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THE NORTH FACE

Elmer: Torrey criticizes leadership

Continued from Page 1

"Older organizations tend to be less receptive to new ideas than a younger organization," Elmer said. "Older organizations also tend to want to study things, instead of just trying them out to see if something might work."

She added: "When a leader raises an issue that might require looking at things differently, it is common for the organization to say 'we need a plan, more direction or more resources.'"

Elmer said the continuing challenge is to create a vision with the council and city executives.

In her evaluation, Elmer thought she needed improvement in community and citizen relations, whereas she thought she either met or exceeded expectations in all other areas.

Elmer was rated on a scale from "exceeding expectations" to "doing an unsatisfactory job." As a whole, the council members were disappointed and said Elmer did need improvement.

Two members in particular

were on opposite ends of the spectrum. Councilman Bobby Lee gave Elmer unsatisfactory marks in all but one category, while Councilwoman Betty Taylor supported Elmer completely.

Taylor said she had a few concerns, but she thought Elmer was doing a good job. "Overall, I think she is moving in the right direction and in a few years will have achieved her goal of 'transparent' government," Taylor said.

In terms of leadership, Lee said Elmer is incompetent. "I do not believe Ms. Elmer understands how to craft a strategic approach for the organization. I do not believe Ms. Elmer models standards of honesty, integrity, trust, and respect."

Elmer defended these sentiments in her self-evaluation. "I would suspect that both the [executives] and the council would give me a lower rating than I would in this category because Eugene has not had the experience of both a new city manager and layoffs in over 15 years."

"In such a situation, it was not possible to make some of the changes the

council was asking for in a timely way without criticism from employees and the [executives]."

Mayor Jim Torrey didn't believe that Elmer was doing her job. "[Leadership] is her weakest area. I want to make it clear that I am not talking about the 'vision' that the elected officials have the responsibility for creating."

He continued: "When I have asked her to describe the strategic direction for the staff of the city, she has been unable to do so in a comprehensive way. Her response has been limited to the following: 'cost-effective government and citizen-responsive services' and 'a transparent government.' These are admirable goals but they are only slogans."

After her first year as city manager, Elmer said, "The city has been through a very turbulent year, and I think the council has asked me to make a lot of difficult decisions, which were necessary but not immediately popular."

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