



---

---

*Section 10*

*David A. Strohl*

*Belle Isle City Manager  
Candidate Report*

---

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
COVER LETTER AND RESUME	<b>1</b>
CANDIDATE INTRODUCTION	<b>9</b>
BACKGROUND CHECKS	<b>15</b>
CB&A REFERENCE NOTES	<b>19</b>
INTERNET SEARCH	<b>31</b>

---

---

*Cover Letter and Resume*

---

---

**DAVID A. STROHL, ICMA-CM**

19755 Sunset Court, Tinley Park, Illinois 60487-4422 • 309-253-3923 • dastrohl@comcast.net

April 24, 2023

Colin Baenziger & Associates  
2055 South Atlantic Avenue  
Suite 504  
Daytona Beach Shores, Florida 32118

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as application for the position of City Manager of the City of Belle Isle, Florida. My résumé accompanies this letter for your review and consideration.

As you can see from my résumé, I am an ICMA Credentialed Manager with more than twenty-five years of local government management experience. I am currently serving as City Administrator of the City of Palos Heights, Illinois, a community with a population of approximately 12,000. Palos Heights is an upscale community with a high quality of life. As City Administrator, I serve as the Chief Administrative Officer responsible to the Mayor and eight-member City Council of this full-service municipality for the management of municipal operations. During my tenure with the City, much of my attention has been on conducting an analysis and assessment of the organization and identifying opportunities for increased effectiveness and efficiency of operations and service delivery and on positioning the City to better pursue economic development.

Prior to my current position, I served as the Village Administrator of the Village of Forsyth, Illinois, a community with a population of approximately 3,500, for a period of more than seven years. Forsyth is also an upscale community with a high quality of life and is home to the area's regional shopping mall and additional retail, restaurant, and hotel development. As Village Administrator, I served as the Chief Administrative Officer responsible to the Village President and six-member Board of Trustees for the management of municipal operations. Prior to my service in Forsyth, I served as the Business Manager of the Village of Morton, Illinois, a community with a population of approximately 16,300, for a period of nearly twelve years. Morton is also an upscale community with a high quality of life, being the recipient of many accolades from a variety of sources. As Business Manager, I served as the Chief Administrative Officer and was responsible to the Village President and six-member Board of Trustees of this full-service municipality for the management of the administrative operations and the performance of economic development duties. Prior to my service in Morton, I served as the first City Administrator of the City of West Peoria, Illinois, a community with a population of approximately 5,300, for a period of more than five years. Beginning my employment with the City less than a year after its incorporation provided me with the opportunity to develop and implement many of the City's policies, procedures, and practices, to develop the municipal organization, and to work on many of the City's "firsts."

These and other positions have provided me with experience in managing, supervising, and/or performing many local government administrative, management, and operational functions. In addition to my broad base of experience, I offer a commitment to conservative fiscal management and to effective, efficient, high-quality service delivery, as well as a management philosophy emphasizing communication, consensus-building, openness, and teamwork. I am also a dedicated and hardworking individual who continually strives for the highest level of achievement, ethics, and professional conduct and who is committed to assisting the governing body set strategic priorities and achieve its desired goals and objectives.

I am looking for a local government management position which will provide me with an opportunity to utilize my more than twenty-five years of local government management experience in a dynamic, ethical, forward-thinking, innovative, and progressive organization that embraces and encourages innovation, change, and appropriate risk-taking and that is committed to continuous improvement, and which will provide me with an opportunity to confront a variety of new challenges and with opportunities for professional and personal growth and development.

## **Section 10**

I believe that I am well qualified for this position and that I can make a valuable, long-term contribution to the City of Belle Isle by assisting it to achieve the strategic goals and objectives of the organization and the community and to respond to the ever-increasing challenges that units of local government must successfully address in order to prosper in the continuously changing and increasingly complex local government environment. I would welcome the opportunity for a personal interview to discuss my qualifications in more detail. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*David A. Strohl*

David A. Strohl

**DAVID A. STROHL, ICMA-CM**  
19755 Sunset Court  
Tinley Park, Illinois 60487-4422  
309-253-3923  
dastrohl@comcast.net

---

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

#### **City Administrator, City of Palos Heights, Illinois**

**July, 2021 - Present**

Chief Administrative Officer responsible to the Mayor and eight-member City Council for the management of the municipal operations of a full-service, non-home rule municipality operating under the mayor-council form of government.

#### General Administration And Management

- Assist the Mayor as Local Liquor Control Commissioner administer and enforce state and local liquor codes within the corporate limits of the City.
- Draft ordinances and resolutions.
- Initiated and coordinating the ongoing process of redistricting the City's wards as a result of the 2020 Decennial Census.
- Manage and supervise the maintenance of the City's information technology (IT) infrastructure and telephone system.
- Manage and supervise the maintenance of the City's World Wide Web site.
- Manage and supervise the operations of the City's cable television government access channel.
- Manage and supervise the preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and meeting packets for meetings of the City Council and meetings of City Council Committees.
- Manage and supervise the production and distribution of the City's monthly newsletter.
- Negotiated an intergovernmental agreement with a neighboring municipality for the sharing of costs related to an outdoor warning siren.
- Perform community, intergovernmental, and media relations activities.
- Provide general administrative assistance and support to the Mayor and City Council.
- Responsible for the administration and oversight of the City's residential waste collection and recycling contract. Oversaw the negotiation of a renewal of the City's residential waste collection and recycling contract.

#### Budgeting And Financial Management

- Initiated the adoption of the Budget System and serve as Budget Officer.
- Manage and supervise the accounts payable, accounts receivable, and payroll functions.
- Manage and supervise utility billing, collections, and customer service operations for the City's waste water and water utilities. Monthly billing to 300+ commercial customers and quarterly billing to 5,000+ residential customers.
- Responsible for the preparation and administration of the annual operating and capital budgets, as well as the preparation of the annual appropriation ordinance (prior to the adoption of the Budget System) and the tax levy ordinance.

#### Community And Economic Development

- Created the position of Community Event Coordinator in order to develop, promote, and conduct community activities and events that contribute to and enhance the quality of life of residents and that contribute to and enhance a sense of community among residents.
- Oversee the management of one existing Business District and the ongoing development of a new Business District within the City.
- Oversee the management of two existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts and the ongoing development of a new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District within the City.

#### Human Resource/Personnel Management

- Manage and supervise all aspects of the City's human resource/personnel management system.
- Serve as a member of the City's collective bargaining team (two collective bargaining units).

**Public Works**

- Oversaw the development of a ten-year capital plan for the City's water utility.
- Oversee the ongoing application process for an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) loan for \$15,000,000+ in water system capital projects.
- Oversee the ongoing planning for the remodeling of City Hall and an abandoned regional dispatch center located adjacent to City Hall.

**Risk Management**

- Manage and supervise all aspects of the City's risk management program.
- Serve as a Delegate on the Board of Directors of the Intergovernmental Risk Management Agency (IRMA).

**Village Administrator, Village of Forsyth, Illinois****January, 2014 - June, 2021**

Chief Administrative Officer responsible to the Village President and six-member Board of Trustees for the management of the municipal operations of a full-service, non-home rule municipality operating under the mayor-council form of government.

**General Administration And Management**

- Assisted the Village President as Local Liquor Control Commissioner administer and enforce state and local liquor codes within the corporate limits of the Village.
- Drafted ordinances and resolutions.
- Initiated and oversaw the creation of a new Village logo. Managed the implementation of the new logo across the organization.
- Initiated conducting a citizen/community survey on a biennial basis to determine satisfaction with the services provided by the Village and other pertinent information. Developed survey instrument.
- Initiated the conversion of forms used by the public to fillable PDF documents and posting them on the Village's World Wide Web site in order to provide better service to the public.
- Initiated the posting of the meeting packets for meetings of the Board of Trustees on the Village's World Wide Web site in order to promote openness and transparency.
- Initiated the practice of having no open liquor licenses in order to provide greater control by the Board of Trustees over potential new licensed establishments.
- Initiated, coordinated, and participated in strategic planning activities and developed resulting strategic plan document. Responsible for implementing strategic plan.
- Led the process for the Village's participation in a County-wide mass/public notification system, working in a cooperative regional manner to obtain emergency notification capabilities to alert residents to emergency situations while achieving significant cost savings.
- Managed and supervised the maintenance of the Village's information technology (IT) infrastructure and telephone system.
- Managed and supervised the maintenance of the Village's World Wide Web site.
- Managed and supervised the production and distribution of the Village newsletter. Initiated and led the transition from publishing a paper newsletter that was mailed to each resident two times a month to publishing an electronic newsletter that was e-mailed to subscribers on a quarterly basis, saving considerable time, money, and effort.
- Performed community, intergovernmental, and media relations activities.
- Prepared and distributed meeting agendas and meeting packets for meetings of the Board of Trustees.
- Provided general administrative assistance and support to the Village President and Board of Trustees.
- Responsible for the administration and oversight of the Village's cable television, electric, natural gas, and telephone franchise agreements. Negotiated a renewal of the Village's cable television franchise agreement.
- Responsible for the administration and oversight of the Village's intergovernmental agreement with the Macon County Sheriff's Office for the provision of police services. Negotiated two (2) renewals of the police services agreement.
- Responsible for the administration and oversight of the Village's municipal electric aggregation program.
- Served as Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) Officer and as Open Meetings Act (OMA) Officer.



**Budgeting And Financial Management**

- Initiated online utility bill presentment and payment system.
- Initiated the conversion of the Village's fiscal year from May 1-April 30 to January 1-December 31 in order to better align the fiscal year with numerous events and processes.
- Initiated the establishment of a special revenue fund to account for the tax levied and imposed by the Village upon the use and privilege of renting a hotel or motel room within the Village in order to promote accountability for such revenue.
- Initiated the outsourcing of printing and mailing utility bills, thereby reducing costs and allowing staff to perform other duties.
- Managed and supervised the accounts payable, accounts receivable, and payroll functions.
- Managed and supervised utility billing, collections, and customer service operations for the Village's waste water and water utilities. Monthly billing to 1,500+ customers.
- Responsible for the preparation and administration of the annual operating and capital budgets, as well as the preparation of the tax levy ordinance.
- Served as Budget Officer.

**Community And Economic Development**

- Created the position of Community and Economic Development Coordinator and hired the Village's first community and economic development professional in order to better address community and economic development issues.
- Created the position of Event Coordinator in order to develop, promote, and conduct community activities and events that contribute to and enhance the quality of life of residents and that contribute to and enhance a sense of community among residents.
- Initiated a review of and revisions to code enforcement procedures and the creation of the position of Code Enforcement Officer in order to better address code enforcement issues.
- Initiated a review of and revisions to land use regulations in order to ensure the effectiveness and practicality of such regulations.
- Initiated and led the acquisition and development of a geographic information system (GIS).
- Initiated and led the process of establishing the Village's first Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in order to create a funding mechanism for commercial and residential development within the Village. Initiated and led the process of expanding the Village's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.
- Initiated the requirement that the Village Attorney attend the meetings of the Planning and Zoning Commission in order to improve the conduct of business at such meetings.
- Led the process for the development of zoning regulations for medical marijuana facilities.
- Led the process for the Village's inclusion in a proposed new multi-jurisdictional Enterprise Zone.
- Managed the Village's tourism program, with the goal of promoting tourism and attracting nonresident overnight visitors. Managed the Village's tourism grant program, which provided funding each year from the Village's hotel/motel tax revenues to local organizations to promote activities and events within the Village and the surrounding area that promoted tourism and attracted nonresident overnight visitors. Developed policies and procedures regarding the operation of the Village's tourism grant program in order to provide for a more orderly and objective decision-making process.
- Oversaw the application process for an Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant for the acquisition of more than 70 acres of land for the location of a family sports and nature park.
- Oversaw the management of more than 100 acres of land owned by the Village for the purpose of future residential development, but which was farmed until development occurred.
- Oversaw the process of acquiring approximately 15 acres of abandoned railroad right-of-way from the United States Department of the Interior for the purpose of developing a recreational trail.
- Participated in the process of examining potentially developing a family sports and nature park as both a community asset and a sports tourism destination.
- Served as Plat Officer.
- Served as Zoning Officer/Zoning Official.
- Served on the Board of Directors of the Economic Development Corporation of Decatur and Macon County.
- Served on the Community Marketing Governance Committee, overseeing an area-wide branding and marketing initiative.
- Served on the Enterprise Zone Advisory Board.
- Served on the Village's Community Center Committee examining the issue of potentially building and operating a community center.
- Successfully negotiated several Tax Increment Financing (TIF) redevelopment agreements.



Human Resource/Personnel Management

- Managed and supervised all aspects of the Village's human resource/personnel management system.
- Initiated and implemented a Section 125 (Premium-Only) Plan.
- Initiated and implemented the increasing of the annual work-hour threshold for participation in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) in an effort to decrease the number of part-time employees eligible for participation, thereby lessening the labor costs of the Village.
- Performed labor relations activities, including handling of grievances and serving as a member of the Village's collective bargaining team (one collective bargaining unit).

Public Works

- Initiated a review of and revisions to subdivision construction standards and practices in order to ensure that development is constructed and infrastructure is installed so as to last a reasonable amount of time in order to save taxpayers' money in the future.
- Initiated the development of regulations regarding the installation of personal wireless service facilities in Village rights-of-way and on private property.
- Initiated the performance of a street pavement assessment to provide objective evaluation of the Village's street infrastructure to assist in the capital planning process.
- Initiated the practice of conducting open houses for major public works projects in order to facilitate better communication between the Village and property owners and residents affected by such public works projects.
- Initiated the practice of performing design work for public works projects during one calendar year and construction the following calendar year in order to allow for the orderly and timely completion of public works projects.
- Led the process for the Village's participation in a regional effort to protect the Mahomet Aquifer from contamination from a proposed hazardous waste disposal site.
- Oversaw the acquisition of extraterritorial property for the purpose of locating a water well.
- Oversaw the application process for an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) loan for \$6,000,000+ in water system capital projects.
- Responsible for the administration and oversight of the Village's municipal electric and natural gas supply contracts for the supply of electricity and natural gas to Village facilities.
- Served on the Policy Committee and the Technical Committee of the Decatur Urbanized Area Transportation Study (DUATS).

Risk Management

- Managed and supervised all aspects of the Village's risk management program.

**Interim City Administrator, City of La Grange, Missouri****July, 2013 - January, 2014**

Chief Administrative Officer responsible to the Mayor and six-member City Council for the management of the municipal operations of a full-service, Special Charter municipality operating under the mayor-council form of government.

- Conducted a review of existing bank and investment accounts in order to provide for effective cash management practices.
- Implemented weekly staff meetings in order to facilitate management of municipal operations and communication and cooperation across departmental boundaries.
- Initiated and led the process of reviewing City records in order to identify records appropriate and eligible for destruction and records required to be retained according to record retention requirements, organizing those records required to be retained, and destroying those records appropriate and eligible for destruction.
- Initiated the creation of a formal order of business for regular meetings of the City Council in order to improve the conduct of business at regular meetings of the City Council.
- Initiated the creation of a formal policy regarding public participation at meetings of the City Council in order to improve the conduct of business at meetings of the City Council.
- Initiated the preparation of monthly budget-to-actual reports and the distribution of those monthly budget-to-actual reports to the Mayor and City Council and to Department Heads in order to improve financial oversight by the Mayor and City Council and by Department Heads.
- Initiated the requirement that the City Attorney and Department Heads attend both regular meetings of the City Council each month in order to improve the conduct of business at regular meetings of the City Council.
- Led the process of evaluating the appropriateness of converting the City's health insurance plan from a fully-insured plan to a self-funded plan.

- Led the process of soliciting and evaluating proposals for electronic mail and World Wide Web site services. Led the process of migrating the City's electronic mail and World Wide Web site to new service providers.

**In Transition (As a result of previous position being eliminated)**

**January, 2012 - July, 2013**

**Business Manager, Village of Morton, Illinois**

**March, 2000 - December, 2011**

Chief Administrative Officer responsible to the Village President and six-member Board of Trustees for the management of the administrative operations of a full-service, non-home rule municipality operating under the mayor-council form of government.

