
FINALIST CANDIDATE
QUALIFICATIONS AND BACKGROUND REPORT

Executive Director – Anthem, AZ



Mr. Aaron Baker

This report includes the following research:

Resume, Cover letter, Candidate Introduction / Writing Sample, Disclosure Statement, Personal Interview with the candidate, Criminal / Civil background checks & Employment & Education verification and Reference Interviews.

FINAL UPDATE: Criminal / Civil Background check and Employment and Education Verification complete and verified 18 of 20 with 2 pending. Reference Interviews were completed and very positive.

The common term used by all reference interviewees was “trust”.



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Executive Background Summary



Background:

Mr. Baker comes with extensive experience with a long tenure in the same City of Mesquite, NV starting as a planner and moving through several positions and now serving as the City Manager. His experience gives him experience in working with many different aspects and diverse situations of the city and among several departments and with staff. He has a high level of respect from the staff and local members of the community. He is highly respected by those with whom he serves and works with. He would be a candidate that would offer a high level quality while he takes the time to have outstanding relationships with city employees, members of the community and developers in the city.

His experience would be complimentary of Anthem and the community.

Employment:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| • City Manager – City of Mesquite, NV | 2019 – Present |
| • Assist. City Manager – City of Mesquite, NV | 2016 - 2019 |
| • City Liaison Officer – City of Mesquite, NV | 2013 - 2016 |
| • Interim Ec. Dev. Dir. – City Of Mesquite, NV | 2012 - 2013 |
| • Econ. Dev. & Redev. Associate – City of Mesquite, NV | 2010 - 2011 |
| • Associate Planner – City of Mesquite, NV | 2007 - 2010 |
| • Assist. Planner/GIS Analyst – City of Mesquite, NV | 2006 - 2007 |
| • Engineering Intern – City of Orem, UT | 2005 |

Education and Certifications:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Masters of Public Administration | University of Nevada |
| • Bachelor Geography, Urban, Rural, Environ. Planning | Brigham Young University |
| • Bachelor of Russian Studies | Brigham Young University |
| • ICMA Member | |
| • Certified Planner with APA | |

Cover Letter & Resume



Cover Letter

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gmail.com

324 Cora Circle
Mesquite, NV
89027

September 10, 2021

Chairman Bob McKenzie
3701 W. Anthem Way
Anthem, AZ 85086

Dear Chair McKenzie,

In reviewing the duties for the next executive director, I feel that I can add immediate value to the Anthem team. As an effective communicator with over 16 years of local government experience including most recently as Mesquite, NV city manager and past experience as a homeowner's association president, I am uniquely qualified to lead Anthem.

In Mesquite, the city manager is also the chief executive officer of the organization. With over 200 employees and a total budget of \$69 million, my responsibilities were broad and complex. Consequently, I can handle the budget and operational requirements of the executive director position.

When I took over in Mesquite, I worked with the staff to modernize the budget process and documents. With much shepherding, the budget document moved from being an Excel spreadsheet towards being a content-rich, answer-laden guide to where Mesquite was going over the next few years. As part of this transition, staff implemented a new budget development process and established a realistic and funded capital improvement program.

As part of the budget overhaul, we started systematically reviewing and updating the City's financial policies. They had not been updated since 2000. This process allowed us to have productive conversations with the City Council and residents about public funds and how they should be managed.

I also increased Council and community awareness about the City's finances. Specifically, I introduced new monthly financial statements that consolidated almost 100 pages of numbers and text into four pages of easily digestible, meaningful information that Council and the public could reference at a glance.

Because of my work experiences, I fluently speak the language of local government. I have been the city staffer resolving an issue with a contractor or resident. I have been the city manager negotiating terms of a development agreement. I have privately and publicly conversed with elected officials about their concerns, and presented countless times before boards and other public agencies. Consequently, I would be a powerful advocate for Anthem when working with regulatory agencies because I know how to speak to each individual group.

Similarly, I know how to work with residents. Daily, I worked with community members to find reasonable, commonsense solutions that met their needs and the needs of the City. While saying yes is not always possible, you can still end a conversation as friends.



When I arrived in Mesquite in 2006, Pulte Homes was starting to develop their 2,000-acre Sun City Mesquite project. Since the project started, I personally worked with Pulte representatives to review and gain approval for multiple facets of their project, negotiated development agreement amendments and worked with Pulte on general matters involving the Mesquite project. Later, as city manager, I worked closely with Quincy Edwards, Las Vegas Region Vice President of Land, regarding Pulte's future plans for the project. Additionally, I have worked with Phil Crapo the community manager for Sun City Mesquite on several matters. So, I feel like I have a good working knowledge of Pulte, their products and their way of doing business.

In my private life, I served as an HOA board member and president for my neighborhood association. While on the board, we dealt with a variety of homeowner requests from architectural reviews to unpaid dues. Consequently, I feel comfortable working in this environment.

Finally, communication is very important to me. Consequently, I prioritize a collaborative working environment both internally and externally and look forward to doing the same in Anthem. In Mesquite, I was the face of the city to the region as I oversaw public and government affairs and served for several years as public information officer. Starting in 2013, I worked with the City's lobbyists to advance the City's legislative agenda. I find communicating with residents, businesses and other governmental agencies to be very rewarding.

In order to ensure a good pattern of communication with the elected officials, when I became city manager I established an onboarding process for newly elected officials that included a handbook, training sessions and meetings with key staff and others. Prior to that, newly elected officials had to figure things out on their own. These sessions greatly benefitted both the electeds and the staff.

Given my management experience, my ability to speak in an understandable way to different government agencies, my knowledge of Pulte and homeowner's associations and my emphasis on being a consistent communicator, I can start adding value and helping the Anthem team on day one.

Respectfully,



Aaron R. Baker

Resume

Aaron R Baker

702.306.0047
aaronrichardovich@gmail.com

324 Cora Circle
Mesquite, NV
89027

EXPERIENCE

City Manager, City of Mesquite, Nevada

September 2019-May 2021

Served as the City's Chief Executive Officer for all city operations. Directed the City's response to COVID-19 and oversaw all related operations and expenses. Obtained concessions from labor unions due to impacts of COVID-19. Updated a number of city processes to account for COVID-19. Implemented the City's Strategic Plan within the budget process and document. Overhauled the City's budget process for both the regular budget and the CIP, providing for long-term funding and sustainability. Initiated an overhaul of the City's economic development activities and responsibilities. Directed multiple code amendments to simplify and streamline business development standards. In conjunction with the City's insurance provider, set up a new employee wellness program. Established a new employee safety program.

Assistant to the City Manager, City of Mesquite, Nevada

September 2016-September 2019

Resolved highly complex and sensitive projects assigned by the City Manager. Oversaw day-to-day operations of the city manager's office. Guided the citywide budget drafting process. Developed and implemented financial policies and procedures to strengthen the city's financial position. Oversaw eight different departmental and operational budgets and related personnel. Participated in labor negotiations. Served as the city's primary contact for economic development activities. Directed all redevelopment related activities. Managed the City's real estate portfolio and negotiated all transactions involving City property. Supervised citywide grant efforts. Oversaw public and government affairs for the city. Acted as a lobbyist for the City of Mesquite and supervised the city's contract lobbyists.

City Liaison Officer, City of Mesquite, Nevada

July 2013-September 2016

Provided high level operational and analytical support to the City Manager. Researched, analyzed and recommended to the city manager and city council solutions to problems and new or revised services. Worked as Redevelopment Director and coordinated economic development efforts. Liaised between the city manager's office and city departments, outside agencies and the general public. Served as the city's public information officer.

