Promoting Trust in a Divisive World
– Free Webinar

Thursday, October 10, 2019
11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. PT (2:00 - 3:30 p.m. ET)

*** Advance registration required for this webinar ***
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7969380521400674306

Webinar Topics:
1. What are the keys to promoting trust in local government?
2. How have local governments built and rebuilt trust?
3. What are useful approaches and resources to support your efforts?

Presenters:
* Frank Benest, ICMA Liaison for Next Generation Initiatives, former City Manager, Palo Alto, CA
* Wanda Page, Deputy City Manager, Durham, NC
* Scott Morelli, City Manager, South Portland, ME

Audience: All persons interested in local government careers


Note: please "white list" or "allow sender" for "customercare@gotowebinar.com" to receive confirmation email for the webinar.

We’ll be using webinar tools (including real-time questions and live polling) to make this a great opportunity for audience interaction.

Post-Webinar Discussion Questions:
a. Where is trust affecting our community and our agency’s ability to serve it?
b. What practical steps would we like to consider to strengthen trust in our community and with our

ICMA State Association Coaching Partners:
Alabama, Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin
Biographical Sketches of Presenters

Frank Benest, ICMA Liaison for Next Generation Initiatives, former City Manager, Palo Alto, CA

Until August 2008, Dr. Frank Benest served as the City Manager of Palo Alto, California. Frank is a noted consultant and trainer on collaborative service delivery, entrepreneurial government, civic engagement, leadership development and succession planning.

Prior to his appointment in Palo Alto, Frank served as City Manager in Brea and Colton, California. He has a doctorate in management from Brigham Young University; a Masters in Public Administration from California State University, Long Beach; and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale University. Frank serves as the Senior Advisor to ICMA on Next Generation Initiatives and chairs the ICMA Coaching Program.

Frank is Past President of the California City Managers Department and past Vice President of the International City/County Management Association. Frank teaches at Stanford University and has been inducted into the National Academy of Public Administration.

Wanda Page, Deputy City Manager, Durham, NC

Wanda Page was appointed Deputy City Manager of Durham in February 2006 after serving the City of Durham for 18 years in the Finance and Audit Services Departments. As Deputy City Manager, Wanda is responsible for assisting the City Manager in overseeing the operations of Durham City government. She has a strong commitment to and passion for Durham’s people and neighborhoods. She is the executive leader of the Office on Youth, Budget and Management Services, Human Resources, Equity and Inclusion, and Technology Solutions Departments as they provide administrative support to departments that directly impact the quality of life for the residents of Durham.

Wanda received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration in 1982 from the University of NC at Chapel Hill. She is also a Cum Laude graduate of North Carolina Central University where she received a Master of Business Administration degree in 1995. In addition to becoming a Certified Public Accountant in 1987, she became a Certified Internal Auditor in 2002, a Chartered Global Management Accountant in 2012, and an ICMA-Credentialed Manager in 2012.

Wanda was appointed to a four year term on the UNC Chapel Hill Board of Visitors in 2013 and served until 2017 on the Student Recruitment and Government Relations Committees. She currently serves on the MPA Advisory Board of the Public Administration Department at North Carolina Central University and is a member of the Executive Committee of the Lincoln Community Health Center Foundation.
Wanda holds active memberships in the International City and County Management Association, North Carolina City and County Management Association, Government Finance Officers Association, the American Institute of CPAs, North Carolina Association of CPAs and the Institute of Internal Auditors, of which she has served on several national and local committees during her tenure. She currently serves on the Collaboration with MPA Programs Committee of the North Carolina City and County Management Association.

Scott Morelli, City Manager, South Portland, ME

Scott Morelli has nearly 15 years of municipal government experience in four different communities and two different states. For the past two-and-a-half years, he has served as City Manager for the City of South Portland, Maine. With a population of 25,556, South Portland is the fourth largest city in the state. Morelli previously served for seven years as the City Manager of Gardiner, Maine (pop. 5,800) and prior to that he was Executive Assistant to the Town Manager in Framingham, MA (then-pop. 68,318) for nearly five years. In 2000-2001, he served as the Selectmen’s Assistant for the town of Waterboro, Maine (then-pop. 6,214).

Morelli is a credentialed manager through the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and is a certified manager through the Maine Town, City and County Management Association (MTCMA). He is currently in his fourth year serving as a member of the MTCMA Board of Directors, where he has chaired both the Awards Committee and Sponsorship Committee. He also served on and chaired the ICMA Awards Evaluation Committee.

Morelli received his Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University and his B.A. in Public Management from the University of Maine. He is married and has three daughters, age 6 – 18.

More Coaching Resources—See http://icma.org/coaching for valuable resources to boost your career. Sign up for the complimentary email list at http://icma.org/coachinglist to keep informed of the details for future ICMA Coaching Program sessions and other resources.

ICMA Coaching Program Outreach Partners:
Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA), Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL), International Network of Asian Public Administrators (I-NAPA), International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR), League of Women in Government (LWG), Local Government Hispanic Network (LGHN), Local Government Management Association of British Columbia (LGMA), National Association of County Administrators (NACA), National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA), and Women Leading Government (WLG)
30 State Association Coaching Partners
Overview of Session

Webinar topics:
1. What are the keys to promoting trust in local government?
2. How have local governments built and rebuilt trust?
3. What are useful approaches and resources to support your efforts?

Presenters:
* Frank Benest, ICMA Liaison for Next Generation Initiatives, former City Manager, Palo Alto, CA
* Wanda Page, Deputy City Manager, Durham, NC
* Scott Morelli, City Manager, South Portland, ME

Producer and Moderator:
* Don Maruska, Master Certified Coach, Director, ICMA Coaching Program
Polling Question #1

How many people are listening on your line?
Promoting Trust in a Divisive World

Frank Benest, former City Manager, Colton, Brea, and Palo Alto, CA, ICMA Liaison for Next Generation Initiatives
Three Major Take Aways

1. Make a personal connection with interested parties
2. Engage stakeholders in authentic conversations
3. Incorporate the ideas of stakeholders to create a shared solution
Trust is Key Currency

- All the big issues are divisive
- Leaders must acknowledge “trust deficits” inside & outside organizations
- To improve organizations & communities, leaders must still act amidst uncertainty & lack of confidence
Why Trust?

- Only 49% of employees have a great deal of trust in their boss.
- Only 40% trust their local government (Edelman “Trust Barometer”).
- People choose to follow leaders (or not).
Why Trust?

- Everyone has “veto” power
- Big challenges are “adaptive” (not technical)
  - No right or wrong answers
  - Value conflicts
  - Each stakeholder group has its own preferred solution
  - Requires more leadership, not management
Polling Question #2

Where does your agency face trust issues?

a. within the organization
b. with elected officials
c. with the public
Day Workers in Brea
Day Workers in Brea

- Day workers congregating in downtown
- Council wanted to use police enforcement
- Bought time
- Organized diverse staff team
- Proposed Jobs Program
- Proposal generated intense conflict
Day Workers in Brea

- Expanded team to include day workers, merchants & faith leaders & volunteers
- Started conversations with stakeholders
- Addressed concerns
- Engaged day workers to run Job Center
- Showed our work
- Focused on a big “why”
- Pilot Job Center for Day Workers approved 3-2
Trust-Building

- Expanded team to include all stakeholders
- Engaged all stakeholders in authentic conversations & built relationships
- Acknowledged problems & addressed them
- Showed our work
- Ensured that everyone got “finger-prints” on solution
- Took some “smart risks”
- Went slow to go fast
Seeking “Buy-In”
Authentic Conversations

- Followers may follow if they feel connected to you.
- Connection & trust are created by entering into authentic conversations.

“Leadership is the art of conversation.”

David Whyte
Ideas to Promote Trust

1. Embrace uncertainty & “messiness”
2. Connect on personal level
3. Engage stakeholders in authentic conversations
4. Listen first; seek to understand
5. Ask questions with a “curious mind”
Ideas to Promote Trust

6. Focus on the “why” (not just the “what” & “how”)
7. Talk straight; be transparent & optimistic
8. Get people’s fingerprints on solution
9. Pilot everything
10. “Ready, fire, aim’’
Authentic Conversations (con’t)

In real conversations, you don’t have to be right.

“Real listening is a willingness to let the other person change you.”

