



CITY MANAGER COLUMN

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THE COUNCIL/MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

(Upper Arlington, Ohio) – With the New Year comes a change in our community's leadership. At Monday's Organizational Meeting of City Council, new members David DeCapua and Debbie Johnson were sworn into office, and Frank Ciotola and Wade Steen were sworn in to serve their second terms. Council then selected Frank Ciotola to serve a two-year term as Council President, and Mary Ann Krauss to serve a two-year term as Vice President of Council.

For the 2010-2011 term of Council, we have a strong combination of experienced Council members committed to leading our community along a path that protects the qualities we all cherish while building upon the foundation needed to sustain quality of life and keep the City fiscally secure. This is coupled with new members who have proven themselves civic-minded, well versed in community issues and who bring strong professional and personal skills to the Council body.

Upper Arlington government operates under the Council-Manager form, a combination of the strong political leadership of elected officials with the strong managerial experience of an appointed manager.

Within this framework, the elected members of City Council serve to represent citizens by concentrating on policy issues that are responsive to citizens' needs and wishes. City Council is charged with reviewing and subsequently adopting the City's budget, and enacting policy on other important fiscal decisions such as capital financing. The Council focuses on setting goals for the community, initiating and setting forth the direction for major projects, considering issues of community growth, development or redevelopment, and strategic planning.

In Upper Arlington's case, our Council Members truly view their part-time role as public service, accepting only a modest annual stipend for their role in leading our community forward.

Concurrently, the role of the fulltime City Manager is to carry out the policy set forth by City Council. He/she is also charged with overseeing the administrative responsibilities of his/her staff, necessary to successfully run a City organization, providing the day-to-day services required by a community. The City Manager serves to present the budget and other financial considerations to City Council, and serves as the Council's chief advisor, presenting complete and objective information regarding special projects or long-term goals, including the pros and cons of options, and the long-term consequences of decisions made by the Council.

The Council-Manager Form of Government is one utilized by many communities both in Central Ohio and across the nation. It is recognized for the stability it brings by maintaining a consistency in day-to-day operations while allowing Council leadership to focus its energies where it is needed most, which has certainly been the case in Upper Arlington for many years. Communities typically realize cost savings as a result of consistent management practices – as productivity and morale is enhanced, and new programs or technologies are implemented effectively.

On behalf of Staff here at the City, I welcome and congratulate our new Council Members and Leadership. We look forward to working with you in the coming months, as you help set policy and direction for the good of the community. I am confident that our organization is healthy, energized and ready for the tasks ahead.

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