



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Present: Councilors Krintzman (Chair), Noel, Albright, Ryan, Humphrey, Wright, Greenberg, and Baker

Also Present: Councilors Oliver, Grossman, Downs, Malakie, Markiewicz, Laredo, Crossley, and Lucas

City Staff: Michelle McGonagle, HR Generalist; Chris Sullivan, Acting City Clerk/Assistant City Clerk of Vital Records; Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, Director of Human Resources; Nadia Khan, Acting City Clerk/Assistant City Clerk; Janet Ferguson, Vital Statistics Coordinator; Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

#137-21 Public Meeting with City Clerk/Clerk for the Council candidates

CITY CLERK PRELIMINARY SCREENING COMMITTEE submitting recommended candidates for the City Clerk/Clerk of the Council position for review by the Programs & Services Committee and recommendation to the City Council.

Action: Programs & Services Held 8-0

Notes: The Chair introduced the item, saying that this meeting would be dedicated to the public interview portion of the search for a new City Clerk/Clerk of the Council. He said that each candidate would be asked the same series of pre-written questions by the Committee, with the remainder of their time open for additional follow up questions from the Committee members or other Councilors. The Committee was joined by Ms. Pizzi O'Brien and Ms. McGonagle in case any inappropriate questions were asked. Each candidate's interview is summarized below:

Nadia Khan, City of Newton

Please tell us why you are interested in this position and why you feel you are the right choice. Please include any general career or training experience you feel is relevant.

I began my career in Newton in 2014 on the City Clerk's side of the office, maintaining vital records such as births, deaths, and other licenses. Then moving up into Elections I trained the poll workers. In 2016 I transitioned to the City Council side to staff the Public Facilities and Land Use committees. Then by 2019 I had become the Assistant City Clerk where I continue to learn legislative experience. I am interested in the variety of this office as it is constantly changing work that allows for continued learning. The City Clerk work is complimentary as you are always busy at something different. Before coming to Newton I facilitated job seeker training with the Connecticut Department of Labor, prior to which I graduated with a psychology degree from the University of Connecticut.

Let's now talk about some of the core duties of this position. This is a two-part question which will address both the duties of the City Clerk and the duties of the Clerk of the Council. First, please describe, in detail, any experience or knowledge you have in the facilitation of public meetings, including your knowledge of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and parliamentary rules. Then, please describe your experience with elections, vital records, census, and working for a legislative body.

I have extensive experience managing public meetings as the Acting City Clerk, as well as with the Land Use, Public Facilities, and Real Property Reuse committees. I am familiar with the Council rules but am still growing as I learn more about parliamentary procedure, which is something I am excited to continue with. I am comfortable reaching out to the Law Department and those with more institutional knowledge when necessary as well. I am also familiar with both halves of the City Clerk office. Elections can be intimidating, and I am familiar with this as well, having managed several elections. I am also familiar with when we need to get in touch with other departments.

Thank you for addressing elections in the previous questions. Let's expand on that topic a bit. This is a three-part question focusing on the management of elections, addressing disenfranchised voters, and safeguarding the process.

- **First, Newton highly values efficient, fair, and transparent elections. Time management and organization are integral for running a successful election. Please describe how you embody these two skills sets and how you have deployed these two skills sets in your current or former positions.**
- **Second, there is a feeling of mistrust throughout the country that not enough is being done to encourage the disenfranchised to vote. How would you address this, and how would you establish relationships in the community to develop a sense of trust in voting and remove any obstacles?**
- **And lastly, in light of the national debate on elections, please outline your guiding principles of safeguarding the elections process.**

Newton, and Massachusetts as a whole, is fortunate to not be subject to some of the more contentious aspects of this debate. While there is some distrust around the elections process, Newton has done a good job at managing voter expectations and conveying important information to voters. It is also good that we have offered in-person early voting. For time management of elections, I was responsible for recruiting and training poll workers as the equipment they use requires some expertise. Newton and other municipalities can improve their outreach at high traffic locations such as the senior center for those less likely to be able to get to polling locations. To safeguard the process, the poll workers must be trained to properly use the equipment

As addressed earlier, and as you know, this position holds two roles as outlined in the City Ordinances. One is the City Clerk and the other is the Clerk of the Council. Let's now focus on the Clerk of the Council part of this position. Please describe what you feel this role includes, what makes it different from the work of the City Clerk, how you would balance these two roles and lastly, how you envision supporting the Newton City Council, including how to manage the expectations of all twenty-four members and Council leadership?

