

Council Business Meeting

May 2, 2017

Title: Selection of Interim City Recorder
From: John Karns Interim City Administrator
John.karns@ashland.or.us

Summary:

Barbara Christensen retired from her position as City Recorder effective April 30, 2017. The City has received three applications for the interim position as well as one letter of intent from an internal employee. By the terms of the Charter, Council will need to select an Interim City Recorder within 60 days of the City Recorder's retirement.

Actions, Options, or Potential Motions:

Council may appoint the Interim City Recorder from the four applicants or continue the matter for further discussion. The appointment needs to be made by July 1, 2017.

A potential motion would be: "I move to appoint _____ as Interim City Recorder".

Staff Recommendation:

N/A

Resource Requirements:

The salary and benefits for this position are in the City's budget for 2017/2019.

Policies, Plans and Goals Supported:

N/A

Background and Additional Information:

The City Recorder's position is currently an elected position by City Charter. The current term expires December 31, 2018. At the [March 6, 2017](#), study session Council determined the process for this selection and at the [April 3, 2017](#), study session agreed to interview the applicants.

There has been interest in changing the City Recorder's position to an appointed position, as was recommended by the ad hoc City Recorder Position Committee, in order to create a more robust qualification profile and to equal the appointed status found in most Oregon cities. Staff recommends that Council schedule a future study session for further discussion, if there is interest in this change.

Attachments:

Applications
ad hoc Committee final recommendation

Melissa Huhtala
332 Meadow Drive
Ashland, OR 97520
(541) 499-2900

I was excited to read about the current opening as City Recorder for the City of Ashland. I think you will find I am an exceptional candidate for this position. I have 8+ years with public and government based jobs. I have been the custodian of all City records for the last 6 years at the City of Talent.

I am very knowledgeable in Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Quickbooks, Publisher, O365, Outlook and Laserfiche. I am familiar with most other programs and I also am great at website maintenance.

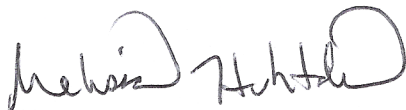
My strongest assets include working with people, managing tasks, improving processes and can deal with conflict in a positive manner. I am a very quick learner and always eager to learn more.

I am driven to provide high quality and valuable product. I offer exceptional attention to detail and have great communication skills. I found that with all my jobs my co-workers have become like family. I get along great with others and I think I have the personality and drive that is ready for this job.

My accomplishments and qualifications are detailed in my resume. I appreciate your taking the time to review my credentials and experience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Huhtala". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "M".

Melissa Huhtala

meetings and assist other departments and staff as needed. Create documents, booklets and reports. Place all purchase orders for the Department.

- Coordinate the Budget and Audit processes that entail public noticing, preparing agendas, meeting set-up, transcribing minutes, format the Budget and Audit documents. Correlating financial information and producing Budget binders, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Component Unit Financial Report (CUFR)
- Coordinates the Grant process; create applications, ensure applications are complete, notice the meetings in the paper and produce minutes. Distribute checks throughout the year.

2004 – 2007

Sterling Savings Bank

Ashland, OR

Customer Service Representative Teller/Accounts Representative

- Top cross selling telling in all branches.
- Opened numerous accounts for the branch.
- Trained new employees.
- Processed wire transfers, deposits and withdrawals.
- Filed signature cards and loan documents.

2002 – 2004

Siskiyou Medical Group

Mount Shasta, CA

Front Desk Secretary

- Scheduled appointments for patients.
- Data processed payroll and accounting invoices
- Trained new recruits.
- Answered multiple phone lines
- Filed and maintained all medical records

2000 - 2002

Scott Valley Bank

Mount Shasta, CA

Teller/New Accounts

- Top cross selling teller in all branches.
- Opened numerous accounts for the branch.
- Trained new employees.
- Processed wire transfers, deposits and withdrawals.

March 3, 2017

Letter of Recommendation

Melissa Huhtala

I was the Chief of Police for the City of Talent from 2008 to 2016. In 2011 I assisted in selecting Melissa Huhtala to be our City Recorder and I conducted the employment background investigation on her.

Subsequently, I worked with Melissa on City business from the summer of 2011 until I retired in April 2016.

I found her to be an exceptionally talented, organized and motivated person. These qualities served her well from day one. Melissa came into the job during a bit of upheaval in the city as the city manager who hired her was unexpectedly replaced first by an interim and later by another manager. Melissa also had limited opportunity to be trained by the outgoing City Recorder. Additionally, Melissa found a key responsibility for her position was managing the annual City sponsored Harvest Festival and the event was coming up in 60 days. Melissa also had to learn the requirements of her position as she went along.

Melissa not only excelled at her work during this hectic first 6 months, she brought the level of professionalism and achievement of this position to a new height. Melissa has continued to develop her knowledge, skills and abilities throughout her tenure.

I strongly recommend her as a potential new employee.

For additional information please contact me at mikemoran541@gmail.com.



Mike Moran

Chief of Police -Retired

March 9, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Mrs. Melissa Huhtala. I was a city council member during her employment with City of Talent. Since 2011, I had the pleasure of working with Melissa in a variety of different capacities in her role at the city. Her title may have been City Recorder but she effectively accomplished many other duties that made her valuable to the organization and community.

Melissa provided leadership in handling many efforts that were led by community members outside of city hall. She led the expansion of the only annual community event that brought 1,000 of attendees to the city. She accomplished this by managing volunteers, advocating sponsorships, and overseeing the processes in accordance to the city requirements. This was all done in addition to her regular employee duties.

As a City Recorder, she demonstrated excellent management on public documents and city records. She organized the codification of Talent's Municipal Codes. She maintained a reliable relationship with elected officials and administrative staff. She met and exceeded the requirements to keep public meetings and requests in compliance with ORS and the city's charter. She was the "go-to" person for all public members who were involved with the city.

In my experience as an elected official, I was very satisfied to have Melissa as the City's Recorder and the "go-to" person in administration. From the start, she put the effort and energy in being knowledgeable about the city and how to accomplish what was being asked. I am confident she is very capable of fulfilling a role as a City Recorder and in Executive Administration within city government.

In my experience as an executive in management and finance, I know Melissa is a very valuable individual to have on a management team. She will represent an organization professionally. She will succeed in accomplishing the duties and make sure that her role is benefiting the team as whole.

Overall, Melissa is an excellent individual to have in your organization now and for the future.

Sincerely,



Edwin J. (EJ) McManus, MBA

Contact: 541/261-2392

March 8, 2017

To whom it may concern:

Melissa Huhtala was hired as the Talent City Recorder in 2011, early in my term as Mayor. Melissa quickly oriented herself to the City and began to put some order to a public records management system that had been lacking for a number of years. Melissa's grasp of records management and her technical ability created a system that was much superior to what we had prior to her employment with the City of Talent. I appreciated the fact that I could find historical records in a timely manner.

During my term as Mayor, I completely trusted Melissa to insure our meetings and public records were conducted within the scope of Oregon law. When a specific situation arose that she was not sure of, she would find the answer. I can think of no instance in which she gave me or the Council erroneous advice.

One of Melissa's strong point is that she is a self-starter with a strong work ethic. The City Recorder position at Talent has many other duties as assigned. Even though these extra duties took a lot of her time, I was always confident that her City Recorder duties would be done in a timely and professional manner.

For elected officials navigating Public Records and Public Meeting laws and regulations is a daunting task. Failure to comply can lead to serious consequences. I so appreciated Melissa's professionalism and guidance in getting me through my term as Mayor without incident.

William Cecil
Former Mayor, City of Talent

Lisa Witnauer
63 Mallard St.
Ashland, OR
541-621-0717
lwitnauer@yahoo.com

City Of Ashland

Dear Hiring Team,

I am writing in response to your posting for City Recorder/Treasurer.

I am excited about this position because I will be able to contribute to my community by offering my skills and experience in management and accounting.

I am a self-directed, dedicated and technically skilled business professional with a versatile administrative support skill set, developed through 10 years of experience in Accounting, management, payroll processing, employee orientation, workman's compensation and human resources.

