

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 13

Anthony “Tony” H. O’Rourke

*Gainesville City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

Section 13**ANTHONY H. O'ROURKE****315 N. 98th Ave.****orourketony5@gmail.com****Yakima, WA 98908****509-731-9330 (c)**

February 22, 2016

Colin Baengizer
 Colin Baenziger & Associates
 recruit45@cb-asso.com

Dear Colin,

It is with considerable interest that I submit the attached resume and cover letter as my application for the position of City Manager of Gainesville, Florida.

I have over thirty years of experience in public and private sector management, with particular expertise in financial management, organizational leadership, strategic planning, economic development, public-private partnerships, downtown revitalization, and public safety. I was most recently the City Manager of Yakima, Washington, population 93,000, and formerly managed Coral Springs, Florida, Beaver Creek Resort, Colorado and South Lake Tahoe, California.

I have a strong interest in this position based on my successful track record in organizational transformations and creating a unity of purpose and vision with elected officials, economic development, fiscal stewardship, and partnership with major stakeholders as expressed in the community profile of Gainesville. I believe the following highlights of my public and private sector experience are consistent with the qualifications you are seeking.

Organizational Leadership and Vision Implementation

As the City Manager of Coral Springs, Florida (population 100,000), South Lake Tahoe, California (3.5 million annual visitors), and Yakima, Washington (population 93,000), I have led the transformation of traditional government bureaucracies to ones that “work better, faster, and costs less” by creating a shared vision, strategic plan, and commitment to an entrepreneurial business model. Instead of “government as usual”, Coral Springs, South Lake Tahoe, and Yakima think and act strategically, put customers and employees first, and focus on continuous quality improvement.

- ✓ Awarded the State of Florida Sterling Award for creating a quality-driven, high performance organization, based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria. Once government organizations became eligible for the Malcolm Baldrige Award in 2007, Coral Springs became the first local, state, or national government organization to win. Only one other city has since won this national honor.
- ✓ Through citizen surveys and strategic planning in Coral Springs, Beaver Creek, South Lake Tahoe, and Yakima, I have created a unity of purpose and common vision to transcend differences, focus on greater public purpose, and increase community improvements.

Financial Planning and Management

- ✓ Consistently reduced annual property tax rates in Coral Springs, South Lake Tahoe, and Yakima.
- ✓ Achieved AAA bond upgrade in Coral Springs, and AA in Yakima based on outstanding financial management practices, strong budgetary performance, and development of strong operating reserves, resulting in significant interest cost savings.

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- ✓ Developed Five-Year Financial Plans and Annual Business Plans to achieve core community priorities, business initiatives, key performance metrics, and significant financial results in Coral Springs, Beaver Creek, South Lake Tahoe, and Yakima.
- ✓ Achieved \$29.7 million in current and long-term cost savings in South Lake Tahoe, during the recession, through service consolidation, right sizing, and major labor union concessions. Reduced Beaver Creek Resort's operating expenses 30% during the recession while maintaining quality services and the integrity of a world-class destination brand.
- ✓ Instituted a series of operational and financial measures to eliminate a projected \$2 million annual transit system deficit by optimizing operations and transit routes, while also increasing operating reserves by \$5 million to ensure critical fleet replacement and financial sustainability for 1.5 million annual transit passengers.

Economic Development

- ✓ Initiated Downtown Yakima Master Plan to preserve historic character and heritage, while making downtown more vibrant, safe, and successful with the planned addition of a new \$14 million public plaza, special events, expanded parking, landscaping, marketing, and police bike patrols. Downtown sales tax has grown by 30% in the past two years, twice the city average.
- ✓ Coordinated the redevelopment of a 220 acre former lumber mill and municipal landfill in a socioeconomically distressed area of Yakima. The complex revitalization consisted of major environmental assessment and remediation with the Washington State Department of Ecology, acquisition of right-of-way, economic analysis of appropriate and feasible commercial uses and job creation, and securing \$125 million from the State of Washington to construct internal roads and direct access to the nearby I-82 interstate/highway. The total investment in this brownfield revitalization exceeded \$170 million.
- ✓ Collaborated with major developers in Beaver Creek, Colorado to construct two mixed-use developments valued at \$75 million that consisted of 350,000 square feet of retail, residential, restaurant, parking and public space. The resort's contribution consisted of \$16 million for an outdoor ice rink, outdoor escalators, transportation center, and contribution towards a 530-seat performing arts center.
- ✓ Initiated Beaver Creek Resort's retail and brand enhancement strategy consisting of over \$50 million in capital improvements, increased marketing initiatives, and the development of a signature events roster to energize the resort. The new signature events attracted \$15 million in corporate and television sponsors, and thousands of destination guests, thereby stimulating significant retail, restaurant, lodging and real estate sales. Retail sales were in the top 1% nationally per square foot.
- ✓ Negotiated a 25-year agreement between the City of Coral Springs and the PGA Tour for the City to be the tournament host site for the PGA Honda Classic. The Honda Classic had an estimated five-year present value economic impact of \$37 million on the local economy based upon a study conducted by the University of Florida.
- ✓ Secured a \$29 million public-private hotel/conference center development agreement between the City of Coral Springs and John Q. Hammons Industry, which resulted in a 224 room Marriott Hotel and new 20,000 square foot conference center.

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- ✓ Initiated and collaborated with a Yakima non-profit organization to design, construct, and operate a \$13 million, 120-acre, 19-field and 85,000 square foot indoor sports complex. The City's contribution will be \$5 million but with no operating or maintenance
- ✓ obligations. An independent economic impact study projected the sports complex would generate \$10 million in direct and indirect spending in Yakima at its build-out within five years.

Public Safety

For the past 25 years, the City of Yakima has experienced a high crime rate and a significant presence of gangs and gang crime. Yakima has an environment that contains multiple risk factors for gang involvement, including a culture of poverty, low adult educational attainment, high seasonal unemployment, illegal drug use, and high teen birth rate. To address gang problems the City developed a Gang Free Initiative based on the United States Justice Department Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model to prevent, intervene and suppress gang activity. The City's historical gang free strategies have had marginal results given continued large gang membership, high crime rate and gang-related homicides. During my tenure we have taken a more targeted and aggressive approach to gang mitigation. Examples include:

- ✓ Expansion of the Police Department's Gang Unit from five members to ten to increase gang intelligence and suppression activity. As a result, there has been a substantial reduction in gang crimes and homicide rates.
- ✓ Initiated the purchase of 74 assigned police patrol vehicles at a cost of \$4.7 million to increase police presence and response capacity by 450%. This initiative increased the maximum community police patrol presence from 16 units to 74. Crime has been reduced by 22% since this initiative.
- ✓ Expanded the City's full time Violent Gang Crime Task Force for the investigation, apprehension, and prosecution of violent gang members. Participating law enforcement agencies include: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Marshall Service, Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Attorney's Office, Washington State Department of Corrections, and Yakima Police Gang Units.
- ✓ Enhanced City staffing, funding, and partnerships to focus on targeted gang prevention and intervention strategies to promote positive youth development with youth-serving agencies, schools, street outreach workers, training and employment programs, mental health agencies, and faith-based organizations.

I believe my interpersonal skills, management abilities, and experience is consistent with the qualifications you are seeking. I look forward to discussing this opportunity with you further.

Sincerely,
Anthony H. O'Rourke

Section 13**ANTHONY H. O'ROURKE**315 N. 98th Ave.

Yakima, WA 98908

orourketony5@gmail.com

509-731-9330 (c)

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Over thirty years experience in public and private sector management including strategic and organizational leadership, business planning, financial management, economic and community development, labor relations, transit services, capital improvements, marketing, special events, and public-private partnerships.

SUMMARY OF SKILLS

- Proactive, strategic leader with collaborative style
- Customer-focused, data-driven, and results oriented
- Proven track record of fiscal discipline and cost-saving innovations
- Ability to build strong organizational cultures and shared visions
- Emphasize teamwork and enable others to act
- Positive, approachable, and transparent communication

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

City of Yakima, Washington
City Manager

2012 to 2016

Chief Executive Officer of the largest city in Central Washington (93,000), which serves as the commercial, agricultural and viticulture trade center for 250,000. Founded in 1883, Yakima is a full-service, stand-alone city. Responsible for workforce of 770 and annual budget of \$227 million. Resigned effective January 1, 2016.

Specific Accomplishments:

- Initiated Downtown Master Plan and revitalization strategy to preserve the heritage and character of downtown Yakima, while making downtown more vibrant, safe, active, attractive, and successful. Key strategies included design of a world-class, public-private financed \$14 million public plaza, broader retail mix, new dining, boutique hotel and entertainment opportunities, safer environment, easier and expanded parking, landscaping, marketing, and special events to activate downtown. In past two years, downtown sales tax growth exceeded 30%, twice the city average.
- Coordinated the redevelopment of a 220 acre former lumber mill and municipal landfill in a socioeconomically distressed area of Yakima. The complex revitalization consisted of major environmental assessment and remediation with the Washington State Department of Ecology, acquisition of right-of-way, economic analysis of appropriate and feasible commercial uses and job creation, and securing \$125 million from the State of Washington to construct internal roads and direct access to the nearby I-82 interstate/highway. The total investment in this brownfield revitalization exceeded \$170 million.
- Initiated Citizen Survey and multi-year Strategic Plan, five-year financial plan, and annual Business Plan to identify core community strategic priorities, business initiatives, and key performance measures to align City Council policy and budget decisions to key intended outcomes to achieve significant and sustainable community results.
- Instituted a series of operational and financial measures to eliminate a projected \$2 million annual transit system deficit by optimizing operations and transit routes, while also increasing operating reserves by \$5 million to ensure critical fleet replacement and financial sustainability for 1.5 million annual transit passengers.

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- Addressed the City's deferred infrastructure backlog by gaining City Council and public support for \$81 million in capital improvements including 150 lane miles of road overlay, \$12 million in airport improvements, complete restoration of major downtown corridor, new \$18 million, 72,000 sq. ft. aquatic/fitness center, public plaza, and \$13 million sports complex consisting of 19 fields and 85,000 sq. ft. indoor sports facility. Investments were achieved without tax or fee increases, and \$24 million in public-private funding partnerships.
- Winner of the 2013 National Public Employee Labor Relations Association Pacesetter Award for being the first city in Washington to open a full-service employee health clinic to reduce healthcare cost and enhance employee healthcare. Saved \$317,000 in prescription, lab test, and emergency room costs, as well as, \$3.5 million in future cost based on early detection of 700 cases of chronic and life threatening diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.
- Deployed multiple initiatives, including deployment of two gang units, purchase and assignment of 74 police patrol vehicles, downtown bike patrol, development and partnership in a Federal Violent Crime Taskforce, and enhanced training to achieve a two year Part 1 crime rate reduction of 22% .
- Successfully negotiated 13 separate collective bargaining agreements, with average 4-year terms and 1.27% annual wage adjustment without any required mediation or interest- arbitration.

City of South Lake Tahoe, California
City Manager

2010 to 2012

Chief Executive Officer for a full-service city and destination resort that attracts 3.5 million guests annually. Responsible for a workforce of 200 and annual budget of \$94 million.

Specific Accomplishments:

- Developed a Five-Year Financial Plan that addressed historical structural budget deficits and a five-year projected budget shortfall of \$25 million by transforming the city's unsustainable business model through reduction in staffing, consolidation of departments and services, contracting out, health plan modifications and achieving pension and health care cost sharing contributions from all six City labor unions. Achieved \$29.7 million in permanent cost savings, and a balanced five-year financial plan.
- Initiated a multi-year Strategic Plan and annual Business Plan that resulted in a collaborative City Council, staff, and community commitment to five core strategic priorities, annual business initiatives, and key performance measures to move the community and city organization forward. The plan aligns and links the City's policy, personnel, fiscal, and capital resources with strategic priorities.
- To address the city's outdated capital infrastructure, garnered City Council support for a \$25 million five year capital improvements plan to fix city streets, facilities, and infrastructure, without any tax increase. In the prior 15 years, the city had only invested \$7 million in infrastructure.
- Initiated a managed competition process to evaluate the most cost-effective and customer-focused method to operate key city services. Results included contracting out the city ice arena and recreational services, for annual savings of \$500,000.
- Coordinated a major initiative to enhance the heart of the city's business core by upgrading its appearance and infrastructure. Improvements include \$40 million in complete street enhancements in partnership with Caltrans, \$7 million for a lakefront plaza and amphitheater in partnership with California Tahoe Conservancy, and \$1.5 million in business façade, signage, and streetscape improvements in partnership with local businesses.

Section 13**Beaver Creek, Colorado
Beaver Creek Resort Company – Executive Director****1996 to 2010**

Chief Executive of a private corporation responsible for the governance and management of a world-class alpine resort. Beaver Creek Resort had a market value of \$4.1 billion, 3 million annual guests, and gross annual sales in excess of \$400 million. The Resort Company functions include economic enhancement, transportation, public safety, property maintenance, marketing, special events, environmental quality, capital improvements, finances, strategic planning and design review. Reported to a nine-member Board representing the major stakeholders of the resort.

Specific Accomplishments:

- Initiated Beaver Creek brand enhancement strategies with key commercial and residential stakeholders to ensure a significant and sustainable market advantage for Beaver Creek. Strategies include investing over \$50 million in capital improvements including an outdoor ice rink, escalators, parking, landscaping, signage and transportation systems, in addition to the development of marketing initiatives and special events to generate retail, lodging and real estate demand. Retail sales ranked in top 1% nationally on a per square foot basis. During my fourteen year tenure retail sales grew at an annual rate of 10.3%.
- Transformed the business model of the Beaver Creek Resort Company by reducing resort operating expenses by 36% over a two-year period to address the adverse impact of the national recession, and created a sustainable business model, while preserving the integrity of the Beaver Creek Resort brand and guest experience.
- Played a key role in the private funding and management of the \$15 million Vilar Center for the Arts – the cultural crown jewel of Beaver Creek. Served on the Vilar Center’s Board of Directors for ten years, as well as Chief Executive Officer for three years, responsible for cultural programming, operations, marketing and fundraising.
- Collaborated with major developers in Beaver Creek to construct two mixed-use developments valued at \$75 million and consisting of 350,000 square feet of retail, residential, restaurant, parking and public space. Resort contribution consisted of \$16 million for public improvements.
- Developed a roster of signature events to energize and animate the resort. The signature events included Bon Appétit Magazine Master Chef Classic, The New Yorker on the Slopes, Blues, Brews & BBQ, Beaver Creek Summer Rodeo Series, Arts Festival, Antique Festival, Outdoor Summer Concert Series, and Oktoberfest. Attracted \$15 million in corporate and television sponsors, and tens of thousands of destination guests, thereby stimulating significant retail, restaurant, lodging, and real estate sales.

**City of Tallahassee, Florida
Assistant City Manager****1995 to 1996**

Supported the City Manager in providing executive and strategic leadership for an organization workforce of 2,800, 200,000 customers, and \$350 million operating budget. Responsible for administrative, information and financial services and City Commission strategic initiatives. Directly supervised Finance, General Services, Information Systems Services, Employee Relations and Equal Opportunity.

Specific Accomplishments:

- Directed development of a five-year financial plan adopted by the City Commission that streamlined the City workforce and budget in anticipation of dramatic changes in deregulation, competition and citizen expectations.

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- Coordinated design, evaluation, selection and implementation of \$10 million dollar 800Mhz trunked simulcast emergency radio communication system.

City of Coral Springs, Florida (1989 - 1995)

City Manager

1992 to 1995

Chief Executive Officer for rapid growth community of 100,000 in Southeast Florida (Broward County). Responsible for a workforce of 600 and for a budget of \$56 million.

Specific Accomplishments:

- Implemented a City-wide Total Quality Management initiative to achieve total customer satisfaction by focusing on customer services, leadership, employee empowerment and continuous improvement of the quality and cost of City services. Results included three consecutive property tax reductions, \$14 million in operating fund savings and 92% customer satisfaction rating. Based on these results the City was awarded the State of Florida's Sterling Award, the first city in America to win a Malcolm Baldrige sanctioned quality award. In 2007 the City of Coral Springs became the first and only city in America to win the Malcolm Baldrige Award.
- Initiated development of a non-profit Economic Development Foundation, comprised of private and public sector representatives to foster the diversification of the City's economy and attract value-added businesses. Thirteen companies relocated to the City representing 1,863 new jobs and \$12 million in economic benefits.
- Negotiated for the City to be the host site for the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Men's American's Red Clay Tennis Championship. The twenty-year ATP tournament agreement included a 16 court facility and clubhouse, 4,500 seat stadium, national and international TV coverage, and revenue from ticket, parking and concession sales.
- Negotiated agreement for the City to be the host site of the PGA Tour Honda Classic starting in 1996. The twenty-five year agreement includes the development of a Tournament Player's Club championship 18-hole golf course and a \$29 million hotel/conference center.

City of Coral Springs, Florida
Assistant City Manager

1989 to 1992

City of Richardson, Texas
Assistant to the City Manager

1985 to 1989

City of Richardson, Texas
Administrative Assistant to the City Manager

1983 to 1985

City of Dallas, Texas
Administrative Assistant to the Deputy City Manager and Fire Chief

1981 to 1983

Isla Vista, California
Community Development Director

1977 to 1979

EDUCATION

Cornell University
Masters in Urban and Regional Planning, 1981
Concentration in Urban Development and Management
Professional Masters Scholarship 1979-81

University of California, Santa Barbara
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, 1977
Magna Cum Laude Honors
Outstanding Community Service Award

References Available Upon Request

Candidate Introduction

Section 13**ANTHONY O'ROURKE**

EDUCATION

Master of Urban and Regional Planning, Cornell University
 Bachelor of Arts and Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara

EXPERIENCE

City Manager, Yakima, Washington	2012-2016
City Manager, South Lake Tahoe, California	2010-2012
Executive Director, Beaver Creek Resort Company, Colorado	1996-2010
Assistant City Manager, Tallahassee, Florida	1995-1996
City Manager, Coral Springs, Florida	1992-1995
Assistant to the City Manager, Richardson, Texas	1983-1989
Assistant to Deputy City Manager, Dallas, Texas	1981-1982

BACKGROUND

The City of Yakima, Washington is the state's ninth largest city within a very socio-economically diverse population of 93,000. The City is the county seat and is the central trade area of Central Washington. Yakima is a major agricultural center noted for its apples, cherries, wine and hops. It is home to two major hospitals, a private medical school, Central Washington State Fair, and several major event and cultural venues.

The Yakima City budget is \$228 million, of which the general fund budget is \$73 million. The City has 770 employees of which 14 reported directly to me.

The three most significant issues facing Yakima are:

- Public Safety – Yakima historically has had significant property and gang related crime. The public consistently ranks public safety as its most important concern and priority. During the past two years, through a series of public safety and gang initiatives, the crime rate has dropped 22%.
- Infrastructure – Yakima has not kept pace with investment and rehabilitation of its roads, facilities, and recreation infrastructure. During the past three years, the City has invested \$80 million in resurfacing 150 lane miles of roads, upgrading facilities, and developing new recreational assets with private partners and without any tax increase.
- Economic Development – With 21% of the population below the federal poverty standard, and 45% receiving some form of government assistance, there is a great

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need for higher paying jobs and economic diversification in Yakima. During the past three years, the City has made significant progress in revitalizing its downtown and retail growth, expanding commercial air service, garnering \$125 million in state funds to create a major 220 acre business park, and investing \$11 million to revitalize a major business corridor.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

I am interested in becoming the City Manager of Gainesville because it represents an ideal professional and personal match. Gainesville offers me the professional opportunity to share my public and private sector expertise and successful track record in transforming traditional government bureaucracies to an entrepreneurial customer driven business model focused on thinking and acting proactively and strategically, putting customers first, empowering employees to act, and committing to continuous quality and service improvement. On a personal perspective it also offers a great geographical location to enjoy my many outdoor recreational interests.

I am very excited about the opportunity to assist the City in transforming its culture, living within its means and developing with the City Commission, community, and organization a strategic plan to achieve significant and measurable results in the areas of economic development, financial health, public-private partnerships and customer service.

I believe my over thirty years of success in both the public and private sector, in particular in the area of customer service results as exemplified by Coral Springs, Florida being the first city recipient of the Florida Governor's Sterling Award for outstanding customer service and high performance and the first city in America to win the national Malcolm Baldrige Award is evidence of the qualifications and success the City of Gainesville is seeking.

My management style is proactive, customer focused, collaborative, strategic, and results oriented. My staff would describe me as a strong leader who is honest, empowering, focused, innovative, and decisive. They would say I empower them and provide them with the trust, latitude and authority to do their jobs. In return, they know I expect results.

Elected officials would characterize me as very strategic, customer-driven a team builder, visionary, focused, and a good communicator. I maintain good, on-going communications with elected officials to ensure smooth operations and no surprises. I am able to handle stress and conflict very well.

My primary strengths are the entrepreneurial style, customer focus, and varied experience I bring to local government. I am able to bring private sector practices to the public sector to make it work faster, better, and less costly. I reduce rules, regulations,

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and red-tape that can hamper innovation, creativity, and results. I empower employees to focus on customers and results. I am strategically driven and put business plans in place with measurable indicators to monitor and measure community and organizational progress.

My greatest weaknesses are that I can be impatient, too frank, and too direct. My desire to achieve significant and sustainable results is problematic to those who want to maintain "government as usual" and the status quo.

I use a number of performance metrics to determine the effectiveness and success of my organization. First and foremost, I conduct annual citizen and employee surveys and focus groups to get a representative and scientific measure of needs, expectations, and service ratings. I like to use the motto, "Rate Us, Tell Us, Help Us" to encourage customer and employee feedback. This data is critical to meeting customer and employee needs and enhancing organizational service delivery and results.

Financially, I develop quarterly monitoring reports to ensure balanced budgets, and Five-Year Financial Plans to ensure long term fiscal health and plan for needed capital and operational investments.

Operationally, I use private and public sector benchmarks and best practices to identify optimal cycle and response times and cost reduction opportunities.

Strategically, I include key intended outcomes in the multi-year strategic plan and annual business plan to measure, and monitor, community and organizational progress.

As the City Manager of Coral Springs, Florida (population 100,000), South Lake Tahoe, California (3.5 million annual visitors), and Yakima, Washington (population 93,000), I led the transformation of traditional government bureaucracies to ones that "work better, faster, and costs less" by creating a shared vision, strategic plan, and commitment to an entrepreneurial business model. Instead of "government as usual", Coral Springs, South Lake Tahoe, and Yakima think and act strategically, put customers and employees first, and focus on continuous quality improvement. As a result of these efforts Coral Springs was awarded the State of Florida Sterling Award for creating a quality-driven, high performance organization, based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria. Once government organizations became eligible in 2007 for the Malcolm Baldrige Award, Coral Springs became the first local, state, or national government organization to win. Only one other city has since won this honor. Less than 100 businesses and non-profit organizations in the United States have won this award since its inception in 1988.

In 2015, the National Civic League awarded the City of Yakima the All-America City Award for creating a community partnership to address at-risk minority youth challenges, in particular, those susceptible to gang lifestyles.

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My biggest professional mistake was informing the Yakima City Council in confidence, on September 1, 2015, that I intended to leave the City of Yakima on January 1, 2016 subject to the City Council keeping my plans confidential until after the November 3, 2015 election. My decision to resign my position was due to a United States Federal Court decision to vacate the terms of all City Council members as a result of a case claiming Yakima's at-large voting system violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. As a consequence of this judicial decision, the majority of the City Council I had been hired by and successfully worked for, were no longer going to be the City Council. The United States Supreme Court heard the City's appeal on the US District Court decision on December 8, however, the Supreme Court's decision will not remedy the vacating of the City Council. Instead of a clean, professional transition, several Council members violated my confidential agreement and caused me professional and personal damages.

I have, unfortunately, had to fire employees for both misconducts and poor performance. Unless an employee has done something illegal or grossly unethical, I give them the opportunity to correct performance deficiencies. I make sure they understand my expectations and goals for them. I give them three to six months to demonstrate progress and better performance. Many improve, however, for those who did not, I let them go. I make sure the departure is professional and not degrading. When warranted, I offer them a severance package to bridge the financial gap to their next job.

I have no remorse terminating employees based on giving them the opportunity to improve. I give them the time, training, and resources to improve.

The challenges I see facing Gainesville are:

- Creating a citizen-centered culture and organizational business model that establishes a unity of purpose and common brand, based upon the needs and expectations of its customers, and committed to the highest level of customer service.
- Implementing economic development initiatives that will create quality, living wage jobs, a diverse economic base, and long-term economic vitality.
- Building upon the current downtown revitalization to achieve a stronger retail and housing mix, new infrastructure, and a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Enhancing neighborhood partnerships and civic engagement by listening to, understanding, and fostering mutual respect with the community's diverse population.

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- Ensuring long-term financial vitality and sustainability by controlling personnel costs, developing new revenue sources, leveraging public-private partnerships, lowering the debt burden, and increasing operating reserve fund balances.

During the first six months in Gainesville, I would propose the following work plan.

Phase I: Listening and Understanding (60 days)

The first phase of any transition is to first listen and learn, and not presume what the needs and expectations of the citizens, community and organization are. To that end, I would request a citizen survey be conducted to understand the needs, expectations, challenges, and overall assessment of the community.

In addition to a citizen survey, I would request an employee survey also be conducted to understand employee perspectives, concerns, organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement. Topics covered by the survey would include job satisfaction, effective communication, staff development and executive leadership.

I would recommend each Commission member make a list of 10 to 15 individuals and/or organizational members I should meet with to get a better understanding of the variety and breadth of issues in both the community and city organization. Examples of possible individuals and organizations would include business leaders, non-profit organizations, residential associations, educational leaders, recreational organizations, religious leaders, other governmental agencies, employee groups, union leaders, etc.

My learning and listening would not end after this initial 90 days. I would consistently get feedback from the community and organization, as well as have weekly meetings with City Commission members and department directors. These individual meetings are critical to keep a pulse of the community and organization and to ensure a constant exchange of information, ideas, and plans. I am a big proponent of “no surprises” and consistent communication would minimize the chances of “surprises” and maximize collaboration and alignment in critical operations, projects, and issues.

Phase II: Data Analysis – Learning What the Facts Are (60 days)

Once the information and data is collected from the community and organization assessment phase, I would meet with the City Commission to develop a Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan would be the collaborative result of the Citizen Survey and City Commission’s assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the community and organization. The Strategic Plan offers direction and focus on issues that are critically important to improving Gainesville. The Plan would set priorities, establish strategies and most importantly, include performance measures to monitor and measure Plan progress. The Strategic Plan will require the Board and staff to consider the Plan when developing policies, delivering services, and processing requests for fiscal resources.

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Upon the Commission's review and modification, the Strategic Plan would be brought back to the City Commission for formal adoption.

Phase III: Alignment (60 days)

Upon the City Commission adopting a Strategic Plan, I would focus on aligning the Commission's strategic priorities and key intended outcomes with the organizational culture and structure. The following critical steps outline how I would move words to actions and ensure alignment of the City's policies, budget, departments, and staff work plans to the City Commission's Strategic Plan.

- Create an Annual Business Plan with specific, action-oriented goals, work activities, and performance measures for every City department and employee aligned with the Strategic Plan.
- Focus City Commission policy initiatives and discussions on the Strategic Priorities.
- Link senior management and employee performance evaluations and rewards with the Strategic Priorities.
- Monitor the Strategic Priorities performance measures to hold ourselves accountable for making measurable progress in achieving the strategic commitments.
- Communicate quarterly to the City Commission and the public through a Strategic Plan Progress Report.
- Periodically review the Strategic Plan with the City Commission to ensure that it continues to focus City government on the issues most important to the community.

