HOW TO NAVIGATE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS WITH BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

UNDERSTANDING THE SOURCES OF TENSION AND STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE RESOLUTION

CHANGES IN LOCAL POLITICS OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS

- Demographic and Social Shifts: Increased diversity, evolving electorate, and geographic differences.

- Impact of Social Media: Managing misinformation, compliance, and digital divide challenges.

- Conflicts Between Management and Officials: Unclear roles, differing priorities, and micromanagement.

- Impact of These Conflicts: Delayed decisions, reduced trust, wasted resources, staff turnover.

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

- Establish Clear Roles between officials and staff.

- Promote Open and Respectful Communication.

- Use Mediation and Neutral Facilitation when necessary.

- Focus on Common Goals and community outcomes.

- Provide Training and Develop Clear Procedures.

- Document Decisions and Lead by Example.

KEEP BLOOD PRESSURE DOWN AND KEEP MOVING FORWARD

- Formalize Roles and Responsibilities through codes or policies.

- Provide Training and Orientation for both officials and staff.

- Enhance Communication and Collaboration via clear systems and evaluation processes.

- Model Respectful Behavior and Seek Legal Counsel when unclear.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF CONFLICT AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS

- The Rogue Supervisor: Uses social media to attack staff and files open records complaints.

- The Incompetent Elected Official: Well-liked but unqualified; spreads misinformation and creates friction.

- The Power Play: Board Chair demands nepotism and retaliates when refused.

- Pushing Board Members: Committee chairs push illegal closed sessions and resist legal guidance.

- The Legal Scholar: Board member oversteps authority at other commission meetings.

QUESTIONS: