



# Effective Communications

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S.C. Association of Counties

*August 2019*

# Today's participants

Moderator: **Anna Berger**, *Director of Research and Training*  
S.C. Association of Counties

Panelists:

**Jackie R. Broach-Akers**, *Public Information Officer*  
Georgetown County

**Jim T. McCain Jr.**, *Council Chairman*  
Sumter County

**Gary M. Mixon**, *Administrator*  
Sumter County

**Katherine O'Neill**, *Chief Operating Officer*  
The Palladian Group

**Charles Weathers**, *President*  
The Weathers Group

What is missing? (A trained facilitator)

Is our trip mapped out?

# Who is telling our story?

Media, friend or foe?

Be honest – are we using technology as much as we can?

Do we look like we mean it?

## We are a team, right?

Uh oh... what do we do now?

Dear younger me...

# Who is telling our story?

- How often should we tell our story?
- When is a good time to deliver a “not-so-good” message?
- Does the messenger matter? Why?
- How do we keep council, the administrator, leadership team and front-line staff on the same page?
- Pros/Cons of Town Hall vs. Public Hearing.
- What tools/techniques are available to help council members convey the messages?
- Should we ask council members to carry around folders of reports?
- How can the website be used in this area?

# Is our trip mapped out?

- How do we ensure decisions are made that are consistent with our vision, mission and values?
- Can people with different personal/political interests buy into the same vision, mission and values?
- Who are our community partners and how do we collaborate on goals?
- How do the values serve a guard rails to keep us on track?

# We are a team, right?

- When does the Chairman communicate on behalf of Council?
- How does the Chairman communicate with Council?
- How do committee chairs communicate with Council and the administrator?
- When do individual members communicate for themselves?
- How do we keep the team intact when there is disagreement?
- What happens when county employees are the last to know?

# Do we look like we mean it?



- Are people really watching how council members and other leaders are responding during meetings?
- Do leaders set the tone through their non-verbal cues?
- How do we walk the talk?

# Media – Friend or Foe?



- Are media our friend or foe?
- Is it wise to be proactive or to lay low?
- Is there such a thing as “off the record” or embargoed stories?
- How can you help the county team get on the same page during a slow news day?



# Be honest – are we using technology as much as we can?



- How do you use the media to rebroadcast your story on the county website?
- Is social media worth the time and effort?
- How close can you get to continuous uninterrupted service through your website?
- Who are your website visitors?

Uh oh.... what do we do now?

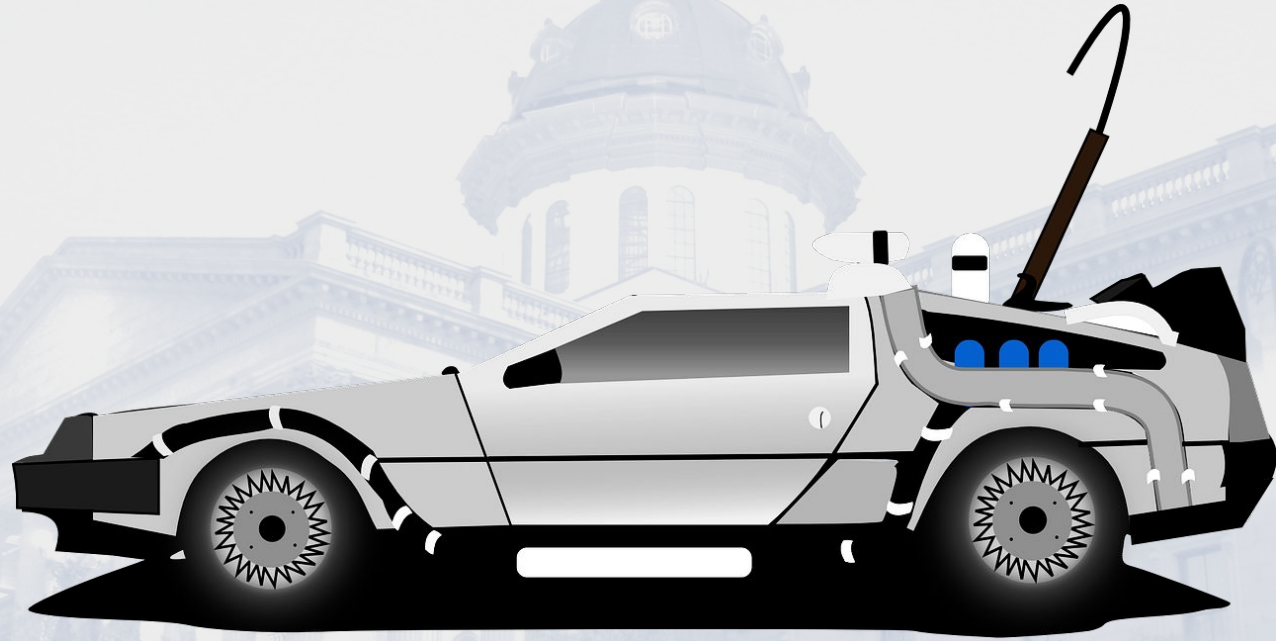
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- How do you respond when advised to say “no comment”?
- How can we help council members when they want to say something, but they can’t?
- What is the best way to balance the tension between following prudent legal advice and being there for the people in the community?
- How transparent can/should you be?

# What is missing? (A trained facilitator)

- Why is having a neutral 3rd party beneficial?
- How does a facilitator create a safe space for brave conversations?
- What are the challenges of administrators or council members self-facilitating strategy and visioning sessions?
- How can everyone play a role in building the agenda?
- What work takes place in advance with Council members?

# Dear younger me...



- Looking back, what advice would you as an experienced council chair or county administrator, give to your younger self?



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