

2012 City of Bozeman Qualitative Ethics Research Findings

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The 2012 ethics trainings for the City of Bozeman began on March 21. Between March 21 and April 6, a series of 13 trainings were offered. Morning, afternoon, and evening hours were scheduled to allow for the greatest flexibility in meeting the needs of employees who were mandated to attend. Three locations were utilized; the City Commission room at City Hall, the training room in the Public Works building, and the municipal court room at the Law & Justice Center.

Ethics trainings are mandated by City charter and there were a lot of employees to move through the trainings in the few weeks allotted. Annual ethics trainings are required by City charter, and employees had mixed feelings about attending. However, 69% of the employees and 80% of the supervisors demonstrated through clicker responses that although they were required to come to the training, it wasn't so bad and they usually learned something. Employees indicated that they liked the use of anonymous clicker polling for ethics training.

After the introduction, I presented the results from the Fall 2011 quantitative research study. A sample of the City of Bozeman employees had participated in the on-line survey, another sample had declined to participate, and none had received the research results directly. Although not much discussion was generated by the research results, employees indicated that they were pleased to hear the results and gain an understanding of the study implications.

Next, a series of ethics "Red Light/Green Light" questions were asked. These consisted of short scenarios that presented potential ethical dilemmas. If there was a potential ethical issue present, participants selected a button that reflected a "red light" response. If the participant thought that the scenario did not reflect an ethical concern, they pushed a "green light" response. There were 5 of these questions in the training (the questions were adapted for the perspective of an employee or a supervisor depending on the training). After each "Red Light/Green Light" question, and large group discussion, the corresponding ethics code was highlighted. The intent of these questions was to serve as a warm up, to generate critical thinking, and to provide a connection to the City of Bozeman code of ethics.

The next portion of the training consisted of more in-depth ethical scenarios. A slide with an ethical situation was projected and read to the large group. One to 3 anonymous clicker response questions were generated, and small groups were formed to discuss the

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ethical situation. The small groups were given 3-5 minutes to discuss the situation and how they would respond to it. Employees and supervisors appeared to appreciate the opportunity for discussion and to apply critical thinking skills to these ethical scenarios. The scenario discussions were included in the training to promote involving others in ethical dilemmas and to demonstrate that a variety of opinions can lead to different perspectives and more informed ethical decision-making. Employees got to discuss what the right thing to do might be in the situation. Two or 3 of these longer scenarios were utilized in each training session, depending on the time available. Again, a large group discussion was facilitated after each small group discussion, and the relevant code was attached to the particular scenario.

The final part of the training session involved the 4 research questions. Employees and supervisors formed small groups and responded to each of the research questions. Responses were put onto a flip chart page (or pages) and the small group selected a spokesperson who reported back to the large group what they talked about. I took observational field notes during the report out by small groups and asked clarifying questions for greater understanding.

At the close of each training session, two clicker evaluation slides were utilized for feedback (Likert scale response items: this training session was a good use of my time, and I learned something today that I will use in my work with the City). 68% of employees and 84% of supervisors agreed or strongly agreed that the ethics training as a good use of their time (12% of employees and 5% of supervisors disagreed or strongly disagreed). 53% of employees and 67% of supervisors agreed or strongly agreed that they learned something in the ethics training that they will be able to use in their job with the City (20% of employees and 7% of supervisors disagreed or strongly disagreed).

A representation of the frequencies of emerging themes can be found in Table 1, demonstrating responses from employees and supervisors separately by research question. Numbers to the right of each bullet represent frequencies. The number to the left of the slash represents the number of small groups who discussed the theme. The number to the right represents the total number of small groups who discussed the theme. There was redundancy in the emerging themes among the research questions. I chose which research question to assign the theme, to make sense of the data and to avoid repeating information. This was not a perfect process and overlap does occur. I did not include categories in the chart if they emerged only once. My goal was to find patterns in the data rather than anecdotes representing just a few people (Trevino et al., 2003). However, I will give the entire list of comments to the City of Bozeman at the close of this study.

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Table 1. Responses to research questions by category

Question	Employees	Supervisors
<p>Q1: Talk about how your group perceives the ethics “culture” within the City of Bozeman. Is it weak, strong, or somewhere in between. Why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong 6/38 • Strong culture on the departmental level 7/38 • In between weak and strong 16/38 • Weak 6/38 • Weak for administration 4/38 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong 6/12 • Moving in a positive direction 3/12 • In between weak and strong 3/12 • Strong within our department 2/12
<p>Q2: What steps would you take to strengthen ethical behavior within the City of Bozeman?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability 18/38 Hold people accountable at all levels, tie ethics to evaluation • Communication and transparency 16/38 Improved communications and transparency • Training 14/38 Continue education, trainings and discussion • Hire and promote ethical people 6/38 • Create anonymous avenues to report ethical violations 6/38 • Increase pay, implement recommendations from compensation study 3/38 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training 5/12 Continue education, trainings and discussion • Realistic Policies 4/12 Ethics policies more realistic, more guidance and clarity in the gray areas • Accountability 3/12 Hold employees more accountable • Pro-active 2/12 Be pro-active and not reactive to ethics issues
<p>Q3: What do you think the role of City Leadership should be in strengthening the ethical culture? (Employee Question) OR As a supervisor and leader within the City, what role do you serve or should you serve in creating the ethical culture of the City? How can the City Leadership assist in creating a stronger culture? (Supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead by example; be a good role model for staff 26/38 • Safe environment 10/38 Create and reward a culture where questions are invited and asked freely, in a retaliation-free environment • Bridge the gap between management and employees 10/38 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead by example; be a good role model for staff 11/12