General Administration And Management

- Assisted the Village President as Local Liquor Control Commissioner administer and enforce state and local liquor codes within the corporate limits of the Village.
- Coordinated the Village's municipal electric aggregation effort.
- Drafted ordinances and resolutions.
- Initiated and developed the Village's first official World Wide Web site. Supervised the maintenance of the Village's World Wide Web site.
- Initiated and led process of implementing Google Apps as the Village's electronic mail service provider, thereby providing greater functionality at a lower cost.
- Initiated the adoption of an administrative policies and procedures manual.
- Initiated, coordinated, and participated in strategic planning activities.
- Managed and coordinated the maintenance of the Village's information technology (IT) infrastructure and telephone system.
- Managed the Village's cable television government access channel.
- Oversaw the management of two residential properties owned by the Village for the purpose of future expansion of a fire station, but which was rented out to tenants until expansion occurred.
- Performed community, intergovernmental, and media relations activities.
- Prepared a successfully-funded competitive grant application for a grant to replace the windows at Village Hall with energy efficient windows. Administered the grant upon its being awarded.
- Prepared and distributed meeting agendas and meeting packets for meetings of the Board of Trustees.
- Provided general administrative assistance and support to the Village President and Board of Trustees.
- Responsible for the administration and oversight of the Village's cable television, electric, natural gas, and telephone franchise agreements. Assisted in the negotiation of the Village's cable television, electric, and natural gas franchise agreements.
- Responsible for the administration and oversight of the Village's residential waste collection and recycling contract.

Budgeting And Financial Management

- Improved the collection of delinquent utility accounts by revising policies and procedures regarding delinquent utility accounts.
- Initiated and implemented modifications to the budget document in order to improve readability and usability.
- Initiated and led process to replace the Village's financial management software and related computer hardware.
- Managed and supervised the accounts payable, accounts receivable, and payroll functions.
- Managed and supervised utility billing, collections, and customer service operations for the Village's natural gas, storm water, waste water, and water utilities. Monthly billing to 6,000+ customers.
- Responsible for the preparation and administration of the annual operating and capital budgets, as well as the preparation of the annual appropriation ordinance and the tax levy ordinance.

---

---

*Candidate Introduction*

---

---

**DAVID STROHL**

---

**EDUCATION**

Master of Public Administration, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA  
Bachelor of Science in Political Science, Illinois State University, Normal, IL  
Associate in Arts and Science in Political Science, Illinois Central College, East Peoria, IL

**EXPERIENCE**

City Administrator, City of Palos Heights, IL	2021 – Present
Village Administrator, Village of Forsyth, IL	2014 – 2021
Interim City Administrator, City of La Grange, MO	2013
Business Manager, Village of Morton, IL	2000 – 2011
City Administrator, City of West Peoria, IL	1994 – 2000

**BACKGROUND**

Palos Heights is a Chicago suburb with a population of slightly over 12,000 located in southern Cook County. Palos Heights is primarily a residential community, but has several commercial and office areas/corridors. The City is also home to Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital, a 425-bed hospital that is part of the Northwestern University medical system, Trinity Christian College, a private college with a student population of approximately 1,200, as well as to a Metra commuter rail station.

Palos Heights has a total budget of over \$30 million and a General Fund budget of over \$13 million. The City employs approximately 70 full-time employees, of which I directly supervise 10.

The three most significant issues facing the City are:

- Governance Practices. The City generally has a series of over-complicated processes for considering and approving often routine matters, as well as a burdensome set of ordinances that are over-regulatory for both businesses and residents with no clear value. As a result, I have spent much of my time and effort conducting an analysis and assessment of the organization and identifying opportunities for increased effectiveness and efficiency of operations and service delivery.
- Capital Planning And Infrastructure. The City has ignored its infrastructure needs, particularly in regard to its water system, for a significant number of years. In addition, it has not had a comprehensive capital plan. This has resulted in aging and failing infrastructure and increasing capital needs that require a significant investment of money. I am currently working with Staff to develop a five-year capital plan, Staff has worked with consulting engineers to develop a ten-year water system improvement plan,

**DAVID STROHL**

---

and application has been made to obtain low-interest State loan funding for the work.

- Downtown Corridor. The City does not have a traditional downtown. Instead, it has a downtown corridor along a heavily traveled State route. Widening of this State route many years ago increased traffic flow and traffic speed and eliminated on-street parking. This, along with limited parking, obsolete platting, a retail strip layout, and changing shopping habits have greatly impacted the downtown corridor. Work is currently being done to develop a Business District to provide funding and legal mechanisms to help address this situation.

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

Professionally, I am looking for a local government management position which will provide me with an opportunity to utilize my more than twenty-five years of local government management experience in a dynamic, ethical, forward-thinking, innovative, and progressive organization that embraces and encourages innovation, change, and appropriate risk-taking and that is committed to continuous improvement, and which will provide me with an opportunity to confront a variety of new challenges and with opportunities for professional and personal growth and development. I am looking to continue my career in a community that is part of or close to a metropolitan area which allows for the quality of life unique to smaller communities along with the cultural, entertainment, and other amenities provided by a metropolitan area. I believe that this position would provide such an opportunity.

Generally speaking, my management style is to not micromanage, as my role is to manage the organization, not each individual department or employee. Instead, I try to lay out the project or task, set parameters and deadlines, and check in periodically. I believe that you need to give people room to grow, including occasionally making mistakes. At the same time, you need to keep the risks within acceptable limits, so that if a problem develops, you can deal with it before it gets out of hand. I also believe that it's important to make clear to employees that you expect them to come to you with a problem before it gets out of control and that you're available to them if they need input or are dealing with something that they don't understand. I also expect staff to take ownership of issues and to be accountable for their actions and for results. In addition, I offer a commitment to conservative fiscal management and to effective, efficient, high-quality service delivery, as well as a management philosophy emphasizing communication, consensus-building, openness, and teamwork. I am also a dedicated and hardworking individual who continually strives for the highest level of achievement, ethics, and professional conduct and who is committed to assisting the governing body set strategic priorities and achieve its desired goals and objectives.

I believe that my staff would say that I do not micromanage them, that I involve them in decision-making to the extent possible, that I'm ethical, that I'm fair, that I keep them informed, and that I respect them as employees and as people.

**DAVID STROHL**

---

I believe that the elected officials I have served would say that I'm knowledgeable, that I'm politically astute while being apolitical, that I'm thorough, and that I keep them informed (No surprises).

I believe that my strengths include the following:

1. My ability to place myself in other people's shoes and to see things from their perspective, be they elected or appointed officials, staff members, or citizens, and to attempt to resolve issues within that framework.
2. My ability to think strategically and see the big picture.
3. My commitment to customer service, to professional management, and to public service in general.
4. My management style, with an emphasis on communication, consensus building, cooperation, and teamwork. I believe that we all (elected and appointed officials, staff, and citizens) are on the same team and should work within that framework.
5. My openness to new ideas and new methods of doing things.

I believe that my weaknesses are:

1. That I am a bit of a perfectionist. I take a great deal of pride in my work and am committed to producing the highest-quality results that I can. However, I know that it is not always possible or practical to do perfect work. Sometimes you have to decide what is important and ignore the rest in order to be productive.
2. That I have a tendency to take on too much myself. Having come from a background of little or no staff and having to do so much on my own, I sometimes forget that others can or should take on certain projects and/or tasks. That said, I don't micromanage people once I give them an assignment or task, I just have to step back and realize that I can't and shouldn't do everything.

I believe that the best way to measure performance and determine if Staff and I are meeting the organization's goals is by the governing body, key staff members, and myself developing a detailed strategic plan that outlines specific objectives to achieve goals, with clear action steps, responsible parties, and time frames so that attainment of objectives can be clearly understood by all.

I believe that my biggest achievement or success was my role as Chair of the Downtown Development Action Team of the Morton Economic Development Council, leading the effort to create a Business District to facilitate and provide funding for community and economic development and redevelopment activities within the Business District. A 0.25% sales tax was imposed within the Business District, which encompasses most of the retail and commercial businesses in the Village, to provide funding for community and economic development and redevelopment activities within the District. The Business District and the funding that it provides will impact the development and redevelopment of the Downtown and other retail and



**DAVID STROHL**

---

commercial areas of the Village for years to come and will have a long-term impact on the community.

I believe that the biggest failure or mistake of my career is my inability to effectuate much significant change in my current position. I see a number of things that I believe are in need of change and improvement, based on my professional experience and the input of Staff, but there unfortunately is an organizational culture of not being open to change and a lack of strategic thinking. This has led to significant frustration among Staff, including myself.

I have been fortunate enough to have had to fire only one employee in my career. This employee had performance issues and problems with getting along with her coworkers. I tried to handle this informally at first, trying to make her aware of the issues that had been brought to my attention and coaching and mentoring her to correct the issues. However, these efforts weren't successful, so I had to develop a formal performance improvement plan outlining what she needed to do and a time frame for achievement. Unfortunately, she did not meet those goals and her employment was terminated. It was unfortunate, but the right thing to do for the organization.

Based on my initial review of the information available to me, I believe that the immediate challenges facing the City of Belle Isle include:

- Limited opportunities for growth and new development given the City's surrounding area and issues with the County. Redevelopment of existing properties and in-fill development of any vacant properties may be the best options to increase the property tax base.
- A lack of space in City facilities and limited opportunities to relocate. Use of eminent domain authority may be necessary to address the lack of available properties. Use of an existing commercial or office property or other non-traditional location may also be an option.
- The City's location in the Orlando metropolitan area, requiring it to develop and maintain effective relationships with other units of government in the area, as well as the impacts to the City from persons and activities that spill over to the City from other areas.

My first six months in Belle Isle will focus on gathering information about the community and the organization. This information gathering will be performed through meeting with appropriate people within the organization, the community, and the region (including meeting individually with the chief elected official, members of the governing body, any other elected officials, appointed officials, the chairs of appointed boards and commissions, members of the administrative staff, department heads, the chair or president and the director of the chamber of commerce, and the chair or president and the director of the economic development organization) and through reading appropriate documents. The goal of this information gathering will be to learn about the community, the organization, and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the community and the organization, to analyze the issues facing the community and the organization, and to develop an action plan to address those issues.

**DAVID STROHL**

---

My experience with working with the news media has generally been interacting with the print media, although that has lessened over the years with the changes taking place in local print journalism. My practice has been to try to be as open and honest as possible and sharing as much information as possible in order for the public to have as accurate an understanding of issues as possible. I don't believe that there is anything in my background that would cause anyone any embarrassment.

I view social media as one of many communication channels that can and should be used to keep residents up to date.

I do not anticipate anyone contacting the City with negative information about me.

In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, traveling, and spending time with my family.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

- Knowledgeable
- Accessible
- Highly Ethical
- Proactive
- A strategic person that thinks about the big picture
- A problem-solver that takes a common-sense, practical approach

**REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION**

My current organization, a strong mayor-council form of government, does not, in my opinion, value the role of the City Administrator position. As a result, I do not believe that my skills and experience are being appropriately utilized, nor do I believe that the issues and challenges facing the community and the organization are being addressed. There is a level of frustration among Staff, including myself, in our inability to effectuate significant organizational change.

**CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY**

My current salary is \$158,002.00 per year.

---

---

*CB&A Background Checks*

---

---

**Background Check Summary for  
DAVID ALLEN STROHL**

---

**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Cook County, IL	No Records Found
Macon County, IL	No Records Found
Lewis County, MO	No Records Found
Tazewell County, IL	No Records Found
State	
Illinois	No Records Found
Missouri	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Cook County, IL	No Records Found
Macon County, IL	No Records Found
Lewis County, MO	No Records Found
Tazewell County, IL	No Records Found
Federal	
Illinois	No Records Found
Missouri	No Records Found

**Motor Vehicle**

Illinois	No Records Found
----------	------------------

**Credit**

Excellent

**Personal Bankruptcy**

No Records Found

**Sex Offender Registry**

Not Listed

**Education**

Confirmed

**Employment**

Confirmed, except for the City of  
Palos Heights, IL (07/2021 – Present)

**Social Media**

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for  
DAVID ALLEN STROHL**

---

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for  
DAVID ALLEN STROHL  
Personal Disclosure**

---

**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

---

Name of Applicant: David A. Strohl

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

**Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.**

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?  
Yes ☐ No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?  
Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?  
Yes ☐ No ☒
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?  
Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?  
Yes ☐ No ☒
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?  
Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?  
Yes ☐ No ☒
8. Please list links to all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.  

Not Applicable
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?  
Yes ☐ No ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.  

Not Applicable

Attested to: David A. Strohl  
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [Monique@cb-asso.com](mailto:Monique@cb-asso.com) or via fax to (561) 621-5965 **no later than 5:00 PM MST 05/15/2023.**



---

---

*CB&A Reference Notes*

---

---

## Reference Notes

### David A. Strohl

---

#### **Dave Wendt - Trustee, Village of Forsyth, IL 217-412-2519**

Mr. Wendt has known Mr. Strohl since 2014. Mr. Wendt served on the Board of Trustees for the Village of Forsyth when Mr. Strohl took the position as Village Administrator. The Board consistently gave Mr. Strohl good reviews during his tenure in Forsyth.

Mr. Wendt appreciates the ideas Mr. Strohl brought from his past work in a larger community. While Forsyth has a population of less than 4,000, it borders the City of Decatur, which has a population of 80,000. Because of the Village's location at the intersection of an interstate and a major highway, 5,000 to 7,000 people visit every day, staying in its hotels, shopping at its mall, and dining at its restaurants. Mr. Strohl's experience helped Forsyth deal with these issues that resemble those of a large municipality.

Mr. Strohl thrives in a bureaucratic environment. He is thorough, organized, and able to anticipate future issues. He understands and plans for the legal requirements of a project or procedure. For example, he proposed that Forsyth reduce the number of its liquor licenses to match the number of businesses that already had one. This enabled the Village to better control alcohol consumption in the community. If a new business arrived, it had to petition the Village not only to grant them a license but also to increase the number of licenses.

Mr. Strohl is a problem solver. When the Public Works Director announced his retirement only a month in advance, it created a major challenge. To meet EPA regulations, the Village needed to hire a new Director with a class A water license to run its water treatment plant before the retirement took effect. Mr. Strohl proposed that they hire a temporary firm with a license to manage the plant until they could hire a new Director. He identified two or three firms for the Board to choose from. The firm they hired did excellent work until the Board chose a new Director. The Village maintains an agreement with the firm to provide temporary services in the future should the need arise.

Mr. Strohl also demonstrated skill during the hiring process. He provided the Board with valuable guidance throughout the process of hiring a new Public Works Director. The Director they hired has since done excellent work in Forsyth and still works there today.

Mr. Strohl advocates for change when it is appropriate. He proposed and implemented several improvements and modernizations in Forsyth. However, he understood that a small community can be resistant to change. He knew when to back off or leave the matter up to the Trustees to decide.

Mr. Strohl effectively communicates with members of the public in group settings. His presentations at community meetings are well organized. While he takes phone calls from residents at times, he prefers to delegate customer service interactions to members of his staff. He then works to address residents' concerns behind the scenes, by finding answers to their questions, making plans, and scheduling hearings.

## Reference Notes

### David A. Strohl

---

Mr. Strohl attends all the required community meetings. He participates in Board meetings and planning and zoning meetings. However, he often declines to participate in community events, such as parades and festivals. He prefers to delegate public appearances to members of his staff.

Mr. Strohl is an effective communicator. He keeps elected officials informed through a weekly update email. In the Village of Forsyth, he reorganized Board meetings to make them more efficient. The new meeting structure facilitated better communication, which helped the Board plan ahead and avoid emergency situations. He accomplishes tasks in a timely manner. If he or his staff cannot meet a deadline, he informs the Board and explains the reasons for the delay.

Mr. Strohl maintains his composure during stressful situations. Mr. Wendt has never seen him lose his temper. When Mr. Strohl accepted the position of Village Administrator in Forsyth, he encountered a tense atmosphere caused by disagreements between his predecessor and the Board. His calm and steady personality helped him successfully navigate the situation and restore order to the community. Throughout his tenure, Mr. Strohl helped avoid tense encounters with residents by informing the Board of potential conflicts ahead of time.

Mr. Wendt has no knowledge of any significant controversy involving Mr. Strohl. Nothing in Mr. Strohl's background or conduct would concern a citizen or an employer.

Mr. Wendt was satisfied with Mr. Strohl's work for the Village of Forsyth. He was sorry to see Mr. Strohl leave, but he understood he was ready for a new challenge. He recommends Mr. Strohl for the position.

#### **Words or phrases used to describe David Strohl:**

- Detail oriented,
- Organized,
- Good planner,
- Keeps people informed, and
- Experienced.

**Strengths:** A skilled bureaucrat and planner, good financial skills.

**Weaknesses:** Not interested in being the public face of the Village.

---

#### **Bob Gruenewald - Trustee, Village of Forsyth, IL 217-520-5489**

Mr. Gruenewald has known Mr. Strohl since 2017. Mr. Gruenewald served as a Trustee for the Village of Forsyth while Mr. Strohl was the Village Administrator. The two maintained a positive working relationship.

