

City of Asheville
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
Application Form

APPLICANTS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO ATTEND SEVERAL MEETINGS OF A BOARD PRIOR TO APPLYING AND/OR APPOINTMENT TO A BOARD

Name of board or commission(s) Councilman Vacancy

Your name: Phillip H. Gray Home Phone#: (828) 667-3196

Street Address: 53 Haly Ho Drive City: Candler Zip Code: 28715

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: Retired Military / Retired Businessman

Your Position: Consultant / Coordinator

Resident Of City: Candler / Asheville County: Buncombe Race: Caucasian * Sex: Male * Age: 49

Are you a United States Citizen (circle One)? YES Or No

Residence Location (check one): Central _____ North _____ South _____ East _____ West X

How did you become aware of the opening? X Webpage _____ Current Volunteer _____ eNews _____
Government Channel _____ Newspaper _____ Radio _____ Organization _____ Agenda X Other _____

Please indicate the area(s) of expertise that you can bring to the above board(s) then in detail list education, experience, reasons for your interest, and other factors that support your interest for serving (use additional sheet if necessary). Expertise: X Legal: X Technical: _____ Fundraising: _____ Community Contacts X Business Management (Financial) X Business Management (Operational) X Public Speaking

EDUCATION: For higher education, I hold BS with a double major (Information System Management / Business Management) with a minor in Business Law from the University of Maryland European Division, (transcript available upon request). While serving active duty, I completed numerous leadership academies with an above average success rating. I also hold a "Meister" from the Federal Republic of Germany as an Information Systems Manager, which enabled me as a U.S. citizen to own and operate a computer service business in Germany.

EXPERTISE:

A. **Legal:** While I hold a minor in business law I was also required to study categories of law (Contract, Business, Tort, and Criminal). Although I never practiced Law, I was required to keep myself abreast of current contract laws with the Department of Defense, since I was one of few computer business owners in Europe who were under contract to evaluate and provide written estimates for computer repair and replacement. (See Attachment)

Return To:
Maggie Burleson, City Clerk
Post Office Box 7148
Asheville, N.C. 28802-7148

Signature: 

Date: November 7, 2008

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*This Information is required for the sole purpose of assuring that a cross section of the community is supported.

Attachment

EXPERTISE:

B. Technical: I was a computer programmer, operator, and repairman for the military's AN-GSG-10/12 mainframes and associated subordinate computers for 12.5 years while active duty. I am familiar with acquisition and office software packages including graphics software. I am also semi-proficient with "Pascal" and the basics of the programming structure.

C. Business Management (Financial): As a section leader, I was required to maintain computers and test equipment within a fixed governmental budget, along with providing detailed reports regarding cost analysis when such cost exceeded the annual budget. I attended and completed successfully accounting courses at the University level (University of Maryland European Division Heidelberg, Germany).

D. Business Management (Operational): I am very proficient in the formulation of proposals regarding a wide variety of social economic and political backgrounds. During the last year, I coordinated a consulting group on a healthcare reform proposal, which has gained recognition from all levels of government. I owned and operated a successful small business servicing a military community of the size of Asheville. I maintained Contractual Agreements with the DOD in the Schweinfurt, Wurtzburg, and Bad Kissingen area of Germany. I currently manage the estate of Henry Wells, son to Senator Henry Gordon Wells of the New England Wells, formally a resident of the Asheville area.

E. Public Speaking: As I have been bilingual for many years (English/German), I was often chosen to represent the military post in Bad Kissingen/Germany, regarding cultural and business relations. I was also a field interpreter while on NATO exercises. I have acted as a liaison for a private consulting group when dealing with various Senators, Congressman, and advisors to different Governors, including our recently elected Governor, Beverly Perdue.

Phillip H. Gray

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Cell (828) 273-9815

E-mail pgray59@bellsouth.net

Objective:

Seeking the appointment to Asheville City Council. Based on the recent election victory of Ms. Holly Jones.

Employment History:

Consultant / Coordinator

October 2007-Present

Acted as the chief consultant and coordinator for a private civil consultant group whose primary goal was healthcare reform for the United States under a free market based system with minimal government control. Currently it has been lobbied and has received significant interest from multiple state Governors and other legislators to include our own newly elected Governor, Senator Burr, and recently Jane Whilden. Pro Bono Work

Participant / Assistant for a Renal Support Group

2005-Present

As I was at one time a renal dialysis patient prior to the receipt of a transplant in 2006 I remain active on a local ESRD support group. It is an open forum initially set up by a small group of renal patients to assist new patients and to disseminate information to improve the quality of life for ESRD patients. With in the last year it has gained support from one of the largest Renal care companies in the United States. Pro Bono Work

Business Owner / Operator

February 1998-2000

The Computer Doctor; Schweinfurt Germany

Owned and operated a small computer business centered in the heart of a U.S. military community in Europe. Held a contract with the DOD to perform inspections and cost estimations on damaged computer equipment shipped by the Federal Government. In addition I was licensed to repair such equipment. I sold the business and I returned to the United States.

