



mejorando group

## Summary

January 30-31, 2015

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# *Village of Ruidoso*



## *Strategic Planning Advance Meeting*

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Submitted By:

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Village of Ruidoso Mayor and Council held their planning Advance meeting over the course of January 30 and January 31, 2015 to explore and discuss issues relevant to the Village's operation and future of the community. The following meeting summary represents the product of these discussions.

## MEETING OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the Advance session:

1. Fortify relationships among elected officials to ensure the clarity necessary to achieve the community vision.
2. Clarify protocols and proper procedures regarding communication between elected officials and the Village Manager.
3. Establish a cohesive set of actions for 2015 and beyond to ensure the Village Manager and staff, are focused on the appropriate priorities.
4. To strengthen the relationship and mutual understanding between members of the governing body and executive management.

The outcome of the Advance meeting was to create a consensus on the role the Village organization plays in responding to current and potential challenges/issues, prioritizing goals including specific activities intended to impact those challenges and adopt a realistic and meaningful schedule in the undertaking of services and projects which support those goals.

## EXERCISES/ACTIVITIES

A refresher on the Council-Manager form of government was the first topic covered. In particular, clarifying expectations and the roles of each party (comments from the discussion are provided after each bullet point):

- **Mayor:**
  - To serve as the leader and facilitator of the governing body;
  - Responsible for Village Business and setting the Council Agenda;
  - Act as the Fiduciary Agent for the community;
  - Set Policy and direction for progressive change; and
  - Serve as liaison between community and Village of Ruidoso.

- **Councilors:**
  - Govern in a way that sets a positive tone for the community including being transparent with decision-making;
  - Address issues that are brought forward;
  - Set the Vision for the future;
  - In an effort to engage community members, educate and inform the citizens of the activities of the Village, as well as solicit their input; and
  - Recognize and engage volunteers and committee members.
  
- **Village Manager:**
  - Work at the direction of the Mayor and Council;
  - Manage the day to day business/operations of the Village;
  - Have a positive infectious attitude and foster a culture of teamwork;
  - Effectively communicate progress and activities
  - Work with the Mayor and Council to enhance public trust in Village business;
  - Motivate and lead Department Directors to accomplish the Vision of the Council;
  - Engage Village employees in an effort to improve individual employee performance and overall, organizational effectiveness; and
  - Address problems as they are presented;
  
- **Village staff**
  - Serve with integrity;
  - Serve as an Ambassador for the Village and act as a Chief Example Officer (CEO);
  - Maintain a positive attitude towards their role as leaders and exercise initiative regularly;
  - Stay apprised of Village activities;
  - Feel connected to the Vision and contribute towards its realization; and
  - Work as a productive team member.
  
- **Community members**
  - Actively communicate with the Mayor and Council;
  - Ask questions and to hold the Village accountable; and
  - Beyond participating on Boards, Commissions and Committees seek to engage with the Village on the future of the community.

**“Hot” Topics** Prior to the January advance, the Mayor and Councilors were asked for their input on what topics they believe would be worthwhile to discuss during the Advance meeting. These are primarily items not typically found on agendas for regular meetings of the governing body and permit the group to participate in an in-depth discussion of both strategic and operational items.

- a) **Water** – The consensus that Water remains a high priority was affirmed. Various items were discussed including:
- Update on the status of the Water Master Plan.
  - Staff located written correspondence documenting the 40 year plan was indeed updated and accepted by the State.
  - Efforts will continue to reduce water loss from 35% to 15%.
  - A number of projects are underway to improve the water situation in Ruidoso (Grindstone Dam; Alto Dam; replace water lines as funded with GO Bond; River Well B to be drilled and put in service this spring; and water meters are currently out for bid and will be replaced this year.)
- b) **Addressing system** – A desire was expressed to upgrade the addressing system similar to the County. The intent is to ensure timely and responsive E-911 calls for service, as well as for more efficient Code Enforcement services. An upgrade of this magnitude is a significant undertaking.
- c) **Main Street Businesses** – Build synergy with local businesses and help them work together. Need to work with Chamber of Commerce. Possibly engage outside resources to assist businesses with benefits of using social media and provide training for business owners on customer service and other related topics. Restore the Main Street – Entertainment district. Village and Chamber working to apply for Arts and Culture District through NM Main Street Program. Need to develop a business plan for mid-town that would improve the buildings, marketing and business activity. Will require that we build relationships and show a direct benefit to businesses. Code Enforcement need to be more business friendly and less controlling. Parking would help to solve some of the concerns in mid-town.
- d) **Recreation Center** – Councilor Coughlin is reaching out to the public and the Parks and Recreation Commission to gauge support for financing and constructing a new recreation center with indoor pool and Boys and Girls Club. The existing pool is rather old and will eventually have to be replaced. Private funding on behalf of the portion for the B&G Club would be secured.
- e) **Airport** – The Master Plan for the Airport is underway and once reviewed by the FAA, it will be presented to the governing body for their approval. Mayor and Council discussed the role of the Airport and given the availability of land and high-quality of the facility itself, their interest in securing more economic development opportunities at the Airport. Its role as an economic engine for the community has the potential to be expanded. VOR needs to utilize this asset in marketing to tourists that visit for various activities not necessarily related to aviation itself.

