

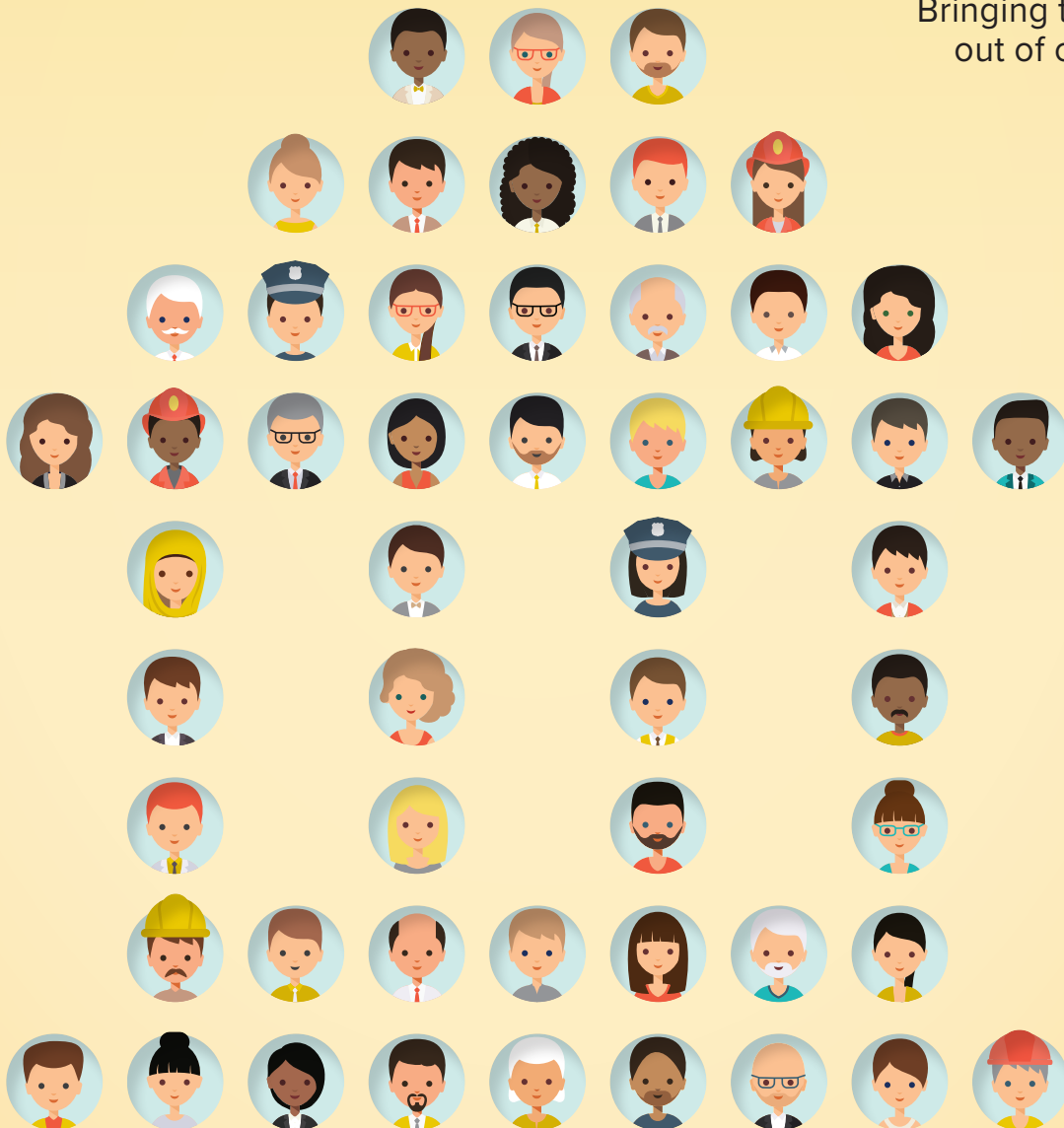
# Cityvision

THE ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON CITIES **MAGAZINE**



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FROM THE  
PRESIDENT

**It's my pleasure** to write you here in the pages of *Cityvision* magazine as president of AWC. When I first ran for council in 1997, I chose "Let's Work Together" as my campaign slogan. This was no mere platitude. At that time, the Poulsbo community was deeply divided:

the city was considering approval of the state's largest master plan—one that would allow for new developments that could affect the economy and character of our community.

"Let's work together" is a theme that has continued to resonate throughout my time on council. It is especially pertinent to the ways that elected officials work with city staff. During my service—both with AWC and with the City of Poulsbo—I have learned how important city staff are to the success of a city. In addition to clear and courageous leadership from their elected officials, cities and towns also need the professional and steady efforts of city staff. So it is fitting that this issue of *Cityvision* is focused on the professional challenges and opportunities related to staffing city hall.

It's easy to think of city leadership in terms of hot-button issues. Councilmembers often campaign by promising solutions to the headline-grabbing topics of the day—and indeed, we need

elected officials to come up with bold and thoughtful solutions to the pressing concerns faced by our communities. But elected officials can't do it alone. They also need well-trained staff members who can keep the city running. Depending on the services your city provides, those staff members' duties could include maintaining water treatment plants, taking calls and dispatching emergency personnel, applying proper human resource practices, and much more.

As elected officials, we would do well to familiarize ourselves with and cultivate an appreciation for the important work performed by city staff. We can't do it alone, after all. So let's work together.

Sincerely,

**Ed Stern**  
Councilmember, Poulsbo

# Cityvision

7/8.19

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Cities grow through female leadership, minority business owners, and diverse city staff. And in our popular **NOTED** feature, we affirm the actions codified via Initiative 1000.

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Waterville Mayor Royal DeVaney draws on a course of nearly three decades of civic leadership.

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### TEAM WORKERS

Four municipal leaders talk about challenges they've faced, and strategies they've put in place, as champions of public service.

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Expert perspectives on the council-manager relationship, recruiting (and retaining) top talent, and the housing promise held out by HB 1406.

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One Washington servant with a unique way of uniting the roles of city staff and council

▶  
Richland  
City Manager Cindy  
Reents at city hall  
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# Citybeat



## Sister Cities

The Northwest Women's Leadership Academy aims to increase the number of female executives in local government.

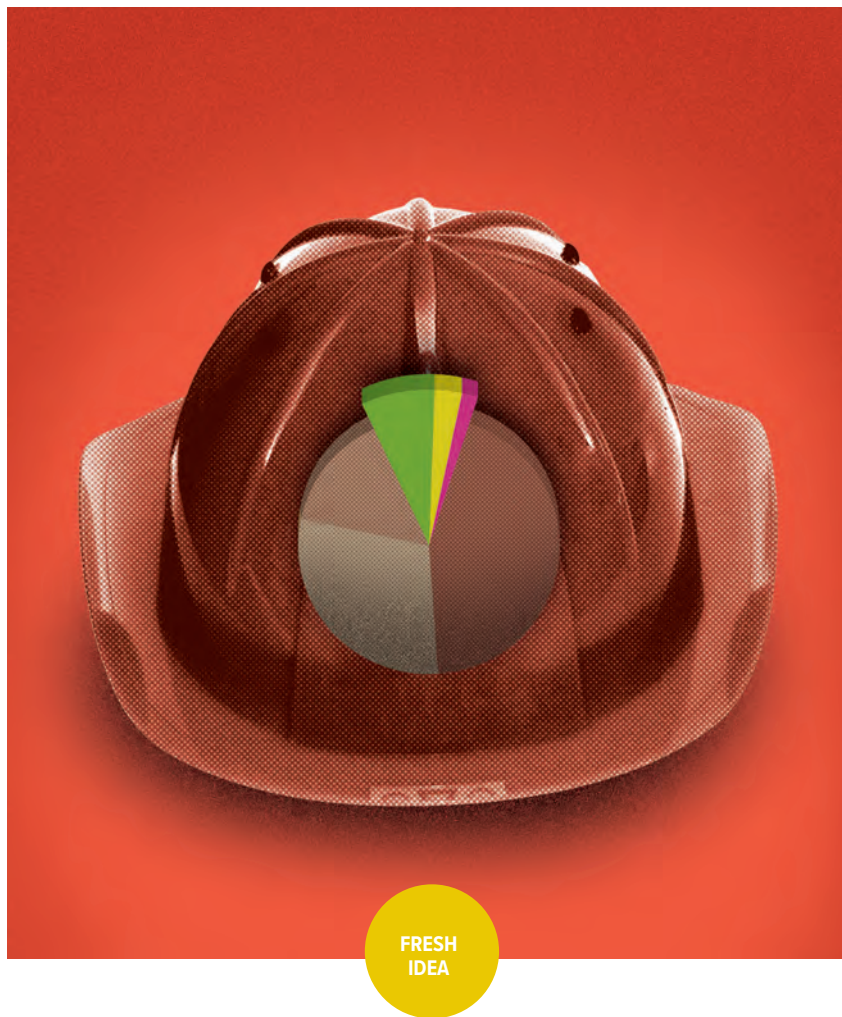
**W**HEN THE INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY Management Association first polled its membership in 1974, women filled only 36 of approximately 2,800 chief administrative officer positions nationwide, a dismal 1.3 percent. In its most recent report from August 2014, 14.4 percent of the nation's 3,586 city and county managers were women—a modest improvement. Seeking to continue narrowing the gap in our region, last September the Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA) debuted the Northwest Women's Leadership Academy (NWLA), a nine-month professional development program for