Interim Economic Development Director, City of Mesquite, Nevada

January 2012-June 2013

Directed all activities and operations of the City's Economic Development Department including redevelopment, housing and business development, and public affairs efforts. Planned, negotiated, and implemented complex development projects in the City. Coordinated assigned activities with outside agencies and the general public. Provided highly responsible and complex staff assistance to the City Manager.

Economic Development and Redevelopment Associate, City of Mesquite, Nevada

July 2010-December 2011

Provided technical and professional analysis on economic development, redevelopment, housing, and business development efforts. Conducted studies, and made recommendations on development and redevelopment efforts. Generated and maintained economic development-centric website and assisted in all other public affairs efforts.

Associate Planner, City of Mesquite, Nevada

May 2007-June 2010

Performed technical and professional community planning work. Prepared community, corridor, and long-range plans. Wrote and administered grant applications. Oversaw the city's transportation model. Generated recommendations on redevelopment, transportation, special projects, and code revisions.

Assistant Planner/GIS Analyst, City of Mesquite, Nevada

May 2006-April 2007

Performed planning work for special projects, zoning and subdivision work. Completed a variety of CAD and GIS technical duties as needed to assist in the preparation, review and maintenance of planning drawing documents, reports, and databases.

Engineering Intern, City of Orem, Utah

January 2005-December 2005

Worked as liaison between the city and citizens, acquiring property and easements on multiple capital projects. Drafted legal agreements and created visual exhibits. Performed due diligence research for property acquisition. Managed project documents and files.

EDUCATION

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV, August 2017

Masters of Public Administration

Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, April 2006

BS - Geography: Urban, Rural, and Environmental Planning emphasis

BA - Russian

Minor - Business Management

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Office, G Suite, Caselle, AutoCAD, Esri ArcGIS and TransCAD

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND MEMBERSHIPS

Member of International City/County Management Association
Certified Planner through the American Planning Association
Member of the Redevelopment Association of Nevada
2011 City of Mesquite Administrative Services Employee of the Year
Leadership Mesquite 2010 Graduate
2nd Miler Award from Boy Scouts of America
Presented professional paper at Esri 2007 User Conference.

FOREIGN EXPERIENCE

Suzhou, China: Fieldwork in land use planning, environmental change and economic development

St. Petersburg, Russia: Served two years as a volunteer representative of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Disclosure Statement





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Candidate Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Aaron Baker

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 your 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 convicted of a felony? Yes No
2. Have you ever been involved in a domestic abuse incident that resulted in your being arrested or that was covered by the media? Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy? 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 that resulted in a lawsuit? Yes No
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated or under the influence of illegal or controlled substances? Yes No
7. Have you ever pursued legal action against a current or former employer? Yes No
8. **Please list the URL** for any personal social media accounts you have or use:
 - a. LinkedIn Yes No URL: https://www.linkedin.com/in/aaron-baker-647b561ab
 - b. My Space Yes No URL:
 - c. Twitter Yes No URL:
 - d. FaceBook Yes No URL: https://www.facebook.com/aaron.baker.50552
 - e. Instagram Yes No URL:
 - f. Other: . URL:
9. Is there anything else in your background which is *unresolved* that might cause a reasonable person concern if he/she were to become aware of it through the press, blog, or other public medium. Yes No If yes, please use another page to explain.

Attested: Aaron Baker

Signature

9/20/21
date

Please (a) print, (b) sign with your *actual signature*, (c) scan / photograph and (d) send back as an email attachment.

Telephone Interview w/ Candidate



Date: Sept 25, 2021

Conducted by: David Evertsen

What prompted your interest in this position?

I like the leadership in Anthem, I have done my research on the community, and I am impressed and very interested in working with this organization.

My wife and I took the time to take our family on a road trip (from Mesquite Nevada to Anthem) to visit the community and see what it was really like. I decided that if I was considering this position, I needed to be fully dedicated and that my family was completely dedicated to this change.

We went to the stores, shops and talked to people and got a good feel of the community. We absolutely loved it.

What do you know about Anthem? *Candidate referenced SEVERAL documents he had reviewed and cited information regarding budgets, infrastructure, organizational culture, marketing, etc. It was clear that he was the most informed of all of the candidates regarding the structure, function, and operation of Anthem.*

What do you see as the greatest challenge for Public Administrators generally, and City Managers / specifically? What about Community Associations?

There are two challenges I see facing all governance groups

.

- 1. Aging infrastructure** - having to pay to maintain and replace it.
- 2. Aging workforce that will retire soon.** With their retirement, a lot of experience and wisdom will leave the workplace.
- 3. Technology.** The greatest opportunities I see are using technology to meet the demands of the future and having a governance structure nimble enough to be able to rise to the challenges of the future. Technology can be used to automate many of the processes that we do today.
- 4. Cost Reduction.** Additionally, technology can be used to meet needs that we don't even foresee. Additionally, technology will help drive down the cost and time needed to maintain and replace key infrastructure; thus, saving scarce resources in the process.
- 5. Slow-moving Public Agencies.** I don't see governing groups moving quickly enough to keep up with change. Too many say, "We've always done it this way and will always do it this way." This mindset creates challenges and prevents opportunities. Consequently, residents end up with a bloated, underperforming governance structure, which is the exact opposite goal of what governing groups are supposed to be doing.

What does “Public Management in the 21st Century” mean to you?

TECHNOLOGY. *I believe technology is going to play a huge role in how things go forward. I also believe that will affect how people react in their participation. It will be fun, but the challenge that I see is the government body’s ability and the mind set to change and keep up. So, the question will be how we will keep in the cusp of that.*

As I looked into the budget and funds, I have a concern about the budget for the enhancement fund and look in the future that this could be positive and also a challenge to make sure this is enough and what could wipe out most of that.

It will be important to manage the budget in a way that we will have the reserves for what expenses will come up.

What would your references say are 5 words which describe you, your skills or your attributes?

- **Visionary** – *I like to see where the organization can go. If they want a caretaker, then I’m not the guy for them. I like to see what is ahead, and see the opportunities out there and reach them together.*
- **Tech savvy** – *I enjoy using technology to make peoples lives better*
- **Even keeled** – *personality and style*
- **Collaborative** – *I like everyone involved and in the know*
- **Good sense of humor** – *having a good sense of humor is important for relieving stress in difficult situations, and to help people learn from their mistakes.*

Would your family be comfortable with relocation to Arizona? *My wife and I took the time to take our family on a road trip to visit the community and see what it was really like. I decided that if I was considering this position, I needed to be fully dedicated and that my family was completely dedicated to this change. We went to the stores, shops and talked to people and got a good feel of the community. We absolutely loved it.*

Anything else you would like to share? Do you have any questions we might answer for you?

Next steps.

Interviewer Comments: *Mr. Baker and his wife have 8 children. He has served as City Manager of Mesquite, NV, and is among the few candidates with a solid employment record of longevity. Mr. Baker impressed me when he (a) discussed his personal family trip to Anthem – demonstrated a serious commitment to this job, (b) with 8 children, commitment to being an active part of the community was clear and unambiguous, and (c) was one of few candidates who clearly had conducted a lot of personal research on Anthem its operations, and how his skill-sets transfer over from City Management to Community Association Management.*

I have no doubt that an interview with the Community Council will be a highlight for staff and Council.

