



BEN LANE

CITY CLERK ACCOMPLISHMENTS (JUNE 2022 TO MAY 2023)

Overview

This self-evaluation covers the following goals for the June 2022 to May 2023 period, along with several other areas:

- 1) Conducting the August and November 2022 Council Elections successfully.
- 2) Implementing improvements to the City's Records Management Program.
- 3) Working with the Mayor, City Council, and City Attorney to update the Rules of Council Procedure.
- 4) Developing team members and representing the City Clerk's profession.
- 5) Beginning the procurement process for an electronic Agenda Management System to replace a largely paper-based process.

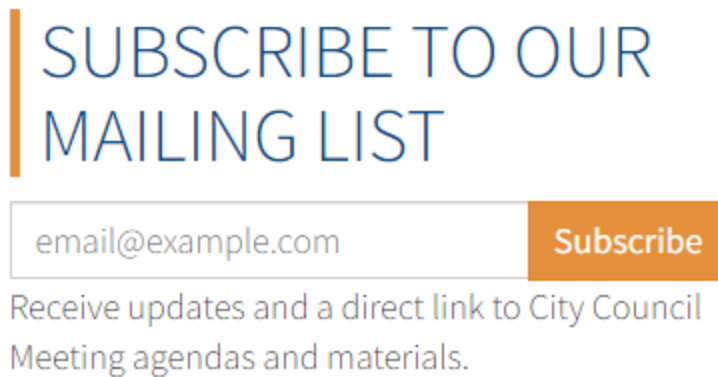
This report covers these and other areas in detail. I truly appreciate being able to serve as the City Clerk of Scottsdale.

Innovations and Improvements

Leveraging technology is key to improving our services for external and internal customers and making our operations more efficient. Additionally, I look for ways to make materials and information provided to the public, City Council, and others easier to understand and more transparent. In furtherance of these goals, the following innovations and improvements were undertaken:

- **Online Agenda Sign Up** – Following up on a resident suggestion and working with Information Technology (IT) staff, the City Clerk's Office implemented a solution allowing residents to sign up to receive email notifications when Council

Meeting agendas (and amended agendas) are posted on the City’s website by the City Clerk’s Office (see screenshot below).



This subscription notification can be found on multiple City webpages to make it convenient for individuals to sign up. This solution is now live on the City’s website and the June 27, 2023 Council Meeting will be the first agenda to use this new email list, which will be managed by City Clerk staff.

I looked to implement this solution when I began my tenure in Scottsdale in 2021. At the time, there were technological limitations related to the notification mechanism that prevented implementation. These technological limitations were overcome and we look forward to the full implementation of this process improvement.

- **Board and Commission Online Application** – Based on Mayor and City Council feedback, this online application was updated to include a “Conditions of Appointment” section, requiring applicants to acknowledge several important items pertaining to appointment (see screenshot below).

Conditions of Appointment

By checking the checkboxes below you acknowledge and understand the following:

- If you miss three consecutive meetings, or four meetings within a six-month period, you may be removed from office
- All members must maintain Scottsdale residency in order to remain in office
- Committing a felony or certain crimes will automatically remove you from office
- If you are no longer able or willing to serve, please contact your board chair and staff liaison immediately

Acknowledgement *

- I acknowledge and understand the above

Additionally, the overall format of the application was updated to provide a more modernized (aesthetically pleasing) look to the online form and the application that is provided to the Council for review. The new application form is also consistent with other online forms maintained by the Clerk's Office, such as the Request to Speak and Written Comment online forms used for Council Meetings. The updated application system (Cognito) allows for Clerk staff to directly manage the application and make minor/routine changes and updates.

- **Records Destruction Request Portal** – Before City staff destroy records that have met their retention periods, the destruction request must be reviewed and approved by the Clerk's Office. This destruction request was a manual process with departmental staff either interofficing or emailing a request form.

Working with IT staff, we developed an online records portal to allow for the electronic submission of destruction requests by an approved departmental Records Officer. This was implemented on December 1, 2022 and allows for more efficient processing and tracking of requests.