Alan Alda
Resources

- Stephen R. Covey, *The Speed of Trust*
- Simon Sinek, TED Talk, “How Great Leaders Inspire Action”
- Frank’s Career Compass columns
  - “Trust Me!”
  - “The Power of Vulnerability”
  - “Leadership is the Art of Conversation”
Polling Question #3

Which of these ideas to promote trust would be useful for your agency?

a. Connect on personal level
b. Engage stakeholders in authentic conversations
c. Listen first; seek to understand
d. Get people’s fingerprints on solution
e. Pilot everything
Promoting Trust in a Divisive World

Deputy City Manager Wanda Page | ICMA Coaching Program
• Trust building starts BEFORE any incident – not during it

• Must respond quickly

• Thoughtfulness around ‘repair’ of lost trust is necessary or it makes situation worse
Who are we?
• Incorporated in 1869 as a Municipal Corporation in N.C.; 4th largest N.C. city with 270,000+ residents

• Council-Manager form of government (Elected Mayor and Six-Member Council)

• 2,650 full-time employees

• Operating budget: $477 million

• Capital budget: $391 million
What guides our work?
Council Adopted Strategic Plan Goals

• Innovative & High-Performing Organization
• Connected, Engaged & Diverse Communities
• Shared Economic Prosperity
• Sustainable Natural & Built Environment
• Building a Safer Community Together
Why is trust important?
Employee Engagement Index
2019 vs. 2017 Survey Results
Percent Engaged

Employee Engagement
- Previous: 58%
  - 36% Engaged
  - 64% Not Engaged

City Management
- Previous: 41%
  - 39% Engaged
  - 61% Not Engaged

Direct Supervisor
- Previous: 77%
  - 21% Engaged
  - 79% Not Engaged
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Management</th>
<th>Direct Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Management shows respect for employees.</td>
<td>My direct supervisor provides me flexibility and choice in how I do my work. 86% (+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust City Management to make decisions that are in the best interest of the organization.</td>
<td>My direct supervisor accepts personal accountability for the performance and outcome of our work unit. 80% (+2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Management is open, honest, and transparent.</td>
<td>My direct supervisor helps me to solve problems at work. 82% (-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My opinions matter to City Management.</td>
<td>My direct supervisor communicates changes that will affect my work and me. 83% (+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My direct supervisor follows through by implementing recommendations and feedback from employees. 80% (+3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When trust is tested
• 20” water line break

• Major emergency repair took 8 hours

• After repair was complete an environmental scientist notified staff that soil was known to be contaminated with arsenic & lead

• Staff sent for testing 25 days after repair
• Test results confirmed higher-than-expected arsenic levels in staff

• Additional staff members near site raised safety concerns & distrust of information being shared by management
• Concerned staff, distrustful of management, contacted multiple local media outlets

• Internal trust issue generated an external communication issue
How we responded
• Department scheduled tests, explained results, and counseled impacted staff and their families

• Prepared and distributed fact sheets for all 350+ employees of the department
• Performed additional tests and communicated results for reassurance risk was contained and employees were safe

• Immediately began collecting information from federal and state databases to document possible soil contamination areas to prevent future worksite exposure
• Removed entire section of damaged water line in affected area from system

• Responded to news media inquiries regarding concerns raised by employees and public
Lessons Learned
• Trust building starts BEFORE the incident – not during it. Need that equity “in the bank” before a crisis.

• Management must respond faster. Lack of response causes unnecessary fear and distrust by staff.

• Subject-matter experts must be credible with staff, i.e. “not Management’s doctor.”

• Proactively sought and now maintain database of other contaminated sites to prevent future exposure.
Polling Question #4

Which of these take aways from the Durham example would help your agency?

a. Build trust before incidents arise--have equity in the bank
b. Respond quickly--delay causes unnecessary fear and distrust
c. Subject matter experts must be credible to stakeholders
d. Proactively address other potential exposures
Promoting Trust in a Divisive World

Scott Morelli, City Manager | South Portland, Maine
Promoting Trust in a Divisive World

• Key Points
  1. Learn from your past – both the good, the bad, and the ugly
  2. Be transparent – “no comment” is no good
  3. Ethics matter – self-inflicted wounds are the worst
Promoting Trust in a Divisive World

South Portland, ME

• 4th largest city in state (~26,000 pop)
• During WWII, shipyard built 236 Liberty Ships, employing 30,000 people at it’s peak
• A pipeline to Montreal was created around same time to help ensure safe transports of oil to Canada
• Rigby Yard: Largest RR yard in New England
• Highly educated and engaged
  • 43% with bachelors degree or better (30% U.S., 29% ME)
Promoting Trust in a Divisive World