To differentiate between the two, the Clerk of the Council deals with the legislative role and City Clerk deals with the daily operations. The Council side involves providing regular

guidance to the Council and I have had a different opportunity for that this year. The role requires an intimate understanding of all 24 Councilors and the other relationships of Department Heads. A good team is also necessary for success in this role.

Now let's discuss your management experience. As you likely know, the work of the City Clerk/Clerk of the Council in Newton includes managing a staff of 14 employees, both union and nonunion and many volunteers and part time employees during special events. Please respond to this three-part question regarding your management experience and philosophy. What is your supervisory experience, including experience supervising both union and nonunion personnel?

Describe your experience and philosophy with mentoring and disciplining employees.

And lastly, please discuss how you would establish working relationships with your staff and other City employees, knowing that your predecessor served in the role for over 15 years.

Currently I directly manage 3 employees along with the rest of the team, including the archivist, and scanning coordinator. Before taking my current position, I was responsible for training the poll workers. I have had to be conscious of union status and have brought in HR when necessary. I have been fortunate to have had great mentors who have shown the need to make sure staff is comfortable coming to you so they can come forward with mistakes and fix them. I can offer support when needed, which means encouraging staff to ask questions. Fortunately, I have not personally been in a situation requiring much disciplining of employees, but if necessary, there is no reason that I would not be able to address these problems. I have a strong ability to develop rapport and I know the people to reach out to in these situations.

It is always important to identify one's own strengths, and weaknesses. Please first describe what your weaknesses are, professionally; but also, as it relates to this specific position. Then, please describe your strengths and how you would leverage your strengths in order to address your weaknesses?

One of my biggest weaknesses is delegating. Sometimes, I take on too many projects if I feel it is faster or easier to do on my own when it should be given to a staff member. As the institutional knowledge on the Council side, sometimes it is easier for me to do these projects. My biggest strength is the ability to ask questions when I do not know the answer and have the proper conversations with those who do. Sometimes this could help identify opportunities to improve delegation.

Managing your emotions and the emotions of others during stressful workplace situations can be complex. Please describe how you plan to manage stress, your emotions and the emotions of others while supporting the work of the city council; while managing your staff; while working with other City leadership; and while representing the City within the community and with the public. Please describe an example of a situation in which you encountered conflict in the workplace, and how you addressed it. With 20/20 hindsight, would you have handled that situation differently?

This year has been a good example of how to support the Council and office staff. Emotions can run high in the office as everyone has been affected by the past year differently. You cannot always control the situations that arise so it is important to stay calm and deal with them as they come. Focusing on moving forward helps with stressful situations and fostering an environment where staff is happy to come to work.

We regularly have agitated residents come into the office as we are the recipients of those who have been bounced around City Hall without a clear answer. It is often incumbent upon City Clerk staff to find the answer. Rather than continue the pattern, we encourage staff to try and find the answer. Sometimes, with a zoning violation for example, we can reach out to ISD and bring that answer back to the customer. There is not always an immediate response you can give so it is important to collect the contact information for these cases and follow up with a resolution. These steps can help calm tense situations, especially in time-sensitive situations. Overall, timeliness is important to this process.

Diversity and inclusion are key values in Newton, which is why the City is committed to developing and implementing a long-term DEI plan for the City. This is a three-part question.