In addition to the development and alignment of a Strategic Plan, I would begin efforts to transform the organization culture by educating, training and rewarding staff on the following core values: demonstrate a passion for customer service, empower people closest to the customer to continuously improve the organization's quality and services, commit "everyday, in every way," to providing better, faster and cheaper customer services, and ensure City actions reflect these core organizational values. To achieve this transformation requires the political will of the City Commission and senior leadership, and a willingness to weather the forming, storming, performing and norming stages of organizational transformation.

In 35 years of public and private sector work I have received very positive newspaper, radio, and television media coverage. However, in the past six months in Yakima I have been critically portrayed by the local newspaper, Yakima Herald Republic, for opposing a proposal to locate a homeless shelter in a predominantly low income, Hispanic based neighborhood. Opposition was based on a clear violation of two prior legal precedents and violation of the City's land-use development regulations. More suitable and permitted homeless locations were rejected by the applicant.

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By far the worst coverage I have received is based on how the same newspaper reporter has misinformed and distorted the coverage of my intention to resign from the City effective January 1, 2016 subject to the City Council keeping my plan confidential. Violation of this confidentiality would require a severance award to offset any personal and professional damages.

Compounding the negative publicity is the fact the newspaper reporter has been very biased and sensational. His journalism has been unethical since our police department arrested him for a DUI violation in December 2014. Despite meetings and complaints to his editorial supervisors, he continues to cover City Hall and police matters in a very bias and sensational manner.

I have provided the City with a full disclosure of my background to ensure nothing would embarrass the City if it became public knowledge.

I have used multiple social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) to communicate with residents and businesses about City issues, events, and activities. In addition, I have supported the development of robust web sites to maximize relevant public information access to the community.

I do not expect anyone from the Yakima community, or any other community I have worked for, to contact the City of Gainesville with any disparaging information about me, with the exception of a Bruce Smith, a publisher of a small free weekly business paper in Yakima. Mr. Smith consistently attacks elected and appointed officials in Yakima and is a strong proponent of replacing the Council-Manager form of local government for a strong Mayor form. He is not civil or ethical in his behavior.

In my spare time I enjoy reading, watching movies, traveling, spending time with my family, and enjoying outdoor activities that includes my golden retriever, Murphy.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Proactive / forward thinking
- Innovative
- Focused / results oriented
- Strong sense of humor
- Impatient
- Customer driven

Section 13**ANTHONY O'ROURKE**

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

On September 1, 2015, I informed the Yakima City Council of my interest to leave Yakima on January 1, 2016, due to a United States Federal Court decision to vacate the terms of all City Council members as a result of a case claiming that Yakima's at-large voting system violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. As a consequence, the majority of the City Council I had been hired by, and successfully worked with, were no longer going to be part of the City Council. The City has appealed the U.S. District Court decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court heard the appeal on December 8th and is not expected to announce its decision until late spring 2016. Unfortunately, the appeal won't remedy the vacating of the City Council terms.

CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation at the City of Yakima is \$180,000 plus I receive a monthly vehicle allowance.

Section 13

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
ANTHONY H. O'ROURKE**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Yakima County, WA	No Records Found
El Dorado County, CA	No Records Found
Eagle County, CO	No Records Found
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Washington	No Records Found
California	Records maintained by county of residence
Colorado	No Records Found
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Yakima County, WA	No Records Found
El Dorado County, CA	No Records Found
Eagle County, CO	No Records Found
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Washington	No Records Found
California	No Records Found
Colorado	No Records Found
Florida	*September 1993 – Libel, Slander Law Suit filed against the City of Coral Springs including Mr. O'Rourke in his capacity as City Manager <i>Disposition</i> = September 1995, Case Closed
	<i>*See next page for candidate explanation of record found</i>

Motor Vehicle

Washington	No Records Found
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**Background Check Summary for
ANTHONY H. O'ROURKE**

Credit	Excellent
Bankruptcy	No Records Found
Education	Confirmed
Employment	Confirmed

From: Tony O'Rourke [mailto:torourke@cityofslt.us]
To: Kathryn Knutson
Subject: Re: Background Check Record Found that Requires an Explanation

I and the City of Coral Springs, Florida where I was the City Manager were sued for defamation by the City's former litigation attorneys because they over billed the city for legal services and committed wire fraud. The City of Coral Springs and I prevailed in that case on a summary judgment effective September 1995.

Tony

Section 13

**Background Check Summary for
ANTHONY H. O'ROURKE
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Anthony O'Rourke

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No x
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No x
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No x
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No x
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No x
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No x
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No x
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No x
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account?
Yes No x
10. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes x No In 1992 when I was the Assistant City Manager of Coral Springs, FL I had an inappropriate relationship with a co-worker. I disclosed this matter to the Coral Springs City Commission prior to be appointed the City Manager of Coral Springs in 1993.
11. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
Defendant along with the City of Coral Springs in a Federal lawsuit in 1994 by a former city attorney that was dismissed on summary judgment by the Federal Court in Ft.Lauderdale, Florida

Attested to: 

Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to kknutson@ch-assp.com or via fax to

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

Dave Ettl – Former Council Member, Yakima, WA 509-949-6931

Mr. Ettl met Mr. O’Rourke during the interview process in 2012. Mr. O’Rourke impressed the Council with a list of things he wanted to accomplish in Yakima. This list included the collection of citizen input through surveys and the completion of a five year plan. The Council voted unanimously to hire him and he has completed the list, one item at a time. He can set a vision and execute a master plan based on community input.

Mr. O’Rourke did an excellent job. He was enjoyable to work with and accomplished a great deal. He took a City that was inert for over 30 years and brought about many exciting and excellent changes.

Mr. O’Rourke made good decisions when hiring staff and also when promoting employees from within. The Council was very pleased with him in this regard. Mr. Ettl did not agree on one hire, but in general he worked diligently with Human Resources to hire the right individuals for the right position.

Mr. O’Rourke is an intelligent man with a diverse background. He worked in Texas, Florida, Colorado, and has some private sector experience. He worked at a ski resort with a high end clientele who expect customer service. His background made him sensitive to the public. He is an effective decision maker, though he could listen to more input. He worked with the Council to do great things.

One thing Mr. O’Rourke did well was to help the Council consider all of the options available. Because of his enthusiasm and vision, he helped the Council look beyond the status quo and see what could be. They completed some fairly big projects and were working on more when he left. He does not babysit the status quo; he is best suited to improving the community.

Mr. O’Rourke attended all the typical community and civic events. He is very affable. Sometimes he is assertive but that is a desired quality in a leader. His style and good humor created an enjoyable working environment. He is an excellent presenter and communicator. He helps the public understand the big picture.

Yakima residents rated the city lower than the visitors did. Many people cling to memories of the past. The citizen survey revealed concerns about the quality of the downtown. The Council knew it was a problem but did not know how to fix it. Mr. O’Rourke had experience and led the process based on citizen input and need. He put together a recruiting tool to gather ideas. He selected a consulting firm and developed a plan to put a plaza in the downtown area. The plaza is not without controversy from residents who did not follow the process and do not want to lose 200 parking spaces, but for everyone involved it was a great process. He truly included the public and finalized a world class design. Yakima had a negative perception problem, which he resolved. They have a real opportunity now and he deserves credit for spearheading that effort.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

The previous City Manager had a number of contingency funds but did not use the budget to its full capacity because he was extremely conservative. Mr. O’Rourke used the budget to achieve more than they thought possible. He suggested using contingency funds as a debt service to repair streets and accomplish other goals. He has an excellent command of the budget process; it became more understandable and less cumbersome. He did an excellent job.

Mr. O’Rourke had a weekly follow up with the Council members. They always knew the status of projects because he cycled the information in front of them. It enabled him to stay on task, nothing fell through the cracks.

The consulting group they hired told them the plaza would be controversial and suggested they have a citizen group be the point on the project. They followed the recommendation but the citizen group failed to execute. A number of residents do not understand the vision and worry about having to walk an extra block to a restaurant.

An ACLU lawsuit was filed against Yakima in relation to their form of government. Four of the Council Members decided not to run for reelection in light of this lawsuit. Mr. O’Rourke decided to look for a different opportunity because of the controversial roll over in the Council. When Mr. O’Rourke told the Council he hoped to find a new position by the end of the year he asked if he could make the announcement personally. However, someone in the meeting leaked the information to the press. A community group that is against the Manager/Council form of government used the information to create a controversy where one did not exist. Mr. O’Rourke and the Council had even developed an agreement that if he did not have a new job he would stay on and mentor the City Attorney who was to serve as the Interim City Manager.

Mr. O’Rourke was exactly what Yakima needed to come to life, though some portions of the community resist change. In order to entice residents to the downtown area he set aside part of the budget to fund downtown activities. In the past few years the sales tax from downtown businesses are up significantly compared to the rest of the City. He had creative ideas. They were on an exciting path that was disrupted by the ACLU lawsuit. Mr. Ettl believes the lawsuit will be overturned by the Supreme Court.

Mr. O’Rourke was vetted thoroughly before he was hired in Yakima and nothing controversial was discovered. He enjoyed only accomplishment and success in Yakima.

An Editor at the Yakima Business Journal orchestrated and lost a campaign to change Yakima to a strong mayor form of government before Mr. O’Rourke was hired. Because his ultimate goal is to change the government, and he has an agreement with the person who wants to be the strong Mayor, he has been very dishonest. He might disagree with this reference but his motives should be considered.

Mr. O’Rourke impressed everyone with his energy and enthusiasm, and he hit the ground running. He fixed roads that had not been touched in 20 years. He generated public/private partnerships, a new aquatic center, the downtown revitalization, and a gateway into the community. He worked

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

with the State Department of Ecology to develop a large parcel of land. His tenure was a fun, interesting, exciting, and an accomplishing period of time.

Mr. Ettl would hire Mr. O’Rourke in a heartbeat. He woke the community up to their possibilities. He was very good for Yakima.

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Very smart,
- Excellent communicator,
- Creative,
- Innovative,
- Helped Yakima achieve its potential, and
- Efficient.

Strengths: Ability to set a vision; affable; very communicative; tremendous memory for facts; great at presentations; has a real command of the subject matter and can talk about any issue.

Weaknesses: He told the Council during the interview process that they might have to rein him in, but they would never have to get him going, which was the case. He is a little zealous and got ahead of the Council once or twice. However, a manager is much easier to rein in than to motivate. Also, because a former city manager had been in place for 30+ years they were used to doing things in a certain way and he may not have been as sensitive to the entrenched approach. His drive to accomplish goals was a strength and a weakness. It brushed some people the wrong way but those who worked closely with him found it refreshing.

Sean Hawkins – Economic Development Manager, Yakima, WA 509-406-0695

Mr. Hawkins has known Mr. O’Rourke since 2012. They worked closely together and developed a personal friendship based on similar outdoor activity interests that they share.

Mr. O’Rourke certainly has a charger type personality. He clears through the bureaucracy to accomplish goals. The town was stagnant before him; he shook things up and accomplished a tremendous amount.

The Public Works and Human Resource Directors were hired by Mr. O’Rourke and are doing an excellent job. The Community Development Director for planning did not last more than 18 months but that was not Mr. O’Rourke’s fault. Community feedback indicated that residents wanted a philosophical approach to planning, but once the new Director began to implement this approach there was serious pushback from residents.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

The best quality Mr. O’Rourke has is his focus on moving the community forward by developing a strategic plan with Council based on resident input. He is very strategic and once a plan is created and approved, he fights for it.

Whether Mr. O’Rourke is speaking to a small group of 10 or a Chamber Luncheon with 400 attendees, he does well. He is very accessible to the media and had a weekly radio show. He gave his cell phone number to residents so they could call if they had concerns. He responded to every email whether the message was positive or negative. Yakima has a number of public events and he always attended. He met with residents and was available to everyone 24/7.

Mr. O’Rourke had a weekly meeting with employees where he covered the status of projects and assignments. He is out in front of the organization and has great leadership skills. What they accomplished in Yakima could not have been done without him.

One of the most significant projects Mr. O’Rourke led was the downtown project which included the construction of a public plaza for events, activities, and gatherings. He worked very diligently and they have gathered \$12 million of the \$14 million dollars they need. Residents against the plaza thought they could stop it, but Mr. O’Rourke kept everyone focused on the goals and they have a high chance of success.

Yakima only financed items when they had the cash in hand to pay for them. Mr. O’Rourke has a different perspective and financed improvements desired by community through bonds. He has an excellent financial background.

Because he is very precise in his approach, employees knew exactly what information was needed rather than wasting time completing numerous reports. His precision allows him to be timely in completing assignments.

Yakima had not done anything for 30 years so every project they worked on was controversial. Mr. O’Rourke’s idea to have officers drive police cars home at night was controversial even though the union was willing to forego raises for two years to finance the proposal. Residents have a different perspective of their neighborhood when they see that an officer lives in the community. The downtown plaza and soccer projects were controversial but it brings out the best in Mr. O’Rourke. He moves the community forward and helps Council see what change is about. They cannot please everyone, so they have to be strong.

Mr. Hawkins did not investigate Mr. O’Rourke’s past but he has not been involved in anything controversial in Yakima. Yakima had a big turnover in the Council and many of the newly elected officials have no experience in the public sector. He could have stayed in Yakima and would have worked well with the new Council but he resigned. The residents who are against the plaza project might have a different opinion of Mr. O’Rourke. Residents who do not want change always create a challenge for leadership. Many residents are unhappy that he resigned.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

If a community wants a status quo manager, Mr. O’Rourke is not your man. If they want someone to achieve their goals, he will fight for them. He wants to help communities move forward. The staff really enjoyed working with him because he communicated so well, which increased morale. He handles controversial situations and has good experience to draw from. He brought knowledge from around the country to influence different projects. If a community has projects they want completed, Mr. O’Rourke will do a great job.

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Good sense of humor,
- Very focused,
- Very charismatic,
- Very strong willed,
- Good energy, and
- Very passionate.

Strengths: Great communicator in speaking and writing; rare ability to take a complex situation and describe it in a way that the public can understand; genuine and passionate about change; always looking for new ways to work.

Weaknesses: Mr. O’Rourke’s charge forward style irritated some who were used to having their egos massaged by the former manager. The product of change is that you cannot always make everyone happy.

Maureen Adkison – Council Member, Yakima, WA 509-965-2975

Ms. Adkison has known Mr. O’Rourke since 2012. They have a wonderful relationship. He was very open and met weekly with every Council member. He always listened to what they had to say. He responded to suggestions, questions, and always followed through.

Mr. O’Rourke did a tremendous job. The community was completely stagnant when he was hired. He told the Council that they would have to slow him down and he took them to a different place. They have a better vision, their economy has improved, and the downtown is enhanced. He has a strong vision which was much appreciated.

The finance and public works director Mr. O’Rourke hired are great. He prefers to hire from within. He made key moves that have been very effective. Not everyone agreed with Mr. O’Rourke’s decisions but in general they were very good. He was very involved. His wife sold real estate and he joined the rotary club. He is a very ardent outdoorsman. He had a high profile in the community and never acted in a way that embarrassed the Council or hurt the community.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

During City Council meetings Mr. O’Rourke related well to the public and he is very responsive to their needs. When residents came to the podium with questions, he took notes and then followed through. He is an innovative change agent.

Mr. O’Rourke based the budget on priorities. He reorganized the departments to free up money that could be used in other ways. He kept an eye on the budget and worked closely with finance.

In 2013 the roads were in severe disrepair and had potholes as big as sinkholes. The Council asked Mr. O’Rourke to address the issue. By spring they were redoing miles of road with a four year plan to replace them all. He moved quickly to complete this massive undertaking. The work was completed at night to avoid disruptions, which the community appreciated.

One thing Mr. O’Rourke did was let the Council members dream. They could bring any idea to him and he replied that he was not sure if it was possible but he would look into it. He was open to good ideas and supported the elected officials.

Yakima had some significant projects during Mr. O’Rourke’s tenure but nothing was controversial. He did not do anything that made the front page of the paper. When they hired him the media thoroughly investigated his background and found nothing of concern.

Ms. Adkison does not know why Mr. O’Rourke resigned but if she had to guess, the Council changed significantly after an election. In addition, there was at least one Council member who did not support him. He might have felt both he and the City will be better served through his resignation. When you have a strong personality and are in a high profile position, like Mr. O’Rourke, you have detractors.

Ms. Adkison would hire Mr. O’Rourke and did not want him to leave. She enjoyed every interaction that she had with both him and his family. He will be missed in Yakima.

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Intelligent,
- Aggressive,
- Forward thinking,
- Open to good ideas,
- Supportive and responsive, and
- Strong character.

Strengths: Vision; very smart; related incredibly well with others; incredible breadth of information; strong presence.

Weaknesses: He is aggressive and may push the envelope a little bit in that the Council thought he moved too fast and on his own. He did not often ask for help which may be a weakness in some cases. However, he was exactly what Yakima needed.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

Verlynn Best – Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce, Yakima, WA 509-248-2021

Ms. Best met Mr. O’Rourke in 2012. She is affiliated with the City through the business community. She supports the City in their goals that correlate with commerce.

Mr. O’Rourke is an excellent manager who was a catalyst for Yakima. He had to make changes that are not always easy in a community like theirs. He initiated numerous projects that are beneficial to the community. He follows a task through from conception to completion.

They have a great rapport. Ms. Best likes Mr. O’Rourke from both a personal and professional perspective. He is very intelligent and business savvy. He has integrity, is hardworking, and determined.

The Police Chief hired by Mr. O’Rourke is incredible. He came from Chicago and has done an excellent job. The Economic Development Director has also made a significant impact in the community. In general Mr. O’Rourke’s decisions are always good.

Mr. O’Rourke led many faceted projects in the community. He is innovative, a change agent, and he maintains an organization at a high performance level. He managed operations at the appropriate level.

During a public meeting Mr. O’Rourke shared his cell phone number with the audience and encouraged residents to call him with questions or concerns. When a client called Ms. Best with permitting or other City issues she gave them Mr. O’Rourke’s number and he always took care of them. He was very vested, passionate, and concerned about the community.

One project that Mr. O’Rourke led was the park expansion. He helped purchase property to build a soccer complex which will partially open in the spring. He was the driving force behind the project. In terms of finance Mr. O’Rourke has an excellent skillset. He always completes tasks in a timely manner.

The plaza was a game changer because it showed residents a different way to accomplish goals. Because residents are ultra conservative the plaza has been controversial. Nothing in Mr. O’Rourke’s background would embarrass an employer should the press investigate his past.

Yakima had a city manager in place for 32 years before Mr. O’Rourke, which is unheard of and indicates how residents feel about change. Mr. O’Rourke is dynamic and energetic. Some in the community complained about the changes he brought to the community but Ms. Best never saw any problems with Mr. O’Rourke’s performance or leadership.

Ms. Best would hire Mr. O’Rourke in a heartbeat. He is a good man and an excellent manager. She and others are heartbroken that he left because he accomplished so much.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Professional,
- Smart,
- Business savvy,
- Ambitious,
- Creative, and
- Personable.

Strengths: Organizational skills; follow through; knows how to get things done.

Weaknesses: If he has any it would be that he came into an ultra-conservative community and could have done more community messaging.

Jeff Cutter – City Attorney, Yakima, WA 509-728-4307

Mr. Cutter was involved in the process to hire Mr. O’Rourke in 2012. Mr. Cutter is currently the Interim City Manager in Yakima. They had a great relationship and enjoyed a mutual respect.

Mr. O’Rourke is a hard charger and he takes his position very seriously. He is very sharp and is completely focused on needs in the community. He identifies issues and solutions quickly. He made some hiring decisions that Mr. Cutter did not agree with. Based on the nature of the personalities that came in Mr. Cutter is not sure if a thorough background check was conducted.

Mr. O’Rourke came to Yakima and identified areas where the city was truly lacking. He is experienced and can quickly and skillfully assess conditions. He found internal difficulties that needed attention. He initiated citizen and employee surveys using a national tool to measure Yakima against other cities. The Council was not excited about the results but it provided information that they are using to determine what the strategic priorities should be. He has inherent knowledge to see what is going on and where change is most effective.

Mr. O’Rourke was involved in the Rotary Club and service groups. He met with the right people to understand the essence of the community and where they wanted to go. He engaged with the public and personally knew them. He is very direct and always delivers the message that he believes is true whether the audience wants to hear it or not. For the most part Mr. O’Rourke kept everyone informed.

The downtown plaza is a contested issue, some residents want it and some do not. Mr. O’Rourke brought in a consultant to conduct a thorough analysis. He embraced the recommendations and pursued them heavily both with staff and the community. He formed a team of employees to analyze possible solutions and address the financial aspects of the design.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

Mr. O’Rourke has an extremely good understanding of finance and how it works. However, he may have a tendency to drive his goals and force certain financial situations with respect to available budget and resources because he believes that he is going to achieve the desired outcome. As the interim manager, Mr. Cutter feels some issues were oversold by Mr. O’Rourke.

Mr. O’Rourke completed tasks in a timely fashion and held the staff accountable in meeting deadlines. He developed a very strong rapport with every council member, even the ones who did not like his approach. He kept the momentum going amongst the staff and engaged the Council to drive objectives forward. He was patient with realistic problems but also expected staff to find solutions, which was very positive in terms of management style.

Personnel issues were controversial. Mr. O’Rourke dealt directly with union representation and made arrangements without the participation of the department heads because he saw himself as the best person to negotiate. While the agreements greatly benefitted both the police and fire departments, his approach created challenges for the department heads. They might have a different perspective of him. Nothing in his background would concern an employer.

The elected officials and most in the community recognize that Yakima needed change. Mr. O’Rourke brought change in a big way. However, a city manager who comes in as a change maker typically does not enjoy a long tenure. Mr. O’Rourke was not run out of town, but his effectiveness was limited so Mr. Cutter suspects that his resignation was mutually agreed upon. Some Council Members strongly supported Mr. O’Rourke and some did not appreciate his style.

If Mr. Cutter had a City where Yakima was in 2012 he would hire Mr. O’Rourke as its manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Extremely intelligent,
- Driven,
- Fair,
- Cares about and supports employees,
- Aggressively pursues goals, and
- Very active in his role.

Strengths: Hard charger; focused; very smart; identifies issues and solutions quickly.

Weaknesses: He has so much passion for what he wants to accomplish that at times he overlooks the opportunity to include staff in the process. Usually his technique works very well but at times it creates difficulties.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

Connie Mendoza – Human Resource Director, Yakima, WA 509-728-3551

Ms. Mendoza worked with the fire and police departments in an administrative capacity when Mr. O’Rourke was hired in 2012. She became the Human Resource Director in 2015.

In terms of job performance Mr. O’Rourke was great. They worked very well together. Mr. O’Rourke only hires department heads, the rest of the employees are hired through a civil service process with competitive testing. His decisions both in general and when hiring are good.

Mr. O’Rourke is innovative, a change agent, and he maintains an organization at a high performance level. He kept employees informed through a weekly meeting. He is both a leader and a manager; he utilizes the skillset needed for the situation. Some circumstances call for management while others require leadership.

Union leaders questioned the hiring practices and expressed a desire to have more input in the hiring decisions. Mr. O’Rourke has experience working with different unions. He asked the Chief Examiner and Ms. Mendoza to meet with him. They came to a good understanding of the process and determined how the union could be more involved. Rather than waiting for the Union to file a grievance, he brought them together to collaborate.

Mr. O’Rourke is customer service oriented and he solves problems. He seems to have good financial skills. He accomplishes tasks given to him in a timely manner.

Mr. O’Rourke went against the advice of the Police Chief in a personnel matter, which became controversial. Also, the downtown plaza project has become controversial because some citizen groups feel that the money should be spent helping the homeless in their community.

Ms. Mendoza did not run a background check on Mr. O’Rourke when he was hired. She saw a newspaper article about a verbal resignation or intent to resign that was withdrawn. His departure from Yakima was a mutual agreement between him and the Council. The Police Chief might have a different opinion of Mr. O’Rourke than the one expressed in this reference.

Ms. Mendoza would hire Mr. O’Rourke. He was great to work with and she feels honored to know him. She is very appreciative of the exceptional opportunity he gave her.

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Intelligent,
- Easy to work with, and
- Makes quick decisions.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

Strengths: Easy to talk to; understanding; sympathetic to the needs of employees; extremely intelligent; good memory.

Weaknesses: Prior to making decisions he should rely on his administrative staff or department heads as a resource.

Bill Stradling – Former City Commissioner, Coral Springs, FL **954-972-3800 954-275-5965**

Mr. Stradling has known Mr. O’Rourke since 1990 when he became a City Commissioner in Coral Springs. At the time, Mr. O’Rourke was Assistant City Manager. When the City Manager left, Mr. Stradling was influential in getting Mr. O’Rourke appointed as the new City Manager. As a commercial industrial electrical contractor Mr. Stradling was interested in changing how the government was being run. Mr. O’Rourke was instrumental in helping the Commission change how municipal operations functioned and refocused their work to become more customer oriented. He changed how the organization viewed both internal assistance and the external customer. He enhanced the procurement processes. He formulated an effective system which enabled the municipal government to improve its relationship with constituents in the community and solicit feedback on various issues. His extensive efforts helped Coral Springs win the Sterling Award. Mr. O’Rourke has been an inspiration to all people in government who want to see change for the good of their constituents. He is a driven individual who completes his assignments. He is also an outstanding person who is not afraid of a challenge and was well respected by the Mayor and the Commission.

The City of Coral Springs was dealing with substantial controversy before Mr. O’Rourke arrived. The City had become quite oriented toward the needs of builders because the economy had been faltering. Mr. O’Rourke set up the necessary processes for Council to review how they had been spending and what would happen at the conclusion of the building cycle. He implemented focus groups and engaged a facilitator to work with the Commission to ensure everyone was on the same page and participating in a collaborative effort. Each commission member chose a particular area of interest or expertise they were willing to spearhead then came together collegially to move the municipal processes along. Mr. O’Rourke was exceptional at building consensus and utilizing all their different strengths to the betterment of the organization.

Mr. O’Rourke worked extremely well with his employees. He built the staff and developed a program whereby lower ranking employees could rate their superiors in an effort to increase productivity. He hired excellent personnel, one of whom replaced him when he left the City. He gave each department the opportunity to create its own specific budget in a collaborative and effective manner. He began the budgetary process early and encouraged input from both the community and the staff. Through this process he developed a stable budget which saved the City significant amounts of money and improved the City’s credit rating to AAA.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

When making decisions, Mr. O’Rourke ensures he has collected all relevant information and bases his decisions on those gathered facts. He consistently made good decisions in a reasonable length of time. He was extremely innovative and continually explored different strategies when choosing which actions would be best for the organization.

Mr. Stradling would absolutely hire Mr. O’Rourke, given the opportunity. He is a wonderful individual and will be an outstanding City or County Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Inspirational,
- Consensus builder,
- Effective,
- Innovative,
- Honest, and
- Strong leader.

Strengths: High moral character; full of honesty and integrity; an excellent business man.

Weaknesses: Can be a workaholic.

Bruce Grego – Former Councilmember, South Lake Tahoe, CA 530-544-7575

As one of the council members involved in hiring Mr. O’Rourke, Mr. Grego has known him since 2010 when he came to South Lake Tahoe. He was very happy with Mr. O’Rourke and his job performance. Mr. O’Rourke was responsive to the needs of his elected officials and is an individual who strived to accomplish his tasks promptly.

Coming into an organization that faced many difficult issues and a substantial reduction in revenues, Mr. O’Rourke has been instrumental in cutting \$5 million from the budget and tightening up the City’s financial operations. He reduced the budget by working strongly with the unions through complicated labor negotiations but in a manner that did not negatively affect the public. He cut back departments and staff through layoffs. He had the unfortunate job of reducing wages, benefits, and health insurance coverage for employees and retirees. As a result his relationship with employees was not stellar, although he excelled in every project assigned to him by the Council. He often promoted new ideas and introduced new ordinances which helped enforce ordinances already in place. He privatized some of the recreational facilities in the area. He is extremely focused on results and therefore does not always try to achieve consensus among groups or employees, although bypassing such consultation has enabled him to accomplish a great deal.