- **New email address** – a new email address (cityclerk@scottsdaleaz.gov) was created and used as the main email address for the November 2022 Election Informational Pamphlet. This address also is utilized on the Clerk's website and for public records requests. Multiple Clerk team members have access to this mailbox ensuring that questions are responded to in a timely manner even if a team member is out of the office.
- **E-Signatures** – Continuing the utilization of the City's procured solution, BlueInk, City Clerk staff route gift forms for Councilmembers to complete and sign electronically. Working with the other Charter Officers and IT staff, the Clerk's Office expanded this functionality to other forms, such as certain administratively approved small dollar contracts and intergovernmental agreements. [Administrative Regulation 151](#) was updated to allow for the electronic routing of City Council Reports. The electronic routing allows for more efficient processing and is environmentally friendly.
- **Kiosk for Public Comments** – First implemented for the August 24, 2021 City Council Meeting, the use of an electronic kiosk for residents to sign up for public comment on agenda items continues to be well received. This system eliminated the need for paper comment cards. In addition to signing up to speak at the kiosk, residents can also sign up online ahead of the Council Meeting and on their smartphones using a QR code. During Council Meetings, the kiosk is staffed by a City Clerk team member who helps residents fill out a request to speak, which on average, takes about 30 seconds to complete. During this

period, we had almost 100 individuals sign up to speak on an item using the kiosk. Several neighboring jurisdictions have implemented a similar system.

- **Document Management Solution** – The City’s new document management and storage system is Laserfiche. In December 2022, the City Clerk’s Office worked with IT to input Clerk-managed documents, such as Council Reports, Ordinances, Resolutions and Contracts into Laserfiche. We continue to work with IT to ensure Laserfiche is scanning documents accurately and these documents have searchable text, as these were both standards of the previous document management system (DM).

Election Administration

Two City elections were held during this evaluation period. The 2022 Primary Election (to elect three Councilmembers) was held on August 2, 2022. The General Election was held on November 8, 2022 to elect any office that remained unfilled after the August Election.

- **August 2022 Council Election (Primary)**

Two Council seats were filled during the August Election by Councilmembers Kathy Littlefield and Solange Whitehead, which is the first time this occurred since the City moved to its current format for electing the Mayor and Council. I provided information to the Council, candidates, public and the media on how the election calculation was done.

I drafted a 16-page pamphlet, which provided information about the election and included a one-page statement from each candidate. The pamphlet was mailed to almost 100,000 Scottsdale households the week of June 27, 2022.

Based on statewide redistricting and related reprecincting done by Maricopa County, a new citywide interactive precinct map was developed that included a detailed image of each individual precinct. Also, this map denoted new precincts as Scottsdale increased from 53 precincts to 61 precincts.

For the August Election, independent voters do not automatically receive a ballot as this is a party primary election. As part of our outreach efforts, we publicized that independent voters needed to request a ballot type (either of a political party, which included the City Council races or a “city only” ballot which only included races directly related to City of Scottsdale residents). Also, I worked with the Communications Office to provide election information through the City’s various platforms, including press releases, the City’s website, and social media platforms for both the August and November elections.

- **November 2022 Council Election (General)**

The 2022 General Election (to elect one Councilmember) was held on November 8, 2022. The informational pamphlet provided information about the election and included a one-page statement from each candidate was mailed to almost 100,000 Scottsdale households the week of October 3, 2022.

To better brand City of Scottsdale elections, we worked with our Graphics Section to develop a “Scottsdale Votes” sticker (see image below). This image is already used on our elections website (scottsdale.vote), our informational pamphlets, and other election materials.



These stickers could be picked up by residents as they dropped their early ballots off at Scottsdale City Hall. Over 3,000 stickers were given to voters during the November 2022 Election.

At Mayor Ortega’s suggestion, and with the support of the City Council, we converted five of the seven reserved parking spaces at City Hall into additional spaces for voters (sample of the signage below). These signs were installed temporarily during the final week of the Election and appreciated by voters as it provided additional parking close to the City Hall public entrance.



After the November Election, I provided an orientation to new Councilmember Barry Graham, which focused on City Clerk office functions, records management and public records, and meeting minutes.

- **Campaign Finance**

Campaign Finance Reports were due on a regular basis during this evaluation period. I sent periodic email reminders to committees related to upcoming filing deadlines and called any committee that had not filed by the morning the reports were due. These efforts resulted in all but one report being filed by the deadline. Over 80 campaign finance reports were filed by candidate and political action committees during the 2022 Election cycle.

- **E-Qual**

Starting in 2020, the Arizona Secretary of State's (SOS) Office made its online nomination petition filing system (E-Qual) available to cities and towns. E-Qual allows candidates to gather nomination signatures from qualified electors using an online portal. In addition to the environmental benefits of minimizing the number of paper petitions needed, E-Qual also confirms the signer is registered to vote, lives in the correct jurisdiction, and has not electronically signed more than the maximum number of petitions allowed for that office.

