

**CITY OF WEST LIBERTY, IOWA  
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING REPORT 2021-2022**

**Mayor:**

**Robert Hartman**

**City Council: 2021**

**Jose Zacarias  
Diane Beranek  
Cara McFerren**

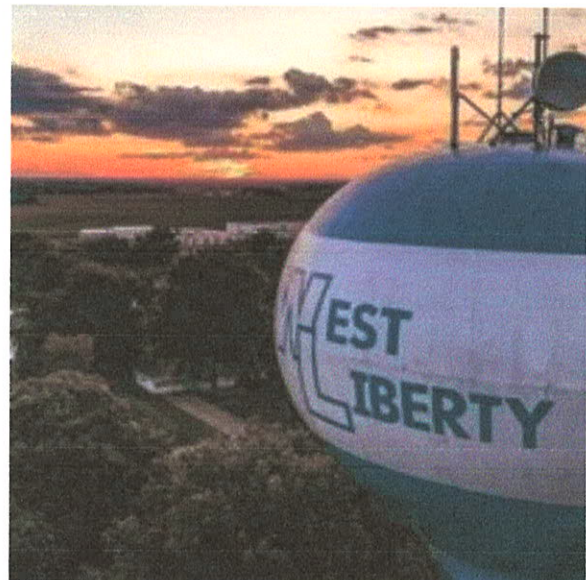
**Robert Rock  
Dave Smith**

**Department Heads:**

**City Manager David Haugland  
City Clerk/Finance – Lee Geertz  
Electric Superintendent – Ed Tvrs  
Parks & Recreation Director – Nick Heath  
Library Director – Allie Paarsmith  
WWTP Superintendent-Craig Juergens  
Street Superintendent – Adam Reinhardt**

**PW Water/Sewer Superintendent – Danny Goodale**

**Fire Chief – Kirt Sickels  
Building Inspector – Terry Goerd  
Police Chief – Eric Werling  
Communication Director- Jacob Lane**



**Facilitated by:**

**Patrick Callahan**

**Callahan Municipal Consultants, LLC December 1, 2021**

# City of West Liberty, Iowa

## Strategic Planning and Goal Setting Session

### 2022

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#### **Introduction**

The City of West Liberty requested assistance from Patrick Callahan in November 2021, for a strategic planning and goal setting process. Mr. Callahan agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify department needs, capital projects, accomplishments, programs, issues, trends and team building suggestions.
2. Prepare a list of the overall capital projects and suggested initiatives and programs based upon the comments of the elected officials and city department heads.
3. Conduct a strategic planning and goal setting session with the elected officials.
4. Preparation of this final report.

#### **Goal Setting Work Session**

City Council Members and the Mayor held an informal non-binding work session that was conducted by Mr. Callahan on December 1, 2021. The City's elected officials and department heads were asked to do the following:

1. Identify the major accomplishments of the City in 2020 and 2021, as listed by the Mayor and Council, and by the City Department Heads **(Exhibits A-1 & A-2)**.
2. Review the list of most important issues, concerns and trends facing the City in 2022, as listed by the Mayor and Council Members and by the City Department Heads **(Exhibits B-1 & B-2)**.
3. Review and revise the list of potential initiatives, policies, and programs. **(Exhibit C-1 & C-2)**.
4. Indicate those initiatives and programs that are the most urgent or important at this time.
5. Review and revise the list of potential capital projects. **(Exhibit D-1 & D-2)**.
6. Indicate those capital projects that are the most urgent or important at this time.
7. Provide comments and suggestions regarding teamwork objectives. **(Exhibit E-1 & E-2)**.

**Note:** The Letter of Introduction, the Agenda for the Goal Setting Session, and the Preliminary Questionnaire are attached to this report as Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively.

## **THE CITY COUNCIL’S LIST OF “GIVENS”**

After reviewing the list of proposed programs and policies, the Mayor and City Council Members concluded that the City was already committed to the completion of the following capital projects and equipment purchases:

1. Continue with the viability of a third well.
2. Phase II -Addition onto City Hall for more office, police department and staff space – Move the American Legion Building.
3. Rainbow Drive Reconstruction Project
4. West side tower loop project.
5. Generator capabilities for the sanitary sewer lift stations.
6. Maxson Avenue Improvements - streets and utilities.
7. Sewer lining and manhole restoration – Annual program.
8. Sidewalk programs and handicapped ramps at intersections – Annual program.
9. Equipment and vehicle upgrades and purchases for the entire organization.
10. New vehicles – Police Department - \$200,000.
11. Updated equipment – Police Department - \$60,000.
12. Equipment to make pod casts – \$1,500.

