

**City of XX**  
**Questions for Council Members**

[This is a sample of a potential pre-retreat interview used to gather information about participant perspectives.]

*Mr. Manager has been in touch with the School of Government about using a facilitator to help the Council develop some goals for the next few years during a 2-day retreat, which is planned for September 7-8.*

*I'll be working with your group during those two days. Right now, I'm calling to get some background information so I can learn:*

- *Your objectives for the retreat*
- *Specific topics you'd like to see covered and background materials or resources we may need together in support of those topics*
- *Specific current and/or desired dynamics of council working relationships*
- *Any other expectations you may have for this time together*

*I have a series of questions I'd like to ask you which will take about 30 minutes to complete. Is now a good time to have that conversation would it be better to schedule an appointment time for me to call you back?*

**Explain Role of Facilitator**

- Neutral to the content
- Assist group with using effective processes and modeling effective behavior (Ground Rules for Productive Meetings)
- Core values: Valid information; free and informed choice; internal commitment to the choice

**Agreement on agenda**

- Objectives for your time together
- Content: What are the agenda items the group wants to discuss?
- Confirm daily start and end times; location
- Time enough for task completion

**Attendance**

- Who will be expected to attend?
- Will all of group be present? If not, what is the expectation about rescheduling or proceeding anyway?

- Press expected to attend? If so, what will their role be? Has proper notice been given? If facilitators receive questions from press, they will be referred to -----, unless the questions regard group facilitation and its benefit to group effectiveness.

### **Roles**

- What role does chair/staff expect to play in directing the process? Will s/he participate in managing the process or leave that to facilitator? (This will need to be revealed to and discussed with the group before start so everyone understands roles.)

### **Decision-Making**

- Is there a preferred method of priority setting? i.e., sticky dots, numerical rating
- Preferred method for making decisions (consensus, majority rule, other). Will method be the same for all decisions?

**Group Diagnosis** – I am asking these questions in confidence and will not attribute specific comments to individuals. However, when I see trends or patterns or strong concerns, these will need to be raised and discussed within the group if there is to be any progress made towards resolving them.

- Describe any particular ‘problems’ or challenges the group (the Council or the Council plus staff) is having. Causes? Consequences for the group’s effectiveness?
- Group strengths or assets?
- Does the group have clear goals? Understand their role? Clear expectations of each other? Of staff?
- Motivation? Resources? To do their job?
- Would others agree/disagree? Why?
- Motivation for using a facilitator? Prior experiences? How do you envision a facilitator helping the group?
- Are there other issues that you feel are important to be considered as we undertake the planning for this retreat?