I worked with the AZ SOS's Office to bring E-Qual to Scottsdale candidate elections. E-Qual was first used in the August 2022 Council Election and will be used in future candidate elections. Per [State law](#), E-Qual only allows candidates to obtain the minimum number of required signatures. With the Mayor and Council's support, I am working with Government Relations staff to see if a buffer of ten percent above the minimum can be added to the existing State legislation. In June 2023, Government Relations Director Dale Wiebusch and I presented a related resolution for consideration to the Arizona League of Cities and Towns General Administration, Human Resources and Elections (GAHRE) Policy Committee, which unanimously advanced the proposal to the Resolutions Committee, where it will be considered in August 2023.

- **Statistics**

For the August 2022 Primary Election:

- There were 167,313 voters registered for this Election out of a population count of 242,750 residents. This equated to 68.92% of the population being registered to vote.
- A total of 73,446 ballots were cast for a voter turnout percentage of 43.90%.
- Clerk staff assisted voters (in person, by email, and over the telephone) with over 470 election questions, including where to vote, candidate information, when ballots were mailed, and political sign complaints, among other topics.

- Over 3,000 ballots were dropped off at the City Hall drop box location (in the Clerk's customer service lobby) with over 1,800 of those being dropped off during the last three days of the Election.

For the November 2022 General Election:

- There were 164,507 voters registered for this Election out of a population count of 242,750 residents. This equated to 67.77% of the population being registered to vote.
- A total of 126,398 ballots were cast for a voter turnout percentage of 76.83%.
- Clerk staff assisted voters (in person, by email, and over the telephone) with over 400 election questions, including where to vote, candidate information, when ballots were mailed, and political sign complaints, among other topics.
- Over 9,300 ballots were dropped off at the City Hall drop box location (in the City Clerk's customer service lobby) with over 5,700 of those being dropped off during the last three days of the Election.

Council Meeting Management

The City Clerk's Office provides administrative support to the six Councilmembers, including research requests and drafting remarks for events such as ribbon-cutting ceremonies. The Clerk's Office coordinated the transition of a departing Councilmember (Linda Milhaven, who was termed out) and the onboarding a new Councilmember (Barry Graham).

Over this evaluation period, the City held an Inauguration Ceremony for three Councilmembers in January 2023, which was coordinated by the City Clerk's Office.

Other significant accomplishments in this area include:

- **Rules of Council Procedure**

The City Attorney and I met individually with the Mayor and Council to obtain feedback on possible sections to amend related to the [Rules of Council Procedure](#). We compiled and presented this feedback in a July 7, 2022 Work Study Meeting, where we sought Council consensus on individual recommendations. Based on the Council's direction, an amended version of the Rules of Council Procedure was adopted by the Council at the September 13, 2022 Council Meeting as part of the consent agenda. Significant changes to the Rules included modifications to council meeting days, public comment, Council decorum, and voting motions.

In a related matter, I worked with the City Attorney to update [City Code Section 2-17](#) related to the days and times of Council Meetings to match what was amended in the Rules of Council Procedure. This code amendment was adopted by the Council at its February 28, 2023 Council Meeting as part of the consent agenda.

- **Agenda Management Software**

During the previous evaluation period, a Capital Improvement Project Request was approved by the City Council for an Agenda Management System software solution, which will help automate a largely paper-based process in terms of document routing, agenda creation and, possibly, meeting management. During the current evaluation period, requirements were developed that are needed for a procurement request and stakeholders from every City division were identified. The scope of the project was established and possible vendors were identified.

- **Communal Council Meals**

Based on feedback provided by the Mayor and City Council at the March 9, 2023 Council Meeting Retreat, the City Clerk's Office reinstated the practice of communal meals for the Council prior to the start of Regular Council Meetings. This practice was paused in favor of individual boxed meals during the pandemic. The communal meal provides the Council an opportunity to socialize and have informal, non-City business discussions prior to the beginning of a Council Meeting. Communal meals were reinstated with the April 18, 2023 Council Meeting.

- **Statistics**

- 482 Council Reports were processed.
- 68 sets of Council Meeting Minutes were prepared.
- 41 ordinances were processed, with 27 of those ordinances being codified.
- 330 resolutions were processed.
- 2 training sessions related to Agenda and Council Report Processing were conducted with a total of 4 staff members in attendance.

Records Management

During this evaluation period, several records-related programs that were paused during the pandemic were reinstated, including records inspections and in-person records management training for City staff.

Reinstated in August 2022, City Clerk staff conduct records inspections of departmental records. Clerk staff meet with departmental records liaisons to review and discuss what electronic and paper records are being kept in the

department and ensure the records are being kept for the appropriate length of time per the State's retention schedules. As part of this process, we revised the records inspection report form to identify potential issues more clearly, focusing on the last time records destruction forms were submitted and if records were being kept longer than the retention period. If records were being kept longer, the form asked if there were any exceptions allowing for this extended retention (such as a public records request, litigation, or investigation).