- ***How do you feel about diversity, equity, and inclusion in municipal service?***
- ***Do you feel it is important and why?***
- ***And lastly, in what way do you think you and the City Clerk's office can re-evaluate your services, in order to contribute to DEI goals and initiatives?***

I have been excited to take diversity and equity trainings from the City, such as one that was offered regarding unconscious bias. Other steps that can be taken include calling in more candidates for an interview, selecting more candidates for hiring, and checking yourself before making important decisions. To contribute to DEI goals, we offer assistance to customers, especially regarding vital records and amendments in order to make the process easier.

As you may recall from the preliminary hiring stages, technology use in the Clerk's office is a top priority. We have also become increasingly aware that the work of the Council and the City Clerk must continue, even during a global pandemic. This is a three-part question. Please answer the following questions regarding technology use by the City Clerk and the City Clerk's office.

- ***First, describe your general level of comfort with technology including any software you are familiar with that may be used regularly by municipal city clerks.***
- ***Second, how do you harness the power of technology to contribute to your current community and how did you use technology to continue your work during the COVID-19 pandemic.***
- ***And lastly, how do you envision using technology to provide effective and transparent services to the City, its residents, and visitors, if selected for this position?***

Technology use was critical during the pandemic and I am comfortable using different types of it. I am already familiar with programs such as Microsoft Office, Zoom, Granicus, and City Hall Systems. Currently I am also working with ISD to develop an online portal for special permits and am on the working group to develop a council business database. This will help make the Council's work more transparent. We transitioned to Zoom meetings and electronic Friday Packets quickly when the pandemic started and I am also comfortable with the Council Newsletter, which is currently paused.

The meeting then opened to other Councilors who wanted to ask questions.

We get many questions from constituents on our voting records. What can you talk about that will help the Council be more transparent with voting records and docket items?

The Council Actions document posted after Council meetings helps with transparency by

reflecting all of the actions taken by the Council during the meeting. Improving its prominence on the website could help with transparency. There could also be a clearer message about this on the Council homepage.

Can you name up to two things you would have done differently than Mr. Olson?

This is a tough question. The office would have benefitted from more formal training opportunities, such as conferences, as well as making some staff certified municipal clerks. I also think that discipline could have been handled differently. While the office benefitted greatly from the casual managing style, sometimes certain staff members picked up heavier aspects of the position than others.

Do you foresee the public being able to look up the council voting records? How long could this take to implement?

This is the plan with the database, but it is hard to give an exact estimate as it will require a lot of data entry.

Are there improvements to be made to the current website?

It will always be a work in progress, but it will be a huge undertaking to upload all the missing material.

The Council Clerks spend many late nights at meetings. How will you keep their morale and stamina up?

Part of this is making sure that staff understands these late nights are part of the job. Once the team understands this, you need to support them however necessary. The office already has a good support system in place for this.

As you know, the Mayor sets the annual budget and other policies, the Council makes other policies and city ordinances. Could you provide an example of when you conformed with a policy with which you didn't agree?

I do not have a concrete example, but I am also not a Newton resident. One example may be the leaf blower ordinance due to its controversy. The Clerk's Office is not there to make policy or make the public happy about it, but to ensure that it is implemented correctly.

Ms. Khan was thanked for her time and told that HR would reach out to her regarding the next steps in the process.

Karim Abdul-Matin, Town of Brookline

Please tell us why you are interested in this position and why you feel you are the right choice. Please include any general career or training experience you feel is relevant.

I have been interested in public service my entire life and have worked extensively with Brookline Town Meeting during the pandemic. The City Clerk/Clerk of the Council seemed like a position I could excel at. I grew up in an activist family that took local democratic governance seriously, but I always had a bigger focus on governance with a bureaucratic mindset. Working in the non-profit sector, I learned much about working with a diverse group of people and that lack of information often made peoples' jobs difficult. After a layoff due to federal funding cut, I

earned my MPA at Suffolk University and eventually came into my role at the service desk in Brookline where I help town personnel fix broken computer systems. After helping Town Meeting during the pandemic, I realized there was more opportunity for me to display my talents.

