

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL WORKSESSION\CITY COUNCIL RETREAT**  
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA  
QUECHAN CASINO RESORT  
525 ALGODONES ROAD, WINTERHAVEN CA 92283  
CONFERENCE ROOM PIPA B  
**March 26, 2024**  
**1:00 p.m.**

Lunch was provided at 12:00 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Mayor Nicholls** called the Special Worksession/Council Retreat to order at 1:00 p.m.

Councilmembers Present:	Knight, Smith, Morris, Shoop, Shelton, and Mayor Nicholls
Councilmembers Absent:	Morales
Staffmembers Present:	Acting City Administrator, Jay Simonton Deputy City Administrator, Jenn Reichelt City Attorney, Richard W. Files City Clerk, Lynda L. Bushong Deputy City Clerk, Janet Pierson Mayor's Chief of Staff, Kathy Moon

The retreat was facilitated by the Raftelis team, and lead by Julia Novak.

**I. WELCOMING COMMENTS**

**II. SETTING THE STAGE**

**Novak** reviewed the March 26<sup>th</sup> agenda and meeting norms and asked that each participant introduce themselves and share their expectation for the day:

- Continue to build upon the great past we have had. Proud of Council and want to build upon it.
- Valuable experience for the staff tomorrow to have clarity from the Council on the strategic plan goals so we can move forward over the next few years.
- Excited to have a more robust strategic plan with more current priorities to tie items to budget.
- Hoping the Council can express what they want from staff and vision to build into strategic outcomes.
- Anxious to see how the process goes and participate.
- Input and direction to staff is so valuable. Seek consensus.
- Don't have expectations, so won't be disappointed. Keep an open mind.
- A more humane way of living and thinking. Continue to be agreeable.
- Build upon and fine tune our overall vision and direction for the City. New ideas for programs, CIPs, committees. Work together to make it happen. Mile markers for achievement.

- Represent the past, present, and future. Set guidelines for the future.
- Important to get guidance and listen to opportunities to reach our goals.