Since the City Council had already committed to the completion of these items, it was agreed that the Mayor and City Council would not need to rank or prioritize these suggestions.

## **INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS – 2022**

**The Mayor and City Council identified the following initiatives and programs as the most urgent or important.**

### **A. Top Priority Initiatives & Programs**

#### **1. Personnel & Labor Force – Overall Review**

- Code enforcement officer/animal control officer
- Dedicated in-house Human Resources Specialist
- Expansion of Police Department – additional patrol officers
- In depth staffing level assessment
- Grant writer for city projects
- More city staff

#### **2. Annexation - Further Land Growth of City and Annexation of Rural Housing Editions**

#### **3. Personnel Policy Updates and Staff Training**

- Training policy for all City staff
- Update employee handbook and employee training
- Customer service training for the entire organization
- Training and policies for elected officials – Council Conduct and teamwork
- EDI initiatives

#### **4. Communication Enhancements**

- Provide a “Rundown” of major topics discussed after the City Council meetings
- Prepare podcasts that keeps the community informed on City business
- Continue to promote social media and website as a way to access City information

#### **B. Second Priority Programs and Policies**

1. Continue the overall efforts addressing housing needs
2. Utility rate reviews with ongoing schedule to meet cost of goods and services
3. City Code and Policy Updates
  - Continuing work on updating city code
  - Evaluating PD nuisance/ordinance and fine violations
  - Re-codification and updating city codes
  - Make the city code enforceable and accurate
  - Update the policy on condition/appearance of homes and businesses.
4. Work with developers to increase more housing options and opportunities – senior housing and single family housing.

**NOTE:** A complete list of all programs and initiatives, as ranked by the Mayor and City Council Members is attached as **Exhibit C - Final**

#### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS – 2022**

**The Mayor and City Council identified the following capital projects and equipment purchases as the most urgent or important.**

##### **A. Top Priority Capital Projects and Equipment Purchases**

1. Addition of more electric generation and Addition of instant start on generator for station power.
2. Getting natural gas line into the Electric Power Plant
3. New Swimming Pool/Recreation Center

##### **B. Second Priority Capital Projects and Equipment Purchases**

1. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Miller intersection reconstruction project
2. Dog park
3. 6<sup>th</sup> Street improvements – streets and utilities

#### **TEAM BUILDING AGREEMENTS**

The Mayor and City Council reviewed a list of ideas and suggestions relating to team building and building a better working relationship. The list of team building suggestions is identified as **Exhibit E-1 & E-2.**

## **FUTURE PLANNING SUGGESTIONS**

It is recommended that the city staff and the management team prepare an “action plan” for the top ranked capital projects and the initiatives & programs. The action plan for each goal would define the steps needed to accomplish the various tasks or objectives. This action plan could then be presented to the Mayor and City Council for review and approval and made a part of this Goal Setting Report.

It is recommended that the goals and objectives be posted in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The posting of the City Council’s goals and objectives will serve as a reminder to the City Department Heads and Staff Members as to the priorities that were established by the Mayor and City Council.

It is recommended that the City Council review the lists of capital projects/equipment purchases, and initiatives, programs, and monitor the progress that is made on each item on a quarterly basis. The City could use a format that shows the project or item side by side with a comment that updates the City Council and the residents of the City on the progress that has been made on each item at the end of each quarter. The tentative dates for the quarterly updates are: April 5, July 5, October 4, & January 3.

It is important to note that the prioritizing of all the capital projects and various initiatives is not “cast in stone.” The two lists can be modified as new circumstances may dictate. Hopefully, the Mayor and City Council will repeat this process in 2023 or 2024, which may result in some additional modifications.

It is recommended that the City continues to update these capital improvements plan to identify the City’s capital projects over the next four to seven years. The plan could include cost estimates, descriptions of the projects, the justification, and sources of funding.