Mr. O’Rourke is a good decision maker and acts without hesitancy once he has made a choice. He keeps his elected officials fairly well informed; however, when he begins moving a project

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

forward, the speed with which he does so leaves some people feeling unprepared or unable to keep up. Although his ability to accomplish tasks quickly and efficiently could be seen as a benefit, he may lack the balance of being sensitive to others affected by the changes.

Because he stands by his convictions, Mr. O’Rourke did not maintain excellent public relations in South Lake Tahoe. He did not seek consensus among community members but rather focused on accomplishing tasks. His technique drew criticism from the groups affected by his actions, most notably public employees.

If presented with the opportunity, Mr. Grego would hire Mr. O’Rourke again. He has private sector experience and a more practical understanding of private sector needs, and his approach lends itself well to the public sector. He is a fast learner who jumps into a situation with little transition. He is a decision maker and a man of action who does not allow negative comments to hinder his actions when trying to meet the Council’s objectives. He is a candidate who defends his positions and has accomplished a substantial amount during his short time in South Lake Tahoe. He will be an excellent City or County Manager for any organization looking to handle serious challenges, accomplish difficult objectives, and change the municipal environment.

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Succinct,
- Extremely results oriented,
- Change agent,
- Responsive,
- Prompt, and
- Decisive.

Strengths: Direct and prompt in what he does; an achiever who does not allow government red tape to slow him down; accomplishes a great number of tasks; and attacks problems with courage.

Weaknesses: Having been forced to implement major cuts in employment and benefits, Mr. O’Rourke did not have great relationships with employees. He occasionally moves more rapidly than others’ ability to keep up.

Brian Uhler – Chief of Police, South Lake Tahoe, CA 530-318-6275

Mr. Uhler has known Mr. O’Rourke since August of 2010 when Mr. O’Rourke interviewed and subsequently hired him to be the Chief of Police in South Lake Tahoe. Mr. O’Rourke was an excellent City Manager who helped the organization as it turned a significant corner. Prior to his arrival the City was mired in financial troubles which forced them to dip into their reserve fund.

Reference Notes

Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

Mr. O’Rourke was instrumental in recognizing the issues and carrying out some difficult projects to put the City back on a sustainable course.

As part of his schedule, Mr. O’Rourke held weekly meetings with each council member to communicate and promote collaboration. He recognizes and treats all council members equally and helps each of them to the best of his ability. He balanced their diverse interests and personal agendas in a productive manner. He meets regularly with his department heads to increase effectiveness within the organization. He is a great resource to his employees and worked with Mr. Uhler to help him understand his responsibilities as they pertain to fire department functions.

Mr. O’Rourke is a very clear and direct communicator worked well with the public. He provided straight answers and, although some people may not like what he has to say, he navigated those interactions well. Some individuals became offended by his direct nature, while others appreciated it. Having been in public service for many years Mr. Uhler respects Mr. O’Rourke’s ability to make sound decisions. For those instances where Mr. Uhler may have been unsure or unmoved by the approach Mr. O’Rourke took they have always played out to the best advantage of the City, and Mr. Uhler has learned to trust him. Throughout the contract negotiation process with seven bargaining units, Mr. O’Rourke displayed strong collaboration skills. He demonstrated exceptional negotiation skills and intuitiveness for understanding key issues.

Mr. O’Rourke was responsible for dealing with many controversial matters in the City relating to changes that had to be made to achieve financial sustainability. This included the cutting of a significant number of employees which he handled well. Mr. O’Rourke was a successful leader in all efforts to help the City reach that point.

Given the opportunity, Mr. Uhler would absolutely hire Mr. O’Rourke. He will be an excellent City or County Manager. He has the full array of qualities you expect in a manager and has particularly strong, bright points which carry him over the top.

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Energetic,
- Passionate about work,
- Recognizes hard work,
- Knowledgeable about a wide array of issues which face municipalities,
- Funny, and
- Insightful relative to understanding and communicating with his council members.

Strengths: A well-read individual who maintains great knowledge on a wide array of issues; creatively works with budgetary issues and processes; encourages others to use their energies; a very pleasant disposition; and brings levity to the organization.

Weaknesses: Extremely hard charging; sometimes moves matters along more rapidly than others can keep up with; and does not work well with people who prefer a standard government employee profile.

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Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

Nancy Kerry – Former Assistant to the City Manager, South Lake Tahoe, CA
530-307-3237 530-542-6043

Ms. Kerry has known Mr. O’Rourke since he came to the organization in 2010. While she was his assistant during his tenure she has since become the City Manager of South Lake Tahoe.

Mr. O’Rourke is a results oriented manager who offers a refreshing ability to accomplish the goals of his Council. He works very well with his elected officials and has an excellent understanding of the balance between the political and administrative sides of municipal government. He protects his employees from the political side which might hinder their performance yet allows them to have the access to the politicians they want and need. He keeps his staff very well informed and does not micromanage their work. He hires the best individual for each position, always looking for willing, performance-driven employees who produce results. His approach has led to increases in effectiveness throughout the organization as employees began to realize that promotion only comes through performance. People willing to adapt always find a place within the organization.

Mr. O’Rourke led efforts to solve a myriad of problems. The City faced a \$5 million per year deficit, but he was able to identify the problem and proceeded to quickly explore solutions. Thinking outside the box, he reached out to the business community, the general community, and government officials in considering all avenues and possibilities. When he found the right solution for the City he identified what needed to be done and charged ahead. He took an incremental approach to a critical problem and followed through by communicating the resolution to his employees and the public. The community of South Lake Tahoe can be difficult and seemingly full of complainers. Mr. O’Rourke demonstrated strength of character within a contentious public environment. He listens to but does not coddle constituents. He is responsive and quite open to new ideas that are presented to him. He is respectful when working with the public but unwilling to bend to their complaints and criticisms. He stays focused on what the Council has asked him to accomplish.

It would seem that everything Mr. O’Rourke did during his tenure was seen by others as controversial. At the time of his arrival the Council was extremely contentious and this situation was compounded by the City’s financial deficit and the entitlement culture of the community. He entered the organization, made monumental changes, and focused the City in a new direction with a strategic plan and a business plan. He cut staff and increased the amount retirees had to pay for their health care costs. Because of these changes retirees came out in force against him, and he became a target in abusive, contentious meetings and in the press. He was willing to be the target and take the attacks on behalf of the Council, but he has ultimately brought the organization exactly to the place he said he would. The City now maintains a balanced budget and has 25% of its general budget in the bank while also investing in infrastructure. His contribution to the City will be considered enormous in time.

Presented with the opportunity, Ms. Kerry would undoubtedly hire Mr. O’Rourke and would work for him again in a heartbeat. People with a performance based and results oriented approach recognize the positive changes he brought to the organization. He will be an excellent City or

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Anthony “Tony” O’Rourke

County Manager for any organization that faces challenges and is looking for a results driven manager to be a change agent. He can accomplish a great deal and will utilize his abilities and skill set to get results that benefit any organization.

Words or phrases used to describe Tony O’Rourke:

- Results driven,
- Innovative,
- Excellent communicator,
- Determined,
- Focused, and
- Change agent.

Strengths: A very focused individual who cannot be distracted; very driven, with a desire to succeed, and competitive to that end; and does not get flustered or annoyed by angry community members or questioning council members.

Weaknesses: Due to the high level of focus and intensity he puts into his work, some people perceive Mr. O’Rourke as a person who is unwilling to invest time in relationships. He does not focus on feelings; so others may feel he is not listening.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Section 13

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Anthony “Tony” H. O’Rourke
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

November 7, 2015

O’Rourke to receive 4 months’ severance pay
Yakima city manager will step down Dec. 1 and consult interim replacement until end of the year

Author: *Mike Faulk*

Tony O’Rourke will resign as city manager and get four months’ severance pay plus benefits under a deal unanimously approved by the Yakima City Council after a brief executive session Friday. City Attorney Jeff Cutter will begin as interim city manager Dec. 1. **O’Rourke** will turn over his access cards and keys to city property on that date, but will remain available as a consultant and will receive normal pay and benefits through the end of December, under the agreement.

After Dec. 31, the four-month severance package goes into effect, the agreement states. Under **O’Rourke**’s current contract, four months’ pay plus medical, dental and life insurance benefits adds up to about \$69,000. That’s about \$33,000 less than what **O’Rourke** would have received in a severance agreement that was pulled from Tuesday’s agenda before the council or the public could comment. The vote for approval was 6-0, with Councilman Rick Ensey absent. Prior to taking a vote, some council members aired their grievances with each other and **O’Rourke**, as well as the media’s handling of the issue. Overall, moods were tempered compared to Tuesday’s angry meeting in which **O’Rourke** withdrew his intention to resign. He had told the City Council in a closed-door meeting in late August, but word of his intended resignation quickly leaked out. "We have done some disservice to Mr. **O’Rourke**, and continuing this circus will only further do that to a man who wants to be employed someplace else," Councilwoman Maureen Adkison said. "And there have been things going on here embarrassing all of us that need not continue."

Prior to the vote, **O’Rourke** made it clear he would support and sign it. "This fulfills that wish and I think it’s a mutually beneficial outcome and will provide for a smooth, orderly and very professional transition," **O’Rourke** told the council. **O’Rourke** has 21 days to sign the agreement and has seven days to change his mind from the date he signs. The agreement releases **O’Rourke** and the city from legal claims against the other stemming from events "arising on or before" the agreement is signed.

Councilwoman Kathy Coffey read a lengthy prepared statement prior to the vote, stating she was "going to disappoint many people today" by voting to support the separation deal. She listed **O’Rourke**’s accomplishments at City Hall, such as his work on road improvements, plans for a soccer complex and bringing new perspectives to City Hall. But she also listed a number of grievances with his leadership going back to just months after he was hired in 2012, saying he was not always forthcoming. "I had even called a few executive sessions to voice my concerns, but they became a waste of time," Coffey said. Coffey added that one councilman previously

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berated her for raising concerns over **O’Rourke** at a previous job performance review, but didn't say who or when. "If true constructive corrective action had been taken during those times, I'm not sure we would be having the meeting we are today," Coffey said. "The City Council needs to lead the city manager, not the other way around."

Mayor Micah Cawley bemoaned news reports on **O’Rourke**'s departure he said were "based on hearsay, not facts" and commended **O’Rourke**'s professionalism. Councilman Dave Ettl lamented the drama surrounding **O’Rourke**'s resignation and offered praise. "I think we've done a lot of good work on behalf of this city. I wish you nothing but the best," Ettl said. **O’Rourke**'s thoughts on the issue fluctuated throughout the weeks leading up to the vote. Before Tuesday, he had publicly stated he wanted next year's City Council, with four new members, to decide the city's manager's future.

On Tuesday, **O’Rourke** said he instead would work with the new council and accused other current members of making him "roadkill." That led Ensey to try to fire him, a motion rejected by the other six council members. After Friday's meeting, **O’Rourke** returned to his previous stance that the new council should decide who will be city manager. Asked why he rejected Tuesday's deal - which called for six months' severance pay and benefits - **O’Rourke** said, "I wasn't interested in it." He said this package was "more fair" to him than the previous proposal. "This is a very equitable outcome," **O’Rourke**. "Again, this is in everyone's interest." In October, **O’Rourke** wouldn't comment on what he wanted the deal to include, but said it would be subject to public scrutiny before being approved.

On Friday, City Attorney Cutter refused to release a copy of the agreement to the public prior to the vote. He said state law does not require such agreements be made public prior to the council voting on them. On Friday, **O’Rourke** wouldn't answer whether the public should have been allowed to comment on the proposal before it was voted on. "This council was elected to make these kinds of decisions," **O’Rourke** said. "I was chosen by these people and they can choose to conclude that relationship as they did today."

O’Rourke's future employment options remain unclear. He unsuccessfully interviewed for city manager jobs in Sedona, Ariz., in February and Casper, Wyo., in September.

In city emails obtained through a public records request, **O’Rourke** told a personal friend in September that he was interested in jobs in California or the Rocky Mountains region. Cutter will assume the interim city manager role following 18 years of work in the city's Legal Division, beginning when he was hired as city prosecutor in 1997. In 2005, he became a senior assistant city attorney and has led the Legal Department since 2009. A committee consisting of some current council members and their newly elected colleagues will provide recommendations for an executive search firm. The firm, expected to be chosen by the existing council, will vet candidates for the permanent city manager position.

That process could take three to six months, city officials say.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

November 5, 2015

Business anything but usual**Drama surrounding city manager's rescinded resignation creates questions, accusations; newly elected council members say it may be time for O'Rourke to move on**Author: *Mike Faulk*

Councilman Rick Ensey threw up his arms and left the meeting. A visibly frustrated Councilwoman Kathy Coffey struggled to find words at times. And deep divisions in the Yakima City Council were on full display Tuesday with the unexpected announcement that City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** would not be resigning as expected. "You'd be hard pressed to find anyone who has seen anything like that at a council meeting before," Coffey said Wednesday. While heated words and sharply different opinions were plentiful, Tuesday's meeting left no shortage of questions that may be left for an incoming council to deal with in January. Here's a look at some of the most important issues raised so far.

Why did **O'Rourke** withdraw his request for a severance package, which was to have been subject to a public discussion by the council? The request for a severance package was withdrawn when **O'Rourke** said he was not resigning. But there is strong reason to believe that the council would not have approved the severance package. Coffey said the package largely included what **O'Rourke** had requested. It included six months' pay as well as half a year of life insurance and medical benefits, a combined value of about \$102,658. That's more than what **O'Rourke** would get if he were being fired without cause, according to his contract, which just calls for six months' pay.

But on Tuesday, before the council or the public could discuss it, **O'Rourke** said, "There will be no necessity to consider that agreement because I will not be a party to it." If there had been a discussion and vote, it likely would have failed. In separate interviews prior to the meeting, council members Coffey, Ensey, Bill Lover and Maureen Adkison all said they would have voted against it. **O'Rourke** did not return phone calls to the Herald-Republic on Wednesday. Did the council violate **O'Rourke's** right to confidentiality? Asked by council members why he was revoking his resignation, **O'Rourke** said his confidentiality had been violated. That assertion is disputed by open government advocates and City Attorney Jeff Cutter.

In September, **O'Rourke** alleged council members violated state law after his secret resignation - given in executive session Aug. 24 - was leaked to the media. He cited the issue again Tuesday. "Out of civility, I'm not going to get into the details, because my own professional reputation has been violated on numerous occasions during this process. My confidentiality has been violated," **O'Rourke** said. "I'm not going to be party anymore to being roadkill by members of this council."

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Some council members, including Dave Ettl and Micah Cawley, have insisted **O’Rourke** is right in saying that other members mishandled the process. Neither returned calls Wednesday. They have said **O’Rourke** only sought severance because of the leak, but others, including Coffey and Ensey, said **O’Rourke** asked about it at the Aug. 24 meeting. Regardless, **O’Rourke**'s closed-door talks with the council were not protected by state law, Cutter said by phone Wednesday. "Discussion of things relating to the city manager's separation are not exempted from the Open Public Meetings Act," Cutter said. "That's my opinion."

O’Rourke didn't want the public to know about his resignation plans until November, although he had interviewed for jobs in Sedona, Ariz., in February and in Casper, Wyo., in September. Also in September, **O’Rourke** listed his house for sale. If **O’Rourke** said he was resigning, how can he withdraw it? **O’Rourke**'s contract says if he resigns, he has to put it in writing. **O’Rourke** hasn't done that and won't, thus there is no resignation.

But employment attorneys interviewed by the Yakima Herald-Republic last week said that's not necessarily true. The council took significant steps to plan for his departure, such as naming Cutter interim city manager and appointing a committee to recommend an executive search firm. "He may not be able to enforce the requirement that it be in writing if he's going around telling everyone and the city takes action based on his statements," Yakima attorney Kevan Montoya, who has practiced employment law for 26 years, said last week.

What do the newly elected council members think?

On Wednesday, the majority of newly elected council members said if **O’Rourke** doesn't want to be in Yakima, it may be time to move on. "I haven't had a chance to work with him on the issue, but I would say it seems to have been an extremely unprofessional way of handling things," District 1 Councilwoman-elect Dulce Gutierrez said. "If that's grounds for termination, I would like to see the City Council explore that option."

District 7 Councilwoman-elect Holly Cousens said she has lost faith in **O’Rourke**. "His true colors have been shown," Cousens said. "I definitely think it's time to move on." Carmen Mendez and Kelly Rosenow, who remain in a close race for the District 3 seat, gave different reasons for why **O’Rourke** might need to go. Mendez said she likes the job **O’Rourke** has done, but that Yakima needs someone who truly wants to work for the city. "I do think **Tony** doesn't want to stay here any longer and we need to start looking elsewhere," Mendez said. Rosenow called the situation "a big embarrassment" for the city and blamed it on the council's indecisiveness. "They keep alluding to him maybe suing the city for something, and I need more information about what they're alluding to," Rosenow said. "I would look seriously at whether he needs to continue working for Yakima."

District 2 Councilwoman-elect Avina Gutierrez did not return calls Wednesday.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

August 28, 2015

**Former clerk sues city of Yakima over termination
Matheny used workstation to check judicial records on her opponents in 2014 Yakima
County clerk race**Author: *Mike Faulk*

A former Yakima Municipal Court clerk is suing the city for retaliation, negligence and breach of contract. Sarah Matheny was fired last year in the midst of her political campaign for the Yakima County Clerk position after it was discovered she used her job at the court to access state judicial records on her opponents. She was subsequently accused of lying about it to the media. "You've got a young public employee running for office, and the government entity she works at doing everything they can to destroy her campaign," Matheny attorney Bill Pickett said in a telephone interview Thursday. "That's wrong."

The lawsuit, filed Wednesday in Yakima County Superior Court, alleges Matheny was incorrectly paraphrased in a Yakima Herald-Republic article about her accessing opponents' records and that City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** used the comments without verification to help justify Matheny's eventual termination. It goes on to allege **O'Rourke** made misleading or untruthful comments to the media and that through **O'Rourke**, the city "sought actively and unlawfully" to interfere with Matheny's candidacy for political office. Matheny had been disciplined for improperly accessing court records on one of her opponents prior to her termination hearing. But **O'Rourke** later said the city was unclear if everything was known about Matheny's improper use of her office to access information. In the lawsuit, Pickett alleges **O'Rourke** and the city "concocted fiction" to bring about "new causes of action" that led to her termination.

Weeks before the September hearing that led to her firing, **O'Rourke** told the Yakima Herald-Republic that Matheny would be fired. Pickett said this shows the pre-disciplinary hearing was a "sham," in violation of Matheny's right to due process. In a telephone interview Thursday, **O'Rourke** said he had no comment because he has not yet read the lawsuit. "I haven't seen the allegations," **O'Rourke** said. "Until I read it, I can't really respond."

The lawsuit does not list a specific amount for damages. Matheny asked for \$2.5 million in a municipal claim she filed against the city in November. The claim also called for **O'Rourke's** resignation and a public acknowledgement of wrongdoing by the city. In late July 2014, Matheny lost one week of vacation after the city learned that she had used her workstation to access county clerk candidate Steve Driscoll's driving record by using the state's Judicial Information System (JIS).

Later, the city moved to fire her. Municipal Court Judge Kelley Olwell stated in an Aug. 25, 2014, letter to Matheny that she would face a Sept. 8 termination hearing "on allegations that you

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gave false information to the Yakima Herald-Republic concerning how many people you had looked up on the statewide Judicial Information System and disclosed to the public information concerning Mr. Driscoll's criminal traffic history." The judge also stated in that letter that Matheny had told her during an Aug. 19 meeting that she "had lied to the Herald." Matheny disputed the Herald-Republic's reporting on stories about her, and she says she did not tell Olwell she lied to the newspaper. Her opponents in the primary race were Janelle Riddle, Kathleen Carter, Jose Trevino and Driscoll. Public documents show she accessed different types of records on all of the opponents except Carter. Riddle trounced Matheny in the 2014 general election with 66.1 percent of the vote, or 28,080 votes, to Matheny's 30.5 percent, or 12,966 votes.

O'Rourke also called on the state Attorney General's Office to investigate Matheny further, but the state declined. The Public Disclosure Commission investigated a complaint from the Trevino campaign that she inappropriately used government resources in her campaign, but it was dismissed.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)
August 20, 2015

Longtime Yakima cop suspended for sex with prostitute
City manager overrules police chief on penalty - chief wanted officer fired - but will work together for reforms in police discipline

Author: *Donald W. Meyers*

A disciplinary case that places the Yakima police chief at odds with the city manager will see a longtime Yakima police officer suspended for two weeks without pay and forfeit a week's vacation for having sex with a prostitute. In ordering the suspension of Officer Eric Walls, city manager **Tony O'Rourke** rejected the police chief's recommendation that Walls be fired, citing what he calls a biased investigation and arbitrary punishment when compared to officers who committed similar offenses. **O'Rourke** called on Chief Dominic Rizzi Jr. to work with him and the police union to create an independent process for investigating officer misconduct in the future, rather than conducting in-house investigations.

Rizzi said he stands by his recommendation, but will comply with **O'Rourke's** directives to reinstate Walls, change the department's internal investigation process and establish uniform disciplinary procedures. Tony Patlan, president of the Yakima Police Patrolman's Association, praised **O'Rourke's** decision and his call for reforms in police discipline. "Our position is he made the right decision. He took into account Eric's past history of 25 years as a cop," said Patlan, referring to Walls' otherwise unblemished disciplinary record. Walls, who has been on paid administrative leave since February, returned to modified duty this week before serving his suspension, Rizzi said. Walls was initially accused of having sex with two women who police said were known prostitutes and lying about it to his superiors.

The disciplinary action was triggered in December when the first woman filed a complaint with the city against Walls, saying he had sex with her six to eight times over a six-month period in 2014. The woman accused Walls of using his authority as a police officer to continue having sex with her, even after she told him about her convictions for prostitution and drug possession. Their relationship ended in December when Walls began seeing another woman, according to investigative records obtained by the Yakima Herald-Republic. The records said that while he told his supervisor he didn't have a relationship with the first woman, he later told investigators that he did, but broke it off after learning she was a prostitute. He also told investigators he didn't know the second woman also had been convicted of prostitution. Rizzi called those statements lies, noting that Walls had acknowledged the second woman was a prostitute in an earlier interview with investigators.

O'Rourke said he wasn't convinced Walls lied because he may have legitimately confused references to the two women during questioning by investigators. The second woman's only conviction on prostitution was nine years ago, and a sergeant assigned to the North First Street

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area known for prostitution did not know her, **O’Rourke** wrote in a report to Rizzi. The investigator called her an active prostitute without any evidence, **O’Rourke** wrote. Rizzi's report, however, said that more than once the two women were seen together on North First Street and he questioned how a seasoned police officer and hostage negotiator could not follow a line of questioning.

O’Rourke found the recommendation to fire Walls to be inconsistent with other disciplinary actions meted out for violating the department's rules on fraternization and dishonesty. Officer Chris Taylor, a member of the department's Gang Unit, was suspended in April for 64 hours, lost 64 hours of vacation time, was reassigned to the patrol division and was barred from taking home a police car for two months after investigators said he had sex with a gang member who was also a paid informant and the wife of a gang member serving time for murder, **O’Rourke's** report said. "As the chief, you knew I was vehemently opposed to this discipline, and told you it warranted termination given its egregious nature and the peril it put the police officer, his family and members of the gang unit in, as a result of Officer Taylor's gross misconduct," **O’Rourke** wrote.

Another officer, Joe Martinez, was suspended in 2013 for 15 days without pay for associating with a known drug user, dishonesty during an internal investigation, discussing an open homicide investigation when told not to, driving while impaired and making disparaging remarks about another officer, **O’Rourke** noted. "Based on these recent cases of similar situations and infractions, it is clear the proposed discipline of termination for Officer Walls is disparate and discriminatory treatment," **O’Rourke** wrote. "It would constitute an unjust and wrongful discharge."

Rizzi said he recommended Walls be fired for lying about his relationship with the two women. If he had been honest about the relationships, Rizzi said he might have recommended suspension, as happened in the other cases. **O’Rourke's** report noted that after the Taylor case, Rizzi was told to work with the police union to come up with a code of conduct that includes specific penalties to ensure equitable discipline. That work is underway, according to Patlan and Rizzi.

The report calls on Rizzi to establish an independent internal affairs investigator rather than someone from the department it says could lack objectivity. Rizzi said the department's current internal affairs procedures are in compliance with Department of Justice guidelines, but said he will make any changes that **O’Rourke** asks for. Patlan said he also supported having an independent investigator review allegations.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

August 2, 2015

Yakima says ex-employee on hook for cupcake bill
Former human resources director says \$757 billed to city
for her farewell party justifiedAuthor: *Mike Faulk*

Yakima officials want a former employee to pay back nearly \$800 in taxpayer money she spent on her own office farewell party. Farewell parties aren't uncommon for city employees, but costs are usually limited to simple snacks and soft drinks. When former Human Resources Director Cheryl Ann Mattia resigned in December, she ordered \$757.40 worth of gourmet cupcakes baked by the White House Cafe in Yakima.

City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** said the expenditure was a "gross misuse" of taxpayer money and the city's legal team has attempted to work with Mattia's lawyer to get the money refunded. Mattia said the expenditure was the result of a misunderstanding between her and a staff member when the order was placed. But, even so, she believes it was a justified expense. **O'Rourke** used an expletive to dismiss Mattia's statements. "It was a bunch of cupcakes. I thought she made them herself," **O'Rourke** said. "There was no mention of a mistake until after the bill came in." By the time the bill arrived for the city credit card issued to Mattia, her resignation had already become effective. She also spent \$21 on a rented tablecloth for the party.

Mattia said she doesn't owe the city anything and that other department heads have made similar expenditures for farewell parties. She said spending \$757 on cupcakes isn't a waste of taxpayer money. "I did a lot of good for the city," Mattia said. "I feel very good about my dedication and work there." Mattia said the most recent example of an expensive farewell party included one for former Community Development Director Steve Osguthorpe, who also resigned last year. But an itemized list of Osguthorpe's transactions released by the city don't show any such expenditures. The only food expense Osguthorpe charged to the city in all of 2014 was for \$38.79 for three pizzas he ordered for an evening meeting of the city Planning Commission. Osguthorpe, who now holds a similar position in Mountlake Terrace, did not return calls for comment. Mattia also said former interim city manager Michael Morales had an expensive farewell party when he left in 2012, but a search of Morales' expenditures from that year doesn't show any party-related credit card spending. Morales said Wednesday his party included "Costco cake, a jar of mixed nuts and punch," purchased by his assistant. "I don't remember anything more than that," Morales said. "I'd be pretty surprised if that much money was spent on cake and peanuts." Mattia also claimed the city spent heavily on longtime City Manager Dick Zais' farewell party, but Morales, who was assistant city manager under Zais, said tickets sold to the event largely covered the costs.

Mattia was hired in 2011 and promoted to Human Resources director in August 2013. The Selah native had previously worked in personnel or human resources for Yakima County, John I. Haas

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Inc., Filtrona Extrusion, now known as Pexco; Triumph Treatment Services, and E.W. Brandt & Sons.

When her resignation was announced in December, **O’Rourke** complimented Mattia's work for the city, including her role in reducing employee health care costs, improving the city's recruitment and hiring processes, and her labor contract negotiation skills. But it was never made public by the city or Mattia exactly why she left her job. Officials said in a Dec. 8, 2014, post on the city website that she was leaving "in order to focus on the next step in her professional development."