### III. GOVERNING TOGETHER AND COUNCIL-ADMINISTRATOR GOVERNMENT

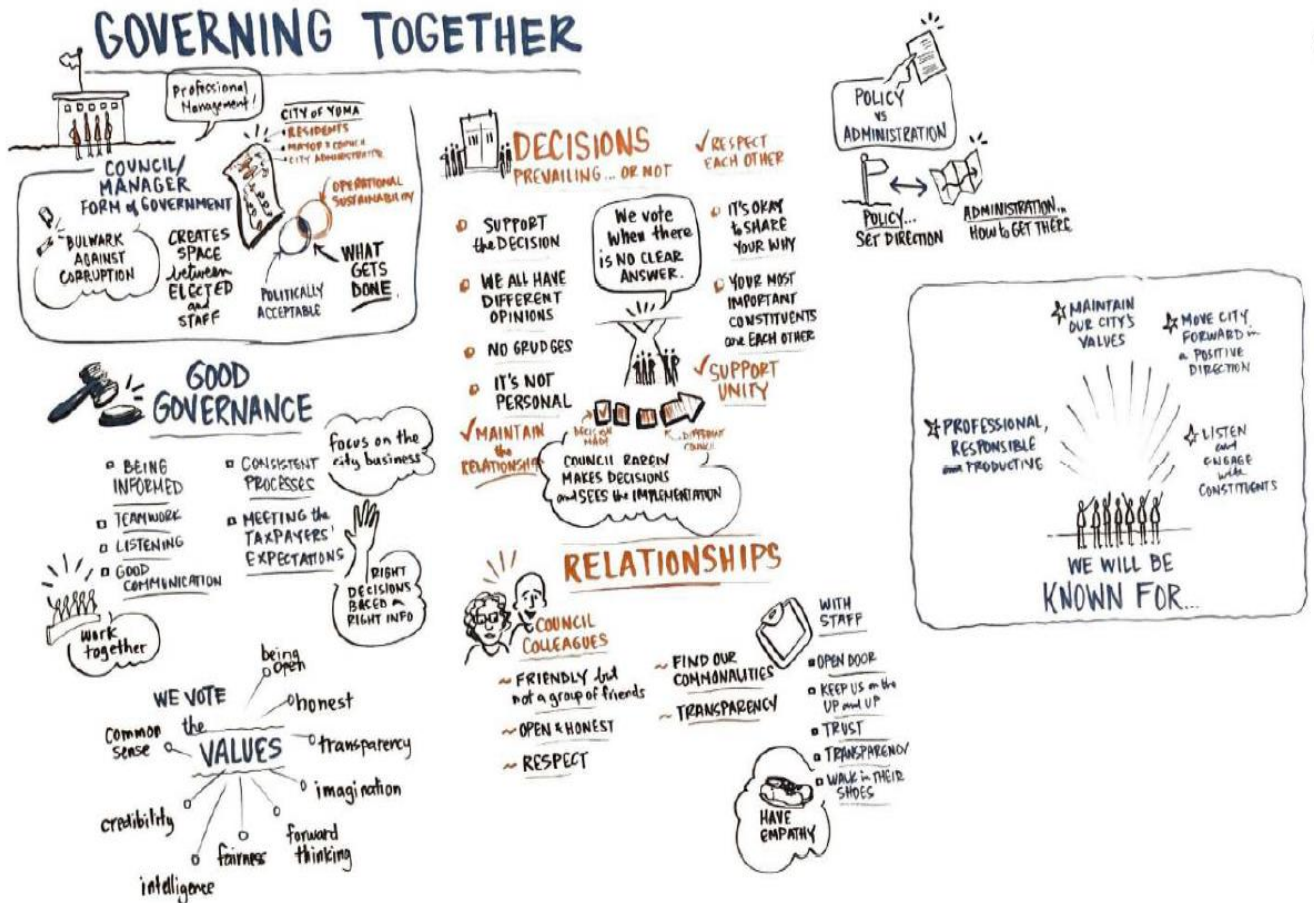
**Novak** shared some thoughts on governance and the Council-Management form of government. City Council then explored a series of questions sharing individual thoughts on what it means to govern well together.

Council members were asked to reflect upon a series of questions as follows:

- What does good governance look like to you?
  - Be informed
  - Consistent processes
  - Non-emotional responses, civility, focused on business
  - Meet the expectation of the taxpayers; representative role
  - Listen to both sides and go with the decision that feels like the right path
  - Good communication, teamwork

- Teamwork, work together listening
- Respectful
  
- What values are important to you in governing?
  - Honesty
  - Transparency
  - Think outside the box
  - Imagination
  - Forward-thinking
  - Fairness
  - Intelligence
  - Be open
  - Credibility
  - Common sense
  
- What is important to remember when your position is the prevailing decision, and what is important to remember when your position is not the prevailing decision?
  - In either scenario, majority decision carries through, it is important to support Council decision as a body
  - Understand that everyone has different opinions
  - Do not hold a grudge; leave it at the door for the next discussion; move on
  - It is not personal
  - Support the decision of the majority even if you are in the minority (the City as a body has made a decision)
  - Have a united front in public; do not badmouth the other side
  - Have intellectual discussions when there is a “no” vote; support unity
  - Answer, “What is best for the City?”
  - Maintenance of relationships is important to the long-term
  - Treat each other with respect, keep focus centered on the people of Yuma
  
- How do you distinguish between the roles of policy (Council) and administration (Acting City Administrator and staff)?
  - Board of Directors and CEO relationship, Council sets the idea and Administrator executes on it.
  - Management of the organization is by one person rather than seven. Otherwise, you have fiefdoms/chaos and disorder.
  - Council sets direction, Administrator carries it out
  - Staff are the experts; rely on their recommendations
  
- What kind of relationship do you hope to have with Council colleagues and with the Acting City Administrator and staff?
  - Friendly, but not group of friends
  - Gray area: expectations of serving on Boards and Commissions
  - Respect
  - Find areas of commonality

