

Dealing with Difficult Citizens

Panel members:

Walter Kyliuk – Mayor of Radisson

Gary St. Onge – Mayor of Estevan

Terry Dennis – Mayor of Canora

Sidney Bowles – Mayor of Pilot Butte



Agenda

- What the pros' say
- The real world! Through the eyes of our panel members:
 - Impact on your private life
 - Example #1 - Most positive outcome
 - Example #2 – Most negative outcome
 - Advice for elected officials



Difficult ...

“Hard to do, achieve, or comprehend. Not easy, hard to manage; hard to satisfy.”

“...troublesome, perplexing”

“...hard to deal with;...hard to please”

“pervasive ... disrespectful... aggressive”

“ Abusive, threatening ...”



What the pros' recommend:

1. Remain:

- Positive
- Respectful
- Firm

2. Do not get personal - be professional

3. Do no create false expectations.

It will come back to haunt you.

Refer individual to CAO

4. Personal threats must be:

- Taken seriously
- Documented
- Referred to the authorities



One bridging phrase:

“That is interesting ...

- a. why would you say something like that?
- b. why would you do something like this ?
- c. why would you say that about me?
- d. why would you use profanities to make your point?
- e. how does that help us understanding each other?



10 Short statements to get back to reality ...

1. That's your opinion ...
2. That's your picture of reality ...
3. I refuse to participate in a name calling argument ...
4. I believe you've offended yourself with that comment
5. Your negativity is not helpful to me (to resolve this issue ...)
6. Your anger makes this conversation difficult right now (stop!)
7. Was that meant to be a nasty comment?
8. I'll give this one more thought...and get back to you
9. I agree with part of what you said ...
10. That comment was not appreciated ...



TOPIC #1

As Mayor, do you have a private life in your community?

Do you often find intrusions, even unintentional ones, from citizens into your family life?

How have you and your family effectively managed these intrusions?



TOPIC #2

What is your most memorable **positive outcome** from dealing with a difficult citizen?

What made this outcome positive?

What did you learn from the experience?



TOPIC #3

What is your most memorable **negative outcome** from dealing with a difficult citizen?

What caused the outcome to be negative?

What did you learn from the experience?



TOPIC #4

If you were advising someone who is interested in running for municipal office, what would you say to him or her about how they can prepare for dealing with difficult citizens?
(3 best pieces of advice)



It is About Choices and Options

When dealing with difficult citizens, remember that you always have a choice.

In fact, you have several choices.

There may be times when you feel your choices are limited, but, in most situations, there will be a variety of options to choose from.

Start with yourself. Operate from a position of inner strength.

Know your triggers. Do your own inner work.

