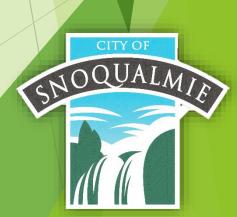
Congratulations, You Are the Finance Director, Now What?

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Becoming a Finance Director-First Steps

- ► I was a finance and budget analyst for eight years before becoming the CFO of Cascade County Montana, including serving as Principal Financial Analyst in Santa Rosa.
- ▶ Did not do my full diligence in vetting the environment before accepting the position.
- Assessment of the operating environment before accepting a position is CRITICAL.
- ► What is the political and management environment, what is the financial status of the organization? CAN YOU MAKE IMPROVEMENTS?

Accepting the Right Position

- ▶ Do through research on the organization you are applying to.
- Assessment of the operating environment before accepting a position is CRITICAL.
- What is the political and management environment, what is the financial status of the organization? CAN YOU MAKE IMPROVEMENTS?
- Interview the organization after you are offered the position, ensure that you can succeed in the job.

The "right fit:" Snoqualmie WA



- Strong management and leadership, same City Administrator and Mayor for 15 years.
- Financial position of City is solid, little fiscal uncertainty. (not always possible)
- Full Service City, population +/- 18,000, \$50 million+ annual expenditures.
- Assured leeway by Mayor and Administrator to manage the department that way I envisioned.
- Beautiful place.

Beginning the Position-Environment

- ► Ended my position at my previous job one day, started the next day at a Council Goal-Setting Workshop.
- ► City was in the middle of a \$32 million bond issuance.
- ▶ 5 of 7 council members had not gone through a budget process before (City is on a biennial budget.)
- ► Known organizational challenges with Finance Department, lack of department growth while City exploded in population.

Planning for first Six-Twelve Months in Position

- Formulated realistic workplan and presented to City Administrator, do not offer "too much" or "too little."
- Known major objectives for me(concurrently):
 - Finish Utility Bond Issuance.
 - ► Take leadership with Council Goals and Objectives Process including Staff Training.
 - ► Train both staff and council on biennial budget process and integrating new council objectives into the budget.(CRITICAL)

Assessing your Department

- ► Unless you have immediate vacancies and major obstacles inhibiting your department operations, take your time.
- ▶ Be inclusive, not exclusive: Get to know your staff, schedule regular staff meetings. MOST IMPORTANTLY: TRUST YOUR STAFF
- ► Gather from your staff and your assessment of what needs to be changes, operationally and organizationally, gauge how long will it take. Examples I found:
 - ▶ No dedicated budget analyst, no dedicated payroll manager.
 - No business license enforcement, no auditing of Sales Tax and UUT.
 - ▶ Too many manual processes taking up too much staff time.

Working with Other Department Heads, Organizational Leadership

- ► Ensure regular meetings with your supervisor.
- ► Set up "get to know you" meetings with all departments that you interact with.
- ► Get to know and understand the "culture" of your organization.
- Assess how the Finance Department is perceived by other departments and organizational employees.
- Where are items you can work with other departments to build trust, repertoire?

Working with Council/Governing Body

- Make sure you are introduced at a council/board meeting.
- Demonstrate that you are approachable and accessible to the council and to the public.
- ► Remember, you work for the taxpayers/ratepayers, and keep that focus in mind when you interact with Council.
- ➤ Yes, there is always at least one disrupter. Consult with management, other department heads on how to interact.
- ► Trial and error will occur as they are getting to know you and vice/versa.

Process Improvements

- Modify your workplan as needed as you become more familiar with your position and organization.
- Work on most immediate needs first (audit findings, budget deadlines, etc.)
- Solicit advice from your mentors and colleagues:
 - Utilize CSMFO listserv.
 - ► Have regular meetings and phone calls with peers.
- ▶ If you see something, say something!
 - Consult GFOA Code of Ethics.
 - ▶ Be familiar with state codes and city ordinances/organizational tenants that you operate under.

Questions?????

