

May 3, 2022

MEMO TO: Traci N. T. Fujita, Director
Office of Council Services

F R O M: Paige Greco, Legislative Analyst *PG*

SUBJECT: **“HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE WITH INPUT-BASED PLANNING” WEBINAR ON JANUARY 19, 2022** (PAF 21-012(30))

You have requested a brief report on Polco’s “How To Build Community Resilience with Input-based Planning” webinar on January 21, 2022. During this webinar, representatives from two municipalities shared the ways in which they gather resident feedback to build resiliency and strengthen relationships. A representative from Polco—a community-engagement firm—wrapped up the discussion by sharing trends related to community resiliency with a focus on COVID-19 impacts.

The presenters were:

- Lisa Brown, Director of Strategy Management, City of Rock Hill, South Carolina.
- Mike Sable, Assistant City Manager, City of Bloomington, Minnesota.
- Angelica Wedell, Director of Marketing & Communications, Polco.

They noted the importance of having readily available data related to resident needs. This data helps government leaders maintain an accurate understanding on their residents’ needs, manage outcomes over time, and create a stable basis for supporting the community.

Following is a summary of the discussion organized around specific questions.

How does your local government gather and use community input to guide strategic planning?

- Ms. Brown—
 - The City of Rock Hill collects data from three sources:

- Business surveys.
- Focus groups within the community .
- The National Community Survey (Polco).
- The City relies on the following cycle to inform their plans and overall direction:
 - Collect data.
 - Incorporate new data into the strategic plan.
 - Make appropriate adjustments to budget requests.
- Mr. Fulton—
 - Maintaining “data books” for City employees, especially newly elected officials, is helpful for hitting the ground running.
 - Following the murder of George Floyd, the City of Bloomington, as a suburb of Minneapolis, benefitted from having systems in place to hear resident feedback and respond to concerns swiftly during the crisis.

How does resident input help your community become more resilient over time?

- Ms. Brown—
 - By following through with promises to incorporate resident feedback, the City has built trust and ultimately more value for its residents.
- Mr. Sable—

- Data has shown that resilient communities come from individuals feeling connected in two ways:
 - Close to home, such as from neighbors.
 - In the broader community, including through institutions like schools and churches.
- The City tries to foster these relationships to improve overall resiliency.

What would you recommend to community leaders interested in building overall community resilience?

- Ms. Brown—
 - Create a routine, and stick to it.
 - Be willing to adjust plans as new information becomes available.
- Mr. Sable—
 - Being transparent about shortcomings will allow for new growth.
 - Be consistent, but make tweaks along the way.

Ms. Wedell concluded the webinar with the following observations:

- While trust in state and federal government has decreased during the pandemic, trust in local government has gone up.
- Data shows that the most resilient communities and organizations incorporate community feedback.

Traci N. T. Fujita
May 3, 2022
Page 4

- Effective community feedback includes: (a) collecting data; (b) following up to tell residents the results of the data; and (c) sharing next steps forward.
- The more communication there is during times of crisis, the more trust is created.

Show notes and a recording of the webinar can be found at tinyurl.com/PolcoOnResiliency.

I hope you find this information useful. Please let me know if I can provide anything further.

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cc: David Raatz, Deputy Director of Council Services