

City of Sheldon Goal Setting Report 2019

Mayor:
Greg Geels

City Council:
Brad Hindt
Pete Hamill
Shawn Broesder
Tom Eggers
Wayne Barahona

Facilitated by:

Eric Christianson
ejchr@iastate.edu
(515) 231-6513

Julie Robison
jrobison@iastate.edu
(515) 231-8457

GOAL SETTING SESSION 2019

Introduction

The City of Sheldon requested Iowa State Extension and Outreach (ISUEO) assist the city with goal setting. ISUEO agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Conduct a survey with the Mayor and City Council Members to discuss recent accomplishments, issues/trends/concerns, potential new initiatives/programs/policies, and suggestions to improve organizational effectiveness. The full results of this survey are available as Exhibit A.
2. Conduct a goal-setting session with the elected officials.
3. Preparation of this final report.

Goal Setting Work Session

City Council Members held a goal setting work session conducted by ISUEO on December 11, 2019. In attendance and participating at these meetings were Mayor Greg Geels, and Council Members, Brad Hindt, Pete Hamill, Shawn Broesder, Tom Eggers, and Wayne Barahona.

Also attending were City Manager, Sam Kooiker, City Clerk, Angela Beckman, Director of Public Works, Todd Uhl, Library Director, Nicole Morgan, Interim Police Chief, David Dykstra, Crossroads Pavilion Manger, Tricia Meendering, Community Development Director, Curt Strouth, Ambulance Director, Kevin Miller, and Sheldon Chamber Development Corporation member, April Schaefer. Media in attendance was Ty Rushing with the Sheldon Mail-Sun.

I. Major Accomplishments

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

Infrastructure

- New Waste Water Treatment Plant
- 16th Street project

Economic development & Housing

- Expansion of Crossroads Industrial Park opening up 15 acres of Heavy Industrial Development
 - Floyd Addition
- Residential and Rental Developments (Sheldon Crossing, Prairie Trail Village)
- Local Business Expansions (Maintainer, Deluxe Feeds/Kent Nutrition)
- Infrastructure improvements to the new Crossroads North Business Park
 - The development agreement to build a new Travel Plaza

City Facilities/Operations

- The hiring of a new City Manager
- Paying down debt
- Developing an agreement with Archer for ambulance services
- Getting interest income on City's operating monies
- Streamlining the utility billing process
- Ongoing efforts to clean up nuisance properties
- The process underway to clean up dilapidated buildings
- The purchase of a new firetruck
- Implementation of a police reserve program

Parks and Rec

- Crossroads Pavilion Event Center
- New Crossroads Pavilion manager hired

The completion of the Master Plan for the proposed Crossroads Community Park

II. Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure maintenance
- Road conditions
- Ability to meet all EPA and IDNR regulations
- Older infrastructure in areas of town

Housing

- Lack of rental code
- Community betterment
- Urban Revitalization
 - Eagle Construction & Trilogy Addition
 - Opportunities for more use
- Housing development
- Older properties

Budget/Finance

- Budget rationalization
- Long-term capital improvement projects lacking funding sources
- Debt
- The tax levy / increase cap
- Rising costs without a rising revenue stream
- Limited revenue sources and challenges with our general fund

City Facilities/Operations

- Re-aligning our priorities under new city management
- High employee insurance costs
- Negotiating higher interest rates for cash balances at NW Bank
- Staff retirement in all departments
- Staff replacement in all departments
- Unemployment Rate/Workforce Availability
- Not enough workers to fill jobs that already exist
- Aging workforce and competitive wages and benefits to rehire

Community Sentiment

- Creating a positive attitude in the community
- Public negativity
- Vocal negative minority

Public Safety

- Lack of volunteers for our emergency services
- Number of upcoming potential retirements from the police force
- Hiring a new Police Chief
- Retirements and turnover at the police department
- Wage disparity between Sheldon PD and area county sheriff's departments

- Low number of officers/1000 of population
- Increase in drug usage and crimes such as theft and violence as a result of drug usage/addiction

Economic Development

- Fewer retail businesses downtown
- Continue to be progressive in working with our local businesses to grow here locally
- Workforce challenges for industry
- Loss of Shopko and continued bleed of retail
- Lead by example by purchasing/hiring locally

Other

- Need to continue to be progressive
- Daycare shortages

III. On-Going Initiatives / Priorities

Infrastructure

- Continue to explore to modernize water distribution system
 - Understand Lewis and Clark water system hook-up impact
 - Explore east side tower
- The start of phase 2 of Crossroads North Business Park infrastructure