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Question)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Leaders are ethics experts 2/38 	
Q4: As a City employee, what do you want out of the Ethics Policy, Board of Ethics and the Ethics Trainings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guidelines 22/38 clarity for behavior, gray areas, gifts • Training Design 21/38 Variety in what employees want, like scenarios and discussion, like clickers, like meeting staff from other departments • Board of Ethics 21/38 Introductions, visibility, access, communication • Legal Guidance 9/38 Available, visible, clear, common-sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Design 7/12 Specific scenarios within departments, like scenarios and discussions • Clear guidelines 6/12 Clear expectations from the City, guidance in gray areas, clarity on gifts

* Numbers to the right of each bullet represent frequencies. The number to the left of the slash represents the number of small groups who mentioned the response theme to this item. The number to the right represents the total number of small groups who discussed the item. There were 3 supervisor training sessions with a total of 12 small groups for discussion. There were 10 employee training sessions with a total of 38 small groups for discussion. Small groups consisted of 3-10 individuals.

Research Question 1: How do two groups of municipal employees (supervisory and non-supervisory) perceive the strength of the ethical culture in their municipality (weak – medium – strong)?

Employees rated the ethical culture in their municipality across the whole continuum from weak to strong. Employee groups mentioned that weak, strong, and in-between cultures are all present, depending on where you work within the City. Several employees noted that there are different ethical cultures within the same department, even varying by shifts. Most employees felt that their own department had a strong culture and that it was their perception of other departments or managers that led them to rate the overall culture as weaker. The following quotes are a representative sample from the employee trainings.

“We are a house divided in terms of ethical culture.” Management versus the rank and file. We see administration as weak, where each of us rated our departments as strong.”

“Mid-management does not want to deal with negative situations in the department. Rather than welcoming questions and dealing with conflict, there is no resolution.”

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“There will always be some offenders, but we are doing well in a relative way.”

“The ethics program is in place and reinforced. City employees tend to be ethical in general and self-regulating. We now have an Ethics Handbook and ethical standards. There is a perception that the culture is progressing to better.”

There is a difference in how the ethical culture of the City is viewed by non-supervisory employees and supervisors. Supervisors rated the ethical culture stronger. There were no small groups of supervisors who rated the culture as weak, although some rated it in between weak and strong.

“We see the culture as strong. The City is being proactive, as opposed to reactive. We have had no recent complaints.”

“I’ve been here since we started the ethics trainings. I would say that we have moved from a 5 to an 8 on a scale of 1-10. We are more focused on ethics now, we talk about it more.”

Research Question 2: What steps do two groups of municipal employees (supervisory and non-supervisory) believe their municipality should take to strengthen the ethical culture?

In relation to research question 2, both employees and supervisors identified accountability and training as ways to strengthen ethical behavior within the City of Bozeman. Eighteen small groups of employees talked about accountability, *“Hold people accountable on all levels. Follow through on disciplinary action. Discuss ethics in performance evaluations.”* They discussed the need to *“use positive reinforcement and recognize ethical behavior when we see it,”* as well as *“evaluate ethics in each department.”* Three of the supervisor small groups also mentioned accountability with similar comments.

Training, although mandated, is seen by both groups as an important component in reinforcing the Code of Ethics and ethical behavior. Both employees and supervisors discussed continuing education, continued training, and continued discussion among employees within departments. Both groups mentioned that the scenarios and discussions helped to determine the right thing to do, rather than just reciting the Code and what the Codes says about what not to do. A need to promote more conversations about ethics, day-to-day and on the job, was noted by both groups. The trainings *“seem to be opening discussion”* and moving ethics *“beyond a once-a-year mandated training topic.”*

Employees had additional suggestions for steps to increase ethical behavior. The employee groups were vocal about improving communication from managers and supervisors and transparency in decision-making. *“We would like more interdepartmental communications, nothing hidden. How do decisions get made?”* Also, *“we would like to hear our leaders talk more about ethics and tell us about changes and updates.”* One group suggested that employees have the opportunity to attend management meetings, so they can learn how decisions are made.

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Employees also suggested that the City put a stronger effort into ethics at the time of hire. *“If we hire ethical people, we will be an ethical organization. People come with their ethics already developed.”* Similar emphasis was placed on promoting people who have demonstrated ethical behavior. *“We would like to see a stronger correlation between promotions/raises and ethical decision-making. Hire quality leaders.”*

Six small groups of employees discussed anonymous avenues for reporting ethical violations. They talked about making it easier to report, safer to report, and ways to get advice anonymously. On-line forums, website reporting, and a hot line were all suggested.

Finally, employees mentioned pay as an ethical issue. *“We think that pay is an ethical issue – it relates to how we feel we are valued and how people value our ability to make decisions. Top administration received raises in this time, while the rank and file did not.”*

Supervisors identified two steps to strengthen ethical behavior that were different than the employees. Supervisors discussed the need for realistic policies that *“provide more clarity and guidance in the gray areas.”* They also discussed a pro-active approach to ethics (including training, education and discussion), rather than a reactive approach relating to an ethical crisis that is taking place. They noted the need to weave ethics into everyday work situations to assist in a pro-active approach; *“Think about ethical situations and what the right thing to do is, before we are on the other side of it having to clean up the mess.”*

Research Question 3: What role should City leadership play in strengthening the ethical culture?

The overwhelming response to research question 3 was *“to lead by example.”* Out of 50 total small groups (employees and supervisors), 37 small groups led with this bullet point. There was less agreement about how to recognize or teach *“leading by example,”* but it was strongly emphasized that leaders should *“talk the talk, and walk the walk.”* Employees stated, *“City leaders need to set a high bar, follow the ethics standards themselves, and foster an ethical and transparent culture.”* Also, *“We want them to set the tone for ethics and model the behavior they want to see in everyone else.”* Depending on the department, employees voiced that their supervisors and managers were doing this well, or not doing this well. There were both negative and positive statements made about managers and supervisors leading by example and serving as positive role models for staff.