Let's now talk about some of the core duties of this position. This is a two-part question which will address both the duties of the City Clerk and the duties of the Clerk of the Council. First, please describe, in detail, any experience or knowledge you have in the facilitation of public meetings, including your knowledge of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and parliamentary rules. Then, please describe your experience with elections, vital records, census, and working for a legislative body.

My experience comes from working with Brookline Town Meeting and I have been learning parliamentary procedure by watching the former Town Moderator do his job. I have also been reading up on Open Meeting Law, with transparency being the big theme requiring careful attention. Though my experience has been with Brookline Town Meeting, which only meets twice a year, I have been reading through the Newton City Council minutes and transcripts to prepare for this role. The staff would also be an asset for me as well. Regarding elections and vital records, Newton already has detailed procedures for these with dedicated staff as well. Through my work I have addressed big problems with complex processes and I work with people to make sure they understand their roles.

Thank you for addressing elections in the previous questions. Let's expand on that topic a bit. This is a three-part question focusing on the management of elections, addressing disenfranchised voters, and safeguarding the process.

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- ***Second, there is a feeling of mistrust throughout the country that not enough is being done to encourage the disenfranchised to vote. How would you address this, and how would you establish relationships in the community to develop a sense of trust in voting and remove any obstacles?***
- ***And lastly, in light of the national debate on elections, please outline your guiding principles of safeguarding the elections process.***

With the many polling stations across Newton, I understand you hire temporary staff for these locations. My assumption is that there is already an existing system in place and it is fairly well organized. I would meet people where they are and see how to improve performance within the existing skill levels. In my current job, I need to understand the expectations and limitations of my team. As I have grown up in Massachusetts, I have gained greater appreciation for voting and local governance, seeing that the key is to make people feel included in this process. I am curious at what opportunities could extend to the middle and high schools to increase awareness of Newton's government and what roles they could play. I am proud to say that Massachusetts runs its elections well overall. One key is to make sure people do not feel physically intimidated and to make sure that laws for election cybersecurity are followed.

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It is great to see that Newton combines both of these roles to make sure democratic governance occurs in the open. The City Clerk position focuses on making sure we have records of who we are and that elections are conducted fairly. The Clerk of the Council aspect serves as the public witness to the actions of the Council side it makes sure that its process is fair and that public deliberation happens correctly. I would hope to get to know each one of the Councilors. Overall, I would see my job as the guardian of public deliberation.

Now let's discuss your management experience. As you likely know, the work of the City Clerk/Clerk of the Council in Newton includes managing a staff of 14 employees, both union and nonunion and many volunteers and part time employees during special events. Please respond to this three-part question regarding your management experience and philosophy.

- ***What is your supervisory experience, including experience supervising both union and nonunion personnel?***
- ***Describe your experience and philosophy with mentoring and disciplining employees.***
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I mainly worked in highly matrixed organizations with teams of varying sizes, so this flexibility is normal to me. I do not consider people to work for me, but rather I would see us as working for Newton. Everyone thrives when we accept people making the best steps for their own careers as well, which sometimes means accepting when they move on. So developing talent is the best attitude for the office. I do have experience disciplining employees in the workplace and being transparent and upfront with them was the best course. I have zero tolerance for behaviors that make coworkers feel unsafe at work such as racism.

It is always important to identify one's own strengths, and weaknesses. Please first describe what your weaknesses are, professionally; but also, as it relates to this specific position. Then, please describe your strengths and how you would leverage your strengths in order to address your weaknesses?

My main weakness with this position would be having never done it. With the other positions on my resume, I started with no experience but quickly learned on the job. The other strength is my leadership ability as I like to see people thrive. Everyone in this office already knows what is broken and I would want to connect with them to find identify the problems to fix them.

Managing your emotions and the emotions of others during stressful workplace situations can be complex. Please describe how you plan to manage stress, your emotions and the emotions of others while supporting the work of the city council; while managing your staff; while working with other City leadership; and while representing the City within the community and

with the public. Please describe an example of a situation in which you encountered conflict in the workplace, and how you addressed it. With 20/20 hindsight, would you have handled that situation differently?