Housing & Economic Development

- Dispose of nuisance properties
- Nuisance property clean-up
- Continue to market, sell, and develop Crossroads North
- Develop commercial properties around Crossroad Pavilion

City Facilities/Operations

- Updating City Codes & Codification
 - Update our nuisance codes & property maintenance code
 - Vicious dog ordinance & dog licensing
 - ATV ordinance update
 - Peddlers permit update and simplify
- Update personnel policy
- Develop cash balance policy for general fund
- Increase recycling frequency

Public Safety

- Developing a funding source for emergency services capital improvements
- EMS Fleet of 3
- Continue to review and revise our police department policy handbook

The council identified the following as topics that may require further discussion at a future work session or regular meeting of the City Council:

- Daycare – potential for city support
- New Water Tower (East side)
- NW Iowa Planning Presentation on Nuisance Abatement, Property Maintenance, and Rental Inspection
- Cash Balance Policy
- Police hierarchy and structure
- Council rules and procedures

IV. Significant NEW Initiatives, Programs, Policies, or Actions

The council considered a number of potential priorities for the next two years and voted on their top choices. The full vote tallies are available as Exhibit B.

- Major Street Repairs
 - Oak, Pine, South 3rd, and North 5th
- Plan for long term solution for funding of emergency service
- Explore IT Managed Services
- Identifying space for affordable housing and formulate an incentive plan for building in it

V. Organizational Effectiveness

Council identified a number of accomplishments of the past two years including, in particular:

- More open lines of communication amongst council and with the Manager
- Improvements in Council Room technology
- Recognition of employees and volunteers with regular expressions of appreciation
- Excellent working relationship with SCDC and staff

For the upcoming year, Council aspires to focus on:

- Developing a vision and narrative for the city going forward to promote speaking in unison
- Managing public communications in a way that is proactive and shares the good news and work that is happening in the City
- Educating the public in a more systematic and planned way in order to provide factual information about decisions and city affairs
- Continuing to operate efficiently
- Continuing the great working relationship between SCDC and the City of Sheldon
- Continuing to regularly visit city departments
- Implementing a staff recognition and appreciation process by recognizing staff years of service with the City

To support Council goals regarding Organizational Effectiveness, a presentation on Public Comment Strategies for City Council Meetings was provided which focused on Best Practice Guidelines for including public comment periods in regular business meetings; Sample Structure for Public Comment Periods with Recommendations and Key Considerations; Additional Strategies for Public Input; and Key Background References on Iowa State Code and general guidance. Discussion focused on a desire to improve the structure and format for incorporating public comment into regular business meetings. Council will continue to consider the recommendations provided. The handout shared is available as Exhibit C.

It was a pleasure to assist the City of Sheldon with this goal setting process. We were particularly impressed with the level of cooperation and collaboration between the City Council and the staff.

Eric Christianson
Julie Robison
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

December 13, 2019

EXHIBIT A

CITY OF SHELDON GOAL SETTING – 2019 ELECTED OFFICIAL AND STAFF RESPONSES (E) indicates Elected Officials (S) indicates Staff Responses

I. Major Accomplishments

Infrastructure

- New Waste Water Treatment Plant (S/E)
- 16th Street project (S)

Housing

- Residential Developments (Crossroads North development, Sheldon Crossing, Prairie Trail Village (S/E)
- Floyd Addition (S)

Economic development

- Expansion of Crossroads Industrial Park opening up 15 acres of Heavy Industrial Development. (S/E)
- Commercial Land Development (E)
- Local Business Expansions (Maintainer, Deluxe Feeds/Kent Nutrition) (S)
- Infrastructure improvements to the new Crossroads North Business Park (S)
- The purchase of 35 acres of ground for a new Business Park (S)
- The development agreement to build a new Travel Plaza in Crossroads North Business Park (S)

City Facilities/Operations

- The hiring of a new City Manager (S/E)
- Paying down debt (S/E)
- Getting interest income on City's operating monies (S)
- Streamlining the utility billing process (S)
- Ongoing efforts to clean up nuisance properties (2) (S)
- The process underway to clean up dilapidated buildings (S)
- The purchase of a new firetruck (S)
- Implementation of a police reserve program (S)

Parks and Rec

- Crossroads Pavilion Event Center (S/E)
- New Crossroads Pavilion manager hired (S)
- The completion of the Master Plan for the proposed Crossroads Community Park. (S)

II. Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities

Community Sentiment

- Negative press coverage (E/S)
- Vocal negative minority (E)
- Creating a positive attitude in the community (E)
- disruptive council meetings (S)
- The negative culture (S)
- Timing on public issues. (S)
- Public negativity (S)