## Reference Notes

### David A. Strohl

---

Mr. Strohl is knowledgeable about local government. If there is something he does not know, he thoroughly researches the matter. His understanding of economic development was an asset to the Village of Forsyth when planning a new community center and sports park. He reached out to Administrators and Mayors of neighboring communities for additional guidance and assistance. He made helpful proposals based on research.

Mr. Strohl supports the vision of the Board of Trustees. In Forsyth, he and his staff accomplished many of the items on the Trustees' 5-year plan. He places a high priority on keeping elected officials informed. He sends emails on a biweekly basis before Board meetings detailing his recent activities and upcoming issues and events. He reaches out to Trustees whenever a new issue arises.

Mr. Strohl attends community meetings. He is present during Board meetings and represents the municipality during Economic Development Council meetings. He makes clear presentations during these meetings. During the planning stages of the new community center and sports park, Mr. Strohl actively participated in public meetings to inform residents and take input.

When interacting with disgruntled members of the public, Mr. Strohl maintains his composure. He listens and calms them down. He helps them find a peaceful and satisfactory resolution to their problems.

Mr. Strohl serves customers in innovative ways. The Village of Forsyth runs its own water treatment plant and must therefore collect payments and monitor water usage. At the beginning of Mr. Strohl's tenure, the Village monitored usage by sending personnel to manually read water meters outside residences. Mr. Strohl advocated for the modernization of the system. He led the effort to install an automated monitoring system and helped set up an online payment system.

Mr. Strohl makes excellent hiring decisions. He works well with a team when conducting interviews. He has a solid approach to interviewing candidates and asks compelling questions. During the process of hiring a new Public Works Director for the Village of Forsyth, Mr. Strohl identified a promising candidate and recommended him to the Board of Trustees. The Board agreed with his recommendation but had difficulty determining what salary the candidate would receive. Mr. Strohl's persistence helped the Board reach a consensus and complete the hiring process. They hired the candidate, who still works for the Village today.

Mr. Strohl is a problem solver. When the Board of Trustees could not decide where the community center would be located, he held a meeting in which he detailed the pros and cons of various locations. He collected input from the Board members. His efforts helped the Board agree upon a location.

Mr. Strohl has a low-key personality, but it does not interfere with his efficacy as a manager. He worked well with business leaders in Forsyth, especially the owners of Hickory Point Mall.

**Reference Notes**  
**David A. Strohl**

---

Mr. Strohl is experienced in municipal finances. He is conservative with funds and ensures the municipality has a balanced budget. He is disciplined when spending funds and authorizing expenditures. He keeps the taxpayers in mind when managing the budget.

Mr. Strohl strives to accomplish tasks in a timely manner. Though government often moves slowly, he meets expected time frames whenever he can. He does not rush a project if it needs more time and attention, but he stays on task and tries to keep making progress.

Mr. Strohl avoids stress by planning ahead and making wise decisions. If a conflict arises with members of the Board or with residents during public meetings, he does not become upset. He maintains order and discusses the matter calmly.

Mr. Gruenewald is not aware of any controversy Mr. Strohl has been involved in. Nothing in his conduct or past would concern a citizen or an employer. Mr. Strohl will make an effective City or County Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Strohl:**

- Fiscally responsible,
- Focused on initiatives,
- Good manager,
- Resourceful,
- Understands government rules and regulations, and
- Maintains an appropriate relationship with the Board.

**Strengths:** Listens to people, looks for solutions to their problems.

**Weaknesses:** Lived in another community, so he was less available on weekends. Was not as engaged in the community as he could have been. Avoids public appearances.

---

**Kerry Denison – Former Trustee, Village of Forsyth, IL 217-330-0795**

Mr. Denison has known Mr. Strohl since 2018. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Village of Forsyth during Mr. Strohl's tenure as the Village Administrator. Mr. Denison and his fellow Trustees were pleased with Mr. Strohl's performance and gave him a substantial raise.

Mr. Strohl is an excellent Administrator. He is businesslike, task oriented, and committed to his work. He is experienced and knowledgeable in local government. If he does not know something, he researches it and learns quickly. He is a team player. He is a good listener and easy to get along with. He takes input from others and tries to build consensus among his peers.

## Reference Notes

### David A. Strohl

---

Mr. Strohl has great financial skills. Forsyth has a small population but a substantial economy. As a suburb of a larger city, it has a great deal of restaurants and shops. Mr. Strohl managed Forsyth's substantial budget with skill.

Mr. Strohl is thoughtful about the consequences of his actions. He understands that rumors of change can have a negative impact on the community. For example, when a new business approached him about building in Forsyth, Mr. Strohl kept the matter quiet until building permits were obtained.

Mr. Strohl is a good manager. He keeps his employees on task. He encourages his staff to share their ideas. He makes good hiring decisions. He successfully hired a new Public Works Director and staff for the Economic Development department. The employees he hired have done good work for the Village.

Mr. Strohl is flexible and does not fear change. One major task he oversaw in Forsyth was reinvigorating its shopping mall. He researched malls throughout the country and identified successful methods others have used. He proposed repurposing mall space for other uses such as a skating rink or a chapel. He proactively worked with the mall's owners to suggest and implement innovative changes.

Mr. Strohl strives to establish positive relationships with neighboring municipalities. He worked with the City of Decatur's Council on many occasions. He also maintained communication with the nearby Village of Mount Zion, a community of a similar size with similar challenges.

Mr. Strohl had many opportunities to interact with Forsyth's residents on an individual basis. In a small community, residents often reach out to the municipality with their concerns and ideas. Mr. Strohl focused on serving them as valued customers. Mr. Denison has heard no complaints about Mr. Strohl's interactions with members of the public.

Mr. Strohl keeps the Trustees informed. He holds a meeting with them every two weeks to give updates and discuss plans, problems, and financial matters. He manages the stress of his position well. He does not display extremes of emotion. He is flexible and willing to try new things.

During his time as the Village Administrator, Mr. Strohl chose not to live in Forsyth. His permanent residence was located about 70 miles away. He rented an apartment in the Village, where he stayed during the week, and he returned home on weekends. This annoyed some of the Board members, who felt he should live within the Village. Though the issue was somewhat controversial, the Board eventually accepted Mr. Strohl's decision because he effectively fulfilled his responsibilities. Mr. Denison is not aware of anything in Mr. Strohl's background or conduct that would concern a resident or an employer.

Mr. Strohl will make an excellent City or County Manager. Any organization that hires him will be pleased with his performance.



## Reference Notes

### David A. Strohl

---

**Words or phrases used to describe David Strohl:**

- Conscientious,
- Task oriented,
- Thoughtful,
- Consensus builder, and
- Hard worker.

**Strengths:** Purposeful, thoughtful, builds consensus.

**Weaknesses:** Too unemotional at times.

---

**Jim Peck – Village President, Village of Forsyth, IL 217-433-5700**

Mr. Peck has known Mr. Strohl since 2014. Mr. Peck was a Trustee when Mr. Strohl became the Village Administrator in Forsyth. Mr. Peck later became the Village President a few months before Mr. Strohl's departure. He and his colleagues were very pleased with Mr. Strohl's performance.

Mr. Strohl interacts well with his employees. He keeps them on task. He delegates to his staff, preferring to lead from behind the scenes. When hiring personnel, he makes wise choices. In Forsyth, his hiring decisions resulted in a low employee turnover rate.

Mr. Strohl is a problem solver. Forsyth is a small town with few challenges. However, the Village borders a larger community whose challenges sometimes affect Forsyth. Mr. Strohl effectively manages these issues. He embraces innovation. He supports changes proposed by the Board of Trustees and rallies his staff around their vision. He has also proposed many of his own ideas which the Board has approved.

Mr. Strohl communicates well with the Board of Trustees. He keeps them informed through a weekly memo detailing his recent work, his ideas, and upcoming events. He reaches out to them whenever the need arises through emails and phone calls.

Mr. Strohl attends his required meetings. In the Village of Forsyth, he was present at both Board meetings and Planning Commission meetings. He helped prepare for the meetings by creating an agenda under the direction of the Mayor.

Mr. Strohl is experienced in interacting with members of the public. While he functions best in a group setting, he also communicates well with individuals.

**Reference Notes  
David A. Strohl**

---

Mr. Strohl manages the stress of his position by being prepared. He meets timelines and anticipates challenges. On occasion, he helped avoid conflicts by informing the Board of a resident's concern so they could prepare a response.

Mr. Peck has no knowledge of Mr. Strohl's involvement in any controversy. There is nothing in his background or conduct that would prevent him from honorable service in local government.

Mr. Strohl will make a great City or County Manager. Mr. Peck would hire him again if he needed a new Administrator. He recommends Mr. Strohl for the position.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Strohl:**

- Honest,
- Hard working,
- Prompt,
- Sincere,
- Friendly, and
- Straightforward.

**Strengths:** Fiscally responsible.

**Weaknesses:** Stayed in the office most of the time, did not connect with residents enough.

---

**Jeff Jurgens – Former Village Attorney, Village of Forsyth, IL 309-846-8936**

Mr. Jurgens has known Mr. Strohl since 2014. Mr. Jurgens worked as the Village Attorney during the time Mr. Strohl served as the Village Administrator in Forsyth, Illinois. The previous Administrator had a tumultuous tenure. When Mr. Strohl accepted the position, he succeeded in resolving a difficult situation. The Board of Trustees was very pleased with his performance.

While Mr. Strohl is open to change, his primary task in the Village of Forsyth was to correct previous mistakes and help the organization run more smoothly. He understood it was not appropriate to push new ideas at the time.

Mr. Strohl makes good hiring decisions. The people he hired in Forsyth were a good fit for the organization. He has experience in interacting with citizens. He makes good presentations in community meetings, and he takes time to speak with individuals as well. He continually strives to address their concerns.

Mr. Strohl keeps elected officials informed of what is happening in his area of government. He sends out a weekly email to keep them up to date. He attends all the meetings required of him.

**Reference Notes  
David A. Strohl**

---

During his tenure in Forsyth, however, he lived outside of the Village, which limited his capacity to attend additional meetings and community events.

Mr. Strohl has a strong understanding of municipal finance. He helps the organization run within its budget. Forsyth's Board of Trustees was pleased with the firm control he had of the Villages' financial situation.

Mr. Strohl is a problem solver. In the Village of Forsyth, he primarily encountered zoning issues and resident complaints. He spends his time working to improve the issues brought forward by citizens and Trustees.

Mr. Strohl approaches tense situations in a calm and collected manner. Under pressure, he does not rush into making a decision. He maintains his composure and approaches the matter in a thoughtful way.

Mr. Strohl has not been involved in any controversies since Mr. Jurgens has known him. There is nothing in Mr. Strohl's conduct or background that would concern a citizen or an employer. Mr. Jurgens would hire Mr. Strohl if he could. Mr. Strohl will be a great City or County Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Strohl:**

- Calm,
- Thoughtful,
- Strong,
- Leader,
- Friendly, and
- Articulate.

**Strengths:** Calm, collected, thoughtful.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

---

**Kim Taylor – Administrative Assistant, Village of Forsyth, IL 217-972-0679**

Ms. Taylor has known Mr. Strohl since 2015. She worked for him as an Administrative Assistant during his time as Administrator in the Village of Forsyth. Mr. Strohl is a great administrator. He is thorough, experienced, prompt, and friendly. Ms. Taylor feels comfortable asking him for assistance or his opinion, even though he has since left his position in Forsyth.

Mr. Strohl fosters a team environment. He makes everyone feel important, from the secretaries to the Village President. He invites his staff to give input, encouraging them to approach him not with problems but ideas to overcome challenges. Then they discuss the issue and work on it

## Reference Notes

### David A. Strohl

---

together. When the need arises to hire personnel, Mr. Strohl thoroughly researches candidates. He uses his experience to help him choose the best candidate.

Mr. Strohl puts a high priority on communication. He keeps his staff and colleagues informed of what is happening in the organization. He holds regular staff meetings, especially after community meetings, to ensure staff members have the most current information.

Mr. Strohl attends community meetings and events. If he has a conflict that prevents him from attending, he informs his colleagues in advance.

Mr. Strohl has experience in dealing with members of the public. He interacts well with citizens. He uses a customer service approach when listening to their concerns. Only once during his seven years in Forsyth did Ms. Taylor sense that he was frustrated with a customer. However, he maintained his composure and asked for help instead of displaying negative emotions.

Mr. Strohl is a problem-solver. When the Village experienced trouble processing water bills, Mr. Strohl proposed choosing a third party to handle the billing. The decision resulted in a much smoother experience for the Village and its residents. He has great financial abilities. He was able to assist the Village Treasurer with her responsibilities when needed.

To Ms. Taylor's knowledge, Mr. Strohl has not been involved in any controversial situation. When he took the position in Forsyth, he successfully managed unrest in the organization created by his predecessor. He gained the favor of the Trustees and restored their trust in the Administration. Nothing in his background or conduct would concern an employer or citizen. Ms. Taylor recommends him for any position in local government.

#### **Words or phrases used to describe David Strohl:**

- Diligent,
- Thoughtful,
- Responsible,
- Thorough,
- Hard-working, and
- Tactful.

**Strengths:** Communication, organization, teamwork.

**Weaknesses:** Dislikes interacting with the press.

---

## Reference Notes

### David A. Strohl

---

**Marilyn Johnson - Trustee, Village of Forsyth, IL 217-433-8270**

Ms. Johnson has known Mr. Strohl since 2014, while he served as Village Administrator for Forsyth. At the time, Ms. Johnson was the Village President. Mr. Strohl was the best Administrator she has worked with during her many years of service in Forsyth.

Mr. Strohl is meticulous. He researches issues thoroughly before making decisions. Once he commits to a plan, he follows through and completes the project. He is innovative when the need arises, but he does not push for unnecessary changes. He understands the benefits of maintaining procedures that work well.

Mr. Strohl prefers to lead from behind the scenes. Though he does not enjoy being in the spotlight, he is skilled at personnel management and makes great hiring decisions. On one occasion, he helped the Public Works Director solve some problems involving the staff in that department.

While he does not enjoy socializing during community events, Mr. Strohl has experience interacting with members of the public. He is effective in his interactions, whether in a group setting or when meeting with a citizen individually.

Mr. Strohl has many other fine qualities that make him an excellent candidate. He attends community meetings whenever necessary. He is customer service oriented. He keeps elected officials informed. He has excellent financial skills and ensures the Village follows the budget. He completes tasks in a timely manner. During stressful situations, he maintains his composure and approaches problems in a quiet, thoughtful manner.

Ms. Johnson has no knowledge of Mr. Strohl's involvement in any controversy. Nothing in his background or conduct would concern a citizen or an employer. He will make an excellent City or County Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Strohl:**

- Very good administrator,
- Works well with a variety of people,
- Prompt,
- Friendly, and
- Has a positive attitude.

**Strengths:** Meticulous, stays informed, follows through.

**Weaknesses:** Could communicate better.

---

**Reference Notes  
David A. Strohl**

---

**Rhonda Stewart – Village Treasurer, Village of Forsyth, IL 217-201-1943**

Ms. Stewart has known Mr. Strohl since 2014. She worked for him as the Village Treasurer during the time he served as Village Administrator. Ms. Stewart characterizes Mr. Strohl's job performance as very good.

Mr. Strohl attends community meetings, including meetings with the Board of Trustees. During these meetings, he spends time answering questions from residents. He tries to address their concerns.

As a manager, Mr. Strohl leads from behind the scenes. He gets involved when needed, but he spends most of his time doing productive work in the office. The Board of Trustees approves of his management style. When hiring personnel, Mr. Strohl makes good decisions. He manages stress well. He controls his temper during tense situations.

Mr. Strohl has excellent financial skills. Ms. Stewart felt comfortable asking him for assistance with the budget and appreciated his experience with municipal finances. He always kept her informed about financial concerns and potential changes to the budget. In the Village of Forsyth, Mr. Strohl used his financial expertise in innovative ways. For example, he changed the format of the budget book and expanded it, making it more user friendly. He also led a team in the effort to set up an online payment system.

Ms. Stewart is not aware of Mr. Strohl's involvement in any controversy. His background and conduct are appropriate for a member of local government. Ms. Stewart recommends him for the position.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Strohl:**

- Organized,
- Sensible,
- Honest,
- Passionate, and
- Very Comprehensive.

**Strengths:** Excellent financial skills, accomplishes tasks on time.

**Weaknesses:** A perfectionist who overthinks things at times.

---

**Prepared by:** Claire Argyle  
Colin Baenziger & Associates



---

---

*CB&A Internet Research*

---

---

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **David A. Strohl** is listed below.]