- Communication, keep informed
- Open door policy
- Transparency
- Empathy and understanding, “walk a mile in their shoes”
- What do you hope this governing body will be known for?
  - Professionalism
  - Responsible
  - Productive
  - Maintain the value our City if known for
  - Listening to the constituency
  - Positive direction
  - Outreach to the people



#### IV. THE IDEAL COUNCIL MEMBER

Member of the City Council considered how different groups (the public, the staff, and your City Council colleagues) might describe and “ideal” member of the City Council:

- The Public
  - Honesty
  - Representing the best interest of the public
  - Accessibility – be present in the community, interact
  - Be informed
  - Acknowledge their issue or problem, but that they are representative of the whole
  
- City staff
  - Council values staff
  - We are on the same team
  - We are approachable
  - Support them in their job – equipment, resources, have their back
  - Seek feedback from staff
  - Mutual respect
  - Clear direction
  - Consensus, stability, collaboration
  - Display same behavior on and off the dais
  
- Council Colleagues
  - Common sense
  - Respect
  - Communication
  - Support one another
  - Do your job – demonstrate partnership, move the City forward, stay on task
  - Preparedness for meetings – read the agenda and ask questions that weren’t already answered in the packet
  - Attend board and committee meetings
  - Don’t stab others in the back or undercut the efforts of the City of Yuma