In a mid-July interview, Mattia said she is still looking for full-time work. The transaction was first discovered by city Budget and Finance Director Cindy Epperson. She said the city decided to authorize the payment to the White House Cafe because the restaurant doesn't share blame for the exorbitant costs. "Someone at the city asked for it and it was delivered," Epperson said. "We didn't feel like we could go against the vendor on that." White House Cafe owner Sherry Jefferson declined to comment.

O’Rourke said it's possible the city could take Mattia to small claims court to recoup the money if talks with her attorney remain unsuccessful. "We're not playing around," he said.

* The last name of Sherry Jefferson, the owner of the White House Cafe, has been corrected.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

March 28, 2015

City manager hurt in Cowiche Canyon bike crash

Author: *Yakima Herald-Republic*

Yakima City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** will have to miss a trip to Washington, D.C., next week because of injuries he suffered Thursday evening while bicycling in the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy.

O’Rourke and his dog, Murphy, were taking advantage of a balmy spring day on the trails, but about half-mile up from the Scenic Drive parking lot, **O’Rourke** slammed into a rock, tumbled over the handlebars and landed face-first, city spokesman Randy Beehler said. A doctor from Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center happened to be there and tended to **O’Rourke** while they waited for help. It took about 45 minutes for the emergency medical technicians to reach **O’Rourke** because they had to hike in, Beehler said. "He doesn't have any serious injuries," Beehler said. "He got pretty scraped up and is pretty sore."

Beehler added after the crash, **O’Rourke** "was a bit dizzy and had some tingling in his arms and fingers," but he never lost the ability to move his limbs.

After treatment at the hospital, **O’Rourke** returned home to recuperate. He did not come in to work Friday. Beehler said that **O’Rourke** will see how things go over the weekend and determine Monday whether he's OK to return. But the trip with the city delegation to the nation's capital, made at least annually, is out.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

December 10, 2014

Yakima council OKs city manager pay raise, budget**Council votes 4-3 to give Tony O’Rourke pay hike, passes budget on 6-1 vote**Author: *Mike Faulk*

The Yakima City Council on Tuesday narrowly passed a pay raise for the city manager and approved the city's 2015 budget. In a 4-3 vote, the council approved a 2.5 percent pay raise and an extra week of vacation for City Manager **Tony O’Rourke**. With the raise, **O’Rourke**'s base salary will increase to \$179,375 annually beginning in January. It was the first pay raise for **O’Rourke**, who was hired by the City Council in July 2012. The base salary does not include the estimated value of other benefits in his contract. **O’Rourke**'s pay and benefits combined reached \$244,390 in 2013, according to city records.

Council members Kathy Coffey, Rick Ensey and Bill Lover voted against the pay raise. Lover said he worries about "legacy costs," or setting the bar for paying public employees so high that it becomes unsustainable. Lover said his philosophy doesn't just concern **O’Rourke**, but also other city employee pay increases. Coffey said she was also concerned about the total amount of **O’Rourke**'s compensation package when factoring in benefits. She said there were other concerns that came up in a recent closed-door discussion by the council about **O’Rourke**'s performance, on which she did not elaborate. "I still feel that he needs to do some work as far as his communication and working with the community and the council," Coffey said in an interview after the meeting.

Ensey said he has an issue with "the tone of City Hall" under **O’Rourke**. **O’Rourke**, he said, could be more diplomatic with people who disagree with his initiatives. "He's already well-compensated," Ensey said. Council members Dave Ettl, Tom Dittmar, Micah Cawley and Maureen Adkison voted in favor of the increase. They cited a number of initiatives **O’Rourke** has undertaken, especially finding ways to cut costs while efficiently carrying out road improvement projects, enforcing long-ignored code ordinances and boosting spending on the police and fire departments. "His work has shown that he's earned it," Ettl said.

Cawley cited the difficulty of running an organization the size of the city of Yakima and **O’Rourke**'s attention to detail in managing every department. Cawley said **O’Rourke** has been successful in spite of the council's decision two years ago to eliminate the assistant city manager position. The city has more than 700 employees. "When you're leading an organization of our size, it's a 24-hour job," Cawley said.

The council also approved a 1.5 percent raise in salary for the city's 70 nonunion employees. The pay raise for 2015, which was approved unanimously, includes a \$500 lump-sum payment in addition to the salary increase.

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The city increased the pay of those employees by 1 percent and also paid a lump sum of \$500 this year as well. In 2013, the city gave those employees a \$1,000 lump sum and an additional personal holiday.

The lone opponent to the 2015 budget proposal was Lover. He said his vote was based solely on his opposition to some items being funded that he had previously voted against, but not the budget as a whole. Ensey, who voted in favor of the budget, said he felt similar to Lover, but didn't believe voting in favor of the budget meant he endorsed everything being approved. Both Lover and Ensey have been critics of the downtown plaza proposal, which is budgeted for \$800,000 in spending on engineering designs for 2015. "There have been budgets in the past I disliked more than this one and I still voted for them," Ensey said. "I don't see my voting for the budget as a blanket endorsement of everything."

The final budget amounted to roughly \$208 million, balanced by using \$8.6 million in reserves that come mostly from capital funds for construction and maintenance projects. The city's water and wastewater utilities are in the midst of such projects, and Yakima Transit is budgeted to purchase three buses in 2015 to replace aging vehicles in the fleet. In December 2013, the council approved a \$206 million budget for 2014. The council unanimously approved an early retirement package for Yakima Police Capt. Rod Light without discussion. Light's retirement will go into effect Feb. 1. Light has been off work since July, when an investigation stemming from domestic violence allegations by his estranged wife was launched. He has since been cleared of any wrongdoing, but hasn't been able to return to work because he is still the subject of a protective order filed by his estranged wife, which under federal law bars him from carrying a gun.

City officials have said his early retirement is not related to the allegations, but part of a plan to encourage early retirements in order to bring up-and-coming officers into the command staff, where a significant number of older officers are expected to retire in the next several years. The retirement package provides a lump sum payment of \$50,118 and five months of medical premium payments worth a total of \$5,088.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

October 21, 2014

Yakima woman to be charged with secretly recording city official

Author: *Mike Faulk*

A Yakima woman who secretly recorded a meeting with City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** now faces a charge of recording private communications without consent. The woman, Joey Anderson, is scheduled to be arraigned in Yakima County District Court next Monday. In an interview, Anderson said she was within her rights to record **O’Rourke** during a July 16 meeting because he is a public official who was in the course of carrying out his duties. "I firmly believe they are abusing their powers and it's a misuse of the law," Anderson said. **O’Rourke** has said he is concerned that allowing the recording to go unchallenged would compromise his right to privacy on other matters, such as confidential labor negotiations and other internal business dealings.

Anderson, who filed a motion to have the case dismissed, met with **O’Rourke** in July to raise allegations of police brutality in an April incident involving her husband Russell Anderson. She later posted the video of her meeting with **O’Rourke** on YouTube, which led to the city filing a complaint against her.

The case may be unique in Washington state. In response to an inquiry from the Yakima Herald-Republic, Attorney General's Office ombudsman Nancy Krier said she was unaware of any previous case history of a city manager seeking such charges against someone for recording him or her on the job without consent.

The charge is a gross misdemeanor punishable by up to a year imprisonment or up to a \$5,000 fine.

Anderson has been assigned a public defender in the case.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

August 7, 2014

Secret recording of city manager investigatedAuthor: *Mike Faulk*

YAKIMA, Wash. - Yakima authorities are investigating whether a resident violated the law when she secretly recorded a recent meeting with City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** and posted it on YouTube. The information came out at Tuesday's Yakima City Council meeting when a friend of Joey Anderson, the resident in question, addressed the council demanding **O'Rourke** drop charges against her. But so far the city hasn't brought charges. "We're in the process of investigating what we believe to be a criminal violation of the law," **O'Rourke** told council members after the exchange.

Anderson has been a regular at council meetings in recent months in attempts to draw attention to accusations of police brutality against her husband stemming from an incident in April. According to police reports, Anderson's husband, Russell, walked toward them with a machete and resisted arrest. Police were responding at the time to a domestic disturbance at Anderson's mobile home, where she was attempting to evict a tenant. Since then, Anderson has used the audience participation section of council meetings to raise allegations of corruption against **O'Rourke**, the entire council and the Yakima Police Department.

The council and other officials had largely ignored Anderson's comments, in part because of a pending case against her husband on a charge of domestic disturbance, but **O'Rourke** agreed to meet privately with her to discuss the case July 16. Anderson recorded the meeting on her cellphone camera, which she says was sitting on top of her wallet during the meeting. The meeting lasted about 20 minutes and included Yakima police Capt. Greg Copeland.

O'Rourke and Copeland say very little on the recording. Anderson becomes increasingly upset to the point of shouting at the two before **O'Rourke** agrees to review the case file. **O'Rourke** later sent a letter to Anderson detailing his review of the case file that found her claims to be unsubstantiated. At Tuesday's council meeting, Anderson's friend, Maria Bosworth, said **O'Rourke** didn't have to consent to the recording because it occurred while he was conducting business in his official capacity. In an interview Wednesday, **O'Rourke** said there are any number of tasks he performs in his official capacity that must be able to remain confidential, such as labor negotiations and real estate transactions. He said Anderson's recording violated state law, which requires consent from both parties to be recorded. "I wasn't concerned about anything I said in the meeting," **O'Rourke** said. "It's the principle of the matter." **O'Rourke** said city attorneys are currently reviewing case law on the matter before deciding on bringing a charge. Recording and broadcasting without consent is a gross misdemeanor in the state, punishable by up to one year in jail or up to a \$5,000 fine.

* This article has been updated to include the recording and to correct the location of the camera with which the recording was made and the length of the meeting.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

July 27, 2014

Yakima city manager gets mostly high marks
Despite overall positive rating of Tony O’Rourke, some City Council members express displeasure in certain areas

Author: *Donald W. Meyers*

Yakima City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** again received high marks from the City Council in his annual evaluation, but there were some signs of displeasure with his performance. Council members graded **O’Rourke** in several areas, including staff effectiveness, strategic leadership and democratic responsiveness. The evaluation was completed Saturday during a closed-door session at the council's retreat at the Hilton Garden Inn in downtown Yakima. "**Tony's** done well," said Mayor Micah Cawley. "He's done a good job."

In the seven-page evaluation, the council found that **O’Rourke** met or exceeded expectations in his second year on the job. **O’Rourke** also got high marks in his first year, but this year saw at least one council member grade him as not meeting expectations. Areas of concern were presenting policy-related information completely and accurately, respecting the role of elected officials in making policy decisions, demonstrating an appreciation for the community's culture, demonstrating ongoing commitment to training, and respecting the views of others. In each of those areas, only one council member indicated a problem with **O’Rourke**. The individual evaluation sheets filled out by council members were not made available.

The council also discussed what it would like to accomplish by 2018, as well as how to work together. The retreat came at a time when council members have different visions for the city's future. Bill Chiat, the California consultant hired to moderate the discussion, turned the city's effort at billboard regulation into a case study on how the council should work together by first agreeing on a goal. After a motion by the council and a year's work by city staff and the Planning Commission, the council voted 5-2 in March against an ordinance that would have banned new billboards in the city after billboard industry representatives objected. The first thing the council should have done differently, Chiat said, was not allow the initial motion for a billboard moratorium to be made under the "other business" section of the meeting agenda. Conducting business at that point in a meeting deprives the public of a chance to weigh in on the matter, and also hampers council members, who need a chance to hash out the idea and reach a consensus, Chiat said.

Instead, Chiat said any ideas brought up under other business should be referred to a future meeting as a separate agenda item. Cawley said the council will probably adopt such a rule. "Let's call it the Las Vegas rule," **O’Rourke** quipped. "You can't marry the policy item that night." Chiat said the council should also understand the end it wants to achieve, and then make sure city staff and others, such as the Planning Commission, understand the goal as they work on implementation. "They may not be perfectly aligned, but they will be going in the same direction," Chiat said.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

December 31, 2013

Yakima city contract calls for 10% raise over 4 yearsAuthor: *Mike Faulk*

About 260 city of Yakima employees will get a 10 percent pay raise over the next four years if the City Council approves the new contract next Tuesday. The contract, which establishes an annual 2.5 percent pay increase beginning in 2014 through 2017, will give employees covered by the contract their first cost of living increase since 2008, said Eddie Allan, the local staff representative for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. Allan said wages for the 261 general government employees covered by AFSCME lagged behind other union employees, such as police and fire, by about 16 percent since 2008 because those union groups secured cost of living increases. The contract also includes additional lump sum payments to each employee of \$1,000 for 2014, \$500 for 2015, \$500 for 2016 and \$750 for 2017.

The union approved the contract earlier this month before it was sent to the City Council. The contract had overwhelming support among union members who cast ballots, winning approval by a vote of 186 to 8. "That'll tell you how outstanding it was," Allan said. Employees covered by AFSCME work across a range of departments for the city, from secretaries to bill collectors to maintenance workers, and the union is the city's largest bargaining unit. City officials refer to them as "frontline workers" because their jobs either mostly involve work outside of City Hall or they frequently deal with the public.

City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** said it didn't take long to negotiate the agreement. **O'Rourke** said the cost of living increases were long overdue. "They're really the backbone of the city," **O'Rourke** said. "It was the right thing to do." The deal would increase the city's spending on those employees by an estimated \$2.1 million through the end of 2017. The city budgeted \$19.9 million for pay and benefits for AFSCME employees through the end of 2013. The city has more than a dozen bargaining groups and is still in negotiations with four of them for contracts that begin in 2014, city spokesman Randy Beehler said. Those include separate unions for 911 dispatchers and call takers, a union for supervisors and administrators, and the union representing Public Works division managers.

The Yakima City Council is also expected to approve a contract with the Yakima County Board of County Commissioners to continue to provide meeting space for the commission with a one-time payment of \$12,000 for City Hall renovations. The commission has been meeting in the City Council chambers for four years. The \$12,000 from the county will go toward the 2014 budget for the city, which already has appropriated \$200,000 for other City Hall renovations. A majority of those projects are aimed at making the building, constructed in 1949, more compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act by improving access. Those include putting automatic doors on the North Second Street entrance to the building and installing lower service counters for access by people in wheelchairs. "There are a whole host of small but important adjustments we have to make," **O'Rourke** said.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)
November 12, 2013

Some question downtown redevelopment outreach
City manager puts out memo detailing city's efforts to be inclusive, but some business owners still feeling left out of the input process
Author: *Mai Hoang*

Within days of a well-attended hearing on a proposed master plan for downtown, Yakima City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** felt compelled to send a memo to the Yakima City Council documenting in detail the city's efforts to reach out and gather input on aspects of the plan. The memo, sent Thursday, was a direct response to some business owners who said the city had not done enough to gather their opinions about a transformative vision for the downtown core. The skirmish over the master plan is an example of how difficult it can be to birth change in a city that often doubts its ability to innovate. But experts say it's also a lesson in the political reality that style is often substance, and that wooing as many affected parties as early as possible can make for much smoother sailing when the time comes to sell the project.

Public hearings and meetings may meet the legal requirements concerning civic engagement for a downtown master plan, said Timothy Bishop, known for his decade long tenure (1995-2005) leading downtown redevelopment in Walla Walla, a town whose efforts have been nationally recognized. But "it's not necessarily the most conducive to actually getting input," Bishop said in recent telephone interview.

In Yakima, the businesses most worried about the plan are located near a proposed expansion of Millennium Plaza into a central gathering place, which could cost more than 200 parking spots in the immediate vicinity. Craig Carroll, co-owner of the Yakima Sports Center, who relies on parking spaces that would be lost or moved farther away, said city officials should have approached him and others personally from the get-go. "I'm flexible," he said. "Maybe we could come on (board) something that could work for the city and for us. But under the current plan, (the lost spots) would just annihilate us."

O'Rourke says the city is obligated to listen to the diverse viewpoints of the community as a whole, not just a handful of business owners who are concerned about the plaza. "This isn't just about some businesses around the plaza," he said. "It's bigger than that; it's (about) the heart of Yakima." The city's proposal to replace the spots that would be lost for the plaza includes leasing space from parking garages owned by Joe Morrier and Larry Hull, two downtown property owners who have expressed support for the plan. Morrier companies own the parking garage in the former Yakima Mall, while Hull owns what is known as the Dragon Inn garage at Second Street and Chestnut Avenue.

While the proposed master plan clearly showed the loss of the existing plaza parking, Bishop said that given the sensitive nature of parking, nearby business and property owners should have

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been notified to prevent any unpleasant surprises. Based on his past experience working on large-scale projects in Walla Walla, Bishop said he found that the most beneficial approach was a series of one-on-one meetings where specific questions and issues were tackled for a given concept or idea.

Most business owners are focused on running their business and tend not to respond until they see something that directly affects them. "It may be that these folks maybe haven't engaged because they haven't seen a plan and wanted to see what they were responding to," he said. At this point, city officials in Yakima will have to consider whether the process has been inclusive enough, Bishop said. "In the end, you probably won't have 100 percent satisfaction, but if there are legitimate concerns that can still be addressed, that's still a piece of the process," he said. "It's worth another couple of meetings to iron those out."

O’Rourke believes the city already has plenty of support from those who participated in the master plan process - including substantial downtown property owners Joe Mann and Morrier and numerous business owners throughout downtown. "The people who have participated to date think we provided a firehose of information and data," he said.

One of those supporters is Graham Snyder, who owns Cowiche Canyon Kitchen, a new restaurant going up at the corner of Second Street and Yakima Avenue next to what would be the expanded plaza. Snyder said while it may seem counterintuitive to support a plan that, in the short-term, would directly affect his investment, he is supportive of efforts to improve the area and understands that the plan is still evolving. "I'm supportive (of) any conversation or dialogue that leads to a better Yakima, he said. While Snyder said he understands the concerns people have about parking, he believes the plan provides long-term gains. "I think we have so much more to offer than close parking," he said.

In his memo to the City Council, **O’Rourke** states that several email invitations were sent to business and property owners for a wide range of meetings, including public input meetings and smaller focus groups for stakeholders, such as business and property owners. **O’Rourke** estimates that nearly 700 people, including community members and business owners, were involved at some point in the master plan process. So he's bewildered when he hears business owners claim they were not approached. "I'm just telling you that our communication has been very consistent and transparent and had some success given the number of people who have been involved," he said. But some say the process lacked a personal touch.

Kathi Mercy, who has expressed reservations with the plan, attended some of the city's meetings, but felt they lacked more substantive dialogue, said Jamie Carmody, a Yakima attorney who represents the Mercy family, owners of the downtown Orion Cinema and Mickey's Pub. The Mercy family is not against downtown redevelopment, but feels the city could have spent more time tackling specific details and issues in a one-to-one setting, Carmody said. "Nobody sat down and said, 'Kathi, your parking is going away (under this proposed plan); here's our thoughts on how to tackle the issue. How would you tackle the issue?'" Carmody said. All sides believe

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there are additional opportunities for engagement. The city is still in the very early stages of the plan, contrary to what some may think, **O’Rourke** said.

A vote on Nov. 19 is only for approval to start design efforts for the proposed plaza, which is estimated to cost \$10 million to \$12 million. Any construction is at least a year away. There is still plenty of time to participate through "implementation committees," made up of property owners, businesses and others who want to work on details for executing the plan.

O’Rourke has encouraged business owners who voiced opposition or concern to be part of the process. "This is inning No. 1 of a nine-inning game," he said. "Get on the field and play the game." But Carroll, of the Yakima Sports Center, believes the ball is still with the city of Yakima. "I will engage and there would be other people who are more willing to engage if they just take us seriously," he said.

Carmody hopes future discussions will explore more nuts and bolts. "We would like to see the process take a more business, rather than government, approach to development," he said. "That means slowing it down and looking specifically at costs (and) structural impacts to roads."

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

August 9, 2013

**Tony O’Rourke, one year on
Conversation with YH-R ranges from crime to the city's poor image, Boise Cascade mill
site to City Hall culture**

Author: *Dan Catchpole*

It's been a busy first year for Yakima City Manager **Tony O’Rourke**. The city has started working to bring people and business back to downtown Yakima, taken over the airport, conducted two annual citizen surveys, cracked down on code violations at motels and hotels, started cleaning up North First Street, began implementing the Gang Free Initiative, put more money into road repairs and negotiated labor contracts with most of its largest unions. In its first annual review of **O’Rourke** earlier this week, the Yakima City Council gave him good marks across the board.

The Yakima Herald-Republic sat down with **O’Rourke** to talk about his time here.

YH-R: During the past year, you've led several major policy changes - from taking over the airport to cracking down on motel code violations. What has been your biggest success?

O’Rourke: It's been working with the City Council to develop a strategic framework for our work, and aligning that with the business plan and annual budget. Government tends to respond to the latest emergency, but this council hasn't done that.

YH-R: And your biggest regret?

O’Rourke: Nothing immediately jumps out. I don't tend to dwell that much on past decisions. I reset my clock every day. I don't know, maybe some personnel decisions that should've been made earlier, but I wanted to be fair.

YH-R: When you took over as city manager, Yakima City Hall's culture was the product of Dick Zais' 32-year tenure. How has that affected your ability to do your job?

O’Rourke: Well, the benefits are there has been consistency and stability. And the drawback is a culture that's maybe not as aggressive and customer driven as I'd like. But the employees have been able to step up. A change in leadership brings new urgency. You get complacent under one boss. It's only human nature.

YH-R: With all the changes you've made during the past year, what is the overarching goal?

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O’Rourke: The overarching goal is to move the city forward, but to do that we need to adjust the culture of city government. It needs more customer focus, living within its means and results driven.

YH-R: You've made several personnel changes - bringing in new top people, encouraging some high-level staffers to move on and reorganizing responsibilities in some departments. What are you trying to accomplish?

O’Rourke: We're trying to create a proactive management style. I want to empower employees to get results, rather than wait for instructions. You've got to constantly be producing now. Just because you've been here a long time doesn't mean you're an asset. I only had to make a tune-up here. Previous places I've worked had much more difficult work cultures when I arrived.

YH-R: How have city unions reacted to your emphasis on results and customer service?

O’Rourke: They've responded really well. Their members, for the most part, live in Yakima, and they realize what the city is facing. They want to solve problems. Two unions - transit and police officers - could have gone to binding arbitration, but didn't. We're making progress on an agreement with the firefighters union. With the police union, we knocked out our contract agreement in about five minutes, basically.

YH-R: In recent years, the city has increased its spending on police and public safety, a trend that has continued during your watch. But crime rates have been falling for decades. Why is Yakima still spending more on public safety?

O’Rourke: Unfortunately, that reduction is punctuated by drive-by shootings, gang shootings and burglaries. People need to feel safe, and public perception doesn't reflect the drop in crime. It's the hangover after years of a lot of violent crime. Crime rates are going down, but Yakima still has much higher rates compared to the national and state averages. We still need to drive those numbers down. That requires more than just about suppression of crime. It also requires prevention and intervention, which is what the city's Gang Free Initiative is designed to do.

YH-R: Yakima residents tend to have a bad image of their city. Does that affect your ability to, as you said, move the city forward?

O’Rourke: It helps me, because people recognize there are problems. But, to some degree, people have lost hope. We didn't get here overnight. So, I think people are willing to give the city time to earn their trust back. Because they're so negative about Yakima, they recognize that what we're trying to do is the right path, whether it's the Gang Free Initiative or revitalizing the downtown.

YH-R: As city manager, what is the riskiest city initiative you're working on?

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O’Rourke: The former Boise Cascade mill site is probably the riskiest situation. What we do depends on how polluted the land is and the cost of cleaning it up. That could be millions of dollars in environmental cleanup, roadwork and other improvements to get it to the point when a developer and businesses want to come in.

Now, we're going to use state and federal grants to pay for most of that work, but the city will have to put up some money. So, is that work sufficient to bring in investment? Is there that much demand for that land? We're studying those questions before we start spending much money, but the answers to those are mostly out of my control.

YH-R: What other challenges does Yakima face?

O’Rourke: Gangs and random violence continue to be a problem. They're not as bad as they used to be, but we need to drive those numbers down. The city needs to improve its physical appearance and infrastructure. It also needs more living-wage jobs and better educational opportunities with more parent involvement. These are things that the city can't tackle on its own, and they'll require years of work. I came here knowing we had lots of challenges, and I'll work on them until I retire. The keys to success are working with the City Council to move the city forward and listening to the public for direction. We've already started making progress on some things. This summer, the city started extensive repairs on some of its worst streets. Other things, like the mill site, will take years before we see the results.

But the council and City Hall are focused on the future, and it's brighter than yesterday.

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Anthony “Tony” H. O’Rourke
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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

August 7, 2013

Yakima council gives manager glowing reviewAuthor: *Phil Ferolito*

Yakima City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** "has met and exceeded expectations" in his first year on the job, implementing fresh ideas to move the city forward, the City Council concluded Tuesday. Council members met in an executive session before their regular business meeting to evaluate **O'Rourke's** performance, which garnered solid marks across the board. "The City Council was enthusiastic about the new energy and ideas that **Tony** has brought to the table when he was hired last July," Mayor Micah Cawley said in a news release. "Now, after a year's worth of work to judge from, we are confident that he's the right guy for the job. He's brought about a lot of change in the city's structure and has led the organization in a new direction." His performance was outlined in a six-page evaluation that graded him on areas ranging from effectiveness with staff and policy facilitation to organizational planning and integrity. Council members mostly graded him as meeting or exceeding expectations in all areas. No one ranked him at the bottom level of "does not meet expectations" in any of the categories.

The City Council credited **O'Rourke** with successfully negotiating several labor contracts, realigning the city's organizational structure for a smoother operation and implementing projects and events based on needs residents voiced in surveys. Some of those events are the Lunch-Time Downtown Concert Series and the Downtown Summer Nights Concert Series. He also launched an ongoing effort to repave streets throughout the city, said city spokesman Randy Beehler. In addition, **O'Rourke** created a new city position of economic development manager, responsible for a new website that promotes downtown businesses and includes a locator map for tourists. He and his staff are developing a downtown master plan that should spur continued revitalization and set design standards for growth. This summer, he launched a task force that turned up major safety code violations at 20 different properties in the city, including the downtown Cascade and Senator apartments. Property owners made the fixes necessary to bring the buildings into compliance and make them safe for residents, Beehler said.

Before coming to Yakima, **O'Rourke** worked for two years as city manager for South Lake Tahoe, Calif., and before that spent four years as the executive director of Beaver Creek Resort Co., a private alpine resort west of Denver that serves more than 3 million guests a year and generates more than \$400 million annually. He began his career in public service Isla Vista, Calif., as a community development director. He's also worked as an administrative assistant to the deputy city manager and fire chief in Dallas as well as an assistant to city manager the city manager in Richardson, Texas. He went on to become the assistant city manager Coral Springs, Fla., where he was promoted to city manager.

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Anthony “Tony” H. O’Rourke
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

June 19, 2013

City firefighters unite to protest proposed cutting of battalion chiefs

Author: *Dan Catchpole*

A move by Yakima firefighters to block a proposed staffing change by taking the issue directly to the City Council backfired Tuesday night. More than 20 firefighters showed up to protest the city administration's proposal to cut the fire department's battalion chiefs, saying that the move would put them at risk and make the department less efficient in responding to emergencies. Yakima Mayor Micah Cawley cut off Jeremy Rodriguez, president of the firefighters union, saying that he was raising staffing issues that had to be taken up during collective bargaining. A bargaining meeting is scheduled for early July. "When it comes to issues of bargaining ... that's the city manager's desk," Cawley said.

Council members in general were reluctant to engage in the issue. City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** is responsible for negotiated labor agreements, which the council then votes on. But the firefighters were raising issues of public safety, not bargaining matters, Mike Wagner, the union's secretary, said. "You guys turned public concern into an issue" of collective bargaining. "I don't get to come to a union meeting and discuss anything with you," Cawley shot back. **O'Rourke** said that the administration has asked firefighters to share their concerns about the proposal, but hasn't received a response.

