CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **Legislative Assistant** **E-PLAN**
SG:E2-2
DEPARTMENT: **Legislative** **CS:N**
FLSA:N
EEO4CODE:PP

JOB SUMMARY:

Performs advanced technical support activities and paraprofessional work for the City Council. Organizes the administrative functions of the Council office. Works with the Council President and other Council members, Department Heads, the Mayor's staff, other agencies, and community groups to schedule Council meetings and set the business agenda. Prepares and disseminates the Council agenda. Maintains Council schedules and calendars. Serves as a resource on the municipal legislative process.

Coordinates public information and outreach efforts on behalf of City Council. Responds to public inquiries regarding City and/or Council actions, researches issues, reports trends in public opinion obtained through public contact, and explains rules, projects, plans and initiatives to the public. Plans and produces public information products and events. Serves as liaison to local, State and federal agencies. Maintains effective working relations with various community stakeholders in schools, businesses and public agencies as well as with media representatives. Works collaboratively with Executive staff, Department Heads and other staff.

Work requires a high degree of confidentiality and discretion in a sensitive public environment. Provides guidance as needed regarding the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, the Open Public Records Act and Roberts' Rules of Order.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS:

Directly responsible to the Council President (at the direction of the full Council) with coordination from the City Attorney. Works independently and establishes office procedures and work routines under the guidance of applicable Legislative Office and City policies and procedures, as well as federal, State, City and departmental laws, rules and regulations. May receive day-to-day guidance from the City Attorney, as needed. May assign and monitor work of part-time and/or temporary employees and interns.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:

1. **General Administrative Support**: Provides high level administrative support to the City Council. Works with the Council President to develop and monitor Legislative Department's budget, policies and procedures. Prepares and maintains the Legislative Department’s budget and financial records, time sheets, etc. Maintains inventories and determines need for supplies, furniture and equipment. May research information needed for purchasing decisions. Updates Council documents and information posted to City website.

2. **Council Agendas and Agenda Bills**: Coordinates the preparation of Council agendas for various meetings. Schedules, coordinates and prepares background materials for regular

and special Council Committee meetings, work sessions and retreats. Receives agenda bills and attachments and reviews for completeness. Works with departments to ensure Council receives all necessary agenda bill information for their deliberations. Assigns bill to Council standing committee(s) with estimated time for review and action. Schedules public hearings and other agenda topics. Performs follow up work from agenda with Department Heads and staff to facilitate Council action as needed.

3. **Council Committee Meetings:** Works with the Council President to organize Council's annual reorganization meeting and retreat. Coordinates with the Deputy City Clerk and other departments to ensure adequate administrative support for all Council meetings.

4. **Council Meeting Minutes:** Serves as back up to Deputy City Clerk in recording and preparing minutes of Council meetings.

5. **Public Notice:** Assists in the preparation and processing of public hearing notices for legal publication and required notification of appropriate property owners in accordance with State and local regulations. Provides timely notice of Council meetings, including to key stakeholders. Oversees the notice, distribution of the Council's biweekly agenda packets, and posting to the Council website.

6. **Scheduling and Logistics**: Maintains Council calendar of meetings, activities and individual Council member schedules. Sets annual Council calendar of meetings by resolution for the following year. Ensures notice requirements are met for quorum of Council members at meetings and events. Organizes and coordinates logistical elements of Council meetings and retreats. Makes or coordinates travel arrangements for Council and staff members as needed. Schedules appointments, meetings and appearances for Council and staff members. Coordinates joint meetings with other agencies as required. Maintains a disciplined, organized schedule.

7. **Immigration Advisory Board:** Coordinates with board members to organize agenda materials, schedules and takes minutes for meetings. Arranges interpretation services for meetings as well as translation of all written materials and minutes. Posts meeting agenda, minutes and audio recording on City website.

8. **Communications:** Receives and responds to a variety of inquiries, concerns and complaints from residents and individuals with a business interest in the City. Screens and refers calls as appropriate. Acts as liaison between the Council and Mayor's office, City employees and the public. Assists in the resolution of problems and concerns through explanation of City or departmental practices and policies. Researches issues. Attends meetings to keep informed of departmental activities, City projects, issues and actions. Establishes and maintains communication links with community stakeholders, public agencies and other entities regarding Council business; this communication includes, but is not limited to, information regarding current ward boundaries or other business interests.

