

From the List-Serv – To an Ordinance for the Obvious?



Oh, I so appreciate the list-serv that KRWA has developed and made available to city clerks. I know that the RWD offices also have a separate list-serv courtesy of KRWA.

Once again, the city clerk list-serv brought a flash of relief into a day that was in dire need of such. A recent request went something such as this: “I am in need of something that prohibits sleeping and bathing in public”. Hmmm, my fellow folks from the land of Sues, this conjures up incredible images that bring forth more of the low-belly, Santa-type laugh. I realize that clerk’s need was serious. The request causes images to jet through the mind at a pace that is not controllable. And that “jet” moment led me to a good ole’ laugh – again. Talk about needing to Ordinance the obvious, good golly folks!!! Why (and more importantly, who) made that village address something that has never hit anyone else’s radar? We live in the conservative midwest – most people don’t even go bare in the dark of their own homes! Much less at the fountain in the middle of town. That was the image that happened – singing and suds-ing right in the middle of town with a response of “haven’t you ever seen a man bathe before?” when onlookers couldn’t quite - NOT LOOK! My mind kept it brief but very clear. Well, I have also seen a whole bunch of little kids, elbows on knees, sitting on the curb, observing – with a herd of mothers headed their way... Whooo... next subject.

Money woes

A year goes fast; money seems to go faster! It is my second budget for this town and I’ve learned a great deal again this year. I appreciate the software that helps facilitate not only the budget itself but also

helps me truly grasp how all this works. It ties in so well with my accounting software. Kudos to the council and mayor for being supportive of this purchase as a brand new clerk two years ago!!

We are funny, about money – and priorities, and how loudly opinions are expressed. One of the many, many things learned under the hat of the clerk is that what is obvious to one is not so obvious to another. I have started to look at the array of opinions as the beginning of a work of art. A blank canvas, the splash and splatter of opinions that will finally lead to the finished piece of art – the decision. It once was a source of discomfort (okay - maybe more like anxiety) but I respect the ability to find a destination – a

resolution, that may have even felt impossible when the canvas was first placed. It just seems so easy from the outside to occupy a council seat – straight forward. The appearance of “how hard can it be to just fix and grow the community” seems so obvious. But due to the many opinions and passions, all-important in the final work, it can be difficult. The Mona Lisa is about a woman and her expression – yet I

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feel her hand placement and her garments were very important in leading to this quiet, yet incredible work of art. The background, details and support – are all as important as the main theme itself. Parks, pools, streets, water and community unity – all need to be passions and still be pursued with balance in our wonderful little villages. They all contribute to the work of art we each call our home.

What’s a city clerk to do?

It has been a bit of a restless week for me as a clerk. I do try my best to know my responsibilities and carry them out. There is much to know as a small town clerk and it is impossible to know what you don’t know until after the fact. There is discouragement when folks of the village perceive I intentionally decide to take the low road and ignore what I am to do. They decide that it is typical because our city can’t get anything right. We have had a bit of rough history and I, at times, wonder if we will ever be able to change that. I wonder if we will ever be able to earn the confidence of the people. I wonder if mistakes will be seen as mistakes rather than intentional poor job performance by apathetic employees. I had a calm, wise individual tell me that there are those who will find fault – regardless – period. That is a mindset that truly escapes me. I am using broad terms here. It is quite possible we do have the confidence and the citizens see the positive changes, but we only hear from those few who disapprove – and they will find a reason to do so. That again, escapes me. This is why I write. And, now that I have put this in black and white a perspective has unfolded: one percent of the people voice disapproval. Too bad I am not politically minded – that would be a fabulous approval rating in that arena!!! But, alas, I am more of a Suessville person than political.... I say I have pretty thick skin. Really, I probably don't; this too shall pass.

Sometimes I think us 3rd class city clerks (who wear all the hats) need a support group... a cheer section... an hour to vent... cheese, grapes and wine anyone???. Let that roll around in your cerebrum for a minute! More of those images “jet” through the mind. Could that result in an Ordinance forbidding the collecting, gathering or grouping of city clerks where wine is available....eh, it was a fun thought for a minute.... :)

Our city building houses the library. I am so excited for them! They got some funds

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together and were able to freshen up their corner of the world. Paint, carpeting and a great desk. Lots of work from the kids and folks here in town to help make that happen. It just looks great in there. I had to smile at the same comment I heard several times “Geez, there are a lot of books in here” . . . hmmm.... REEEAALLLY?

It is time, again, to start the crossing process – organizing, closing, locking – but the hats stay close. I seldom crossover without a question, comment or concern regarding our village. I have a bit of a love/hate relationship with that part of my role here. We are close, small, and secure; I am citizen, clerk and neighbor, wearer of hats – and at times . . . of hats a weary-wearer. But a clerk I am and a clerk I shall be. To all my hat-wearing keeper of the keys ... a good evening and . . . Godspeed.

Rhonda Meyerhoff is city clerk in Clifton, KS. Prior to moving to Clifton, she did a variety of work including serving as a medical transcriptionist, CPA assistant, rural mail carrier, a paramedic, bookkeeper and more.



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