I can't manage the emotions of others and you need to work with people as they are with an appropriate baseline. To manage my own stress and my emotions, I exercise and try not to take the things people say too personally. I also think it is important for the workplace to have humor so the team can laugh and freely express themselves.

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- ***Do you feel it is important and why?***
- ***And lastly, in what way do you think you and the City Clerk's office can re-evaluate your services, in order to contribute to DEI goals and initiatives?***
- ***What experience do you have working with the LGBT community, especially the Trans community?***

Personally I have benefitted from increased inclusivity and I understand what it means. It is also important to have diverse personality types in the workplace as they will compliment each other. I would also hope to model to children of color what they can aspire to. The important thing is to move forward towards a more inclusive future. I do not have much professional experience with the LGBT community but I do have LGBT friends in my personal life.

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I am extremely comfortable working with technology in the public sector. My team currently manages about 10,000 computers. It was tricky to pivot to digital Town Meeting, but with help from BU I was able to make it work. The public meeting process does not need to change, we just need to translate it over to Zoom. Moving to the future, I realized after meeting with the screening committee how many resources the Council and Newton has to do interesting work with the Clerk's position. I have dreamt of working with a community that would be interested in building a platform to run city governments. This also includes making searchable public records, which would require a technology platform that does not exist yet.

The meeting then opened to allow other Councilors to ask questions if they wished

Do you have any experience that could help with transparency, such as making Councilor voting

records more accessible?

The transparency challenge has two parts, one is intention to make things more transparent. Newton is currently in compliance as nobody is trying to hide anything, but these records can be time-indexed and hard to find. Since the intention is sincere, there should be no barrier to transparency. With the right system, we should be able to put these records together online, but it is a shift in the role of technology in the department. In the future it is both achievable and helpful to the public to make records more searchable and all we need is the will.

Tell us, what do you want us to know about you that would convince this Council to hire somebody with no clerk experience?

I run to the most complex challenges and I thrive in these situations where others are having difficulty working together and help people achieve solutions. With the support of the capable staff, the Council, and the Mayor's Office, I can help maximize the value of the Clerk's Office and I am a strategic hire to help those who already know how to do the work improve. I am also the best choice to help keep up with advances in information technology. Rather than make sure things happen the way they always have, I would be able to transform the way we handle transparency.

What is your biggest regret in your tenure as the service desk manager of Brookline and what would you have done differently?

It would be the way I handled my first Fall season. I was hired in October, and September is the most important time for the school department. I identified a problem in February and I informed staff that if it was not promptly addressed, there would be procurement issues and other systems access problems. It was not addressed and this is what happened in the fall. Though we were able to fix it, I should have been more assertive to push senior staff to fix the problem.

We transitioned to a new website about a year ago and much of the material on the old website had to be re-uploaded. Could this have been avoided based on your knowledge and is there any easy fix?

If there is no digital copy of an item, then one has to be created. If you want to include material from early Newton, there is surely more archival work to be done. I would not speak too poorly of your website as it complies with the law and does its job. To understand what can be done differently, we need to work backwards from what the public wants. This will help direct all the detailed work the Clerk's Office needs to do in addition to complying with state law. There would be a lot of throughout work involved with this solution. Other issues to changing too much could deal with contracts that still need to be met.

As you know, the Mayor sets the annual budget and other policies, the Council makes other policies and city ordinances. Could you provide an example of when you conformed with a policy with which you didn't agree?

It was not an ordinance, but there is much I do not like about how the division of labor is organized in the school department. But this is not my job, my focus is the service desk team. It is not in my interest to worry about things I have no control over and my role is to implement as the Clerk. Being too active in this could undermine democracy as it is the Council's job to make policy while the Clerk records and complies.

You have mentioned “staying in your lane”, what do you think your greatest impact on the community would be?

