6:45 to allow interested council members an opportunity to tour Memorial Hall with Director Cotten. One other slight modification is to the seating arrangement - I've asked department heads to join us at the tables instead of sitting in the audience as they have done in the past.

On Tuesday, we'll be back at City Hall in the 5th floor study for the Issues & Options discussion.

Other:

The mayor asked me to provide you with an update on the Halloween event at Dover Hill. The organizer is looking at delaying the opening of the event until the weekend of October 10-11, so her payment to the city would be delayed until October 13th. I don't anticipate any objections to this, but if you have concerns, please let me know.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the conference, thanks for your time spent reading this, and have a great weekend!

From Brian Kelly, Assistant to the City Manager:

Mayor and Council,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to attend the ICMA Conference in Charlotte. I was able to learn a lot and believe that the city will benefit from that knowledge. Below is a summary of things I learned.

- One of the keynote speakers was Dan Heath who wrote “Switch” and “Decisive.” Dan walked us through a four step decision making process that can lead to better decision making. The four step process is called W.R.A.P., which stands for (1) widen your options, (2) reality test your options, (3) attain distance before a decision, (4) prepare to be wrong. In the presentation Dan explained these thoroughly, you may find two of the explanations rather interesting. Gaining distance does not equate to “sleeping on” a decision. Instead there are ways to gain distance by asking yourself simple questions, i.e. “What would I tell my best friend to do?” You prepare to be wrong by setting up “tripwires” in the decision making process. An example would be to say, “We are going try X method of code enforcement for three months, if code enforcement numbers have not increased by at least 5% then we will reevaluate.” Dan gave a couple of other tricks that can be easily applied to help people make better decisions.
- Another speaker was Erica Williams Simons, who is at the forefront of engaging millennials with social media. Erica spoke of the paradigm where millennials want to be active and affect change in their community, yet they do not want to be involved in government, “Because the story of government is negative and does not align with their values.” She suggests that governments look to realign the story of government with the values that millennials want to be a part of. She gave the top five values. The first value is being **purpose driven** - young people want to see results, regardless of who is doing it. The second value is **collaboration** - young people have grown up in a connected world and want to be part of a process and work collaboratively to affect change. Third, young people want government to be **transparent** - anything secretive is bad. Fourth, government needs to be **accessible, available and responsive** - government is there to serve the people and not self-interest. The fifth value is that young people value **change**, and they want government to be open to change. I think it is evident that the values are interconnected. As a millennial, I believe Erica oversimplified her argument, but by following her advice we will increase participation among millennials. She gave some other good examples of how to engage college students with various social media platforms including Google Hangout.
- I did attend several sessions that were geared toward specific issues in Joplin, including innovative public-private partnerships and downtown redevelopment. Through this I became aware of some other communities that we may be able to borrow ideas from.
- The conference was a great opportunity to network. The following is a list of names of people who gave me good ideas on ways to do things better in Joplin. The underlined names are people I met for the first time in Charlotte: Mark Durbin, former City Manager, Kissimmee FL; Troy Brown, City Manager Tracy CA; Greg Burris, City Manager

Springfield MO; Dennis Enslinger, Deputy City Manager, Gaithersburg MD; Ron Fehr, City Manager, Manhattan KS; Scott Neufeld, Budget Director Johnson County KS; Harold Stewart, City Manager Knoxville IA; Zach Walker, Management Analyst Independence MO; Michael Wilkes, City Manager Olathe KS.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like more information on anything above.

Thanks,

Brian