I am an independent thinker and problem solver, exercising sound judgment and care in decision-making with a high level of integrity and professionalism willing to go above and beyond.

Currently I am the Accounting Manager for Ashland Partners & Company, LLP in Jacksonville, Oregon.

I have included my resume and letters of recommendation for your review. I look forward to hearing more about the position and the company.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Witnauer

LISA WITNAUER

Ashland, OR 97520

541-621-0717

lwitnauer@yahoo.com

Qualifications

I am a self-directed, dedicated and technically skilled business professional with a versatile administrative support skill set, developed through 10 years of experience in Accounting, management, payroll processing, employee orientation, workman's compensation and human resources.

I am an independent thinker and problem solver, exercising sound judgment and care in decision-making with a high level of integrity and professionalism willing to go above and beyond.

Currently I am the Accounting Manager for Ashland Partners & Company, LLP in Jacksonville, Oregon.

Experience

Accounting Manager, Ashland Partners & Company, LLP, Jacksonville, OR. September 2016-Present

- Responsibilities include oversight of all necessary day to day accounting responsibilities, including journal entries, accounts payable/ receivable, bank deposits, invoicing, and collections.
- Responsible for quarterly closing and balance sheet book document retention.
- Monthly auditing and reconciliation of balance sheet and profit and loss accounts.
- Monthly bank reconciliation of both domestic and international bank accounts.
- Responsible for quarterly financial reporting for contracted CFO so she is prepared for quarterly Partner presentations.
- Responsible for processing payroll timely and accurately.
- Provided the highest level of support for the annual audit.
- Take pride in knowing I protect the organization's value by keeping information confidential.

Accounting Manager, Big Tree Farms, Inc. Ashland, OR. June 2014-September 2016.

- Managed all necessary day to day accounting responsibilities, including journal entries, accounts payable/ receivable, bank deposits, invoicing, collections, etc.
- Implemented the integration of MYOB accounting software and Ostendo, ERP enterprise resource planning software.
- Established and implement companies accounting policies and interpret guidance in regards to accounting transactions.
- Responsible for the monthly close as well as maintenance of all accounting ledgers including, bank reconciliation and all revenue and expense account reconciliations

- Prepared of all financial reports, including Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheet and Statement of Cash Flows, as well as the year-end financial reports. Produce financial reports and statements for our Indonesian entity for month and year-end consolidated reports.
- Provided timely explanations of variances between actual results and forecasts/budgets; provided corrective action recommendations to management, where necessary.
- Performed internal audits to reinforce proper accounting practices by other members and departments.
- Responsible for hiring and managing employees in the Accounting Department.
- Responsible for Human Resources, including hiring paperwork, maintaining personnel files, creating vacation holiday and sick time policy.
- Processed payroll timely and accurately including wage garnishment and benefit accrual
- Coordinated and completed annual audits
- Drafted and enforced accounting policies and procedures in connection with auditor recommendations.
- Protected organization's value by keeping information confidential.

**Accountant/Office Manager- Skylark Assisted Living, Woollard Ipsen Management.
Sept 2008-June 2014**

- Worked closely with the company controller, administrator and department heads
- Prepared and analyzed all monthly financial statements
- Issued weekly expense tracking reports to all department managers so they can maintain their individual budgets
- Responsible for the facility's accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, cash records and general ledger
- Responsible for understanding and calculating Medicaid adjustments
- Processed payroll timely and accurately including wage garnishment and benefit accrual
- Filed all workman's compensation claims and follow through with EAIP subsidy requests
- Maintained all personnel, confidential and resident files according to retention requirements
- Initiated and tracked FMLA/OFLA protected leave
- Conducted employee orientation and criminal background checks (Authorized Designee)
- Understands that all employee and company information must be conducted in a confidential and professional manner

**Owner/Operator- Bento Phoenix, Phoenix, OR.
May 2005-July 2008**

- Owner/Operator of a small business for over three years.
- Created Menu and food cost controls.
- Oversaw all daily operations and bookkeeping using QuickBooks.
- Prepared monthly and year-end Profit and Loss statements and Balance Sheets.
- Processed Payroll , filed quarterly payroll taxes, filed year end taxes W-3, 940, 941 and employee W2.
- Hired, trained and managed my entire staff.