Candidate Introduction & Writing Sample



Candidate Introduction / Writing Sample

What is your current/recent position/title(s)?	City Manager City of Mesquite, NV
How would you describe your current employer and work environment?	The City of Mesquite employees were hard working and dedicated. They wanted what was best for the community. As city manager, I created a collaborative and inclusive environment where employees were involved and knew that they were important. I was allowed to innovate and try new things to propel the organization forward. The political climate was difficult at times.
What are the services your current employer provides?	Finance, Human Resources, Public Works, Athletics and Leisure Services (Parks and Recreation), Development Services, Clerk, Records, Police, Fire, Courts, Legal, Grants, IT
How much influence do you have in the preparation of your annual budget, purchasing, and personnel decisions?	I served as the chief executive officer for the City of Mesquite. As such, I had total responsibility and accountability for the annual budget, annual financial review (audit); all personnel decisions, except for municipal judge and city attorney; and purchasing up to \$50,000. For any purchases greater than \$50,000, staff provided a recommendation and the Council approved or denied.
Why are you interested in becoming the Executive Director in Anthem Community, AZ?	<p>First and foremost, I love people. As a result, serving others comes naturally. I relish working with elected officials to help the community reach its full potential. I enjoy local government because you can see first-hand the results of your actions helping people.</p> <p>First, it is the current community leadership. Based on what I have been able to research online, read in the recruitment brochure and learn from employees and residents in the community, everyone seems to know their responsibilities and duties and handle them with aplomb. Having a good team is vital to success, because residents get a higher level of service and a better experience overall.</p> <p>Second, after reading the flier about the position, I feel like my skills and the skills required for this position are a good fit. I want to work in any environment that requires my very best and I feel like based on the job description, each day in Anthem would be that way. Frankly, that would be fun.</p>

	<p>Third, I like the five principles outlined in Anthem’s Livability Vision. I also agree with and have experience with the principles outlined in Anthem’s 14 guiding principles. These are things that I want for myself and my family. Consequently, it would be a joy to work on these each day.</p> <p>Fourth, I think that Anthem has all the right community infrastructure. Anthem has abundant community pride, a high quality of life, a good mix of residents, a variety of commercial and professional businesses, plentiful recreational and community opportunities and a good educational system. Having these factors already in place will help Anthem continue its upward trajectory.</p> <p>Finally, on a personal level, my family and I really like the vibe of the community and the friendly residents. As part of our due diligence for this position, my family and I visited Anthem and we absolutely loved it. It has the small town feel and atmosphere that we cherish with the proximity to more amenities in the Phoenix area. This is like the community where we currently live and its proximity to Las Vegas. We are close enough to enjoy the benefits, but not too close. As we have recounted our visit and researched more about the schools, activities and opportunities in Anthem, our interest has only grown. Given all these reasons, we feel like it is a strong match for our family.</p>
<p>What do you believe are the keys to successfully managing a large local agency and community?</p>	<p>In my opinion, there are five keys to successfully managing.</p> <p>The first key is having the right team in place. From what I can tell, Anthem has a fantastic group of dedicated employees who want to help residents. The Community Council is focused on helping both the employees and the residents. Having the right people makes it possible to do great things.</p> <p>The second key is productive communication. Making sure that the communication channels are established and open is constant effort. If there is breakdown, then action needs to be taken to rebuild it. In the absence of communication, progressing stops occurring and things stagnate or go backwards.</p> <p>Third, there must be a set of agreed upon values. If these shared values are not in place, then there is greater chance for inefficiency and misunderstanding. Shortly after becoming city manager, I arranged for the Mesquite city council to participate in a workshop where they laid out their vision, values, and strategic priorities. This was the first time that this had happened in over a decade. Having these items in place helped build trust, establish common goals, and guide future decision making.</p>

	<p>Fourth, there must be mutual respect and appreciation for each person and her or his respective role. We need each other to be successful. Additionally, each person needs to see how his or her role feeds into the shared organizational values. In other words, how does what they do impact the organization?</p> <p>Finally, there must be complete honesty in all that you do. If people cannot trust each other, then nothing will ever get done.</p>
Share two examples of where your leadership efforts improved the efficiency / effectiveness of your <i>organization</i> and its mission.	<p>1. As I mentioned earlier, when I became city manager, I engaged the city council in a strategic planning process. This was the first time that this had happened in many years.</p> <p>The council wanted to do it, they just needed someone to help lead them through the process. Having an agreed upon vision, strategic priorities and values greatly helped the organization to focus on what we really wanted. We stopped chasing every whim and started to actively pursue things that fell within the framework of the strategic priorities. From the staff's perspective, we finally knew what we were working towards and why. It was invigorating.</p> <p>2. One of the strategic priorities set by the council was to improve the fiscal health of the organization. Consequently, I led an effort to improve the budgeting process to make sure that more people were involved earlier in the budget drafting process and the budget included their strategic priorities. Second, we updated numerous financial policies and procedures. Finally, I direct finance to update their monthly financial reports to make them easier for the elected officials, the public and staff to digest.</p>
Share two ethical situations that you faced during your career. What were the issues and what was the outcome? Looking back, would you do anything differently?	<p>In 2020, the then-city attorney, who was a city employee at the time and directly reported to the city council, ran for the office of mayor while remaining city attorney. Most council members had questions about this and whether this was ethical.</p> <p>To resolve the issue, I had to obtain outside legal counsel for the City Council, so that they would be informed in their decision-making process. As the one charged with facilitating the process, I had to be completely neutral on the issue. Sadly, I had a council member, staff and community members actively recruit me to sway this issue in the direction they wanted. Despite their efforts, I did not become involved. Rather, I remained objective, abided by my professional ethics, and provided the council with the needed resources.</p>

	<p>While a difficult experience, I felt like I maintained my integrity throughout, and I would not change how I responded.</p> <p>Shortly after becoming city manager, a city department requested that one of their employees receive a greater raise than he was contractually entitled to. The employee who was supposed to receive the increase also happened to be my neighbor and our kids often played together. Candidly, I felt like this department was testing me to see what I would do as the new manager. I decided that he would receive his exact contractual raise. Nothing more, nothing less.</p> <p>Looking back, I would not change anything. I felt like and still feel like I made the right decision. I simply followed the rules in place. Despite others' efforts, it was never personal.</p>
<p>What is your experience in public speaking before community groups, the media, and elected officials?</p>	<p>I prioritize a collaborative working environment both internally and externally. In Mesquite, for many years I was the face of the city to the region as I oversaw public and government affairs and served for several years as public information officer. As public information officer (PIO), I worked with local and regional media outlets to help get the City's message out. Another part of my PIO duties was to present to other public agencies, community events, HOA meetings and public gatherings of all kinds.</p> <p>Starting in 2013, I worked with the City's lobbyists to advance the City's legislative agenda. Later, I worked with the Nevada delegation and testified before a US House of Representatives Subcommittee. I am proud of my work in getting the City's charter approved through the Nevada legislature in 2017. I find communicating with residents, businesses, and other governmental agencies to be very rewarding.</p> <p>Finally, I presented agenda items at almost every city council meeting.</p> <p>Given all these experiences, I feel very comfortable speaking publicly.</p>
<p>How would you approach improving the public's perception of the community in today's context?</p> <p>Please share an example from your experience or success story?</p>	<p>To improve the public perception of the community, you need to determine the purpose and the audience for your efforts. Is your purpose to address a specific problem or are you making a general effort to market the community? Is this because of one event or a series of events?</p>