## **COMMUNICATION OF COUNCIL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES TO CITIZENS**

Since the citizens of West Liberty are basically the “shareholders” or owners of the City, it is important that they are informed about the goals and objectives that have been established by the Mayor and City Council. The following is a brief summary of various activities that have been used in other cities to communicate the City Council’s goals and objectives to local residents.

1. ***City Website.*** After the Mayor and City Council have reviewed and formally adopted the Goal Setting Report, a copy of the report can be placed on the City’s website for review by the citizens of West Liberty.
2. ***Newspaper Article.*** The City could request that the local newspaper publish a list of the City Council’s goals and objectives.
3. ***Town Hall Meeting.*** The City Council could schedule a town hall meeting or public forum to present a summary of the City’s goals and objectives and to seek comments and observations from local residents.

4. ***City Hall Posting of Goals.*** The Council’s goals and objectives could be posted in the lobby area at City Hall for interested residents to review.
5. ***Open Houses – City Facilities.*** Annual “open houses” at various City buildings, such as City Hall, Police Station, Fire Station, Public Works Shop, Wastewater Plant, Water Plant, and Library could be held to inform the citizens about the upcoming city projects and programs that have been proposed.
6. ***Community Leaders’ Meeting.*** The Mayor and City Council could schedule an annual or semi-annual meeting with the School Board and Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to review and discuss the City Council’s goals and objectives. These meetings could also provide an opportunity to learn more about the projects, programs, and objectives under consideration by these same organizations.
7. ***Presentations to Service Clubs.*** The Mayor, Council Members, and City Manager could make brief presentations to local services clubs and organizations outlining the goals and objectives.
8. ***Public Places –Reading Material.*** A copy of this goal setting report or a brief summary of the City’s goals and objectives could be made available in public places, such as the West Liberty Library, medical clinics, lawyer offices, or where local residents could read this report while waiting for appointments.

#### **FINAL COMMENTS**

It was a pleasure to assist the City of West Liberty with this goal setting process. We were pleased with the level of cooperation of the city staff and the elected officials.

Once again, thanks to the City Clerk, City Manager, Department Heads, the Mayor, and the City Council Members for the great cooperation and timely responses during this process.

Patrick Callahan  
Callahan Municipal Consultants, LLC  
December 6, 2021

**EXHIBIT A-1  
CITY OF WEST LIBERTY, IOWA  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – 2022**

**Major Accomplishments – Mayor/Council Members Responses**

1. Feasibility Study and implementation of City Hall/PD expansion.
2. Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)
3. Housing developments and Urban Revitalization Program
4. Hiring of a Communication Specialist
5. Columbarium addition to City Cemetery
6. Revision of Employee Handbook
7. Review of fees schedule
8. City website development and design
9. Commence with a Park & Recreation master plan
10. Department Head monthly planning meetings and initiate teamwork communications
11. New lift truck for Electric Department.
12. Playgrounds at Kimberly Park & Friendship Park
13. Renovation of City Hall
14. Hired Police Chief and City Manager
15. Restoration of Lady Liberty

**EXHIBIT A-2  
CITY OF WEST LIBERTY, IOWA  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – 2022**

**Major Accomplishments – Department Heads**

1. Hired new city manager
2. Hired new police chief
3. Efficiently and effectively handled turnover of the city manager and police chief positions
4. Continued support of Department Supervisors - both new and old
5. Raised and maintained moral of City employees
6. Worked efficiently through the COVID-19 pandemic with minimal loss of work hours
7. Started the Safety Committee and operating it smoothly
8. Built new playground at Kimberly Park
9. Built new playground at Friendship Park
10. Completion of electric substation upgrade
11. Removal of DLA generator
12. Rate study for Electric Department
13. Halloween costume project – Police Department
14. Downtown renovations
15. Monthly Chamber of Commerce meetings at Community Center
16. Established an Economic Development matching grant for revitalization
17. Completed Phase I of the Police Station and City Hall Improvement Project
18. Implemented customer service rules for utilities
19. Additional staffing with Wage/Evaluation Matrix
20. Water Department/Interim Supervisor completed certification to operate the facility
21. WWTP Department/Interim Supervisor completed certification to operate the facility