Supervisors had some insight into leading by example but added that specific training or feedback in this area would be helpful. Supervisors discussed that they need to create an open door environment, provide their perceptions of ethical issues, and initiate discussions with employees about ethics within their work area.

Apart from leading by example and role modeling ethical behavior, employees identified the need for a safe environment without retaliation, bridging the gap between management and employees, and the need for City leaders to be ethics experts.

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Regarding a safe environment: *“We need to create and reward a culture where questions are invited and asked freely – make it safe.”* And, *“There is a reluctance now to bring things forward or to talk freely. Make it safe to go to leadership.”* Also, *“We would like a retaliation-free environment; if you confront your supervisor or manager, there won’t be repercussions.”*

Supervisors are also impacted by this perceived lack of safe environment. They stated, *“The fear of retaliation affects us too. When there is a reluctance to come to management to share concerns, ask questions, or report an unsafe behavior, supervisors can’t act on information they don’t have. A safe, open environment is needed for all of us – the fear doesn’t serve any of us.”* Whether the environment is safe to openly question how decisions are made or bring concerns to the open, there does appear to be a perception that it is not safe to do so in some City departments.

Employees talked about a perceived distance between management and employees. They expressed a desire to know the City leaders better. They want more communication, access to managers, and visibility. One group invited the City managers to *“come work side by side us on a crew for 8 hours a day for two weeks. Help with snow removal, graffiti removal, flushing, and garbage.”* One employee noted, *“When Tricia was hired as the new Human Resources Director, she came around to every department to introduce herself to employees. We have not met several of the City Management or the Board of Ethics. I liked the way Tricia did that.”*

The employees want consistency in decisions, everyone held to the same standards, two-way communication and 360 degree evaluation.

Research Question 4: What do City employees want out of the Ethics Policy, Board of Ethics and the Ethics Trainings?

Both supervisors and employees identified that they want clear guidelines from the ethics program. Although a large part of the training this year revolved around the gray areas in ethics, City employees want clarity where it can be defined (gifts as an example). They want realistic policies that are easy to understand.

There was a lot of input into training design as well. Staff like mixing up the trainings (in person, electronic), mixing departments (department specific versus departments interacting with each other), they like clickers, scenarios and discussion.

Employees also identified that they would like introductions to the independent Board of Ethics. They would like the Board to be accessible, more visible, and to communicate with them. Employees felt they would be reluctant to involve strangers in an ethical dilemma. They would like to know more about how the Board of Ethics could be a resource to them.

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Employees want the same access, visibility, and communication with the City legal department.

Conclusions and Discussion

The employees of the City of Bozeman were a true pleasure to work with on these 2012 ethics trainings. Although mandated to annual training by City charter, the employees arrived with good attitudes, engaged with the material, and generated legitimate recommendations for strengthening the ethical culture and climate within the City. It has been a privilege to work with the City of Bozeman in this capacity. There were common themes among the supervisors and non-supervisory employees, along with different perspectives depending on group membership. Many of the suggestions made by employees are supported by ethics research.

The conclusions are organized in three areas that impact the ethical strength of an organization: ethics culture/climate, ethical leadership, and ethics program. These components interact with each other and collectively to impact ethical behavior within the municipal organization.

Strengthening the ethics culture: Accountability, training, open communications, transparency

The City of Bozeman ethical culture was rated by employees and supervisors as being a strong-leaning culture. Although rated along the full continuum of weak, strong, and in between weak and strong, the overall rating reflects leaning towards strong. In almost all cases, employees rated their own departments as strong or improving. The City management was rated as weak by some employees and there is a perceived distance from the “rank and file” employees to the management level.

Bozeman employees and supervisors identify accountability and training as steps to strengthen ethical behavior. Ethical leaders create ground rules and hold employees accountable (Trevino et al., 2003). Accountability is linked with the reinforcement of ethical behavior. Reinforcement refers to the likelihood that employees will be punished for behaving unethically and rewarded for behaving ethically (Kaptein, 2011). When employees are not punished for unethical behavior or even rewarded for such behavior, the message is that unethical behavior is acceptable or even desirable. The reward system represents a key symbol system that creates shared meaning about appropriate and inappropriate conduct (Trevino et al., 2003). Through the reward system, the leader focuses attention on the kinds of behaviors that are valued and not valued in the organization. A lack of recognition of ethical behavior reduces the willingness of employees to act ethically and increases the likelihood of unethical behavior. In alignment with this research, Bozeman employees voiced that they want employees at all levels held accountable for positive and negative behavior.

Organization-wide communications and transparency will also lead to a stronger ethical culture. Trevino et al. (2003) demonstrated the importance of conveying an ethics message. Leaders need to appear courageous in tough ethical situations, and be concerned about means,

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not just ends. They need to think about the long term. Some leaders believe that their ethics are quite transparent to others. But, to distant employees (Trevino et al., 2003), the “fishbowl” may look more like a “fortress,” that blocks wide-spread communication. When leaders share information about important organizational decisions, they are viewed as more ethical. Ethical leaders can demonstrate that they care about employees within an organization in a variety of ways: listening, demonstrating concern for the greater good, and the long-term best interest of the organization. They need to communicate regularly about ethical issues, and hold people accountable through rewards and punishment to signal support for ethical values.

Bozeman employees want the City to build ethics into everyday tasks, and especially to hiring, promotion, and performance evaluation. Employees want an anonymous way to alert the City to potential ethical violations. Current pay was also tied to ethics. A pro-active approach, including realistic policies, annual training and interactive discussions, will help the City avoid ethics crises.

