

How to Prevent a Failed Construction Project

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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SCORE members believe that projects can be improved by enhancing the administrative skills of project owners, that is, the city or utility. The administrative board, whether the mayor and board of aldermen or a utility board, must take full responsibility for the success or failure of the construction project.

If you were building a house, you would not hire an architect or contractor, tell him to “build me a house” and then leave on an extended vacation. You would carefully plan and discuss what you wanted and what it would look like. Plans would be chosen carefully or drawn to satisfy your needs and desires. Fixtures and equipment would be discussed and chosen based upon the needs and desires of those using them. Colors and finish details would be specified. Finally, the cost of the project would have to match your available resources. These decisions would be finalized after much discussion between you — the owner — and your builder and/or architect. As the owner, you know what you want the house to be, and the professionals know how to make it happen. By working together using everyone’s expertise, you can get the best project at the most economical price.

Likewise, in a utility construction project, the owners must work carefully with others to have a successful project. Above all, owner participation is required (Sweeney), and a partnering relationship” is essential for success and savings (A. Smith, D. Smith).

DISCLAIMER: The letters and publications written by the MTAS consultants were written based upon the law at the time and/or a specific sets of facts. The laws referenced in the letters and publications may have changed and/or the technical advice provided may not be applicable to your city or circumstances. Always consult with your city attorney or an MTAS consultant before taking any action based on information contained in this website.

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