9. **Media and Public Relations:** Plans, coordinates, develops and disseminates proactive public information products such as emails, website and social media content, and other informational materials. Coordinates and supports the planning of events such as public forums, open houses and community activities. Maintains good working relationships with members of the media and supplies appropriate, accurate and timely information. Detects and monitors emerging issues in the community. Advises on planning agendas, timing issues for action and wording of potential communications or actions.

10. **Staff Supervision:** Hires and supervises part-time and temporary support staff and consultants as required. Assigns and reviews work. Conducts performance appraisals, assesses and provides for training and development needs, and attends to performance issues.

11. **Records Management**: Acts as records manager for the Council. Maintains and updates office filing system. Updates various policies and procedures manuals. Responsible for sending/retrieving archival materials. Keeps accurate records of all contracts, bonds or other legal documents.

12. **Council Processes:** Serves as Council's subject matter expert on the municipal legislative process, Open Public Meetings Act, Open Public Records Act and Roberts' Rules of Order. Provides continuity between Councils and is an information resource on issues and historical background. Assists Council members to make sound decisions regarding appropriate Council member actions and communications.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. May serve as back up to other City staff members as appropriate.

2. Performs other related work of a similar nature and level.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities):

Knowledge of:
- The Municipal legislative process, public notice requirements, Open Public Meetings Act, Public Records Act and Roberts' Rules of Order.
- Communication, education and public involvement strategies, and how to apply them in a municipal environment.
- Municipal administration and familiarity with the functions and activities of the departments and divisions of municipal government.
- State and local related codes and regulations, policies and procedures regarding legislative procedures and public notice requirements.

Skill in:
- Excellent literacy skills including reading, composition, knowledge of standard and business English usage, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and format.
- Excellent interpersonal skills to work with the public, staff, elected officials and media using courtesy and tact in sensitive or high-pressure situations.
- Excellent listening skills and the ability to communicate orally and in writing in clear concise language appropriate for the purpose and parties addressed.
- Problem solving, decision making, time management, planning and organization skills.
- Proficient in the use of standard software applications including word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, database management and document/records management programs.
- Proficient in the use of social media applications including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Ability to:
- Read, understand and apply ordinances, laws, policies and procedures applicable to the scope of work.

- Develop and maintain a working familiarity with Council business and priorities, current and on-going City legislative issues, and community stakeholders.
- Maintain the highest level of professionalism, tact and discretion in a frequently high-pressure environment.
- Tolerate stress and handle several tasks simultaneously while maintaining accuracy and attention to detail in an environment of frequent interruptions.
- Work independently and assume responsibility in carrying out position responsibilities.
- Exercise sound judgment to solve problems in stressful situations.
- Organize, prioritize and schedule work to meet legal and business deadlines and demands of peak workloads while maintaining accuracy and attention to detail.
- Apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Handle information with discretion and maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information and materials.
- Deal tactfully with the public and respond effectively in potentially confrontational situations.
- Communicate and work effectively with co-workers, City employees, public agencies, attorneys, and the public.
- Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation, and Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Physical ability to perform the essential functions of the job, including:
  - Frequently remain stationary for long periods of time;
  - Frequently communicate accurate information and ideas with others;
  - Frequently operate a computer and other office machinery such as keyboard, mouse, phone, and fax machine;
  - Occasionally transport objects up to 25 pounds.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is performed in an executive office setting of high public contact and visibility, as well as in a semi-private office with computer workstation. Exposure to an environment with background sounds related to the office work environment and interaction with the public. May experience frequent interruptions. May also require occasional travel. This is a sedentary position with minimal physical exertion requirements.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- High school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) required.
- Demonstrated strong written and oral communication skills required.
- Proficiency with word processing, spreadsheet, document management, social media platforms and basic website content management required.
- Bilingual fluency in English and Spanish required.
- Keyboarding skills at 50 words per minute required.
- College or vocational training in area related to the position, such as office management, public administration, public relations, communications or other related area is preferred.
- Municipal or other governmental experience strongly preferred.
- Experience in a public service organization preferred.
- A minimum of five (5) years office administration or executive support including at least two (2) years as an executive secretary/assistant preferred.

- An equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to provide the applicant with the knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully perform the essential functions of the job will be considered.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:

- Willingness and ability to attend and participate in evening and weekend meetings.
- Employment contingent upon passing a criminal background check.

PREPARED BY: Barry Bjork
1/16/80

REVIEWED BY: _____
Gene Knutson, Council President

REVISED BY: BS 9/85
BS/KH 4/86
PB 3/95
KH 4/04
CL/LK 1/14
MK/HS/AS 8/20