Ethical Leadership: Leading by example, safe environment, bridging the gap

Bozeman employees want their leaders to lead by example and model the behavior they want to see in others. People learn what behavior is expected of them by observing the behavior of role models (Kaptein, 2011). Ethical standards are compromised when managers and supervisors communicate contradictory or inconsistent signals to subordinates. Behavior that is consistent with the ethical standards of the organization reinforces the message of compliance with these standards. Executives set the tone at the top that shapes the ethical culture and climate for the organization. Ethical leaders reinforce conduct within the context of an ethics agenda. Employees perceive that the ethical leader’s goal is not simply job performance, but performance within a set of ethical values and principles (Trevino et al., 2003). Trevino et al. noted that an organization whose leaders represent high ethical standards and who reward ethical conduct is also an organization that values its employees, its community, and obeying the law. Leading by example was a strong theme with Bozeman employees.

Bozeman employees want a safe, retaliation-free culture where questions can be asked openly from any level. A relevant dimension of ethical culture to predict and prevent unethical behavior is that of the openness managers and employees experience to discuss ethical dilemmas and alleged unethical behavior (Kaptein 2011). If the organizational culture is characterized by little discussion where criticism is not encouraged or accepted, ideas will not be exchanged and the readiness to bring ethical issues to the attention of management will be limited or absent. Trevino et al. (1999) noted that the degree to which managers and employees can openly talk about ethics is a good predictor of the frequency of unethical behavior.

Bozeman employees perceive a gap between management and the front line. They want their managers to be accessible, communicative, and visible. Kaptein (2011) found cases

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where a lack of visibility was a frontrunner to unethical behavior. A lack of visibility can lead to concealed behavior. Further, Trevino et al. (2003) discusses social salience for leaders. If a leader is quietly ethical within the confines of the top management team, but more distant employees do not know about it, he or she is not likely to be perceived as an ethical leader. More distant employees are not likely to infer ethical leadership from routine executive decisions that are not widely communicated. One small group of Bozeman employees stated, *"We perceive that unethical decisions have been made."* In the same session, another small group reported that they wanted the City managers to *"foster an ethical and transparent environment."* Bozeman employees want to see and experience strong leadership. They want to be confident that leaders will know what to do and will take action on issues that arise (ethics experts).

One group of Bozeman employees stated, *"We are one of the best cities in Montana – and it is because of us staff – we want to feel valued."* Others noted that *"department heads are valued over the workers. We want equality across the board, more respect for workers."* Employees want the City to avoid an elitist mentality.

Ethics Program: Training, discussion, clarity, visible leadership

Bozeman employees *"want to feel like we are working for an ethical government."* They want *"guidance, leadership, and clarity."* Employees had suggestions for training design which include a variety of approaches (in-person and electronic). They appreciate the increased depth into ethical scenarios. Rather than focusing on Codes of Ethics alone, the use of clickers, ethics scenarios and interactive discussions helped to deepen knowledge. City employees would like access, visibility and communications with City leaders, the independent Board of Ethics, and the City legal department. They want clarity and realistic guidelines, where possible. An employee reported, *"I'd like clarity on the behavioral ethical questions that exist. What is the clear right thing to do in this situation?"* It is important that an organization does not leave managers and employees to rely on their moral intuition and good judgment alone, but to create a culture in which a distinction between ethical and unethical behavior is clear (Kaptein, 2011). Greater clarity communicates the importance of ethical standards and decreases the likelihood that employees unwittingly engage in unethical behavior.

Kaptein (2011) demonstrated that dimensions of ethical culture are negatively related to unethical behavior. Ethical role modeling by managers and supervisors, an openness to discuss ethical issues, and reinforcement of ethical behavior were all suggestions made by City of Bozeman employees in this qualitative study and are consistent with the factors identified as significant in Kaptein's 2011 research. West & Berman (2006) write about a comprehensive ethics system. Many organizations do more than just adopt codes of ethics; their leaders provide examples of ethical conduct and foster discussions of ethics issues, cities offer ethics trainings that deal with relevant scenarios, some local governments make ethics a criterion in hiring, where others have an ethics counselor to whom employees can go when they have questions. West & Berman (2006) assert that leaders must take inventory of their

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organization's ethics environment. The City of Bozeman has begun this journey. Employees noted, *"We are moving in a positive direction. The culture has become more open, it's better than in years past."* What Bozeman learns through the process may set the stage for strengthening the ethics of other municipalities.

Recommendations

- For leaders of municipal governments – as a result of the informal survey of municipal clerks reflecting that 75% of Montana municipalities do not give new employees a copy of the Montana State Code of Ethics, and 93% provide no training on the Montana State Code of Ethics, the ethics program case-study of the City of Bozeman may provide a good example to strengthen ethical leadership and ethical culture within cities and towns across Montana.
- For the City of Bozeman leadership – this qualitative study has highlighted employee-identified areas to strengthen ethical culture within the City (that are in alignment with ethics research). City leaders may use this study to address the conclusions in each of three areas; ethical culture/climate, ethical leadership, and ethics program. Specific recommendations include:
 - Continue training, education, and foster discussion of ethics issues: incorporate it beyond a one-time annual training. Utilize relevant scenarios that apply to specific municipal work settings.
 - Make ethics a criterion in hiring, promotion, and performance evaluation.
 - Reinforce ethical behavior - recognize and reward ethical behavior; follow through on disciplinary actions related to unethical behavior.
 - Cultivate an openness to discuss ethical issues - address the perception of an unsafe environment for questions, discussions, and reporting.
 - Clearly identify ethics resource personnel available to employees.
 - Consider anonymous avenues for reporting.
 - Ethical role modeling – lead by example, enhanced communications, perception of distance.
 - Board of Ethics – introductions and communications with employees. Provide clarity on the gift prohibition.
- For further study:
 - The 2011 pilot quantitative study, along with this 2012 qualitative study, provide additional areas of focus for the City of Bozeman to continue to strengthen ethics within the organization. Future research should be conducted after implementation of these recommendations to determine if there has been a strengthening of the ethical environment within the City. The City of Bozeman has embarked down a unique path in the State of Montana. What is being learned within the City may be very valuable and replicable to other Montana municipalities in the future.