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure maintenance (E)
- Infrastructure needs (S)
- Ability to meet all EPA and IDNR regulations (S)
- Condition of some streets (S)
- Older infrastructure in areas of town (S)

Housing

- Lack of rental code (E)
- Community in betterment (E)
- Urban Revitalization (E)
- Housing development (E)
- Adequate housing (S)
- Older properties (S)

Budget/Finance

- Budget rationalization (E/S)
- Long term capital improvement projects lacking funding sources (E)
- The tax levy / increase cap (S)
- Rising costs without a rising revenue stream (S)
- Limited revenue sources and challenges with our general fund (S)

City Facilities/Operations

- High employee insurance costs (E)
- Staff retirement in all departments (S)
- Staff replacement in all departments (S)
- Unemployment Rate/Workforce Availability (S)
- Not enough workers to fill jobs that already exist (S)
- aging workforce and competitive wages and benefits to rehire (S)

Public Safety

- Lack of volunteers for our emergency services (E)
- Number of upcoming potential retirements from the police force (E)
- Hiring a new Police Chief (S)
- Retirements and turnover at the police department (S)

- Wage disparity between Sheldon PD and area county sheriff's departments (S)
- Dangerously low number of officers/1000 of population (S)
- Increase in drug usage and crimes such as theft and violence as a result of drug usage/addiction (S)

Economic Development

- Deterioration of downtown (E)
- Continue to be progressive in working with our local businesses to grow here locally. (S)
- Stagnant employment opportunities and limited growth in industry (S)
- Loss of Shopko and continued bleed of retail. (S)
- Lead by example by purchasing/hiring locally (S)
- Struggling and declining retail businesses (S)

Other

- Need to continue to be progressive (S)
- Daycare Shortages (S)

III. On-going Initiatives / Priorities

Infrastructure

- Street Repair (E/S)
- Continue to enhance the entrances to Sheldon (E)
- New Water Tower (East Side) (E)
- Lewis & Clark water project hook-up (S)
- 2nd Water Tower (S)
- Lewis and Clark water system (S)
- The completion of phase 2 of Crossroads North Business Park Infrastructure (S)

Housing & Economic Development

- We need to make better progress on identifying space for affordable housing and formulate an incentive plan for building in it. (E)
- Nuisance property clean-up (S)
- Continue to market, sell and develop Crossroads North (S)
- Continue to address debilitated properties in town (S)

City Facilities/Operations

- Re-aligning our priorities under new city management (E)
- Updating City Codes (S)
- Develop building codes (S)
- Update our nuisance codes (S)
- Revision of policies and procedures (S)
- Franchise Agreement & Fee with MidAmerican Energy (S)

Public Safety

- EMS Fleet of 3 (S)
- Additional staff for public safety (S)

- Hire an additional police officer (S)
- Promote someone to be a full-time investigator (S)
- Continue to review and revise our police department policy handbook (S)

Parks & Rec

- Crossroads Park (in phases) (S)
- A multi stage plan for the borrow pit area to proceed onward (start with one area and complete a little bit each year) (S)

IV. Significant NEW Initiatives, Programs, Policies, or Actions

- Develop a unified vision for downtown to prepare for residential and commercial expansion (E)
- Update City Codes (S)
- Filling key positions (S)
- Updating personnel manual and related policies (S)
- Infrastructure and street repairs (S)
- Fill the HC Lane buildings (S)
- Fill the old Bomgaars Building (S)
- Revitalize Old 60 (S)
- Clean-up nuisance properties including the old trailers on Western Avenue (S)
- Assistance to Daycare(s) to address the increasing demand of quality daycare locally. (S)
- Implement Rental and Building Codes (2) (S)
- Technology security (S)
- Update current Code of Ordinances,
 - vicious dog ordinance (S)
 - nuisance abatement (S)
 - ATV ordinance (S)
 - peddlers permit. (S)
- Street/Infrastructure updates (S)

V. Organizational Effectiveness

- Upgrade the technology in the Council Chambers. (E)
- Develop a vision and narrative for the city going forward that is a message we can speak in unison. We are facing some negative press (warranted and not) and our job of moving forward would be much more successful if we are unified in our vision. (E)
- Vision Casting & Management (E)
- We are a very lean operation. No City engineer, no assistant directors, no code enforcement person, no building/zoning inspections person, and most directors handle their own administrative tasks. (S)
- Continue the great working relationship between the SCDC and City of Sheldon. (S)
- Micro Management in departments. Involving individuals in issues that shouldn't be involved. (S)

- Council member and/or mayor visits with the various city departments on a regular basis
- Implement a staff recognition/appreciation process by recognizing years of service (such as every 5 years) with the city (S)

Any other feedback:

Morale of elected officials and staff is ok, but it's lower than it should be because it seems, as a community, we are held hostage by a few negative people who aren't interested in seeing the community move forward.

