

Boone from A1

Boone’s reference to seeking employment was verified last Friday after his resignation to be the newly opened position of Assistant to the City Manager in Cottage Grove.

The move pits the former councilor against more than two dozen other applicants with a wide variety of backgrounds relating to city management.

While accepting he may not be the chosen hire, Boone looked back on his last decade in appreciation for all he’d learned and accomplished.

Boone was first elected to the councilor position in the 2010 election, then re-elected in 2014 and again in 2018.

He recalls first being motivated to run for office “out of an abundance of hubris,” believing the Cottage Grove City Council needed a voice of reason such as himself to direct it toward more rational decision-making.

In a turn of fortune, Boone wound up being the only candidate to run for the Ward 1 position that year and easily won the vote.

Once on council, his view of the public body quickly changed.

“I got in and immediately found this learning curve. Very quickly I found out that all this stuff I thought was a pile of terrible, stupid decisions were actually very reasonable, intelligent decisions,” he said. “The issue was that I personally had been unaware of all the backstory and all the other moving parts connected to the one thing I read about. So

my unhappiness with the council was born really out of my own ignorance — not anything the council was doing wrong.”

As his time in local government progressed, Boone found that the interlocking mechanisms of it all often confounded intuitive, “common sense” solutions to problems.

“So there was a lot of learning and a lot of eating crow I had to do,” he said.

Boone credited more senior council members and city staff for helping guide him through the first four years in the position.

“And through that process I came to realize how much I really enjoyed being involved with local government and how important local government in particular is,” he said. “Local government is the place to be. That’s where — maybe not the big, flashy stuff happens — but it’s the stuff that really touches people’s lives the most directly.”

Though he studied computer science at Oregon State University, Boone said he was inspired by his colleagues’ expertise in government and decided to go back to school. He went on to obtain his bachelor’s in planning public policy and management at the University of Oregon and later a master’s in public administration, which he finished last spring.

Outside local government roles, Boone would also go on to join as Treasurer on the board of the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) in 2018.

The league represents all 241 cities in the state and works with its member cities to help local government more efficiently

serve Oregon citizens.

Year by year, Boone was automatically moved up through the pathway of titles, serving as vice president and finishing his presidency in December 2020.

His resignation from the city council, however, made him ineligible to serve his latest position as “immediate past president” and he exited the board.

He has also represented the city on the boards of the Cottage Grove Community Foundation, the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency, the Cottage Grove Community Development Corporation, the Lane Area Commission on Transportation, and on both the General Government and the Finance and Taxation policy committees for the LOC.

In the Cottage Grove City Council, Boone was elected by the council as council president in 2017 and was selected to continue as council president in 2019.

Looking back, Boone noted some highlights of the past decade.

“I think my best sort of crowning political argument moment was not having a moratorium on medical marijuana dispensaries in Cottage Grove,” he recalled. “I believe when the conversation started, I was counting on being the one vote out of the seven to not have

a moratorium and by the end of it we went ahead and did not have a moratorium and things worked out fine.”

Overall, however, Boone sees the council as a cohesive body and his pride mainly stems from being part of its functionality.

“It’s not about me — it’s how good and healthy our council relationships are,” he said.

Boone laments the fracturing he’s seen in other government bodies while praising the Cottage Grove council’s civility.

“We need to continue working to make sure that continues — as new councilors come on, impressing on them the importance of that,” he said.

Now that his future with Cottage Grove no longer includes councillorship, Boone hopes to fill the recently opened assistant position with the city and eventually rise to become city manager.

He is, however, accepting that his bid for the job may not pan out.

Both Boone and City Manager Richard Meyers have been publicly clear that the former councilor’s assessment among applicants will be based objectively upon merit and the two have refrained from discussing the application.

Still, some in the community have raised concerns that Boone’s proximity to the city as councilor over the years has all but

ensured his attaining the position and can be viewed as a done deal.

“No, it’s absolutely not,” Boone said in response. “Richard is going to look at all of the candidates with an eye toward the best good of Cottage Grove. And that means the successful candidate may not be me. And I’m fine with that.”

While working in Cottage Grove is his ideal situation, Boone may have to look further afield for a city manager position.

However, “I would love to be able to stay in Cottage Grove,” he said. “I intend to retire here.”

At his final council meeting on Jan. 25, oth-

ers on the council praised Boone for his contribution to the community.

“You will be missed in this role,” said Councilor Mike Fleck. “I think that you will excel in your future employment, wherever that happens to be. And I wish you the best and thank you for your service.”

The Ward 1 councilor term expires Dec. 31, 2022, meaning a replacement will be sought to fill out the rest of the term.

The city has set a Feb. 26 deadline for applications to the position and will conduct interviews and appoint a person to serve out the rest of the term on March 8.

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