The firefighters union has tried to share its concerns but city officials haven't listened, Wagner said. **O'Rourke** previously said that cutting the battalion chiefs would make for more efficient staffing and let the city hire more firefighters.

The department is staffed in 48-hour shifts, and each one has a battalion chief in charge of emergency responses.

Under **O'Rourke's** plan, the department's deputy chiefs would partially take on that role. The first company officer on scene would act as incident commander until a deputy chief arrives. But that company officer has to be taken off an engine team, which limits what that team can do and slows down the response, Rodriguez said.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

May 22, 2013

**Yakima will move ahead with plan to buy cop cars
Council members express doubts about cost projections, but agree it will improve safety**Author: *Dan Catchpole*

After a long discussion Tuesday night, the Yakima City Council told city staff to move ahead with a \$4.7 million plan to give every police patrol officer a take-home cruiser. Yakima City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** pushed for the plan, saying it is the cheapest way to make the city safer.

Under the plan, police will have a higher visibility, which supporters say will help deter crime. Officers driving the cars off duty could respond to situations demanding immediate action, such as a life-threatening emergency, but in most cases simply report potential problems for on-duty officers to handle and could respond if dispatched. Council members expressed skepticism that the program to buy 74 new cars will be as cheap as **O'Rourke** claimed it would be, but backed it as an effective way to make residents feel safer. They voted 6-0 to have staff draw up an ordinance spelling out the plan. The ordinance will be voted on at a later date. Respondents to a survey commissioned last summer by the city overwhelmingly said they don't feel safe in many parts of Yakima, despite violent crime rates that have steadily fallen over the past 20 years.

Under the take-home car program, officers would be encouraged to use the cars when they are off-duty, **O'Rourke** said. "The intent is to create significant visibility." To pay for the program, the city negotiated a tentative agreement with the Yakima Police Patrolman's Association to give up wage increases for the next two years - a projected savings of \$4.4 million over six years. The city also agreed to not raise health insurance premiums for officers. **O'Rourke** says he expects the city would have to spend that money anyway because the police union can go to binding arbitration for labor contracts.

Two council members - Kathy Coffey and Bill Lover - said they were worried the union would simply demand to make up the lost increases in two years. "That isn't the plan at all," said Tony Patlan, president of the police officers union. Speaking during the open comments period, City Council candidate Charles Noel said the city and its residents can't afford to give police officers new benefits. "The people in Yakima that are going to pay for this, they're not getting pay increases," he said.

The program wouldn't generate much additional labor costs for the city, as off-duty officers who respond to an emergency won't get overtime pay, Patlan said. Council members said the city's cost analysis seemed to involve some creative math, but the program could still be worth it. "I don't like fuzzy math," Coffey said. "I still think there's going to be increased gas and maintenance on there. And that's OK."

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)
November 30, 2012

Bid's low for MLK underpass

Good news comes with an asterisk: City manager says this is the last underpass for quite some time

Author: *MARK MOREY*

A Western Washington contractor is the apparent winner of the construction bid for the second, and long-delayed, downtown underpass. But city manager **Tony O'Rourke** sent another message, too, with the announcement Thursday: No more underpasses for the foreseeable future. "Given the magnitude of other street improvements in the city, certainly it is not a priority for me to put in another underpass," **O'Rourke** said in a telephone interview after the city announced the apparent low bidder.

Michael Morales, the city's former economic development director and the interim city manager before **O'Rourke**, at one point had suggested several more underpasses were needed to fully improve the city's transportation infrastructure. But with more and more streets across the city edging closer to failure, **O'Rourke's** proposed 2013 budget asks for money to start those repairs, which have gone unfunded for several years due to the economic decline.

The Martin Luther King Jr. underpass, to be built just west of First Street, follows a similar underpass that opened in May on Lincoln Avenue. The Lincoln underpass was plagued by construction problems that delayed completion for months and pushed the project more than \$4 million over budget. City officials say the apparent low bid for the MLK Jr. Boulevard underpass pares almost \$2 million off the estimated cost.

Mowat Construction of Woodinville submitted a bid of just more than \$10.6 million to serve as the prime contractor. Mowat was not the prime contractor on the Lincoln project. City Engineer Doug Mayo said all six bids received by the city were below the initial estimate of about \$12.7 million. "Timing is probably the biggest factor in the bids coming in below the estimate," Mayo said in a news release. "Contractors are looking for work right now, and that benefitted us on this project." If Mowat's bid is verified as the lowest, construction is expected to get under way sometime in January.

The work will take about 18 months to complete. Traffic will be diverted to Yakima Avenue during that time, and MLK Jr. Boulevard will be closed to vehicles between First Street and First Avenue. The total budget for both underpasses and related improvements was earlier estimated at about \$41.5 million. The city was able to bridge the shortfall from the Lincoln project by committing the city's share of 2013 federal transportation funding to the MLK project. It was not immediately clear what would happen to any surplus funding if the Mowat bid stays near the estimate. However, it could give the city a cushion for any unexpected costs. The Lincoln underpass went over budget primarily because of problems with how the roadbed was stabilized.

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The project was designed using a method that was later deemed to be unsuitable because of water in the area, so the contractor had to wait for testing to determine an acceptable stabilization technique. Apollo Inc. of Kennewick was the prime contractor.

The city is still looking into who is to blame for the design problem. **O’Rourke** and city engineers have said they want to avoid a repeat of the situation with the MLK underpass. **O’Rourke** said the contractor's work would be closely monitored to make sure it was on time and within budget. "Anything short of that, we're going to have problems," he said. "The public deserves that assurance."

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)
October 24, 2012

**City manager says Yakima must balance how it spends
Proposed 2013 budget aims to put employee compensation in line with cost of providing services**

Author: *MARK MOREY*

Debt service for a street bond city officials say is critically needed to fix streets headed toward massive failure: \$350,000. Givebacks from employee unions and managers to hold down the percentage of the city budget consumed by wages and benefits: \$304,000. The two figures represent the balance that City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** wants to strike between providing for the city workforce and ensuring that residents receive the services for which they pay taxes.

The City Council on Tuesday heard its first full airing of **O’Rourke’s** proposed 2013 budget. **O’Rourke** uses a variety of approaches - attrition, job moves, accounting changes - to reach his fiscal goal, but he made clear in statements to the council that he believes it's time for city employees to give back to the budget. He said after the meeting that the reception from city unions has been "not great." According to his calculations, employee compensation is set to consume 72 percent of the city general fund, up 2 percent from this year. He says the city needs to get a handle on that increase in order to provide needed services, such as street repair. And that's just the beginning. Over the next five years, he recommends the city seek \$1.5 million from employees to help control a budget gap that could reach \$4 million per year by 2016. He identified increases in employee compensation as the biggest reason for the \$1.4 million hike in the 2013 budget - almost \$1 million to police and firefighters, another \$385,000 toward the citywide health plan. "We can't continue to meet the needs of our community if more and more of our resources go into salary and benefits," **O’Rourke** told the council during the two-hour session, which also covered the city's strategic plan. **O’Rourke** said he hopes through negotiation to avoid "more draconian" options, namely layoffs. "We're just going to be straight about the need for this to happen," he said.

Gary Hill, president of the biggest union starting wage negotiations with the city, withheld judgment, saying Tuesday that union leaders are waiting for more information from the city. "There's a lot of stuff that's probably going to come up," he said about pending talks between the sides. Hill's union - which represents almost half of the city's 639 union employees in a variety of departments - for the last several years has accepted benefit cuts and no cost of living increases in order to avoid layoffs.

O’Rourke said many of the unions have gone without pay increases in five of the last seven years, but he pointed out that pay and insurance for city employees remain above those received by many Yakima residents. The council did not dwell on the union aspects of **O’Rourke’s** budget. But members seemed generally pleased with his overall approach to balance the budget while finding revenue for more police officers to staff a second gang team and to begin repairing

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streets, an area unfunded for the past few years. Council members complimented **O’Rourke** and the detailed nature of his budget proposal. "This is definitely a new age for the city," Mayor Micah Cawley said. Councilman Rick Ensey said he was excited by the presentation, but he warned that the council must not be distracted by naysayers. "We have to have a strong spine," he said. The 2013 budget is calculated at \$61.4 million, up 2.4 percent from the projected final figure for 2012. The budget saves the most money - \$730,000 - by changing how the city calculates personnel cost. Instead of budgeting every authorized position at the full annual amount, the city will deduct 2 percent in total personnel costs to reflect positions open throughout the year from vacancies. The \$304,000 would come from both union and non-union employees. About 90 of the city's employees are unrepresented. That final number is dependent on negotiations. Last year, the council turned down the police and fire contracts once before securing a better deal, avoiding the cost of arbitration for both sides.

Another \$163,000 in savings would come from holding open or delaying hiring for three positions in information technology, public works and community development. And \$220,000 would be freed up by shifting three airport firefighters to other vacancies in the fire department. A federal requirement for airport staffing during flight times will be met through overtime or staffing adjustments. **O’Rourke** proposes that the city take \$350,000 from the general fund to cover debt service on a \$5 million bond that would be put toward street repair. The citywide pavement condition index - a measure of whether the streets are in good shape - stands at 54 on a scale of 100. If repairs don't start soon, that number dips dramatically to 19, effectively leaving the city with too big of a hole to climb out of, public works officials say. The bond - which would fund repairs across the city - gives the city a chance to prove to residents that it can effectively deal with the street problem.

The next step might be a ballot measure for a \$20 car tab fee, which could raise \$1 million per year toward repairs or be leveraged for another long-term bond, **O’Rourke** told the council. The council, which has tussled with the street issue for the past two years, did not act on the request and has time to decide whether to prepare a ballot proposal for early next year. **O’Rourke** also wants to dedicate five police officers to a second gang unit. Police say they need another team to address the gang problem fulltime.

One officer would be pulled from patrol, two more from community services and two new officers would be hired. Civilians would be hired for the community service jobs, perhaps retired officers. **O’Rourke** said the approach saves money, as well as the time needed for hiring five new officers. The city remains on track for hiring a dozen additional officers by next year - adding six and filling six vacancies from 2012. Among other highlights, the proposed budget calls for reinstating two fire inspector positions, cut from this year's budget and refunded largely through inspection fees, and finding about \$347,00 to hire more public defenders. The Supreme Court ruled this year that local governments needed to do a better job of representing poor clients, requiring more attorneys. The council is expected to call for a public budget hearing on Nov. 20, with budget approval tentatively slated for early December. By state law, the budget must be approved by the end of the year.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

September 22, 2012

O’Rourke wants city to agree on mill plan

Author: *Yakima Herald-Republic*

The Yakima City Council and Yakima County commissioners will meet Tuesday for an update on the future of the old Boise Cascade mill site. City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** says he wants the council to agree on a road map for the project. After reviewing past work on the project, **O’Rourke** said he got the impression that the council, rather than city staff, needed to be more involved in the decision-making process. Key decisions to be made soon include the necessity of an environmental review and an appraisal of the overall property value. **O’Rourke** said Friday that he thinks the city should prepare for purchasing the property from the Oregon-based ownership group for the best chance at controlling its future. Development costs would still be the responsibility of the private market.

O’Rourke said it may be financially best to leave an old city dump in place on the mill site, instead of trying to convert it to a soccer complex. The necessary work on the dump site would be expensive, so it could make better sense to build the soccer fields on the Central Washington State Fair Park property, owned by the county, he said.

The meeting is at 10 a.m. at City Hall, 129 N. Second St.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

July 7, 2012

Yakima city manager's survey hits mailbox

By MARK MOREY

A survey being mailed to residents this month is new City Manager **Tony O’Rourke**’s first big step toward shaping his tenure at City Hall. A round of pre-notification postcards went out late last month, and the surveys will be mailed in two rounds ending Friday. The 3,000 surveys should result in a return rate between 25 percent and 40 percent, **O’Rourke** said. That should be enough to get a good sense of what services residents believe the city should provide and, to some extent, how they should be funded. The survey consists of more than 20 questions on everything from residents’ perception of how safe they are to their priorities for spending money on initiatives like street repair or an aquatic center.

O’Rourke said this will be the fourth time he has conducted this type of survey. It was a key part of his employment contract with the City Council. He said listening to taxpayer feedback is an important part of making government more responsive. In some ways, it simplifies the decision making process. “It’s not a question of guessing what they want. It’s just a matter of delivering on what they tell you they want,” **O’Rourke** said. Core services, like police and fire, are generally expected, but the survey may help the council make decisions in other service areas, such as streets and parks.

In South Lake Tahoe, where **O’Rourke** worked before coming to Yakima this month, a citizen survey resulted in the council finding money in the budget for bonds to cover infrastructure improvements. That vote followed some 15 years of indecision on the issue, **O’Rourke** said. In Yakima, the council has already delayed a ballot vote on adding a \$20 car tab fee to support long-unfunded road repairs. A question about how to pay for those repairs is included in the survey. The survey’s results will be ready for review at an Aug. 28 council retreat.

O’Rourke said the survey is structured so that residents in all parts of the city will receive them. A Spanish-language version was included.

The survey, at a cost of about \$25,000, is being conducted by National Research Center Inc. of Boulder, Colo., in cooperation with the International City/County Management Association.

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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

June 2, 2012

New Yakima city manager meets with council prior to arrival

YAKIMA, Wash. -- A strategic plan, a business plan, citizen and employee surveys, outcome measurements. This is the language **Tony O’Rourke** plans to bring to City Hall when he starts July 2 as city manager. The keywords add up to **O’Rourke**’s strategy for transforming both the culture and the framework behind a local government that spent much of the past three decades under a single manager, the now-retired Dick Zais. A 40-minute session Friday with the City Council was intended as an icebreaker before his formal start. **O’Rourke** made clear that the politicians drive the car — he just provides the fuel at their direction. “The most critical element is the political will of the City Council — and I believe you have that will or I wouldn’t be here,” he said.

For a council that has sometimes chided itself for being indecisive, **O’Rourke**’s feedback-oriented and goal-driven approach will require something of an adjustment. But council members said they are eager to get started on the initiatives outlined by **O’Rourke** — a citizen survey expected to be complete by August; a strategic plan that looks ahead several years to ensure that the city’s priorities, citizens’ desires and the city budget match up; and a business plan that addresses shorter-term objectives within the overall strategy. “Tell you what: I’m excited,” said Councilman Rick Ensey, who added that he was ready to put the past behind him and get started on the next phase.

Kathy Coffey agreed, but cautioned that the council should not immediately expect miracles from **O’Rourke** or other city staff. “There’s a lot on your plate, so the need for priority on your part and on our part is going to be even more important,” Coffey said. In response to Coffey’s concerns, **O’Rourke** acknowledged that much of 2012 will likely be consumed by drafting the 2013 budget. But **O’Rourke** said government must recognize that current revenue levels probably aren’t going to improve. That will require the council to focus on key initiatives — perhaps the old Boise Cascade mill site, gangs or the future of the Yakima Air Terminal — while looking toward partnerships, technology and other ways to cut the cost of government.

“I don’t work well in the Land of Oz,” **O’Rourke** said. “I work well in the land of reality, and the reality is government has to change.”

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Anthony “Tony” H. O’Rourke
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Yakima Herald-Republic (WA)

May 12, 2012

O’Rourke signs 2-year contract to be Yakima’s city manager

Tony O’Rourke has signed a two-year contract to serve as Yakima city manager and plans to start work July 2, city officials announced Friday. **O’Rourke** and Mayor Micah Cawley met at Yakima City Hall Friday morning to formally sign the agreement. He will be paid \$175,000 annually. The new city manager and his wife are spending a few days in town house hunting and getting more familiar with the area.

O’Rourke has resigned from his current position as city manager in South Lake Tahoe, Calif., but will continue working there until the middle of June, a city release said. **O’Rourke** will make another visit to Yakima in a few weeks to meet key city staff and community leaders. “I’m looking forward to listening to the Yakima community and finding out what the needs and expectations are here,” said **O’Rourke** in the news release. “Yakima is a great place and already has a solid foundation. “There are certainly challenges here, but I’m confident that we will be able to put into place concepts that I’ve found to be successful throughout my career in both the public sector and the private sector that will help take Yakima to the next level.”

Before taking the city manager job in South Lake Tahoe in August 2010, **O’Rourke** was the executive director of Beaver Creek Resort Co. in Vail, Colo. After graduating from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1977 with a Bachelor of Arts in political science, **O’Rourke** began his public service career in Isla Vista, Calif., as a community development director. In 1981, **O’Rourke** earned a master’s degree in urban and regional planning from Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

From 1981 to 1983, he was an administrative assistant to the deputy city manager and fire chief in Dallas. In 1983, **O’Rourke** went to work for Richardson, Texas, as an administrative assistant to the city manager and became the assistant to the city manager in Richardson two years later. In 1989, he became the assistant city manager in Coral Springs, Fla., and in 1992 was promoted to Corals Springs city manager, a position he held until he joined Beaver Creek Resort Co.

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Lake Tahoe News
April 20, 2012

Opinion: Open Letter to the Community
O’Rourke is in breach of contract

To the community,

There is a lot of noise buzzing around the city manager’s search for a new employer. So, for the record, the vote to hire Mr. **(Tony) O’Rourke** as South Tahoe’s city manager was 4-1. I cast the lone no vote. But I should back up and explain why I did not take part in the interview process for selecting a city manager.

The process was tainted from the beginning because the field to be interview had been reduced to just two candidates, **O’Rourke** and another candidate. The City Council had selected four to be interviewed. Before the process started two dropped out. At that point, I phoned Mayor (Kathay) Lovell and told her that the list was too short and that the council should open the selection process again. The mayor said no to my request; there would only be two to be interviewed. Because of her response I bowed out. To me it was clear that **O’Rourke** had a lock on the job because when the council learned that **O’Rourke** was from Beaver Creek, the glow of Vail lit up the face of more than one councilmember.

As said, the above is by gone. History. Presently, after less than two years, **O’Rourke** is searching for a new job and it is reported that he has been offered a city manager’s job in Washington state. If he doesn’t take that job, I believe he will be in breach of contract with the city of South Lake Tahoe. Clearly, he hasn’t any intention of fulfilling the contract with the city. I think the claim of breach is solid, that he can be fired without collecting a basket full of dough.

From the beginning, the selection process for hiring **O’Rourke** lacked integrity. It was incomplete. The bias was there and clear. And now the joke is on the city. Also, it is clear that **O’Rourke** falls short of having integrity. But in fairness to **O’Rourke**, the City Council majority got what it ordered.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

PS: If according to the current mayor and council **O’Rourke** is the real deal – good as gold – why are they prepared to release him from his contract?

[CB&A Note: Mr. Crawford served on the South Lake Tahoe City Council from 1998 to 2002 and 2006 to 2010.]

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Anthony “Tony” H. O’Rourke
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Lake Tahoe News
January 21, 2012

JPA agrees to refinance South Shore recreation bonds

By Kathryn Reed

While it’s up to the recreation JPA board to decide how to spend the \$15,000 that is estimated to be saved each year by refinancing the bonds, it is likely to go toward recreation on the South Shore instead of saving taxpayers a few cents on the \$18 a year they pay now for the measure.

That will be an agenda item if and when the bond sales go through and there is actual money to talk about.

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority – made up of Hal Cole (South Lake Tahoe), Norma Santiago (El Dorado County), and Debbie Henderson (Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District) – agreed Friday to go forward with changing 75 percent of the bonds from tax-exempt to taxable and refinancing the remainder as tax-exempt.

A contingency is the JPA board wants the county Board of Supervisors at its Jan. 24 meeting and Tahoe Paradise board on Jan. 26 to endorse the refinancing idea.

Santiago and Henderson after the meeting told *Lake Tahoe News* they believe their respective boards will give the green light. Both boards have been apprised of the proposal that will be before them.

However, the JPA board can do what it wants without the approval of the three member agency boards. What the JPA board would do if a no vote were given next week by either or both boards, remains a large question mark.

What has changed since the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Jan. 17 approved the refinancing is interest rates have decreased. Compass Bank is now a better alternative than Alliance Bank.

While financial advisor Mark Northcross would receive a bonus from Alliance if he were to bring the JPA’s business there, he is recommending Compass because of the cost savings to his client – the JPA. (He was the financial advisor when the original bonds were sold in 2001.)

On Wednesday, Compass’ taxable bonds dropped from 5 percent to 4.75 percent and their tax-exempt bonds dropped from 3.25 percent to 3.2 percent.

Northcross noted if the JPA were to refinance all the bonds at the current tax-exempt status, that the annual savings would be \$50,000.

The city, though, maintains changing the bond structure will save taxpayers at least \$150,000 more a year because the ice arena will stay in the hands of a private operator. With that entity

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paying the city rent and other money, the city’s coffers could expand even more. City Manager **Tony O’Rourke**’s mantra is the JPA taxpayers benefit if the city is saving money.

Talk of refinancing the bonds was never brought up by the JPA board until South Lake Tahoe realized the contract it had with private operators of the ice rink had to be altered to comply with IRS rules as they relate to for-profits. That meant creating a 50-day termination clause that is black and white.

The original contract between the city and Tahoe Sports Entertainment (and one that is likely to be reinstated after the bond sales are finalized) was for 10 years, with a 90-day out clause. Dissolution, though, had many strings attached. The longer contract provides incentives for TSE to make substantive investments in the rink.

The ice rink was built with voter-approved Measure S money.

Property owners on the California side of the basin – roughly encompassing the boundaries of Lake Tahoe Unified School District – pay \$18 for Measure S. The JPA collects about \$630,000 a year. There is \$4.5 million in principal owed on the bonds that were approved in 2000 and sunset in 2030.

It’s expected the bond sales/refinancing will go through at the end of February.

Also at the meeting, the JPA board appointed people to the bicycle and ball field committees. Creation of the committees fulfills a requirement of the revised recreation measure – called Measure R – that was approved in November.

The two committees will have a joint meeting Feb. 3 at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport where they will be given a primer on California’s opening meeting law and officers will be elected.

All committee meetings will be open to the public.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lake Tahoe News
September 16th, 2011

S. Tahoe council asks for help if workers want to keep jobs

By Kathryn Reed

After nearly three hours, the South Lake Tahoe City Council turned the budget discussion on the nearly 200 people who attended the special meeting Thursday night. Councilman Bruce Grego led the charge, with his colleagues falling in behind, when he asked where those in attendance have been before last night. Then asking them to suggest solutions for closing the \$5.2 million gap. Asking them to do more than say they are good workers or retirees, and that they should keep their jobs, salaries and benefits. The offer was put to the community at-large as well.

With the 2011-12 budget taking effect Oct. 1, the council unanimously agreed to meet again Sept. 27 at 6pm, with a vote expected that night. Between now and then council members want ideas for how to solve the problem, not reasons why not to do something. However, it would be a serious violation for a represented employee to engage a councilperson in a discussion about salaries, benefits or work conditions. This extension also allows the city to continue negotiating with its seven bargaining units and come up with solutions that would alter the budget proposal as presented. While the council met in closed session before the budget meeting started at 7:15pm, no reportable action on the labor negotiations was taken.

Revenue discussion

Grego, showing his frustration, said the council put a measure on the ballot two years ago to raise the business license fee, which would have mostly increased the rate on larger businesses, and the town voted it down. With the hotel occupancy rate at 23 percent, City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** said now is not the time to raise the transient occupancy tax when rooms already are empty. One person who spoke to *Lake Tahoe News* said she tried to offer **O’Rourke** ideas but was shunned. She’s going to take her thoughts to the council in private.

At the meeting, Robert Stiles with Tahoe Real Estate Services, suggested raising the vacation rental home fee from \$144 a year to \$250 to raise about \$130,000. Steve Crouch, who represents the General-Public Works association, said lower the reserves to less than 25 percent, don’t spend money on frivolous items like \$9,000 to decorate a Christmas tree or \$50,000 on GPS tracking devices for snowplow drivers. Rob Swain, who runs the senior center, said, “There are lots of assets. Things could be explored. We could get creative and have lots better results.” This longtime employee ran the ice rink before it was turned over to a private operation last month. He did not present any ideas at the Sept. 15 meeting, but instead spoke in platitudes.

Councilman Tom Davis is most concerned about the projected revenue in the budget. He echoed Stiles’ comment that forecasting an increase in property taxes of about 1.5 percent could backfire. Property taxes are the city’s largest source of income.

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What’s on the table

The elimination of 22 jobs is likely if concessions are not made by the employee groups regarding benefits. Who exactly they are is not definitive until either a labor contract is renegotiated or the deadline arrives for the council to pass a budget – which must be balanced per state law. Even then, employee bumping rights make for the fallout to be a bit prolonged. Cuts are expected in nearly every department. The three division chiefs in the fire department have been given notice. They are at-will employees.

At the meeting Thursday, **O’Rourke** said the city is “proposing alternative delivery contracts” for the rec center, senior center and pool. He said this would not affect the quality or quantity of services. Sources have told *Lake Tahoe News* the rec center is likely to have a greater partnership with the local Boys & Girls Club because it is running similar programs, plus the two buildings are walking distance from each other.

El Dorado County is expected to take over a larger roll in how the senior center is operated. Most counties run these types of programs – not a city. Changes to the pool are expected, but it will not be operated by a private entity.

O’Rourke admitted the golf course, airport, campground and other city run operations could be turned over to a private operator if the numbers make it more advantageous to do so and the council agrees to it. Temporary snowplow operators are expected to go from seven to 15. **O’Rourke** said this will provide for an initial savings of \$256,000 a year, with long-term benefits of a half million dollars a year.

Maintenance of roads beyond pothole repair will be contracted out. Furloughs for just about everyone are going away – which equates to 18,000 hours of additional service. Lease purchase agreements for police vehicles will become the new norm.

Who’s saying what

Many of the 29 people who spoke, along with a few shouts from the audience (many of whom were watching on the television monitor in the lobby because of space constraints), voiced frustration with what they perceive as cuts only at the bottom.

However, it was in March that three director jobs and the assistant city manager position were eliminated. **O’Rourke** on Thursday said the consolidation of jobs resulted in 10 percent raises for the finance director, police-fire chief, and community services director because of increased duties. He failed to mention how the human resources director and public information officer also are making more.

Employees say this is unfair. When they are asked to do more with fewer people they are not given raises. While this is true, they have a contract per their bargaining unit and the upper management positions are at-will and not represented. But two of their own got 10 percent raises

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as well — the capital improvement manager and payroll specialist. Non-exempt types will also be paying their share of PERS, while the only employee group to agree to do so is the fire association.

O’Rourke emphatically stated he had not received a single bonus nor a nickel raise since he has been here. (Although he came on board in August 2010, the council has yet to review him as is normal each year.)

Crouch, the union rep, said it’s frustrating to negotiate with the numbers continually changing. City staff said property taxes and state take-aways legitimately altered the figures.

Judy Crawford, former parks and rec employee, lamented how sad it is there are more places to buy pot in town than there are places to buy shoes.

Thirteen-year-old Garrett Harley spoke of the great job the rec staff does.

Vivian Gonterman, who has lived in town since Pioneer Trail was a dirt road, equated the city contracting out services to how well the United States has prospered by having other countries make everything. Her husband is a retired city employee.

Joe McKenna, retired fire captain, said, “We’ve always dealt with financial crisis. I was on the bargaining team. We gave up a lot for our health care.” (Retirees get the same health care benefits employees get.)

Jerry Copeland, representing the Admin-Confidential employee group, said no one told him there would be a reward to come to the table first. (The fire association is getting a 2 percent raise because they made concessions.) He also said the perception is the employees are the ones who caused the financial problems.

A recurring sentiment expressed confidentially to *Lake Tahoe News* is that management, and therefore the council, don’t really care and are trying to balance the budget on the back of employees who did not create the fiscal mess. In addition, the dictatorial nature of how things are run is often echoed. Lindsey Henry, 27, a third generation South Lake Tahoe resident, said of the employees, “You need to consider the big picture of what they are doing for this community.” Her dad used to work for the city.