Our current property tax levy is 10 cents less per thousand than it was in 2003. There is not room for the kind of waste that we are often so derisively accused of. The continual negativity is creating a negative image of Sheldon, and is hurting our community's reputation in a regional and statewide sense.

I feel we have a leadership structure in place that believes in educating and being transparent so as to encourage and allow effective decision making. I support the additional communication that Sam provides on a variety of concerns or accomplishments.

Great staff who work collaborative well together between departments and organizations.

Exhibit B

City of Sheldon
Goal Setting Session – 2019

SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS CONSIDERED

(votes received in parentheses)

- Major Street Repairs (5)
 - Will be in 5-year CIP: Oak, Pine, South 3rd, and North 5th
- Plan for long-term solution for funding of emergency service (5)
- Explore IT Managed Services (5)
- We need to make better progress on identifying space for affordable housing and formulate an incentive plan for building in it (4)

- Develop a unified vision for downtown to prepare for residential and commercial expansion (3)
- Crossroads Park (in phases) (3)
- Assistance to Daycare to address the increasing demand of quality daycare locally (2)
- Plan to enhance the entrances to Sheldon (1)
 - Revitalize Old 60
- Create a "finance committee" made up of citizens (1)
- Hire additional police officers (1)
 - Promote someone to be a full-time investigator
- Explore getting a police dog (0)
- Establish mechanism to help Airport save up funding for grant matches (0)
- Additional full or part time emergency service staff (0)
- Reduce debt (0)

Exhibit C
**PUBLIC COMMENT STRATEGIES FOR CITY COUNCIL
MEETINGS:
TEN BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

GENERAL PURPOSE STATEMENT ON PUBLIC COMMENT: To provide the public an opportunity to share views with their elected leadership during regular meetings of the Council in order to facilitate meaningful public participation. This is commonly a time when the public provides input and elected leaders listen and receive information which is taken into consideration in the decision-making.

TOP TEN GUIDELINES

1. Establish structure for public comment periods in Council Rules of Procedure in a way that reflects your community's values.
2. Include written guidelines, or ground rules, as part of the published Council Agenda to provide the public clear expectations in advance.
3. The Mayor or presiding officer may review the written guidelines at the beginning of the comment period and explain this is a time for public input and that the council will not engage in dialogue. Clear ground rules stated prior to opening the floor for Public Comments are helpful to set the tone.
4. Designate a specific period either at the beginning or end of the meeting for public comment. Public comment near the beginning of the meeting allows the public to better anticipate the approximate timing of the comment period in the agenda.
5. Establish a time limit for the public comment period (for example, one hour) in order to maintain an efficient meeting and provide adequate time for all items on a business agenda to be accomplished.
6. It is reasonable to limit speakers to 3 or 5 minutes during open comment period. Apply time limits consistently and fairly to all speakers, regardless of subject. Remind speakers to wrap up comments if necessary.
7. Generally, refrain from responding to speakers or engage in dialogue during Public Comment periods, except to provide brief factual information (such as the time of a meeting or event) or refer the staff to follow up with responses at a later date. Avoid back-and-forth.
8. Listen attentively to each speaker, avoiding any behavior which could be perceived as lack of interest.
9. Thank each speaker, regardless of subject and whether positive or negative.
10. Make clear to the public there are additional mechanisms for communicating with their elected leaders in addition to formal council business meetings.

SAMPLE STRUCTURE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

PUBLIC FORUM (one-hour time limit)

Public Forum is the City Council's opportunity to hear comments from as many members of the public as possible. During Public Forum, the City Council receives comments and refrains from speaking. The Mayor may ask the City Manager to follow up.

Anyone who wants to speak during Public Comment Period should do the following:

1. Raise your hand to be recognized by the Mayor and then come to the speaker's podium/microphone and state your name and address.
2. Be concise and limit comments to three (or five) minutes.
3. If you are addressing a matter on the agenda, state the agenda item you are speaking about and if you are speaking on more than one agenda item, arrange your comments in chronological order.
4. Try not to duplicate information that has already been presented.
5. Direct comments to the entire Council and not to an individual Council Member.
6. Maintain a courteous and respectful manner.
7. Give the City Clerk your contact information and any written handouts.

Thank you to everyone in the audience for respecting the business meeting.