emerging female leaders in local government, which graduated its first class of 32 in June.

"Women are underrepresented in government, and the initiative was to increase the number of women at the city and county executive level," explains Anne Pflug, a retired city manager serving as one of the NWLA's organizers. "Part of that is the 'silver tsunami'—the baby boomer generation is retiring, and we're getting women ready to take the top seat."

The academy's core curriculum focuses on eight areas of professional and personal development—from leadership and ethics to budgeting and life/work bal- **CONTINUED ON P.10** ►

NOTED ► EQUITY AND INCLUSION PER INITIATIVE 1000 THE QUESTION ► WHAT UNUSUAL JOB DID YOU HAVE BEFORE CITY MANAGER? TRAINING ► THE OPENING OF CITIES ON TAP



## Race Pace

Tumwater adopts a long-term approach to diversifying its fire service.

BY TRACY HOWARD GARTON

**AFTER A RECENT SEARCH TO FILL** seven department vacancies yielded only white male candidates, City of Tumwater Fire Chief Scott LaVielle and City Administrator John Doan decided to do something about it. They founded the IDEA Team, a diversity hiring program to create a firefighting talent pool that would more accurately reflect the shifting demographics of the city.

"The face of Tumwater has changed considerably over the past few years," says LaVielle, "and we needed to figure out how, as a fire service, we could

represent that." According to US Census statistics, the nonwhite share of Tumwater's population has nearly doubled since 2000, from 11 percent to 19.6 percent. Yet even as the city's demographics have shifted, the profile of candidates for firefighter positions remained constant: predominantly white and male.

To identify the causes for the discrepancy and counteract the trend, in March 2018 the city created the IDEA (the acronym is short for "Inclusive, Diverse, Empowered, Accessible") Team, nearly two dozen fire department officers, union leaders, and

city staff who manage multiple committees dedicated to finding and creating ways for the department to proactively attract a more diverse pool of candidates—and to bolster inclusivity overall.

"We needed to look at the structural things in the process of hiring a firefighter that may be keeping that pool from being diverse," says Doan. One major barrier for broadening the pool of applicants identified by the IDEA Team was cost. "People weren't applying here because it's expensive," LaVielle says, referencing the

**"WE NEEDED TO LOOK AT THE STRUCTURAL THINGS IN THE PROCESS OF HIRING A FIREFIGHTER THAT MAY BE KEEPING THAT POOL FROM BEING DIVERSE."**

fees and time required to prepare for the written exam and the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) required of all applicants. So Tumwater's fire department agreed to cover the cost of the CPAT. To further broaden the pool of candidates, the department, which had previously interviewed only candidates who scored in the top 3 percent of all test takers, would interview candidates who scored in the top 20 percent.

Just over a year in, these measures seem to be producing benefits. As Tumwater looks to fill five open positions, the number of applicants invited to interview for those jobs under the department's new hiring protocols has nearly doubled, to 300—mostly white males, yes, but also a higher number of women and people of color.

"We have to remind everyone: this is a marathon," says Doan. "We're not going to watch an online video on diversity and inclusion and then expect everything will be different." And although the pace may be slow, adds LaVielle, Tumwater's IDEA Team is committed to moving the city forward in its goal of diversifying its fire service.

"In order for us to get better as a public service entity," he stresses, "we need to understand that change and diversity is something that benefits all of us." **C**



## LEAD ROLES

Two recent surveys of Washington city and county executives yield a glimpse of work at the highest levels of local government.



**78%**

had an advanced degree  
(master's and/or professional)

**12**

average years  
of experience  
as municipal  
executive

**5**

average  
years with  
current  
jurisdiction

**\$9,463**

average monthly compensation  
(500–14,999 city population)

**\$15,296**

average monthly compensation  
(15,000+ city population)



**46%**

received or were offered  
relocation expenses

**72%**

benefited from an employer-  
provided vehicle or car  
allowance

Sources: WCMA survey, AWC survey

TOOL  
KIT

## BUSINESS SCHOOL

Walla Walla caters to a neglected niche of the city's would-be entrepreneurs.

BY ALLIE GISH

**AFTER THE CITY OF WALLA WALLA** was designated an entitlement city in 2013 and became eligible for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, Byron Olson, Walla Walla's deputy city manager, and Jennifer Beckmeyer, the city's CDBG coordinator, began looking for ways they might leverage Walla Walla's CDBG grant (totaling \$381,864 in 2018) to serve single mothers and the city's Hispanic population—which a scan of local demographic data deemed most in need of assistance to start and grow businesses.

Enter Mercy Corps Northwest, an Oregon-based nonprofit helping low-income entrepreneurs gain the skills and seed money they need to launch successful small businesses. Mercy Corps' Individual Development Accounts (IDA) program works this way: over six months, participants complete a basic business skills class, craft a business plan, and save \$500—or \$84 per month—which is then matched with a \$4,000 grant upon completion of the program.

Partnering with the Port of Walla Walla, Walla Walla Community College, the City of College Place, and local financial institutions, the City of Walla Walla contracted Mercy Corps Northwest to launch an IDA satellite tailored for Walla Walla dubbed the Micro-Business Assistance Program. The first 16 would-be entrepreneurs—mostly Spanish-speaking mothers earning less

than 80 percent of area median income with a net worth of less than \$20,000—enrolled in the program in October 2018.

Classes, taught in Spanish and English, were held at a local elementary school on Saturday mornings, and the city provided child care and free breakfast for participants (and their families).

This past April, 12 low-income

entrepreneurs graduated and received their \$4,000 matching grants at a ceremony held at Baker Boyer Bank, one of the program's corporate sponsors.

"The microbusiness program is one of the most successful and beneficial programs created to help the prosperity of Walla Walla," says Mariela Gomez Serrato, who plans to use her grant to support her beauty products distribution business, "but even more so to help the Hispanic community thrive."

As those first graduates cashed their checks and spread the word, interest in Walla Walla's MBA Program, which has enrolled 38 new entrepreneurs for the second edition that began in July, has soared.

"It will take time to realize our big long-term goals of getting folks out of poverty and off public assistance and financially stable with their own business," says Beckmeyer. "The change I have seen is that people come into city hall asking questions and knowing there is a place to go where someone can walk you through the process of getting a business license in Spanish. That just didn't exist in this community." 



For more information:  
[wallawalla.gov](http://wallawalla.gov)

## INITIATIVE 1000

Passed by voters in 1998, Initiative 200 (I-200) prohibited state and local governments from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment based on the protected categories of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin.

An initiative to the Legislature, I-1000 was passed into law by the Legislature and was to take effect July 28, 2019.

**NEW SECTION. Sec. 1.** This act may be known and cited as the Washington state diversity, equity, and inclusion act.

**NEW SECTION. Sec. 2.** The intent of the people in enacting this act is to guarantee every resident of Washington state equal opportunity and access to public education, public employment, and public contracting without discrimination based on their race, sex, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or honorably discharged veteran or military status. This is accomplished by: Restoring affirmative action into state law without the use of quotas or preferential treatment; defining the meaning of preferential treatment and its exceptions; and establishing a governor's commission on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I-1000 expands the state's protected categories to include sexual orientation; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; and honorably discharged veteran or military status.

