



## **Keeping Council Members in Check**

Council Members overstepping their bounds, by interfering with the City Manager's authority and duties. That's the number one complaint we hear from city administrators who are experiencing a hostile work environment.

### **What to Do Before There is a Problem:**

Require Council Member commitments in writing. In policy statements, in your new or revised employment agreement, and certainly in the Municipal Code.

The Council must acknowledge:

- Except for the purpose of inquiry, the Council will only deal with subordinate employees, contractors or consultants, through the City Manager or his/her designee.
- No Council Member will give direction to any subordinate of the Manager, either publicly or privately.
- Council Members will not interfere with execution of the Manager's stated powers and duties.
- No Council Member will order the appointment or removal of any person to any office or employment under the supervision or control of the Manager.

### **What to Do When Trouble Starts:**

Immediately confront the offender, cite the controlling policies, and demand compliance.

Enlist the assistance of whoever might persuade the errant Council Member into compliance: The City Attorney? A fellow Council Member? A Joint Powers Insurance Authority representative?

If the Council Member's conduct becomes way out of line, you may be forced to extreme remedies: filing an administrative claim, or seeking to exit with an appropriate separation package.