

AGENDA
GIG HARBOR CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
Friday, January 9, 2026 - 9:00 AM
Harbor History Museum Resource Room

This meeting may also be accessed through Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/93216056382> or by calling (253) 215-8782 and entering Meeting ID 932 1605 6382.

RETREAT AGENDA ITEMS

9:00 - Opening Session

- Call to Order/Roll Call
- Welcome
- Review of Agenda & Objectives

9:30 - Mayor–Council Roles and Responsibilities

- Overview of Executive and Legislative Roles
- Areas Requiring Coordination and Collaboration

10:15 - Roles in Practice

- Discussion of current governance practices and coordination

11:00 - Break

11:15 - Long-term Outlook for the City

- Discussion of desired outcomes for the community over the next decade

12:15 - Lunch

1:00 - Council–Mayor Working Norms

- Expectations for decision-making, communication, and collaboration

2:30 - Break

2:45 - Strategic Focus Areas

- Identification of priority issues to inform strategic planning

4:15 - Next Steps and Commitments

- Summary of key takeaways
- Agreement on follow-up actions

4:45 - Adjourn

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

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Public comment will not be accepted at this meeting.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) ACCOMMODATIONS

ADA accommodations can be provided upon request. Those requiring special accommodations should contact the city clerk at cityclerk@gigharborwa.gov or (253) 853-7613 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

MAYOR-COUNCIL FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Gig Harbor City Council Workshop
January 9, 2026