• City of South Portland, Maine
  • Numerous divisive issues over the years has led to heated public arguments, acrimony at Council meetings, and distrust of elected officials and staff
    • Contentious issues where the City has advocated a certain position
    • (Mis)Interpretations of City ordinance by City staff, or at least perception of
  • In process of healing from some of these hot-button issues – not there yet!
Past Controversies: “Tar Sands” Ordinance

• In 2009, Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board approved request by Portland Pipeline Corporation (PPLC) to reverse their pipeline to export “tar sands”
  • Many residents felt ordinance prohibited

• In 2013 a citizens group proposed an ordinance to ban exporting “tar sands” from the City’s numerous coastal terminals

• Nearly 500 citizens packed the gym at our Community Center to show their support or opposition to the ordinance

• Voters rejected in November 2013, opposed by some who supported the idea but thought ordinance too broad
  • They promised City Council would come back with a more narrow ordinance
Past Controversies: “Tar Sands” Ordinance

• City Council approved a more narrow ban of bulk loading of crude oil on to tankers to protect public health
• Led to a lawsuit, where the City has spent nearly $2.5 million thus far defending itself
• City has won first round in federal court; federal appeals court in Boston recently heard oral arguments and we are awaiting their decision
• Council’s action to approve after voters rejected a similar ordinance still controversial – could it have been explained better?

Photo from PPL in 2013. Portland Press Herald
Past Controversies: LP Gas Terminal

- Project proposed for local rail yard to house liquid petroleum gas
- Code Enforcement Officer endorsed plan as compliant with City ordinance when in front of Planning Board
- Neighbors opposed and a resident called into question the CEO’s interpretation, eventually leading the City to hire a consultant to review
- Consultant contradicted CEO and said LP gas storage was not allowed
- Company pulled proposal
- City Councilor lambasted staff for wasting “time and money” to get “things right”
- Could CEO checking with legal counsel first have avoided all of this?
Promoting Trust in a Divisive World

• During this time, the code officer of 35 years and city manager of 9 years (30 with the City) both resigned

• On heels of these major issues, several smaller but significant issues have surfaced over the past year

• Had the potential to strain public trust in government and lead to more discontent within community
  • Needed to handle swiftly, yet delicately, to ensure we acted appropriately
October 2018: Million Dollar Mistake

- During a training and testing exercise, a firefighter accidentally struck a power line with the City’s brand new $1.1 million ladder truck, which had been in service for two days
- No one injured but vehicle caught fire and a picture of burning truck made its rounds on social media, resulting in predictable comments about competence and wasting tax dollars

October 2018: Million Dollar Mistake

- Safety Officer conducted an investigation – including an interview with a resident who witnessed event
- Kept media informed throughout three month process
  - Council always had advance copy
- Insurance covered most of cost to replace ladder truck (total loss) – phew!
- Employee disciplined, tasked with creating new protocols to avoid similar situations in future
- Not much backlash from public
February 2019: Misuse of City Resources

- Upset resident sent City Councilors and the media a video which purportedly showed a member of the Fire Department salting his driveway (in a neighboring community) using City road salt and a City vehicle
- Claimed this was not the first time the incident occurred
February 2019: Misuse of City Resources

- Interviewed employee, confirmed incident, and disciplined
- Since media had been alerted, and the incident raised concerns about abuse of City resources, we pushed the envelope on what we could say/release to the media to let public know we took seriously
- Again, not much backlash, and a few residents even commended us for taking action and not sweeping under the rug

South Portland suspends worker for salting his driveway in Scarborough with city truck

South Portland — A longtime city employee was suspended for a week without pay after he was videotaped applying salt to the driveway at his home in Scarborough using a Fire Department service truck.

Ronald Doucette was a firefighter for 35 years and has held a part-time maintenance position with the department since he retired in 2005, city officials said Friday.