Education

Southern Oregon University 1993-1997 - Bachelor's Degree, Art History 3.6 GPA

Rogue Community College 1998-2000 - Accounting 4.0

- Accounting I
- Accounting II
- Federal Taxation

Key Skills

Accounting, Management, Office Management, Accounts Receivables, Accounts Payable, General Ledger, ADP Payroll Processing, QuickBooks, MYOB Accounting software, ACPACC Accounting software, Ostendo ERP software, Excel, Human Resources, Workman's compensation, FMLA/OFLA Leave, Employee Orientation

References

Shalon Zimmerman, Human Resources Generalist, Ashland Partners & Company	541-857-8800
Frederick Schilling, Chief Brand Officer, Big Tree Farms, Inc.,	541-778-3465
Mary Heckenlaible, Operations Manager, Big Tree Farms, Inc.,	541-778-3468
Linda Roberson, Controller, Woollard Ipsen Management	541-773-2771

06/16/16

To Whom It May Concern:

Over the course of the 2 years that Mrs. Witnauer has been employed at Big Tree Farms, she has shown unencumbered interest to learn new complex tasks that are required in our international company. Big Tree Farms operates in a fast paced business environment that requires individuals to stay focused, on task and be able to pivot quickly in order to get the job done. Lisa has continually performed while under these pressures.

In her tenure at Big Tree Farms, as US Accounting Manager, her responsibilities included; managing US accounting, acting as US based point person in our first company wide audit (Mazars and Moss Adams) and HR management for the US entity.

Of particular note is her acting as the point person in the US for our first company wide audit. Without having any prior experience with audits and with a daunting workload to meet deadlines, Lisa's perseverance helped accomplish this requirement.

Lisa is reliable, dedicated and a driven individual with a strong desire to solve problems in accounting and ensure any issue is resolved. She is a friendly, caring individual who will do what has to be done to ensure the job gets done.

Organized and diligent, Lisa quickly learned technology systems and software that were unfamiliar to her when she first started with BTF and continued to learn new systems as BTF progressed.

Lisa is a hardworking, diligent accounting manager. She has my highest recommendation, and I am happy to furnish more details if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Frederick Schilling
Founder/CBO
Big Tree Farms
M: 541-778-3465
fs@bigtreefarms.com



Woollard Ipsen Management

June 15, 2016

Re: Personal Recommendation
Lisa Witnauer

To Whom It May Concern:

Lisa Witnauer was employed by Skylark Assisted Living, LLC from September 25, 2008 until June 18, 2014. I had the privilege of being one of her supervisors during her time of employment. Lisa's title as office manager included a wide variety of job duties. Her primary duty was bookkeeping, but included other job duties such as, administering workers compensation claims, new hire orientation and assisting operations in many other tasks.

In the time Lisa worked for Skylark Assisted Living, LLC she proved to be very responsible, trustworthy, hardworking, detail orientated and a good communicator. She has a strong desire to excel in all aspects of her work. The high degree of integrity and professionalism Lisa has exhibited allowed a certain piece of mind as a supervisor in a different location.

I truly enjoyed working with Lisa and hated to see it end. Please consider this a high recommendation in her ability to adapt to any career in the realm of her experience.

Sincerely,

Linda Roberson
Controller
Woollard Ipsen Management, LLC

541 363-2365
55 N. Mountain Ave.
Ashland, OR 97520
sonia@rangelcpa.com



March 22, 2017

City Council
City of Ashland
20 East Main St.
Ashland, OR 97520

Re: City Recorder/Treasurer

Dear City Council,

I was recently directed to your City Recorder/Treasurer vacancy announcement by a good friend. After speaking with Barbara Christensen to learn more about the job, I realized that it was a diverse enough position to be both challenging and engaging. I also concluded that my qualifications are ideal for this position.