**Sec. 3.** RCW 49.60.400 and 2013 c 242 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, ((or)) national origin, age, sexual orientation, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or honorably discharged veteran or military status in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting.

I-1000 does not mandate affirmative action but instead amends current law to allow state and local governments to create policies to remedy discrimination against certain protected classes.

Under I-1000, "the state" includes state, city, county, public college or university, community college, school district, special district, or other political or governmental subdivision within Washington State.

[...]  
(9) Nothing in this section prohibits the state from implementing affirmative action laws, regulations, policies, or procedures such as participation goals or outreach efforts that do not utilize quotas and that do not constitute preferential treatment as defined in this section.

(10) Nothing in this section prohibits the state from implementing affirmative action laws, regulations, policies, or procedures which are not in violation of a state or federal statute, final regulation, or court order.

Sexual orientation is not included as a permitted basis for affirmative action in I-1000 despite its new inclusion as a protected class.

(11) For the purposes of this section [...]

(c) "Affirmative action" means a policy in which an individual's race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, age, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, and honorably discharged veteran or military status are factors considered in the selection of qualified women, honorably discharged military veterans, persons in protected age categories, persons with disabilities, and minorities for opportunities in public education, public employment, and public contracting. Affirmative action includes, but shall not be limited to, recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, outreach, setting and achieving goals and timetables, and other measures designed to increase Washington's diversity in public education, public employment, and public contracting; and

With the passage of I-1000, state and local governments may consider a person's race, sex, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, veteran, or military status in consideration of public employment, higher education, and contracting.

(d) "Preferential treatment" means the act of using race, sex, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, and honorably discharged veteran or military status as the sole qualifying factor to select a lesser qualified candidate over a more qualified candidate for a public education, public employment, or public contracting opportunity.

[...]

Unlike I-200, I-1000 still prohibits the use of "preferential treatment" but defines it as using a person's status as the "sole qualifying factor" to select a lesser qualified candidate over a more qualified candidate.

## THE QUESTION

### WHAT UNUSUAL JOB HAVE YOU HELD PRIOR TO BECOMING A CITY MANAGER?



I worked for roughly 10 years on USAID-sponsored projects to implement a tax system in post-Soviet Russia. In hindsight, I think we missed the part of the puzzle that has to do with what kind of help the receiver wants to stand up for. We went in very focused on economic and political theory, and perhaps failed to account for more subtle human and cultural aspects like pride and historical identity.

—**MORGAN SMITH**  
City Manager, Bainbridge Island



A job I loved and learned how to work hard at was construction. I worked construction jobs through high school and college. One time I worked on a demolition crew where all the other members of the crew were inmates from the prison that would be let out each day on work release. Prison guards would watch us work all day, and I heard some great stories during my time with these inmates. It made for many interesting days.

—**REGAN BOLLI**  
City Manager, Covington



I spent a summer as an intern at Disney World, working as a popcorn vendor on Main Street and an ice cream vendor in Tomorrowland. It was hard work with an incredible amount of public interaction, but it was lots of fun.

—**MICHAEL JONES**  
City Manager, Blaine

## TRAININGS

### AUG

**13** **RMSA Public Records Act**  
Naches

**22–23** **Municipal Budgeting & Financial Management** Leavenworth

**28** **RMSA Public Records Act**  
Yelm

### SEPT

**3** **RMSA Public Records Act**  
Harrington

**10** **Drug & Alcohol Supervisor Training** Camas

**10** **Retro WorkSafe Employer**  
Wenatchee

**11** **Drug & Alcohol Supervisor Training** Olympia

**12** **Drug & Alcohol Supervisor Training** Mukilteo

**12** **Retro WorkSafe Employer**  
Marysville

**16** **Mayors Exchange** Leavenworth

**17** **Mayor as CEO** Leavenworth

**25** **Cities on Tap** Bellevue

## TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

### CITIES ON TAP

AWC is excited to introduce Cities on Tap, a brand-new event for Washington's city leaders. Held in 11 cities across the state in September and October, Cities on Tap is a revamped and reimagined take on Regional Meetings. This new event is more than just a name change: Cities on Tap will bring vital information and networking opportunities to Washington's city leaders in an energetic, informal environment.

So what's on tap? Attendees will have the time to connect and talk outside of city hall with mayors and councilmembers from nearby cities. They'll also get timely insights from AWC's Legislative Advocacy Team, along with information about essential tools and services. Get more information and learn about the great lineup of venues by visiting [wacities.org/CitiesOnTap](http://wacities.org/CitiesOnTap).

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**Oct 1** Walla Walla  
**Oct 2** Spokane  
**Oct 8** Hoquiam  
**Oct 9** Bellingham  
**Oct 10** Sequim  
**Oct 17** Lynnwood  
**Oct 21** Wenatchee  
**Oct 23** Yakima  
**Oct 24** Tacoma  
**Oct 30** Vancouver



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## Citybeat

### *Sister Cities* continued from page 5

ance—for women who are new to city management, as well as female leaders in various public service positions who are interested in moving up in the executive ranks. Marcia Harnden, for example, a captain and patrol supervisor with the Bellevue Police Department, was chosen for the original cohort after a fellow captain at the department sent her information about the program.

"I'm always looking for ways to grow and get better, and this was an opportunity to do that outside of law enforcement," says Harnden, who oversees Bellevue's bomb squad, SWAT team, and security for special events. "I found the curriculum to be very good at identifying the basics of how to interact with elected officials and how to put my best foot forward with city leaders."

### THE FEMALE FOCUS OF THE SIX DAYLONG SESSIONS CREATED A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THAT'S UNIQUE IN MALE-CENTRIC LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

For Connell City Administrator Maria Peña, another 2019 NWLA alumna, the female focus of the six daylong sessions created a learning environment that's unique in male-centric local government. "It brings about more discussion, and it was good to hear other women talk about not being perfect," she says. "Women can be hard on themselves, and it's important to build each other up."

Pflug seeks to nurture that atmosphere in future iterations of the NWLA, which has recruited 58 applicants for the class of 2020, convening with a session on leadership development at Kirkland City Hall on September 20. "People often feel that they have to have a certain number of boxes checked in terms of experience and knowledge to feel 'qualified' for that top seat," says Pflug, a WCMA senior advisor who mentors city managers statewide. "We try to give them a sense of the strengths that they would bring to that position, and often they have those strengths already, so it's giving them that recognition."

As fresh graduates from the inaugural academy cohort, Harnden and Peña laugh that the only critique they have regarding the program's pilot run is that they wished it had lasted longer ("I would do it again in a heartbeat," gushes Peña), and they encourage other emerging female leaders in local government to follow in their footsteps.

"I'd like to think that the enthusiasm and success of the first year will propel it forward for many years to come," adds Pflug.

And in the process, propel more women into the ranks of city and county managers statewide. **C**

—Kirsten Dobroth



For more information:  
[wccma.org](http://wccma.org)

# Cityscope



## Water Works

Approaching retirement, Royal DeVaney reflects on how a dry bathroom tap led to nearly three decades of public service as Waterville's mayor.

INTERVIEW BY KIRSTEN DOBROTH

Waterville Mayor  
Royal DeVaney

**You've lived in Waterville for over 30 years. What first brought you to the area?**

I was born in Oregon, and in 1959 I went to Alaska for what I thought would be three years—26 years later, I left. My wife was born and raised right outside of Waterville. I had just retired from my job in Alaska managing seafood processing plants, and we already owned a home in Waterville, so we decided to move here full time in 1985, and from there it just kind of blossomed into other things.

**Like serving on Waterville's Park Board and Zoning and Planning Commission, and eventually as its mayor. What led to your interest in local government?**

I was the first mayor in Unalaska [Alaska] out in the Aleutians. Out there, I got kind of pushed into it—a bunch of people said, "Have you thought about doing this?" When I came to Waterville, the mayor at the time approached me about joining the Park Board or the Zoning and Planning Commission, and I thought I might be interested in one of them. **CONTINUED ON P.12** ▶



Mayor DeVaney at Pioneer Park Deli in downtown Waterville

Well, the paper came out a few days later, and there was an article that said he had appointed me to both those boards, so I did that for a couple of years.