<https://southcooknews.com/stories/634504468-city-of-palos-heights-city-council-met-aug-2>

South Cook News  
November 7, 2022

**City of Palos Heights City Council met Aug. 2**

Author: Kristine Gonzales-Abella

● The Mayor introduced a motion to approve the appointment of City Administrator **David Strohl** as the Budget Officer. Alderman Key moved to approve the appointment seconded by Alderman McGovern. On roll call, the motion to approve the appointment was:

Ayes: (6) Basso, Clifford, Key, Lewandowski, McGovern, McGrogan

Nays: (0) None

With six (6) affirmative votes the motion carried.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **David A. Strohl** is listed below.]

<https://southcooknews.com/stories/628568615-city-of-palos-heights-city-council-met-july-5>

South Cook News

July 18, 2022

**City of Palos Heights City Council met July 5**

Author: Philip Gonzales

9. Motion to approve a Resolution appointing a delegate (**David Strohl**, City Administrator) and alternate delegate (Charlotte Moore, Office Manager) to the Intergovernmental Risk Management Agency (IRMA).

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **David A. Strohl** is listed below.]

<https://icma.org/articles/member-news/members-recommended-receive-credential-january-2022>  
December 1, 2021

**Members Recommended to Receive Credential in January 2022**

**These ICMA members have been recommended by the Credentialing Advisory Board to receive ICMA Credentialed Manager or Candidate status in January 2022.**

Author: Jenese Jackson

The ICMA Credentialed Manager (ICMA-CM) designation has become widely respected, frequently requested in recruitment of positions, and cited in positive media coverage of public stewardship. Congratulations to the following members, who have been recommended by the Credentialing Advisory Board to receive ICMA Credentialed Manager or Candidate status in January 2022.

ICMA Credentialed Managers are professional local government managers qualified by a combination of education and experience, adherence to high standards of integrity, and an assessed commitment to lifelong learning and professional development. Objections must be filed in writing to the ICMA executive director (via [credentialing@icma.org](mailto:credentialing@icma.org)) and received by December 31, 2021.

**ICMA Credentialed Managers**

David Strohl, Palos Heights, IL

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[https://herald-review.com/news/local/mount-zion-splash-pad-among-macon-county-projects-to-get-state-grant-money/article\\_271a7a89-ef93-5f8c-af14-78b939c6ed2c.html](https://herald-review.com/news/local/mount-zion-splash-pad-among-macon-county-projects-to-get-state-grant-money/article_271a7a89-ef93-5f8c-af14-78b939c6ed2c.html)

Herald & Review

February 5, 2019

**Mount Zion splash pad among Macon County projects to get state grant money**

Author: Unknown

Three Macon County parks projects, including a new splash pad in Mount Zion, will be funded by state grants announced Tuesday. Gov. J.B. Pritzker's office announced the three projects, totaling \$758,400 in funding, as part of a list of 89 across Illinois. The grants, totaling \$28.9 million statewide, will provide up to half of the money for each project, to be combined with local matching funds.

The Macon County projects are:

\$309,200 to the village of Forsyth to acquire land for a sports park;

\$75,000 to the Macon County Conservation District for cattail pond improvements at the Rock Springs Conservation Area;

\$374,200 to Mount Zion for the Fletcher Park splash pad development.

The Rock Springs and Mount Zion projects will be paid for through the state's Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) program, which receives its funding from a percentage of the state's real estate transfer tax. Money for the Forsyth project will come from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

As of Tuesday morning, Mount Zion has raised about \$65,000 for the project, said village administrator Julie Miller. The grant from the state will require a 50/50 match, so Miller said the coming months will be used to raise the additional \$310,000 necessary to make the splash pad a reality. "Obviously we have a ways to go, so we are going to have more fundraising efforts in the coming year to get us to that \$374,200 level," she said.

Once the village receives the grant money, which is expected to be this spring, they will have 24 months to build the splash pad. Overall construction time is expected to be about one year, Miller said. Those interested in contributing to help fund the splash pad can contact the Community Foundation of Macon County at (217) 429-3000.

Forsyth village administrator **David Strohl** said the village applied for the state grant with the idea of developing a sports park and community center. The 70-acre site would be off of County Highway 20. Although plans are still being processed, he said, the project will begin in phases once the village board has the money in hand. "But the grant was just awarded last week," **Strohl** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Herald &amp; Review (IL)

April 19, 2017

**Forsyth Moves to Create TIF District**

Author: Allison Petty

The village of Forsyth is moving to establish a tax increment financing district to spur residential and commercial development. The village's board of trustees voted Monday to enter into a professional services agreement with TIF Illinois of Bloomington to study the proposed area and determine which parcels are eligible, the village said in a news release. The purpose of the district would be to spur residential development in the Prairie Winds area and commercial development along the U.S. 51 corridor and other parts of the village.

Village Administrator **David Strohl** described the move as an investment in the village's economic future. "Hope is not an effective strategy for economic development but it's what we've been relying on for too many years," **Strohl** said. "Using a mechanism like TIF is what we need to ensure Forsyth remains competitive and an attractive place for businesses and residents to locate to for decades to come."

TIF districts were established by state law as a tool that local governments can use to create economic growth in certain areas. Here's how it works: When a district is established, the property value at the time is considered the base amount. The city, school district and other taxing bodies continue to collect property taxes on this amount.

If the property value rises because of new developments or improvements, the property owner pays higher taxes. However, those proceeds — the taxes paid on the difference, or "increment" — are put into a special fund that can be used either to reimburse a developer for certain costs or to invest in infrastructure for the area, as the city of Decatur did for its downtown several years ago.

The area chosen for a TIF must meet certain criteria laid out in state law, which is generally meant to identify blighted or underperforming areas. The maximum life of a TIF district is 23 years, although municipalities can choose to end them before then. The village said the district could be established as early as August. The village of Forsyth does not have any active TIF districts. The city of Decatur has seven, according to its most recent report to the Illinois Comptroller's Office. This story will be updated.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Herald & Review (IL)

February 18, 2016

**Gas Tax Talk Visits Mt. Zion – Village is Interested in Price Response at its Gas Stations**

Author: Ryan Voyles

The recently approved gas tax in Decatur has at least one village considering whether to follow suit. Mount Zion Village Administrator Julie Miller told the board of trustees during its Tuesday night meeting that they would take a “wait and see” approach when it came to its own gas tax. “We want to see what these gas stations do here in response to the vote in Decatur,” she said.

That vote was the one taken Tuesday night when the Decatur City Council approved of a new gas tax during its meeting. The tax is 5 cents per gallon of unleaded gasoline and 1 cent per gallon on diesel fuel and will take effect April 1. Decatur city officials said each penny is expected to generate \$250,000 to \$300,000 in revenue.

When the cost of gas does rise in Decatur, Miller said she would not be surprised to see gas stations in surrounding communities such Mount Zion raise their prices to match those in Decatur, with station owners netting the additional revenue. She noted similar situations occurred in neighboring towns and villages when Champaign passed a gas tax in 2012 and Bloomington 2014.

One thing that could put a damper in Mount Zion’s plan is that gas taxes are one of the tools granted to home rule municipalities to increase local funds. The village is far below the minimum 25,000 population required to be considered home rule, and there are no plans to elect by referendum to become a home rule unit. Miller acknowledged this issue and said a legal opinion would be sought on whether the village can do anything in regard to a gas tax. Not every neighboring village is so quick to follow Decatur’s lead on the matter.

**David Strohl**, village administrator from Forsyth, said there has been no discussion or consideration by village officials there in regard to a gas tax. Since there are just two gas stations in the village, **Strohl** said the impact of a gas tax on the village’s revenue would be minimal. “We see no reason to look into it at this time,” he said.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Herald & Review (IL)  
January 20, 2016

**Forsyth Keeps Gaming Restrictions in Place**

Author: Chris Lusvardi

Video gaming will continue to be banned in Forsyth after the village board of trustees considered recent requests to change an ordinance in effect since 2012. The board decided during its meeting Monday not to further explore changing its ordinance that prohibits businesses from operating video gaming machines. The ordinance was needed after state law allowed for video gaming at certain types of businesses. "I see no reason to do away with the ban," trustee Jim Peck said.

Trustee Bob Gruenewald said allowing video gaming would not promote what he considers a widely-desired, family-friendly environment within Forsyth. Trustee Dave Wendt said the feedback he has received from residents is against allowing video gaming. Resident Leo Morland told the board it should keep the ban in place. "Gambling is a vice," Morland said. "I don't think the village is the right place for video gaming." Wendt would at least like to wait to see the outcome of a proposal to add a casino at the Decatur Conference Center and Hotel. That could determine whether smaller businesses could be successful, he said.

Village Administrator **David Strohl**, along with Mayor Marilyn Johnson, asked the board to consider the issue, saying the rise of video gaming at businesses in other communities has created interest in whether Forsyth would allow it. The board had considered the issue in 2012 as a possible way of raising revenue for the village. **Strohl** said the interest in adding video gaming appears to be coming mostly from smaller, independently-owned businesses rather than the chains that are most common in Forsyth.

While keeping the ban in place, trustees didn't shut the door completely on, at some point, reversing course. Trustee Kerstin Trachtenberg doesn't like gambling but isn't totally against allowing it. "If businesses are coming to us saying they're losing customers by not having it, that'd be worth considering," Trachtenberg said. "There hasn't been a big call for it from businesses." Trustee Larry Reed doesn't think the problems commonly linked to businesses with video gaming machines are as widespread as many believe. He said it wouldn't go against being family-friendly as it's not really an activity families do together.

Village Attorney Jeff Jurgens said the number of establishments with video gaming could be held in check by limiting the number of liquor licenses issued. "You don't want it everywhere you turn in the village," he said. Otherwise, Jurgens said the number of places eligible for video gaming would be hard to restrict if the village ordinance aligned with what state law allows.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[https://herald-review.com/news/local/forsyth-to-develop-disc-golf-course/article\\_7da84902-409f-537c-816e-4a752c539599.html](https://herald-review.com/news/local/forsyth-to-develop-disc-golf-course/article_7da84902-409f-537c-816e-4a752c539599.html)

Herald & Review

April 27, 2015

**Forsyth to develop disc golf course**

Author: Chris Lusvardi

Development of a disc golf course for Forsyth Park is moving ahead. The Forsyth Board of Trustees approved a proposal last week for design services and the purchase of up to 18 disc golf baskets. “We could have one of the nicer courses,” trustee Bob Gruenewald said. “It’s an activity that is clearly growing in interest.”

The board was approached last year about the possibility of adding a course at the park. Gruenewald looked into the idea and found it to be promising. Illinois has about 200 disc golf courses, including one at Nelson Park in Decatur, Gruenewald said.

The design services of Illinois Disc Golf in Rantoul would be worth \$1,500, Village Administrator **David Strohl** said. The board also agreed to spend up to \$9,000 to purchase baskets for the course.

Preliminary plans will change slightly, but Gruenewald said the concept for an 18-hole course is mostly in place. In addition, Gruenewald said signs could be installed along the course. He said after the design is finished, the board would work with Public Works Director Larry Coloni on completing the course. Gruenewald is hoping to have the course ready for play by the end of the summer.

Coloni said the park could be ready without many changes to make for a few challenges along the way. “We have a great park with a lot of trees,” Coloni said. “You’re going to see a lot of activity out there.”

Having Nelson Park available would increase the chances of holding a tournament in the Decatur/Forsyth area, Gruenewald said. “We have the property to have a tournament-quality course,” Gruenewald said. “It will bring people to the community.” He said the course would make use of unused space in the park. Parts of the course would run along Stevens Creek, Gruenewald said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[https://herald-review.com/news/local/forsyth-mulls-joining-battle-in-keep-pcbs-out-of-landfill/article\\_d69378f6-5279-5028-b833-a391b8294a1f.html](https://herald-review.com/news/local/forsyth-mulls-joining-battle-in-keep-pcbs-out-of-landfill/article_d69378f6-5279-5028-b833-a391b8294a1f.html)

Herald & Review

June 3, 2014

**Forsyth mulls joining battle in keep PCBs out of landfill**

Author: Chris Lusvardi

Groups fighting to keep potentially harmful chemical waste out of the Clinton Landfill are looking for support from more local governments. Champaign Assistant City Attorney Joe Hooker asked the Forsyth Village Board on Monday to join the legal fight to block polychlorinated biphenyl, or PCB, waste from being stored at the Clinton site. Peoria-based Area Disposal wants to be able to store PCBs at the landfill, which sits on top of the Mahomet Aquifer. The company has said a plastic liner will protect the chemicals from leaking into the ground. An Illinois Pollution Control Board ruling regarding the permitting of chemical waste storage at the landfill is currently being appealed, Hooker said. “We’ve got a battle on our hands,” Hooker said. “There’s no guarantee of success, but it’s a legal battle worth having.”

Forsyth and more than 80 other communities in 14 counties with more than half a million residents around Central Illinois rely on the aquifer for clean drinking water. The cost of participation in the coalition paying for private attorneys to work on the case is based on the population of the community, Hooker said. As a result, he said Forsyth would pay a relatively small portion of the overall costs. Champaign and Decatur are among the largest contributors because of their size, Hooker said. The more communities that become involved gives the group more strength, Hooker said. Forsyth trustee Steve Hubbard was among the board members who expressed interest in further considering the idea to join the effort. So far, Hooker said nine communities have joined the group. During the meeting, the village approved a separate resolution in support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designating the Mahomet Aquifer as a sole source aquifer. Hooker said another coalition with 16 intergovernmental members are involved with the sole source designation efforts.

The public comment period on the sole source aquifer remains open until June 12. Comments should be addressed to William Spaulding, U.S. EPA (WG-15J), 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60604-3590 or [spaulding.william@epa.gov](mailto:spaulding.william@epa.gov). The aquifer is an irreplaceable resource, he said. “That’s why we think it’s such an important designation,” Hooker said.

The Forsyth board began considering ways to get involved with efforts to protect the aquifer after resident Joe Dugger brought up the issue during its May 5 meeting. Village Administrator **David Strohl** has since explored the issue and invited Hooker to speak to the board.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[https://herald-review.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/warrensburg-library-settles-with-forsyth/article\\_f905c9ea-80b4-5f1d-baa4-92ff9e8a32af.html](https://herald-review.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/warrensburg-library-settles-with-forsyth/article_f905c9ea-80b4-5f1d-baa4-92ff9e8a32af.html)

Herald & Review

April 22, 2014

**Warrensburg library settles with Forsyth**

Author: Chris Lusvardi

A settlement involving the village of Forsyth and Warrensburg's Barclay Library system has been reached regarding a taxation issue. Forsyth Village Attorney Jeff Jurgens said Monday the arrangement involves a lawsuit the village filed in November 2011. It involves properties in Forsyth that will be deannexed from the Barclay Library system.

With Forsyth operating its own library system but not levying taxes for it, Jurgens said the agreement allows for the properties in question to not pay taxes to Barclay Library after Jan. 1, 2020. In the meantime, he said the residents of the disputed properties will be able to use both libraries. Prior to the settlement, Barclay could have collected taxes on the properties indefinitely. The properties involved are in areas north and south of Weaver Road and west of Oakland Avenue. The issue affects more than 100 properties in Forsyth.

The settlement prevents further lawsuits after a series of appeals as Barclay would officially waive its rights to contest the issue, Jurgens said. Although the agreement was approved in the Macon County Circuit Court in March, Jurgens did not yet have a copy of the settlement signed by all parties. Jurgens said the settlement is a compromise of the taxation issue, which surfaced in 2009.

The Forsyth trustees also approved its fiscal year 2014-15 budget with anticipated expenditures of about \$6.9 million, Administrator **David Strohl** said. The expenditures would decrease from the previous couple of years after the village paid off bonds for its sewer treatment plant, **Strohl** said.

In previous meetings, the trustees had debated long-range priorities for capital expenditures, particularly in Forsyth Park. Trustee Steve Hubbard raised the concern that sales tax revenue has been down during parts of the year, indicating that Hickory Point Mall has not generated the kind of revenue it has in the past.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Herald & Review (IL)

January 7, 2014

**Forsyth Selects Decatur Native as Administrator – David Strohl was Morton Business Manager**

Author: Chris Lusvardi

The village of Forsyth moved in a timely fashion to fill its vacant administrator position. **David Strohl**, who formerly was the business manager in Morton, was selected and introduced Monday during the board meeting. **Strohl** said he grew up in Decatur and is looking forward to moving back after being away since the 1980s. He will begin the job Jan. 13. “I will meet with the mayor and board about priorities and establish those going forward,” **Strohl** said. “I’m looking forward to getting to know the issues in the area.”