	<p>As to the audience, whom you are trying to reach will determine how you go about messaging. In some cases, social media and the use of influencers might be the best way to get the message out. On the other hand, a more traditional media campaign using print and radio might better reach your target audience.</p> <p>I have also learned that if you want the public to have a certain perception, you must drive it. You cannot leave it to chance. Oftentimes if you are not messaging, then someone else will. When I took over as city manager, I wanted to increase the amount of information that the city was providing. I felt like others in the community were driving their own narrative and the city wasn't doing enough to message what the elected had stated as their values. Consequently, I hired a part-time staffer to focus solely on communications. She put together several media campaigns focused on different purposes and audiences. She was successful in increasing the desired messaging.</p>
<p>Have you ever experienced a situation of public outcry, angry citizenry or negative media coverage involving yourself or one of your <i>employees</i>?</p> <p>If yes, please tell us about it.</p>	<p>Several years ago, the City of Mesquite experienced a "First Amendment Audit." A First Amendment Audit is when someone with a video camera will come into a public building, start filming and ask questions. The individuals can have a variety of goals in doing the audit. For some, one of their goals is to escalate the situation and incite strong emotional reactions from the employees, which provides for great YouTube material.</p> <p>Mesquite was audited twice by the same group. I was involved in both and felt like they went well. We did some organizational training between audits, which greatly helped with the second one.</p> <p>While Mesquite did receive some negative comments on YouTube about the interactions, the feedback was generally positive because we worked to communicate and not get goaded into saying or doing something that we would later regret.</p> <p>You can search "Mesquite NV First Amendment Audit" to watch both interactions.</p>
<p>Are there any technical or administrative innovations or programs that you implemented elsewhere that you would like to bring to Anthem?</p> <p>If so, please briefly explain?</p>	<p>I do not know all of Anthem's systems and processes, so I am not going to pretend to know exactly what Anthem can do to improve.</p> <p>That said, there are some things that I have implemented elsewhere that have helped and may help Anthem too.</p> <p>First, I would implement a schedule to regularly review all of Anthem's contracts. It is good to periodically rebid contracts to make sure that residents are getting the best value for their dues.</p>

	<p>Second, I would develop an app for Anthem. In Mesquite we did this and experienced great success. Residents were able to sign up for services, report problems, pay for recreation classes, chat with a city staffer, and get news updates. It was a nice complement to the website.</p> <p>Third, I implemented a one-stop communication tool that allowed residents to chat with staff via the website, social media, or text. It was nice because residents could use their preferred method of communication on their end, while staff had one platform on the city's end. This helped increase communication with residents during COVID.</p> <p>Finally, I implemented several online processes to reduce paperwork. From changes in accounting and HR to how building plans were submitted and reviewed, we improved the customer experience and allowed them to do more without having to physically come to city hall.</p>
<p>What do you see as the greatest challenges / opportunities facing the local governments, service organizations, and Community Associations like Anthem today?</p>	<p>There are two challenges I see facing all governance groups. The first is aging infrastructure and having to pay to maintain and replace it. The second challenge is an aging workforce that will retire soon. With their retirement, a lot of experience and wisdom will leave the workplace.</p> <p>The greatest opportunities I see are using technology to meet the demands of the future and having a governance structure nimble enough to be able to rise to the challenges of the future.</p> <p>Technology can be used to automate many of the processes that we do today. Additionally, it can be used to meet needs that we don't even foresee. Additionally, technology will help drive down the cost and time needed to maintain and replace key infrastructure; thus, saving scarce resources in the process.</p> <p>I don't see governing groups moving quickly enough to keep up with change. Too many say, "We've always done it this way and will always do it this way." This mindset creates challenges and prevents opportunities. Consequently, residents end up with a bloated, underperforming governance structure, which is the exact opposite goal of what governing groups are supposed to be doing.</p>
<p>What measures / tools for measuring success of an improvement, innovation or change in your organization have you / do you use to gauge the within your organization? Why did you find these tools useful?</p>	<p>Each department within Mesquite had their own set of metrics. Generally, the data about each metric was locked within some software. (Percentage of budget spent, time to respond to call, employee training, number of building permits, etc.) Towards the end of my time in Mesquite, we started exploring software that created a dashboard where each of these key metrics would be</p>

	<p>available in real-time for people to see. On the back end, the software would talk to each of these programs and extract the needed information from each of the programs automatically. The automated dashboard was the end goal.</p> <p>Without the software, each department spent a few minutes to a few hours generating monthly reports with this key information.</p> <p>These individual reports were then emailed and manually consolidated. So, there was still measurement and accountability, but it was much more of a manual process each month.</p>
Tell us about two ways you or your agency has found to reduce costs and / or improve operations?	<p>One thing that I did to reduce costs was to replace traditional streetlights with LED lights. I did this without creating any new costs to the city. I was able to work with the local power provider and the Colorado River Commission to obtain an allocation of power for the city at a reduced monthly cost. The city saved about \$4,000 per month on our electricity bill. We then banked those savings and used them to buy new LED streetlights. The new LED streetlights costs 60% less per month to operate than the current streetlights. So, we created a system that would continue to pay for the improvements monthly, while driving down long-term operating expenses. Once all the streetlights are done, the city is going to move on to other improvements like pumps and HVAC units.</p>
What do you consider to be your greatest achievement as a Public Administrator? Your biggest failure? Why?	<p>My greatest achievement was working with the city council to establish a vision, values and strategic priorities for the city. I am proud to say that it was unanimously adopted by the council.</p> <p>For so long, the city had been rudderless, and this gave the elected, staff and residents purpose and meaning. I felt a real change in each of the groups once this rolled out. What made me happiest was when members of the community would say, "Thank you. This needed to be done. We needed it."</p> <p>From an infrastructure perspective, I am proud of my role in getting natural gas service extended to Mesquite. This was something that the community had wanted for decades but was unable to do until 2019. Also, I am very proud of getting a new interchange on Interstate 15, Exit 118, approved, paid for, and built. The long-term economic benefits the community will experience are inestimable at this point.</p> <p>My greatest failure is related to my greatest success. When COVID hit in the spring of 2020, I allowed myself to become distracted from the strategic priorities. The city had so much momentum and we lost it because we did not continue to focus on the priorities. Rather, COVID overtook our lives, and we didn't start working on</p>

	<p>the priorities again for about 10 months. In that time, we lost any ground we had previously gained.</p>
<p>What do you see as the major challenges facing local governments and Community Associations within the 10 years? Next 20 years?</p>	<p>As I mentioned earlier in the response about challenges and opportunities, being able to fund infrastructure maintenance and repair, while building new amenities is going to be the greatest challenge.</p> <p>Residents tend to want the latest and greatest amenities and are willing to move to get them. I believe that to retain residents, communities will need to maintain improvements in ideal condition and build new amenities that are interesting to the families of the future. This is difficult to do because you can only estimate what the costs will be in the future.</p>
<p>Have you found ways to reduce rising pension and infrastructure maintenance costs? If so, please tell us about your experience.</p>	<p>In Mesquite, there was not a lot that I could do about pension costs because the state retirement system was a defined benefit system that the city did not control. That said, there are some things that can be done to control costs. First, the employee can pay for a portion of their benefit. Second, you can introduce a tiered pension system that puts all new hires on a different pension program than other employees. Finally, one thing that I was never able to try, but wanted to do was to allocate a total compensation amount for each employee and then allow them to determine how it is used for each component of their individual compensation. My guess is that younger employees will want less insurance and pension benefits and more salary. In my mind, the most important question is who is ultimately responsible for the employee's retirement benefit. I believe that it should be the employee, not the employer. By placing it on the employee's shoulders, the employee is more motivated.</p> <p>On a related note, one thing I did to help control medical insurance costs was to partner with our health insurance company to develop and implement an employee wellness program. The program was designed to address both personal and professional needs. It was well received by the employees.</p> <p>To accurately control infrastructure maintenance costs, you must have a comprehensive inventory of all your assets and their lifecycle. If you don't, then you cannot properly fund their maintenance.</p> <p>Also, I learned that it truly costs to delay preventative maintenance. You must stay on top of maintenance, or it gets away from you and ends up costing you more in the long run.</p>

