

Leading During A Council Crisis

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Brenda Fischer Background

- Almost 20 years in local government
- City Manager, City of Glendale, AZ
- Sharing my experience and lessons learned to possibly help you if you ever face a similar situation
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Case Overview

- City population: 45,000
- Sexual harassment of staff by Councilmember
- Duration: More than a year
- Victims: 15 city employees
- Formal complaint and investigation

History

- Councilmember
 - Personality
 - Accused behavior
 - Going through divorce
 - Counseling didn't stop it



Inappropriate Behavior

- Physical
- Verbal
- Intimidation
- Equipment Misuse
- Threatening
- Off-property and in city hall
- Retaliation
- Previously reported



Initial Complaint

- Federal law
- City Code
- City Attorney
- Fellow elected officials
- Timing



Goals

- Stop the behavior
- Protect employees
- Protect workplace
- Protect taxpayers
- Protect myself



Initial Investigation

- External attorney hired
- Interviews
- Restrictions on Councilmember
- Initial report to Council (e-session)
- Council's limitations for retribution
- Final report to Council (public session)
- Results
 - Training for Council and staff
 - Code of ethics for Council
 - Permanent restrictions on him



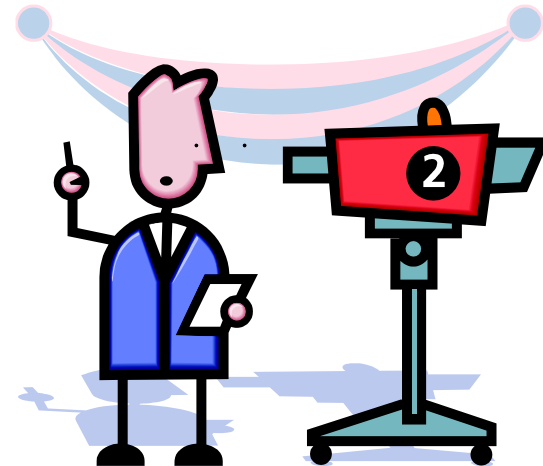
Follow-Up Investigation

- Complainants upset with final report
- Subsequent complaints filed
- Demands for his resignation
- Complaint filed by female Councilmember
- Additional reports to Council in e-session
- Councilmember publicly stated he did no wrong



Media & Public Outcry

- Demands for his resignation:
 - Editorials
 - Public comment portion of the Council meetings
 - Letters to the editor
 - Social media site postings
 - Media interviews
- Recall effort



Ultimate Outcome

- Resignation
- Workplace
- New Councilmember
- Training
- Code of ethics
- No lawsuits



Leadership During This Crisis

- Open door and safe outlet
- Professionalism
- Workplace behavior
- Personal challenges/stress



Hostile Work Environment in 2013

- Continues to be workplace issue
- Laws, training and education
- Recent Public Sector examples include:
 - Former Congressman and current New York Mayoral Candidate Weiner
 - Former San Diego Mayor Filner
 - Tucson Councilmember
 - Northern California Councilmember
 - Google it....you'll find numerous current examples

Advice to You, Lessons Learned

- Take action
- Be courageous
- Timely action
- Do the right thing,
for the right reasons



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September 22-25, 2013