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- More research is needed on ethics training, especially from the trainee's perspective. Was the material covered relevant to their jobs? Were the tools useful in resolving day-to-day ethical dilemmas? Was the mode of instruction sufficiently engaging to capture their interest? Was the time allocated appropriate? And finally, is training associated with a more ethical organization? (West & Berman, 2006).

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Bozeman Ethics – Spring 2012
Qualitative Results – Raw Data and Summary Chart

SUPERVISOR RESPONSES

1. Talk about how your group perceives the ethics “culture” within the City of Bozeman. Does your group perceive it as weak, strong, or somewhere in between. Why?

Culture has improved, Culture has become more open

Culture is strong within our department – we hold each other accountable, we know right and wrong innately

(6) Strong, ethics are openly discussed, we are committed, stricter rules than State, employees know they are held to a higher standard, In a fish bowl, high profile departments, great culture, City has a strong sense of a high ethical culture

(2) In-between, Good+, 50%+

“We see the culture as strong. The City is being proactive, as opposed to reactive. We have had no recent complaints.”

“I’ve been here since we started the ethics trainings. I would say that we have moved from a 5 to an 8, on a scale of 1-10. We are more focused on ethics now, we talk about it more.”

2. What steps would you take to strengthen ethical behavior within the City of Bozeman?

(5) Continued Education, Trainings, Discussion (all City of Bozeman parties are part of this ethics program), 2-3 trainings per year, in-person better than online

Be pro-active and not reactive with ethics

Get public input on ways to strengthen ethics in Bozeman

Promote more conversations among employees

Consistent response to ethical complaints – culture of consistency

Hold people accountable

More realistic policy – can we receive thank yous?

Eliminate the “cookie” clause (quote - \$50 defined by State Code would be more helpful)

Guidance in the gray areas of handbook

Hold people accountable

“Right thing versus the defined ethical thing. Regarding coffee and bagels and garbage crew scenario. Right thing is to accept the coffee and bagels – defined ethics is to not accept the gift.”

3. As a supervisor and leader within the City, what role do you serve or should you serve in creating the ethical culture of the City? How can the City Leadership assist in creating a stronger culture?

(11) Lead by example/Be a good role model for your staff

Keep good ethics in the forefront

Policing – enforce policies that exist

Accept personal responsibility for your own behavior

Provide feedback on ethical perception of issues

Deal with issues fairly and promptly

A Dilbert approach – common-sense

No retaliation

Open door policy to report ethics violations

Promote continuing education on ethics for supervisors and staff

Train supervisors first so they can promote among staff

Supervisors to understand ethics code

4. As a City employee, what do you want out of the Ethics Policy, Board of Ethics and the Ethics Trainings?

(3) Clarity on gifts, \$\$ amounts

(3) Department specific trainings – to cover unique issues – specific scenarios within departments

(2) Clear expectations of what City wants in terms of ethical behavior and clearly followed in all departments, clarity

(2) Like this format of scenarios and discussions, scenario-based training relating to actual codes

Encourage training

Guidance in the gray areas of handbook – write it so people can understand it

City needs to practice what they expect of employees , City needs to lead by example – every employee

Would like to understand the basis for ethics (eg. Bible)

Tools for supervisors – performance management and ethics

On-line or everyone together (supervisors and employees) – change up delivery methods

Timing of trainings – winter

Meet the Board of Ethics

NON-SUPERVISORY RESPONSES

1. Talk about how your group perceives the ethics “culture” within the City of Bozeman. Is it weak, strong, or somewhere in between. Why?

(6) Strong

classes, Ethics Handbook, trainings, no scandals, self-image, ethical standards, more to lose if unethical, annual class is good – adequate, people tend to be ethical in general, City clarifying issues, tend to self-regulate, peer influence, ethics program in place and reinforced

(6) Strong culture on the department level

Laborers are ethical
may depend on department
There’s room for improvement
Strength varies by departments
Ethics culture is isolated by department – no complaints in this group
Strong in my own department
Employees have/use street smarts when encountering ethical situations
Small reliant teams, accountability

(13) Somewhere in between strong and weak

weak-leaning; middle leaning towards strong; above average
(2) depends on department
It’s all about perception
We can always do better
On a scale of 1-10; about a 7
Strong written policy, variable among departments, gray areas

(3) Neutral about ethics culture

Disconnect between upper and lower levels of employees
Ethical expectations are higher for employees lower on the ladder
Management not held to the same standard
Strong with flaws, weak at the top

(6) Weak overall

Starting from top down to lowest level
Top level needs to avoid elitist mentality
Due to facebook issue
Top administration received raises during this time Weak for administration

They took raises during this time

Particularly management

Management chooses to use ethics when they will benefit/ can justify decisions through political speak

If management would abide by ethics, employees would be more apt to apply a greater effort

(2) Upper management questionable in terms of ethics

(3) Rank & File seems ethical overall, rank & file strong

Affects morale

We perceive that unethical decisions have been made

Improvement in management's ethical behavior

Why are supervisors going to different trainings than employees?