Private Contractor

1995-1998

Holz Im Form; Oberthulba, Germany
Weinstube Zur Klause; Oberthulba, Germany
OFG; Oberthulba, Germany

Duties included a wide range of computer upgrades and software related tasks. In addition I also was involved in marketing strategies for the non-profit organization, (OFG) as well as the other two businesses listed. Duties were directly related to desktop publishing skills.

Floor Supervisor / Drill Press Operator

September 1993-1995

Holzer U. Zink; Oberthulba Germany

I was a supervisor for a subcontractor for Knauf Industries. In addition to quality control inspections and shipping protocols, I also ran a drill press. I held this position while on the Temporary Duty Retired List of the U.S. Army until I was fully retired in 1995

U.S. Army Non-Commissioned Officer
Multiple duty assignments U.S. and Europe
Medically retired Post Gulf War

March 1981-1993

I was rated number one in my field (13C30) in Europe for six consecutive years. I was the section leader of a multi-resource computer section, which performed analyses on strategic locations for military resources and the complete use of those resources. Was called on to represent the FA Branch of the Army for the development of the Congressional Defense plan for Western Europe. I was assigned the NOCIC in charge of closing out a unit during the draw down phase after reunification. Wrote, tested and implemented many SOPs, which remain on file in the pentagon. I was awarded numerous citations and medals for outstanding duties / performances while Active Duty.

Education:

University Of Maryland (European Division)
Bachelor Of Science: (Double Major)
Information System Management / Business Management
Minor: Business Law.

Government Issued Meister Beruff (Germany)
Informatik: Equivalent to a Masters in Computer Science.

Military Education:

Basic Non Commissioned Officers Course:

Course objective was to implement the Management Theory in a fully automated environment. In addition the course was designed to fine tune computer management skills in areas of Programming, Operations, Maintenance and Repair of mainframe computers along with other associated digital devices. The course length was eight sixty-hour accelerated study weeks. In addition practical work was required for completion.
Honor Graduate

TS-113A Computer Operations and Maintenance Course:

Course was an in-depth computer and operations course. Specifically designed as an advancement course in operations and maintenance of mainframe computers and digital message emulators, which are used on helicopters and AWACS planes. Specific training was also given in local and wide area networks. Course length was twelve sixty hour accelerated study weeks. In addition practical work was required for completion.
Honor Graduate

Tacfire Fire Support Course:

Course dealt with mainframe operation and repair. Specifically with fault detection and fault isolation techniques, digital networks and being able to read machine language under the octal system, while programming with ADA formats. Preparation of nuclear and chemical weapons data to include meteorological down wind radiation messages. I had to learn techniques in setting up local area networks along with wide area networks by both hardware and radio frequency. Course length was thirteen and a half sixty hour accelerated study weeks. In addition practical work was required for completion.
Graduated with an 86% course average.

Additional Courses Of Study

(FLS) EMT training, Cryptology, Air Loading and Deployment, Counseling, Strategic Planning, and the War Doctrine

Skills:

- **Educated**
- **Completed Leadership Training**
- **Proficient as a Team Member or Individual.**
- **Works well under pressure**
- **Computer literate**
- **Networking Experience**
- **Excellent Communication Skills**
- **Analytically Driven**
- **Bilingual (German)**

1. What motivates you to apply for this position?

I am applying for this position, because I believe it to be my civic duty and responsibility to offer my expertise and leadership experience to the community.

Civic duty: As a citizen, I do not only have the responsibility to pay taxes; I have the duty to assist in coping with the problems of the city, both during the good and the bad times. I believe it is my civic duty to offer my technical and professional skills to be used by the leaders of this community and to strive to become one of those leaders who will and can make a difference within this community. A leader who is able to analytically approach any situation with objectivity rather than opinion or a preconceived prejudice and is willing to make tough decisions for the benefit of the community as a whole and not a specific group within the community.

Responsibility: As a trained professional, I see it as a responsibility to offer my services, both social and technical, to help mold the type of community, which will thrive for years to come. I look forward to working toward real solutions for the social or developmental issues of the community.

Expertise: Due to my educational background in business and the technological field, I could be a viable asset to the City Council. In addition, I have always been in or held a leadership position, which where not only the end results were a driving factor but also cost effectiveness under specific times lines.

Leadership: Since Asheville is made up of so many diverse subcultures it is important to be able to assimilate to each subculture without bias. Having been a respected leader within a highly structured yet diverse environment, I feel I could bridge gaps should tensions rise. I am willing and able to mediate any situation to achieve a sensible and productive outcome for any social or economic situation.

2. Where do you fall on the conservative-liberal spectrum in terms of fiscal and social policy?

I consider myself to be in the political center, while holding to some conservative values. This approach allows me to maintain focus on issues without bias. While I believe that tax policies are the necessary evil of any government at any level, the government itself must remain responsible in it's spending.

As leaders, we need to approach any subject regarding fiscal policy with equal understanding and allow ourselves the ability to maintain the balance of liberalism, while holding to strong enough conservative values to accomplish the present and future needs of Asheville. I know we can't satisfy everyone 100% of the time and that isn't the city councils job. The priority is to vote accordingly on policies, which will better the community as a whole without prejudice.

