

City of Webster City, Iowa Goal Setting Report 2016

Mayor:

John Hawkins

City Council:

Matt McKinney

Logan Welch

Brian Miller

Jim Talbot

City Staff:

Ed Sadler, City Manager

Karyl Bonjour, City Clerk

Zach Chizek, City Attorney

Kent Harfst, Assistant City Manager/Parks Director

Beth Chelesvig, Administrative Services Director

Ann Smith, City Manager's Secretary/Deputy City Clerk



Facilitated by:

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Institute of Public Affairs

University of Iowa

**CITY OF WEBSTER CITY, IOWA
GOAL SETTING SESSION
2016**

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CITY OF WEBSTER CITY, IOWA

GOAL SETTING SESSION

2016

Introduction

The City of Webster City requested the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) to assist the city with goal setting. IPA agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify recent accomplishments, issues/trends/concerns, potential new initiatives/programs/policies and suggestions to improve organizational effectiveness.
2. Conduct a goal-setting session with the elected officials.
3. Preparation of this report.

Goal Setting Work Session

City Council Members and the Mayor held a work session conducted by the IPA on March 3, 2016. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor John Hawkins and Council Members Matt McKinney, Logan Welch, Brian Miller, and Jim Talbot. Also in attendance and participating in this meeting were City Manager Ed Sadler, City Clerk Karyl Bonjour, Assistant City Manager/Parks Director Kent Harfst, Administrative Services Director Beth Chelesvig, City manager's Secretary/Deputy City Clerk Ann Smith, and City Attorney Zach Chizek.

Major City Accomplishments

The following were identified as major accomplishments by the city during the past two years:

Budget/Financial

- Continued balanced budgets for all funds
- Continued strong financial position
- 5 year Capital and Operating Plans
- Continued positive Audit reports
- Three years of no utility rate increases

City Operations/Facilities

- Revised Sign ordinance
- The Town Hall. Many citizens were able to come forward with suggestions and concerns in a format that was much more comfortable than a Council meeting.
- Revised animal ordinance
- New roof for Beam building
- City LED light bulbs for sale and have sold over 3,500 in first three months
- New City web site with fillable job applications and grant applications
- Now accepting credit card payments and online payments
- Revised vacation policy
- Revised personnel manual

Community Events

- Hosted RVTV for third year in a row
- RAGBRAI passed through town
- Community wide clean up
- Assisted with Junquefest for two years

Economic Development

- Business expansions:
 - Shopko
 - Hospital Clinic
 - WCF Financial Bank
 - Thrifty White
 - Maharry Dentistry
 - Russ Chelesvig-new Barber Shop-changing the look of an old gas station
- The continued growth of not only home based businesses, but also new businesses moving to town

Housing/Code Enforcement

- Purchase of land for Brewer Creek 5th addition expansion
- Removal of 3 nuisance properties

Infrastructure

- Moving forward with East and West Second street projects
- Completed Water Plant improvements-Open House
- Continued LED street light replacement
- Riverside Wetlands grant and project
- Street improvements
- Water line west of town to Van Diest replaced
- Continued work on undergrounding City electric service
- Neal #4 power plant upgraded to comply with Federal emission requirements and extended its life by 29 years
- Conducted “ice-pigging” pilot program to clean out water lines

Parks & Rec

- On target with multi-year ash tree removal

Public Safety

- New Police Chief and Fire Chief
- Police force back to full strength

Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances or operations:

Budget/Financial

- Tax revenues decreasing and assessed values being rolled back
- Property tax reduction (Electrolux tax revenue decrease)
- The electric operating fund: what are the parameters that allow the City to make major expenditures of money for projects?

City Operations/Facilities

- Succession planning for Manager and department directors
- Finding a solution for the residents negatively affected by the restrictions in the Sign ordinance
- Need a quarterly meeting with Deb Brown, Chamber to review ideas and things she's seeing when she visits other towns
- Our community has seen no economic, social, or population growth in the past year that could be linked to a major accomplishment
- Consider another community wide clean up
- Identify and publish list of all City owned rental land

Community Engagement/Character

- Community engagement
- The growing distrust between community and government
- The culture and language barrier between different ethnicities within the community
- Negative attitudes and outlooks (local and nationwide) difficult to overcome
- Destructive impacts of social media

Economic Development

- Economic development in small town Iowa is difficult
- What else can we do to encourage economic development?
- City Council needs to have a better understanding of the Economic Development Director's current projects and status (if any)- while still maintaining confidentiality requirements and, if possible, the reason(s) companies have not chosen Webster City.
- The inability to attract young professionals through employment opportunities
- Ownership of Beam building – pros/cons
- Continued progress of Vero Blue

Housing/Code Enforcement

- Need to get the new houses the City built sold
- Affordable available housing
- The lack of homes (especially newer homes) for sale in the immediate area
- The lack of rentals properties available to those considering relocating to town
- The lack of low to moderate income housing
- Brewer Creek Estates 5th addition: Development of infrastructure

Infrastructure

- Street conditions
- The continued need for infrastructure improvement beyond the normal LOSST, TIF money
- Replacement of the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