Perception that the culture is progressing to better

Lots of gray area in Bozeman Ethics – different departments have their own idea of ethics

Weak – Medium- Strong: all are present even within one department, shifts

We are generally responsive

We welcome responding to needs from other departments

Level of public service is strong

Compared to the County, we are fabulous

Supervisors need help leading by example

“Mid management does not want to deal with negative situations in the department. Rather than welcoming questions and dealing with conflict, there is no resolution.”

“There will always be some offenders, but we are doing well in a relative way.”

“We are a house divided in terms of ethical culture. Management versus the rank and file. We see administration as weak, where each of us rated our individual departments as strong.”

2. What steps would you take to strengthen ethical behavior within the City of Bozeman?

(10) Trainings

keep up with trainings, continue with some level of training, maintain trainings, more meetings/trainings

trainings are good (this training in particular)

continue education. It seems to be opening discussion.

That's what this class is for...

Program in place reinforces ethics

Information, education

Inter-departmental trainings to go over department specific issues (more frequently to keep it fresh)

- (10) Accountability and oversight
 - both bosses and employees!
 - (2) Hold people accountable at all levels
 - Take responsibility for yourself
 - Enforce ethical discipline
 - More accountability regarding ethical decision-making/violations
 - Follow through on disciplinary action
 - Employees police themselves in situations
 - Accountability from the bottom up
 - Supervisors get evaluated
 - Workers evaluate management on ethics
- (5) Hire ethical people, incorporate ethics into the hiring process, make ethics a bigger part of the hiring process
- (3) Ethics Board more available – who do you go to with a problem, need to know Ethics Board, who is serving, how did they get on it,
 - Employee Ethics committee – made up of staff from various departments
 - Anonymous, safe survey that targets the City of Bozeman specifically
 - Be allowed to name names & departments
- (2) More transparency, more interdepartmental communications, nothing hidden, explanations regarding decisions,
 - more respect for workers
 - pay & wages studies – take action on the study and implement the recommendations
 - Report things
 - Avenue to comment on supervisors conduct anonymously
 - City could get data about compliance
 - Application of ethics trainings – consistency within the City
 - Helpful to meet with employees from different departments – show variety of problems
 - Discuss ethics in performance evaluations
 - Regular discussion of ethics in departments
 - OK as it is
 - Lead by example
 - Top level needs to avoid elitist mentality. Peons have ethics forced on them, while upper continues unethical behavior without repercussions.
 - Anonymous online form for questions on the employee website?
 - Give each department more independence to develop ethical codes
 - Anonymous protection
 - Add ethics to performance evaluation – discuss in evaluations
 - Maintain/improve positive working environment
 - Positive reinforcement and recognition of ethical behavior
 - Regular informative messages via an internal site (wiki?)
 - Increase pay – think it is an issue of ethics – how we feel we are valued and our ability to make decisions
 - More communication – more postings – reminders about patron privacy
 - Extra training for supervisors

Follow through with complaints and ethics issues
Retaliation free environment – if you confront your supervisor or a manager, there won't be repercussions
Better communication, open, honest
Equality across the board
Ethical question of the month
Evaluation of ethics within all departments
Share what we are doing on ethics with the public (since they wanted it)
More communication with the Board of Ethics
Make it easier to report things – anonymous hot line?
Would like to see core values exhibited by leadership
Clarity is needed for behavior and ethics questions
 Don't get too far with it – offends people
Resources need to be approachable and accessible
Hold people accountable at all levels
Specifics – clear answers to dilemmas
Ease of moving through the leadership chain
More communication at all levels
Stronger correlation between \$\$/promotions and ethical decisions

“if the cookie clause and accepting bagels and coffee are all we need to talk about, we don't need more ethics trainings. There are much more serious ethics issues going on here – that's what we should be trained on.”

3. What do you think the role of City Leadership should be in strengthening the ethical culture?

(23) Lead by example – Set a good example, walk the walk, do what we say not what we do, skits – what to do and what not to do
(3) Leadership held to a higher standard (set the example for ethical behavior you want to see)
City leaders need to set a high bar
Follow ethical standards themselves – lead by example
Foster an ethical and transparent culture/environment
Admin votes in raises, but can't afford to give a decent raise to city employees (fire and PD)
Rules apply to everyone
Role model
They have the public eye and the media attention – their actions matter
They should set the tone
Need to have more scrutiny on them

(3) Create and reward culture where questions are invited and asked freely – make it safe, there is a reluctance now to bring things forward or to talk freely, Make it safe to go to leadership

(2) Join crews in the field, work side by side with the hourly employees for a minimum of 2 weeks straight, 8 hours each day. Snow removal, graffiti removal, flushing, garbage route. Must be incognito (undercover boss).

(2) Supervisors should be held to the same standards and transparency as employees (consistency), Lack of consistency between behavior of management and behavior of staff, hold supervisors accountable

(2) Consistency in decisions for all employees

Follow-up, take action on the survey listed in no. 2

Put this (lead by example) into the ethics training – how to role model behavior you want to see

Bridging the gap between employees and city leaders (City Management attending departmental meetings, visiting departments, more communication, city attorney)

Post clear guidelines about what is allowable for city staff and family, businesses

Hire quality leaders

Already provide training

Transparency of recorded City Commission meetings is good

More transparency

Be ethical in all aspects

Solicit employee feedback and participation to management

Employee participation with the Board of Ethics?

Keep mandating ethics training

Reinforce good ethical behavior

Increase knowledge of Ethical Framework that keeps all of us on track and accountable

Put money where your mouth is – live outside of Bozeman because can't afford to live here

Have them take pay cuts

Turn back the City cars

Heads of departments are valued over workers – morale has plummeted

More in tune with commission – frivolous spending

We are one of the best cities in Montana – because of our staff – value them

Wait too long to implement policy

Regular communications from management to staff

Interactive communications to keep thinking about ethics

City Leaders need to be our ethics experts

Want to know we are protected by the Code of Ethics

Leaders talk about ethics more

Two-way evaluations

Follow through complaints and issues

“The role of City Leaders is to create an environment where questions are welcome about the way we do things. A safe environment for frank discussions.”