22. GIS system agreement to establish utility locates
23. CIP and EFP for entire organization
24. Hired an new library director
25. Increased civic engagement – new candidates
26. Reduced legal entanglements
27. Derecho recovery work
28. Relabeled majority of English language library materials
29. Increased library collection of racial diversity
30. Increased gender diversity in policing
31. Increased grant funding for Library
32. All City Council meetings and WIFI/session videos are online
33. Website has become more accessible and intuitive
34. There are online fillable PDF's for city documents
35. Increased presence on website and social media
36. Entered into an agreement with the City's website provider

**EXHIBIT B-1  
CITY OF WEST LIBERTY, IOWA  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – 2022**

**Issues and Concerns – Mayor/City Council Members Responses**

1. Continued housing needs
2. Budget constraints and future diminished government funding
3. Customer service quality
4. Communications with general public
5. Increase housing/development
6. Annexation of subdivisions that have City services

**EXHIBIT B-2  
CITY OF WEST LIBERTY, IOWA  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – 2022**

**Issues and Concerns – Department Heads**

1. The amount of housing whether it is new housing or condos or apartments
2. The lack of interest from people wanting to bring new businesses to Liberty Park
3. Concern with the current residents of West Liberty supporting the changes needed to continue to grow our city.
4. Concern with long-term sustainability of utilities, if City does not continue to grow in population
5. The need to raise utility rates, which then might be an issue by making West Liberty a less affordable option for residents and businesses considering moving to West Liberty
6. Concern with the public's current relationship with the City Staff
7. Aging infrastructure – roads, sewer, water, parks and electric
8. Lack of substantial growth for the City is an issue
9. The appearance of the trailer parks as visitors enter the City from the south
10. Roll back with taxes/small tax base to support the general needs
11. Staffing retention and limited workforce/workload due to minimum staffing
12. Technology costs and security of the equipment
13. Quality of life attractions and wellness for community members of all ages
14. Succession plan for City employees
15. Communications internal and external
16. Lack of electric generation to power the City in the near future
17. Retention of police officers
18. Relationships with Fire Department
19. 28E agreement with Atalissa for Police Services
20. Lack of cultural integration

21. Youth engagement
22. Low social/economic status leaves citizens in survival mode
23. Lack of younger generations moving to West Liberty
24. Concerns that parts of the city code are unclear
25. Concerns about employees using social media to attack the City
26. Concerns about Department Heads not informing us of important information
27. Land use
28. Certain upgrades requires industry guarantees that they will remain in the City prior to the completion of the upgrades or expansions
29. The need for industries to pay their portion of the costs to upgrade the City's infrastructure

**EXHIBIT C-FINAL  
CITY OF WEST LIBERTY, IOWA  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – 2022**

**Significant Initiatives, Programs, & Policies – Mayor & City Council Members Rankings**

<b>Program, Policies and Initiative</b>	<b>Top Priority</b>	<b>Second Priority</b>	<b>Total Score</b>
1. Personnel & Labor Force – Overall Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code enforcement officer/animal control officer</li> <li>• Dedicated in-house Human Resources Specialist</li> <li>• In depth staffing level assessment</li> <li>• Grant writer for city projects</li> <li>• More city staff</li> </ul>	6	0	12
2. Annexation - further land growth of city and annexation of rural housing editions	4	1	9
3. Personnel Policy Updates and Staff Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training policy for all City staff</li> <li>• Update employee handbook and employee training</li> <li>• Customer service training for the entire organization</li> <li>• Training and policies for elected officials – Council Conduct and teamwork</li> <li>• EDI initiatives</li> </ul>	3	3	9
4. Communication enhancements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a “rundown” of major topics discussed after the City Council meeting</li> <li>• Prepare podcasts that keeps the community informed on City business</li> <li>• Continue to promote social media and website as a way to access City information</li> </ul>	4	1	9
5. Continued efforts for addressing housing needs	3	1	7
6. Utility rate reviews with ongoing schedule to meet costs of goods and services	2	3	7
7. City Code and Policy Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing work on updating city code</li> <li>• Evaluating PD nuisance/ordinance and fine violations</li> <li>• Re-codification and updating city codes</li> <li>• Make the city code enforceable and accurate</li> <li>• Update the policy on condition/appearance of homes and businesses</li> </ul>	2	2	6
8. Work with developers to increase more housing options and opportunities – senior housing and single family housing	1	4	6
9. Creative initiatives and events to get the public involved and excited about living in West Liberty.	2	1	5
10. Updating Police Department policy manual and making it applicable	0	4	4