It would be technology. There has been much frustration expressed over this and there is a lot within the scope of this position, all of which relies on public records. If these were made more searchable, it would be a lot of work and coordination but it would be to everyone's benefit.

Mr. Abdul-Matin was thanked for his time and told that HR would contact him regarding the next steps in the process.

Carol Moore, City of Mukilteo, Washington

Please tell us why you are interested in this position and why you feel you are the right choice. Please include any general career or training experience you feel is relevant.

I am a career public employee in both non-profits and public executive management and I am comfortable in this field. Whether judicial or Council-related, there are always interdepartmental relationships and it is what I like to do. Having earned a Bachelor's degree in History, I see the City Clerk as the city historian to gather and archive information. These are all things that interest me and I enjoy leading a team, and while I currently do not have staff I have previously led staff in prior positions in Oakmont, Pennsylvania and Florida. Creating a healthy workplace culture is something I enjoy as well. Newton has more capacity with its large Council and this large group would be a challenge that I would enjoy. I enjoy facilitating the legislative process as well as I also served as City Clerk in Oakmont. We also have family on the East Coast and are eager to move back, and Newton seems like a great community to move to and work for its residents. I also had experience writing grants before earning my masters' degree.

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My strength is in public meetings, whether through the court system or my positions in Oakmont and currently in Mukilteo. Though my expertise is in Washington public records laws as a certified public records officer, I am comfortable in learning those of Massachusetts as I have begun reading into them. I am not a parliamentarian but I make sure to research all the possible motions before a meeting. I have been watching Council meetings for a few weeks and have seen that the Councilors are familiar with Roberts' Rules. In Washington, our elections are all vote by mail so we have no physical spaces and I am in charge of local ballot measures and work with other elections officers. I would also be comfortable learning the elections process in Massachusetts. There would be a learning curve but this is a process I am excited to learn more about. I would be a great team leader for the poll workers. For vital statistics I have some counter experience but it would also be another new aspect I'd be excited to learn.

Thank you for addressing elections in the previous questions. Let's expand on that topic a bit. This is a three-part question focusing on the management of elections, addressing disenfranchised voters, and safeguarding the process.

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- **Second, there is a feeling of mistrust throughout the country that not enough is being done to encourage the disenfranchised to vote. How would you address this, and how would you establish relationships in the community to develop a sense of trust in voting and remove any obstacles?**
- **And lastly, in light of the national debate on elections, please outline your guiding principles of safeguarding the elections process.**

Since as the City Clerk I am the records manager, ADA coordinator, and several other roles, good organization is necessary. I use technology, delegation, and flexible priorities to help with this. I am comfortable switching gears among tasks when necessary as well. I remind department heads to get me all necessary documents in time for our posting deadlines on Wednesday to avoid the strict penalties. The various department liaisons are helpful when I need to delegate as I do not have a direct staff to do this. There is still distrust in government and I speak regularly with citizens concerned about this and open communication with easily accessible information is key to combating mistrust. For example, I needed to provide a public records request to a resident concerned about why a candidate pulled out of a race and he was satisfied after reading the records. Distrust must be acknowledged and a moderate use of social media can help. Additionally, a booth at community events can help people who don't normally come to Council get to know their City Clerk. To safeguard the elections process, I have been researching the proposed Votes Act in Massachusetts, but I would need to study this more. To help be a symbol of trust to the public, the City Clerk or one of their staff should be present for the collection of ballots.

As addressed earlier, and as you know, this position holds two roles as outlined in the City Ordinances. One is the City Clerk and the other is the Clerk of the Council. Let's now focus on the Clerk of the Council part of this position. Please describe what you feel this role includes, what makes it different from the work of the City Clerk, how you would balance these two roles and lastly, how you envision supporting the Newton City Council, including how to manage the expectations of all twenty-four members and Council leadership?