We developed a more in-depth training session that covered records practices from creation to destruction and worked with Departments to ensure we had an updated list of departmental records officers. In May 2023, we debuted the new two-hour records training for staff liaisons.

- **Statistics**

- 40,746 images (pages) were scanned into our records database. These images came from a total of 1,632 documents.
- 10 records inspections were conducted.
- Records Trainings held:
 - December 12/01/2022 – Emergency Management staff with a total of 1 staff member in attendance.
 - May 30, 2023 – City departmental records officer training with a total of 25 staff members in attendance.
 - June 8, 2023 – City departmental records officer training with a total of 32 staff members in attendance.

Boards and Commissions

The Clerk's Office processed almost 1,000 legal postings during this period. Legal postings include meeting notices, marked agendas, and meeting minutes, among other documents. Clerk staff work with staff liaisons to ensure items meet the State's Open Meeting Law requirements and [Administrative Regulation 121](#) standards.

The City Clerk's Office worked with the City Treasurer's Office to open an application process for the new Protect and Preserve Task Force shortly after the City Council approved its formation in September 2022. This process included the development of a new webpage explaining the charge of the Task Force and application requirements. The Task Force membership was divided into three geographical districts in the City (North, Central, South) and there were three members per district. We worked with IT staff to develop a mapping application to help determine what geographical district each applicant lived in. We worked with the City Treasurer's and Communications Offices to develop a press release advertising the opening of this recruitment period.

We processed almost 40 Protect and Preserve Task Force applications one day after the application process closed and provided these applications to the Mayor and Council for review the next day. This was done in early November 2022 during the final days of the November 8, 2022 Election. Task Force nominations were made by the City Council in November 2022 with appointments being made in December 2022.

Other significant accomplishments related to boards and commission included:

- **Advertisement** – We worked with the Communications Office to better publicize board and commission recruitments. This resulted in a February 28, 2023 nomination process with 74 total applicants for 8 board and commission positions and a March 7, 2023 appointment process with 28 nominees for 8 boards and commissions.
- **Vacancy Report** – As a process improvement implemented in October 2021, I provide a monthly report to the City Council detailing members who resigned or were removed from their board or commission.
- **Statistics**
 - 953 legal postings were processed.
 - 168 board and commission applications were processed and the Council made 33 appointments or reappointments to boards and commissions.
 - 15 trainings related to attendance, Open Meeting Law, Ethics, and other requirements were conducted with a total of 27 newly appointed board and commission members in attendance.
 - 15 trainings related to legal postings and other responsibilities were conducted with a total of 33 board and commission staff liaisons in attendance.

Budgeting

The City Clerk's Office supports the Council goal of fiscal and resource management by proactively seeking ways to reduce operational costs while maintaining, or when possible, increasing service levels to internal and external customers. To further this goal, we have one of the lowest operating budgets in the City. Additionally, I track election costs on an individual invoice basis to be able to better budget for future elections.

As only two candidates were involved in the November 2022 Council Election, I was able to combine sections and reduce the informational pamphlet from 16 pages to 8 pages, saving the City over \$11,000. For the Agenda Management Software

procurement, over \$23,000 in savings were achieved by using an internal IT project manager instead of an outside consultant for requirements gathering.

Professional Development, Presentations, and Awards

I believe cross-training and professional growth are important components to having a strong staff. To further this effort, I worked with my team on questions related to the August and November 2022 Council Elections to ensure that answers were consistent among all team members through trainings and by developing a list of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers that could be referred to by staff.

The following major certifications, appointments, or awards occurred during this evaluation period:

- In March 2023, I was appointed to the Governor’s Bipartisan Elections Task Force as the municipal government representative. The Task Force is charged with making recommendations to Governor Katie Hobbs related to enhancing the accessibility and security of Arizona’s elections. As part of this Task Force, I chair the Election Administration Working Group and serve on the Election Day and After Working Group.

The following presentations were made during this evaluations period:

- In October 2022, I presented to the Scottsdale Mayor’s Youth Council on City Clerk functions and the importance of City elections.
- In October 2022, I presented to the Fall 2022 Scottsdale Insiders class on City Clerk functions and the importance of City elections.
- In March 2023, I met with Arizona State University graduate students and discussed my professional background and City Clerk functions.
- In March 2023, I presented to the Spring 2023 Scottsdale 101 class on City Clerk functions.
- In April 2023, I met with Sean McManus, who serves as the Chief of the Plans, Analysis and Integration Office in the U.S. Army Garrison Daegu in Camp Henry, Korea, as part of International City/County Management Association Senior Fellowship Program, which was coordinated by the City Manager’s Office. Sean and I had a wide-ranging discussion on elections and the City’s partnership with Maricopa County; boards and commissions; and records management.