11. Reviewing Police Department vacation policy and salaried supervisor policy	0	4	4
12. Hire full time Fire Chief	1	1	3
13. Social safety net resources – not church provided	0	3	3
14. Expansion of businesses in the Industrial Park	1	1	3
15. Work on 28E agreement with Board of supervisors	1	0	2
16. Update permits/forms/charges for services provided by the City	0	1	1
17. Update and re-evaluate sewer and water rates	0	0	0
18. Planning and Zoning Board recruitment for members	0	0	0
19. Eliminate city brush pile burning	0	0	0
20. Beautification opportunities for homeowners and renters	0	0	0

**EXHIBIT D-FINAL  
CITY OF WEST LIBERTY, IOWA  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – 2022**

**Capital Projects – Mayor & City Council Members Rankings**

<b>Capital Project/Equipment Purchase</b>	<b>Top Priority</b>	<b>Second Priority</b>	<b>Total Score</b>
1. Addition of more electric generation and Addition of instant start on generator for station power	6	0	12
2. Getting natural gas line into the Electric Power Plant	4	1	9
3. New Swimming Pool/Recreation Center	3	2	8
4. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street and Miller intersection reconstruction project	3	1	7
5. Dog park	3	1	7
6. 6 <sup>th</sup> Street improvement s- streets and utilities	2	1	5
7. New outdoor swimming pool/aquatic center	1	2	4
8. North Dutton & 1 <sup>st</sup> Street properties – convert to housing development Projects	1	2	4
9. Additional soccer field & softball fields at Dutton Park and Wapsi fields into green space/dog park	0	3	3
10. Trail extensions throughout the City & connect to Nichols or West Branch	1	1	3
11. Storage & Garage Facility for all Departments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Park and Recreation office/garage</li> <li>• New City storage shed/garage</li> <li>• Demolition of the parks shop and replacing it with a new building that would be sufficient space for storage for other departments, if needed.</li> </ul>	0	2	2
12. Pave/asphalt downtown alleyways - \$70,000.	0	2	2
13. Street Projects - continue to include the infrastructure below street level	0	2	2
14. Tool Library for community use	0	1	1
15. Mini Pitch field	0	1	1
16. New rear load garbage truck - \$150,000 to \$180,000	0	0	0
17. Cameral systems throughout the community – Railroad crossings	0	0	0
18. New warehouse/garage for Electric Department	0	0	0
19. Library remodeling project	0	0	0

**EXHIBIT E-1  
CITY OF WEST LIBERTY, IOWA  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – 2022**

**Teamwork Suggestions – Mayor & City Council Members Responses**

1. Communication strategies between staff, department heads and city leadership
2. Support training of all city staff and elected officials – Policies & Programs



**EXHIBIT E-2  
CITY OF WEST LIBERTY, IOWA  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – 2022**



**Teamwork Suggestions – Department Heads**

1. Supervisors and City Manager communication – continue staff meetings - Given
2. Create a Council Calendar for work session – schedule training and team building to include work retreats
3. Council communication procedure – City Manager as the first step of questions and communication
4. Transparency and consistency by creating policy and strengthening communications
5. All stay the course of the planning and goals established and not get distracted by changing the course with something new and not in the plan, unless going through a process with City Leadership and Staff.
6. Department Supervisors training to communicate with staff on goals and planning.
7. Have organized and productive city council meetings
8. Attend team building and leadership seminars
9. Job shadowing certain jobs within the City in order to gain insight into City's day to day operations
10. Schedule a tour of all City owned utilities - Given
11. Spending time on community outreach so that the community shows more interest and support for the mayor and city council
12. Introduce themselves to the community in creative ways
13. Portray a positive and sincere caring for the well-being of the community
14. Don't focus on individual agendas with in the City
15. Be more decisive when it comes to getting things done
16. Ask questions and take action when advised on unsafe working conditions
17. Department Head training in HR on communications, policies, programs, and tech resources

18. EDI training – all City Departments
19. Discussion between departments regarding resources & vendors for cost savings
20. Schedule more meetings with individual City Departments and work sessions involving all City Departments
21. Hire the right vendor or company for the various projects – architects vs. engineers