#### **Why did you run for mayor?**

I got up in the middle of the night to get a drink of water one time, and no water came out of the faucet. I went to town hall wanting to find out what was happening, and they said, “Oh, this is just a common thing. Sometimes we run out of water.” So I talked to my wife, and I said, “I think I might get involved and that I have something to offer to them,” and she agreed. In 1991 I ran for mayor, and my term started in 1992.

#### **And did you get to the bottom of Waterville’s water problem?**

When I first took office, I’d go to Olympia, and nobody knew where Waterville was. Within two years, almost everyone

### **“I LISTEN TO ANYONE WHO WILL TALK TO ME. I DO MORE BUSINESS IN THE POST OFFICE OR THE STORE OR ONE OF THE RESTAURANTS THAN I DO AT MY DESK, BECAUSE PEOPLE DON’T WANT TO BOTHER ME THERE.”**

in the state knew where Waterville was, because I went to meetings and was pretty pushy about funding and getting things done for the town. A major part of that was that I got some wells drilled and two more reservoirs to add to our water supply.

#### **What makes the Waterville economy tick, and is it difficult to attract workers to a rural community of 1,200?**

Waterville is on the Waterville Plateau: we’ve got wheat for miles all the way around town, and if you go eight miles away you start running into fruit orchards. Since I took office, the farms have gotten bigger and there’s fewer of them, and

with the equipment now they can do so much of the work in a day with fewer people. The kids that grew up on the farms here didn’t see much of a future and moved away, but in the past eight years they’ve started coming back to the area looking for work.

#### **What kind of jobs are they finding?**

Some of them are coming back to the farms and helping family who are still here. There’s a clinic in town, and we have people coming back with medical degrees working there. Some young people who left to get their education have come back to teach at the school. The county seat is Wa-

terville, so we’ve got positions that people are filling with the county to help with things that the county takes care of, like road maintenance.

#### **At the end of December, you’re retiring as mayor after 28 years. Any advice for first-term mayors who want to succeed at the job?**

Listen to the people. I’ve had my mind made up and thought I had it all figured out, and a lot of times I’ve had my mind changed because people in town would see it a little differently—and most of the time it saved us money and expedited things. I listen to anyone who will talk to me. I do more business in the post office or the store or one of the restaurants than I do at my desk, because people don’t want to bother me there—they think I’m busy—but they’ll bother me anywhere else, and I take the time to sit and listen and see what they’ve got to say. ☺

# Waterville

Cityvision looks at how Waterville strives to keep its agricultural region flush with H<sub>2</sub>O.

## POPULATION

POPULATION DATA FROM THE 2010 US CENSUS, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

**2010** **1,138**

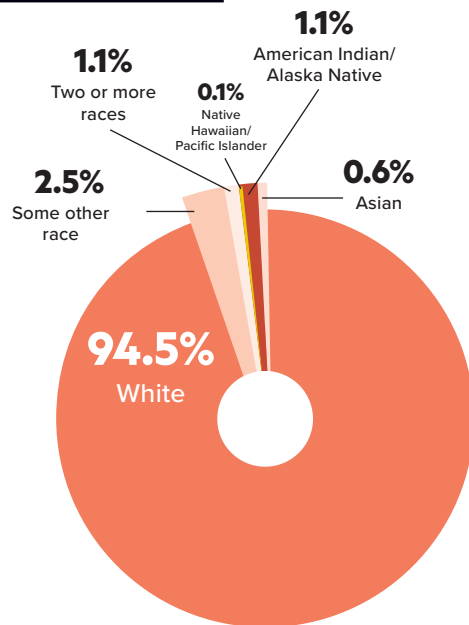


**2018** **1,213**



2018 SOURCE: WA OFM

## DEMOGRAPHICS



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

## WATER WORKERS

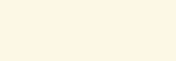
**48**

Employees at largest public sector employer (Waterville School District)



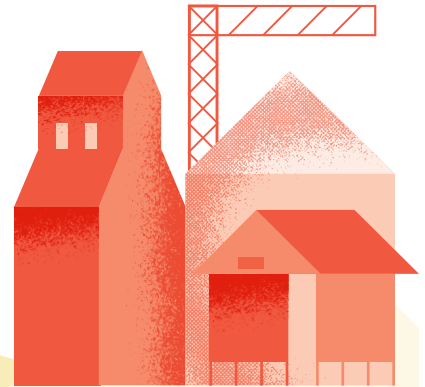
**5**

Town of Waterville full-time employees



**16**

Employees at largest private sector employer (Highline Grain Growers)



SOURCES: TOWN OF WATERVILLE/WATERVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT, HIGHLINE GRAIN GROWERS

## SEVEN SEAS

**7**

Number of wells it takes to satisfy Waterville's thirst today

**2009**

Year the town's last well was drilled

**\$300k**

Cost to drill that well in 2009



**1M**

Gallons of water the town's residents consume on a typical summer day

**750**

Depth (in feet) of town's deepest well

SOURCE: WENATCHEE WORLD

## OVER A BARREL

Year Waterville's first well was drilled



**0**

Number of wells serving Okanogan that year



**7**

Days Okanogan's town hall closed whenever its water tank needed to be refilled

Year Waterville replaced Okanogan as Douglas County seat



**1**

Barrels of Waterville water sent to Okanogan to influence that decision

SOURCE: DOUGLAS COUNTY PUD

# Team

# WORKERS



Sequim City Manager  
Charlie Bush outside  
city hall

Four municipal leaders talk about challenges they've faced, and strategies they've put in place, as champions of public service.

**“ WE HAVE A LOT OF FUN** here at the City of Sequim. It's something that was in place to some extent before I got here, and we tried to really open it up even more. We have done all kinds of things: we've been out camping; we've done pot-lucks, happy hours, hikes, bike rides; we've done a Wii bowling tournament in our exercise room—just a variety of things to get everybody together outside of their normal work environments and have fun together and enjoy their time together here working for the city. It's also accomplishing a goal for the city, which is bringing our organization closer together. You don't want people in a stressful, time-sensitive situation to realize they don't know each other. And so the plan is that by having people do some engaging, fun things that that actually starts to change their work performance as well.

We measure employee engagement here. Gallup does employee engagement surveys through something called the Q12, a survey they've been doing for something like 40 years. They've been asking the same questions for a long, long time, and they've got all this longitudinal data. The first time we did it in 2017, our score was 3.5 on a 5-point scale, which equates to 63 percent out of 100 percent.

In the private sector, nationwide, employee engagement averages 28 percent. That basically means that less than a third of employees bring their best selves to work. And then you've got another 60 percent or so who are essentially just punching the clock; there are opportunities for them to step it up, but they don't feel a need to or desire to. And then you've got some people at the end of the spectrum who are actively disengaged,

who are really there to undermine what's going on. For us to poll at over 60 percent, that was really good.

There were some insights from the first survey that we acted on. One of the things we weren't very good at that we thought we'd be really good at was our connection to our mission and vision; we just thought intuitively, "Hey we're local government, we know what we're about: public service." But people did not feel like they had a real clear, razor-sharp understanding of that. So we partnered up with the Drucker Institute in Claremont, California, where Peter Drucker, the father of modern management, was a professor; we used their methods to develop a vision, mission, and core values for each department, and even drive that down to the division level. If you're in public works you actually have more detail about your mission for the water division or the sewer division.

The analogy that I love is that a city's staff is like a rowboat. If you're on a rowing team and you've got somebody who's out of sync with the rest of the team or is rowing in the wrong direction or is only rowing with one arm, it can really mess things up for the whole crew. But if you've got everyone working together in this thing going in the same direction, imagine what you can accomplish together. So you want to have a very fluid, very efficient, very trusting team operating with a knowledge of where you're going together.

Along those lines, we spend a lot of money on employee development here at Sequim. We have a full tuition reimbursement program: we've paid for entire degrees for employees. The reason we do that and make it a priority is because we're a rural community, and we can't compete with the I-5 corridor. We rarely attract talent from that area, because we're nowhere in that pay range. We're a smaller community, but we can grow our own people, and doing that serves multiple purposes: One, it's really motivating and inspiring to see our coworkers getting another degree and moving up in the organization. Two, it's a great retention tool when you're able to continue to develop and challenge yourself. And three, we're developing our own talent internally so we don't have to be as reliant on bringing talent in from the outside.

## SEQUIM

### CHARLIE BUSH

**Current position** City manager

**Years at that job** 4

**Years of public service** 21

**Education** MPA, Syracuse University  
Maxwell School of Citizenship &  
Public Affairs; BA (political science),  
Wittenberg University

**Best advice from another city manager** "You can always be an economic developer if you've been a city manager for a long time, but if you've done economic development for a long time, it's harder to move into city management."

## MARIE MOSLEY

**Current position** City manager

**Years at that job** 9

**Years of public service** 36

**Education** BA (accounting), Gonzaga University

**Pet civic project** Kennewick's Gesa Carousel of Dreams, a vintage 1912 carousel restored, to the tune of \$1.9 million, via a partnership between the city and a group of local community leaders who volunteered their resources, time, and talents

“IN 2010, OUR CITY manager decided to pursue a different career path, which left the position vacant. So the mayor and city council asked me to step in as interim city manager, and I agreed to do that, even though I was definitely stepping outside my comfort zone because I had not been in a city manager or deputy city manager position—I had been in finance my entire career. I was the interim city manager for about four months when the council offered me the full-time city manager position. Given my lack of experience, I was appreciative that the council was willing to take a risk.

During the recession, as support services director, I had worked with the city manager and the city council. What got us through that difficult time is our “budgeting by priorities” model. There were some positions, like government affairs, that we had to eliminate and realign our resources to implement higher-priority programs for the organization. We looked at some of the programs we were providing and asked if there were other ways we could deliver those services. We worked with organizations like the YMCA to take over programs like a summer day camp we had been providing so that we weren't competing or duplicating services with the limited resources that we had. Those types of challenges really did prepare me for taking over as city manager.

As soon as I took on the city manager role, we established our core values of integrity, inclusiveness, stewardship, and communication. As an organization we embrace and live by these core values. We have made a commitment to hiring and promoting the best and the brightest. We are also focusing on the importance of succession planning, as we have many members of our organization who are within five or so years of retirement. It's important that we're working to make sure that the next generation is prepared



Kennewick City  
Manager Marie  
Mosley at the Gesa  
Carousel of Dreams

to take over when those of us who have been in these jobs for many years are ready to retire.

I do think there's an advantage to having somebody who's being groomed for a position, who understands the culture of the organization, and who knows the council's goals and priorities. The City of Kennewick utilizes our strategic plan to stay aligned as an organization with the council's goals and priorities. Not only do we tie our strategic planning process into the biennial budget, but we tie it into our performance reviews. It is my responsibility to keep the organization focused on our strategic plan, which will help even when we may have changes in council leadership.

Since I've been in this profession, it certainly seems that the norm is to work in our department silos. I don't think that's as effective as coming together as a team and looking for creative and flexible solutions that could be missed if we are just focused on a single department or a linear approach. We definitely can't be as successful if we're not working on a cross-functional basis that encompasses multiple areas of expertise within our organization.

We also can't be successful if we're not building and leveraging partnerships with other cities and jurisdictions. A river separates Pasco from Kennewick. Kennewick and Richland are separated by a road; half of the road is owned by Kennewick, and half is owned by Richland. The three cities are also within two counties, so we do a lot of partnering, with [city manager] Dave Zabell over in Pasco and Cindy Reents [city manager of Richland] and our county administrators.

I consider Cindy to be a friend and a mentor. We regularly have lunch and collaboratively work together because we both attend many partnership meetings. For instance, Cindy is the chair of our bicounty dispatch center, SECOMM. Prior to the consolidation last year, we had a dispatch center in Franklin County and one in Benton County. There were instances where if you were on the border of Franklin County, you could be standing in Pasco and make a phone call to 911 and end up getting Benton County dispatch. We recognized it was very important to have just one dispatch center, and Cindy did an amazing job of implementing the consolidation.

We also have a great partnership with the Port of Kennewick and have been recognized by the governor's office the past two years for the ways we have been able to capitalize on the strengths and resources of each of our organizations to further multiple economic development projects. We can provide much more efficient and effective services when we're partnering versus when we're doing things by ourselves.

## Hire Calling Q&A DENNIS KARRAS

*Local government executive recruiter Dennis Karras talks about the public-sector job market and how municipalities can optimize their search for the right candidate.*



**Your firm, Karras Consulting, specializes in recruitment for municipal positions in the Pacific Northwest. What led you to focus on local government?**

I was on a couple of governors' cabinets heading a state agency called State Department Personnel, and when I was the director, we had a department that conducted searches for state government. It was so popular and successful that a lot of local governments also used our services.... My daughter [Marissa Karras, who had been working in the high-tech sector as a public relations and marketing director] and I had decided that when I left state government we would start a company to provide the sort of expertise and customer service that we felt was really wanting in organizations we'd worked with previously.

**And part of that expertise is dipping into the private sector to find candidates who might also flourish in municipal roles.**

Oftentimes municipal clients want someone who has had municipal experience, and I think

that's important, but there are a lot of private-sector clients that we've introduced to local government. Maybe we find someone working for an organization where their values are not aligning, or they're working in the private sector and they want an opportunity to give back and be a contributor to their community.

**Are there jobs or skills in the private sector that you think transfer well to employment in local government?**

Information technology tends to be a great area, as well as human resources.

**You tell your clients that background checks are the most important part of the hiring process. What do you look for in a candidate, beyond glowing references?**

We go out to a wide group of individuals—people who've worked for the candidate, peers, stakeholders, people they've worked for in the past—and we get a really broad view of their past work successes and failures. The thing that's most important to us, and the thing that clients

CONTINUED ON P.19 ►

**I HAVE A SAYING ON THE** wall in my office—I’ve had it since before I became Richland’s city manager in 2007: “Some leaders are born women.” I just really appreciate that, because there are very few female city managers, especially in the state of Washington. As the very first city manager in the Tri-Cities area, I think the biggest issue was proving to council that a woman could do this job. I looked at it as, “No problem!”

We budget extremely conservatively here. When the downturn hit after I became city manager, we buckled down; I talked to all of the department heads and said, “We’re going to scrub our budget”—that’s what we called it—“and we’re going to get down to what it is that we need to function and provide the services that our citizens have asked us to do.” And that’s been my mantra here to our employees: It doesn’t matter if there’s a downturn. Let’s do what business would do.

It really was a relief to have another female city manager in the Tri-Cities area, and I felt Marie [Mosley, Kennewick’s city manager] was leaning on me because I had been a city manager before her. But she had no idea how much I leaned on her, and we’ve just developed a relationship that has transcended city work: it has created such a bond between the two cities. It doesn’t really matter which city you’re in, whether you’re big or small; we all have the same issues. We can speak as one voice, especially when we’re lobbying in Olympia, and we’ve been able to do that as well with Pasco and West Richland—we’re a very, very good team. But I think Marie and I, as female city managers, have a little bit of a better bond. We meet regularly, we talk on the phone, we partner, we share things—we have even shared employees. She loaned me an executive one time, and I’ve provided services to her. We have a master local agreement, so when we need those kinds of services, we call each other up and see if we can help each other out.

If you asked any of my employees, they’d probably tell you that I wear my heart on my sleeve. When I’m giving them an award, I’ve usually got tears in my eyes because I’m really proud of them. But I also hold them accountable, because we still have a business to run, and we are going to run this business the best that we possibly can with the best employees that we can. I do a brown-bag lunch once a quarter, and there’s no agenda; any employ-

ee can come and have lunch and talk about anything they want, and I will try to answer the best I can. Once a month, I also take four random employees out to lunch and tell them, “We don’t have to talk about work. I just want to get to know you.” And then a year ago, we started implementing a monthly city manager’s orientation for new employees. Again, there’s no agenda; it’s my way of thanking them for choosing Richland.

If my employees know me, they’re going to trust me more. If I get to know them, I’m going to trust them more, and I want to work in a place where people help me do what I need to do, and I want them to know I’m here to help them do what they need to do. It’s kind of cheesy, but we’re here together: we’ve got to be a family.

When I took over as city manager, the first thing I did was work with council and build a strategic plan. One of the pieces of that plan was to make our downtown into this beautiful, walkable waterfront area along the river, to create something better for our community where people would really just have a sense of place. Part of that involved replacing our original city hall, which was falling apart. We took down three buildings and consolidated them into one building, which is going to save a lot of money; the efficiencies that it has created for our staff have been already staggering. It took 10 years and \$18 million, but on Monday, June 10, we had our city hall grand opening.

It was probably more surreal for me than anybody. When I look out my window like I’m doing right now, I see a changing landscape, and I know I had a hand in that. My granddaughter was looking at the plaque on the wall in city hall that had my name on it, and I said, “Grammy did that!” What we’re doing is not for today, it’s for tomorrow, for generations to come. I truly believe that this is what I was born to do; I mean, what other profession gets to do that?

## RICHLAND

### CINDY REENTS

**Current position** City manager

**Years at that job** 12

**Years of public service** 26

**Education** MBA, California Coast University

**Best advice from another city manager** “If you want to be a good city manager, you need to know finance and people. If you want to be a great city manager, you need to know people and finance.”

# RICHLAND CITY HALL



Richland City Manager  
Cindy Reents with her  
granddaughters

should first and foremost look at and pay attention to, is the candidate's ethics and integrity. That's what really forms the foundation of any good leader.

## **What's one effective recruitment strategy for a small city in a rural area drawing from a limited local talent pool?**

Looking at "boomerangs": candidates who've grown up near the location where you're doing the recruitment, or maybe they attended college there or have family in the area. Those are all draws that are really important.

## **How else can small cities attract talent?**

Cultural fit is really important for any candidate: What's going to draw them to the area? Is it because of the recreational opportunities there, or that they like the wide-open spaces? I think you always need to be looking at those types of things, and if you can offer any type of unique benefits, that's very lucrative, too.

## **What's an example of that?**

We did a recruitment for a public organization recently that offered free, on-site physical therapy. That was a real benefit to us in the recruitment process—that they were willing to put resources like that into their budget for employees.

## **How do you make sure you're reaching out to a diverse talent pool?**

We reach out to a lot

of professional alumni associations and community groups, and then we really leverage associations that cater to diverse candidates. The most important piece of that is to let candidates know that your city really values diversity, equity, and inclusion. If you want diversity, you have to create a culture that supports it.

## **What specific qualities do you look for in city manager or administrator candidates?**

It's important to remember that most of these jobs are not tactical in nature—they're not doing the work, they're overseeing and directing the work. So, strategy and creativity are really important. But I think one of the most important things in any leadership role is relationship building.

## **Is there such a thing as too broad of a search when it comes to finding the right candidate?**

The wider the search, the better. In fact, we tend to go with very broad general qualifications because we don't really want people to be fearful of applying for a position because they don't think they meet some specific criteria. Every once in a while, we find someone who may not meet the traditional qualifications that the clients are looking for but offers another skill set that's important that had not been thought of previously—we're looking for that diamond in the rough.

*Pullman*

## ADAM LINCOLN

**Current position** City administrator

**Years at that job** 3

**Years of public service** 13

**Education** MPA, University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy & Governance; BA (political science), Western Washington University

**Best advice from another city manager** "You really have to spend time getting to know your team—you have to be open to being vulnerable with the people that work around you."

Pullman City  
Administrator  
Adam Lincoln



“**I AM A BIG PROPONENT** of the Lean model of government and process improvement, and looking at what other cities are doing that's cutting-edge and how we might replicate that here. That needs to come not just from the top down, but from all directions of the city. One of the things that we've been looking at and taking a cue from Charlie Bush in Sequim is how can we create a team that is multilevel, is diverse, and focuses on identifying innovations we should be looking at. We're a couple of weeks away from starting our own internal innovation team, which is a big deal for us because we are encouraging people to not just lead down but lead up.

We don't have the money to have a trainer go through every single department to do this work, so this group will help facilitate conversations and lead trainings to be that group that wants to go above and beyond, that is interested in doing things a little differently. They'll be the ones to lead those efforts, and I'm pretty excited for that. That kind of work on process improvement is important, but so is improving the culture of the workplace.

One of the better pieces of advice that I got—and this is something that's

probably contrary to how a lot of longer-standing city managers operate—is that you really have to spend time getting to know your team, and you have to be open to being vulnerable with the people that work around you. A lot of city managers want to keep an arm's distance from their employees, and they get in the habit of just being in their office with the door closed. When you deal with human resources issues and things like that, I understand that need to keep that arm's distance. But it makes for a much happier work relationship when you actually get to know the people you're working with, and they understand that you truly care about what their interests are and what they're doing.

When I became manager, the city had gotten away from doing citywide picnics. Every year since I've been here, we've done an all-staff barbecue picnic. The other thing we stole from Charlie was what's called our Fun Committee. One of the employees who runs our social media operation has also been really great about reaching out to local restaurants and bars and setting up happy hours for anyone on staff who's interested in going out after work and just spending an hour or two talking about whatever comes up. It's a way to invest in the community

and also get to spend time talking to one another.

People respect leadership where it's approachable and open-minded. If you have someone who's just sort of the figurehead at the top who isn't approachable, you might go along with what they do, but you're not going to have much satisfaction in what you do. And to me it's really important that if you're going to dedicate your career to working for the city, you're also going to get satisfaction out of doing that. If there's something I can do to make that job better for you, then I want to know about it. I want you to feel comfortable talking to me.

We may be a staff of 300, but we're not a big enough organization where I can't get out and meet with all of the employees at some point in a relatively short amount of time. Maybe you're someone in the city who doesn't have an e-mail address, and you work out in the field all day; if it means that I should come to you, then I'll come to you to find out what it is that we should do differently or better, or how I can assist you in some way. It gets back to that genuine relationship, that viewpoint of servant leadership being a critical aspect of being a good leader. **C**

# Citywise

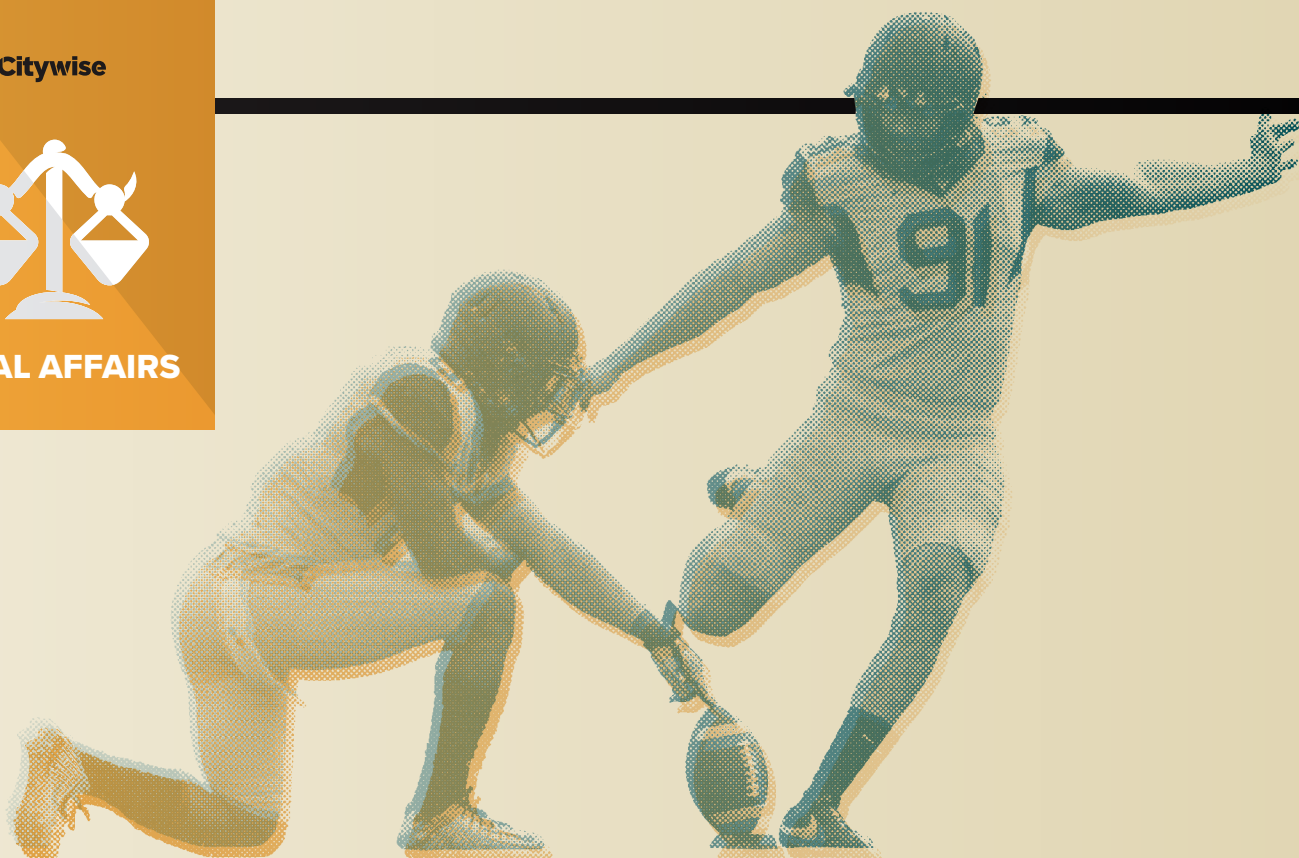
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The most valuable employees approach every day as a starting line instead of a finish line, seeking fresh ways to contribute to the organization's mission.

