Getting Your Board Off to a Great Start

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Introductions

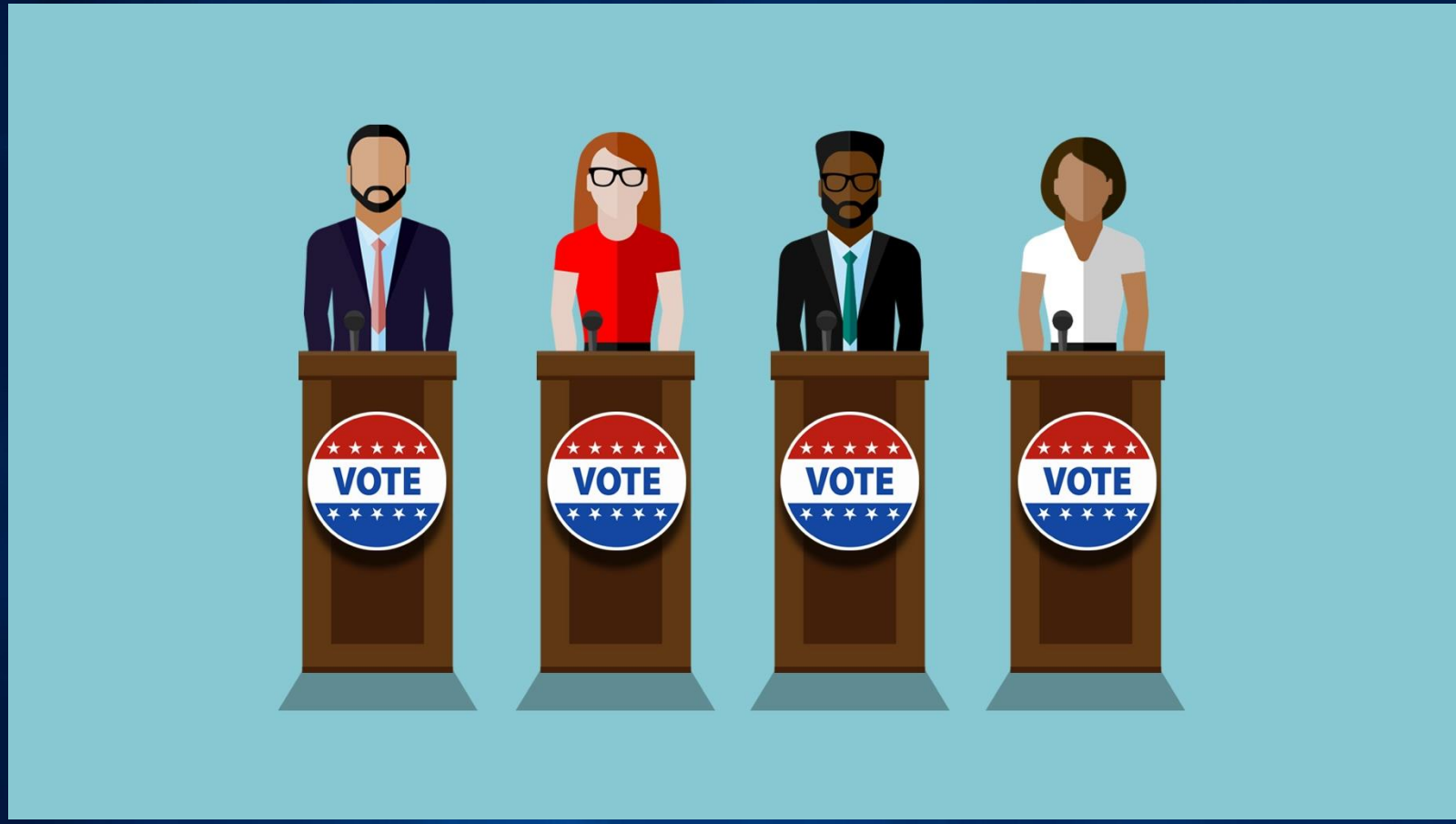
UNC School of Government	Kimberly Nelson
Lumpkin County	Alan Ours
City of Sugar Hill	Paul Radford
GA Association of County Commissioners	Alicia Vaughn

Session Objectives

- Discuss strategies for engaging prospective elected officials
- Explain methods for orienting new elected officials
- Workshop session for dealing with tricky situations

Best Practices for Engaging Candidates

- Not talking about violating ICMA Code of Ethics #7!
- There are benefits and risks



Why Engage Candidates?