**Strohl** was selected among three finalists for the position, Mayor Marilyn Johnson said. The board held three closed meetings in December to interview candidates. **Strohl** will replace Mike Miller, who announced his resignation in October after just over a year on the job. **Strohl** will be the village’s fourth administrator since 2006.

Previous searches have taken as long as nine months to complete. Johnson said the board felt the sooner it made a selection, the better. “We had a lot of great candidates,” Johnson said. “All of the trustees felt very strong about the one we chose.” After having his position in Morton eliminated about two years ago due to financial reasons, **Strohl** had been serving as interim city manager in LaGrange, Mo. He hopes his experience in small communities will serve him well in Forsyth.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

<https://www.pjstar.com/story/news/2012/01/10/raises-issued-to-three-employees/63682593007/>

Journal Star

January 9, 2012

**Raises issued to three employees, one let go**

Author: Steve Stein

Three village employees were given additional duties and raises Jan. 3 by the Village Board as part of a reorganization board members say will increase efficiency and meet future needs.

The reorganization also has saved money because of the elimination of the business manager position. **David Strohl**, who held the job for 11 years, was let go “strictly for financial reasons,” said Mayor Norm Durflinger.

“**David** was a faithful employee, but because of the village’s increasing expenses and negotiated salaries and an economy that hasn’t changed to keep up with the increases, we decided to eliminate his position,” Durflinger said. “We needed to cut our costs, and the village office was the most logical place to do it.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

May 27, 2011

**Morton Upgrading Financial Software**

Author: Steve Stein

The village has purchased new financial management software that will replace its current software, which was bought in the 1980s. Residents will notice the difference next year, when they'll be able to pay their village utility bills and view their bill payment history online, and save the village a few bucks. "We won't have to mail out bills to residents who pay online, so there will be some savings for us there," said village business manager **David Strohl**.

Village staff who deal with financial records such as accounts payable, payroll and the general ledger also will benefit from the new software, which was purchased this month from Civic Systems of Madison, Wis., for \$79,500. The cost includes 10 1/2 days of training and two days of on-site assistance. The annual support fee is \$11,600.

Related hardware, including printers, will be purchased from Pearl Technology of Peoria. **Strohl** expects the hardware cost won't exceed \$12,000. That would put the project about \$28,000 under the budgeted \$120,000. **Strohl** said a substantial portion of the savings will come from lower-than-expected data conversion costs. Only a year's worth of data will be converted, and the old financial management system will remain in operation through April 30, 2012, the end of the current fiscal year.

The process of updating the system began about a year ago with the hiring of a consultant from Clifton Gunderson of Peoria. "We needed to make changes because our AS/400 server is nearing the end of its useful life," **Strohl** said. "It doesn't have any more memory, and it runs on a platform that's no longer prevalent. We think the AS/400 is 11 years old, but I'll bet it's a few years older than that. We've gotten our money's worth out of it."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

May 18, 2010

**Morton Forms Commission for Business District**

Author: Steve Stein

The 12-member commission that will recommend approval or denial of requests for funds generated by a sales tax increase in Morton's new business district was established Monday by the Village Board. The nine voting members of the commission are business people who work in the district. One of the three nonvoting members is Village Board Trustee Jeff Kaufman, who voted against the formation of the district and 0.25 percentage point sales tax increase to 7 percent after two lengthy public hearings that attracted standing-room-only crowds and lively debate. The Village Board will ultimately rule on each funding request from business owners within the district.

Mayor Norm Durflinger nominated the commission members. Village Board members unanimously approved the appointments. "We looked for people who were interested in serving on the commission and for representatives from each commercial district in the village," Durflinger said about the voting members. Commission terms were determined by lottery.

Brian Hensley (Morton Buildings), Mike Sosman (Ruby Tuesday's) and Mary Spahr (building owner) will serve three-year terms. Brent Braker (Garber Heating & Air Conditioning), Katie VandenBerg (Eli's Coffee Shop) and Tina Wilmoth (Kmart) will serve two-year terms. Nick Esser (Heartland Bank and Trust), Jenna Grimm (Grimm's) and Bruce Kodatt (Pumpkin Glass) will serve one-year terms. Grimm is Durflinger's daughter. Durflinger did not vote on the nominations.

In addition to Kaufman, the nonvoting commission members are Village Business Manager **David Strohl** and Morton Economic Development Council Executive Director Jennifer Daly. Trustee Tony Huette, who voted in favor of the district and sales tax increase, is the alternate from the Village Board. The commission probably will meet monthly. Its first meeting is expected to be in June.

The additional sales tax money - an estimated \$400,000 annually for the 23-year life of the district - will be used for public infrastructure and streetscape improvements, village acquisition of property, facade work, and legal and consulting fees. Applicants for funds must prove that the money being requested will provide a benefit to the community. July 1 is the launch date for the district and sales tax increase. **Strohl** said the village probably won't receive its first revenues from the tax increase until October.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

August 12, 2009

**Are You Loco? Think Local**

Author: Emily LaHood

Think about the last time you bought a gift for somebody or a piece of furniture or needed a caterer for an event. Where did you go? If your answer is an out-of-town business or a big-box, corporate store, you suffer from what I call Fox Books Syndrome. In the movie “You’ve Got Mail,” Meg Ryan’s character struggles to keep her mother’s bookshop open after the chain store, Fox Books, opens in the area. What is the cause of Fox Books Syndrome? Jennifer Daly, CEO of the Morton Economic Development Council, thinks it is a result of people not thinking about where their money goes after it hits the cash register. “Every dollar you spend has meaning. When you spend money in Morton, the local sales tax stays in Morton and doesn’t go to another city,” said Daly as she explained how cash flow works.

**David Strohl**, business manager of the village of Morton, said that sales tax is used to pay for “general funds for the village, such as police and fire protection, street maintenance, planning and zoning, and paramedics.” When a Morton resident decides to go to the Metro Centre to buy a gift instead of supporting one of the shops around town, such as Ackerman Farms, Potter House, Pumpkin Postal or Yellow Brick, they are paying for Peoria’s streets and upkeep. “People should just keep in the back of their minds to shop Morton first,” said Daly. She added that, “People think they can’t find what they need here, but Morton is full of hidden treasures.”

For those in search of clothing stores, Daly suggested shopping at Hissy Fits on Main Street, which is an upscale children clothing and nursery store, and Used but Not Abused. For the critics of a second-hand clothing store, Daly argued, “It’s amazing what you can find (at Used but Not Abused). All of their clothes are name brand and in good shape. Plus, you are recycling and keeping money in Morton.” “Even places that don’t focus on clothes, such as Wal-mart, Kmart and Grimm’s Inc. have clothing to offer. It’s so easy to find what you need in Morton if you just think before you shop.”

Sales tax is not the only reason to buy local, though. Generally, people open their own businesses because it is what they love to do. They are interested in the services they offer, and, therefore, have more knowledge and better service than chain stores. Hometown Pharmacy owner, David Newell, said what sets him apart from corporate pharmacies is, “I care about the customers as people. We offer a different kind of buying experience. We are on a first name basis and know the people and how to help them.”

Debbie Showalter, owner of Ewe-Nique Yarns, had similar thoughts on the subject and said, “Big box stores can’t offer customer service and knowledge. They carry the basics, but we expand on it. We have anywhere from \$3 cotton yarns to \$80 qiviuck and other rare yarns. We also offer classes and open knit Thursdays.” When discussing the Field Shopping Center,

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

William Turney, owner of From the Field Cooking School, said that it is a “crafter’s paradise. There’s the bead and quilt shop, and Ewe-Nique Yarns is not your grandma’s store.”

Unfortunately, Turney sees that, “Independent places are dying. Corporate shouldn’t be the only option. People should have shopping alternatives.” He also added, “It’s frustrating. It would be interesting to know why people go to Peoria. We throw down some of the best (food) in town at good prices and could easily keep up with places like Seven in Peoria Heights.” In the past three years, From the Field has expanded from a cooking school to a bakery, lunch café, smoked meat shop, catering company and even offers team building classes.

Turney tries to keep his ingredients local. He gets his sauces and honey from the surrounding area, and the meat he sells comes from nearby farmers who add no chemical hormones to their animals. Turney and Daly both agree that Morton has more to offer than people think. From the Field is not the only business that has many services. “Pumpkin Postal has a great gift shop,” said Daly, “They sell wines that are made in Illinois and custom gift baskets.” “Yellow Brick Boutique is also very unique,” commented Daly. Not only is Yellow Brick a gift shop, but it is also an art gallery. Owner Mariam Briggs is an artist who fills the shop with her paintings. “I paint murals in homes,” said Briggs. “Mainly people hire me for nurseries. I also offer painting and portrait services.”

Although Briggs has many services to offer, she said that “after Christmas, there was a big drop in business.” And, hers is not the only shop struggling. As a former employee of Potter House Gifts, I watched business dwindle through the summer, bolster a bit for the holidays and drop back down after the new year started. Whether it keeps Morton’s roads clean and fire trucks running or keeps independent business owners from being unemployed, taking the time to think about shopping local really does make a difference. Don’t fall prey to Fox Books Syndrome. Try Miller Paint Shop instead of Home Depot or Cool Beans/Eli’s/Sweet Treats instead of Starbucks. All it takes is a little extra thought to make a big difference. A full list of Morton chamber businesses can be found on the chamber’s Web site, [www.mortonchamber.org](http://www.mortonchamber.org).

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Pekin Daily Times (IL)

January 8, 2009

**Study to Examine Retail Sites**

Author: Amanda Jacobs

PEORIA - The Economic Development Council for Central Illinois is teaming up with local municipalities to identify opportunities for retail development in the region. "We feel that we're underserved for retail right now," said Cindy Patterson, director of marketing and communications for the EDC. "We have room to grow, in other words." The EDC and its Retail Strategy Group have invited local governments to identify sites to be included in the Central Illinois Retail Study. The study aims to include at least nine sites.

The total estimated cost for the study is about \$51,800. Patterson said the cost will be divided equally among the number of sites participating, resulting in a cost of between \$5,000 and \$6,000 per site. However, she said that the total cost of the study could go up or down depending on the number of sites included.

All of the communities that participate in the study will save money, even if less than nine sites are included, said Pekin Economic Development Coordinator Steve Brown, who is also a member of the EDC's Retail Strategy Group. He said similar studies sponsored by a single community can cost that community between \$40,000 and \$60,000.

Representatives from Evanston-based firm Teska Associates Inc. will examine the available space and relevant consumer demographics for each site included in the study, Patterson said. Once the study is complete, the firm will provide each site with a specific list of retailers that would be well-suited to that location and help the participating municipalities distribute marketing materials to those retailers, she said. "Then we can better target who we should go for rather than working off a wish list," said **David Strohl**, business manager for the Village of Morton. In addition to identifying retailers that would be well-suited to Morton, the village will also save money by partnering with other communities in the study, he said.

**Strohl** said that Morton has identified two sites to be included in the study: the Field Shopping Center and the intersection of Courtland Street and North Morton Avenue. He said the latter site is one of the village's "prime retail locations" because of its visibility and highway access. The Village Board has agreed to pay no more than \$6,600 per site, for a total cost of up to \$13,200, **Strohl** said. The funding for the studies will come from the village's hotel/motel tax, he said. "We see retail development as a component of helping to support our tourism activities," **Strohl** said. "It's all kind of combined and interrelated."

Washington is prepared to pay at least \$6,000 to fund its participation in the study, said Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, and the money will come from the tourism and economic development portion of the city's budget. The city has selected Sunnyland Plaza as its site for the study, he said, and he has spoken to owner Neelam Salmen about her taking on some

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

of the cost. Although Salmen has expressed some interest in funding part of the study, the city has not reached an agreement with her yet, said Oliphant, who is also a member of the EDC's Retail Strategy Group.

Retail development in Sunnyland Plaza would benefit not only Washington but also East Peoria, Patterson said. Oliphant said he hopes the study will bring in more businesses to generate revenue for the surrounding community. "It hasn't seen the type of development that we or the owner would like to see," he said. Oliphant said he hopes the study will allow Washington to promote Sunnyland in a good light and to determine what businesses would be a good fit for the location. "Basically we're looking for more concrete information to present to retailers," he said. "We certainly hope that it will give us a leg up."

Pekin, Havana, Bartonville, Chillicothe and West Peoria also have expressed interest in participating in the study, Patterson said, while Peoria is considering three or four sites that could be included. Havana's downtown area or the business park on Laurel Avenue are both good candidates for the study, said Economic Development Coordinator Terry Svob, but several details need to be cleared up before the city can officially commit. "It is something that did catch my eye," he said.

Havana would have to pay an additional cost because of its distance from the other locations, Svob said, and the total cost would have to be approved by the City Council before the city could participate. Pekin is reviewing several potential sites for the study, Brown said, and the city staff will make a recommendation to the City Council at Monday's meeting. "We've got quite a few nice locations that we could consider," he said.

Patterson said that now is a good time for the region to participate in the retail study, which will take a long time to complete. Once the national economy starts to improve, the participating sites will be prepared with information to present to prospective retailers, she said. However, Oliphant said there is not going to be a "magic potion" that will instantly create economic growth. "There's still going to be a lot of work to be done after we get the study completed," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Morton Times-News (IL)

September 10, 2008

**Legislators Hope to Override Hotel Tax Veto**

Author: Jeanette Kendall &amp; Nathan Domenighini

On Aug. 26, Gov. Rod Blagojevich vetoed a bill that would allow Morton and East Peoria officials to raise hotel tax by 1 percent, making the hotel tax equal to Peoria's at 6 percent. The idea to raise the hotel tax resulted after Brent Lonteen, president and chief executive officer of the Peoria Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau approached Morton and East Peoria officials about the idea in March. Lonteen said the PACVB would not be able to continue to do in the future what it has done in the past due to increased costs and a fund shortage.

Morton officials recently authorized its legislators to seek the special legislation that would allow the village to increase its hotel tax. "This was not unexpected," East Peoria city administrator, Tom Brimberry said. "It would have been a surprise had he not vetoed it. My understanding, it's this governor's M.O. He waits until the 60th day and then he vetoes it if there's anything he thinks smells remotely like a tax increase. This is not a tax increase. This simply gives East Peoria and Morton permission to raise their hotel tax if they choose. All it simply does is what good government should do, and that is put power in the local government."

Washington city administrator Bob Morris said Washington has not passed the hotel/motel tax increase. Currently, the hotel/motel tax there is 5 percent. If increase, it would raise to 6 percent. "We agreed to sit tight until everything was put in place as far as East Peoria and Morton is concerned," Morris said. "We went into this with the presumption that we would all do this jointly." Peoria City Council increased the city's hotel tax rate May 1 from 5.5 to 6 percent.

Rep. Keith Sommer said the next step for Morton and East Peoria is to work with legislators in the fall veto session. Rep. Mike Smith said the governor is "a little misguided." "Really, we're only talking about a user fee, and it's on people outside our community who are coming to stay in East Peoria or Morton. And, of course, the tax goes to help promote tourism and attract more people to the community," Smith said. "This is not a tax increase like when you think of tax increases. This is an increase - yes, and a tax - yes. But, it's put onto your hotel motel bill. It's not like the citizens of (either town) are paying for it," Brimberry said. "It's for visitors who come and stay, and the tax will go up by a penny and the money must be used for tourism type purposes to promote more visitors coming to your area."

Smith said Koehler would have to initiate the Senate Bill to override the governor's veto. "I think that's his intention. If that's successful, than I will attempt that in the House, too. I think it would be in the week after the election," Smith said. It would require 74 votes for an override to occur, Sommer said. Sommer said he normally does not pursue tax increases, but he discussed the matter with village officials and decided to go forward. "This could yield some economic benefit," Sommer said. "If (both towns) don't see any benefit, they can just roll back."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Brimberry explained that because East Peoria and Morton are non-home-rule communities, permission to increase the hotel tax is required from the state. Washington and Peoria can increase theirs at will. Brimberry said Chicago attracts many trade shows and conferences even though they have a hotel tax rate of 13 percent. Village tourism director Susan Pyles said Morton needs to be linked to the PACVB because the organization provides services that help fill hotels. When there are large events taking place in the Peoria area, such as March Madness, conferences and soccer tournaments, Pyles said the PACVB helps distribute visitors to surrounding communities that contribute to the organization.

The governor's veto delays the legislation process, but will not affect any plans for the village because the budget is already set for the fiscal year, Pyles said. "At this point, it doesn't put any strain on the village," she added. Currently, the village pays \$10,000 to the PACVB to participate in its regional marketing campaign, village business manager **David Strohl** said. "We anticipate receiving \$210,000 (at the end of fiscal year)," **Strohl** said. With a 1 percent increase, he said the village could receive an additional \$40,000 in hotel/motel tax revenue.