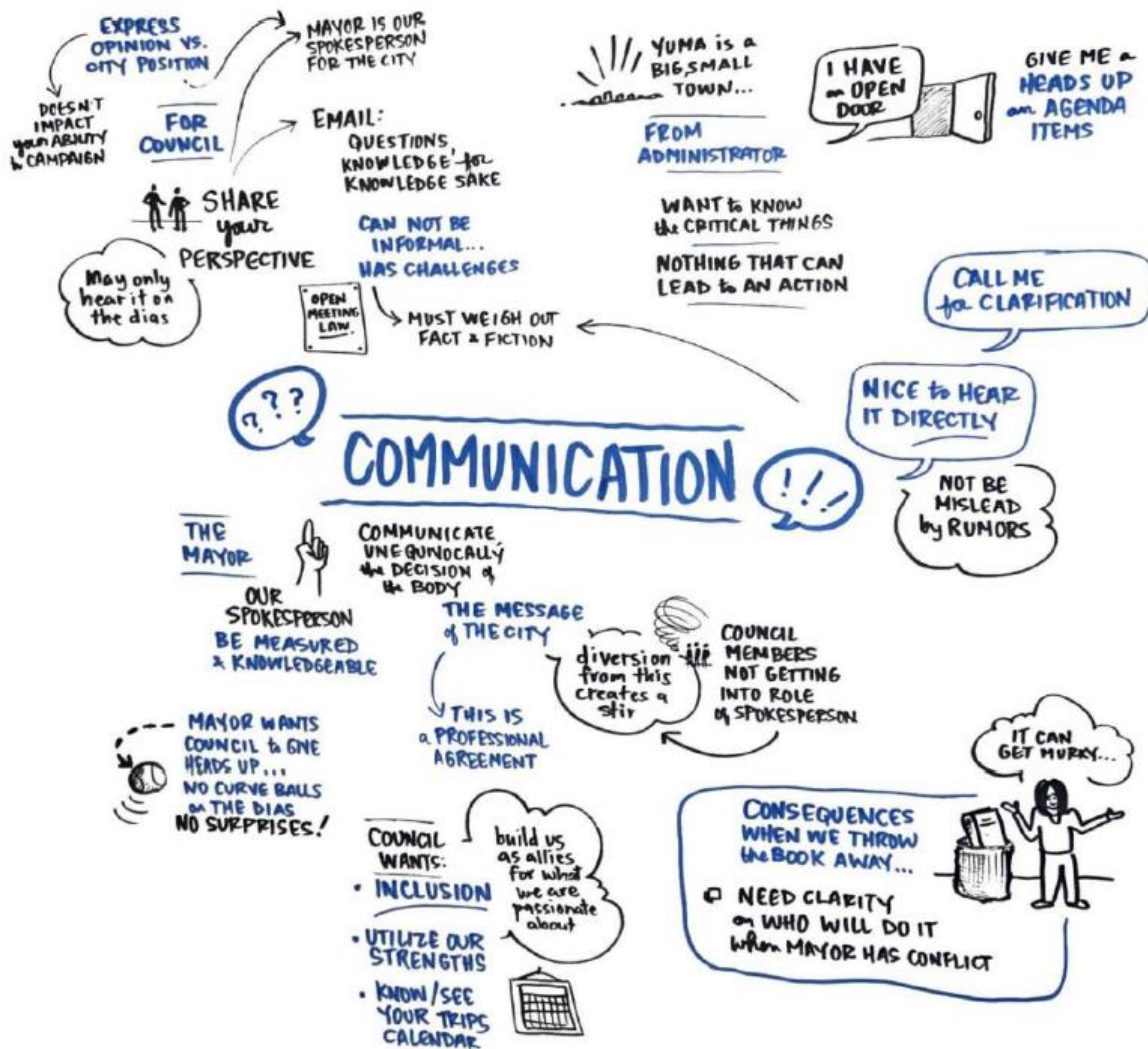
## V. EXPECTATIONS

Communication expectations between and among members of the governing body, the City Administrator, and his team were held; including an assessment of what individuals can commit to ensure open communication:

- What do you expect from your City Council Colleagues with regard to communication?
  - Acknowledge frustrating communication restraints: handcuffed with open meeting laws, difficult and problematic to navigate, discourages us from communicating, makes dialogue challenging
  - Funnel communication through the Acting City Administrator
  - Build camaraderie outside of City business (without leading to an action)
  - Distinguish City Council business from campaign mode during election season
  - Directly express if you are offering a personal opinion

- Call each other to verify or correct the narrative with the truth if a community member says something that sounds questionable
- Are there any specific communication needs/expectations you have for the Mayor?
  - Speak on behalf of the City Council per the Charter, mutual agreement
  - Take a measured approach
  - Set boundaries – don't get out in front
  - Be knowledgeable about the issues and what you don't know about
  - Unequivocally communicate the decision of the body even if he doesn't agree with the outcome (learning experience about Cuomo interview about mask mandate)
  - State the official message of the position of the City vs. a personal opinion
  - Demonstrate political leadership
  - Foster inclusion
  - Build allies and partners with Councilmember subject matter experts; identify their strengths and their issue of interest
  - Notify others of major trips out of town (DC, Phoenix), keep other Councilmembers informed (instead of reading it in the paper)
- What communication expectations do you have for the Acting City Administrator?
  - Stay neutral with City Council politics
  - Make City Council aware of critical things that are happening, so we don't get blindsided
  - Provide official communication prior to Councilmembers hearing from upset community members (squelch rumors)
- Mayor expectations from City Council
  - Courtesy to provide head's up about a specific issue they might pull from the agenda
  - No surprises on the dais
- City Administrator from City Council
  - Keep the City Administrator in the loop on direct inquiries to department directors
  - Ask agenda questions





## VI. PEER ACCOUNTABILITY

Peer accountability relies on mutual respect, trust and understanding of expectations. The Councilmembers offered suggestions on how they prefer to be approached if they violate one of the agreed upon standards of behavior, as show in the image below:





- Prefer a direct and straightforward conversation
- Approach privately, not in public, preferably by the Mayor
- Steer back on track during a meeting
- Bring awareness to it
- Bring in a third person on the City Council to mediate, if necessary

A suggestion was made to bring back Resolution R2015-047, which outlines expectations of decorum, etc. for discussion to recommit to those specifics and potentially revise it.

## VI. CLOSING

The day came to a close with each participant sharing a parting thought on how they felt about the work done during day one of the retreat.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

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Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor