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MANAGERS IN TRANSITION

RESOURCE GUIDE

The California City Management Foundation has created this resource guide for city managers going through a separation with their city councils. The resources and suggestions were provided by city managers in California who have gone through similar transitions or who have watched their colleagues do so. Many people are willing to assist city managers who find themselves in the position of having to reevaluate their current employment or who are going through involuntary separation with their city councils. *The key is to remember that others can help and, in fact, want to help.* The following is just a beginning point for a manager who finds himself or herself needing to consider other options.

Severance Check List

The following comments were offered by city managers based on their experiences in the separation process. Several managers noted that it is best for all severance provisions to be provided in advance in the employment agreement. However, since it is usually not possible to consider during negotiations everything that could be of concern later, the following suggestions may assist managers going through a separation process. Speaking with other managers who have gone through a similar experience and reviewing other separation agreements may also be helpful avenues during the process.

- ✓ Hire an attorney who is familiar with public sector chief executives and consult with him/her **before** making any formal or informal agreements with the city council. Don't try to work out an agreement by yourself, even if you think you can represent your own interests. You may regret it later.
- ✓ Stipulate in the separation agreement who can speak to the press and what they will say. Add accountability into the separation agreement (for example, if the manager violates the "speak no evil about the council" provision, severance provisions would cease; if the council violates it, severance would double).
- ✓ Get a letter of reference signed at the time the separation agreement is executed.
- ✓ Stipulate that the city manager's personnel file is sealed, and only he or she can authorize its release.

- ✓ Obtain continued medical benefits and PERS for a period of time after separation.
- ✓ Secure payment of all sick leave, administrative leave and vacation leave.
- ✓ Weigh the advantages/disadvantages of a payoff of contract terms vs. staying on the payroll.
- ✓ Vest in deferred compensation accounts for the entire year.
- ✓ If the council expects to receive advice or assistance from the city manager after the separation, make sure the length of the commitment and the compensation are clear.
- ✓ Negotiate for the use of city automobile, office space, clerical assistance and office equipment for a specified period of time.
- ✓ Obtain outplacement services paid by the city.
- ✓ Download your internet bookmarks; print out or copy your electronic address books; get a fax machine and business cards; decide which work-related periodicals you want to personally subscribe to; maintain contact with your area managers group and other professional associations.
- ✓ Write out a list of the organization's accomplishments during your tenure as city manager for future reference as you begin your job search.

Press Relations

- ✓ Agree with the city council that neither side will speak negatively about the other; cite "philosophical" differences and wish each other well.
- ✓ Develop a mutually agreeable press release.
- ✓ Draft a letter of resignation in such a way that it says what the manager wants the press to know. Let the letter speak for itself, rather than commenting further to the press.
- ✓ Stay away from the press for a couple of days to let things die down. When you do talk, don't talk about the council (it won't help). Talk about the things you are proud of in your tenure. Make no public pronouncements defending yourself; take the high road.
- ✓ Remember that your greatest asset is your professional reputation. The way you exit creates a lasting image and reflects on how you value your work and your colleagues.

Attorneys

The following attorneys were identified by city managers as helpful in negotiating their separation agreements.

Robert Aaronson

Aaronson Law Offices
3565 El Camino Real, Suite 5
Palo Alto, CA 94306
650-565-8838
650-565-8800 (fax)

Tom Feeley

700 S. Flower Street, Suite 2320
Los Angeles, CA 90017-4210
213-236-9670
tfeeley@feeleylaw.com

Bob Logan

255 West Julian Street, Suite 302
San Jose, CA 95110
408-287-2156
408-280-1749 (fax)

Sally Mitchell

177 Bovet Rd., Suite 600
San Mateo, CA 94402
650-340-7107
SallyMitchel@aol.com

Gregory G. Petersen

The Petersen Law Firm
2755 Bristol Street, Suite 208
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
714-708-8000
714-708-8010 (fax)

Darold Pieper

Richards, Watson & Gershon
333 South Hope Street, 38th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071-1469
213-626-8484
213-626-0078 (fax)
dpieper@rwglaw.com

R. Craig Scott

Executive Law Group
One Newport Place, Suite 1000
Newport Beach, CA 92660
888-920-3932
949-222-0188
949-553-8464 (fax)
rcraigscott@execlaw.com
www.execlaw.com

Susan Silver

Stephen Silver

Silver, Hadden and Silver
1428 Second Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401
310-393-1486

Counseling and Career Consulting

Having one's employment situation disrupted can affect many other aspects of a manager's life. The manager's spouse and children are also heavily impacted, and their needs and fears must be considered. A range of counseling services is offered in most areas of the state. These services can be useful to the manager and his or her family during a difficult transition. Some health plans and risk management authorities also provide counseling benefits and resources. Advice offered by managers who have gone through an involuntary separation includes:

- When it happens, talk to other managers who have gone through the same experience.
- Realize it can happen to anyone; it's part of the job; it's the right of the city council.
- Get out of town.
- Keep it light; see the humor in the situation.
- Recognize that the staff you leave behind may be grieving more than you are.

City managers have found the following people helpful:

Bill Mathis, Ph.D. (Psychologist)
Mathis & Associates
3435 Valle Verde Drive
Napa, CA 94558
707-252-2151

Kent Black (Career Consulting)
388 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94111
415-623-2711
415-454-1665

Recruitment Resources

A host of recruitment resources exist in the state, including executive recruiters, job outplacement services offered in many localities, and publications. One manager stated: *“This was a time where knowing the recruiting firms and individual recruiters paid off. It still took time and effort, but I never lacked opportunities to sell my skills.”*

Public Service Skills, Inc.
(for interim city manager positions)
340 G Street, Suite A
Davis, CA 95616
Tel: 530-757-4495
Web: www.pssinc.org
Contact: Clark Goecker

Bob Murray & Associates
3017 Douglas Boulevard, Suite 300
Roseville, CA 95661
Tel: 916-774-7558
Web: www.bobmurrayassoc.com
Contact: Bob Murray

Govtjobs.com
www.govtjobs.com

L.B. Hayhurst & Associates
15 Pamaron Way, Suite B
Novato, CA 94949
Tel: 415-884-0544
Fax: 415-884-0544
Web: www.human-resource.com
Contact: Lonnie B. Hayhurst

Shannon Associates
740 University Avenue, Suite 130
Sacramento, CA 95825
Tel: 916-567-4280
Fax: 916-567-1220
Web: www.shannonassoc.com
Contact: John Shannon

The Oldani Group
188-106th Avenue, Suite 420
Bellevue, WA 98004
Tel: 425-451-3938
Fax: 425-453-6786
Web: www.theoldanigroup.com
Contact: Jerry Oldani

DMG-Maximus
1800 Century Park East #430
Los Angeles, CA 90067-1507
Tel: 310-552-1112
Fax: 310-552-1113
Web: www.dmgmaximus.com
Contact: Norman Roberts

Hughes, Perry & Associates
P.O. Box 384
35590 Verdant View Street
Sea Ranch, CA 95497
Tel: 707-785-3083
Fax: 707-785-3086
Web: www.hughesperry.com
Contact: Richard Perry

Ralph Andersen & Associates
4240 Rocklin Road, Suite 11
Rocklin, CA 95677
Tel: 916-630-4900
Web: www.ralphandersen.com
Contact: Heather Renschler and Chuck Rohre

The PAR Group
100 North Waukegan Road, Suite. 200
Lake Bluff, IL 60044-1694
Tel: 847-234-0005
Contact: Paul Reaume

RJA Management Services, Inc.
550 W. Duarte Road, Suite 6
Arcada, CA 91007
Tel: 626-447-3318
Web: www.rjamanagement.com
Contact: Dr. Richard Garcia

Western Executive Search
16201 Stagecoach Road
Meadow Vista, CA 95722-9548
Tel: 530-878-1110
Fax: 530-878-0201
Contact: Robert M. Christofferson

Reading List

Some managers said that when they found themselves in transition between jobs, they took the opportunity to reflect on what happened, read books that helped them consider what they might learn about themselves and the experience, and consider the process of looking for a new job.

Adversity Quotient, by Paul Stotz

The Tao of Leadership, translated by John Heider

Right from the Start, by Dan Ciampa and Michael Watkins

Taking Charge, by General Perry Smith

Stewardship, by Peter Block

The Far Side Gallery, by Gary Larson

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, by Steven Covey

Notes for Beachcombers, by Fran and Frank Alshire

Walking on Thin Air, by the Colorado City/County Managers Association

Who Moved My Cheese, by Spencer Johnson

Rethinking Commitment, by Dennis Jaffe, Cynthia Scott, Glenn Tobe

Managers as Resources

Our colleagues are another good source of information and guidance, whether or not they've been through an involuntary separation process. Range Riders are also very willing to lend an ear and offer advice, as are members of the California City Management Foundation Board. The following are just some of the people who would welcome a call from any city manager going through employment transition:

Kevin Northcraft

411 E. Kern Avenue
Tulare, CA 93274
559-684-4200
knorthcraft@ci.tulare.ca.us

Greg Korduner

6550 Miles Avenue
Huntington Park, CA 90255
323-584-6222

Don Pauley

559-897-6528
Peggy Pauley
559-992-9729
1401 Draper Street
Kingsburg, CA 93631
559-897-6528