—CITY 101 P.26 ►



**22** COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENTS **24** AFFORDABLE HOUSING ASSISTANCE  
**26** ATTRACTING AND RETAINING ROCK-STAR STAFF



# ROLE REHEARSAL

On the effective functioning of council-manager governments

PAUL SULLIVAN MUNICIPAL RESEARCH & SERVICES CENTER

**T**HERE ARE MORE THAN **50 CITIES** in Washington operating under the council-manager form of government.

Each has a city manager who works for, and with, a city council. What is the role of a city manager as it relates to a city council? What can a city manager do that a council cannot? And what can a council do but a city manager cannot?

The nature of a city council is probably understood, but what exactly is a city manager? In a sense, the manager has similar duties to those of a mayor in a mayor-council city. But whereas a mayor is elected, the city manager is not; he or she is selected by, and can be removed by, the city council. A city manager is a professional, typically with specialized education, training, and experience in municipal issues. The manager supervises the day-to-day operation of the city government,

implements policy decisions, and may assist the council in the development of new programs. The city council, on the other hand, is the city's legislative branch and policymaker. So the council and the manager have separate but connected roles, both instrumental to the city's operation and success.

Problems between the manager and the council typically arise out of confusion over the distinct roles that each fills. For example, a councilmember may ask the clerk to prepare a comparison of the city's revenues over the past five years, taking the clerk away from assigned work requiring attention. The manager may place a controversial issue on the council's agenda, giving notice to the public, before the council is prepared to consider it. The manager may refuse to provide a record requested by a councilmember, arguing that the record really isn't needed by the

council. Or the council may insist that the manager discipline or terminate an employee who has received complaints from the public.

In other words, when the roles get blurred or improperly exercised, inconsistent with law, there can be problems! So, what are the proper roles of each?

## PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE MANAGER AND THE COUNCIL TYPICALLY ARISE OUT OF CONFUSION OVER THE DISTINCT ROLES THAT EACH FILLS.

The city council has authority to create positions necessary to carry out the city's programs and responsibilities. Although the city manager may offer suggestions, it is the council that creates positions and sets the salaries, wages, and benefits for each. The council may also set the qualifications needed to be hired into a position, and, if it does, the manager uses them to make his or her selection. If the council has the power of confirmation, it may confirm the manager's selections, so



long as no qualifications have been adopted for a particular position. If the person selected by the manager is not confirmed, a new selection is made, and the confirmation process begins anew. (If qualifications have been adopted, the person selected is not subject to confirmation.) Once the workforce is in place, the manager has the sole authority to supervise, set work assignments, discipline, or terminate employees, all without council involvement.

While the city council may offer suggestions to the manager on how the daily operation of the city should be handled, operational duties are administrative and exclusively under the manager's control. The council has no authority to give orders to staff, and in fact, contact with staff should occur through the city manager, except at council meetings (a requirement that may not be totally realistic).

While the city manager may offer policy suggestions for the city, it is the council that determines which policies it will adopt, as those decisions are legislative in nature and are solely under its authority. Perhaps the most

important policy decision a council makes is the adoption of the city's budget. By statute, the city manager prepares the preliminary budget and provides it to the council; the council reviews the proposals, conducts hearings, makes revisions it determines appropriate, and then makes its final decision by ordinance. The council's decision is not subject to veto, since the manager does not possess authority to veto any ordinance, unlike mayors in mayor-council cities. After a budget has been adopted, the manager periodically reports to the council on whether revenues and expenses are consistent with projections and if any amendments are needed.

The city manager oversees implementation of the budget, although the council continues to have an important role in its operation. If a contract is needed to carry out a program, such as for supplies, equipment, or professional services, the council must approve the contract, whether it be for the purchase of a box of paper clips or the construction of a building. Typically, the council will delegate some contracting authority to

the manager to reduce its involvement in more routine matters and will place limits on the value or nature of the contracts the manager may approve. (The council can, of course, revoke its delegation, if it so chooses.) The council's role in the contracting continues even after a contract has been signed: payment requires that the council satisfy itself that the expenditure was contemplated by the budget, money is available, and the work has been performed as contemplated and is complete.

Governing is not easy. Sometimes it is not clear whether an action belongs to the council or to the manager. But if the council and the manager recognize and abide by their respective roles, conflict can be better avoided, goals better accomplished, and the public better served. **C**

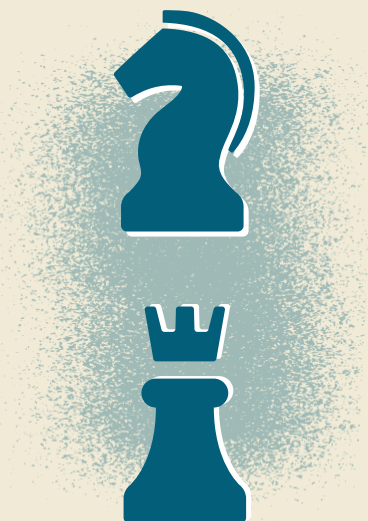
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**Paul Sullivan**, a legal consultant with MRSC, has served as Ellensburg's city attorney and was an assistant city attorney for Vancouver; he also was twice employed as a staff member with the Seattle City Council.

## Task Masters

For city managers and city councils to work effectively on behalf of their communities, each should adhere to their allotted functions.

MANAGER	COUNCIL
Supervises the day-to-day operations and implements policy decisions	Legislative branch and policymaker
Supervises, sets work assignments for, disciplines, or terminates employees	Creates positions and sets the salaries, wages, and benefits for each
Offers policy suggestions for the city	Determines which policies it will adopt
Prepares the preliminary budget	Adopts the city's budget
Periodically reports to the council on whether revenues and expenses are consistent with projections and if any amendments are needed	Reviews the proposals, conducts hearings, makes revisions it deems appropriate, and then makes its final decision by ordinance
Oversees implementation of the budget	Approves contracts





## Due Dates

Cities considering this revenue source should mind the following additional timelines:

- The Department of Revenue (DOR) requires 30 days' notice of adoption of sales tax credits. The credit will take effect on the first day of the month following the 30-day period.
- If your city is adopting a qualifying local tax, DOR requires 75 days' notice of adoption of sales tax increases. Local sales tax increases may take effect only on the first day of the first, second, or third quarter.
- If your city is adopting a qualifying local tax, remember to factor in the ballot measure process into the timeline, as these must be approved by voters.
- If you are intending to bond the revenues for a project under this authority, check with counsel about other deadlines that may apply.

# HOUSE MONEY

On HB 1406 and its potential to increase cities' funding for housing

JON JURICH PACIFICA LAW GROUP

■ **BASICS.** The recently enacted HB 1406 provides cities and counties with a new 20-year revenue source to combat housing issues without adding a new tax at the register. Instead, a slice of the state sales and use tax will be returned to cities and counties that (i) adopt a resolution stating their intention to levy the new tax before January 31, 2020, and (ii) formally enact via ordinance the sales and use tax authorized by HB 1406 before July 27, 2020.