	<p>Conducting an annual evaluation of all your assets should be part of your PM program. Software is available to help estimate lifecycle, track inspections and project costs.</p> <p>When I left Mesquite, we were in the process of doing this for all the City's assets. Historically, the public works director simply budgeted a set amount each year and did the best he could. When I became city manager, the city had just hired a new public works director and he and I both agreed that the city needed a more sophisticated approach to managing assets.</p> <p>Two things we did to help pay for infrastructure was to explore every revenue stream possible. We leased out facilities for athletic tournaments. As part of calculating the lease rate, we examined operating and replacement costs.</p> <p>revenue streams.</p>
<p>Tell us more about your <i>management style?</i></p>	<p>I am a leader who is committed to his employees. I make sure that they have the resources and training that they need to perform their responsibilities. I am sincere, collaborative and even keeled in my approach.</p> <p>When it comes to leading, I have three pillars that I follow.</p> <p>First, get stuff done. Employers want and need results. Consequently, employees need to accomplish things. There is a great feeling of satisfaction that accompanies finishing something.</p> <p>My second pillar is to be honest. While a simple statement, many struggle with this.</p> <p>On a most basic level, if people don't believe the words coming out of your mouth, then you are done for. In a previous life, I had a coworker who always lied. Consequently, no one took him seriously and people would just stop listening when he talked. If people did engage, it was often to point out errors in his statements.</p> <p>Another facet of honesty is to only promise what you can deliver. Be honest about what you can and cannot do about both work product and timing. Overpromising will always come back to haunt you. We have all missed deadlines or underperformed and felt the sting associated with that.</p> <p>A third part of being honest is giving credit to others. Far too often, others claim credit for things that they had little to do with and downplay the role of team members in accomplishing the work. Early in my career, I had a boss who willingly shared the spotlight with me on a project. I knew that my contribution was</p>

	<p>not amazing, but it was nice to be recognized by my superior for my efforts.</p> <p>My third and final pillar is part of the solution. It is easy to criticize someone else's work. Mistakes are part of the process and that's okay. It's also safe to stay on the sidelines and not get involved in something. True leadership leads out and finds answers to challenges.</p>
Give us six adjectives or phrases you would use to describe yourself	<p>Even keeled Sincere Collaborative Visionary Tech savvy I love a good laugh</p>
Are you comfortable with your current salary? If not, why not? <i>(Creative answers welcome)</i>	<p>I am comfortable with my previous salary and benefits.</p> <p>One thing that bothered me was that there was not a pay for performance system in place. Effort is not rewarded. When I asked about doing something like this, I was told that extra effort was just part of my job, and I should not be paid more to simply do my job. Frankly, this creates a disincentive to innovate and seek for higher goals because the reward is not there.</p>
What are your salary expectations if you are hired by us?	<p>I would like to agree upon a total compensation amount and then divide it out between salary and benefits. I would also like to have performance incentives in place that motivate me and encourage me to motivate the team.</p>
Is there anything else about yourself you would like to tell us that would be helpful in evaluating you for this position?	<p>This past week, my family and I visited Anthem. We drove the streets, visited the neighborhoods, talked with residents and employees, and explored all that Anthem has to offer. We loved it. Additionally, I have talked to several Pulte employees about Anthem to understand their perspective as well. Everyone had positive things to say.</p> <p>Also, I have a strong background in community development. This could be beneficial in several ways.</p> <p>First, I have written, reviewed, and enforced design guidelines and community standards. That said, I enjoy working with people helping them see how they can accomplish what they want within the guidelines. There are times you have to say no, but you do not have to be adversaries.</p>

Second, I am familiar with engineering and architectural drawings and construction processes including funding and oversight.

Finally, I have also done economic development. One idea I had would be to conduct a commercial leakage study to see what businesses are missing from Anthem and then work with the commercial property owners to recruit these businesses to Anthem to vacant commercial units. This would create a better chance of success for the business, fill vacant units and address real needs.

Background Investigation Part I:
Internet, News & Social Media





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Candidate Release Form

Applicant's Authority to Conduct a Background Investigation and to Release Information

To Whom It May Concern:

I hereby agree to submit to a background investigation by Municipal Solutions for the purpose of evaluating me for employment with future clients. I understand that such an investigation will include contacts with individuals and institutions relating to my professional and personal life. I understand that I can be rejected for this employment or terminated in the future based on the results of this investigation. I further understand that this investigation is part of the hiring process and that until the investigation is complete, any and all offers of employment are conditional upon its outcome. I further understand that if I am employed, it will be pursuant to an employment agreement or job offer consistent with the Anthem's hiring practices.

I therefore authorize Municipal Solutions to provide future clients, or its representatives, any and all information (oral or written) you may have pertaining to my fitness for employment. Such information may include, but is not limited to, the following:

Personal Qualifications
Employment History
Military Records
Education

Financial History including credit records
Criminal and Civil Records
Driving/Motor Vehicle Records
News Archives & Social Media

Print Name: Aaron R Baker

Signature: A Baker

Date: 10/4/2021

Other or Prior Names (maiden name, nickname "Chuck", initial)

*Social Security No: 529-77-0291

Birth Date: 4/25/1981

*Driver's License No. 1902862116

State: Nevada

Address: Current: 324 Cora Circle Mesquite, NV 89027

States & Counties (past 10 years):

Return a signed and scanned PDF to **Heather, Kaylynne & Kathryn** at: AnthemExecutive@municipalsolutions.org

*****PRIVACY IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US.** If you prefer, please call us by phone to provide your Social Security #. You can also scan and save as a PDF, and password protect it. Whichever you prefer.

Please (a) print, (b) sign with your *actual signature*, (c) scan / photograph and (d) send back as an email attachment.

Internet, News & Social Media Research

Social Media:

Facebook: Personal Profile. No recent posts. 282 Friends. Not very active on this Platform.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/aaron.baker.50552>

Local Mesquite News Page.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/mesquitelocal/>

Twitter: No personal FB page reported. None found.

Instagram: No personal Instagram page reported. None found.

LinkedIn: 91 Connections, Lists multiple job positions in Mesquite, Nevada

Link: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/aaron-baker-647b561ab/>

Internet / News Articles:

Minutes: 10 Feb 2011 – “Assembly Committee: Government Affairs”

Summary: An Assembly committee in which Government affairs are discussed, the Director of which is Aaron Baker.

Link: <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Exhibits/Assembly/GA/AGA126C.pdf>

Minutes: 3 Oct 2016 – “City Charter Committee”

Summary: Minutes of a scheduled meeting of the City Charter Committee was held on Monday October 3, 2016 at 3:30 PM. Committee members in attendance were Karen Beardsley, George Gault, Mike Benham and Ex-Officio Aaron Baker Also present were Mayor Allan S. Litman; City Manager, Andy Barton; City Attorney Robert Sweetin; City Clerk, Tracy Beck and

Ex-Officio Aaron Baker called the meeting to order and excused David Ballweg, Committee member.

Link: https://mesquitenv.granicus.com/MinutesViewer.php?view_id=1&clip_id=77&doc_id=b5229ac4-b1af-11e6-8893-00219ba2f017

Minutes: 13 Feb 2018 – “Mesquite Regular City Council Meeting”

Summary: Minutes of a scheduled meeting of the City Council held Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at 5:00

PM at City Hall. In attendance were Mayor Allan S. Litman; Council members David Ballweg, Rich Green, George Rapson, W. Geno Withelder and Brian Wursten. Also in attendance were City Manager Andy Barton, Assistant to the City Manager Aaron Baker; City Attorney Robert Sweetin,

Finance Director Dave Empey, Public Works Director Bill Tanner, City Clerk Tracy E. Beck, other City Staff and approximately 60 citizens.