Implementation of new policies should be carefully balanced, so no specific group is impacted in an adverse manner. I believe good fiscal policy takes into consideration all levels of the economy as well as all social groups within the community and promotes growth without singling out specific tier of the business community.

Regardless of where you fall on the conservative-liberal spectrum our focus as leaders needs to be based on the problem-solving model. It is also understood that there will be instances where the problem-solving model may not be an option such as the case of our broken water lines or the recent gas shortage. It is in times of crisis whether it is natural or civic when our values may have to remain in the background until after a temporary solution can be achieved.

3. In your eyes, what should be the top 2 or 3 priorities our City Council should be focused on in the upcoming year and why?

A. Economic and Civic Growth: We can't have one without the other. The entire nation is facing one of the most troubling economic times since the depression. Our focus must be on maintaining industry in our area and keeping the jobs here in the mountains. To do this, we have to offer tax incentives for industries, which are willing to expand or relocate into our area. Secondly, we cannot just view economic growth without dealing with civic growth, which includes the consideration of issues such as building codes, taxes, and changes to our zoning ordinances. A key approach is to plan growth wisely and prevent uncontrolled growth for the sole purpose of tax revenue. We need to grow moderately under a plan, which has the future in its best interest. As this community continues to grow, we also have to maintain a solid infrastructure.

B. Infrastructure: In order for Asheville to grow moderately under a growth plan, we are going to have to expand the infrastructure to handle both the needs of our citizens and of our industry. We will have to insure that our areas of industry are strategically placed, so the normal flow of everyday life moves without congestion or is inhibited by second guess construction.

We also need to consider a plan B strategy, especially regarding our energy consumption. We cannot afford to be caught off guard again, like during the recent gas shortage. Had the shortage lasted longer, Asheville would have just not suffered to the extent it did, it would have been crippled. As leaders of this community, we cannot afford to wait until another crisis to formulate a secondary course of action. We not only have to be wise enough to look at our weaknesses in advance we owe it to our citizens, who place their trust in us, to be ready at a time of need.

4. What do you consider the most crucial problem, need, or cause for the citizens of Asheville?
How would you approach its resolution or champion the cause?

This has to be dealt with at the city level just as much it does the county or state. Asheville is the center or hub of Western North Carolina, we cannot rule out the economy and it's growth. It is clear top analysts are calling for a rough road in our future. The housing market and the availability of jobs are foremost on everyone's mind. Secondly, the projected budget shortfalls this coming year and just where to cut spending or gain revenue in the future are also important issues.

First I would approach this by appointing a liaison, whom is capable to deal with the business industry to gather information as to what these businesses need (support wise) to keep the jobs that exist, here. Secondly that liaison needs to be able to reach out to industries, which are either, looking to relocate or expand. We as a community can't afford to wait till they come to us. Let us be the headhunter. We need to seek those businesses out and offer them a fair tax incentive rather than buying them with a disproportionat tax advantage.

Secondly, as a member of the city council I would take a hard look at the budget and make outright cuts to programs that are currently not performing to expectations; start a strategic placement plan of our law enforcement resources to save fuel costs while maintaining an adequate reaction time to any crime being committed or responded to. Cut back on programs where the city resources and subsidies are being used without clear benefit. If resources are spent on projects like the civic center renovation, we need to regain those funds, for example by raising the usage fee and/or actively seeking more venues catering to the middle-aged crowd in order to draw larger audiences. We have to approach this not just on the cuts but ways to generate revenue as well. Furthermore, I would like to examine possibilities to improve the efficiency of the public transportation system. However, no clear answers can be made without a detailed analysis of current spending to include adjustments for the recent inflationary or deflationary rate. It would be counter productive to cut blindly.

5. 2008-09 and 2009-10 fiscal years will be financially tough for the City. What will be your top funding priorities and what would you like to see reduced to balance the budget.

This is not an easy question to answer without knowing exactly where the funds are being used. However, I am sure that fuel and overhead are two of the major issues concerning the fiscal budget. It is also evident that the city's redevelopment would have to be reexamined regarding the feasibility of projects for what we could complete as to what we would like to complete. In addition, as a council member I would be voting for penalties for projects/developers who run significantly behind schedule if the fault was not do to weather or other uncontrollable factors.

I would also have to consider human resource cuts. This is an area, which is a costly drain. I would consider cutting some janitorial staff and putting some of the burden on to the personnel working in these departments. I would look into a shorter workweek, for example a four-hour cut for non-essential staffing. The four hours of revenue along with the additional benefits paid by the city would represent significant savings. Another avenue maybe to initiate a wage freeze for six months, followed by wage increase compatible to the Federal Government's percentage rate. Further defer it for six months and you just saved six months of salary increases, while deferring the increase for an additional six months.

Project management needs to also take a lesson from the Federal Government by not just accepting the lowest bid plus or minus 2% but holding them accountable by over cost caps.

Cutting 2% off the annual budget for every area of culture and recreation would save another quarter of a million dollars.

In addition, if the city could cut only 1% in the subcategories of environment and transportation we could save just over a 600K alone. This would be more than enough to cover to cover the projected budget shortfall for the coming year.