I have earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting and graduated with honors in the major. I further enhanced my knowledge by studying for the CPA exam. After successfully passing all four sections of the exam I went on to gain my experience as a municipal auditor of the second largest city in the U.S., Los Angeles. Other engagements included the LA Housing Department, Community Redevelopment Agency, Los Angeles Fire & Police Pension System, LA Unified School District, LA County Beaches & Harbors and LA County Treasurer & Tax Collector. Through this job, I gained a vast amount of knowledge about how the various government departments operate and integrate.

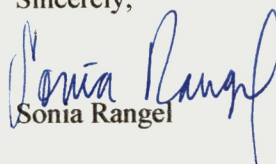
As a resident of Oregon for the past six years I have worked as an independent accountant for several local businesses and not-for-profits. After receiving my CPA license from the Oregon Board of Accountancy in 2014, I expanded my services to cover tax. Subsequently, upon client request, I registered as a Firm to provide certified services.

As my business has grown so have the expenses. Professional dues, subscriptions, peer review costs, insurance, rent, software, taxes, licensing fees and so on. I have moved my business out of the area to respect the non-compete agreement that I signed with Reid, Hanna & Johnson and have even accepted out-of-state work. However, this has proved to be unsustainable.

I have taken some time to assess my options for going forward with my business and I am also considering this local job opportunity as an alternate route to self-sufficiency.

I hope that you acknowledge my qualifications for this position and consider meeting with me for an interview.

Sincerely,


Sonia Rangel

Enclosure

Sonia Rangel, CPA
55 N. Mountain Ave., Ashland OR 97520
Work: (541) 499-6890 • Cell: (541) 363-2365
E-mail: sonia@rangelcpa.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

A bright and detail oriented CPA with combined experience in the areas of accounting, auditing, tax, and real estate.

LICENSES/CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Public Accountant – State of Oregon #14092

EXPERIENCE

Jan. 2011 – Present

Self Employed, Medford, OR

Owner

- Business administration
- Preparation of Consolidated Financial Statements
- Financial statement presentation and interpretation
- Comparative analysis of financial data
- Corporate and Individual tax return preparation
- Client and project management
- Adherence to professional standards

April 2008 – March 2010

Simpson & Simpson, Los Angeles, CA

Staff Auditor

- Documented processes within government departments and not-for-profit organizations for purposes of assessing internal controls and designing audit procedures. Selected sample data according to audit procedures and requested back-up documentation for review.
- Audited business records to verify the accuracy of transient occupancy tax and gross receipts percentage payments due to the County of Los Angeles.
- Recorded audit results and forwarded to supervisor

Aug. 2006 – April 2007

London & Co., Brentwood, CA

Staff Accountant

- Accounting for investments
- Financial statement analysis, tax projections, and forecasted cash flows for the financial management of clients in the entertainment industry
- Preparation of Corporate, Estate, and Individual tax returns
- Communication with clients, IRS, and Franchise Tax Board

Jan. 2003 – May 2005

Century 21 A-Team

Real Estate Agent

- Assisted clients in searching, selecting, inspecting, and purchasing a home
- Coordinated with buyer, seller, lender, escrow, and title company to ensure transaction closing

EDUCATION

May 2005

California State University Dominguez Hills, Carson CA

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Emphasis: Accounting

(Honors in the Major)

SKILLS

Proficiency with Word, Excel, Fund Accounting and GASB

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants

Oregon Society of Certified Public Accountants

Date: April 18, 2017

To: Mayor and Council

From: Dana Smith

Re: Interim City Recorder Position

Mayor and Council,

After a great deal of thought regarding the position of City Recorder, I have decided to ask you to consider me for this appointment. My initial hesitancy centered on the necessity of my moving from my current location just outside the city limits into Ashland. That circumstance has recently changed, and I could now make a move to reside within city limits.

My hope is that you will consider appointing me Interim City Recorder for the transition period that would have to end no later than June 30, 2017, with the contingency I reside within city limits well before that deadline. Once I met that contingency, I would satisfy the eligibility requirement to fill out the remainder of Barb Christensen's term and would promptly seek Council appointment to fill the vacancy until the next biennial election.

