

**ASSEMBLY CHAIR BRAWLEY**

# GOVERNANCE MOMENT

Assembly meetings &  
municipal business are a big,  
very public group project

**[www.muni.org/assembly](http://www.muni.org/assembly)**



# THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY IS...



**12 Members**



**1 Governing Body**



**The Cast of a Large,  
Complex Live Production**

# TUCKMAN'S STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT



## Forming

- New members!
- Excitement, optimism
- Learning group rules, processes
- Individualistic



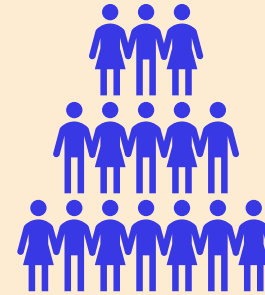
## Storming

- "Newness" wears off
- Group dynamic hasn't solidified
- Often becomes tension & conflicts



## Norming

- Members build relationships
- Focus toward working together, shared tasks
- Conflict is healthy, but gets resolved



## Performing

- High-functioning
- Members identify as part of a group
- Team works together on shared projects



## [ Ending ]

- Group is dissolved, project ends, members leave
- Mixed feelings: both pride & grief
- Assembly never "ends," but elections create a new group.

# A(NOTHER) KIND OF POLITICAL THEATER

## Each public meeting is a production:

- Partly scripted, but mostly improv
- Assembly members are actors
- Chair and Vice Chair are—but also are not—directors
- The public is both participant and audience
- There is a large technical crew of support staff
  - Clerk: procedure, minutes, documents
  - Mayor & Admin: policy, priorities, operational experts
  - Attorneys: advice, via “performance law”
  - IT & A/V: managing sound, streaming, recording, software
- The production is structured by **rules** and the **clock**:
  - We have a set time period each night to do business.
  - What we do & how are (mostly) defined in law, and set precedent.



*What will  
happen tonight?*

*Dunno!  
Something.*

*It's up to  
the body ...*

# LET'S TALK ABOUT PROCEDURE

- What's the most important goal? Doing our business effectively.
  - Efficiency is good, but not the primary goal (*but still a good one!*)
  - Volume and speed (*passing many things as quickly as possible*) are not the same as good outcomes.
  - It's OK to take more time: postponing an item for more information, more public input, or a new version.
- With comedy and local public meetings, timing matters:
  - Meetings are noticed to end at **11 p.m.**, but can be extended (with a motion).
  - The Charter automatically adjourns all Muni meetings at **midnight**:  
*Bill of Rights (§ 2.01) "... immunity from official assembly actions after 12:00 midnight & before 7:00 am"*  
*Public Meetings (§ 17.05). "Action taken in violation of this paragraph is void." (Assembly, School Board, B&Cs.*
  - Debate time limit: **1 hour**, unless extended by majority/unan. consent (AMC 2.30.080F)
- Debate can be informal, but it's not a conversation:
  - Everyone may speak twice per item, and chair prioritizes 1<sup>st</sup>-time speakers
  - Political wisdom: "If you have the votes, vote. If you don't, talk."
- Every action creates work for staff (*the nature of this job!*), but some more than others:
  - Verbal amendments are difficult for the Clerk, Counsel and other members; put it in writing!
  - Laid on the Table (LOTT) items give no public notice, and are manually processed after the fact.

# Future Governance Topics

- Meetings behind the scenes
  - 1 regular meeting = 3 pre-planning meetings
  - Future leadership learning opportunities
- Legislative process
  - Tools, options & strategies for members
  - Building in public engagement
  - From idea to implementation, creating a code change or policy that actually works
- Procedures & legal issues
  - Quasi-judicial and adjudicative matters
  - Sorting out social media questions
- Committee best practices

***What else should we talk about?***