4. As a City employee, what do you want out of the Ethics Policy, Board of Ethics and the Ethics Trainings?

(10) Board of Ethics

- (3) more visibility of Board of Ethics
- introductions (who are they? We don't know them)
- personal relationships (not likely to go to a stranger with an ethics dilemma)
- bring in Ethics Board so they hear "our side"
- Know that they exist, know who the board is, that they are available
- Transparency – who's the board? What are their credentials?
- The Board of Ethics should participate in these trainings – lead them or their presence
- More interactions with the Board of Ethics people
- BOE – tell us purpose, goals, how to contact, what they want from us as employees
- Who are they, what do they do? How do I access them?
- Communicate with us about changes
- Fix the gift thing
- Come to trainings, stop by City offices
- Didn't know we had a Board of Ethics

(6) Clarity and guidelines

- Clear answer to gift question and other gray ethics questions

(6) Re-write/re-structure the gift policy

(4) Scenarios were great! Interactive training was positive versus the other trainings, interactive trainings

(2) More relevant ethics scenarios – personalize

(2) Like the clickers

(2) Liked meeting people from other departments

(2) Every employee feels comfortable having some place to go when problems arise, Leaders/Supervisors/ BOE need to be safe to go to

(2) Legal guidance – write common sense policies without jargon so every day people can read and understand them, take the legal speak out of the handbook

Legal Department more available, more visible to employees, short intro by Greg Sullivan

In person training

Like small groups for discussion

Like not mixing departments for training

Like having supervisors separate

Ethics cannot be the only time we mix departments – there needs to be other opportunities; it is too sensitive a topic

Increase knowledge of legal rights to employees within the City

A more realistic view of ethics (not just cookie clause and free coffee – larger, more complex issues than that)

Want to feel like we are working for an ethical government

Spend more time on ethics

Specific training on ways to communicate in difficult situations would be helpful

More of a common sense approach to ethics – helps with the gray areas
Want to know changes and updates on ethics
Reasonable outline of what will be expected as a “City” representative
No zero tolerance – (discuss, teach, help understand the gray)
Good to know that the Board and the policies exist
Annual training is helpful
All employees and management train together
Will anything actually happen from this feedback?
Go deeper on personal gain ethics issues
Know you will be protected if you follow the ethics policy
Know who you can go to/talk to
Supervisors held to a higher standard
Define legal rights more clearly
Keep ethics up front as an issue
Anonymous way to report and get advice
Regular time and place for ethics questions
Time to ask questions
On line trainings were more convenient, but like the scenarios of this training
Alternate trainings between meetings and on-line, but continue
Like discussing the ethics scenarios with other employees
Webinars? Videos?
Update ethics policies to make them more user friendly
Issues resolved fairly and promptly
Utilize resources available
Better communication
Nothing comes up again
Guidance, Leadership, and Clarity
More granola bars
Coffee with the granola bars
Lunch

“We can all read the handbook and take a test on the material but still not understand how the city wants us to act in situations with nuance.”

“When Tricia was hired as the HR Director, she came to every department and introduced herself to employees. We have not met several of the City Management or the Board of Ethics.”

“I’d like clarity on the behavioral ethical questions that exist. What is the clear right thing to do in this situation?”

“I’d like a clear way to comment on a supervisor’s behavior anonymously to be able to talk about problem behaviors, without retaliation.”

BOARD RESPONSES

1. Talk about how your group perceives the ethics “culture” within the City of Bozeman. Do you see it as weak, strong, or somewhere in between? Why?

(13) Strong culture (facebook issue was embarrassing) – great personal experience with staff, ethics culture is strong despite situational ethics decisions (made by a few), it is transparent, meetings are good, City leaders saying the word “ethical,” City government seems ethically strong – Community also, sense of community/area, gut reaction is strong, lots of transparency, Strong-ish, Strong – based on observations over last 20+ years, Strong with transparency and engagement

(2) Better than the County

City of Bozeman organization – strong ethical nature

Relatively strong – having meetings

Good to strong

Between medium and strong

Getting stronger/moving away from weak

(3) Between weak and strong

city/citizen mixed

Evolving

Gift policy diminishes

Community sees it as fairly strong and pretty transparent

Don’t have to work hard to find the info you want

Vast improvement from 1996, partly due to ethics policy and transparency

Awareness – night and day difference from now and years ago

Voters adopted ethics policy

Board discussions are healthy

Regional Ethics based on “rural” culture

Always room to improve... it has gotten better over the years

“Ethics is an ambiguous area; it is often reactive and it is difficult to be pro-active until an issue arises. Talking about the ethics culture indicates that the City of BZ is trying to raise the issue. The Ethics Culture is strong despite situational ethics decisions made by a few.”