- f) **Turnaround time on Hiring of new city employees** – Mayor and Council are concerned about the amount of time (60-90 days) required to hire a position possibly causing the Village to miss out valuable candidates to work for the Village and who may find employment elsewhere. Need to re-evaluate this process and ensure that both the process is more timely and efficient and the caliber of the applicant pool is qualified.
- g) **Communication with the public** – A robust discussion focused on civic engagement, public participation and the need to inform the public and Council of the progress being made, projects/activities being planned and scheduled and issues that impact the Village. The Village Manager committed to co-creating with the existing resource devoted to public communication, a Plan that encompasses the creation of a strategy and series of tactics/platforms (i.e. social media, radio, print, etc.) for community outreach.
- h) **Quality of housing including affordability** – Affordable housing plan currently in progress with community committee engaged. Need to also assess utility deposits, utility connects and disconnects to ensure that the Village is covering its costs but NOT a hindrance to the public. The Village needs to be more business friendly but also enforce non-compliance. Consider zoning ordinances and revise to support housing/rentals (1 kitchen per resident). VOR needs to file on the liens that have been placed and address the dilapidated and unsafe properties. The goal is to coordinate with the community, Schools, Hospital and other partners to address and provide affordable housing for the workforce in Ruidoso.
- i) **Other Items:**
- **Tracking Mechanism** to update and inform the Mayor and Council of directives, activities, projects, issues. A Communication Strategy will help to identify more ways to effectively communicate or to better utilize the Manager's Report; Monday with the Mayor; e-mail communications, etc. Possibly use insert in Utility Billing, social media, face book, etc.
  - **Redevelopment** – Clean up dilapidated properties, old trailers that are an unsightly and unsafe and foreclose on liens. This necessitates a strategy be developed and funding secured to support this effort. Develop an economic development strategy and partner with local businesses, Chamber of Commerce and others to clean up the community, address signage, solicit new development, promote recreation and create the Arts and Culture District. NM Main Street provides excellent resources to support this effort.
  - **Zoning and Comprehensive Planning** – Review and revise zoning ordinances that are outdated and out of compliance with State Law.

Improve zoning ordinance so they are more business friendly. Need to update the Comprehensive Plan

- **Code Enforcement** – Volume of functions for only two people is unsustainable. Need to evaluate how to improve code enforcement so it is proactive and serves the community.
- **Village Facilities relocation** – Evaluate the need to relocate the Municipal Court, Forestry, Utilities, and IT. Need to demolish the Annex building and convert the land for parking purposes. Consider options at where to relocate the Village offices and how the Village Land could be best utilized for business development/parking.

The intent of the **Hot Topics** was not necessarily to create consensus for potential action by the Mayor and Council, but instead to engage in substantive dialogue about issues of all sizes and dimension. The Village Manager was able to respond to several of the items articulating the Village's current position for each item and providing potential options to make changes.

The next topic of discussion was to identify the various **trends** impacting the role of government and the Village in general. Those mentioned in no particular order were:

- External
  - The fluctuating level of community involvement and engagement
  - Resistance to change
  - Unfunded mandates from the Federal and State government(s)
  - Difficult with accessing an available workforce
  - Technology – Fiber in particular
  - Transportation
  - Schools – teachers leaving
- Internal
  - Mayor and Council have excellent working relationship with each other and Manager and staff
  - Village can be perceived as not as business friendly as it possible
  - The level of turnover within the Police Department
  - The process utilized to hire new Village employees as it relates to timeliness and promptness
  - Good leadership now in place with the Village Manager and Department Directors

The trends set the context for the continued maturation of the community.

Transitioning from the trends, the next focus was on identifying the **Future Potential of Ruidoso**. Envisioning the future – the feel and texture of a community – serves a powerful purpose in helping illuminate the minds and spirits of all involved in its realization.

1. What does the Village of Ruidoso want to be the best at?

- Be Bold – Be Imaginative
- Fostering an environment to live, build and grow.
- Communications with the public.
- Public Safety related services
- Recreation Services
- Customer Service – operate more like a business.
- Lead by example and treat everyone with respect.
- Welcome people into our community.
- Aesthetic – Beautification – Community and Neighborhood

2. What are the best measures of our effectiveness?

- Consider revision and adoption of ordinances as mechanisms which support the Vision and Goals.
- Be proactive and consistent with Code Enforcement activities and services.
- Empower the creativity and ideas of Village employees as a means to improving Village operations, services and overall effectiveness.