Many people voiced concern for how well the streets would be plowed with temps and the potential liability it could create for the city. “Temporary workers won’t save our city,” Vernon Lee told the council. While the city struggles to live within its means, many who spoke said it’s also critical to not lose the sense of community that still lingers.

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Mountain Democrat (Placerville, CA)
August 11, 2011

Tahoe police chief takes over fire dept.

By Adam Jensen

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE — Major changes are in store for both the South Lake Tahoe Fire and Police departments as the city continues a struggle to live within its means. And one of the most significant changes has already taken place. Police Chief Brian Uhler took over as fire chief on Monday following the resignation of Lorenzo Gigliotti on Aug. 1. And Gigliotti, who said he expected to stay through September in a resignation letter, may not be the only leadership position on the way out. During a Wednesday interview, Uhler said he expects a “significantly smaller command structure” at the fire department as part of an upcoming reorganization. The new structure has not been finalized, but the department’s three division chief positions could be cut as part of the changes.

Two of the division chiefs are eligible or will soon be eligible for early retirement, Uhler said. Layoffs of the positions are also being considered, said City Manager **Tony O’Rourke**. If the division chiefs are cut, the department would then look to find three supervisors from its pool of nine captains. **O’Rourke** said he then plans on finding a fire chief from the current captains to replace Uhler in the next six to 12 months. Uhler acknowledged there is “a lot of tension” in the Fire Department because of the possibility of job losses, but said he was confident the department would be able to work through it.

The reorganization of both the Police and Fire departments is being conducted in a way that will maintain service to the community, according to both Uhler and **O’Rourke**. “When we have to make these cuts, we don’t want to make them from the front line,” **O’Rourke** said.

South Lake Tahoe Firemen’s Association representative Dan Sullivan was in training Friday and not immediately available for comment on the changes to the fire department. Each of the department’s division chiefs, Ray Zachau, Greg Gstettenbauer and Marty Scheuerman did not return a request for comment Friday. Uhler acknowledged he is not a fire expert and will be relying on the expertise of department firefighters as he takes on the responsibility of fire chief.

The city has operated with a single head for the Fire Department and Police Department in the past and **O’Rourke** highlighted Uhler’s 25 years in public safety in explaining that he has “no concerns” about police chief’s ability to take on the expanded role.

Police also see cuts

While Uhler launches a new job as fire chief, significant changes are also under way at the Police Department. The department’s captain position will not be filled when Martin Hewlett retires in February. One of three lieutenant positions will also be cut following the retirement of Cam Carmichael the same month.

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The June retirement of Sgt. Robert Autre and the recent promotion of Sgt. Brian Williams to lieutenant also create two vacancies at the sergeant position that will not be filled, Uhler said. The loss of Autre’s position is “one less officer on the streets, but at least it’s not the result of having to lay someone off,” Uhler said. Elimination of the positions will require more from the department’s lieutenants and officers may also be asked to take on additional responsibilities as part of the reorganization, Uhler said. The elimination of some police services is also being considered. Moving coordination of the city’s Latino Affairs Commission from the Police Department to city spokeswoman Nancy Kerry is one example of a change that has already taken place, Uhler said.

The department will still be engaged with the commission on police issues, but does not have the resources to coordinate all of the commissions interests, which include issues like access to housing and job creation, Uhler said. “We want to help, but we want to help in ways that relate to the Police Department,” Uhler said. “We have to focus on delivery of core services,” Uhler added.

Responding to calls for service, undertaking active patrols, conducting thorough investigations and maintaining participation in the South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team were among the core services listed by Uhler.

The changes to the Police and Fire departments are part of strategy spearhead by **O’Rourke** to save \$3.4 million annually over the next five years. The City Council has balanced its budget using reserve funding the past two years and eliminated eight positions in March as part of the city-wide reorganization. But the strategy has not been as successful as **O’Rourke** would have liked in achieving concessions from the city staff labor groups. He said only 15 percent of the hoped for savings have materialized from the groups.

The concessions have come from the South Lake Tahoe Firemen’s Association, **O’Rourke** said. “In the absence of concessions, we are looking at layoffs,” **O’Rourke** said, adding, “We went through this drill in March. Unfortunately we need to do it again.” California cities are required to adopt balanced budgets under state law. A budget proposal will be presented to the city council Aug. 23, **O’Rourke** said.

The city manager said he expected South Lake Tahoe to struggle with revenue for the foreseeable future, noting continued uncertainty in the economy. “This doesn’t happen overnight and it won’t be solved overnight,” **O’Rourke** said. “You cannot expect the status quo to take you into the future.”

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Lake Tahoe News
July 20th, 2011

Opinion: Telling the truth from city hall
By **Tony O’Rourke**

Mr. (Steve) Kubby recently wrote about a complaint he filed with the grand jury, which he has a right to do.

However, misrepresenting the facts is harmful to the community and creates confusion. The following facts can be supported with documentation upon request:

- Prior to the city’s incorporation in 1965, “rural road standards” existed throughout the community. In 1965, the city inherited the rural roadway network from the county. The current City Council’s proposed initiative to invest \$20 million over the next five years to improve and fix the city’s road infrastructure is a significant and important step in the right direction. The city has published several articles about its efforts to set aside funding to improve the roads. Unfortunately, Mr. Kubby continues to ignore this fact.
- In 2003, the City conducted an audit of the Redevelopment Agency’s financial performance to complete the redevelopment projects in the Stateline area. Following this comprehensive audit, the City Council authorized a loan in the amount of \$7 million to the Redevelopment Agency for costs and revenue shortages related to the redevelopment project. The Redevelopment Agency continues to repay \$500,000 each year for this loan, which covers principal and interest. Over half of the loan amount has been repaid to date. Each year, Redevelopment Agency proceeds also support the city’s general fund for services rendered by the city on behalf of the Redevelopment Agency. The city provided all of the background documentation regarding this issue to Mr. Kubby upon his request and reviewed many documents with him about this issue. Two separate grand juries looked in this issue and recommend the city adopt financial policies to more efficiently recover their costs for redevelopment projects. The city adopted those policies in 2005. Now let’s move onto more pertinent and immediate challenges, like financial sustainability and infrastructure investment rather than beating this matter to death.
- Mr. Randy Lane’s Chateau project is not funded by the city. The city’s interest is the same as everyone’s, which is a desire to see a project completed at the site. Neither Mayor Hal Cole, nor any city councilmembers, are responsible for the collapse of the project or the economy. The project continues to attract interested investors and will require the collaboration of all parties to see a project come to fruition at the site. The City Council supports completion of a project.
- The city has increased its efforts to keep the public informed about the cost of roads, the progress of projects and all aspects of the city. Visit the [city’s website](#) and sign up to receive news and information.

Tony O’Rourke is city manager of South Lake Tahoe.

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PRWeb (USA)
July 18, 2011

People are Talking about Lake Tahoe News

Lake Tahoe News (<http://www.LakeTahoeNews.net>) is gearing up to celebrate a full two years of being the only daily news source in Lake Tahoe. In the past year the website has grown from 20,000 readers a month to more than 50,000. Readers are in 100 countries and more than 2,000 cities.

"Our growth in this day and age of a struggling economy is proof that giving people what they want and need is the future of journalism," Publisher Kathryn Reed says. She also contends online news is "not just the future, it's the present."

Subscribers receive daily emails for free with headlines from the last 24 hours. Editorial content ranges from the day-to-day life to comprehensive pieces providing glimpses to life inside and outside of Tahoe.

Writers gave readers a look inside Olympic venues before the 2010 Vancouver Winter Games. Being a world-class ski destination, Lake Tahoe spawned about a dozen Olympians. Numerous stories have highlighted the life-altering aftermath of the horrendous 2007 wildfire that consumed 254 homes.

The site was launched Labor Day weekend 2009 when hundreds marched down U.S. Highway 50 to give thanks to the discovery Jaycee Lee Dugard, the local child who was kidnapped and found as an adult with two children of her own, was alive. Being strictly online, independent, local and 24/7, the news site proves print and broadcast mediums can be stale. It is not tied to corporate interests (like Patch.com) or stockholder whims.

"If you want to know what is really happening in South Lake Tahoe, up to the minute, Lake Tahoe News is a great resource, with facts, fairness and the pulse and opinion of the community," South Lake Tahoe City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** says.

People are gravitating to the website for news about Tahoe, but to also find out about events in the area, what is going on in the outdoors and to add their opinion. The interactive nature allows a constant dialog.

Advertisers are finding online is the way to reach more people - because it is global, even if the product is local. Plus, all ads link back to the advertisers' website - which provides more information than any print ad, or quick television or radio spot ever could. That call to action is immediate. The branding is constant.

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Lake Tahoe News
June 10th, 2011

Opinion: Plan to improve South Tahoe’s roads
By Tony O’Rourke

As the city sets its sights on improving the roads of South Lake Tahoe, it’s a good time to reflect on the overall condition of the streets and how the Road to Tahoe ever got paved in the first place.

- The city’s current roadway network is comprised of over 256 lane miles of roadway.
- Prior to 1960–1965, “rural road standards” existed throughout the community. In 1965 when the city incorporated it inherited the roadway network from the county.
- The “typical” roadway structure on these rural roadways has been a minimal two inches of asphalt over existing compacted dirt. In most cases, no drainage infrastructure nor curb or gutter was installed. By comparison, today’s standard residential roadways are 4 inches of asphalt over 8 inches of compacted Class II aggregate base material.
- Making the old roadway conditions even worse, the asphalt mixture used to create these roads included an oil-based binding material resulting in strong, but inflexible roads causing large thermal cracking throughout the network.
- In 1995, the city began investing approximately \$546,903 per year for roadway rehabilitation and overlay – for a total of \$7,109,749 expended, excluding years 2000, 2004 and 2005.
- In 2007, the city created a pavement management system to more accurately evaluate and prioritize road maintenance. Prior to the new system, windshield surveys were used to visually observe the road conditions and repairs were scheduled based on appearance. Using the new system, the city inspected every roadway and assigned a score based on the amount of pavement distress per segment. The higher the score, the better the road condition. The average score on a scale of 1 to 100 is an overall 50 or an F grade.
- The city recently evaluated the cost to convert and improve all roadways from rural conditions to “complete streets,” which includes curb, gutter, sidewalk, landscaping and lighting at cost of approximately \$300 million.
- For the first time in the city’s history, the City Council adopted a Strategic Plan and five-year financial plan which places roadway rehabilitation as a high priority and for the first time the city is allocating a substantial amount of funds to roads. The city will be expending approximately \$4 million annually or \$20 million over the next five years for roadway improvements. This figure is eight times the amount spent on any previous year in the city’s history.

The roads to Tahoe will finally begin to look and wear better than ever.

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Lake Tahoe News
 May 16th, 2011

Opinion: Now is the time for solutions, not stones
By Tony O’Rourke

In response to Mr. (Bill) Crawford’s May 12, 2011, opinion piece in the [Lake Tahoe News](#) I would like to set the record straight.

It was grossly misleading of Mr. Crawford to state, “the city manager of South Lake Tahoe will advise the City Council to donate \$250,000 of city reserve funds to the school district for upgrading the football field at South Tahoe High School.” Mr. Crawford further stated, “This is an example of undisciplined behavior by the city manager because the gift has nothing do with meeting the needs of the city.”

First, the May 3 memorandum to the City Council on this matter clearly states that Dr. (Jim) Tarwater, superintendent of Lake Tahoe Unified School District, was scheduled to make a presentation requesting the City Council consider a contribution of \$250,000 toward the Viking Stadium and softball field improvements. Nowhere in the memo am I, as city manager, or any other member of the city staff recommending anything other than to hear Dr. Tarwater’s presentation and consider his request. Furthermore, the item was postponed until June because the request required additional information and needed to be discussed in the broader context of the city’s proposed five-year Capital Improvement Plan.

In Mr. Crawford’s own words, “The school district should run the district and the city should run the city ... *but there should be no free exchange of tax dollars.*” (emphasis added). I find it incredulous that Mr. Crawford would suggest the notion of a potential partnership between the city and school district as ill-advised” and “undisciplined behavior,” yet as a council member Mr. Crawford repeatedly supported a partnership between the city and school district as exhibited by the following:

- Voted multiple times to support the school district financially, most recently in 2010 to spend \$52,913 for a South Lake Tahoe police officer to serve four days a week as a school resource officer at South Tahoe High School. The school district contributed \$52,105 for this “financial partnership.”
- Voted to support the expenditure of \$28,000 for a land appraisal and master plan for a government center in partnership with the school district and El Dorado County.
- In 2009, voted to support the development and shared operating costs of a city-school district multipurpose room at South Tahoe High School.
- At the Feb. 6, 2007, City Council meeting, Mr. Crawford expressed his opinion of the importance of securing maintenance funding for the renovated athletic track and newly constructed soccer field at South Tahoe Middle School — the same track and soccer field

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for which the city had in 2006 contributed \$270,000 to the school district to build. At the February 2007 meeting Mr. Crawford stated, “this renovated facility should be available for all of the community.” Now, Mr. Crawford criticizes simply the idea of considering the very kind of City-School District partnership he supported as a council member.

Mr. Crawford is correct, “The city can’t fix the streets.” During Mr. Crawford’s tenure as City Council member virtually nothing was done to invest in city streets. In fact, the city last adopted a Capital Improvement Program in 1999.

By comparison, the current City Council in less than 100 days of service has:

- Right-sized the city organization through department consolidations, layoffs and early retirements saving the South Lake Tahoe taxpayers \$10.2 million over the next five years;
- Adopted a Strategic Plan that addresses and prioritizes the needs of the community for the next five years by focusing on Fiscal Sustainability, Economic Development, Improving the Built Environment, Improving Public Trust and Accountability, and Partnership Development;
- Adopted a five-year financial plan that eliminates a projected \$17 million budget shortfall over the next five years by right-sizing the city organization to live within its means and investing \$25 million in public roads, sidewalks, drainage, lighting and community facilities;
- Started developing the first Capital Improvement Plan since 1999 to improve streets, sidewalks, lights, bike paths and community facilities;
- Taken action to provide the public what the public has loudly indicated it wants, which includes better government, better streets and infrastructure, better facilities for youth and better partnerships among government agencies. In the December 2010 Citizen Survey, a mere 32 percent of residents indicated services for our youth were excellent or good and 81 percent rated community appearance and infrastructure as an essential or very important priority to address.

Ironically and unfortunately, when former Councilmember Crawford had the opportunity to put the city on a fiscally prudent and sustainable course as the current City Council has done, he chose to use over \$5.2 million dollars in operating reserves in 2008, 2009 and 2010 largely for personnel costs to balance the city’s budget rather than permanently right-sizing the city and investing in public infrastructure.

Mr. Crawford, please spare the public lectures on what is prudent or appropriate fiscal discipline. When Mr. Crawford had the opportunity to demonstrate fiscally prudent action, he chose to kick the can down the road.

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Every citizen, every city employee, every City Council member in the wake of these financially challenging times must share part of the burden of saving our city. I publicly request Mr. Crawford to commit to finding constructive and positive solutions for our City and not merely sit on the sidelines and criticize those who are making the tough choices now, taking the heat now, for choices that could have been made years ago. These are times that require bold and innovative leadership, not carping from the bench.

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Lake Tahoe News
April 29th, 2011

**Opinion: Detailing importance of S. Tahoe’s General Plan
By Tony O’Rourke**

On May 3, the South Lake Tahoe City Council will host a public hearing and work session on the city’s General Plan update. On May 17, the City Council is scheduled to consider adopting the General Plan update and final environmental impact report. This is an exciting time for the city as it nears completion of adopting the community’s vision following a three-year process of gathering community input, developing ideas, evaluating environmental impacts and concerns and considering alternatives.

The city of South Lake Tahoe’s 2030 General Plan update sets a new direction for how the community plans, manages, and implements change. The development of the General Plan update is based on the smart growth principles adopted by the City Council in 2005, the Sustainability Plan adopted by the City Council in 2008, as well as the community’s vision as expressed in the draft Tahoe Valley Community Plan, Pathway 2007, many General Plan public workshops and community input during the process through comments and meetings.

In addition, the drafted General Plan and final environmental impact report includes environmental mitigation measures and an analysis of consistency with standards set by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Why do we need a General Plan when we have the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and its Regional Plan?

Every city and county in California is legally required to adopt a General Plan, which serves as a community’s constitution for land use and development. The TRPA sets land use policy on a regional scale, but doesn’t include specific needs of a community and South Lake Tahoe is our community. While a Regional Plan is important, its mission is to focus on lake clarity, regional developments and environmental thresholds. The city’s General Plan goes a step further and focuses on South Lake Tahoe residents’ vision, local needs and neighborhoods.

For example, in December 2010, local residents rated the appearance of South Lake Tahoe among the lowest in a national survey of 270 cities. The majority of the commercial corridor in South Lake Tahoe is deemed a protected “view corridor” to Lake Tahoe; yet the result of the regulations have left the visual appearance of the community below standard and in need of significant upgrade. While a billion dollars has been invested in lake clarity, which is still declining, the infrastructure and appearance of the city have been neglected.

What is and is not in the General Plan update?

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Recently, special interest groups and individuals have written articles summarizing as purported “facts” things in the General Plan that are false and misleading. While the General Plan can be long and arduous reading, it is a public record so one need not argue about what is or is not contained in the plan. For the purpose of fact-setting the following is offered.

What is not in the General Plan:

- The General Plan does not contain a plan for 100 acres of six-story high-density development as asserted by uninformed sources.
- The city’s General Plan does not envision thousands of new condominiums. Given the state of the housing market, it will be many years before the proposed 940 market rate residential housing unit allocations and 222 affordable housing residential allocations would be absorbed into the currently depressed housing market. Any new residential unit (which includes condominiums) requires an allocation of a residential unit of rse (RUU) from the TRPA. The exception to the rule is for affordable housing units, which are restricted to low and moderate income households and do not require an RUU. If you read or hear otherwise, you are being given false or misleading information.
- The General Plan does not utilize eminent domain. The City Council adopted Resolution 2008-16 eliminating eminent domain authority from its purview.

What is in the General Plan:

- The plan focuses on sustainability and contains all policies included in the 2008 City Sustainability Plan. With adoption of the General Plan, the city will continue to be the leader in sustainable policy and practices within the Tahoe basin.
- The plan requires the city to promote “Complete Neighborhoods” that provide resident amenities, such as walking and biking trails and enhance neighborhood identity. These amenities have been suggested by special interest environmental groups as projects that would result in a better place to live and visit, which will provide great opportunities for collaboration.
- The plan requires incorporation of policies into community plans and an allowance of up to 70 percent land coverage on specifically-designated properties within areas that are already developed as higher density commercial hubs.
- The plan promotes removing worn and dilapidated buildings from existing commercial corridor into centralized hubs, which provides opportunity to improve the visual appearance of the city and reduce coverage in sensitive areas by centralizing it into non-sensitive areas. The General Plan requests up to an additional 386,000 square feet of commercial floor area to accomplish this goal.

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The city is poised to take this opportunity to complete the process of developing a 20-year vision for the future through adoption of a comprehensive General Plan. The City thanks the community for their input into the Plan. The City’s General Plan Update and recently adopted Strategic Plan will help to ensure the beauty of our natural environment is not undermined by our built environment.

Tony O’Rourke is city manager of South Lake Tahoe.

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Lake Tahoe News
November 18th, 2010

O’Rourke: Revamp how SLT operates, create a clear vision

Publisher’s note: *This completes this three-part series on South Lake Tahoe’s budget. More stories will come in the future.*

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe’s budget is convoluted and difficult to understand. After probing by *Lake Tahoe News* started earlier this year more documents have been placed on the city’s website. This is a good first step. Transparency, though, is still a bit elusive.

City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** plans to change how the next budget document looks. He wants a budget message at the front and a summary so the public can more easily discern what lies within. Although warrants are paper clipped to the councilmembers’ agenda packets, they are not actually part of the packet. This means they are not part of that public record. Warrants are a list of checks that have been written.

Councilman Bill Crawford for years has been trying to get this practice changed, as well as to have copies available at the meetings for the public. But these warrants in many ways are useless. This is because there is no record to whether the check written was for something that was budgeted. It doesn’t say what account the money came from. Nothing indicates what percentage or dollar amount of the account the money came from has been spent to date. Without knowing if the various departments are within budget as the warrants are written, the information is as valuable as the paper it’s printed on.

O’Rourke since his arrival in early August has called for a monthly budget update to be in the council’s packet. That happened on Nov. 16, but it contained information for the month ending Sept. 30. A case could easily be made that this is dated material, not current.

Councilmembers Kathay Lovell and Hal Cole represent the finance committee that is supposed to be working with staff. But neither has said anything about the budget at a council meeting since the 2010-11 budget was passed in August. This August approval of a budget that took effect Oct. 1 was unprecedented by a South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Ex-City Manager Dave Jinkens wanted it approved before he was out of office the first week of August. “The budget process was highly centralized under David. It was him and the finance director,” **O’Rourke** said.

Not much vision

The city has seldom been forward thinking more than the end of the fiscal year. But the deficits are going to continue. Transient occupancy tax, sales tax and property tax are the three main sources of income. They are stagnant. The Teeter Law that allows the county to keep the pass

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through of property tax dollars going from the convention center parcels to the city will expire in a little more than a year. Even though hotel bookings are up going into winter, the cost of those rooms is not what they were three years ago. Full occupancy does not mean the same amount of TOT collected in years past because the price of a room night is not the same. What does the budget look like for fiscal year 2015-16 – five years from now? No one knows because the city hasn’t planned for the future.

O’Rourke is shaking things up so that last paragraph can’t be written again. He has assembled 40 people to develop a five-year financial plan. Rank and file staff up to directors are part of the panel. “We need fingerprints and DNA of staff on (the budget),” **O’Rourke** said. “The result is they will have greater ownership. The process should be transparent and inclusive.”

This process should eliminate department heads finding out about staff reductions days before the City Council votes for them – as was the case in August. “The City Manager [Dave Jinkens] notified the Fire Chief via e-mail on July 28, almost one week prior to the August 3 City Council meeting,” Vulecich wrote *Lake Tahoe News* in reference to the freezing of a division chief’s job once the person who has the position retires in January. **Strategic planning** Without goals, the budget ends up taking a shotgun approach to city services instead of being streamlined.

O’Rourke wants to convene the council that will be seated next month – with 60 percent new faces – to create a strategic plan what will be “a shared vision for the community.” He wants to focus on a handful of goals and achieve them. From his first interviews, **O’Rourke** said he is results-driven. To get there he believes the city needs to change its business model. “We need to modify the business model to reflect the priorities,” **O’Rourke** said. “There is a thorough lack of infrastructure. We are so deficient in curbs and gutters it’s mindboggling. “We need to look at where we can get the money. We need to look at the expense side of the ledger, too.”

He’s well aware the city cannot be all things to all people – thus the need to create priorities. And he doesn’t want them to change on an annual basis. A goal of his is to create a survey for staff and a separate one for the public in the next month. “I want data to drive the decision-making,” **O’Rourke**.

When told the public has filled out surveys in the past only to have their wishes ignored, **O’Rourke** said it’s still a necessity “to make sure we are on the same playing field.” He wants to look at the services the city is providing to the public in addition to the facilities. His face contorts a bit while mentioning the locker room at the city pool and the condition it is in. “Hideous” was the word he used.

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Lake Tahoe News
November 2nd, 2010

South Lake Tahoe hires police chief from outside department

By Kathryn Reed

The first police chief hired from outside the department was sworn in this morning at the South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting.

Brian Uhler becomes the eighth chief, taking over a department that has had a rocky time of it in recent years, especially under the leadership of former Chief Terry Daniels. Capt. Martin Hewlett has been the leader of the department since the start of the year after Daniels left.

Several members of the police department were on hand as Uhler was sworn-in and given his badge at the end of the Nov. 2 council meeting. He said a few perfunctory words before the meeting was adjourned.

Uhler, 49, most recently was a captain in the UC San Francisco police force. He was laid off in August after two years on the job. Before that he spent 25 years with the Corpus Christi, Texas, police department. He retired as a commander.

Uhler has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and a master’s degree in public administration, and is a graduate of the FBI Academy.

“He really understands the whole police operations,” City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** told *Lake Tahoe News*. “He is very smart and strategic. He doesn’t come across as a typical cop.”

This is **O’Rourke**’s first hire since coming on board in August. His next appointment, which could be before the end of the year, will be director of Parks and Recreation.

In the series of panel interviews, Uhler was the top candidate for the chiefs of police. **O’Rourke** sent most of the several dozen resumes to a police chief he knows in Florida who ranked Uhler as the top candidate on paper.

Uhler was one of three finalists. No local candidates made the final list.

Uhler called the five panels in one day an “endurance event.”

Uhler has experience in all aspects of a police department, which appealed to **O’Rourke**.

“A lot of chiefs come from administration or the political side. This guy has proven himself on the street,” **O’Rourke** said.

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Another key for **O’Rourke** was to hire someone who could mentor the younger officers. Liking the outdoors was another selling point. Uhler is a hiker, skier and cyclist.

“You have to share the values of why people are here. He shares those values and embraces them,” **O’Rourke** said.

On top of that, even though Uhler spent so many years in Texas, he is a Giants fan. He drove into town last night after the Giants were crowned World Champions after beating the Texas Rangers in Game 5 of the World Series.

Uhler has a little experience with snow. He spent some time in Mammoth – though it was as a youth. With his father in the aerospace industry, he moved around a bit as a kid. After high school he joined the Army, where he entered the military police. He went to the Corpus Christi department after being discharged.

Uhler is divorced with two children. His son is in college in North Carolina. His daughter will move to Tahoe this winter to attend Lake Tahoe Community College.

He will be making a base salary of \$142,000, with a 1.5 percent longevity incentive boosting his pay to about \$145,000 year.

Uhler’s first day on the job will be Nov. 8.

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Tahoe Daily Tribune
August 13, 2010

New city manager in South Lake Tahoe wants to recruit commercial airlines

By Adam Jensen

Tony O’Rourke said his management style is “very strategic” and said he will encourage the City Council to select five of priorities on which to focus

Just days after touching ground, **Tony O’Rourke**, South Lake Tahoe's new city manager, introduced himself to members of the Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe on Wednesday.

O’Rourke began work as the city manager on Monday.

He discussed his background and gave attendees to the Soroptimist luncheon at Harvey's Resort and Casino an idea of how he intends to manage his new job responsibilities.

Born in Austria to American parents, **O’Rourke** spent his early years moving between in England, Italy, Washington, D.C., and Thailand before landing on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, where he spent his teenage years.

O’Rourke graduated from Cornell University and was involved in city government in Dallas, Texas, Corals Springs, Fla., and Tallahassee, Fla., prior to becoming the Executive Director Beaver Creek Resort Company in Colorado, a non-profit corporation combining municipal services with a homeowners and resort association. He spent 14 years in Beaver Creek before accepting the South Lake Tahoe position.

O’Rourke has two college-aged daughters and a 16-year-old son with Suzy **O’Rourke**, his wife of 25 years. The new city manager expects his wife and son to move to the South Shore from Colorado later this month.

Since arriving, **O’Rourke** said he's been impressed by the hiking and biking in the area.

He's also begun meeting with department heads and other city staff to find out more about the city and what people would like to accomplish.

O’Rourke said his management style is “very strategic” and said he will encourage the City Council to select five of priorities on which to focus. The strategic focus will encourage progress and keep the city council from focusing solely on the issues of the week, **O’Rourke** said.

With council support, the city manager said he would like to reestablish commercial air service to Lake Tahoe Airport as one of his first priorities.

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But, the ability to make changes to the city will rest on the council, **O’Rourke** said.