Recommendation for Council Consideration:

- Adopt a simple statement such as the above which may be included on the official agenda to provide this information to speakers in advance of the meeting. In addition, the Mayor may read this statement prior to opening the floor for Public Comment.
- The statement can be modified to state that speakers may only speak on items not on the agenda (if desired) or for which there are designated public hearings.
- Adopting this simple statement can be an interim step to implementing more detailed Rules of Procedures, should that be desired.

Key Considerations:

- **Placement of Public Comment Period** in the order of business. Best Practice suggests locating at the beginning of the agenda after routine opening agenda items.
- **Length of Public Comment Period.** Best Practice suggests one-hour time limit.
- **Length of Individual Speaker Comments.** Best Practice suggests 3-5 minutes.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES TO INVITE PUBLIC INPUT BEYOND REGULARLY SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETINGS*

- Regularly invite constituents to contact members of Council and provide easy-to-access contact information.
- In the event a controversial issue for which you expect large numbers of public commenters, ask a staff member to be available after the end of the council meeting to address questions.
- Hold a public workshop on a particularly concerning issue where council and or staff members are available to share information and listen to more extended comments.
- Establish regular opportunities to connect with the public, including open office hours, coffee with the Mayor and Council, community forums and planning charrettes.
- For recurrent or especially complex issues, consider asking a professional facilitator to conduct a focus group with concerned public to help the council gain clarity on the public's experience, attitudes and values. Focus Groups can help to identify solutions through group interaction in a structured manner.
- Set up a task force on key issues and invite key stakeholders and members of the concerned public to participate. Create a clear mission and set a timeframe for the group to complete its work.
- Create a Council subcommittee to provide focus on a specific issue or problem. Can be permanent or temporary.
- Expand and/or reinvigorate boards and commissions to accommodate emerging community issues.

*May be subject to Open Meetings Law

KEY BACKGROUND REFERENCES

IOWA CODE, CHAPTER 21: OFFICAL MEETINGS OPEN TO PUBLIC (OPEN MEETINGS): 21.7 Rules of Conduct at Meetings. The Public may use cameras or recording devices at any open session. Nothing in this Chapter shall prevent a governmental body from making and enforcing reasonable rules for the conduct of its meetings to assure those meetings are orderly, and free from interference or interruption from spectators. [C79, 81, §28A.7] C85, §21.7

CHAPTER 372 ORGANIZATION OF CITY GOVERNMENT Section 5.: The Council shall determine its own rules and maintain records of its proceedings.

GUIDANCE FROM IOWA ATTORNEY GENERAL: Although the Open Meetings Law does not entitle citizens to speak at a meeting, citizens may request the opportunity to address the body at a meeting. (Some agencies also have specific statutes or rules that provide for citizen input.) Public bodies can facilitate citizen participation by allocating time for public comment structured by reasonable rules of conduct, such as advance deadlines for requesting an opportunity to speak, and reasonable time limits for oral comments. We encourage public bodies to facilitate these citizen requests. Public bodies should look beyond minimum legal requirements to foster meaningful public participation in open meetings. Citizens should offer their views to public officials under reasonable rules of conduct. By working together, public bodies and citizens can improve communication--and ultimately improve government decision making.

GUIDANCE FROM THE IOWA LEAGUE OF CITIES ON PUBLIC HEARINGS: Iowa Code also requires Public Hearings before acting on items such as approval of certain ordinances and resolutions. Cities should also consider establishing rules of procedure for public hearings.

GUIDANCE FROM THE IOWA LEAGUE OF CITIES ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS (12/2016): While the open meetings law gives the public the right to attend meetings of governmental bodies, the law does not require cities to allow public input at council meetings. The council may permit an audience member to speak at its meetings, but is not required to do so. Without an invitation to speak, everyone is simply an observer listening and watching the deliberations. However, public officials are elected by citizens to represent them and most city officials find it advantageous to allow citizens to address the council. To help prevent a public comment period from becoming prolonged and unproductive, cities find it useful to establish rules for public comments. For example, limitations can be placed on the time and manner of public participation to help maintain efficiency. Those wishing to address the council can be asked to identify themselves by name and address and avoid repeating what already has been said. Many cities place an item on the agenda such as "Public Comments" where audience members are allowed to address the council. It may be helpful to reserve such time at the beginning or end of the meeting to give people the opportunity to speak before or after the council acts on any business. Additionally, the council may allow the public to address any issue or restrict them to agenda or non-agenda items only. Some cities invite the public to provide input at the time each individual agenda item is discussed. Other cities may take a more formal approach and require advance notice to get on the agenda.

[HTTPS://WWW.IOWALEAGUE.ORG/MEMBERS/PAGES/COUNCILMEETINGPROCEDURES.ASPX](https://www.iowaleague.org/members/pages/councilmeetingprocedures.aspx)