

# THE ADMINISTRATOR

A PUBLICATION OF THE N.C. CITY & COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2014, ISSUE 4

## TIME FOR ASSISTANT MANAGER RECOGNITION

**In 2001, the Executive Committee** of the North Carolina City and County Management Association authorized the annual recognition of one or more Outstanding assistant managers from member jurisdictions.

Assistant managers play important roles in the operation of local governments, including carrying out, in some instances, the duties of the manager. Many of the

members of the NCCCMA are current or former assistants, or have assistants under their direction.

Through this notice, NCCCMA members are encouraged to submit deserving assistants for consideration. Nominees can be long time assistants or outstanding newcomers to the profession.

A panel will review the nominations and select the recipient. The award will be

announced and presented at the NCCCMA Business Meeting on Saturday, June 21, 2014. If you wish to nominate an assistant manager for consideration for this award, please complete the nomination form and return by May 23, 2014 to NCCCMA: Attn: Melissa Smith, 308 West Jones Street, Raleigh NC 27603. Electronic submissions to [msmith@nclm.org](mailto:msmith@nclm.org)

## SWEET MEMORIES

**As the N.C. City & County Management Association (NCCCMA) celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary,** The Administrator asked past presidents a question that hopefully brought a smile to their faces: *What was the most memorable thing that happened during your tenure as president of the association?*

**Jack Neel, past president:** "That was 40 years ago. I haven't the slightest idea what all we did. That was the beginning, man. We got this thing going. "

**Lewis Price, Lenoir city council:** "Winning the golf tournament at Pinehurst and hosting the trophy for a year. Wrapping up, I'd like to say that the Good Lord knew he didn't give me the personality for a CPA, and I'm surprised He thought He did for a city manager, but I guess He knew what He was doing because the last 54 years as a manager and city councilman have been a great ride and I've enjoyed MOST of it!"

**Dee Freeman, past president:** "The most memorable thing for me was

broadening my network of people with whom I associated and worked. Being president afforded me opportunities on a statewide and national level that would not have otherwise been available. How wonderful it was to accomplish a number of things on policy, career advancement initiatives, the Code of Ethics, and much more. But, the new friends and colleagues with whom I came in contact are the most memorable. I was so pleased that one of those people was Carolyn Carter, assistant city

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## THE ADMINISTRATOR

*The Administrator* is a monthly newsletter of the North Carolina City and County Management Association, a professional association for city and county managers and assistant managers from counties and municipalities throughout the state of North Carolina.

For comments or suggestions, please contact Matt Lail, editor, at 919-819-3979, or email at [collards12@yahoo.com](mailto:collards12@yahoo.com).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 2014 N.C. City & County Management Association Summer Seminar

Charlotte  
June 19-21, 2014

### ICMA 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

Charlotte  
September 14-17, 2014

# REGISTRATION OPEN FOR SUMMER CONFERENCE

**Registration is now open** for the N.C. City & County Management Association's Summer Seminar, being hosted in Charlotte/Mecklenburg County at the Westin Charlotte Hotel, June 19-21. Please plan to join your local government management colleagues for continuous learning, valuable networking and sustaining fellowship.

The NCCCMA Planning Committee has developed an interesting, informative program agenda focused on innovation, council/manager relationships, and effective leadership traits. In keeping with tradition, local government managers will be also be trained as ICMA hosts and N.C. ambassadors in preparation for ICMA's 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, being held Sept. 14-17 at the Westin Charlotte.

Should you need to become a member of NCCCMA, the

N.C. ICMA state chapter, please visit the [NCCCMA](#) website to access the [membership application form](#).

The conference registration [link](#) also provides on-line access for Westin room reservations, or you may call the hotel directly, and specify that you are registering under the NCCCMA Summer Seminar hotel room block. Westin will honor the room block through May 28 at a room rate of \$172.88 per night, including fees and taxes.

The Westin Charlotte  
601 College Street  
Charlotte, NC 28226  
704-375-2600

We're looking forward to seeing you and yours in late June, and please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. Our very best to you in this season of local government budgets!



## ETHICS: CREATING ETHICAL DILEMMAS FOR STAFF

*Reprinted with permission from Public Management (PM) magazine, published by ICMA, the premier local governmental management organization, Washington, D.C. Contact the ICMA Ethics Center at 202.962.3521 or visit [ICMA.org/ethics](http://ICMA.org/ethics).*

**Ask or direct a staff member** to do something unethical, and you place the person in an untenable position of great risk. How many will muster up the courage to challenge their supervisors?

If they do the right thing, will they face possible job loss or retribution? Or do they go along with the hope that doing so will preserve their employment?

And if the unethical conduct is later revealed, how do they know for certain that they too won't be held accountable for their actions? Those who create ethical dilemmas for their employees demonstrate a complete failure of leadership.

How do leaders do this? The Machiavellian types take the bold approach and just order their direct reports to do things that are clearly unethical. Faced with a direct order or the opportunity to please the boss, who wouldn't comply?

### The Subtle Slide

The vast majority of

ethical dilemmas are created by leaders in a more subtle manner. It's the friendly request for assistance on a personal matter.

The lack of clear communication, often accompanied by a sense of urgency to get it done, sends the tacit message to staff that it's okay to violate a rule or policy. In this instance, to accomplish the leader's desired outcome.

Perhaps it is a pattern of a leader's noncompliance with organizational protocol that leaves staff with the impression that the leader is actually exempt from the rules. This can include a leader's failure to act on information delivered to the leader by staff, and a leader's failure to respect boundaries. Worse yet are those requests that are implicitly coercive.