Presenters



Melanie Harding
Executive Director
Municipal Research &
Services Center



Derek Matheson
City Manager
City of Fife

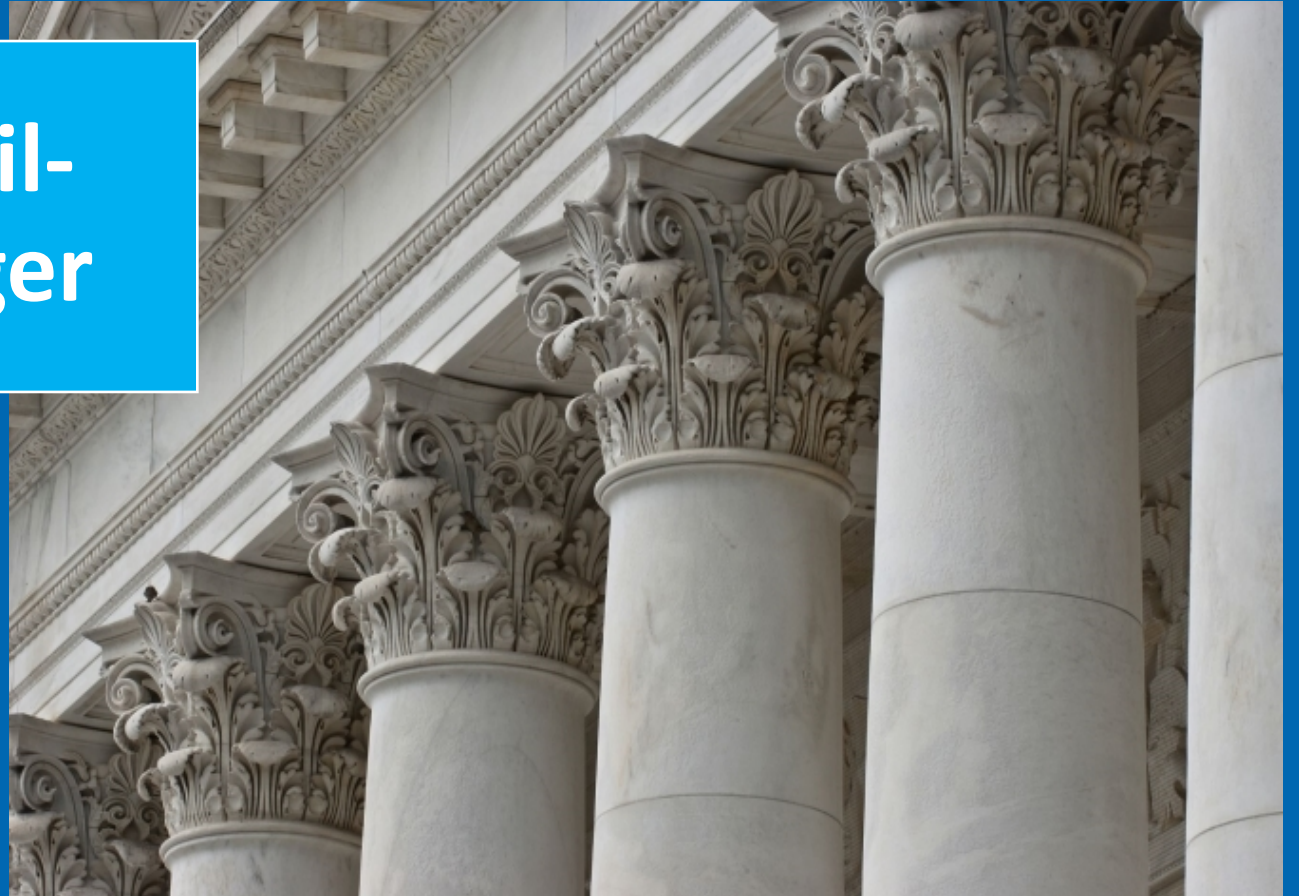
City & Town Forms of Government



**Mayor-
Council**

**Council-
Manager**

Commission





Comparison of Similar Size Cities

CITY	POPULATION	COUNTY	FORM OF GOVERNMENT	CITY MANAGER/ ADMINISTRATOR ROLE
Burlington	10,910	Skagit	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Sumner	11,080	Pierce	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Yelm	11,130	Thurston	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Fife	11,300	Pierce	Council-Manager	City Manager
Grandview	11,950	Yakima	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Airway Heights	12,120	Spokane	Council-Manager	City Manager
Kelso	12,850	Cowlitz	Council-Manager	City Manager
Gig Harbor	13,110	Pierce	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Poulsbo	13,110	Kitsap	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Cheney	13,180	Spokane	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Sedro-Woolley	13,360	Skagit	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Enumclaw	13,400	King	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Lake Forest Park	13,700	King	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Newcastle	13,880	King	Council-Manager	City Manager
Woodinville	14,060	King	Council-Manager	City Manager
Liberty Lake	14,110	Spokane	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Edgewood	14,120	Pierce	Mayor-Council	Asst City Administrator

Of 16 cities around Gig Harbor's population, 69% are Mayor-Council and 31% are Council-Manager form of government.