Additionally, I am a member of the following organizations:

- American Society of Public Administration
- Arizona City/County Management Association
- Arizona Municipal Clerks’ Association
- Election Officials of Arizona
- Engaging Local Government Leaders

- International Institute of Municipal Clerks
- State Bar of Texas

Clerks' Profession

Contributing back to the Clerks' profession is important to me as there are several current and former Clerks who provide guidance to me and I want to help other Clerks as well. The City Clerk's Office is heavily involved with the Arizona Municipal Clerks' Association (AMCA), which is a statewide group supporting the City Clerk profession.

The following was done in furtherance of this goal:

- I served as chair of the Arizona Municipal Clerks' Association (AMCA) Records Management Committee with Deputy City Clerk Cathie Butteweg serving as the co-chair during this period.
- I served as a member of the AMCA Legislative Committee.
- City Clerk Supervisor Rommel Cordova served as the co-chair of the AMCA Education Committee and as a member of the AMCA Handbook and Constitution Committee.
- Rommel Cordova and I presented on board and commission program administration at the 2022 AMCA Fall Best Practices Session.
- Cathie Butteweg and I presented on records management practices at the May 2023 AMCA Region 1 Training.
- As part of a Clerk's Panel, I discussed elections, council meeting management, and professional development at the June 2023 Arizona Municipal Clerk's Institute.

Additionally, the AMCA has a listserv where Clerks can pose questions and seek feedback from others. I responded to 170 requests for information on topics including council meetings, job descriptions, records management, boards and commissions, elections, city code provisions, and contracts.

Goals for the 2023-24 Evaluation Period

- 1) Prepare for the August and November 2024 Mayor and Council Elections, including:
 - a. Developing an informational candidate packet.
 - b. Developing a key dates election calendar for the public and candidates.
 - c. Setting up E-Qual to be used by Mayor and Council candidates.
 - d. Working with and providing information to candidates.
 - e. Drafting an informational pamphlet that will be mailed to almost 100,000 Scottsdale households.

- f. Ensuring required campaign finance reports are filed timely and made available to the public.
- 2) Implement improvements to the City's Records Management Program, including:
 - a. Conducting a twice-yearly training program for records officers that includes more in-depth training related to physical and electronic records management.
 - b. Implementing computer-based training for a high-level records management overview class for City staff.
 - c. Updating the City's Records Management Manual, which provides guidance to staff liaisons.
 - d. Reviewing records destruction requests by City departments to ensure the records have met their retention period requirements.
 - e. Ensuring the City's records inventory lists match State-issued retention schedules.
 - f. Updating departmental essential records lists (records needed in the event of a disaster) in advance of a December 2024 submission to the Arizona State Library and Archives.
 - 3) Implementing computer-based training for a high-level boards and commissions overview class for City staff.
 - 4) Go through the procurement process and select an electronic Agenda Management System vendor.
 - 5) Continue working with the Arizona Secretary of State's Office to implement Beacon, the online campaign finance report filing system, for use by Scottsdale candidate and political action committees.
 - 6) Continue staff development and onboard two new staff members (Deputy City Clerk and Management Assistant). The Management Assistant position has been vacant. After 16 years of outstanding service to the City, Deputy City Clerk Cathie Butteweg will be retiring in August 2023. She graciously agreed to a post-retirement short-term contract to assist with the orientation process for the new Deputy City Clerk.



Coalition of Greater Scottsdale
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To: Scottsdale City Council

7 June 2023

Re: City Clerk, Ben Lane

Charter officer hearing 20 June 2023

COGS-Coalition of Greater Scottsdale—supports the continued employment of City Clerk, Ben Lane.

Mr. Lane has been highly professional in all his interactions with our organization and a willing communicator with the public.

His office team is trained, efficient, and knowledgeable in answering questions from the general public who are unfamiliar with city procedures and documents.

His management of elections is exemplified by his honor to be appointed to Governor Hobbs' Bipartisan Election Task Force.

We hope that Mr. Lane will want to continue in the service of the residents of Scottsdale and that the office of City Clerk continues to be a satisfying experience.

The COGS Board of Directors,

Marilynn Atkinson, John Davis, Sonnie Kirtley,

Howard Myers, Stan Morganstern, Copper Phillips,

Christopher Schaffner, and Andrew Schenck