- Here are just a few real-world examples for consideration:
- A New York State Supreme Court Justice was recently censured for using public resources for personal gain. The judge repeatedly had staffers pick up her child at school and then babysit either in the courthouse or at her home. She also had her office staff drive her on personal errands.
- A city manager obtained a \$10,000

unsecured, below-market-rate loan from the city to use as a down payment on a home. The loan, which was not outlined in the manager's employment agreement, was never approved by city council. When the request was submitted to finance, the check was issued. All of this was later disclosed by a district attorney's investigation. The city attorney also had full knowledge of the loan.

- An audit of county-issued credit cards revealed numerous personal charges made by the county manager to the county card. It was a clear violation of county policy. The personal charges were hard to miss since they included doctor visits, clothing purchases at major retail outlets, and items for the home.

Yet the credit card bill was paid each month, often without receipts, explanation, or reimbursement of the personal expenses.

- In a case from the past decade, the former city manager and deputy city

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## ETHICS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

manager of San Diego each paid \$25,000 in financial penalties for their roles in misleading investors in municipal bonds. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) charges alleged these officials and others knew the city had been intentionally underfunding its pension obligations so that it could increase pension benefits but defer the costs.

The charges also alleged that they were aware that the city would face severe difficulty funding its future pension and retiree health care obligations unless new revenues were obtained, benefits were reduced, or city services were cut. The SEC alleged that despite extensive knowledge, they failed to inform municipal investors about the severe funding problems in bond disclosure documents.

The city manager signed

the closing letter for one of the bond offerings, falsely certifying that it was accurate and did not contain any misleading statements. The deputy regularly reviewed and revised the false and misleading disclosure documents, and signed the closing letter for two of the five bond offerings.

In doing so, the deputy falsely certified the disclosures as accurate and not containing any misleading statements. She also reviewed and made presentations to the rating agencies.

### Culture Matters

There are more facts that make each of these situations unique. But each shares a common thread: In the face of unethical conduct by the leader, opportunities for staff to intervene to stop that conduct were ignored.

From the individual asked to pay a bill or issue a check in violation of city policy to

the department director who had oversight responsibilities, all failed in their ethical responsibility to act. What about all the others who, while not central to the drama, certainly had knowledge of the activity? Why didn't they intervene?

The takeaways from these examples? Leaders, it is not all about you! Consider the impact of your conduct on the employees and the organization before you act. Don't create ethical dilemmas for your staff.

Lastly, work to ensure that your organizational culture empowers employees to challenge unethical conduct no matter where it comes from.

*Martha Perego*  
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## NEED AN INTERN? LOOKING FOR AN INTERNSHIP?

**If you are interested in** a career in local government management and want to explore the profession, or if you are a city or county manager in need of an intern, NCCCMA has a resource for you.

On the association's website is a webpage that allows potential interns to offer up their services. It's also a spot for local governments to solicit for potential interns.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this service, then go to [www.ncmanagers.org](http://www.ncmanagers.org) and look under "Member Resources" and click on "Internships."

## SWEET MEMORIES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

manager of Raleigh at the time, and the fact that she succeeded me as president when the Association elected her as the first female president of the Association.”

**Carolyn Carter, past president:** “... I became very ill in March 1992 before I was supposed to become president in June 1992. It became clear that the illness was going to be a prolonged one and I suggested to the Board of Directors that the Second Vice President and I switch years as presidents, giving me a year to recover. I knew the members of the Board well and they knew me and they knew better than I did what I would need during my recovery (i.e., important work to do) that I could do mostly from home. So they insisted I go ahead and take office in June 1992. (I was not able to go to the office full-time for a year. I had Chronic Fatigue Syndrome). That decision was as important as anything that happened to me in helping me to keep my mental and emotional well-being during a rugged illness. There was no email in those days so most of the business of the Association was conducted by phone, which was easily done from home. Terry Henderson, NCCCMA Secretariat, got a fax machine for me. I was able to be at all the Board meetings and Association meetings and to provide leadership to the Association.

“During that year, the support that I received from my fellow managers through phone calls and cards and

notes helped to sustain me during the toughest times. My daily contact with all members while I was taking care of the business of the Association gave me strength and energy. I will always be grateful for the love and support that I received that helped me as I strived for a complete recovery, which did happen.

“One of the highlights of that year was the phone call that I received during the ICMA Conference in September 1992. I was not able to attend but Phin Horton (Morrisville Town Manager at the time and legendary member of our profession) organized a phone call from the Association hospitality suite and passed the phone to everyone there. That was a boost to my spirits that I lived off for days and which makes me smile as I remember it today.”

**Jerry Ayscue, Vance County:** “The most memorable thing that I recall is the strong relationships that were developed. I was Association president during 2002-2003, when cities and counties were in financial shock. We did not have a traditional summer conference that year (2002), but instead met in Raleigh for a NCCCMA business meeting as a means of being fiscally conservative. That entire year was one in which local governments adjusted to an urgent sense of financial crisis and began to learn of how to cope with severe economic stress and

uncertainty. This demanding environment for managers strengthened our interdependence and reliance on each other as we all struggled to provide sound professional leadership. Those relationships will last a lifetime.”

**Cal Horton, past president:** “... I vividly remember the real pleasure that I had when I introduced Peggy Merriss to our membership at the 1999 summer conference. Peggy then was the city manager of Decatur, Ga., and was serving as the Southeast Region Vice President of ICMA. ... In 2002, she became the first woman to serve as president of ICMA. I remember her attendance at our conference so clearly, because I hired Peggy when I was the assistant city manager in Decatur. It was her first job in local government. I admit that I am proud that I had something to do with her outstanding career of professional and public service.”

**John Ed Whitehurst, past president:** “Not a single event but the fact that my peers felt that I was capable of being president of the Association and electing me as their president”

**Lane Bailey, Lenoir:** “During my term as president, we actually celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of annual conferences. This group met once a year for several years before the organization formalized into an Association.”