The Clerk of the Council must provide assistance to the Council and facilitate the legislative process. I would envision the role as doing more than just taking minutes or being the on-point person, but doing more behind the scenes work to make the meetings flow such as agenda management. It also involves connecting with the public to let them know what will be on the Council's docket and where they can find more information about these materials. The Clerk should also lead projects to simplify this process and make it more transparent to build accountability with the public. It is already helpful that residents have 24 Councilors to get to know, the next step is to make the information available and accessible. I also see the role as serving as a hub of information to the public and other city departments, and I would love to build a relationship with each Councilor.

Now let's discuss your management experience. As you likely know, the work of the City Clerk/Clerk of the Council in Newton includes managing a staff of 14 employees, both union

and nonunion and many volunteers and part time employees during special events. Please respond to this three-part question regarding your management experience and philosophy.

- ***What is your supervisory experience, including experience supervising both union and nonunion personnel?***
- ***Describe your experience and philosophy with mentoring and disciplining employees.***
- ***And lastly, please discuss how you would establish working relationships with your staff and other City employees, knowing that your predecessor served in the role for over 15 years.***

My supervisory experience started from the courts in Florida as a jury clerk. I would welcome and provide orientation to the jurors and I used public speaking with people unhappy to be in a jury. There were 22 clerks of varying roles in the department. My next management experience was in Oakmont where I got experience working with union and non-union employees among city staff. There was no HR department here and I wish there had been. At the clerk of courts, I unfortunately had to discipline and terminate two employees. This process starts with a personal improvement plan to give the employees feedback and these two did not follow the plans. To build working relationships with staff, it is a good sign that the previous Clerk was in the position for 15 years. My first step would be to assume that while the office is well run, there is some morale problems due to a staff shortage. This would be something to address. By meeting with staff I would hope to identify how to get morale back on track. I would get to know the roles and the people and not make too many changes right away.

It is always important to identify one's own strengths, and weaknesses. Please first describe what your weaknesses are, professionally; but also, as it relates to this specific position. Then, please describe your strengths and how you would leverage your strengths in order to address your weaknesses?

My professional weaknesses are the elections process, but my strength is enthusiasm and sincerity as I am willing to put in the work to learn. Another weakness of mine would be that as a high-level thinker, I sometimes miss data-entry work and a strength is to build capacity with the resources I have.

Managing your emotions and the emotions of others during stressful workplace situations can be complex. Please describe how you plan to manage stress, your emotions and the emotions of others while supporting the work of the city council; while managing your staff; while working with other City leadership; and while representing the City within the community and with the public. Please describe an example of a situation in which you encountered conflict in the workplace, and how you addressed it. With 20/20 hindsight, would you have handled that situation differently?

I learned about managing my stress and emotions in my jury manager role. Some of the cases clerks listened to were emotionally challenging and staff needs time to destress from them. I have my own personal techniques, and for staff it is about listening and finding out where their emotions lie. Addressing a conflict, in Oakmont there was a borough manager who was openly opinionated which often disrupted meetings and caused them to run very late. As a silent facilitator it was challenging to calm everybody and I should have said something in private to this individual.

Diversity and inclusion are key values in Newton, which is why the City is committed to developing and implementing a long-term DEI plan for the City. This is a three-part question. I will read all three parts but am happy to repeat them if needed.

- ***How do you feel about diversity, equity, and inclusion in municipal service?***
- ***Do you feel it is important and why?***
- ***And lastly, in what way do you think you and the City Clerk's office can re-evaluate your services, in order to contribute to DEI goals and initiatives?***
- ***What experience do you have working with the LGBT community, especially the Trans community?***
- ***In your professional career, what is your experience with the LGBTQI community?***

I believe that in personal and professional life, DEI commission is invaluable. I learned while earning my masters' degree about the 4 E's of public administration: efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and equity. These are four of the most important roles for the public good. One example of these in use is that at a recent Council meeting, it was discussed that an important notice could be mailed out to all residents to ensure they saw it. Two Councilors pointed out that they do not regularly open their mail. These different voices helped the conversation figure out the best way to distribute the information. I would hope ADA language training could also be used and I would continually be looking at sensitivity training to make people more comfortable. I have only interacted with the LGBTQI community in Mukilteo, not in my other positions, as Mukilteo is a more diverse city.