Link: <http://mesquiteweekly.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Mesquite-City-Council-Meeting-Minutes-February-13-2018.pdf>

Article: 29 Aug 2019 – “Baker named new city manager” Mesquite Local News

Summary: Long-time city employee Aaron Baker was selected as the new city manager by Mesquite’s City Council at its meeting Tuesday, Aug. 27.

Link: <https://mesquitelocalnews.com/2019/08/29/baker-named-new-city-manager/>

Link2: <https://nevada-today.com/mesquite-nv-mayor-takes-role-of-greek-despot-in-city-manager-appointment/>

Link3: <https://www.facebook.com/mesquitelocal/posts/2544721658912765>

Article: 3 Sep 2019 – “Aaron Baker, New City Manager - Sworn in 9/3/2019”

Summary: Aaron Baker was appointed City Manager for the City of Mesquite at the August 27, 2019 City Council Meeting. He was sworn in today, by Tracy Beck, City Clerk, after the Technical Review Meeting.

Link: <https://www.mesquitenv.gov/news/aaron-baker-new-city-manager-sworn-in-9-3-2019>

Membership: 2009-2019 – “2009-2019 Salaries for Mesquite” Transparent Nevada

Summary: Aaron Baker’s profile on website that demonstrates Aaron Baker and other public servants annual salaries.

Link: <https://transparentnevada.com/salaries/mesquite/?s=name>

Article: 19 Mar 2020 – “City expands communication channels” Mesquite Local News

Summary: The City of Mesquite has expanded its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) under an escalation from Level 3 to Level 2 during the current COVID-19 crisis, also known as Corona virus.

Link: <https://mesquitelocalnews.com/2020/03/19/city-expands-communication-channels/>

Minutes: 12 May 2020 – “City Council Meeting Agenda Item Report”

Summary: Consideration for approval of Resolution #1019, a resolution of the City of Mesquite, Nevada creating the COVID-19 Special Revenue Fund.

Link: [https://legistarweb-](https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/585520/56a3f09c1c2c32d7a8ba8b1517b083480.pdf)

[production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/585520/56a3f09c1c2c32d7a8ba8b1517b083480.pdf](https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/585520/56a3f09c1c2c32d7a8ba8b1517b083480.pdf)

Minutes: 11 Aug 2020 – “City Council Meeting Agenda Item Report”

Summary: Minutes discussing the presentation regarding a Public Comment, Discussion and Possible Action.

Link: [https://legistarweb-](https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/659732/dd5645187180ea8a0dc95d62b8b47fe70.pdf)

[production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/659732/dd5645187180ea8a0dc95d62b8b47fe70.pdf](https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/659732/dd5645187180ea8a0dc95d62b8b47fe70.pdf)

Article: 29 Sep 2020 – “BREAKING NEWS – Mesquite Mayor Al Litman tests positive for COVID-19” Mesquite Citizen Journal

Summary: City Manager Aaron Baker confirmed this morning, Sep. 29, that Mesquite Mayor Al Litman has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus.

Mayor Litman was unavailable for comments or further questions about his health. Baker said Mayor Litman received the positive test results on Sunday after receiving a ‘rapid’ test. Baker also said that he advised all city department heads to notify their staff that COVID-19 testing is available, and everyone is encouraged to get tested. He also advised city council members of the mayor’s positive test results and encouraged them to get tested. Southern Nevada Health District will oversee any contact tracing that may be needed. Those who have met the mayor in the last two weeks are encouraged to get tested for the COVID-19 virus. The Mesquite Citizen Journal will continue following this story and update readers as information becomes available.

Link: https://mesquitecitizenjournal.com/breaking-news-mesquite-mayor-al-litman-tests-positive-for-covid-19/?fbclid=IwAR28MqFLsr_Brhi69QTy-zhkGXYiPbn1R5QBmUIglrA5mB6u-Dz6bxHBlyk

Blog: 7 Nov 2020 – “No, I’m Not Quitting (Yet)! Here’s Why...” Annie Gram

Summary: City Council member and opponent in the candidacy for the Mesquite city manager position, Annie Black, recounts exchanges with Aaron Baker during ballot counting.

Link: <https://electannieblack.com/no-im-not-quitting-yet-heres-why/>

Article+ Video: 28 Jan 2021 – “CITY MANAGER TAKES ACTION!! MESQUITE NEVADA – First Amendment Audit – Amagansett Press”

Summary: YouTuber and his son conduct a second First Amendment audit at the Mesquite NV City Hall prompting training and education for public workers on how to deal with citizens exercising their First Amendment rights.

Link1: <https://www.phillyfinest369.com/city-manager-takes-action-mesquite-nevada-first-amendment-audit-amagansett-press/>

Link2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRKukGmGo-I>

Article: 12 May 2021 – “Baker resigns as City Manager, effective immediately”

Summary: Mesquite City Manager unexpectedly resigns effective immediately. Mayor Al Litman fills the position until an Interim City Manager is appointed.

Link: <https://mvprogress.com/2021/05/12/baker-resigns-as-city-manager-effective-immediately/>

Article: 13 May 2021 – “Police union wins, City Manager resigns – News – Op/Ed”

Summary: Mesquite City Manager Aaron Baker submitted his resignation effective immediately on Wednesday afternoon, May 12, following heavy criticism from Police Union.

Link: <https://mesquitecitizenjournal.com/police-union-wins-city-manager-resigns-news-op-ed/>

Baker got crosswise with the Police Union on 2 issues: (1) concessions in the existing Police Department Union Agreement requested by the City Council upset the Police Department (they didn't feel they needed to make any concessions; (2) Police Union supported the Mayor's election and used information obtained during working hours, from the Police Department Offices, computers, government resources and obtained information to slander the Mayor's challenger and sent it to every resident in the City.

**Article: 20 May 2021 – “City Council Appoints Interim City Manager”
Mesquite City website**

Summary: In a special meeting on May 18th, the city council appointed former City Manager Andy Barton as interim city manager after Aaron Baker tendered his resignation on 5/12/21.

Link: <https://www.mesquitenv.gov/news/city-council-appoints-interim-city-manager>

Article: 27 May 2021 – “‘There’s a lot of scared people in this town!’ Tensions run high in Mesquite” Las Vegas Review-Journal

Summary: A tumultuous 2020 mayoral campaign sparked growing tensions in Mesquite, resulting in city officials being forced out of office, the local online newspaper stopping operations and journalists losing their jobs.

Link: <https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/local-nevada/theres-a-lot-of-scared-people-in-this-town-tensions-run-high-in-mesquite-2364774/>

Article: 11 Aug 2021 – “In the race for mayor in this small town, a big secret is exposed” Las Vegas Review-Journal

Summary: After a young woman shares an intimate story from her past with the Mesquite City Council, her private story is spread throughout the

city. Such case happened while Aaron Baker was City Manager of Mesquite.

Link: <https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/local-nevada/in-the-race-for-mayor-in-a-small-nevada-town-a-big-secret-is-exposed-2416623/>

Membership:

Present – “City Of Mesquite” Businessfacilities.com

Summary: Aaron Baker’s profile as City Manager on website that provides professional contact information.

Link: <https://businessfacilities.com/site-selection-directory/listing/city-of-mesquite/>

Membership:

Present – “Aaron Baker City Manager at Mesquite Magazine” Zoominfo.com

Summary: Aaron Baker’s profile on a website that provides professional and contact information.