The village has discussed contributing some of that money to the PACVB for additional services, but nothing has been guaranteed, he added. The projected 2007-08 hotel tax in East Peoria is \$750,000. If the tax were increased from its current 5 percent to 6 percent, it would generate an extra \$150,000. East Peoria leaders pay the PACVB \$80,000 annually to promote tourism and events for the city. In March, Mayor Dave Mingus said even if the hotel tax were increased, it does not mean the extra \$150,000 would go to the PACVB. East Peoria commissioner Mike Unes did not support the legislation. He argued that the increase in hotel tax does affect some local people because there are local business people who are buying hotel rooms.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Morton Times-News (IL)

August 7, 2008

**Alcohol Sale Hours Would Expand**

Author: Nathan Domenighini

An ordinance amending Title 3, Chapter 8 of the Morton Municipal Code, which concerns liquor licenses, would add five additional hours for liquor stores to sell alcohol. Class E license holders - licenses granted to liquor stores in Morton - would be able to open their doors from 6 a.m. to 1 a.m. Monday through Saturday to sell alcohol. On Sundays, Class E holders would be allowed to sell liquor from noon to midnight, except on Christmas. Alcohol sales would extend from Saturday into 1 a.m. Sunday. Currently, liquor stores are allowed to sell alcohol from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday, except Christmas Day, and from noon to 11 p.m. Sundays.

The hours stated for Class E holders would also apply to Class H holders. Class H was added in the proposed amendment to allow wine and beer sales in grocery stores. The amendment also allows daily beer tasting to be included for both Class E and Class H license holders. Currently, there is a \$25 fee for liquor stores to hold wine-tasting events. That fee would be removed for both grocery stores and liquor stores.

Morton Mayor Norm Durflinger said the addition of beer tasting was requested by one of the liquor stores a while back. "Wine tasting was already allowed," he said. But, liquor store owners had to pay a \$25 fee to do so. Morton business manager **David Strohl** said the amendment reflects a similar liquor license in Washington. "Basically, we're utilizing Washington's code," **Strohl** said. "We're using the Washington ordinance as a model." He said both Class E and Class H license holders were given the same hours to create a parity between liquor sales.

The village board could vote on the amendment during the Aug. 18 meeting at Freedom Hall.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Morton Times-News (IL)  
June 4, 2008

**Village Will Borrow, Not Bond**

Author: Nathan Domenighini

Morton Mayor Norm Durflinger said the best time to find a loan for the new firehouse is now. With interest rates increasing yearly for construction costs, Durflinger said the best avenue to fund the village's new firehouse would be to find a loan while construction costs are still cheap. The village will prepare requests for proposals to send to area banks in hopes of finding a loan with a low interest rate. The cost of the new firehouse has not yet been determined; however, Durflinger said the village will seek a \$4 to \$4.5 million loan. Another option the village could have pursued was postponing certain capital projects and re-allocating the funds from street improvements to the firehouse. Durflinger said it might cost the village more to hold the street projects, which are also subject to inflation. "The inflation rate of street work could cost (up to 15 percent more a year)," he said.

The village chose not to bond due to a change in Illinois law that allows for conventional loan terms to extend from one year to 10. "Bonding is difficult and a little more expensive," Durflinger said. The board seemed rather supportive of finding a loan, and finding it soon. Durflinger said he has heard some concerns from residents about the village using a loan to fund the firehouse, and was quick to explain it will not be the first time the village has borrowed. "This is probably the same thing anyone does when they buy a house," Durflinger said. "This is not the first time the village has borrowed money."

Morton business manager **David Strohl** said the last time the village borrowed money was about 20 years ago for special assessments. He was not sure how much that loan was. **Strohl** said borrowing now is an ideal situation for the board considering the current state of the economy. "Interest rates are still low even though the economy is somewhat struggling," he said. "(A loan) certainly allows us to carry on with current capital projects." "Normally, the village would be using bonds, but there is a cost to that," **Strohl** said, adding the changes in state law provide a better opportunity for Morton.

The village's attorney, Tom Davies, will prepare request for proposals to be sent to area banks. Durflinger said he expects the requests to be ready within two weeks and no later than one month. The request will be for a 10-year loan, he added. "We will move forward as fast as we can," Durflinger said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

September 19, 2003

**Morton Fines Hotel Owner for Paying Tax Late**

Author: Unknkown

The village has fined a local hotel owner who paid his June taxes late to protest Morton's tourism policy. Bill Welk, owner of the Best Western Ashland House, Holiday Inn Express and the Welk-Um Inn, was fined \$500 for not paying the tax on time. Welk said he is protesting the fines because the money will go into the village's general fund. If the money would go to the tourism program, he said he would simply pay them. "I'm not above the law," he said. "I made the protest knowing I was not abiding by the law."

In letters dated earlier this month from village Business Manager **Dave Strohl**, Welk was told he had been fined just over \$500, plus \$118 in interest. **Strohl** said a hearing has been scheduled for Sept. 25 with **Strohl**. If Welk is not satisfied with the result of that hearing, he may appeal to Mayor Don Roth.

Welk has also been given a Sept. 29 court date in Tazewell County for the three citations issued. Village Attorney Tom Davies said Welk is charged with petty offenses for violating a village ordinance. No jail time is possible, but additional fines up to \$750 per offense could result. Welk kept his June taxes for the three hotels in escrow at a Morton bank earlier this year as he sought promises from the village board on how the money would be spent. On Aug. 15, he paid the nearly \$13,000 bill at village hall with 12 bags of assorted change and small bills.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

September 17, 2003

**Morton Will Spend \$25,000 on Initiative – Tourism Efforts Include Marketing Campaign, Study**

Author: Michael Noyes

Village officials on Monday approved spending a total of \$25,000 on two separate initiatives to bolster Morton's tourism efforts. Board members voted unanimously to spend \$10,000 to participate in a regional marketing campaign run by the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. It also approved an agreement with the organization for \$15,000 to conduct a study of Morton's tourism assets and make recommendations on how best to utilize them. Both agreements were recommended by Morton Business Manager **Dave Strohl**, who was tapped to run the village's tourism program when it brought that program in-house earlier this year. "I'm glad to see us taking a step forward and moving on," said board member Ginger Hermann.

Morton will be included for a third year in the regional Illinois River Country marketing campaign aimed at attracting visitors to the central Illinois region. The agreement with the PACVB study calls for that organization to recommend an advertising and marketing plan for the village within 90 days. Morton hotel owner Bill Welk has been critical of the village's decision to bring the tourism program in-house. On Monday, he criticized the board's action. "This deal was done before we got here. Where was the discussion?" Welk said. "It's no longer a village board. It's a dictatorship." Hermann said **Strohl** made a recommendation for approval and there was no need to drag out the meeting with a lengthy discussion when members were in agreement.

Board member Steve Leitch said the PACVB brings a tremendous amount of experience to the table that Morton can use. "We're just adding to our knowledge so we can make better decisions in the future," he said. Welk also has organized a Morton Citizens for Tourism group that will hold a meeting at the Best Western Ashland House at 7 tonight. The group has invited all of the Village Board members to attend, along with **Strohl**. Many of the board members have said they will be unavailable to attend because of scheduling conflicts. **Strohl** said he also has a conflict, but welcomed the group's input. "They're free to meet and provide any recommendations they have to the board," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

August 22, 2003

**Morton May Seek Help with its Tourism Program**

Author: Michael Noyes

Village officials may seek guidance in the development of a tourism program from the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. Officials from the PACVB already are scheduled to make a presentation on the Illinois River Country Cooperative Marketing Campaign at the Sept. 15 meeting of the Morton Village Board. Village officials say they may also seek assistance from that organization in developing an in-house tourism program for Morton.

Morton Business Manager **Dave Strohl** said he hasn't discussed any specific role with the PACVB. On Thursday, he said it is "certainly possible" that organization may assist Morton in its efforts to establish a tourism program. "They're open to working something out with us," **Strohl** said. "It kind of depends on what we want them to do."

Vickie Clark, senior vice president and chief operating officer of the PACVB, said one of the tasks her organization performs is representing and advising communities on similar projects. "Tourism and marketing is what we do," Clark said. "One of our responsibilities is to increase tourism for Morton, as it is for all of the (eight) counties and the municipalities we represent."

Village Board Member Ginger Hermann said she would be receptive to any expertise the PACVB could provide as Morton organizes its own operation. The tourism program had been contracted to the Morton Chamber of Commerce for the past three years. Hermann said she has worked with Clark in the past on the Illinois River Country project, which Morton has participated in the past two years. "I would be interested in a presentation that would include what they could do for us and at what cost," Hermann said. "(Clark is) very knowledgeable. I think she is willing to help us get to where we need to go in any way they can."

**Strohl** said initial talks with the PACVB centered around the village's further participation in the Illinois River Country project. However, the PACVB may be asked to take a larger role in shaping Morton's tourism program following the board's rejection of a plan for a tourism commission.

During the meeting Monday night in which board members rejected the commission, some members also expressed an interest in hiring a professional group to help with future plans. The Illinois River Country Cooperative Marketing Campaign has featured 28 different partners for a collective media campaign to promote tourism to the area. Clark said the primarily print campaign reached more than 2 million households in 2002 and more than 4 million households this year.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

August 19, 2003

**Morton Tourism Ordinance Falls Flat – No One on Morton Board Moves to Create Commission**

Author: Michael Noyes

Morton - An ordinance that would have created a commission to help direct the village's tourism program died for lack of a motion Monday night. Morton Business Manager **Dave Strohl** proposed the concept of a nine-member commission, and an ordinance was drafted shortly after he was appointed to form a plan for a village tourism program.

The Morton Chamber of Commerce had been contracted to run a tourism program for the past three years. On Monday, board members were critical of the plan to establish a commission that would have been responsible for drafting an annual program, developing a five-year strategic plan and making recommendations on spending proposals.

Board member Steve Leitch said if a group of citizens or business leaders wants to form their own commission to give input, he would support that. Leitch said the village then could take requests for money, similar to a grant program. **Strohl** said he envisioned a commission that would help develop programs and set the direction for the tourism program. "There's more to this than just taking requests for hotel/motel funds," **Strohl** told the board.

Board member Craig Schwarzentraub said he believes the board needs to hire a professional to help put together a tourism plan. "I don't believe the best way to approach this is with a group of volunteers," Schwarzentraub said. "I think we need to spend some money and hire a professional."

Reached after the meeting, Morton hotel owner Bill Welk, who has been critical of efforts to bring the Morton tourism program in house, was also critical of the board's inaction on Monday night. Welk said when board members decided to bring the program in-house, they said they had the experience and ability to run it. He said that is not consistent with Schwarzentraub's proposal to hire a professional. "What is the real truth here?" Welk said. "I think this is just one more scenario where they're trying to not spend the money."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

August 16, 2003

**Protest By the Bag – Morton Hotel Owner Pays \$13,000 in June Taxes in Change, Small Bills**

Author: Michael Noyes

Lugging 12 bags of assorted change and small bills Friday, a Morton hotel owner paid nearly \$13,000 he owed for hotel/motel taxes in June. Bill Welk, owner of the Best Western Ashland House, Holiday Inn Express and the WelkUm Inn, was accompanied by co-owner Marcia Paul and four employees as he marched into Village Hall to make a point, as well as a payment. "These people work because of tourism," Welk said of his employees as they deposited the money with village officials. The unusual payment method was another way for Welk to express his displeasure with a recent Village Board decision to take direct control of tourism efforts.

After apologizing to office workers for creating extra work, Welk told business manager **Dave Strohl** of his belief that the money be spent only on tourism. "The Village Board needs to do what they're supposed to do and that's spend this money on tourism," Welk told **Strohl**. Board member Darrell Vierling called the move "grandstanding." "It doesn't surprise me," Vierling said. "(Welk) will do what he can to get whatever publicity he can." Vierling said the payment caused some hassle for employees who had to sort the coins and dollars before taking them to the bank, but otherwise he was satisfied. "That's legal tender," Vierling said. "We don't argue with that, and he can pay it any way he wants."

After Welk left, **Strohl** said he had no comment on the payment, but he plans to review the case with the village attorney. No fines or penalties have yet been assessed for the late payment. In July, Welk notified the village he was holding the tax money in escrow at a Morton bank. Welk said he wanted assurances the money would never be used for anything other than tourism efforts. Village Board members said they could not make such promises and that Welk must pay his taxes whether he agrees with the tourism plan or not.

**Strohl** said the village code outlines a number of potential penalties for refusal to pay the hotel/motel tax, including fines up to \$750 and a license suspension for a first offense. Repeat offenses could result in up to six months in jail. "Obviously, that still applies," **Strohl** said. Before the board changed its village tourism efforts, a committee set up by the Morton Chamber of Commerce had handled the program for three years. Welk contends the village doesn't have the expertise to run the program efficiently.

Village Board members, however, have said the move was simply about accountability and giving the board more input on how those hotel/motel tax funds are spent. Vierling said the village must spend the money on promotional activity that results in overnight stays. On Friday, Welk said he is concerned the board will hold onto the hotel/motel tax money until it can get home rule, which would give the village more latitude in how those funds are spent. "(Saving that money is) their intention until they can get home rule through," Welk said. Earlier this year,



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

voters rejected a ballot initiative that would have approved home rule for Morton. Board Member Steve Leitch supported the home-rule initiative but said he is not aware of any plan to hold onto tax money so it can be spent differently. "That's never been our intent," he said. "I don't know that I personally will ever ask anybody to vote for home rule again."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

August 12, 2003

**Tourism Ordinance Includes Commission – Advisory Panel Would Give Input to Morton Leaders**

Author: Michael Noyes

Plans for the Morton tourism program will include the formation of an advisory commission if Village Board members approve a proposed ordinance. Morton Business Manager **Dave Strohl** was appointed by the board to organize a tourism program when it voted recently to promote tourism itself. The ordinance calls for a nine-member volunteer commission. Members would be appointed by the mayor with the consent of the board for one-, two- or three-year terms.

**Strohl** said the concept of the commission is based loosely on the tourism committee the Morton Chamber of Commerce established when the chamber was contracted to run the program three years ago. "From my point of view, it's important to get input from various segments of the community," **Strohl** said.

Commission members will prepare an annual plan, along with developing a five-year strategic plan, the ordinance says. The commission also will consider spending proposals and requests and make recommendations to the Village Board.

Board Member Ginger Hermann said she supports the concept of the commission. "The board values the input from the public, and this will be a process we can use to gather that input," Hermann said. After the board voted June 7 to bring the program in house, chamber tourism committee member Mary Jo Lewellen said she would support the formation of a new commission to provide input. "We've done some good work, laid a good base," Lewellen said. "(The village is) still going to need some input from people in the community who have a background in tourism."

**Strohl** said he crafted the ordinance after studying similar programs in surrounding communities such as Pontiac and Rock Falls. "Obviously the sooner the better," **Strohl** said when asked about a timeline for the formation of the commission. "Hopefully we can get this done and get it established and get moving." The ordinance to establish a tourism commission will likely come up for a vote at Monday's Village Board meeting.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

August 6, 2003

**Morton Hotel Owner Protests with Tax Funds – He's Putting His Money in Escrow, Hoping it Will be Used on Tourism**

Author: Michael Noyes

The owner of three Morton hotels is withholding his hotel/motel tax dollars and seeking assurances from the Village Board on how that money will be spent. Hotel owner Bill Welk wants the board to promise those tax funds will be used only for tourism efforts, but board members say they can't make promises for future boards. Welk, owner of the Best Western Ashland House, Holiday Inn Express, and Welk-Um Inn notified the village in July he would deposit hotel/motel tax funds into an escrow account at a Morton bank.

Welk would not say exactly how much money was deposited, but said it was several thousand dollars. In a letter to the board dated July 30, Welk requested a hearing regarding payment of those funds. The letter states that Welk would not have a problem paying as long as funds "will never be used for any other purposes even if home rule is approved."

Village Board members say they are currently bound by law to spend those funds on tourism efforts. Board Member Darrell Vierling said future boards would not be bound by any promise the current board might make. "Legally, he's obligated to pay it, whether he agrees with (the plan) or not," Vierling said. Welk said he plans to put hotel/motel tax funds for next month in escrow as well. "I'm going to lose. There's no way I cannot pay eventually," Welk said. Withholding those funds is simply "a way for me to say 'This is wrong.'"

The board recently decided to take over local tourism efforts. For the past three years, the tourism program had been handled by a committee set up by the Morton Chamber of Commerce. Welk has criticized that move, saying the village doesn't have the expertise required to run the program efficiently. "It's going to take those people months to get up to par because they have to start the process all over again," Welk said.