Mary Strenn

350 Main Street
El Segundo, CA 90245
310-607-2227
mstrenn@elsegundo.org

Bill Holt

8081 Moody Street
La Palma, CA 90623
562-467-8700
562-860-4992 (fax)

Bill Talley

30442 Via Cantabria
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92695
949-489-1113
billtalley@earthlink.net

Earl Wilson

Donna Wilson
P.O. Box 470
Weed, CA 96094
530-938-5020 (office)
209-728-8316 (home)

Ray Silver

Lynn Silver
P.O. Box 190
Huntington Beach, CA 92649
714-536-5575

Jan Perkins

39100 Liberty Street
Fremont, CA 94538
510-494-4802
jperkins@ci.fremont.ca.us

Glenn Southard

207 Harvard
Claremont, CA 91711
909-399-5441
gsouthard@ci.claremont.ca.us

Guy Huffaker

444 N. Jennifer Way
Porterville, CA 93257
559-784-2925
ghuffaker@ocsnet.net

Bill Garrett

200 E. Main St.
El Cajon, CA 92020
619-441-1716
bgarrett@ci.el-cajon.ca.us

Other Comments

Some managers reflected on other things that were important to them during their time of transition:

- “The support we received from CCMF and members of the profession was great. Just when we began to feel down, a phone call came in offering support and encouragement. If there is anything we can suggest, it is to urge members to call those in transition monthly to remind them that they are not alone. Thanks for your support and help!”
- “Critical was the opportunity to contribute in professional ways and maintain professional associations. I was able to do some work for the Innovations Group and work on a project for the county city manager association, which was very meaningful at the time. One paid little and the other paid none, but it was a connection to the field and helped answer oral board questions about what I have been doing.”
- “Our families deserve protection, not blind obedience to some distant ideal. However, I do not agree with some of the settlements I’m seeing in the press. City managers can go too far.”
- “What helped me and my family the most was the support I/we received from the profession. People like Glenn Southard, Kevin O’Rourke, Dan Reynolds and Kevin Northcraft, to name a few. The frequent contacts reminded us that we were not alone on this very difficult journey. That contact did more for us than anything else to help maintain our perspective and our sanity.”
- “Compile all your past pronouncements explaining your ‘management philosophy’ (speeches, budget messages, responses to evaluations, columns in employee newsletters, etc.); synthesize and condense so that you can answer the inevitable question from headhunters and city councils: ‘what is your management philosophy?’”
- “If you want to get another city manager job, seek out a trusted individual with some experience in council-manager relations; explain what happened...in detail...and listen; be prepared to acknowledge some personal responsibility for the separation; prepare an elevator speech that accurately, but succinctly, describes what happened; prepare an answer to the second inevitable question: ‘what would you have done differently (or what lessons did you learn)?’ Yes, some city councils know that some elected officials are goofy, but they are less interested in the idiosyncrasies of the group that fired you than they are in learning whether you are adaptable to a new environment and different political dynamics.”
- “Accept your colleagues’ expressions of support but beware of facile expressions like ‘hang in there!’ Instead, come to grips with what happened, and how your behavior or attitude may have contributed to the separation. Decide whether you could have done anything differently and still be true to your principles and values...and then, and only then, get on with it.”

- “When you’re in this situation, take a vacation, go to the beach or the mountains. Take time when you’ve fallen off the horse before getting back on.”
- “Take your spouse out to dinner. Don’t sit by the phone and wait for a call. Take care of your mental health.”
- “Remember that it’s not all about you. Take care of your spouse’s needs during this tough time. Be there for him or her and understand what he or she is also going through.”



*“Here on the pulse of this new day
You may have the grace to look up and out
And into your sister’s eyes,
And into your brother’s face,
Your country,
And say simply
Very simply
With hope
Good Morning.”*

Maya Angelou

REFERENCE MATERIAL

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California Joint Powers Insurance Authority

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California City Management Foundation

Mission Statement

The mission of the California City Management Foundation is to foster council-manager relationships and the well being of city managers to ensure stable and successful communities.

Positive Council-Manager Relations

- Promote the concept of team building as a means of enhancing council-manager relations.
- Solicit, develop and disseminate practical information and resources.
- Advocate effective council-manager relations.

Leading the Profession

- Analyze the evolving nature of the profession.
- Identify the unique managerial and political forces that impact the California city manager.
- Collect and maintain employment data.

Education and Advocacy

- Encourage and train professionals who desire to become city managers.
- Sponsor forums to discuss issues, trends, and concerns of the city management profession.
- Advocate the interests of the city management profession in the California Legislature.
- Provide local educational assistance in support of the Council/Manager Plan.

Well Being

- Support managers and their families during times of transition or conflict.
- Enhance professional and financial security through development of publications and legislation.