As you may recall from the preliminary hiring stages, technology use in the Clerk's office is a top priority. We have also become increasingly aware that the work of the Council and the City Clerk must continue, even during a global pandemic. This is a three-part question. Please answer the following questions regarding technology use by the City Clerk and the City Clerk's office.

- ***First, describe your general level of comfort with technology including any software you are familiar with that may be used regularly by municipal city clerks.***
- ***Second, how do you harness the power of technology to contribute to your current community and how did you use technology to continue your work during the COVID-19 pandemic.***
- ***And lastly, how do you envision using technology to provide effective and transparent services to the City, its residents, and visitors, if selected for this position?***

I am very comfortable with tech such as Granicus for agenda management, Microsoft Office, and Laserfiche-an expensive but effective content management software. I am always excited to learn new technology that can help residents feel more connected. Since Mukilteo City Hall is open on restricted hours, we had to quickly adapt to remote work with tools such as e-signatures. Now I am an expert with Zoom as well. For more effective transparency, a public records program could be enacted that creates ownership on the part of the requester by requiring them to make an account. This could make other requests searchable as well. Helping people get more involved in the process makes them less distrustful of government.

The meeting opened to other Councilors who wished to ask questions.

Constituents often ask about transparency, they want to see Councilor votes, actions, and other docket item tracking. What experience would you bring would be your goals to meet these

three areas?

This relates to technology as programs out there would make this easy to do, though painful at first to start. Granicus is one example, iLegislate is another software that connects all the documentation of an item for both Councilors and the public. What I think is simple is not the same as the average person so you need to think like this when designing the system for user-friendliness. I continually ask other departments before adding content to agendas. Confusing websites can leave room for distrust and misinformation.

What is your biggest regret during your tenure at Mukilteo as the City Clerk and what would you have done differently?

I was in the position for about two months and sometimes, public records requests need to get transferred to the Finance liaison. For one request, the liaison did not provide a certain letter. A year later we got notice of action as the required letter was never provided. We fixed this problem with the city attorney, but it was a lesson to pay attention to detail and double-check these requests going forward.

Do you have experience with website transitions? We had a difficult one in Newton and much information such as contracts and historic commission material was lost.

Yes. In Oakmont one of the first things I wanted to address was the website. Their old website was just many scanned PDFs. It took 2 years, but we built a better website. The "How do I?" section was based off frequent questions and helped reduce the number of phone calls on basic questions since people could find the answers themselves. There was lots of work involved with this and it is good to get the public involved in this process. I now run the Clerk's website and we are still getting feedback on how to improve it. Many different voices need to be heard.

As you know, the Mayor sets the annual budget and other policies, the Council makes other policies and city ordinances. Could you provide an example of when you conformed with a policy with which you didn't agree?

Recently a resolution was passed in Mukilteo. In Washington there is a growth management act where all municipalities need to look at affordable housing and combating sprawl and homelessness. For a year we hired a consultant to gather data and research on housing. Very data driven but it became a hot topic with mis and disinformation. Public comment about this item added hours onto meetings. The result was a resolution solely focused on reviewing the permitting process when there are so many other ways to research the city that we missed out on. This was not what I wanted, but the resolution was passed and we had to move on.

What do you believe will be the greatest impact you have if selected?

My greatest impact will be strength and connections. This comes across in relations with staff and coworkers. As someone who is reliable and dependable, I believe that I will become a friendly face to the public and using social media can help become more familiar with residents.

We had a newsletter with the former clerk that was mostly a summary. How would you address communication through a newsletter?

The Mayor of Mukilteo does a newsletter important to not just have Council actions but other things City Hall is doing to show to the public that it matters. I would get behind an online

newsletter, and we could have hard copies as well.

Ms. Moore was thanked for her time and informed that HR would reach out to her regarding the next steps in the process.

Councilor Wright made a motion to Hold which carried 8-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh Krintzman, Chair