3. What are we deeply passionate about?

- Beautification
- Being a destination place for tourists and recreation.
- Water conservation protecting water resources
- Community Involvement
- Economic Development – Business Development

In an effort to determine where the organization and community are presently and what will be necessary to move forward towards the community vision, the next activity engaged the group with the following discussion – **Present to the Future**.

1. How prepared are we to handle all the opportunities and service demands that will occur in the next 3-5 years.

Village staff members are exceptional in managing emergencies and dealing with unplanned events. We are also good at managing the demand on

services with the number of tourists and second home owners that visit on a regular basis. A lot of progress in in motion to fix the failing infrastructure, enhance the recreation (trails and programs) and support the demands of the citizens. We are also dealing with the impacts from NMED and litigation surrounding the NPDES permits with competent staff.

2. How flexible and dynamic is our current strategy and operation to respond to continuous change?

Change has been the primary function in Ruidoso for the last several years. The current Mayor and Council are very flexible and supportive of ensuring the resources are provided to meet the needs of the community. We are currently working on a regional solution for water, wastewater and solid waste. As the economic engine in Lincoln County, we provide the vision and the leadership to address the need for change.

3. What barriers exist that our workforce will have to overcome and how motivated are they to do so?

Hiring qualified and capable candidates for Village employment, and then retaining them in Ruidoso is a challenge. The cost of living and increasing demands for services create a challenging work environment. This is an area we need to work on but are motivated to do so. Information Technology, Fiber Optics and support for IT is real challenge that prohibits businesses from expanding and relocating to Ruidoso. Addressing this issue is not exclusively a Village solution, but requires other partners.

4. To what level does harmony and cooperation exist inside our organization to ensure synergy and teamwork?

With the election last year, the new Mayor and Council have created a more collegial and collaborative climate in which to govern. Beyond generating a healthier tone in the community, this has also translated to a healthy culture for Village staff to do their best work. The Mayor and Council understand well their respective roles and do not interfere with the day to day business of the Village or related personnel matters. We believe we have competent qualified staff to manage the delivery of services and want to help them where we can.



The primary reason supporting the Advance was for the Mayor and Council to identify **specific Goals** to pursue moving forward. This discussion was extremely rich with texture and dimension covering a range of issues and exploring potential pitfalls and opportunities. The outcome was the following:

### 1. Goal: Water – Improve infrastructure and reduce water losses to 15%.

#### Action Steps:

- Transition from best practices toward next practices as a mindset in effectively addressing water-related issues.
- Analyze past water losses to determine future improvements and reduce water loss.
- Continue to replace and repair leaking pipes.
- Keep the GO Bond in motion to finance needed water line improvements
- Actively communicate to the public the progress made and water savings realized.
- Fix Alto Dam so water can filter through that Plant.
- Connect all three water systems to ensure reliability of delivery of water.

### 2. Goal: Work on Regionalization to include partnering with other communities for water infrastructure and water rights.

#### Action Steps:

- Using professional services agreement with Scott Verhines to evaluate and determine if Fort Stanton and Bonito water lines can be utilized.
- Create a list of action items for lobbying purposes to pursue funding and collaboration with other entities and the State.
- Develop regional water plan.
- Create a visual with mapping that shows where the wet water comes from and available water lines to be utilized.
- Develop working relationship with Mescalero Tribe to partner with regional water supply.

**3. Goal: Revitalize Entertainment District by involving the Chamber of Commerce to establish relationships with mid-town businesses.**

## Action Steps:

- Apply for Arts and Culture District through NM Main Street Program.
- Develop a Business Plan with involvement from business stakeholders.
- Coordinate the provision of business training and mentoring services on areas such as customer service, pricing, and marketing for mid-town business.
- Identify contemporary ways to communicate and assist entertainment district businesses.

**4. Goal: Connect Village residents onto Village sewer.**

## Action Steps:

- Inform and educate citizens of the benefits associated with connecting to the City sewer system.
- Identify addresses of those residents that need to connect to Village services.
- Sewer line relocation project – notify residents of this project.
- Send letter to residents sharing the legal mandate requiring them to connect to the City sewer system.

**5. Goal: Quality of Life – Advocate and implement a better Quality of Life in Ruidoso.**

## Action Steps:

- Actively communicate with the public and invite them to become involved and engaged.
- Schedule another “Business After Hours” gathering with the Chamber of Commerce as the most recent event was a huge success.
- Appearance and Condition of community – advocate and where appropriate, clean up dilapidated areas trailers that create an unsightly appearance.
- Partner with the Planning Commission to be proactive in revising ordinances relevant to smart growth practices and community appearance standards.

- Continue to improve infrastructure including replacing leaking pipes and connections to the water system.

## NEXT STEPS

The Village Manager wrapped up the Advance meeting by sharing she would be translating the energy and ideas from the meeting to the next phase by scheduling a workshop with Council and Director to discuss the details and goals identified in our Retreat setting.