Village Board members have said the move gives them more input on how tourism dollars are spent. The village code outlines a number of penalties for refusal to pay the hotel/motel tax. For a first offense, the code calls for a fine of \$200 to \$750 and/or suspension of all village licenses. Repeat offenses may be punishable as a misdemeanor, with up to six months in the county jail. The business manager is responsible for arranging a hearing and determining the proper amount of tax owed, subject to an appeal process.

Business manager **Dave Stohl** said he would not comment on any specific case. "Obviously we would be interested in enforcing the village's code just as we would any violation of the code," **Strohl** said, adding that to his knowledge, no one has previously refused to pay the tax.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

July 9, 2003

**Morton Board to Oversee Tourism – Village Votes to Take Charge of its Own Marketing Spending**

Author: Michael Noyes

The Village Board will now directly oversee the spending of tax dollars on efforts to increase tourism to the area. For the past two years, the board contracted with the Morton Chamber Commerce to develop a program to market Morton. On Monday night, the board voted unanimously to conduct those tourism efforts in-house. The chamber developed a tourism committee to make decisions on specific projects, using a portion of funds generated by the village hotel/motel tax. Board members said they aren't criticizing the tourism board's efforts. They say it's simply a matter of accountability, and they should have more oversight since they are responsible for how funds are utilized. Tourism board supporters who attended the meeting Monday night said they believe the action came about because several members of the tourism board did not support a ballot initiative to make Morton a home rule community. "This is their retaliation against that board," said developer Bill Welk, who said he was an early supporter of the implementation of a hotel/motel tax to fund tourism efforts. "It is government at its worst."

Village Board member Ginger Hermann said that wasn't the reason for her vote. "I'm not a retaliatory person," Hermann said. "We're above that, I hope." On Tuesday, Morton Chamber of Commerce Director Mike Badgerow said he doesn't believe the move was done in retaliation. Badgerow said he wasn't surprised, and the move to shift efforts in-house is common. "Of course it's disappointing, because we spent almost three years developing a program and, in essence, have a vote of no confidence," Badgerow said. "But it's their responsibility . . . they feel they have a stronger program, so we say 'Go for it.'"

Village Board member Jeff Kaufman, who proposed the change, said retaliation was not the reason for his recommendation. The move will simply streamline the process, and the village has the personnel and administration to do the job. Tourism board member Marcia Paul said the village lacks the experience and expertise to do the job as effectively. "It's really sad," Paul said. "We're in the peak of doing our projects right now." Earlier this year, tourism board officials said they believed this could be a banner year in terms of results.

Hermann said the village does have the personnel and knowledge to do the job. The board appointed business manager **Dave Strohl** to develop plans for a village program to promote tourism. "I would hope there would be a smooth transition," Hermann said. "I think we will pretty much want to continue (down the same path the tourism board has been on) to start with." During the meeting, Hermann said the issues were efficacy and accountability. "It was kind of uncharted territory and there were some growing pains involved," Hermann said. "I think since we're accountable, it should be brought in-house."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

March 16, 2000

**West Peoria Finds Computer Void of Files – Aldermen Claim Former Administrator Erased or Took Data**

Author: Sonya Klopfenstein

Some officials here contend that when their former city administrator left last month to take a position in Morton, he left a void larger than empty shoes for someone else to fill. Instead, several aldermen allege **David Strohl** erased six years worth of computer files on his way out - or took them with him on disk - leaving city staff struggling to carry out their day-to-day functions. For example, 4th Ward Alderman Dennis Kroll is not sure the city's finance committee will be able to pull together next year's budget without **Strohl's** assistance - and his working computer copy. Left with only paper copies of all the resolutions, ordinances, manuals, budgets, grants and other documents the city has produced since its incorporation in 1993, Kroll and others say it feels as if they're starting from scratch all over again. "The city computer is void. It's empty. Six years of documentation and research is lost," said Ward One Alderman Leroy Dohm Jr. "When you have to retype 35 pages to add one word, that's uncalled for. It's ridiculous."

But **Strohl** - who assumed duties as Morton's business manager March 1 - said Wednesday that no one from West Peoria has formally contacted him about any sort of problems with lost data. He said there was no formal policy on the books about maintaining electronic copies of documents and that all his work was left in printed form. "I think it might be a misunderstanding on their part," **Strohl** said. "Every time I created a document, like an ordinance, (the council) would act on it - print it, sign and seal - and then I'd delete it." "I guess there may have been a perception that everything created was still on the computer, but that was not the case," he said.

City attorney Bill Connor would not comment specifically on what legal options the city has available, saying only, "My investigation of the situation is continuing." Second Ward Alderman Rocky Mathewson said the council is presently reworking their personnel and policy manuals to include language that spells out electronic files as well as paper-generated documents must be saved and backed up periodically by future administrators. However, he said pursuing the matter legally against **Strohl** would be "frivolous." "He really had no direction as to what to save. No one told him either way," Mathewson said. But Kroll said an investigation is worth pursuing. "It's intellectual property in that he may have authored part of it, but we paid him for it, so it's our property," he said. "It's pretty much up to the mayor (to authorize a lawsuit)," Kroll said. "I think (**Strohl**) should be sued." As far as preparing next year's city budget, **Strohl** said he and city officials made arrangements for that task to be his last remaining commitment to West Peoria. **Strohl** said he will hand over finalized numbers by the end of this week. Meanwhile, members of a search committee are looking for an interim administrator. So far, they've interviewed two candidates, and a mayoral recommendation is expected once Mayor Jim Dillon returns from an out-of-state trip.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

March 2, 2000

**Morton Gets New Administrator – Business Manager Comes to Village from West Peoria**

Author: Mike Hinken

A new business manager started work for the village of Morton on Wednesday. **David Strohl** takes over for Bill Collingwood, who served as both business manager and treasurer for 17 of his 24 years of service in Morton village government. Collingwood will remain on staff part time as village treasurer. **Strohl**, an Illinois Central College and Illinois State University graduate, comes to Morton from the city of West Peoria, where he served as city administrator since 1994. "My decision to take the job with the village of Morton does not reflect any way on West Peoria," **Strohl** said. "The village of Morton has different opportunities than West Peoria. Morton has a different dynamic, it's a growing community that has a new set of challenges that I was looking for in my career."

Village trustee Darrell Vierling said about a dozen candidates were considered for the position. "We're excited about having David on board," Vierling said. "While David may not have had the experience of the other candidates, we felt he had a good foundation of experiences so far, and that he was open to being trained for things we want him to do in the job." **Strohl** will manage the day-to-day operations of the village, from billing the more than 6,000 utilities customers to overseeing aspects of public safety. His position is full time. "There will be a little bit of a learning curve with the new job," **Strohl** said. "It's somewhat different than what I've been doing. My new job will be a little more tightly focused on certain government issues in Morton than in West Peoria."

While with the city of West Peoria, **Strohl** helped organize many firsts, including drafting the first residential waste collection contract; negotiating the city's first gas, electric and telephone franchise agreements; and creating the first sidewalk replacement program. He also assisted the mayor of West Peoria and other city officials, while managing the daily operations of the city. **Strohl**, who majored in political science at both ICC and ISU, has administrative experience working with Peoria County and the village of Peoria Heights. "I look forward to working with the village of Morton," he said. "It's a small community on the suburbs of a large one, so it has metropolitan amenities. I could easily see myself staying in Morton for a good while."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

November 9, 1998

**Five is a Fine Age for West Peoria>Residents Still Relish Their Sense of Ownership**

Author: Jennifer Davis

City Hall -- a small tan brick building catty-corner from Haddad's Super Market on Rohmann Avenue -- is perfect evidence of how this bedroom community, now just 5 years old, still is evolving. The main office is all new computers, gleaming white walls and gray, industrial carpet. But one wall is a plastic tarp separating the major construction on the other side. And, for now, the city clerk, city administrator, bookkeeper and zoning officer arrange their desks in a maze to squeeze into the small space that used to be the city's Oriental market.

"You have to be pretty friendly," said a laughing **David Strohl**, the same city administrator who was hired four years ago when he was a 24-year-old master's degree student. Now 28 but still working on his degree, **Strohl** likes to say he and this city of 5,300 residents have grown up together. For the city's part, it's been a slow, steady, economical maturation.

Mayor Jim Dillon has no grand plans of attracting a casino or rebuilding a riverfront -- even if he could. He wants nicer sidewalks, streets and sewers. It's not sexy stuff, but it's what helped residents decide to go from being an unincorporated area to an official town five years ago Nov. 3. (Even the city's birthday was low-key and low-budget: \$60 total on cake and decorations for the voters who used City Hall as their polling place.) Today, the city has a sidewalk replacement program, two police officers committed 12 hours a day to patrol, and a code-enforcement program that shows in the tree-lined streets of well-kept, Depression-era bungalows.

It also has Guydeen Roos, a city clerk who will either help you or rattle off the number of someone who can. That is, when she's not away from her desk on a call with the volunteer fire department. "Before, if someone had a problem, they didn't know especially where to go -- although the township was helpful," said Roos, a 27-year resident. Now, when residents call City Hall after hours, they can get the mayor's home number off the answering machine. "People find that hard to believe," said Dillon, who co-owns Dillon JC Plumbing of Peoria. But given the obvious community spirit, perhaps they shouldn't.

On Sunday, residents gathered at the Knights of Columbus Hall on West Hill Street for a chili supper to benefit 10-year-old Michael Daniels, who recently was diagnosed with leukemia. Roos took a call the other day from a man who had moved away from the community but was still concerned about the family. Dillon also recalls how everyone pulled together to clean up after this past summer's windstorm. "I was out working with the street crew that night, and people were coming out of their homes to help," said Dillon. "They were picking up branches and getting their saws to cut up trees in neighbors' yards. I'll never forget that."

Bryant DeFrance, the city's first mayor -- indeed, the man most responsible for West Peoria being a city at all -- says the best thing about the incorporation is the sense of ownership.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

"There's a little more self-pride and the knowledge that we control our own destiny," said DeFrance, who researched incorporation after the township told him there was nothing it could do about the crumbling sidewalks. Using the statute books of friend and Peoria County Coroner Herb Buzbee, now deceased, DeFrance spent hours every week looking into the law. He then mounted a grass-roots campaign with the support of the area resident council.

On Nov. 3, 1993, residents voted by a 10-to-1 margin to incorporate. "And we've still been able to hold taxes down. I'm glad of that," DeFrance said. Most West Peorians pay a property tax rate of less than \$7 per \$100 equalized assessed valuation, compared to the \$8.08 per \$100 that the majority of Peorians pay. (That figure varies some depending on the school district, but most Peorians and all West Peorians are in School District 150.) "I think people like the situation the way it is," **Strohl** said.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

May 13, 1998

**County Begins Ripping into Rohmann Avenue Being Torn Up in \$344,000 Follow-Up to Earlier Improvements**

Author: Mike Ramsey

WEST PEORIA -- Cars have a tendency to speed through the 2000 and 2100 blocks of Rohmann Avenue, according to resident Don Shelton. Motorists lean on the gas pedal along the tidy residential street as they make their way to or from nearby Sterling Avenue, he says. Not anymore. For the next month, speeders, leisurely drivers and even home owners with driveways will encounter the ultimate speed bump. County work crews this week began breaking up the pavement -- to a depth of 1 foot -- to make way for a new swath of concrete from Waverly to Cedar avenues.

No minor surgery here. On Tuesday, slabs of the old road chunks were piled up like so much peanut brittle for a giant. The dinosaur-sized jaws of a backhoe loaded pieces of the dismembered street into the back of a hauling truck. The \$344,000 task is the follow-up to a county highway project that last year added new curbs and storm sewers on Rohmann. Shelton remembers that was a bit of a pain, too, but acknowledged residents can use back alleys to access their homes. "If I didn't have the back, I'd find it very aggravating," said the 75-year-old, who has lived on the street for 10 years. "It'll be nice when it's done."

The county notified residents ahead of time with fliers and news announcements. And city officials say affected home owners have been good sports about the project. "So far, no one has called up here that I'm aware of," said **David Strohl**, West Peoria's city administrator. The county also will do some surface work on Rohmann east of Cedar toward Western Avenue, but not on the scale of this week's excavation, a highway department official said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

May 15, 1996

**West Peoria's Special Taxing District Will Fund Sidewalks**

Author: Anthony Smith

A special service area will be created in order for the City Council to levy taxes to help pay for 1,900 feet of sidewalk along Barker Avenue, unless 51 percent of the residents there object and file a petition within 60 days. Residents along Barker between Western and Waverly avenues would pay 50 percent of the costs of building the sidewalks and 25 percent of the costs of curb and gutter construction, officials said. That cost would be spread out over five years on the tax bill, according to the assessed valuation of their property. The city would pick up the rest of the tab. "This was the easiest way to get it started," said Mayor Jim Dillon at a public hearing Tuesday night.

City administrator **David Strohl** said there are two methods in which the public pays for projects like this. The public would have no input if a special assessment is used. In the method chosen by the City Council, 51 percent of the residents affected must want the establishment of the service area. Council members went a step further, requiring the consent of 70 percent of the homeowners. "There's no really good way of doing this but this is the lesser of two evils," he said.

About 25 people attended the hearing at the West Peoria Township Building to ask questions and voice opinion. "I have mixed feelings. I don't know what to think right now," said Denise Hufeld. "This whole thing has been very vague," said one homeowner who would not give her name. "We don't have a dollar figure here, we don't know who's doing it. There's too much vagueness here. A lot of people want to know exactly what's going on."

But Robert DeSutter of 2006 Barker said all 16 homeowners in his block are in favor of creating to service area to get the new sidewalks. At least two meetings were held to clarify and explain the advantages. "I'd rather had seen it done by linear foot but since that's not the way the program is set up, we have to do it by assessed value. I want a new sidewalk. I put in a new driveway last year and I'd like to have a new sidewalk. I know it will improve the neighborhood," he said. Forty-five houses will be affected.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

April 24, 1996

**West Peoria Makes Zoning Appointments>Trio Helped Draft Zoning Ordinance**

Author: Grant Boxleitner

Three members of the West Peoria Planning and Zoning Commission, which drafted the city's zoning ordinance last month, were appointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals by the City Council on Tuesday night.

That list includes West Peoria Township Trustee Sharon McBride, who will add Zoning Board of Appeals member to her long list of titles. The appointment of McBride comes one day after West Peoria Township supervisor John Seabeck said he will appoint her to the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District Board. The West Peoria seat was vacated Monday when L. Ray Tilly resigned after 26 years. "It's kind of weird timing for both of these to come at once," said McBride, who must resign her West Peoria Township trustee position to take the job on the transit board. Seabeck and Todd Baker, who also served with McBride on the city's planning and zoning commission, were also appointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals. John Venzon of Ward 4, Karen Turner of Ward 2, Rob Rembke of Ward 2 and Judy McComb of Ward 2 round out the board appointments.

The planning and zoning commission was dissolved last month when the City Council approved the new zoning ordinance. "We wanted to get as many experienced people who drafted the zoning ordinance to serve on the board of appeals," said Alderman Dan Kerns. Retired East Peoria policeman Orville Smith was re-appointed as the city's code enforcement officer. City Administrator **David Strohl** was also named the city's zoning officer. **Strohl** will interpret the zoning ordinance for local residents.

Before the appointments were voted on, alderman Dennis Kroll accused Mayor Jim Dillon of setting a hidden agenda because he did not list the appointees on the meeting agenda. Kroll said he did not have a problem with any of the candidates but wanted a chance to review them before the meeting. "This deletion of these names is an insult to this council," Kroll said.

Dillon said the deletion of the candidate names was an oversight by **Strohl** and himself when they made the agenda. Kerns said he resented Kroll's "hidden agenda" comments. "You could have called the mayor or myself if you wanted a list of the names," Kerns told Kroll. But after the discussion, all appointees were appointed unanimously.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

February 1, 1996

**City Administrator Wins Praise>College Student Handling West Peoria Community Affairs**

Author: Sharon Oberholtzer

It's not often an aspiring city administrator, just out of college, gets a brand new city to help run, **David Strohl** knows. But **Strohl**, 25, was hired part-time as West Peoria's city administrator less than a year after the community of about 5,300 incorporated. Sure, the part-time salary of \$9,000 wasn't going to make him rich, but the fact he had a job in his field so soon after his graduation from Illinois State University in 1994 with a degree in political science was a plus. "I knew it wasn't much money; I knew it was part-time, but I was in school," said **Strohl**, who has been working on his master's degree in public administration at the University of Illinois, Springfield. This spring, however, he is taking a semester off.