Link: <https://www.zoominfo.com/p/Aaron-Baker/217267381>

Analyst Comments: *The candidate has spent most of his career working his way up the different positions in Mesquite’s local government before making it to the position of City Manager. He demonstrates to be very precise and professional. He presents himself well shows he can be proactive when there is need for action.*

Background Investigation Part II:
Criminal / Civil, Education & Employment Verification



20 total inquiries, 2 pending**Names searched: Aaron Baker, Aaron R. Baker****Criminal Records Checks****Nationwide Criminal Records Search:****Verified***No offenses found***County Criminal Search:***Mesquite (Clark County), NV***Verified***Provo (Utah County), UT***Verified****Statewide Criminal:***Nevada***Verified***Utah***Verified****Civil Records Checks****Federal Civil Search***Nevada***Verified***Utah***Verified****County Civil Search:***Clark County, NV***Verified***Utah County, UT***Pending****3-year Motor Vehicle****Verified****NV DL #1902862116***No incidents to report**License first issued in Nevada, 0 violations, 0 convictions, 0 failure to appear and 0 accidents.*

**NCDL STATUS AS REPORTED TO CDLIS: LIC
EXPIRATION DATES IN THIS DOCUMENT MAY HAVE BEEN EXTENDED PURSUANT
TO EXECUTIVE OR LEGISLATIVE ACTION OF THE ISSUING JURISDICTION
RELATED TO COVID-19. PLEASE CONSULT WITH THE JURISDICTION FOR
FURTHER DETAILS.**

Bankruptcy**Verified**

Based on the information provided to us by the client and/or applicant a search was conducted in the state of record for a minimum of seven years and no past or pending litigation was found in the jurisdiction of this court as of this date.

Employment Verification

City Manager – City of Mesquite, NV <i>Verified online</i>	Verified
Assist. City Manager – City of Mesquite, NV <i>Verified online</i>	Verified
City Liaison Officer – City of Mesquite, NV <i>Verified online</i>	Verified
Interim Econ. Dev. Dir. – City of Mesquite, NV <i>Verified online</i>	Verified
Assist. Planner – City of Mesquite, NV <i>Verified online</i>	Verified
Assistant Planner GIS – City of Mesquite, NV <i>Verified online</i>	Verified
Engineering Intern – City of Orem, UT	Pending

Education Verification

Master of Public Administration <i>University of Nevada</i> <i>Confirmed by National Student Clearing house</i>	Verified
Bachelor of Geography, Urban, Rural, Environment, Planning <i>Brigham Young University</i> <i>Confirmed by National Student Clearing House</i>	Verified

**Based on the information provided to us by the client and/or applicant a search was conducted in the jurisdiction requested and no reportable records were found as of this date.*

*** Based on the information provided to us by the client and/or applicant a search was conducted in the state of record for a minimum of seven years and no past or pending litigation was found in the jurisdiction of this court as of this date.*

Reference Interviews





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Candidate Reference Checklist

Anthem Executive Director
Finalist candidates

Instructions

Please provide names and telephone numbers for the following individuals. *Due to the difficulty of contacting people during the business day, a personal or mobile phone #s would be helpful.* Substitutions should be kept to a minimum. Name, Title and Mobile Phones please.

Explanation (please read carefully): We are not necessarily asking for ‘traditional’ references, but rather to speak with people who can talk about the current / former working relationship they had with you. It’s a less formal, but (we believe) the result is a more honest way to get a sense of what it is like to work with you in 4-5 questions. We generally don’t name the City or the position we are considering you for, just that we are considering you for a position. We realize that contacting a current employer may be problematic, so YES, we can do this as a condition for an employment offer. I hope this provides some clarity on our process. If you have any questions or desired substitutions, please let me know. ~Dave

1. **Two elected officials for the you currently work for who would have familiarity with your work in a *Senior Management position*.** *(may be omitted and substituted by request)*

Brian Wursten Mesquite City Council Member 702.376.6087	George Rapson Former City Council Member 702.813.1450
---------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------

2. **Two elected officials for the agency whom you have worked previously, who would be familiar with your work in a *Senior Management position*.**

See above references	
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3. **Your current direct Supervisor.** *(may be omitted and substituted by request)*

Andy Barton Former City Manager 702.423.1846

4. **A Mayor or City Manager and two prior Mayors or City Managers who know of your work in a *Senior Management position*. For private-sector position substitute with former Senior Executive.**

See above references		
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5. **One HR Director for an agency where you worked in a *Senior Management position*.**

Gina Mendez Mesquite HR Director 702.468.1475

6. Two members of the media who were familiar with you and your work in the agency you worked in as *City Manager or other Senior Management position*.

Barbara Ellestad Mesquite Citizen Journal 702.250.3185	Vernon Robison Moapa Valley Progress 702.672.7608
--------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------

7. Two colleagues or former colleagues from any city, town or agency who knew your work as *City Manager or other Senior Management position*.

Kevin Brown Virgin Valley Water District GM 702.533.1892	Andre Carrier Eureka Casino COO 702.813.1383
----------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------

8. Two subordinate employees who report(ed) directly to you as *City Manager or other Senior Management position*.

Travis Anderson Public Works Director 702.728.0576	Jayson Andrus Fire Chief 702.378.1024
----------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------

Return ASAP in MS Word format to:

Heather, KayLynne or Kathryn at: AnthemExecutive@municipalsolutions.org

Call us at (888) 545-7333 if you have any questions or suggestions.

INTERVIEW #1:

Date: **October 6, 2021**

Candidate Name: **Aaron Baker**

Reference Name: **Kevin Brown**

Interviewer Name: **Amanda Peterson**

Reference Title: **Virgin Valley Water District Mgr.**

1. What has been the working relationship you've had with this candidate? For about how long have you known him / her?

I have known Aaron for 8 years. We provide water to the city and of course Mesquite is very interested in what we do. We would speak frequently, sharing resources and coordinating projects related to growth.

2. Can you share with me 4-5 words that best describe him/her?

Fair, open-minded, honest, good at the art of politics, good communicator

3. What do you consider to be his/her greatest achievement, or management strength? Are there any areas for improvement?

Aaron's management strength is as a negotiator. He and the water district negotiated on a couple pieces of property. We have a high growth rate, so the Water District has to build new wells and treatment plants. We had to negotiate with Aaron on city-owned properties.

Based on what I've heard; he did a very good job negotiating union contracts.

He doesn't have a lot of weaknesses. He trusts people. That can bite you if you trust someone too much. But I think it's good to trust someone until you have a reason not to.

4. Describe the candidate's ability to gain trust in others, or the community while developing an organization into a "21st Century public agency".

Yes, he was trusted because he was forthright on the things he had to do and the challenges he had to deal with. He spoke truth, said what needed to be said, instead of what people wanted to necessarily hear.

5. Describe a crisis where s/he was involved and how they handled it?

Aaron and I didn't interact on crisis situations. The closest I can speak to is when COVID first broke out, I saw Aaron dealing with the emergency operations center and sharing what the city was doing to protect residents. City messaging was excellent.

- 6. If you were in a hiring position today, would you hire him/her as City Manager? Why or why not?**

Yes, because he's someone you can trust to get a job done without babysitting. He is responsive to the city council, to the media, and to residents. There's the public side of things, but Aaron is very good at the behind the scenes dealing with legislators, county commissioners, business leaders, and other government agencies. Aaron was very good at connecting with legislators when they got the city charter done a few years ago.

- 7. If the City were to hire them, is there anything in their past that could become an embarrassment if it became public?**

No, he's a stand-up guy.

- 8. Is there anything else that you would like to add?**

He's an asset to the community and has the skill set to benefit the residents.