- Potential future bosses!
- Increased understanding
- Dispel stereotypes and myths
- Better community discourse
- Role clarity

Best Practices for Engaging Candidates

- What are the risks?
- Do the benefits outweigh the risks?



Ideas for Addressing Candidate Information Needs

- Manager as point of contact
- Host a candidate information session
- Share information equally
- Create an information packet

Possible Candidate Information Topics

- Form of government
- Organizational structure
- Legal roles
- Service authority per state law
- Population and community profile data
- Current strategic plan priorities
- Funding overview of municipal services by department
- Political signage placement regulations

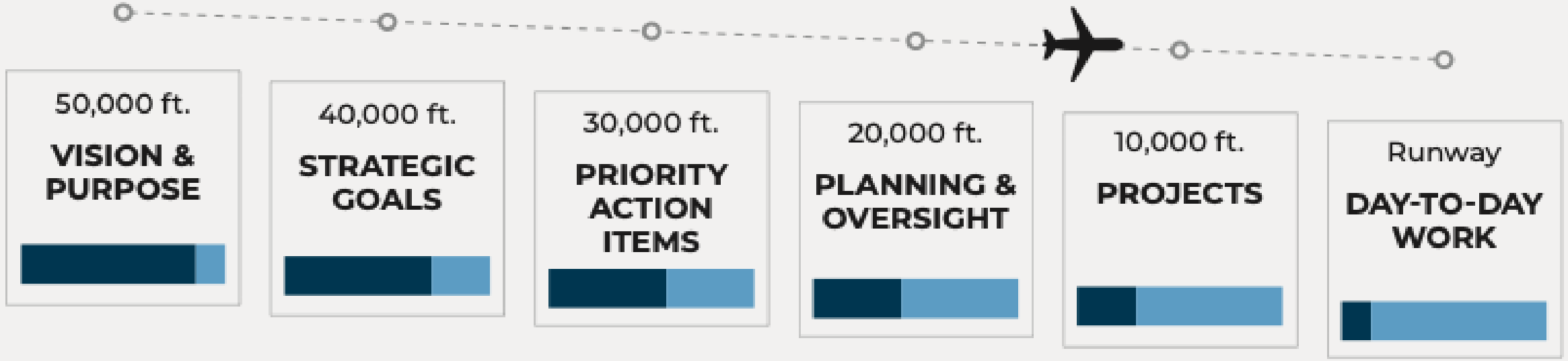
Let’s hear from you….



Other examples or ideas for engaging candidates and addressing their information needs?

Orienting New Board Members

ELECTED OFFICIALS & STAFF WORK **FLIGHT ANALOGY**



Let’s hear from you…

What are the top two things new board members need to know to do their jobs effectively?



Possible Orientation Topics

- High-performing practices for working together
- Meeting/work session schedule
- Ethics and transparency
- Intergovernmental relations
- Communication channels
- Strategic plan and budget process overview
- Anticipated issues, next 3-6 months

Relationship Building & Understanding Shared Expectations



What Managers Need to be Effective

- Respect for the council-manager form of government
- Feedback on effective communication
- Clear guidance from the board
- Appropriate interactions with other staff

What Board Members Need From the Manager

- Honesty
- Shared information
- Listening
- Your personal and professional best
- Politically astute, but not political

Best Practices for Board Orientation

Basic Considerations

- Retreat timing-ideally 90 to 180 days) after swearing In
- Use a professional facilitator
- Location matters
- Framing documents



Tabletop Exercise

Off To a Great Start: Key Take-Aways

Equal information sharing

Manager works for entire board

Role clarity is essential

Agree on mutual board-manager expectations

Respect the board-manager partnership

Be politically astute, not political