Doucette was videotaped on Feb. 21 applying salt to his driveway at 2 Powderhorn Drive, off Pleasant Hill Road, just over the city line. He shares the home with his wife, Patricia Doucette, who was the city’s code enforcement officer for 35 years before she retired in February 2017.
March 2019: Racial-Profiling/Discrimination Complaint

• In early 2019, separate racial incidents made headlines in two Maine communities
  • Comments made by Jackman, Maine town manager
  • Allegations made by teaching at Kennebunk High School in Kennebunk, Maine
March 2019: Racial-Profiling/Discrimination Complaint

- Made by parent of children in City's before and after school care programs
  - Staff disputed but parent was adamant and the claim was very serious
  - City Councilor involved
  - Complaint was not widespread; sent to key staff and some elected officials

- Hired an outside attorney not affiliated with the City who specialized in these matters to investigate the claims
  - Vindicated City of any discrimination or wrong-doing

- Parent thankful we took the time to investigate, though disappointed he could not see final report (ME law)

- Could have blown up in to much larger issue had we not taken seriously and kept both complainant and City Council apprised during process
August 2019: Mandatory Ethics Training

• Felt the City's culture needed an infusion of ethics training to reinforce the importance of public trust

• Hired Martha Perego from ICMA to lead mandatory training sessions for all employees

• More trainings to come, especially for supervisors, along with updates to the City’s ethics policy
  • Had an employee win a truck at a City-paid conference earlier this decade ... would the public approve? Did the policy address this?
Importance of Ethics Policy

- Be sure your community has one
- Should address the following areas:
  - Off Duty Conduct
  - Gifts
  - Political Activity
  - Use of City Resources
  - Conflicts of Interest
- Instill in new employees from day one – City implementing a New Employee Orientation program to be held tri-annually, will focus on ethics and public trust
Lessons Learned

• Be transparent
  • More information, not less, is key to building public trust and avoid assertions that decisions are being made behind-the-scenes

• Deal with issues immediately
  • The longer an incident goes unanswered, the more speculation builds

• One step at a time
  • You can’t make up for past mistrust all at once but you can begin rebuilding it by dealing with new issues as they emerge in a transparent and meaningful manner

• Don’t be afraid to admit mistakes
  • Owning your mistakes, even if it means reversing a previous decision, can lead to improved trust, especially if you note steps as to how similar mistakes will be avoided in the future

• New eyes
  • If you are new to an organization, you have an opportunity to identify and correct things that may have or be causes for mistrust – “We’ve always done it that way” mentality
Polling Question #5

Which lessons learned will help your agency? [check all that apply]

a. Be transparent
b. Deal with issues immediately
c. Take one step at a time
d. Don’t be afraid to admit mistakes
e. Apply “new eyes” to look at things differently
Post-webinar discussion questions

a. Where is trust affecting our community and our agency’s ability to serve it?

b. What practical steps would we like to consider to strengthen trust in our community and with our agency?

c. What resources are relevant for us to pursue further?
Find helpful resources online

https://icma.org/coaching

ICMA Coaching Program Webinars
Six live webinars spotlighting best practices featuring local government professionals.

1:1 Coaching
Personal guidance in your local government career from a local government professional.

CoachConnect
Get paired with the coach or coachess that fits your needs today!

Career Compass
An ICMA Coaching Program column focused on career issues for local government.

Webinar Archives
Miss a webinar? Watch it anytime!

Coaching Resources & FAQs
These PDFs and videos will help you get started on your coaching journey.

Talent Development
Resources you can use independently, with a coach, or across your organization to create...

Coaching Program Partners & Sponsors
The Coaching Program thrives because of our state association partners, outreach partner.

Sign up for the ICMA Coaching Newsletter: http://icma.org/CoachingList
Polling Question #6

How was this webinar of value to you or your agency?  
[click all that apply]

a. Exploring keys to promote trust in local government
b. Learning from examples of how to build/rebuild trust
c. Helping your agency focus on where it needs to boost trust
d. Identifying useful resources
Contacts for today’s session

Presenters:

* Frank Benest, ICMA Liaison for Next Generation Initiatives, former City Manager, Palo Alto, CA frank@frankbenest.com
* Wanda Page, Deputy City Manager, Durham, NC wanda.page@durhamnc.gov
* Scott Morelli, City Manager, South Portland, ME smorelli@southportland.org

Don Maruska, Director, ICMA Coaching Program ICMACoaching@donmaruska.com

Please be sure to complete the post-webinar survey. We value your input.
Register now for upcoming webinar

“Having Difficult Conversations in Your Organization and Beyond”
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. PT (12:30 - 2:00 p.m. ET), Thursday, November 14, 2019
Registration link:
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4582166726757819138

For all webinar registration links and digital recordings, go to
https://icma.org/coachingwebinars.
Polling Results from “Promoting Trust in a Divisive World” – webinar
October 10, 2019
977 sites registered; 405 locations in live audience
775 estimated participants in live audience