



**Carl Vinson
Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**



**City of Morrow
Mayor and City Retreat Report
July 9, 2022
8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Atlanta Evergreen Marriott Conference Resort
4021 Lakeview Drive, Stone Mountain, Ga 30083**

Retreat Attendees:

John J. Lampl	Mayor
Renee Knight	Mayor Pro Tempore – Council Member-At-Large
Dorothy J. Dean	Council Member-At-Large
Van Tran	Council Member-At-Large
Khoa Vuong	Council Member-At-Large
Jeffery C. Baker	City Manager
Lajuana C. Ransaw	City Attorney
Victor M. Aguilar-Mejia	City Clerk

Joint Agreement/Collaboration between the Mayor, Council, and Staff of the City of Morrow to effectively achieve the goals of the City of Morrow. Items captured here are agreed upon as the efforts necessary for the cohesion between the Mayor, Council, and staff of the City of Morrow.



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**City of Morrow
Retreat Agenda
Atlanta Evergreen Marriott Conference Resort**

Saturday, July 9th, 2022

8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:30 AM	Welcome and Introductions Teach/Learn
8:45 AM	Ground Rules and Communication Agreement
9:00 AM	Ice Breaker Activity
10:30 AM	Values Exercise
10:15 PM	BREAK
10:30 AM	Teamwork is Key
11:30 AM	Team Activity
12:00 PM	LUNCH (on-site)
01:00 PM	Role of Council/Role of Staff
2:00 PM	Let's Talk – "Communication is Key"
2:15 PM	BREAK
2:30 PM	Let's Talk – "Communication is Key" (Cont'd)
3:00 PM	"What Would You Do?"
3:45 PM	Wrap-up, Reflections, and Evaluation
5:00 PM	Adjourn



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The meeting began with a Welcome and Introductions. Proceeded by the Retreat Protocol and Code of Conduct. Retreat activities followed as illustrated below.

Values shared by the Council and Staff

The Values identified are anchored by behaviors that result in a team dynamic which exhibits a commitment to serving the City of Morrow.

- Respect
- Professionalism
- Honest
- Courage
- Leadership
- Integrity
- Growth
- Collaboration
- Trustworthy
- Innovation

Things Important for Optimal Teamwork

- Collaboration*
- Transparency
- Patience*
- Communication****
- Cooperation
- Vision
- Hard Work
- Goals*
- Willingness to Succeed
- Accountability
- Engagement
- Experience
- Passion
- Strengths and Weaknesses (Personal)
- Benchmarks
- Consistency
- Effort

The City of Morrow's Council pledges to foster the actions and interactions of the items indicated to achieve an optimal team. Note: Items asterisked were identified by staff and council more than once.

Team Dysfunction

The Council and staff participated in a Team Dysfunction exercise. The result revealed that most participants believed there was serious dysfunction or some dysfunction. There was only one participant who declared there was no dysfunction. It was also revealed that "Trust" (or



lack thereof), is a major catalyst contributing to the lack of trust among members. In conducting the exercise, the council reviewed the elements which causes team dysfunction and discussed the tools to avoid dysfunction.

Team Dysfunction

- Absence of Trust
- Fear of Conflict
- Lack of Commitment
- Avoidance of Accountability
- Inattention to Results

Actions to Avoid Team Dysfunction

- Focus on the strength of the members (not weaknesses)
- Assign a Devil’s Advocate – weigh the pros and the cons
- Define clear deadlines for decisions and actions
- Accountability matters - Pressure poor performers to improve performance
- Access results and work toward common goals

By identifying the causes of team dysfunction, the council, when using the afore mentioned tools should find synergy in working together as a team.

Things Important for Effective Team Communication

The City of Morrow’s Council also identified the things that are important to effective team communication. The Council pledges to be intentional in taking steps to utilize the tools indicated to effectively carry out the duties of the council and in governing the City of Morrow.

- Timely Scheduled meetings
- Meeting Protocols
- Resolving outstanding issues
- Transparency
- Active Listening
- Solid Take-aways/Next Steps
- Focused Conversations
- Accuracy
- Clarity
- Feedback
- Execution
- Vision
- Good judgment
- Comprehension
- Timeliness
- Level of Importance

Action Item Identified from the Council Retreat (Beginning August 2022)

The City Manager to provide an Agenda Schedule Report to the council at least 10 business days before each board meeting. The Council will return all questions/inquiries to the City Manager no later than Thursday (noon) prior to the scheduled Council Board meeting. The City Manager is to return answers to the Council on Monday prior to the scheduled board meeting.

What	Who	When
Dept Managers forward Agenda Items meeting	Dept. Heads	8 Days prior to board
Agenda Schedule to Council	City Manager	7 Days prior to each board meeting
Questions returned to City Manager	Council	Thursday (noon) before each board meeting



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What	Who	When (cont'd)
City Manager responds to Council	City Manager	Friday afternoon before the board meeting
Response to City Council	City Manager	Monday (noon) prior to the board meeting

Note: All follow up questions must be sent to the City Manager before noon on Friday (before the board meeting)

Facilitator's Final Note:

During the retreat it was revealed that a council member routinely records meetings in and out of local jurisdiction meetings or conferences while in attendance. It is not unusual for public meetings to be recorded given that most government entity meetings when hosted, are public (except during executive sessions). Trainings and conferences are somewhat different, as participants seek to learn, they often share their personal experiences openly. The knowledge of being recorded could impact their level of interaction and engagement resulting in low active participation. If there is a need to record a session, be transparent and inform the participants that a recording is being done. Here's where we have a teachable moment.

Think about this common practice we now engage in... Since the advent of covid-19 many meetings are hosted in Zoom. Do you notice that upon entering the meeting if being recorded, Zoom announces that the meeting is being recorded or it places a note on the screen that the meeting will be recorded? This allows individuals the choice to participate or not to participate. In other words, it takes direct action to alert individuals that the session is being recorded. Why is this important? It is important because Zoom is aware of an individual's right to privacy, since the recording could inadvertently be used by others without permission.

Open dialogue or debate is encouraged to work through challenges or differences in opinions. Active listening, patience and the right to agree to disagree, is the best practice that yields more positive results for working together. Keeping in mind that the vote of the majority, is the vote of the council and all council members must accept the vote of the majority...

Council and Staff Reflections

At the end of the retreat staff and council were asked to share their thoughts on the day's activities. Each council member shared their individual take-aways and the day ended with the completion of the retreat evaluation. The results from the staff and council were positive. Take-aways expressed by the council were to:

Listen actively * Exercise more patience * Choose to be virtuous * Communicate with clarity
Be transparent * Be better prepared * Develop a schedule *



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The City of Morrow's retreat was the coming together of the staff and council to learn best practices for professional development. Thank you for choosing CVIOG. It is our pleasure to serve you.

Suzette Arnold,
CVIOG Facilitator

John J. Lampl II, Mayor

Attest:

Victor Aguilar
City Clerk

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John J. Lampl II", is written over a solid horizontal line.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Victor Aguilar", is written over a solid horizontal line.