Interviewer Assessment: *Great personal skills that allow him to get things done.*

INTERVIEW #2:

Date: **October 6, 2021**

Candidate Name: **Aaron Baker**

Reference Name: **Gina Mendez**

Interviewer Name: **Amanda Peterson**

Reference Title: **Director of HR, City of Mesquite**

1. What has been the working relationship you've had with this candidate? For about how long have you known him / her?

He worked at Mesquite for years. First, he was a colleague, then a boss. I've known him for 13 years

2. Can you share with me 4-5 words that best describe him/her?

diligent, reliable, took limited time off, long work hours, integrity, honest, great work ethic

3. What do you consider to be his/her greatest achievement, or management strength? Are there any areas for improvement?

When he took over as city manager, he had a great vision for the budget. It had been messy and disorganized before. He spent time with the Finance Director, and they purchased a module so that we could do the budget more efficiently. His budget skills in finance are a super strength.

People also talked about how good he was with economic development.

We all have areas for improvement. Aaron's career grew in the city, and we were used to seeing him as "Aaron", not as the city manager. But he grew into that. I think he sometimes second guessed himself because of that background.

4. Describe the candidate's ability to gain trust in others, or the community while developing an organization into a "21st Century public agency".

He was trusted because the most important thing he worked on was the budget. He said, "I'm going to work to get what you want", but he never made any promises. He was very transparent about what we could do. I think everyone came out of budget meetings feeling like they had been helped.

5. Describe a crisis where s/he was involved and how they handled it?

When he started his career as a city manager, he had a vision for Mesquite. He wanted to meet with each department, visit each work site etc. Usually, only people at City Hall see the city manager. But he was interrupted by COVID. With so many things closing and no knowledge of what city taxes we would get back, we had to furlough many full-time employees. We probably laid off 40-60 employees, most of our part-timers. That was difficult, but we had budget constraints because of the unknown. He had to make the difficult decisions,

closing open positions. He had to put his foot down with departments. At minimum we have to be at an 8 so that the state didn't take over.

6. If you were in a hiring position today, would you hire him/her as City Manager? Why or why not?

Yes, because he had really good ideas and a vision of how he could make changes.

He was never going to give me a full-time employee because we're a small city and he's tough on the budget, but he was very supportive of diversity and inclusion. He has an open mind when it comes to economic development. He looks at employees as an asset and valued them. He was willing to mentor employees so that they could become more effective.

7. If the City were to hire them, is there anything in their past that could become an embarrassment if it became public?

Not at all. He's a churchgoer and a religious man, and he has 8 kids! He's very ethical and careful when dealing with people.

8. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

His math skills really helped with union negotiations.

***Interviewer Assessment:** Willing to do the hard things to keep a city solvent. Respected by coworkers.*

INTERVIEW #3:

Date: **October 7, 2021**

Candidate Name: **Aaron Baker**
Interviewer Name: **Amanda Peterson**

Reference Name: **Andre Carrier**
Reference Title: **COO of Eureka Casino**

1. What has been the working relationship you've had with this candidate? For about how long have you known him / her?

We've always worked together as partners to keep the lines of communication open between the casino and the city of Mesquite; I've known him about a decade.

2. Can you share with me 4-5 words that best describe him/her?

Responsible, responsive, effective, strategic, broad thinker, good to work with

3. What do you consider to be his/her greatest achievement, or management strength? Are there any areas for improvement?

Aaron's greatest achievement is getting the community to recognize the importance of managing growth effectively. He developed some pathways for responsible growth. And he's also explored the risks of not growing responsibly. Change is inevitable, and he's invested in managing that.

I don't know that I'm close enough to him to give feedback about any areas of improvement. It's tough to be a city manager and have bosses that are elected officials. I don't know if I ever appreciated how difficult that must be, to manage that three dimensionally.

4. Describe the candidate's ability to gain trust in others, or the community while developing an organization into a "21st Century public agency".

Yes, he's trusted because he's built experience over time. He can manage complex projects; we worked on a tax credit deal that was very complicated.

5. Describe a crisis where s/he was involved and how they handled it?

COVID-19 was a crisis and we partnered together to create a vaccination center. We were able to get people vaccinated quickly and efficiently. We would have liked to vaccinate more people, but we couldn't force anyone.

6. If you were in a hiring position today, would you hire him/her as City Manager? Why or why not?

Yes, I would hire him. I'm a big fan of people that are self-reflective and understand the value of research and finding experts, taking inputs, and then also making decisions. As a city manager, you have to hold yourself to a timeline. The timelines can become decoupled from business expectations and normality's, as

well as from human expectations and these timelines can start to live in an alternate timeline. Aaron was very good at trying to bridge the gap between a business timeline and a bureaucratic construct, bringing those together.

- 7. If the City were to hire them, is there anything in their past that could become an embarrassment if it became public?**

No.

- 8. Is there anything else that you would like to add?**

Whichever community gets him is fortunate.

Interviewer Assessment: *Forward-thinking and creative.*

INTERVIEW #4:

Date: **October 6, 2021**

Candidate Name: **Aaron Baker**

Reference Name: **Andy Barton**

Interviewer Name: **Amanda Peterson**

Reference Title: **former Mesquite NV city manager**

- 1. What has been the working relationship you've had with this candidate? For about how long have you known him / her?**

I was the city manager of Mesquite from 2012-2019. Aaron worked for me directly during those years. He had a minor title, but I quickly promoted him to Assistant to the City Manager.

- 2. Can you share with me 4-5 words that best describe him/her?**

Honest, industrious, diligent, skilled, out-of-the-box financial thinker

- 3. What do you consider to be his/her greatest achievement, or management strength? Are there any areas for improvement?**

He was the municipal expert for a regional redevelopment plan. Certain zones in the city were qualified to apply for redevelopment funds, with a 50% match with the city. A lot of commercial building owners took advantage of this program. It was over a dozen transactions with the agency, and he was particularly good with these complex land deals.

At one point I assigned him to manage our senior center. He had 6 employees there, in addition to managing our museum with its handful of employees. As a supervisor, he would come in early to spend time with subordinate employees. At the senior center he would do things he wasn't required: deliver Meals on Wheels, help cook, attend celebratory events. He wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty.

I wouldn't say that he has anything to improve on. He has great work hygiene and is very good with the budget.

- 4. Describe the candidate's ability to gain trust in others, or the community while developing an organization into a "21st Century public agency".**

Everyone likes Aaron. He's a nice guy, even-tempered, and is able to get along with others during stressful conditions.

- 5. Describe a crisis where s/he was involved and how they handled it?**

Our power is sent to us from 80 miles south of us, and when that line goes down there is no redundancy. We occasionally have power failures that can last 10-12 hours. This is particularly difficult because we have a hospital and a large senior community. It gets really hot down here and many residents need oxygen. He

coordinated a plan with the power district, the hospital, the fire department, and the police department (because traffic lights go down) to ensure we aren't endangering our citizens.

I retired in 2019 and he was hired; during Covid he mounted a huge effort, coordinating with the casinos, to get people vaccinated. Not as many people are vaccinated in our area as I would like, but it wasn't for lack of trying.

- 6. If you were in a hiring position today, would you hire him/her as City Manager? Why or why not?**

Absolutely, I recommended him to the Council as my successor. They had no reservations in hiring him because they were familiar with his work.

- 7. If the City were to hire them, is there anything in their past that could become an embarrassment if it became public?**

Not to my knowledge, not at all.

- 8. Is there anything else that you would like to add?**

The ability to write well is rare. I had 160 employees, and only a half dozen who could write well. Aaron wrote extremely well, spoke well, presented well. He gave countless presentations to the City Council.

Interviewer Assessment: Hard-worker and takes his responsibility to the community seriously. Excellent communicator.