2. What steps would you take to strengthen ethical behavior within the City of Bozeman?

(6) Continue to reinforce current training regimen, more education

(4) Flexibility with gift, lighten up on gifts – coffee, lemonade should be OK, reasonable limit of gift, amend code to look at exemplary service – definition of “gift”

(3) Hiring process – interview questions

(2) Create a culture of positive reinforcement and reward

Opportunities for dialog

Discussion is very helpful

Review Handbook on consistent basis

Meeting in person is more effective than online
Keep public disclosed for checks/balances
Focus on transparency
Live ethics trainings
Make ethics more clearly defined, better define regulations as they apply to situations
Make Montana Ethic the standard, maintain the 36% level versus 63% national
Annual review and reflection
Pay attention to perception
Legal guidelines up to date
Educate public about training and ethics efforts
Publicize ethics program/training
More face-to-face ethical discussions independent of issues
Continue with “top of the mind” training and discussion
Keep it on your plate
Do schools discuss it? Maybe take it to the schools
Chief City Attorney required to attend all sessions
Each individual conscious of their own decisions – personal transparency
Communicate ethical issues and solutions among all City participants
Look at frequency for seasonal board members, important for employees
Make public any ethical breaches and consequences
Leadership serving as role models
Rules of engagement for the boards – not as clear
Consistency around ethics interpretation
Regular discussions within boards

3. What do you think the role of City Leadership should be in strengthening the ethical culture?

(10) Lead by example/be the example, walk the talk
(2) Hold employees and officials accountable
Demonstrate an awareness of ethical behavior
City Leadership should initiate review of the Ethics Handbook
City leadership should exude a culture of truth and honesty and the attitude we want BZ
to maintain – friendliness, trust
Leadership should be heavily involved and vocally engaged
Open discussion during decision-making process
Leadership should strive to be as informed as possible in an ethical approach
Perception is as important and leadership should err on the side of caution
Accountability = Transparency
Communicate City efforts
Pass out clickers to public!
Keep politics out of it
Be held to a higher standard, must set precedent for always staying clearly ethical

Check board qualifications
Educate, support
Better rules/defined
Be firm with ethical violations
Enforce standards
Hire ethical people
Verbalize ethics values, provide framework to boards

4. What suggestions do you have for the Ethics Program in the City – Board of Ethics, Ethics Policies, Ethics Trainings?

(3) Keep mixing it up! Continue to vary format and content, variety in training venue, come back with something new

Group training and discussion is good!

Today's format is preferred!

This format is great. Thank you. Fun, interactive

Use class interaction. Today was very productive.

(2) On-line = good, keep on-line option for those who cannot make the dates

Online was a hassle

Discussion/meeting format is preferred over online test

Social scenarios are more helpful than online

Real-life examples – good

We appreciate having board examples – not just employees

Scenario problems great – continue, add to

Learn from previous issues. Modify training with real examples. Good to have smaller groups.

(2) Seems to be on the right track, developing well, continue on

(2) Short training sessions at Board meetings, City boards should be allowed to have an ethics training as part of the Board meeting, rather than a separate training

Training every 3 years/per term

Rookie training

Mixed group of employees and officials

Common sense

Mock ethics complaint – encourage participation – great idea

Board of Ethics members should engage with other boards

Clarify committee meeting protocol. In a committee of 3, can 2 individuals meet and work on issues? i.e. send emails?

More publicity for all the board

Send out real examples to all Boards

Make it simple and to the point

Ice cream!

"I don't think I should have to come every year for Ethics Trainings. One on line test when you start as a board volunteer should be fine."

Bozeman Ethics examples that came up:

Upper management charging lunches to City credit cards and calling them business meetings

Police officer – car ahead at McDonald's pays the food ticket before the employee gets to the window

What if I see something that is not safe or against policy that a supervisor is doing (not someone's personal business). What do I do? Can't talk to supervisor.

Table 1. Supervisor and Employee Responses to research questions by category

Question	Employees	Supervisors
<p>Q1: Talk about how your group perceives the ethics “culture” within the City of Bozeman. Is it weak, strong, or somewhere in between. Why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong 6/38 • Strong culture on the departmental level 7/38 • In between weak and strong 16/38 • Weak 6/38 • Weak for administration 4/38 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong 6/12 • Moving in a positive direction 3/12 • In between weak and strong 3/12 • Strong within our department 2/12
<p>Q2: What steps would you take to strengthen ethical behavior within the City of Bozeman?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability 18/38 Hold people accountable at all levels, tie ethics to evaluation • Communication and transparency 16/38 Improved communications and transparency • Training 14/38 Continue education, trainings and discussion • Hire and promote ethical people 6/38 • Create anonymous avenues to report ethical violations 6/38 • Increase pay, implement recommendations from compensation study 3/38 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training 5/12 Continue education, trainings and discussion • Realistic Policies 4/12 Ethics policies more realistic, more guidance and clarity in the gray areas • Accountability 3/12 Hold employees more accountable • Pro-active 2/12 Be pro-active and not reactive to ethics issues
<p>Q3: What do you think the role of City Leadership should be in strengthening the ethical culture? (Employee Question) OR As a supervisor and leader within the City, what role do you serve or should you serve in creating the ethical culture of the City? How can the City Leadership assist in creating a stronger culture? (Supervisor Question)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead by example; be a good role model for staff 26/38 • Safe environment 10/38 Create and reward a culture where questions are invited and asked freely, in a retaliation-free environment • Bridge the gap between management and employees 10/38 • City Leaders are ethics experts 2/38 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead by example; be a good role model for staff 11/12
<p>Q4: As a City employee, what do you want out of the Ethics Policy, Board of Ethics and the Ethics Trainings?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guidelines 22/38 clarity for behavior, gray areas, gifts • Training Design 21/38 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Design 7/12 Specific scenarios within departments, like scenarios and discussions

<p>Variety in what employees want, like scenarios and discussion, like clickers, like meeting staff from other departments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Ethics 21/38 Introductions, visibility, access, communication • Legal Guidance 9/38 Available, visible, clear, common-sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guidelines 6/12 Clear expectations from the City, guidance in gray areas, clarity on gifts
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* Numbers to the right of each bullet represent frequencies. The number to the left of the slash represents the number of small groups who mentioned the response theme to this item. The number to the right represents the total number of small groups who discussed the item. There were 3 supervisor training sessions with a total of 12 small groups for discussion. There were 10 employee training sessions with a total of 38 small groups for discussion. Small groups consisted of 3-10 individuals.