

**AGENDA**  
**Special City Council Meeting**  
ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE  
March 22, 2021, 12:00 noon

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. <b>CALL TO ORDER/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM</b> <i>Council President</i>       | <i>Information Found On:</i> |
| 2. <b>APPROVAL OF AGENDA</b>   | Page 1                       |
| 3. <b>NEW BUSINESS</b>   |                              |
| a. Facilitator, Strategic Planning Session – approve <i>City Administrator</i> | Pages 2-4                    |
| 4. <b>ADJOURNMENT</b>  |                              |

If you need any type of reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, contact City Hall at (320) 616-5500 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Meetings are live streamed at [LITTLE FALLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING](#). A current list of meetings can be found at [Notice of Meetings](#).



March 4, 2021

**Proposal to:** The City of Little Falls, Minnesota

**Prepared for:** Mr. Jon Radermacher, City Administrator

**Prepared by:** Sharon Rodning Bash, Principal Consultant

Sharon Rodning Bash Consulting is pleased to present this proposal for facilitation services requested by the City of Little Falls. It has been a delight to work with the City over the past 2 years in the community listening process that led to the development of the OurTown 56345 Strategic Framework. The plan, adopted by the City Council in November 2020, offers important guideposts to the city to shape future development. There is recognition that the community engagement in the community listening process has resulted in significant expectations of change as a result of the community listening and engagement processes that led to Framework completion. We would view the work of this retreat, as well as the resulting culture of cooperation it represents as a critical transition to launch the work of OurTown 56345. The desire is that the City Council have embraced a path to executing on the priorities of this plan prior to such time as the community “opens up” post-pandemic.

This time limited engagement is to work with the Mayor and City Administrator around the design, implementation and debriefing/documentation of a City Council retreat to take place in the spring of 2021. We understand that the client is the City of Little Falls. This project has been urged forward by the Mayor and City Administrator, with input and sanction of city council members. The desire is that the City Council have embraced a path to executing on the priorities of this plan prior to such time as the community “opens up” post-pandemic.

**Problem Statement:**

The City Council is comprised of 8 members; 1 member is in 1<sup>st</sup> term; 1 in 2<sup>nd</sup> term; and 5 have held this office for 3 or 4 terms. The mayor, currently in his 2<sup>nd</sup> term, is the 8<sup>th</sup> voting member. The city administrator has been in Little Falls for over 5 years. In recent years the City Council has become a more cohesive body than its historic culture of divisiveness, but there remains a need for the Council to assume the governance role of a single, unified body rather than a group of individuals addressing the needs of a specific constituency base. There remains a pattern of some members adopting policy, then blocking implementation due to what is perceived intimidation by a small but vocal group of naysayers. There is the need to establish an understanding of the governance role and set expectations around behaviors as a single governing body.

**Proposed Approach:**

Our understanding is a 1 ½ day retreat of the City Council, Mayor and City Administrator, likely to take place in late April, 2021.

**Outcomes:**

As a result of this work the City Council will

1. Better understand personal strengths and style as these attributes contribute to council function. Better understand existing team dynamics and issues.
2. Have established formalized expectations, rules of engagement effecting productive team engagement and civil dialogue / diplomacy.
3. Have in place team decision making processes and accountabilities for results of all decisions.
4. Better understand and develop protocols around communications to ensure Council members abide by decisions, honor their intent, and represent decisions positively in the community.
5. Embrace a common commitment to a shared vision, purpose, and strategic priorities.

**Scope of Work:**

1. Development and execution of pre-convening work in two areas:
  - a. self-assessment around individual strengths and talents within the team; and
  - b. building an understanding of the path to implementation of the shared vision, purpose and strategic priorities.
2. Pre-meeting assessment activities will be launched with phone conversations with each council member individually.
3. Planning and execution of a 1.5 day retreat, focused on two core elements – effective team engagement, and launch of implementation paths and commitment to the OurTown 56345 framework.
4. Workshop outcomes listed above. This component could include remote facilitation.
5. Launch of work to ignite the strategic framework. This component would best be held in live session, likely in the County Board Room, Little Falls, MN. [large space, capable of social distancing, with excellent technology for remote facilitation.]
6. Documentation of learnings and outcomes of the retreat.
7. Sharon Rodning Bash would be on site in Little Falls, MN, for the retreat days. Rovena Claxton would offer her services via remote or “Zoom” connection.

**Retreat Outline:**

The implementation of the OurTown 56345 Strategic Framework, in a rural community with a diversity of thoughts, needs, and perspectives, will require a cohesive leadership team at the City Council level. Building an effective team requires skill in the fundamental building blocks that help promote productive use of time spent together and the ability to utilize the strengths of the group, and to use those strengths at times to overcome adversity and “push back” from constituencies. The following approach to a 1 ½ day retreat, lays the groundwork for better understanding of Council member strengths as well as covers the fundamentals of working effectively together as a unified governing body.

