

City manager administers government



Mayor Les Anderson and City Manager Hugh McKinley

"The mayor and the council are elected officials," stated Eugene community relations officer Barbara Shellenbarger. "They are the policy making body," she said. "They appoint the city manager, they hire him to administer the city staff," she said.

Eugene's city manager is Hugh McKinley. He is appointed by the city council to serve an indefinite term and has been with the city for over 11 years.

"I'm the chief administrative officer for the city which means that I have the administrative responsibility for all the operating departments and the staff departments," McKinley said.

"I take my direction as to what is to be accomplished from the city council. "Then I'm responsible for carrying out their directions and seeing that the cities employment group, its administrative structure, provides the services which the council has decided are to be provided through its decisions and through its budget processes," he said.

"I advise the City Council concerning the problems of the city and attempt to give them direction as to the alternatives they can consider. Then once they've made decisions it's my responsibility to carry them out," said McKinley.

"All of the city department heads report to this office, with exception of the library which is responsible to a separate appointed board and the municipal judge who is responsible directly to the City Council," McKinley said. There are a total of 13 city departments which McKinley's office oversees. These are: the finance department, court, legal department, police department, fire department, library, public works, traffic engineer division, planning department, parks and recreation department, data processing, airport department, and the city personnel department. "The various department heads serve as my staff, to advise me," he said.

There are over 700 people employed by the city who work under the direction of McKinley who then reports to the City Council. "It's similar to a president of a corporation with the council being similar to the board of directors of a corporation," he said.

"He is the link and the only link between the city council and the various departments in the city," stated Eugene mayor Les Anderson. "Everything funnels through the city manager."

"Problems usually come to me as a result of citizen's complaints or individual citizens who either have a problem, they want something done about or a complaint or through a department head who has difficulties in his concern. We would develop what we think is an appropriate solution to the problem and if it takes council consideration I will take it to the council and they will make a decision," he stated.

"Occasionally members of the council will initiate a new policy or procedure and usually what happens there is the councilman will either bring it directly to me or he'll bring it up at a council meeting. Then, we'll do a staff study of it, report back to the council as to what our recommendations would be and the council gives it consideration," McKinley said.

"Generally any new problems or policy changes would funnel through this office at one time or another before the decisions are made, so that we can poll together the staff thinking on it and make a recommendation or give the council the choices that can be considered," McKinley said.

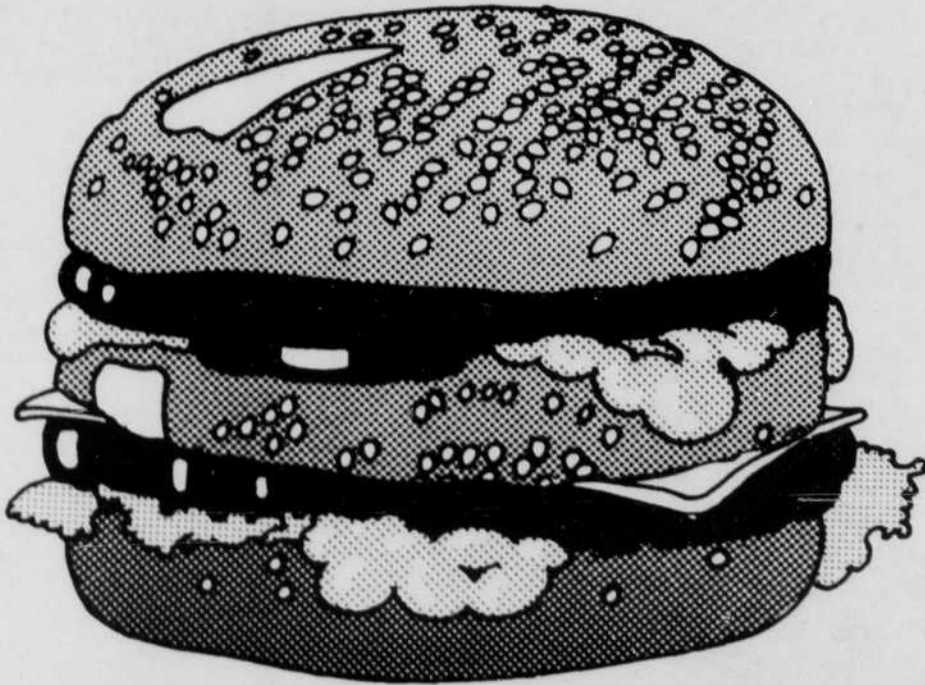
"On any problem of major significance it's not likely that a decision would be made by this office without involving all of the people who have some knowledge of the problem and have some input into the decision. Mr. Martin, my assistant, and I are not technically expert in any one field so we have to rely on competent department heads to guide us," McKinley said.

"We get involved in working with individual citizens as well as other governmental agencies and private groups on various departmental problems," McKinley said. "We also get involved with problems of the city as a whole. A good deal of my time is spent working with the county administration, the Lane Council of Governments, the Planning Commission and other groups," he said.

There are City Council meetings every week, (these are study sessions), and regular city council meetings twice a month. "I make up the agendas for all of the meetings of the City Council," McKinley said. "There will be a whole list of items on each agenda and I have to report to the City Council, on each of those items," he said. "If councilmen want to add anything to the agenda or if individual citizens want an opportunity to appear before the council they make arrangements through my office."

"We have certain seasonal functions that have to be done, such as in the fall cleaning up the leaves and cleaning catch basins," McKinley said. "The summertime is the time when park and recreation activities pick up and become more active, particularly the outside kinds of activities. It's also the time when we are able to get much of our construction done," he said. "We try to do the street paving and the concrete work and that kind of thing in the summertime," McKinley said. "Public works activities pick up in the summertime."

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