“Unless there's a political will by the political leadership nothing is going to get done,” **O’Rourke** said.

He said council members deserve respect from the public because they serve long hours in a thankless position with little compensation.

O’Rourke said cities should be judged just like the private sector when it comes to the quality of services it provides.

“There's no substitute for results,” **O’Rourke** said.

Following a question from the audience about a recent El Dorado County grand jury report that was critical of city leadership, **O’Rourke** said he like the idea that there are challenges facing the city.

He also said the level of dysfunction detailed in the report wasn't surprising.

“I read the grand jury report, it doesn't phase me because that's not unusual,” **O’Rourke** said.

He said he is focused on moving the city forward.

With the level of consternation among the public regarding all levels of government, **O’Rourke** said its up to the city to earn the trust of its citizens on a daily basis.

He said he would be proactive in surveying citizens feelings about city government.

Feelings about some of **O’Rourke's** first statements as city manager were positive on Wednesday.

Former City Attorney and Soroptimist Cathy DiCamillo was among those impressed by **O’Rourke's** priorities.

“Everything you said is music to my ears. Go, go, go,” DiCamillo exclaimed.

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Lake Tahoe News
July 13th, 2010

South Tahoe council approves city manager’s 3-year contract

By Kathryn Reed

Tony O’Rourke is set to begin his job as city manager of South Lake Tahoe on Aug. 9. The City Council on a 4-1 vote July 13 approved his contract.

O’Rourke, who left the meeting after the vote, will have a base salary of \$175,000 a year. He will receive \$500/month in a car allowance, two weeks of vacation, and the standard health and retirement package other city employees receive.

The city is offering up to \$12,000 to move him, his wife and teenage son to Tahoe from Beaver Creek, Colo.

The contract is for three years. His first review will be after he’s been on the job for six months. Just like current City Manager Dave Jinkens’ contract, this one comes with a nine-month severance clause if the council decides to dismiss **O’Rourke**. This is a fairly standard item in city manager contracts in California.

O’Rourke is subject to the two furlough days that are in place, which brings his salary closer to \$161,000. Those two days amount to a salary reduction of 9.23 percent for all city employees. A third furlough day is likely to be part of the city’s cost containment plan when the council approves the 2010-11 budget that will be effective Oct. 1.

What could balance out the third furlough day is the 4.62 percent cost of living adjustment the various city unions have negotiated that is supposed to begin Oct. 1. However, the city is currently negotiating with the various labor groups – with the COLA being one of the sticking points.

Although the city manager and city attorney positions are not part of any bargaining group, they follow in lockstep with the Administrative and Confidential group. So if the COLA is passed, those positions would get a bump in pay.

Also at Tuesday’s meeting, the council voted 4-1 to extend City Attorney Patrick Enright’s contract a year to 2012.

Councilman Bill Crawford was the dissenting vote both times.

Enright went up a step on the salary scale, increasing his wages by 5 percent. His severance provision was doubled to 180 days.

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Lake Tahoe News
July 3rd, 2010

South Lake Tahoe council hires city manager

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe’s next city manager has read the grand jury report, he knows the disconnect between the government and the people it is supposed to serve, he knows about shoveling snow, he knows about the economic rollercoaster ride of a tourism based economy – and still **Tony O’Rourke** accepted the job. **O’Rourke**’s experience in the private and public sector led the City Council on Thursday night to vote 4-0 to select him over the three other candidates they interviewed. Councilman Bill Crawford has chosen to stay out of the interview and selection process.

“I think it’s a great community and a great opportunity for progress. I know there are some real challenges,” **O’Rourke** told *Lake Tahoe News* shortly after he was offered the job July 1. “It’s an opportunity to respond to the needs of the community and produce a government that works better.”

Lake Tahoe News did not post this story earlier because the final details of **O’Rourke**’s contract as well as final documents involving the background check did not come until today. A verbal agreement was given, but the contract has not been signed and all the particulars are still being worked out.

O’Rourke will be making in the ballpark of \$169,502 – what current City Manager Dave Jinkens is earning per year. The contract will probably be for three years, also what Jinkens started with. Other benefits beyond the standard health and retirement are being worked on. It is not known if these would include moving costs, paying for temporary housing, a housing allotment, car or something else. His first day on the job should be right around when Jinkens leaves Aug. 7.

The council is expected to ratify the contract at the July 13 meeting. “It is going to be a whole paradigm shift in style,” Mayor Kathay Lovell said of going from Jinkens to **O’Rourke**. “(**O’Rourke**) is very refreshing. He has great people skills, great communication skills. I think he is really strong.”

The four council members who voted all favored **O’Rourke**. However, Councilman Bruce Grego, who again did not return phone calls, has been lobbying to keep Jinkens on longer. Councilman Hal Cole was not available for comment.

O’Rourke, 55, this morning let his bosses at the Beaver Creek Resort Company in Colorado know he is leaving. He has been their executive director since 1996.

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According to the company’s website, it is “a very special hybrid, combining a homeowners’ association, a resort association, with some municipal services added. The Resort Company, a Colorado nonprofit corporation incorporated on April 30, 1979, was designed to help Beaver Creek become and remain a unique resort community.” It does have ties to Vail Resorts, which owns Heavenly Mountain Resort. “I think that he is strong enough he will be independent and he will not be tied to Vail Resorts,” Councilman Jerry Birdwell said. The hiring of a city manager has not gotten Birdwell off the fence in deciding if he will seek a second term in November, nor will he give a date for when he expects to announce a decision.

Birdwell went on to say, “I think he was the best qualified person who applied for the position and he will be a great asset to this community.” **O’Rourke**’s familiarity with airports was another positive, Birdwell said.

“He comes in understanding a mountain resort and tourism,” Lovell said. “In the capacity he currently has, even though it is not an incorporated city, it’s like it. They have an elected board, they have similar utilities, they have police and fire.”

One difference is the average daily room rate in Beaver Creek is about \$500, while it is \$120 in the redevelopment area of South Lake Tahoe and much less in the rest of town.

O’Rourke sees his blend of private and public experience as a bonus. He thinks one of the problems with cities is having leaders with only government experience.

Before joining Beaver Creek Resort Company, **O’Rourke** was assistant city manager in Tallahassee for a year; city manager of Coral Springs, Fla., from 1992-95 and assistant city manager from 1989-92; assistant city manager of Richardson, Texas, from 1983-85. He has also worked in Dallas, Ithaca, N.Y., Boulder, and was community development director of Isla Vista in California from 1977-79.

Lovell admitted his lack of experience in California was a strike against him when it came to her vote, but she said all the other aspects of his career and experience swayed her to put him at the top of her list – the same place the other council members put **O’Rourke**.

O’Rourke will be moving to the area with his wife and 16-year-old son. They have two other children who are in college. He is a skier, but prefers to snowshoe with his dog.

O’Rourke plans to engage the public as soon as he arrives. “I want a laundry list of names of a cross-section of the community to see what the issues are,” **O’Rourke** said. “We will quickly develop a strategic plan of action to address the most significant issues.”

O’Rourke said change is definitely needed in the city and that “it’s not a painless process and not without a lot of blood, sweat and tears.” He added, “Talk is cheap. We have to produce results. What attracted me to this (job) is that it is a great opportunity to produce great results. I’m not naïve. I know the difficulties of the past. We have to be above that.”

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Rocky Mountain News (CO)
January 24, 2001

BEAVER CREEK HOSTS CULINARY CLASSIC

Author: *Erik Vienneau*

Exclusive Beaver Creek may cater to the rich and famous, but from Feb. 1-4, the resort will make the finest foods in the nation available to the masses.

Many of America's most exciting chefs - including Donald Wressell of the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills and George Marrone of San Francisco's super-hot Fifth Floor - and their local counterparts gather for a weekend of gastronomic indulgence at the Beaver Creek International Culinary Classic.

Tantalize your taste buds at six-course dinners and intimate tastings while engaging your mind in interactive seminars.

“This is like going to Michael Jordan's summer camp instead of seeing one of his games,” Beaver Creek Resort Company President **Tony O’Rourke** said. “This is a hands-on opportunity, and that is what makes us special.”

The popularity of chefs seems to be soaring to the same heights as one of Jordan's legendary slam-dunks.

“People have more ability to enjoy the finer things in life in a strong economy,” **O’Rourke** said, “and people are realizing that all the talent in the world is not in Europe - our chefs are rising to the occasion.”

No matter the reason, food lovers are searching for more than great skiing on their next vacation. Many want a unique, intimate experience.

“Things are more personal in the mountains,” Amy Foster-Devore, of Bon Appetit magazine said. “People are there over several days. They can get to know the chefs and other guests on the slopes, over the stove and around the dinner table.”

The Beaver Creek event encourages interaction between guests and chefs that's rare at larger-scale events.

“A lot of people ask me if the chefs are snobbish or elitist,” **O’Rourke** said. “It's the opposite. These people have a passion for the art that is overwhelming. Whether you are a novice or expert in the kitchen, they love the fact that you're interested.”

Call 1-888-323-7612 for information on the event, or 1-888-920-2787 for tickets. Individual events are available from \$25 to \$125.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
August 10, 1995

CITY MANAGER WARNS OF BELT-TIGHTENING AHEAD

Author: *CHRISTINA A. SAMUELS Herald Staff Writer*

Coral Springs taxpayers are facing a tax increase this year of less than 1 percent -- but future years may not be as rosy.

The budget message prepared by City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** speaks of belt-tightening ahead.

"Revenues are approaching a point of marginal growth," wrote **O’Rourke**, whose last day on the job is Saturday.

The fast-growing city faces increased public service demands and federal and state mandates. Projected budget shortfalls for next year range from \$2.7 million to \$4.3 million.

"The City Commission and staff will be increasingly challenged to balance the need for more services with the community's ability to pay for them," according to **O’Rourke**.

O’Rourke's 1994-95 draft budget recommends property owners pay about \$3.76 per \$1,000 of taxable property value. People in Coral Springs also have to pay about 79 cents per \$1,000 of taxable property value to pay off the city's debts. Though the property tax rate will be open for debate, the "debt service" fee cannot be changed.

Together, that brings the total proposed tax bill to about \$4.55 per \$1,000 of taxable value.

For their money, Coral Springs will be getting nine more police officers, two people to staff a new pool on Riverside Drive, a telecommunications employee and a youth counselor to work with school resource officers.

The city also plans to spend \$45,000 for a lobbyist, \$2.3 million for development of a new 22-acre park, \$175,000 for street resurfacing and \$245,000 for median beautification.

New projects include \$1.2 million to pay for an emergency medical services program, which will start in January. Previously, the service was provided by Broward County. The city will add 24 full-time employees and four rescue units.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
August 10, 1995

SPRINGS PREPARES TO MAKE DEVELOPERS PAY FOR NEW SCHOOLS

Author: *CHRISTINA A. SAMUELS Herald Staff Writer*

As Broward cities continue to debate a proposed one-cent sales tax increase to pay for schools, leaders in Coral Springs are preparing to approve their own plan.

On Saturday morning, commissioners will sit down to vote on a proposal that would add schools to the list of basic neighborhood ingredients that developers have to provide before driving the first nail. The list now includes such staples as roads, sewers and parks.

The concept is called concurrency -- and it's meant to ensure cities can provide the services to keep up with new growth. But while developers are paving roads and building parks, suburban schools continue to overflow.

If city commissioners approve on Saturday, Coral Springs would become the only city in the state to require developers to pay for schools.

But the school system has a countywide plan to deal with crowded schools. Besides pushing for passage of the Sept. 19 sales-tax referendum, school administrators are working on a countywide concurrency plan.

School administrators want Coral Springs to work with them.

"We would prefer to take the lead on this so we can have a plan in effect," said Lee Stepanchek, the school system's director of property management and site acquisition.

But Springs leaders feel that the Broward County School District is not going far enough to help the Northwest Broward city, which is served by 16 bulging schools.

"Theirs is so diluted it doesn't mean anything," City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** said of the countywide plan.

"We need both the sales tax and concurrency," said **O'Rourke**, whose last day on the job is Saturday. "One deals with current deficiencies and the other deals with future growth."

Many Coral Springs parents support the city's efforts to make developers pay for education.

"We all want what's best for our kids. If we can achieve that through concurrency, fine, let's do it," said Mike Resnick, who has a child in Riverside Elementary and two more who graduated from Taravella High.

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Monroe County is the only other governmental agency to try linking development to schools. The rule in the Keys went into effect in 1986, but has not been enforced since a successful challenge from a developer in 1990.

In Coral Springs, there are still several hurdles before the city can start enforcing new rules for developers.

The Florida Department of Community Affairs, which has the final say on the city's proposal, has sent back its recommendation to the city: Work with the School Board.

Developers are telling the city the same thing: Don't strike out on your own.

"It's not the easiest thing to do and it's not the quickest thing to do," said Paul Bertolami, president of the Coral Springs/Parkland Builders' Association. "But we can't do anything about it. We have to work within the law."

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 4, 1995

**O’ROURKE CORAL SPRINGS CITY MANAGER END
SPRINGS MANAGER ACCEPTS NEW JOB**

Author: *ELAINE WALKER Herald Staff Writer*

Known for a management style that is both progressive and unorthodox, Coral Springs City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** has never believed in business as usual at City Hall.

That attitude has won him both praise and criticism during the last three years. Now it's landed him a new job.

O’Rourke announced Monday that he will leave next month to become the assistant city manager for support services with the city of Tallahassee. He also will coordinate the city's \$350 million operating budget and \$600 million capital budget.

His biggest responsibility will be to lead the Tallahassee's adoption of a "total quality management" approach to government. TQM, the latest rage in private businesses, is supposed to give front-line employees the power to make decisions.

Under **O’Rourke**, Coral Springs has been one of the first governments to adopt this philosophy.

"This is a golden opportunity to do on a larger scale what we've done here," said **O’Rourke**, 40, who took over in Coral Springs in November 1992. "With Tallahassee being the state capital, people will watch what we're doing. It's like playing on center court."

Although he goes from being top dog to one of four assistant city managers, **O’Rourke** says he wanted to work in a bigger city and improve the quality of life for his family.

"Titles don't mean much to me," said **O’Rourke**, who will get a small raise from the \$91,600 he earns in Coral Springs. He won't say how much.

O’Rourke's departure caught many off guard because of his popularity with the City Commission. He has weathered several political controversies and is now praised for his reorganization of city government.

O’Rourke has strived to run the city of Coral Springs like a business, not a bureaucracy. He has increased the city's reserve fund by \$10.5 million, cut the number of employees and eliminated many mid-level managers.

Although heralded by his bosses, these moves led to demotions of a number of longtime city employees and created a climate of fear among others.

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"It's a much leaner, flatter organization than it was when he took over," Mayor John Sommerer said. "Taxpayers benefit from the efficiency."

The changes are evident to many city activists.

"City Hall has been much more open than it had been in the past," said Bill Rettinger, president of Pride Promoters of Coral Springs, a civic group.

At the same time, **O’Rourke** has helped to jump-start economic development efforts. In the past two years, 14 new businesses have moved to Coral Springs and created over 1,800 new jobs.

The city also has positioned itself as a center of sports activity with **O’Rourke's** help in negotiating the return of the Honda Classic golf tournament next year and the arrival of America's Red Clay Tennis Championships, which just completed its third year.

"It takes someone like (**O’Rourke**) to make those things happen," said Jack Doughney, the city's director of leisure services. "He took the diamond and shaped it and polished it."

Despite **O’Rourke's** current popularity, his reign in Coral Springs has been clouded by controversy. His late-night appointment on a split commission vote led to an investigation of Sunshine Law violations, which were never substantiated.

In the summer of 1993, two members of the commission called for his resignation and accused him of financial mismanagement, allegations that also went unproved. And his personal ethics were called into question by his close personal relationship with assistant city attorney Karen Roselli.

But once **O’Rourke's** opposition was removed from the commission, the city's fate has been in his hands.

"I don't think there's any question in anyone's mind that **Tony O'Rourke** runs the city of Coral Springs," said former mayor Ben Geiger. "But I think a lot of city employees will be glad if **Tony** packs up his TQM and takes it with him."

City commissioners say they want **O’Rourke's** management philosophy to continue. **O’Rourke** will recommend that Assistant City Manager Mike Levinson take over as acting city manager.

"The culture that **Tony** has provided to the city is pretty well instilled, but it's going to be imperative that we choose someone who has the same ideals," Commissioner Rhonda Calhoun said.

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Sun-Sentinel
July 04, 1995

**Coral Springs City Manager To Quit
O’rourke To Join Team Of 4 In Tallahassee By Mid-august**
July 04, 1995|By ANGELA BRADBERRY Staff Writer

CORAL SPRINGS - — City Manager **Tony O’Rourke**, who thrived in his job despite a rocky start clouded by scandal, is leaving Coral Springs. **O’Rourke** is heading to Tallahassee, where he will serve as one of four assistant city managers. "If I had to leave, this is the time to leave, when things are good," **O’Rourke** said Monday.

O’Rourke, 40, makes \$89,025 and gets a \$4,200 car allowance. He said he is getting a raise but wouldn't disclose his next salary. City officials in Tallahassee could not be reached Monday. **O’Rourke**, who steered the third largest city in Broward for 21/2 years, will oversee finance, information services, employee relations and equal opportunity efforts in Tallahassee. He starts in mid-August and will visit Tallahassee this weekend to start house-hunting. "We knew that with the excellent performance he's given the city that he would attract attention from other quarters," Coral Springs Mayor John Sommerer said. "I'm pleased to see his career continue to grow." Sommerer and other commissioners praised **O’Rourke** on Monday for luring more companies to the city, streamlining the government, cutting costs and introducing to City Hall total quality management. That philosophy, which encourages employees to experiment and to shoulder more responsibility, has been controversial among some employees who say the training is a waste of time and money.

O’Rourke started receiving criticism as soon as he got the job in November 1992. Because he was selected during an unannounced late-night City Commission vote, rumors swirled that an illegal pact had been made to hire him. That would have been in violation of the state's Sunshine Law, which prohibits elected officials from discussing most matters of business outside of a public meeting. The State Attorney's Office investigated but found that no law had been broken.

Shortly after that, **O’Rourke** became entangled in a nasty power struggle with the city attorney over the running of city hall. Word leaked out that **O’Rourke** had an extramarital relationship with an assistant city attorney who was later fired for insubordination by the city attorney. She sued the city for improper firing and got \$55,000 last year in a settlement. In the summer of 1993, then-Mayor Jeanne Mills quit in frustration, accusing **O’Rourke** of fictionalizing reports and covering up problems. **O’Rourke** denied it.

Despite those early months, commissioners said Monday that **O’Rourke** has done an outstanding job. Times have changed in Coral Springs. Commissioners no longer spar at meetings. Instead, they spend time talking about how wonderful the city is and heaping praise on **O’Rourke**. "It has been a very difficult decision [to leave]," **O’Rourke** said. "We have been producing the kinds of results we have been shooting for."

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
January 22, 1995

CITIES MAY DO BETTER EMS JOB

Author: *DAN KEATING Herald Staff Writer*

Emergency medical crews who can't find addresses. Dispatchers who botch alarms. Calls to 911 that aren't even answered.

A handful of horror stories have distorted the debate between Broward County and several cities that want to provide their own emergency medical service.

"It erodes the public confidence in everybody," said Broward Fire Chief Bruce Moeller. "Everybody loses."

After a year of bickering, the county and cities reached a general agreement on Friday that would allow the cities to provide their own ambulance services by raising their own taxes. Even if the deal is approved, it would be months before cities are able to do the job themselves.

Can city residents expect better service from municipal crews?

A Herald computer analysis of 1,150 calls from the county's emergency logs suggests so. A handful of cities already provide their own rescue services, and those whose calls are dispatched by the county far outperform county crews at getting to emergency sites quickly.

County officials admit they're slower to the scene.

"It's a valid argument," said Assistant Chief Mike Haywood. "But don't forget we're subsidizing that -- that's why they have resources for a Cadillac system."

The Herald analyzed a week's worth of calls from November, the most recent records available. The results showed great discrepancies in response times in different parts of the county, with the worst service in unincorporated areas and in Northwest Broward.

The findings:

* The cities that complain the most about county performance aren't necessarily the areas receiving the worst service.

* In the unincorporated pockets around Southwest Fort Lauderdale, at least two-thirds of the calls take more than seven minutes for a response. The same is true in the vast unincorporated area of West Broward called zone 81.

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"Eighty-one's always going to top the list," said Haywood. "It includes Alligator Alley, all the way, 30 or 40 miles to the county line."

Those areas have by far the worst service. No other area in the county has a majority of calls requiring more than seven minutes.

* In three other areas, well over a third of the responses take more than seven minutes: Lauderhill, the unincorporated Pompano Highlands area, and the zone around Coral Springs, Parkland and unincorporated Northwest Broward.

* Coconut Creek, Tamarac, Plantation, Davie, Fort Lauderdale and the unincorporated area near Northwest Fort Lauderdale waited more than seven minutes between 25 percent and 31 percent of the time.

* Cooper City, North Lauderdale, Wilton Manors and the unincorporated pocket of South Broward around Pembroke Park got the best service: seven minutes or less at least 80 percent of the time. All of those zones are much smaller than the regions with poor service.

* The most striking finding came in the two municipalities that handle their own calls but are dispatched by the county: Hallandale and Lauderdale Lakes. Both have better service than any area served by the county -- fewer than one in 10 calls takes more than seven minutes for a response.

For a year, cities have been trying to get permission from the county to run their own paramedic service. In a preliminary agreement Friday, the county said that Fort Lauderdale, Coral Springs, Plantation, Tamarac, Cooper City and Lauderhill could choose to run independent services. Of those, Coral Springs and Lauderhill have some of the worst service provided by the county, while the other cities get average or better than average service from the county.

Lauderhill Fire Chief Chuck Faranda said the findings matched his observations.

"It's totally unacceptable," said Faranda, who wants his officers trained and licensed as paramedics. "We feel we can improve the service here. There's not enough of them."

While the cities may now be able to get improvements with their own service, there has been no comparable clamor for improvements in the unincorporated zones that are already suffering with the worst service.

"I don't think we're going to get better service from the county," said Eric Hersh, vice chairman of the Indian Trace Community Development District Board of Supervisors in Weston, part of the enormous ambulance zone in unincorporated West Broward.

He called the findings on response time "disturbing."

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"That's another reason why we're considering incorporation," Hersh said.

Apartment house manager Anna Cass said the emergency crews have a long way to travel to get to her place in unincorporated Pompano Highlands. "I've called a couple of times," she said. "It was all right. First the cops come, then the firetruck, and the last thing that arrives is the EMS paramedics."

The county just doesn't have enough crews on the road to provide response times comparable to those of municipal departments. "The county has not dedicated enough resources into the system," said Moeller, the county fire chief.

On average, county emergency crews serve twice as many people and twice the geographic area of city units. They respond to 50 percent more calls.

Moeller said the county has been hamstrung by its arrangement with the cities that already provide their own service, including Hallandale, Lauderdale Lakes, Pompano Beach and Deerfield Beach.

Taxes for EMS are collected countywide, but a court order requires the county to return part of that money to the 11 cities that provide their own services. For every \$1 the county spends on its own system, it has to send 80 cents to the cities that provide their own service.

That means if the county wants to spend \$1 million to improve service in Coral Springs or the unincorporated areas, it has to find \$1.8 million in its budget. "Subsidizing the cities is preventing us from evening out the resources and providing a level of care to all the citizens of the county," said Haywood, the Broward assistant fire chief.

The cities have pledged to improve service by committing the money necessary to run their own services with better staffing than the county now provides.

"We've never looked at it as financial," said Coral Springs City Manager **Tony O'Rourke**. "If it means costing more, paying more, I think our commission is ready to do that. It's quality of care that we're interested in."

"The cities are more responsive to their communities," said Tamarac Fire Chief Jim Budzinski. "I believe they've proven that." Budzinski said the recent rash of horror stories may be necessary to draw attention to the need for improvements. "It's unfortunate," he said, "but it may be inevitable as we change the system."

Faranda, the Lauderhill chief, said that if people look at response times, the choice between county and municipal systems is easy. "Anybody can look at it and say, 'Of course I want somebody there in four minutes instead of eight minutes.' "

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 11, 1994

MANAGER PROPOSES A \$56.1 MILLION BUDGET

Author: *ELAINE WALKER Herald Staff Writer*

As Coral Springs continues to grow, so does the cost of running the city.

City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** has proposed a \$56.1 million budget for next year, which begins Oct. 1, that would cover everything from city employees' paychecks to improving the water and sewer system.

The budget would maintain the status quo of city services. It would include \$21.1 million for capital improvements -- the things you can see and touch, such as \$1.9 million for renovations at the City Centre and \$2 million to begin development of the Coral Springs Sawgrass Regional Park.

"One of our priorities has been capital investments because of the growth of our population and the need to replace aging infrastructure," **O'Rourke** said. "The future really rests with solid investments."

The City Commission has already approved a tentative tax rate of \$4.68 per \$1,000 of taxable assessed property value. That means the owner of a home with an assessed value of \$150,000 who takes the \$25,000 homestead exemption would pay \$585 in city taxes.

Here are some of the new programs, facilities and employees included in the proposed budget:

One of the cornerstones of Coral Springs' reputation has always been its parks and recreation programs. But with more than 90,000 residents in the city, there is not enough green space to go around.

City officials want to change that next year with \$1 million to build four multipurpose fields at Cypress Park. The fields, which are to be ready by October 1995, would be used for soccer, football and baseball.

The city also wants to spend \$200,000 to light the ball fields and tennis courts at Forest Glen Middle School, 6701 Turtle Run Blvd., and \$150,000 to finish the development of Riverside Park with a roller hockey rink, volleyball courts, a baseball field and picnic facilities.

Swimmers would have a new competition pool at the city's aquatics center, which will cost \$700,000 to build.

When you call 911 and ask for a Coral Springs police officer to respond to an emergency, five more officers would be available under the new budget.

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Chief Roy Arigo says the new officers would be assigned to road patrol once they complete training next spring.

Coral Springs' finest also hope to purchase 75 mobile data terminals at a cost of \$300,000. The computer terminals would give officers direct access to Florida Department of Motor Vehicles records, arrest records and the Coral Springs police computer system.

Coral Springs kids would soon be able to learn about fire prevention and safety in a miniature house built just for them.

The fire department's budget includes \$30,000 to purchase a 28-foot mobile classroom built to resemble a two-story house with bedrooms and a kitchen. Inside, kids could learn how to get out of danger in case of a real house fire.

"With the number of kids in our community, there is a need for more fire safety and education," said Chief Bill Fyfe.

Coral Springs would be the first department in Broward County with a fire safety house, Fyfe said. The house would visit schools, shopping centers and city parks starting next spring.

Safety Town of Coral Springs would finally get a permanent home.

The city wants to spend \$131,000 to purchase a multipurpose classroom building for Kiwanis Park, where the Kiwanis Club- sponsored safety program serves almost 2,000 Coral Springs kids a year. Five- and 6-year-old kids attend the half-day program to learn about bicycle and pedestrian safety, how to call 911 and stranger awareness.

The building also would be available for use by community groups.

BUDGET HEARINGS

The Coral Springs City Commission will hold budget hearings at 6:30 p.m. Monday and Sept. 21 at City Hall, 9551 W. Sample Rd.

Following Monday's hearing, commissioners will host a budget workshop at 7 p.m. and department directors will detail their spending plans and goals for the coming year.

At the budget hearings, the commission can vote to reduce, but not increase, the tax rate.