**Day One: Morning**

- *Introduction.* Setting the Context, Ground Rules: Why are we here? How will we ensure that our time is well-spent? What outcomes are expected?
- *Voice of the Customer.* Discussion of what work must be done by the City Council to support the roll out of the Strategic Framework. If a poll were taken of those who facilitated listening posts that led to the development of this Framework along with the 56345 Executive Team that guided the process, what leadership behaviors-actions-and expectations would THEY say were most needed to implement the vision for the Little Falls community?



- *Introduction to the Strengths Finder Assessment Tool.* Several activities designed to acquaint Council members with their unique strengths as well as gaps (especially those related to communications) that will need to be overcome to achieve cohesiveness.
  - To aid in this discussion, retreat participants will be asked to read *Clifton Strengths-Finder 2.0* by Tom Rath and complete the on-line assessment. The book is 175 pages in length and is a good addition to a leader's bookshelf. We will work with the City Administrator to ensure books are purchased and distributed very soon. The cost is in the range of \$16-\$20/book.
  - Participants will be asked to both complete a short summary of their learning in advance to share with the rest of the group as well as to send our Team Effectiveness Coach their "Strengths" profile no later than 1 week in advance of the retreat to enable completion of a profile of the City Council as a team.
- *Introduction to Practical Team Work.* The framework for this discussion will come from a leadership model: *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni. We will take each of the five team behaviors blocking team cohesion as outlined by Lencioni and apply them to real-live examples of constituent challenges.

#### Day One: Afternoon

The focus of the afternoon session will be on the learning of new skills and processes for working through the Five Dysfunctions (Challenges) that all teams face at one time or another. These skills include problem-solving, conflict management and resolution, and decision-making skills.

- **Team Challenge: Absence of Trust and Fear of Conflict.** In this discussion, Introduction of practical conflict resolution tools for teams. The focus, again, will be on application to real-life scenarios.
- **Team Challenge: Inattention to Results.** In this session, we will focus on the introduction and application of practical problem-solving and decision-making tools.

#### Day Two: Morning

- Follow-up and reflection on participants' learning from the previous day.
- Launch of strategic framework
- Reinforcement of the concept of accountability for results.
- Agreements for next steps.

#### **Financial Proposal:**

For this work we request a payment of \$2,500. This fee is inclusive of all consultant service fees, travel costs and materials. Not included in this fee is the cost of the StrengthFinders book for each participant. 50% of the fee is payable upon signing of a service contract. The final 50% is payable upon successful completion of the retreat and submission of final documentation.

#### **The Team:**

Strategic Framework Consultant: Sharon Rodning Bash

Sharon has been a consultant to nonprofit arts and human service organizations for over 30 years, providing training, consulting and facilitation in the areas of strategy development, assessment and evaluation, change management, creative problem solving, and major project implementation. She has



facilitated workshops regionally and nationally on topics in related to organizational capacity-building, strategy development and community engagement.

Clients have included national organizations, such as the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, Artspace and VocalEssence; regional service organizations seeking to build arts and culture capacity, such as the Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Commission and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs; city and county governments in rural, suburban and micropolitan areas seeking to develop cultural plans, such as the cities of [St. Louis Park](#), [Grand Marais](#), [Moorhead](#), New York Mills, and [The City of Little Falls](#).

Before her 2018 return to a full-time consulting practice, for the past decade she built and led ArtsLab, a capacity building program of Arts Midwest dedicated to developing the core leadership skills and management capabilities of community-based arts organizations and regional arts and culture networks throughout the Upper Midwest. Prior to her work in the arts sector, she worked in health care administration, primarily within the Medical Affairs Division of Allina health system, as well as serving as the administrative director of the Phillips Eye Institute.

She holds an MPH in community health administration and an MSW in human services administration, both from the University of Minnesota, as well as a BA in environmental biology. She is a certified facilitator, trained through the Minnesota chapter of the Institute of Cultural Affairs.

Team Effectiveness Coach: Rovena Claxton.

Rovena has nearly 30 years' experience in the field of Human Resources management and development. She has an extensive experience in organizational change and improvement initiatives in both Fortune 500 manufacturing firms and non-profit agencies of all sizes. She is an expert group facilitator and team builder. As the Principal consultant for North Shore Human Resource Consulting, LLC, Rovena specializes in assisting small and medium-size employers with employee behavior or performance issues, coaching for leadership success, shaping employment policies and handbooks, and leadership training, especially in the area of conflict resolution and team development for a high engagement culture.

Prior to launching North Shore Human Resource Consulting, Rovena served for 7 years as the Human Resources Business Partner for Minneapolis Children's Hospital, a major Minnesota tertiary care center. She also served for a decade as Vice President for Organizational Development for the Memorial Blood Centers, St. Paul, MN.

She holds an MA in Human Resource Development, and a BA in Education, as well as membership in the Society for Human Resource Management.