Governments can use the funds to buy, build, and rehabilitate affordable housing (including adaptive reuse and supportive housing facilities); to pay operating and maintenance costs on new units of affordable or supportive housing; and (except for certain large cities and counties) to provide rental assistance. The funds must benefit households earning no more than 60 percent of area median income for the jurisdiction.

The amount of funds available to a jurisdiction will depend on several factors, including whether a city has a "qualifying local tax" and how much overlap may exist between cities and counties imposing the new tax. Generally, however, the tax will be either 0.0146 percent or 0.0073 percent of taxable sales for the jurisdiction (with a cap based on the taxable sales for the jurisdiction during the state fiscal year ending June 30, 2019) and can be imposed for 20 years. The tax receipts may also be pledged as a repayment source for bonds.


■ **NEXT STEPS.** Cities and counties should move quickly to adopt the resolution and ordinance by the deadlines. Cities should also consider whether it makes sense to seek to pass a qualifying local tax before July 31, 2020, in order to double the sales tax receipts they are eligible to

collect. For other timing considerations that may apply in certain circumstances, see the details in "Due Dates" at left.

In addition, cities and counties should evaluate whether to pool receipts through interlocal agreements to maximize impact. Interlocal agreements can also help participants pledge tax collections to bonds and allocate collected taxes to

**LOCAL OFFICIALS MAY WANT TO COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES OR STATEWIDE HOUSING AGENCIES, SUCH AS THE WASHINGTON STATE HOUSING FINANCE COMMISSION, TO HELP DEPLOY THE FUNDS.**

authorized affordable housing projects. Local officials may want to collaborate with local housing authorities or statewide housing agencies, such as the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, to help deploy the funds.

City officials should also keep an eye on developments from the Department of Revenue, which will administer the program (at no cost to the cities) and will be providing further guidance, and the Department of Commerce, which will write rules as to the reporting requirements. 

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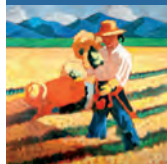


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# SCHOOL OF ROCK

Lessons on rock stars, the rock-solid, and ROCKS

PATRICK IBARRA THE MEJORANDO GROUP

## Star Search

In order to get the most out of your organization's workforce, reassess your tools for attracting and nurturing the most influential employees. Here are some key elements to consider:



### Hiring and Promotion

- Seek out lifelong learners
- Emphasize healthy attitudes
- Look beyond credentials



### Performance Appraisals

- Align appraisals with job descriptions and actual duties
- Promote quality supervisory feedback
- Require self-assessments



### Workplace Culture

- Enforce accountability
- Encourage creativity
- Clarify mission, vision, and values

**I**N ORDER TO build stronger, more vibrant communities, municipal leaders, whether appointed or elected, seek proven ways to maximize the performance of their employees. Far and away the most influential factor in the success of employees, municipal and otherwise, is their attitude toward their role at work.

The most valuable employees approach every day as a starting line instead of a finish line, seeking fresh ways to contribute to the organization's mission. I refer to these types of employees as your "rock stars." Like the original rock stars (those in the music biz), who have adapted to changing trends among the listening public without losing their taste compass, municipal rock stars know how to prioritize the evolving needs of their communities while adhering to a foundation of ethics and equity. They push every day to move their cities' bell curve to the right (i.e., higher performance).

Unfortunately, most organizations reward these rock stars with more work! The unintended consequence is that your organization's rock stars can feel overworked and neglected, and they may even run out of fuel entirely. Make no mistake about it: your rock stars are self-starters, are highly motivated, and serve as the primary drivers of your organization's success. They would definitely benefit from more positive attention and support.

Two other types of employees are what I refer to as "rock-solid" and ROCKS. The rock-solid are those who arrive at work every day committed to doing their very best and are often the backbone of the organization, but they also are often no more than cautiously optimistic about any changes coming down the pike—you know, those changes launched in the name of improving organizational effec-

tiveness. They may not always be overly ambitious, in other words, but they are rock-solid performers nonetheless.

Finally, there are those employees whom I refer to as ROCKS, an acronym I've coined that means Resisting the Opportunity to Change one's Knowledge and Skills. Some employees quit and leave, whereas ROCKS quit and stay. Their bad morale is contagious, and worse still, low-morale people like ROCKS are always seeking new recruits. These employees seek to move the organization's bell curve to the left, dragging down performance and effectiveness.

## REMEMBER: WHATEVER YOU TOLERATE, YOU ADVOCATE.

What frustrates rock stars is how leaders will accept ROCKS as members of the workforce. Remember: whatever you tolerate, you advocate. Rock star employees often have to compensate for the work ROCKS aren't accomplishing. On the other hand, rock stars will often welcome the challenge of helping an organization get the most out of its rock-solid employees.

In short, attracting the right kinds of employees can help cities maximize performance and optimize service levels. Here are three key ways to hire, develop, and retain more rock stars:

- Revise your hiring and promotional processes. Explore deeper the intangibles that influence performance. Credentials don't always translate to competence; if you've ever made a bad hire, you know what I mean. Refresh your job announcements so you emphasize possessing a healthy attitude as a difference-maker. Revise your interview questions with a stronger focus on candidates' and employees'



desire to learn. Ask: “What did you learn last year?” Rock stars are curious, always dreaming up new ways of doing things, and think of themselves as possessing a mind like “wet clay” instead of clay pots.

■ Fix your performance appraisal process. Ensure that the appraisal instrument is aligned with the job description and with the work employees actually complete every day. Remarkably, those three factors—job description, performance appraisal, and the daily work—often aren’t aligned, which undermines the prioritization of mission-critical work. Beyond the instrument, equip supervisors, managers, and leaders with the requisite

skills and capabilities to provide timely, accurate, and meaningful feedback to their employees. Require self-assessments from each employee as part of the process.

■ Reinforce that rock stars are the visible, vocal advocates of the preferred workplace culture. Indeed, these employees are the champions of change, operationalizing the mission, vision, and values to enable your organization and community to reach their full potential. As professional, collegial employees who traffic in trust and build healthy relationships, rock stars value individual accountability and expect their organization’s leaders to be vigilant in ensuring that it exists.

The best days for your organization and your community are in front of them. Your rock stars are symbols of this mind-set and commit themselves daily to building a stronger community. They’re energized by the mission and purpose of local government. Today, people aren’t looking for jobs, they’re looking for meaning—and local government is in the meaning business. If city leaders set the stage for them, your municipal rock stars will shine. **C**

**Patrick Ibarra**, a former city manager, operates the Mejorando Group, an organizational effectiveness consulting practice with clients throughout the state of Washington.



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# Cityscape

City of South Bend Clerk/  
Treasurer—and City of Raymond  
Councilmember—Dee Roberts  
(left) with South Bend Mayor Julie  
Struck (right)



## Double Threat

Straddling the trenches of city hall and the dais of council chambers

**PROFESSIONAL SPORTS HAS BO** Jackson (the only National Football League and Major League Baseball All-Star). Literature has Roald Dahl (beloved children's author, Royal Air Force ace pilot). And in local government, Washington has Dee Roberts (clerk/treasurer, City of South Bend; councilmember, City of Raymond).

"I love South Bend, because that's where I work," says Roberts, who started her civil service career as South Bend's deputy clerk in 1998. "But I also have a deep respect for the city where I live as well. It's kind of crazy, because I know how difficult it is working for a city ... and how important a councilmember is for a city."

Since being appointed to her hometown's council in 2007 (then elected and reelected), every first and third Monday

Roberts clocks off in South Bend and takes her council seat two hours later at Raymond's city hall. That position has afforded her a unique perspective on the work of governing.

"Sitting on the other side has given me new respect, for sure," she says of the challenges facing fellow local electeds, especially South Bend Mayor Julie Struck, who's not just her boss but a peer and a friend. "Whatever she needs, I'm there for her. And I know she has my back."

The same might be said of an outfielder in the MLB or a wingman in the RAF.

"I think everybody knows this in their heart, but maybe it's hard to practice," adds Roberts. "No matter how big or small your city or your department might be, just listen to each other, because you have to be able to work together as a team." **C**

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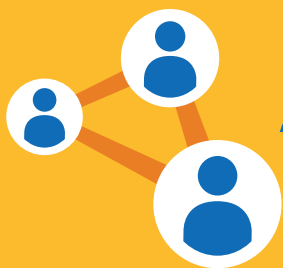


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