Copies of the budget and capital-improvements plan are available through the City Manager's Office at City Hall or by calling 344-1004.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
 June 10, 1994

Coral Springs Demotes Managers

By ANGELA BRADBERRY Staff Writer

CORAL SPRINGS — The city government will shed or reassign most of its managers and shuffle other workers under a plan designed to boost efficiency in everything from parks maintenance to code enforcement. Under the proposal, unveiled Thursday:

- Every manager will be offered the chance to resign in exchange for 17 weeks pay and a year of health benefits. Most who leave won't be replaced and many remaining will be shifted to the front lines, in some instances for less money. This affects about 50 people.
- Older workers will be offered early retirement. About 25 people are eligible.
- Nearly two dozen will be shifted to new jobs. Some will have to take pay cuts.

"We need managers, but we can do with less of them," explained City Manager **Tony O’Rourke**. Coral Springs residents "should love it. There are less chiefs, more Indians. Isn't that what people want from city government?"

City Commissioners, who must approve the buyouts, heralded the plan. "I think that it's novel, that it's pioneering," Mayor John Sommerer said. Vice Mayor Alan Polin called it a "monumental step forward." But Commissioner Rhonda Calhoun was worried about its effect on morale. "There's going to be some short-term pain and suffering," **O’Rourke**. "But we have to break through that." The reorganization comes as city officials wrestle with a \$1.1 million shortfall for the financial year starting in October.

But **O’Rourke** said the plan was not created to save money. Instead, it is to get the city's government operate as private industry. There will be fewer managers and more team leaders, fewer people who do only one task and more workers skilled in many areas, **O’Rourke** said.

Some teams will include city commissioners and will focus on such issues as children and education. Other teams will revolve around such areas as public properties and neighborhood services. Residents should get less run-around, **O’Rourke** said. The plan has caused some consternation in City Hall.

One worker who did not want to be identified for fear of being fired said the involuntary demotions are **O’Rourke**'s attempt to force certain managers out. "I think it's a personal vendetta," the worker said. Not so, **O’Rourke** said. "That's paranoia," he said. If **O’Rourke** wanted to get rid of someone, he could simply fire them, he said. Other workers, though, said they like the plan. "I think the commission is right on track," said Brian Heafy, an information service manager. "We have to run more like a business ... I don't know what's wrong with that."

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 22, 1994

CITY CUTS MAY BRING EMPLOYEE TRANSFERS

Author: *ELAINE WALKER Herald Staff Writer*

Many Coral Springs city workers are likely to find themselves taking on additional work, moving to new jobs or taking pay cuts as the city struggles to slice more than \$1 million from next year's budget.

Preliminary budget projections for the next fiscal year, which will begin Oct. 1, show the city's general fund expenses will exceed revenues by about \$1.5 million, City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** said. The total general fund budget, the money to pay general operating expenses, such as employees' salaries, is projected at more than \$40 million.

City commissioners have directed the city staff not to plan any tax increases, except for the increase needed to cover the city's debt service, which is the amount of money residents agree to pay each year to cover the bonds purchased by the city. Bond issues approved by residents in the past two years include a \$7.5 million bond to purchase environmentally sensitive lands and an approximately \$4.8 million bond for public safety improvements.

Most of the projected shortfall in the general operating budget will have to be made up by cuts in City Hall, **O’Rourke** said.

The people facing most of those cuts will be the 570 city workers, whose pay and benefits account for 75 percent of the city's expenses, **O’Rourke** said.

Although layoffs are not currently in the works, the streamlining of the organization is likely to have the biggest effect on management-level employees, **O’Rourke** said. The plan is to increase the number of front-line workers who deal directly with the public.

That could mean managers being reassigned to lower-level jobs and being asked to take pay cuts, **O’Rourke** said.

Department directors have been asked to come up with plans to restructure their departments and get rid of unneeded positions.

"We want every position in the organization to be able to articulate how they add value to the services we provide," **O’Rourke** said. "Otherwise, they need to be in a different position."

City Clerk Jonda Joseph anticipates that her department of five full-time and two part-time employees can take on work now done by other city departments.

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"We'll be streamlining some things in our office so we have time to do more in other areas and relieve other departments," Joseph said.

Police Chief Roy Arigo hopes to create four more police service aide positions, which would be filled with employees transferred from other city departments.

The new service aides would be used to handle police reports that don't have to be filled out by a police officer. These would include property damage, harassing phone calls and bicycle thefts, which altogether account for about 30 percent of the department's police reports.

"We want to improve the system so we can give officers more time out on the streets to get involved with the community," Arigo said.

The city's reorganization plans are expected to be completed by next month, when the City Commission will begin holding budget workshops.

But even with the city staff restructuring, residents will see their tax bills increase because of the bond issues. The tax bills will rise 5.4 percent from this year's rate of \$4.45 per \$1,000 of taxable property value to \$4.69 per \$1,000 of taxable value.

CITY GOALS

As Coral Springs reaches what many see as the crossroads of its development, the City Commission has identified several target areas for improvement. The priorities will be reflected in the upcoming city budget for next year and in the restructuring of the city staff and resources.

The targets are:

- * Schools and education.
- * Youth and family -- including crime/gun control.
- * Economic development and city finances.
- * Neighborhood vitality -- including growth management.
- * Respect for ethnic and religious diversity.
- * Customer-focused government -- including better marketing of city.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
March 8, 1994

EX-SPRINGS ATTORNEYS' SUIT REJECTED

Author: *ELAINE WALKER Herald Staff Writer*

A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by former Coral Springs city attorneys Paul McDonough and John Wynn against City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** and two former assistant city attorneys.

U.S. District Judge Jose Gonzalez Jr. last week dismissed the suit by McDonough and Wynn, which alleged that **O'Rourke** and former assistant city attorneys Karen Roselli and Tina Talarchyk conspired to defame them.

The suit, filed in September, argues that the defendants used their positions to falsely accuse McDonough and Wynn -- verbally and in writing -- of fraud, extortion, grand theft, dishonesty, cheating, overcharging and violating Florida Bar rules.

The suit was just one part of the political controversy that erupted in Coral Springs last summer and led to the firing of City Attorney Tucker Gibbs and the resignation of Mayor Jeanne Mills.

One issue that arose at the time involved allegations that McDonough and Wynn, Coral Springs' city attorneys until 1992, overcharged the city for legal work.

But in his ruling, Gonzalez found that all of the allegedly defamatory remarks made by the defendants were made in connection with the performance of their official duties.

The remarks are therefore, "absolutely privileged under Florida law, irrespective of the intent with which they were made," his ruling states.

O'Rourke said the court ruling just validates what he knew all along.

"It was clear from the start that it was nothing but a suit based on harassment and it had no merit," he said. "I just hope this puts to rest the final chapter of the city's history and we can continue to accelerate forward."

McDonough declined to comment on the judge's ruling and referred all calls to his attorney, who could not be reached for comment.

Roselli, who was fired in March, has a federal lawsuit pending against the city in which she contends she was dismissed for blowing the whistle on alleged corruption in the city attorney's office. Talarchyk left the city at the end of September when her position as special projects manager was eliminated from the budget.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
November 25, 1993

ACCOUNTANTS ABSOLVE CORAL SPRINGS MANAGER

Author: *ELAINE WALKER Herald Staff Writer*

Part two of a review of Coral Springs City Manager **Tony O’Rourke**'s management practices found basically the same results as part one: no problems.

The Fort Lauderdale accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand found that **O’Rourke** had not violated city policy or procedures in his handling of several financial matters questioned by former Mayor Jeanne Mills.

But in many areas, the city does not have specific policies, leaving the city manager with a great deal of latitude. In a report completed last week, the accountants suggested the City Commission consider adopting policies regarding budget revisions, reimbursement for seminars and the creation of new unfunded positions. The city should also clarify its travel reimbursement policy to determine whether it covers expenses when an employee is interviewing for another job.

Because the report is not considered a formal audit, it did not offer any opinion on whether **O’Rourke** exercised proper judgment or made decisions that were in the best interest of the city, Coopers & Lybrand wrote.

This review was an attempt to investigate half of the allegations made against **O’Rourke** last summer by Mills, who accused the city manager of financial and personnel mismanagement.

Florida Atlantic University Professor Donald Clare investigated the allegations of personnel mismanagement, and reported earlier this month that he found no violations of city personnel practices. Clare praised **O’Rourke** for attempting to run the city like a business.

City commissioners said last week they hope this review puts to rest questions of impropriety.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
November 7, 1993

REPORT PRAISES SPRINGS MANAGER

Author: *ELAINE WALKER Herald Staff Writer*

Coral Springs City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** drew high marks for his personnel management practices and his attempt to run the city like a business in an analysis recently completed by a Florida Atlantic University professor.

Professor Donald Clare, assistant dean of FAU's College of Urban and Public Affairs, was hired to conduct half of a study of **O’Rourke**'s management practices, designed to sort out allegations made against **O’Rourke** by former Mayor Jeanne Mills.

The other half of the study, focusing on **O’Rourke**'s management of city finances, is being done by a representative from the accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand. The report is expected to be completed in about a week.

In studying **O’Rourke**'s management practices, Clare said he was not surprised to find that some of the city manager's innovative ideas have led to criticism.

"He's doing a very imaginative job, and that's always risky in the public sector," Clare said. "Things that are rewarded in the private sector are often punished in the public sector."

Before her abrupt resignation last summer, Mills criticized **O’Rourke** for ignoring city personnel policies, mismanaging city finances, playing favorites with employees and letting his personal relationship with former Assistant City Attorney Karen Roselli interfere with his job.

But many of the issues regarding the controversy that divided City Hall last summer and led to Mills' resignation were not addressed in Clare's study: problems with employee morale, **O’Rourke**'s relationship with Roselli and the power of the city manager over the city attorney's office.

Clare says these were not issues that he was supposed to analyze or things he has the expertise to review. He was to look specifically at the power of the city manager as defined by the city charter, whether the city's personnel policies are uniformly applied and the function of a city manager.

His data-gathering consisted of a brief chat with **O’Rourke**, interviews with two assistant city managers and a review of the city charter and other documents. Clare charged the city \$2,600 for the study, but everything except \$100 for expenses will go into a scholarship fund.

Clare's analysis found:

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- * The transfer of former Assistant City Attorney Tina Talarchyk to the newly created position of special projects manager was within **O’Rourke**'s authority.
- * The appointment of former City Controller Susan Grant to the position of acting director of human resources did not violate city policies.
- * The City Commission should create a more standardized process for **O’Rourke**'s performance review that is based on achieving goals and objectives.
- * The city charter gives **O’Rourke** almost complete power over city workers, but if the City Commission does not support his efforts it is within its authority to limit the city manager's power.

O’Rourke and the city commissioners said they were pleased with the report's findings.

"I knew what we were doing was professional and didn't reflect what the former mayor was saying," **O’Rourke** said. "Hopefully this will make people understand that there is not any corruption taking place in the city of Coral Springs."

The city also has commissioned a study from FAU's Institute for Government. Coral Springs will pay \$18,000 for the Vision 2000 project, to help plan for the city's future.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 26, 1993

GETTING PERSONAL IS COSTLY

Author: *Herald Staff*

SEEMLY: It's a word with an old fashioned lilt but a good summary of the timeless values of appropriateness, discretion, and propriety. It's also a word not used these days at the city halls of Hollywood and Coral Springs.

A majority of each city commission seems willing to forgive or ignore close personal relationships between top city officials and other city employees. These have sparked dissension in both places.

In Hollywood it was a sexual affair between City Attorney Alan Koslow and a secretary. She obtained a settlement on a never-proved harassment charge against her boss because of his recommendation. In Coral Springs a close friendship between City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** and an assistant city attorney led to the messy firing of City Attorney Tucker Gibbs.

Mr. Gibbs says he fired the assistant because she became insubordinate as her relationship with the manager grew. She is suing, saying she was fired because she blew the whistle on a law firm's overcharges. The city is moving briskly to settle, though her accusations remain unproven.

The Hollywood City Commission finally seems to taking the Koslow matter with a bit of seriousness after some defended him. Last week they spoke of possible discipline, but that wouldn't be forthcoming at least until the commission next meets in September. The matter first came to light in April. State prosecutors investigated but referred the issue to the Florida Bar.

Meanwhile, tensions remain between Mr. Koslow and City Manager Robert Noe, who approved the settlement upon Mr. Koslow's recommendation.

The Coral Springs City Commission rejected efforts by two members to discipline or discharge Mr. **O'Rourke** and even declined his suggestion of an outside review. That was an unfortunate decision. An outside review might clear away some of the murk surrounding this issue.

So these matters linger, costing each city dollars, and credibility among employees. While each commission majority has supported their executives' job performance, neither has sent a clear message about professionalism and personal relationships. That omission they may regret.

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Sun Sentinel
July 10, 1993

Coral Springs Official Rips Opponents Over City Turmoil

By ANGELA BRADBERRY, Staff Writer

CORAL SPRINGS -- Embattled City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** lashed out at his political enemies on Friday, saying he is fed up with the continual turmoil that has sapped employee morale and split City Hall into opposing camps. Employees are “tired of this crap,” said **O’Rourke**, who left in the afternoon for a weekend cruise with his wife. “We’re not going to allow cheap political theater to continue to obstruct this community.” The furor brought on by the two warring factions has become an embarrassment to Coral Springs, once the showpiece city of Broward County, several city employees said on Friday.

O’Rourke has acknowledged that he could be the next victim in the political shooting match that claimed his nemesis, fired City Attorney Tucker Gibbs, on Thursday. “I’m a target,” **O’Rourke** said earlier this week. “People ... would like to see nothing more than me floating down the river in a body bag.” But **O’Rourke** said flatly that the prospect of losing his job doesn’t concern him. “I don’t care enough about it,” he said. “My life as city manager has been nothing but pure hell.”

Gibbs and **O’Rourke** have been on opposing sides, and commissioners lined up behind each. Three commissioners back O’Rourke. Two supported Gibbs. Even with Gibbs gone, the battle is far from over. Mayor Jeanne Mills, a Gibbs supporter, has called for an inquiry into **O’Rourke’s** management practices. So far, the commission has taken no action on Mills’ request. She said she thinks he misappropriated money and violated city policies.

Tina Talarchyk, a former assistant city attorney who **O’Rourke** hired when Gibbs wanted to fire her, has not been seen in City Hall for months, Mills said. Talarchyk has been taking vacation and sick time because of stress, **O’Rourke** said. Mills also said former city controller Susan Grant was named acting director of human resources in February though she has no background in that area. **O’Rourke** praised her abilities and said she is being groomed for bigger things.

And the city paid \$23,000 for an employee’s medical bills from a liability account instead of a workers’ compensation account, Mills said. The City Commission is required to approve any expenditure over \$5,000, but commissioners never heard about it. **O’Rourke** said the money was taken from the wrong account, but the mistake has been corrected.

The split goes back months, and centers around legal bills from a former city attorney that were approved by Gibbs and the commission. Commissioners who voted to fire Gibbs have said Gibbs should have told them that an employee, former Assistant City Attorney Karen Roselli, had accused former city attorneys Paul McDonough and John Wynn of inflating the bills. They have denied it.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 11, 1993

SPRINGS MEETS SUBPOENAS COMING AND GOING

Author: *RON ISHOY Herald Staff Writer*

Special prosecutors in the Broward state attorney's office recently subpoenaed Coral Springs city employee travel records and cellular phone bills and an accounting of the city's contingency fund.

Last week, they changed their minds and withdrew the subpoena.

But the investigation is not over. "If you can figure out what's going on," City Manager **Tony O’Rourke** said Monday, "will you let me know?"

Prosecutors have been trying to determine whether three commissioners conspired -- in violation of Florida's Sunshine Law -- to promote **O’Rourke** to city manager while they all attended a municipal conference in Texas last November.

O’Rourke, a former assistant city manager and then acting city manager, was unexpectedly promoted to the city's top job very late into a Nov. 17 City Commission meeting, long after most of the audience had gone home. The promotion came in the middle of a nationwide search that had brought 114 other applicants.

O’Rourke and the three commissioners who voted for him -- Alan Polin, Bill Stradling and Maureen Berk -- all have denied any secret conspiracy to promote **O’Rourke** during their trip to Dallas or any other time. Mayor Jeanne Mills and Commissioner Don Sanders voted against **O’Rourke** at that November meeting.

"I see **Tony** as being someone with an incredible amount of forward thinking and vision and superb talents," Commissioner Polin said after the vote.

"This was one of those midnight politics moves. It's a total disservice to the public," Mayor Mills countered.

Neither Polin nor Mills was available for comment Monday evening.

Broward State Attorney Michael Satz would not discuss his office's interest in Coral Springs: "We can't confirm or deny any investigation."

Sources close to the probe, however, say the withdrawal of the subpoena does not mean the end of the state attorney's interest in the northwest Broward city.

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Assistant State Attorney Michael R. Jones, a member of the state attorney's special prosecutions and public corruption unit who issued the subpoena, had demanded that Coral Springs officials keep word of the subpoena confidential. Then he was removed from the case in a routine transfer and Assistant State Attorney John Hanlon took it over.

When Coral Springs officials, facing a demand by The Miami Herald to see the subpoena, asked Hanlon to legally defend not releasing it, he withdrew the subpoena.

Since then, prosecutor Hanlon has broadened the investigation.

At the last two City Commission meetings, Polin waved what he said were documents showing that City Attorney Tucker Gibbs had mishandled invoices from the city's former attorneys, Paul McDonough and John Wynn.

Gibbs asked Polin for a copy, and McDonough and Wynn filed a public records request for the information. But Polin said he had turned it over to the state attorney's office, Gibbs said.

Gibbs, McDonough and Wynn all have denied any impropriety.

Herald writer Latasha Gethers contributed to this report.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
December 14, 1992

CITY MANAGER'S STYLE DRAWS MIXED REVIEWS

Author: *NAFTALI BENDAVID Herald Staff Writer*

For lots of people, taking an "interim" position means showing caution, staying out of trouble until the situation solidifies. Not **Tony O'Rourke**. When **O'Rourke** was named acting city manager of Coral Springs two months ago, the former assistant city manager immediately pushed through a controversial \$200,000 insurance policy for the city, arranged one city trip to Dallas, set up another to Reno, signed a deal for a tennis tournament and completely reorganized the city's planning and economic growth departments. All in seven weeks.

It was classic **O'Rourke**, whose swashbuckling management style seems more like that of a brash chief executive than a government administrator. The 38-year-old, who was named city manager last month, is a splash of cold water for Coral Springs, which had grown accustomed to the steady, deliberate style of its last city manager, Edwin "Buz" Eddy. Those who support **O'Rourke** say he's just what the city needs -- a decisive executive, unafraid to take action, impatient with bureaucratic delay. His is a style perfectly suited, they say, to solving the suburban city's longstanding problem of sparse economic development.

But others worry that his style concentrates power in his own hands. **O'Rourke** shows little compassion for city staffers, they say, and his indifference to building consensus is undemocratic. "It's an over-aggressive attitude, a shoot-from-the-hip mentality that could be a serious problem," said David Hulett, a prominent city activist. "That's OK for the division commander, but for the guy leading the (troops) a more thoughtful approach might work much better." Eddy, **O'Rourke's** former boss, said, "He knows more about business of city management than anyone I've ever known. But sometimes he has a tendency to move a little too fast." Added Stefani Fink, who worked for **O'Rourke** when he was assistant to the city manager of Richardson, Texas: "He had a motto, 'Don't ask permission, ask forgiveness.' His other motto was, 'My way or the highway.' That kind of sums it up."

A tireless worker, **O'Rourke** acknowledges being a risk-taker. And expects the same from the city's employees. "If you're not willing to take risks in this job, you shouldn't be in it," he said. "If you're looking for unanimous consent on issues, nothing will get done. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose -- but at least play the game. Don't sit on the bench picking up splinters."

O'Rourke is a child of idealistic parents -- and of the '60s. His father, a physician, served as health commissioner under former New York City Mayor John Lindsay. His mother was a public-health nurse. The family lived in Thailand during the early years of the Vietnam War, and in New York during the student uprising at Columbia University.

What **O'Rourke** learned, he says, is that government must be responsive to the people. "It's a function of my genetic coding," he said. After graduating from the University of California,

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O’Rourke received a graduate degree in urban planning from Cornell University. He is married, with 4- and 1-year-old daughters, and he swims an hour each day. He landed in Coral Springs as assistant city manager four years ago, and immediately undertook a series of decisivereforms.

The city's health plan was \$500,000 in debt; by the time **O’Rourke** was through, it was in the black and he had saved the city \$2.3 million. The finance department was in disastrous shape; **O’Rourke** fired or forced out seven top money-handlers, and now it is one of the smoothest-running departments in the city. "A culture had existed in this organization that it was OK to be incompetent, it was OK to be a survivalist," **O’Rourke** said. "That doesn't sit right with me."

His guiding philosophy is the currently fashionable idea that government should be more like business and should work closely with it. He tosses around phrases like "entrepreneurial spirit" and "customer-focused" and "product improvement." But along the way, some saw problems with **O’Rourke's** impatient, forceful style. His revamping of the health plan was a financial hardship for many staffers, requiring higher deductibles.

Once he advocated a 33 percent hike in water fees; it later turned out only a smaller increase was necessary. More recently, he insisted on quickly paying a \$300,000 county fine, despite one commissioner's plea to wait and see if it could be reduced. All these pros and cons converged at 11 p.m. on Nov. 17, when the Coral Springs City Commission abruptly cut short a planned search for a new city manager and, without warning, voted in **O’Rourke**. The item was not on the agenda and few were in the audience. Some were outraged, seeing the move as improper. And while Commissioner Alan Polin made the motion, many suspected **O’Rourke** was somehow behind it. "There was no honorable reason for doing it that way," said Floyd Schultz, one of the few citizens present at the vote. "There was no emergency. It was just poor."

But **O’Rourke's** supporters said he was clearly the best choice and there was no point in looking further. They see his rapid-fire style as the right response to fast-moving times. "He's been criticized by some for moving too rapidly, but I think he is intelligent enough to go through the thought process where maybe others would be more hesitant," said Commissioner Bill Stradling. Added Commissioner Maureen Berk, "He's aggressive and I think he should be. I support him 100 percent." With that, **O’Rourke** takes over a fast-growing city of 85,000, whose City Hall has a \$45 million budget and 600 employees.

The largest challenge facing Coral Springs is attracting the factories and office buildings that pay high taxes. **O’Rourke** already has sparked the creation of an "economic development foundation," to be run jointly by the city, businesses and landowners. His biggest goal, **O’Rourke** said, is creating an atmosphere in which employees feel free to take chances. "When you can plant the seeds and cultivate that kind of culture, this organization can accomplish anything," he said. Still, **O’Rourke** stepped into the job on a 3-2 vote, and the commissioners who opposed him -- Mayor Jeanne Mills and Commissioner Donald Sanders -- have strong doubts. **O’Rourke** acknowledged he must work on gaining their trust. Said Sanders: "We have to put this behind us and work with him. If he does well, he'll be praised. If he screws up, we'll have a decision to make."

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Sun-Sentinel
December 04, 1992

Coral Springs Manager Wants To Get Down To Civic Business

By KIM MARGOLIS, Staff Writer

CORAL SPRINGS -- Call **Tony O’Rourke** this city’s answer to Ross Perot.

The newly named city manager said his message of back-to-basics government sounds very much like the independent presidential candidate’s.

Just as Perot thought there was too much mud-slinging and discussion of non- issues in the federal government, **O’Rourke** said it’s time for the Coral Springs government to set aside personality differences and personal agendas to work on civic issues.

“Let’s talk about what we’re going to accomplish, not whether someone is on the losing end of a vote with sour grapes,” he said.

“We’re too sophisticated, too professional, to put up with this stuff anymore,” he said.

Coral Springs has had its share of political sniping since 1989, when ex- Commissioner Jim Gordon was charged with ethics violations.

Last year, a bitter battle between Mayor Jeanne Mills and Commissioner Janet Oppenheimer ended when the two squared off for the mayor’s seat and Mills won. In recent months, commissioners have held workshops to discuss ways to bring decorum to sometimes unruly meetings.

In fact, **O’Rourke**’s own appointment as city manager brought up a new political problem.

Three commissioners -- Vice Mayor Maureen Berk and Commissioners Bill Stradling and Alan Polin -- voted to promote **O’Rourke** from acting city manager to city manager.

Mills and Commissioner Donald Sanders, who voted against **O’Rourke**’s appointment, criticized the timing of the hiring.

Berk, Stradling, and Polin had just returned from a trip to Dallas, organized by **O’Rourke** to study economic development.

Mills and Sanders were invited but chose not to go.

O’Rourke said he wants all the commissioners to work together to bring more industry and business to Coral Springs.

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Like Perot, **O’Rourke** thinks that government “must act like a business. I take great offense at being called just another government.”

O’Rourke said he will not allow the controversy over his hiring to go any further.

“We’ve got three votes,” he said. “We’ve just got to get the rest of the commission. I’m convinced we can get a consensus of statesmen.”

Berk, the newest city commissioner, said **O’Rourke’s** work as acting city manager has impressed her:

“He’s very bright, he’s very cognizant of the fact that we work as a group and not as individuals. I think this Dallas trip was just an outstanding effort in both the way he put it together and what we gained from it.

“No (other candidates) measured up to him,” she said.

Sanders said that although he didn’t feel **O’Rourke** was the most qualified applicant for the job, he is ready to work with him.

“He’ll work with us on an individual basis and collectively and maybe a little bit extra hard for those people who didn’t vote for him to gain their confidence,” Sanders said.

O’Rourke, 38, has been an assistant city manager in Coral Springs since 1989. Before that he was assistant to the city manager in Richardson, Texas. He has also worked as the administrative assistant to the deputy city manager and fire chief in Dallas.

O’Rourke said he plans to work more closely with requests from commissioners and residents. Residents shouldn’t hesitate to call up the city manager or anyone else to complain about city services, **O’Rourke** said.

“Government has a bad reputation,” he said. “It’s certainly not going to be tolerated here. We have a very responsive city staff.”

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
 January 10, 1991

**AUDITOR CRITICIZES CORAL SPRINGS ACCOUNTING METHODS REPORT
 SAYS MISTAKES HAMPER EFFORT TO MAKE DECISIONS ON FINANCES**

Author: *NAFTALI BENDAVID Herald Staff Writer*

If you kept your checkbook the way the city keeps track of its finances, you wouldn't know exactly how much money you had or whether you were spending it wisely, a new audit concludes. The accounting firm of KPMG Peat Marwick, which annually dissects Coral Springs' finances, did not make any conclusions about whether the problems have cost the city money but said the city's ability to make intelligent financial decisions is hampered.

Peat Marwick criticized Coral Springs for sloppy bookkeeping, unorthodox accounting methods and financial records the auditors found were in error. Their report, delivered to Coral Springs this week, follows the resignation Friday of Willard Beck after 12 years as the city's finance director amid harsh criticism from his bosses.

"We take it dead serious," Assistant City Manager **Tony O'Rourke** said of the auditors' report. "We're definitely going to address it."

Among Peat Marwick's criticisms, which the auditors said they will detail more fully in a later report:

- * The city paid more than \$2 million in employee medical claims last year but didn't check the claims to ensure they were legitimate.
- * At year's end, the city's main bank account -- its general fund -- "was out of balance, and several accounts included erroneous amounts."
- * Complicated transactions "are not thoroughly researched and rigorously reviewed." The result, the auditors said, has been accounting mistakes that hamper the city's financial decision-making. Mary Wood, a Peat Marwick partner, said she could not provide details.

O'Rourke said city staffers will prepare a response to the audit for Tuesday's City Commission meeting. Peat Marwick is recommending that Coral Springs hire an auditor as part of the city staff. **O'Rourke** said he did not think that was necessary. "Any organization is a composition of individuals, and individuals are people, and people make mistakes," **O'Rourke** said. "The question is how fast you respond to those mistakes. I think we're moving in the right direction."

Nine of the 13 recommendations made by the auditors also were made a year ago but were not followed, Peat Marwick said.

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