Typical Authority Distribution: Mayor – Council Form



EXECUTIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

Spokesperson

Makes proposals
to the Council

Proposes budgets

Administers day to
day operations

Appoints and
dismisses employees

POWERS AND AUTHORITY THAT VARY BY FORM

Setting of policy agenda

Chair of Council

Selection of chief
administrative officer

Executive veto power

Appointments to Boards
and Commissions

Confirmation of key
appointed positions

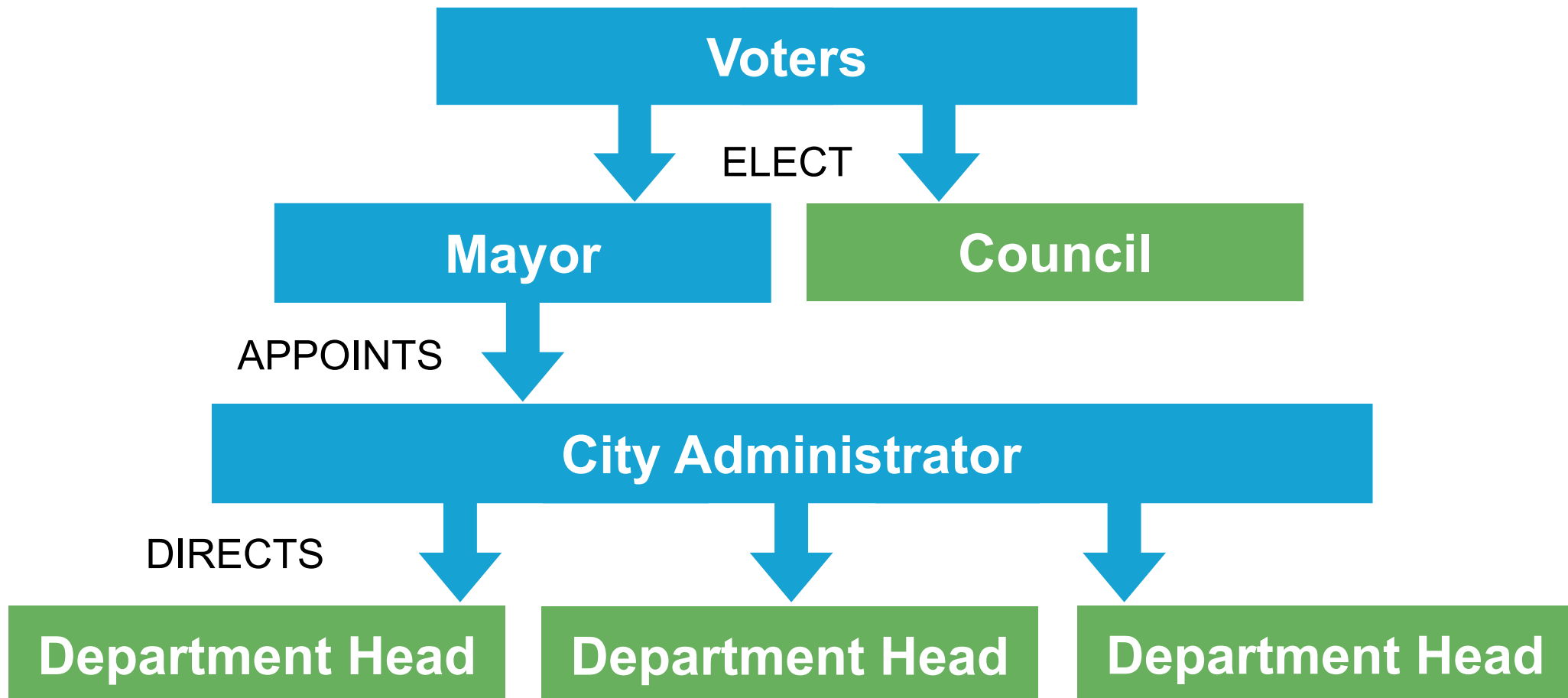
Contracting and
spending authority

LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

Adopts budgets, ballot
proposals and city
code/ordinances

Directs executive to
provide reporting

Mayor-Council Government With City Administrator



City Managers v. City Administrators



CITY MANAGER

- Chief Executive Officer
- “Decider”
- Alignment with Council

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

- Deputy to CEO/Mayor
- Advisor /“Decider”
- Alignment with Mayor
- Can vary based on structure & incumbent Mayor

Best Practices



- Respect one another's "lanes" (branches)
- Remember your city administrator *works* for the Mayor & *supports* the Council
- Reach out to the city administrator for help
- Use your Council Agenda
- Know & use your Council Rules
- Use policies to smooth conflicts

Examples from Over the Years



- Individual vs. team mindset
- Competing strategic plans
- Proclamations



Thank you!

Additional Resources at MRSC.org

- MRSC Overview [City & Town Forms of Government](#)
- AWC & MRSC [Mayor & Councilmember Handbook](#)
- MRSC Blog “[Who’s the Boss? Separation of Powers in Local Government](#)”
- Still have questions: [Ask MRSC](#) (Free Consultation Services)