The Richwoods High School and Illinois Central College graduate also knew the position would provide good on-the-job training. When the City Council hired **Strohl**, said city attorney Joe Cooper, some questioned whether West Peoria needed an administrator. "After he was hired, it became apparent he was needed. He has saved us money and a lot of mistakes." Cooper had more praise for the young administrator. "Dave pretty much earned his way," he said. "He is knowledgeable, hard working, and helps us all."

**Strohl** moved into his part-time position at City Hall in October 1994, a month before the city celebrated its first birthday. In July 1995, he was hired full time for the grand salary of \$20,000 a year. This is his only job, but that wasn't always so. "When I came on board here," **Strohl** said, "I was an assistant to the village administrator at Peoria Heights. As an intern there, I wrote a grant and I administered it; I also worked part-time for Peoria County. The (Heights) grant ended, and I came to West Peoria."

**Strohl** was the first intern for Peoria Heights administrative assistant Rick Williams. "He was here for a semester," said Williams. "He was good, very attentive, and eager to learn. He had a keen desire to pursue a career in public service and worked on a couple of projects that helped me a lot. He wrote a grant, did a good job on it, and it was funded. He also worked in the personnel area and worked on our first-ever merit-wage program." **Strohl** uses Williams as a resource, and there are times, joked the Heights employee, when "I feel like a lending library."

West Peoria, he said, is so new it is still building up its own stock of resource material. That could account for the fact **Strohl's** office is not lined floor-to-ceiling with books. In fact, his office -- a desk, phone, files, computers, and the all-important copy machine -- is quite well-organized and is shared with city clerk Guydeen Roos.

City Hall is sandwiched between a free-standing automotive store and an Oriental market. The market and city hall share the same building, originally constructed to house a variety store. The

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

city hall had served as an insurance office and a polling place for residents, who proudly called themselves West Peorians long before the 11/4-square-mile area was incorporated. "West Peoria," **Strohl** said, "is a very unique community. It's so close to a major urban area but has its own identity. Even before it became a city, you knew the people were from West Peoria."

Administering a small city, said **Strohl**, is different than administering a large municipality. "I provide professional staff support and guidance on various policy issues to the mayor and City Council." He helps the clerk, too, said Roos. "Any question I ask, he always has the answer." As part of his job description, **Strohl** also serves as deputy city clerk, which enables him to take over when Roos is called away from the office. "I'm happy where I am," beamed the young administrator. "This job offers a variety, and I like this community." However, he added, "At some point, I'd like a staff and have more of a leadership position, but over the next few years, this position could develop. "

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

April 2, 1995

**Secrecy Charges Shake Up New City>'Hidden Agenda' Allegations Fuel Interest in West Peoria's First Municipal Election**

Author: Mark Fitton

Has West Peoria city government become an exclusive club for eight or nine members? Or have a discontented city official or two gone political at election time and accused their brethren in an attempt to sway the electorate? In this city of about 5,500, incorporated in 1993 and facing its first municipal election, the answer may depend on who's asked.

In either case, interest in the West Peoria elections appears extraordinarily high. The town is taking on the appearance of an election-sign pincushion, and a recent candidates night drew about 200 people. One alderman Dan Kerns, one of eight aldermen appointed by a residents committee when West Peoria incorporated, gets either the credit or the blame for shaking things up.

Kerns was the principal source for a story in the March issue of the Community Word, a small newspaper circulated in the Peoria bluff areas. In that story and in interviews since, Kerns alleges that most city officials -- Mayor Bryant DeFrance, the seven other voting council members and the city clerk -- have adopted a "hidden agenda" mentality and mode of operating.

That mode, Kerns and others argue, is marked by secret meetings, minutes of proceedings that don't accurately reflect events, and rushing decisions through the voting process without adequate public notice or public input. Kerns is supported on certain specifics by Treasurer Mike Mohr, who months ago announced he wouldn't seek election.

The accused incumbents, who have formed the West Peoria Good Government Political Action Committee, have written their own response, which PAC members said will be mailed to voters. They call Kerns' allegations "baseless, slanderous or at very least a distortion of the truth. " Illegal meetings? Kerns says several council members and their spouses regularly go to Donnelly's Campus Town Bar & Grill for dinner after City Council meetings. He suspects they discuss city business. As evidence, he points to a December 1993 gathering at Donnelly's that he attended. Kerns says besides himself, Mayor DeFrance, council members Linda Capps, Verne Powley, Joe Cooper and Chuck Howard, City Clerk Nancy Powley and then-City Attorney Sandra Birdsall were there.

Kerns says talk was "at first, chit-chat, but pretty soon turned to discussion of city business. " Specifically, Kerns says, talk turned to items including liquor-license holders, performance bonds and annexation, with Birdsall giving advice on annexation. Kerns said he became so uncomfortable that he made notes when he got home. Later, he says, he privately spoke to fellow council members and expressed his discomfort. He says he was met with a nudge- wink attitude. Dissatisfied, Kerns says he later gave copies of the Illinois attorney general's booklet on the

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

Open Meetings Act to each council member.

Others have a different impression of that dinner gathering. Birdsall, who has since left the law firm that represented the city for another job, is among them. "No, absolutely not," Birdsall said when asked if she'd ever been at what she considered an improper or illegal meeting. Birdsall says she would have followed her duty to warn West Peoria officials if they were crossing a legal line. She says her talking about annexation was in response to someone's question, "What is annexation?" and involved her answering with tales of her own experiences as a former village president. Birdsall, who said she'd attended several post-meeting dinners, said, "There was never anything relating to any specific project."

DeFrance says he doesn't believe city officials have violated the law, or the public's trust, while socializing. "We have been places together, in the same room or at the same table, and there's maybe a couple people talking back and forth about a subject, but as far as the whole table collaborating, no," the mayor said. The mayor, other aldermen and Birdsall question Kerns' motive for publicizing -- a month before the election -- his interpretation of a December 1993 event. "Dan's simply doing this to dig up dirt," Alderman Mark Lang said.

Kerns says the election is incidental to the issue: "Let the chips fall where they may. If I don't get sent back to the council, so be it. I'll be able to get up in the morning and look in the mirror and know I did the right thing." The issue will get another look -- this one from the Peoria County State's Attorney's Office.

Chris Fredericksen, chief of the civil division, said that a complainant on March 24 brought in a picture of a group of elected officials engaged in what are alleged to be violations of the Open Meetings Act. "We are looking into it," Fredericksen said. The state's attorney's office does not reveal the name of complainants in such cases, he said. Matter of minutes Kerns and others argue that minutes of City Council proceedings often are so cleansed of anything that might appear "negative" or cause "bad press" that the record does not reflect what happened. Critics say the minutes are especially lacking when it comes to recording public input.

The PAC members disagree, saying minutes routinely go beyond what the law requires. Lang said Kerns likes more verbiage than do the clerk or most committee chairmen, and the debate amounts to a matter of preference. Kroll takes it a step further, saying he believes some people expect nearly verbatim accounts in the tradition of township annual meetings. Politically, "we're not children anymore," Kroll said. "It's an adult thing now." But Kerns and others say there's a pattern. They cite a failure by the council to promptly review and release closed-session minutes, failure to publish public safety committee reports that include crime breakdowns and failure to approve City Council workshop minutes until forced. Further, Kerns says it took floor discussion by the council to get copies of minutes available for the public at meetings and a subsequent public demand by Mohr to make copies of his treasurer's reports available to the audience.

The most striking example of an abbreviated official account of a meeting is the Nov. 1, 1994, land use committee meeting. About two hours of public comment on potential building codes, much of it critical, was recorded by committee chairman Howard as, "Balance of meeting we

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

took comments from the public. " Howard, according to several people, later explained at a council meeting that the public comment was "just too negative."

DeFrance and others point out that Howard had to run the committee meeting, interact with residents and be responsible for the minutes. They say perhaps Kerns should have volunteered to take minutes, as he would later do, or perhaps Howard should have appointed someone to the task. DeFrance, who initially opposed amending those minutes, said that he now agrees with Gary Dutro, president of the West Peoria Residents' Association, who urged the council to include more documentation of public sentiment. Hidden, rushed? Perhaps the biggest criticism of the current council is what opponents say is, at best, a tendency to rush decisions without enough public input and debate or, at worst, an attitude that the council will achieve its agenda regardless of public sentiment.

One of the most visible incidents cited by critics is the hiring of City Administrator **David Strohl** on Sept. 13, 1994. No one seems too publicly critical of **Strohl's** qualifications or performance. Instead, they point to the way the 24-year-old master's degree student was hired as a part- time administrator at \$9,000 per year. (His pay has since been raised to \$11,000.) The night **Strohl** was hired, discussion of a city administrator was not on the agenda. Kerns says the first he learned of the subject was 10 minutes before the council meeting began.

That evening, the council effectively added the subject of hiring a city administrator to its agenda; passed an ordinance, written by **Strohl**, that created the job; interviewed **Strohl** in executive session; and hired him. DeFrance, most agree, had done some homework. **Strohl**, who holds a bachelor's degree in political science, was finishing grant work for Peoria Heights at the time and working part time in the county personnel department. In addition to speaking to **Strohl** and checking his references, DeFrance had **Strohl** interviewed by Robert Wright, a former Peoria city manager. **Strohl** was hired by a 6-2 vote, with Kerns and Kroll casting the "no" votes.

Kroll says he agreed with the need for the position but voted no because he felt rushed. "In retrospect, it came out OK," he said, adding that the debate in executive session was open and thorough. Kerns still has problems with the manner of hiring. Kerns said there was no previous public discussion at a full council session to benefit either the council or the public. He also says he didn't like making the leap from introducing the subject to hiring an administrator in one night. Plus, Kerns says, the position seemed open only to a single candidate, without the city having done any shopping.

Although DeFrance acknowledges he may have rushed a bit, he and supporters say hiring **Strohl** was a matter of unique opportunity, rather like finding the perfect fit at a bargain price at the right moment. Lang also says the position had been discussed for two months in the finance committee. DeFrance and supporters point out that **Strohl** already has "more than paid for himself" by finding for West Peoria \$12,000 in franchise fees now going to Peoria County. However, Kerns continues to raise the question of conflict of interest. **Strohl** still works part time for Peoria County.

**Strohl** supporters say he isn't privy to information in his county personnel-office job that he



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

could use in his West Peoria job. West Peorian and County Board Chairwoman Sharon Kennedy isn't so sure. Kennedy said she has asked the state's attorney's office for an opinion on whether **Strohl** has a potential conflict. Kennedy, it should be noted for the record, is one of mayoral candidate Jim Dillon's campaign managers. Fallout What's been the fallout for West Peoria city government? First, Kerns has become the odd man out among voting council members. Kerns, who acknowledges his disagreements with the other incumbents are largely about how to conduct business, said that he can live with that because he tried to bring about change on and off the council floor before airing his views in the press.

For his part, Treasurer Mike Mohr is leaving government. He cites burnout that he says is partially attributable to the way the council handles itself. Most members of the City Council, he said, seem to have an agenda. Mohr's opinion is that if those members "feel the public might not be in favor or that they will be stalled by public debate or dissension, then put it through some other way." "I don't like behind the scenes stuff at all. This stuff gets to me," said Mohr. "That's why I'm bailing out now." The other incumbents feel differently.

Lang, for instance, doesn't think the council made mistakes on the issues Kerns raises. Nor does he think there's a group agenda or pack mentality. "I know these people; they're not a voting bloc," he said. Kroll says he feels the council may have made some "very minor mistakes" on certain matters, but he scoffs at the idea of collusion. He, in fact, argues the strength of the PAC incumbents is their ability to disagree and still work together. DeFrance said maybe he moved too fast on a few matters, but he contends the "openness" issue is essentially a political attack. If the buzz around West Peoria is any indication, the electorate that came out in force to approve incorporation may return and let its city officials know what it thinks.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David A. Strohl***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

September 22, 1994

**New City Hires Young Administrator>West Peoria Employs ISU Graduate Who Will Start on Master's**

Author: Mark Fitton

The young city of West Peoria will soon have a young city administrator. As a result of a 6-2 vote Sept. 13, **David Strohl** will join the city payroll in early October. **Strohl**, 24, works part time for the Peoria County personnel department and is administering a grant for Peoria Heights. He will work from three to five hours a day for the city of West Peoria at an annual salary of \$9,000, Mayor Bryant DeFrance said. **Strohl**, 24, earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Illinois State University and will soon start work on a master's degree, he said.

**Strohl's** duties will be nearly all-inclusive, DeFrance said. "For the most part, he'll be an assistant to me and the council and help us run the city." Among those duties will be researching and preparing ordinances, working with council committees, and working with such agencies as the Tri- County Planning Commission, the Economic Development Council, and the state's Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. "I'm impressed with the help we're going to get," DeFrance said. "We've taken care of the things we've absolutely had to, and now it's time to move forward. I think this (hiring) will really help us."

**Strohl** said he wants to make a career of public policy work and thought the West Peoria job presented an interesting entry-level opportunity. "It's not often you get to be involved with a new city, and I'm looking forward to being right in the middle of it. I think it will be a great growth experience for West Peoria and for me."

West Peoria voters approved incorporation in November 1993. Dan Kerns, one of the aldermen who voted against the hiring, said he was opposed because the council received the ordinance to create the administrator's position only a few minutes before the meeting. Further, Kerns said, an executive session at the Sept. 13 meeting was the first time he and most aldermen had met **Strohl**. Kerns said he would have preferred the council been involved in the selection process earlier and not been presented with only one candidate on the evening of the hiring. "I'm not against hiring a city administrator so much as I am the fashion in which it was gone about," Kerns said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **David A. Strohl** is listed below.]

Peoria Journal Star, The (IL)

July 31, 1994

**ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY NAMES 1,300 HONOR STUDENTS**

Author: City Desk News

NORMAL -- More than 1,300 students were named to the dean's list at Illinois State University.  
Area students include:

Peoria:

**David A. Strohl,**

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **David A. Strohl** is listed below.]

The Peoria Journal Star (IL)

April 28, 1994

**Peoria County Roundup**

Author: Unknown

**PEORIA HEIGHTS VILLAGE BOARD** The Peoria Heights Village Board took the following action at its April 19 meeting:

\*Established a merit wage review. "Employees will now be evaluated on their performance rather than giving all employees the same percentage of merit pay," said **David Strohl**, assistant village administrator. "If a person has an outstanding performance, he would get more merit pay than someone with a lesser rating. Before, everyone got the same percentage."

\*Authorized the hiring of Gordon Sweetland Certified Public Accountants of Peoria to conduct the village's annual audit through 1996.

\*Received an \$11,600 grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs to refurbish restrooms in village hall in order to make them more accessible for handicapped people.

\*Approved the rezoning of a parking lot at 206 E. Duryea from residential to business. The parking lot is owned by Peoria Heights Bank. Peoria Dist. 150 The District 150 School Board approved a locker search policy Monday night that does not require probable cause or a search warrant.

Before the vote, J.D. Wheeler, president of the Peoria Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, objected to the policy and asked board members to reconsider their positions. Wheeler said the policy is a "full-scale abandonment of the rights of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Eighth amendments." These are rights Americans have fought for and died for, Wheeler told the School Board before it voted unanimously in favor of the stricter policy. The School Board also learned that the last day of school will be June 6, an extension of the school year to make up for two snow days when school was canceled.

The district will again hold summer school for high school students who have failed a course and for students in sixth through eighth grades who need to pass the Minimum Competency Test. However, because the district does not receive reimbursement from the state, tuition will be charged. A contingent of parents addressed the School Board about large class sizes ranging up to 37 students at Calvin Coolidge Middle School. Mark Lang, parent of two children at the school, said a D.A.R.E. officer walked out of an unruly classroom there two times. "If an officer of the law can't keep their attention, how can we expect teachers to?" Lang said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **David A. Strohl** is listed below.]

Peoria Journal Star, The (IL)

March 1, 1992

**ILLINOIS CENTRAL COLLEGE NAMES HONOR LIST STUDENTS**

Author: City Desk News

EAST PEORIA -- A total of 153 students have been named to the President's list at Illinois Central College for achieving a 4.0 grade point average.

Area students are:

Peoria:

**David A. Strohl,**

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David A. Strohl**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

---

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **David A. Strohl** is listed below.]

Peoria Journal Star, The (IL)

July 21, 1991

**ILLINOIS CENTRAL COLLEGE NAMES HONOR ROLL STUDENTS**

Author: City Desk News

A total of 171 full-time students have been named to the president's list for achieving a 4.0 grade point average at Illinois Central College.

Area students are:

Peoria:

**David A. Strohl**

---

Research Compiled by:

Amanda Dillabough

Colin Baenziger & Associates