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The Role of a Good Mayor

The Mayor has at least three main duties: 1) fulfilling ceremonial roles; 2) engaging in meeting management; and 3) acting as a role model/consensus builder.

If representatives of other governments visit a city it is the Mayor who serves as their host. To perform this role well, the Mayor needs to be an outgoing person who can make small talk with individuals from all walks of life, and project a positive vibe and genuine concern for others. As spokesman for the City, the Mayor needs to be someone who can speak off the cuff in an intelligent manner without distracting speech tags. The Mayor also needs to be well-informed about all matters handled by the city and able to succinctly summarize the same.

Presiding at City Council meetings, it is imperative for the Mayor to know parliamentary procedure.¹ Nothing frustrates people like a poorly run meeting! If the members of the City Council do not get along well, it is up to the Mayor to take the lead:

The mayor is in an ideal position to foster positive relationships between the various elements of local government by setting a good example. This includes relationships between the Mayor and Councilors, Council and the administration, and the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer [City Manager].²

To perform this role well, the Mayor needs to be a mediator who seeks a win-win solution rather than someone who aggressively pursues an agenda of her own. Mayors in Iowa are elected on a non-partisan basis to further this objective.

For more information on this topic, read “The Role of a Good Mayor,” at <http://limitedgovernment.org/brief24-10.html>.

Endnotes:

¹ An easy-to-use source is by Dr. Donald P. Racheter, Chapter Ten “Parliamentary Procedure” in *Iowa Government and Politics* (Octagon Press: Muscatine, IA), pp. 121-135.

² “Helping Local Governments Govern Better,” *Good Governance Guide*, <<http://www.goodgovernance.org.au/roles-relationships/roles-in-local-government/mayor/>> accessed on March 17, 2017.