

City *from A1*

It’s partially in this broad capacity that the job description is based.

The new assistant will work directly for the city manager and responsibilities will include coordinating citywide communication efforts, compiling information and statistical data, preparing reports, reviewing and analyzing operational activities, policies and procedures, managing special projects, coordinating specific programs, assisting with implementation of new programs, systems of procedures and responding to resident inquiries.

“The specific definition of what the assistant will be doing will be anything that is assigned him or her from the city manager,” said Meyers, half-jokingly.

Aside from these general needs of the city,

Meyers said an increasing demand for communications and HR (human resources) tasks has stretched beyond his own capacity to handle.

“One of the areas that I’d love to be able to get a better handle on — and I just don’t have the time to do any more — is our online presence,” he said.

For instance, the city has added a virtual element to its public meetings which it intends to continue past the current socially-distanced paradigm.

“So those kinds of things are all things that are adding up. ... They’re straws on the camel’s back. It’s the accumulation of it that is substantial,” said Meyers. “The complexities of managing an organization have grown.”

The position is intended to become a permanent fixture of Cottage Grove city staff and was advertised as a providing

a salary of about \$70,000 to \$90,000, depending on qualifications.

“We’ve created a salary and range chart for the city that breaks out every position and puts them in a range regardless of who’s in the position,” said Meyers of determining the assistant’s salary. “This is what that job is worth to us and where it fits. The salary for this position is below a department head unless the department head is brand new.”

Qualifications for the job include three years of progressively responsible experience managing or supervising operations, programs, budgets and services, preferably in the municipal or private sector environment. A master’s degree is also preferred.

Attaining the assistant position, however, does not ensure that the assistant will be the next city manager.

While Meyers himself

will make the final call on the assistant hire, the Cottage Grove City Council votes in the city manager.

“I do want to make it clear that this does not mean this person is going to be the next city manager,” said Meyers. “That’s a decision the council has to make when that comes up.”

In helping decide from among the more than two dozen applicants for the assistant position, Meyers said he is enlisting the help of other staff and department heads to narrow the list.

The applicants will be issued a “homework assignment” which addresses real projects and policies the city is working on.

“We’ll get it back and say, ‘How did they do? What process did they use? Did they do a good job? Is there a lot of editing that I’m going to have to do to clean it up?’” Meyers explained. “Those

kinds of things will be valuable in that process.”

The applicant pool is reportedly made up of both local and out-of-area candidates, some as far as Pennsylvania and Illinois.

Locally, some buzz has stirred around the verification of former Councilor Jake Boone throwing his hat in the ring.

Boone stepped down from his decade-long council position last Thursday (Feb. 4) in order to apply for the position.

Amid speculation that the city would play favorites and Boone’s hiring is a foregone conclusion, Meyers countered that all applicants are currently being considered.

“The city has not made up its mind. I have not made up my mind at all yet,” said Meyers.

The range of experience among the candidate pool is vast, Meyers said, pointing to several diverse examples.

“A number from Cottage Grove and local residents have applied and some of them have less experience in government, but they’ve got some real interesting experience in the private sector,” he said. “We’ve got some others that have been in the city manager’s office in other states or other places. And some that have had some experience in operation and management of broadband and technology.”

On top of on-paper qualifications and experience, Meyers said personality will also be a big factor in finding the right fit.

It’s hoped that a short list of around 10 applicants will form by the end of this week, at which point the “homework assignments” will begin.

If all goes according to plan, Cottage Grove will see the assistant position filled sometime in March.



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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Are you ready?

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Common home emergencies, and how to prevent them

Dorothy Gale said “there’s no place like home” in “The Wizard of Oz.” But what about when homes are no longer safe?

Household emergencies can occur at any time. When disaster strikes, knowing how to proceed effectively can make a world of difference and potentially save lives. Fortunately it’s easy to prevent or reduce a wide range of household dangers by embracing some simple safety measures.

- **Accidental falls:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that accidental falls are the leading cause of nonfatal injury among nearly every age group. Roughly three million adults age 65 and older experience falls that result in emergency room visits each year in the United States. Falls can be prevented by removing tripping hazards, installing steady handrails and other supports and adding lighting in and around a home. If a fall should occur, stabilize the limb or injured area of the body and seek medical assistance.
- **Kitchen fires:** The potential for danger exists whenever cooking with heat or over open flames. Kitchen fires may occur, but they don’t have to spread or cause serious issues if fast action is taken. Never use water to put out a grease fire — it will only spread it and make it worse. Cover the fire with a lid to suffocate the flames, or use baking soda to douse the fire. Always have an all-purpose fire extinguisher on hand, and know how to operate it.
- **Burst pipes:** Burst pipes or leaking plumbing can quickly cause major damage in a home. Dwell Residential Group says to locate the water main, which is usually in the basement or garage on the “street side” near the water meter. Turn off the main to save the home and your wallet. Make the water main visible, mark which way is off, and instruct others in the house on how to use it.
- **Tipping furniture:** Tip-over incidents send thousands of people (especially young children) to emergency rooms each year, says the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. Top-heavy items, like dressers, TV stands and televisions, bureaus, and bookcases should be anchored to the wall.
- **Unintentional poisoning:** People may inadvertently consume household poisons. State Farm advises calling 9-1-1 if the victim is unconscious or not breathing. If the person is alert, consult with the American Association of Poison Control Centers at 1-800-222-1222 (or the Ontario Poison Centre at 1-800-268-9017) and await instructions. Keep the bottle or packaging of the assumed poison on hand and be prepared to discuss symptoms and personal information about the victim.
- **Fire or other danger:** No one ever thinks an emergency situation necessitating escape from the home will take place. But to play it safe, residents should designate emergency exits that are the quickest and safest ways out of every room in the house. Practice this plan and pick a specific meeting spot outside.

Safety at home involves knowing how to act fast in an emergency and how to reduce your risk of being in potentially dangerous situations.



PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.

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