I fully recognize, of course, that some have suggested a Charter change to make the position of City Recorder appointive rather than elective. Either way, I would continue to be interested in serving as City Recorder and would run for the position in the next biennial election if need be.

I have the full support of the current City Recorder on this proposal. She has even pledged her assistance as a volunteer after her departure to help with the transition.

I became a member of the Oregon Association of Municipal Recordors (OAMR) in 2016 and I am in the process of achieving certification as a municipal clerk. I think I would provide a benefit to this position as your Interim City Recorder and look forward to serving this community as I have over the past nine years. I understand the importance of the role of the City Recorder and the support this office provides.

I am fully aware this request is late and understand it may be too late for you to consider. I appreciate your consideration regardless. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana Smith".

Dana Smith
Assistant to the City Recorder

Report of the ad hoc Committee on the City Recorder Position Recommendations to the City Council January 7, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Following a January, 2015, discussion of department head compensation, the Council requested a study session discussion of City Recorder compensation. This was subsequently conjoined with a request from multiple councilors for a discussion of referring to the voters a charter amendment to make the City Recorder an appointed position.

Following the August 31 study session, the Council requested that the mayor appoint an ad hoc committee to study the matter and make a recommendation to the Council. This committee was appointed at the September 15, 2015 business meeting, with the following members:

- Councilor Stefani Seffinger (chair)
- Barbara Christensen, city recorder
- Dave Kanner, city administrator
- Pam Lucas, Budget Committee member
- Brian Almquist, former city administrator

The committee met three times in October, November and December, 2015. Though she provided extremely valuable input at the first meeting, Ms. Christensen excused herself from the second meeting and preferred the role of liaison to the ad hoc Committee.

Please note that the ad hoc committee recommends that its proposed changes to the city recorder position not take effect until the current city recorder's term expires. The ad hoc committee also wishes to acknowledge the excellent work the current city recorder has provided to the citizens of Ashland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The ad hoc committee recommends to the Council that the City would be best served if this position became an appointed position for the following reasons:

1. The city has been fortunate in having qualified candidates elected to this position in the past. There is no guarantee that this will be the case in the future, particularly in light of the pay and benefits and the fact that there are no minimum qualifications for the position. If this position is appointed, qualifications for the position and a selection process can be established to ensure having the best qualified person in the position.
2. The city recorder is an administrative position that makes administrative decisions. Administrative positions should be filled based on the knowledge, skills and abilities of the candidates who apply.
3. As an elected position, only registered voters of the City of Ashland are eligible to hold the position. This limits the number of qualified candidates for this position. As an elected position with a four year term, candidates may not pursue certification as a municipal clerk or

advanced training in this area. Better qualified candidates may be attracted if the position is appointed and has the potential of being a career option.

4. The city recorder position would better fit in with the city management structure if the position were appointed.
5. Work schedule, duties and coordination with other City functions would be more flexible and would be better managed within the administrative structure of city government.
6. The committee feels City government will be just as transparent and open with an appointed recorder as it is with an elected recorder.

Changing the recorder to an appointed position requires voter approval of a charter amendment. Although it has been common practice for Ashland to refer charter amendments in primary and general elections, this is probably done for reasons of cost. A charter amendment can be referred to any election, including a special election if called for by the Council.

Further recommendations

1. The committee recommends that the hiring and selection process be handled administratively with the selected candidate appointed by the mayor with approval by the city council.
2. A formal outline (or job description) of duties and qualifications for the city recorder position should be developed.
3. Wording changes for the charter amendment will be developed by City Attorney Dave Lohman.
4. The committee recommends submitting this to the voters in the May 2016 primary election. Given the significance of this change, the City should refer this to a vote in a high-turnout election. However, if referred in November 2016, the issue stands to be lost in the crush of the many other items (including the many ballot measures) that are sure to be on that ballot.
5. Regardless of whether the position remains elected or becomes appointed, the committee recommends that the Ashland Municipal Code, Chapter 2.08, be amended to remove from the recorder's duties those functions that more properly belong in other departments. If the position remains elected, the committee recommends a charter amendment to remove outdated language and duties in the charter and address minimum qualifications and salary structure.