On-Going Commitments/Obligations

The following were identified as on-going city commitments and/or obligations for the upcoming 24 month period:

- Implement economic development strategy to stimulate existing business growth/development and expand the tax base
 - Expand efforts with Iowa Area Development Group and Corn Belt
 - Identify investment opportunities using USDA Rural Development funding
 - Continue efforts to sell Tech Center to promote job creation and economic development
 - Review economic development incentives available from the city
- Continue to effectively manage city finances/budget
 - Continue to monitor impact of state property tax legislation on projected future loss of city revenues
 - Identify investments that will lower City operating expenses (i.e. lime water treatment and waste, accelerate LED street light replacement, low cost street resurfacing options, long-term waste water treatment facility improvement needs)
- Continue programs to address infrastructure issues:
 - Continue street repair program
 - Continue major repairs to water and sanitary sewer lines (including slip lining)
 - Continue underground installation of electric utility lines
 - Continue to implement street lighting plan
 - East Second Street & West Second Street resurfacing/sidewalk projects
- Continue community improvement projects;
 - Code enforcement
 - LMI projects
 - Program addressing abandoned housing properties
- Identify sites and alternatives to promote construction of new housing and affordable housing opportunities
 - Make a decision regarding Brewer Creek Estates expansion – Phase V
- Continue to support Historic Committee’s efforts to expand Wilson Brewer complex and raise more money for year-around use
- Continue ash tree mitigation program
- Follow up on recommendations from Community Feedback Task Force
- Attract developer to construct affordable rental housing
- Evaluate programs to promote downtown revitalization
- Develop long-term plan/financing mechanism for handling storm water

New Priority Projects, Programs, Policies and Initiatives

The City Council reviewed potential new projects, programs, policies and initiatives for consideration and selected the following as priorities for the upcoming 24 month period (listed in priority order):

- 1 (Tie) Develop and implement program for façade improvements and second story improvements downtown
- 1 (Tie) Have a yearly city festival

- 3 (Tie) Bonding for more street improvement projects
- 3 (Tie) Review sign ordinance - open the ordinance back up and finish it

A complete list of all programs and initiatives considered by the Mayor and City Council members is attached as **Exhibit A**.

Organizational Effectiveness

The Mayor and City Council reviewed a variety of ideas relating to improving organizational effectiveness to accomplish the selected goals and priorities. After review and discussion, the Mayor and City Council selected the following steps to improve organizational effectiveness:

- Evaluate methods/programs to enhance transparency with the public.
- Evaluate methods/programs to enhance dissemination of council meetings to the public.
- Hold Town Hall meetings on a quarterly basis with City Manager and Council answering questions.
- Continue succession planning to include “promotions from within” strategy, employee training, and cross-training.
- Continue to ask designated Boards and Commissions to give status report to Council and community at council meeting once a month.
- Review use/policies regarding Electric Operating Fund.
- Provide quarterly updates on status of implementation of council goals/priorities.

Note: The agenda for the Goal Setting Session is attached to this report as **Exhibits B**.

Final Comments

It was a pleasure to once again assist the City of Webster City with this goal setting process. I was very impressed by the level of leadership and teamwork exhibited by the participants in the session.

It is important to note that the prioritization of projects and initiatives is not “cast in stone.” They can be modified as new circumstances may occur.

Jeff Schott
Institute of Public Affairs
University of Iowa
March 4, 2016

Exhibit A

City of Webster City
Goal Setting Session – 2016

SIGNIFICANT NEW INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS CONSIDERED

- Hire professional consultant to assess the strength and weakness of Webster City and to make recommendations to secure new businesses
- Consider evaluation of utility rate structure (water, sewer, electrical)
- Develop plan for future wastewater treatment plant renovations/financing
- Have a yearly city festival
- Bonding for more street improvement projects
- Find a way to encourage low income people to take advantage of the monies available to them for improvements to their property
- Hotel/Motel grant may not be awarded to organizations more than once every four years
- Review sign ordinance - open the ordinance back up and finish it
- Develop and implement program for façade improvements and second story improvements downtown
- Reevaluate parking fine structure downtown on Sundays
- Community solar project – investigate feasibility

Exhibit B

AGENDA

**CITY OF WEBSTER CITY
GOAL SETTING SESSION - 2016**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016
6:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Fuller Hall**

1. Introductions and Opening Comments
 - a. Name, Tenure, and Background
2. General Overview of the Meeting and the Goal Setting Process
 - a. The Ground Rules for this session
3. Progress Report and Update –2015 Goal Setting Report
4. Review Recent City Accomplishments (2015 - 16)
5. Review Issues, Concerns, Opportunities, and Trends
6. Identify On-Going Priorities
7. Review Economic Development Priorities
8. New Programs, Policies, Projects and Initiatives
 - a. Review Results of Questionnaire
 - b. Ranking of Priorities
9. Organizational Effectiveness
 - a. Review Results of Questionnaire
10. IPA Report to the Mayor and City Council – 2016 Goal Setting Process
 - a. Development of Action Plan
 - b. Importance of Quarterly Updates
10. Questions, comments, and suggestions
11. Adjourn