

The First 100 Days as City Manager of the City of Lawrence, Kansas

“Connecting, Understanding the Lawrence Culture and Moving Forward on a Strategic Path”

Candidate: Tom Markus

I. History and Background Research: 30-60 days before employment begins.

- Read historical background literature on Lawrence origins and progression thru the years.
- Conduct a review of the city’s charter, code, and policy manuals.
- Conduct a review of the state laws governing the City of Lawrence form of government.
- Conduct a review of the financial reports including recent budgets, annual financial reports including bond rating agency scorecards.
- Conduct a review of the comprehensive plan, specific zone plans and industrial, commercial, residential development sub plans.
- Conduct a review of departmental annual reports, organizational charts and union contracts.
- Send a letter to all city employees introducing myself, asking for the employees support and asking employees to respond to a short survey.

II. Making Connections: 1st 35 Days

- Meet with council members one on one to get their perspective on Lawrence using a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.
- Meet with each department head and administrative staff using a SWOT analysis.
- Reach out via written communication with stakeholder groups: homeowner associations, social service agencies, service clubs, League of Women Voters, diversity organizations, business groups, universities and school district representative’s, employee unions and city commission recommended groups introducing myself and offering to speak with their leadership/board.
- Arrange to meet with local newspaper editors and managers of media outlets.
- Pursue further discussion with department heads regarding their career goals, department needs and their individual needs to be successful.
- Attend at least one meeting of each of the city’s boards and commissions to introduce myself and observe their process.
- Schedule meetings with state, federal legislative delegates, neighboring city, and county leaders to get briefed on current issues.
- Continue current schedule of staff meetings to observe current practice and culture.

III. Continue to Connect and Understand the Lawrence Culture. 2nd 35 Days

- Summarize the SWOT analysis and note the similarities and differences (council and staff) in an effort to draw some conclusions and possible alignment.
- Begin attending stakeholder group meetings in follow up to my letter.
- Visit each of the city's departments and arrange for departmental meetings for a chance to meet as many of the city employees as possible.
- Prepare a report for the city commission on options for undertaking a strategic plan and arrange for a commission meeting to discuss their preferences.
- Establish a schedule of listening posts for members of the public to meet with me.
- Schedule an in-depth meeting with the finance director to gain a greater understanding of our financial SWOT and nuances of Kansas state law related to municipal finance.
- Schedule a team building exercise with department heads and administrative staff in order to strengthen the team approach. This may involve an individual/team assessment tool.
- Initiate a regular in-service training component for department heads and administrative staff based on training needs as determined by manager and staff.

IV. Creating a Strategic Path: Last 30 Days

- Finalize the basic elements of the strategic plan process including but not limited to:
 1. Use of a facilitator.
 2. Community participation (from surveys to public engagement and at what levels). Desired outcomes from the strategic plan and how the plan will be used.
 3. Creation of a public steering committee.
 4. Set target dates to initiate and undertake the strategic plan process.
- Compare SWOT analysis conclusions with list of challenges and opportunities from the recruitment brochure prepared by Ralph Anderson and Associates and determine what steps can be initiated to resolve these issues i.e. roundtable discussions, ad-hoc committees, town meetings etc.
- Analyze the need for a succession plan and if determined necessary begin developing the plan based around the city's core values of integrity, courtesy, fairness and honesty.
- Examine the city's customer service levels and discuss options for improvements. This should be based on the results of the 2015 Lawrence Community Survey.
- Join at least one community civic group to help initiate my engagement in the city.
- Examine our level of technology and identify needs.
- Examine our efforts on becoming a more sustainable community.
- Identify the unique cultural qualities that define Lawrence and consider them when analyzing and providing recommendations on city issues.
- Complete a 1st hundred day city manager report for the commission.