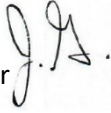




MEMORANDUM

TO: Department Directors

FROM: Jesús Garza, Interim City Manager 

DATE: June 9, 2023

SUBJECT: **Leadership Appointments**

Since returning to this organization in February, I have spent considerable time assessing the strengths of our organization and identified opportunities to reorganize to ensure we are operating cohesively, effectively, and efficiently. To that end, I am pleased to announce the following leadership appointments:

Austin Energy General Manager

Bob Kahn is joining the City as the next General Manager of Austin Energy. Mr. Kahn is a respected leader in the utility industry in Texas and around the country and brings a wealth of knowledge to our organization. He joins us after spending the last decade as the General Manager of the Texas Municipal Power Agency. He was formerly the President and Chief Executive Officer at the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) and served as Deputy General Manager, General Counsel and Vice President for Legal Services at Austin Energy. Mr. Kahn will begin his duties on Monday, July 3.

I want to thank Stuart Reilly who has served as Interim General Manager upon the retirement of Jackie Sargent.

Chief Strategic Communications & External Relations Officer

With the reorganization in March, I created a Strategic Communications and External Affairs position, reporting to the City Manager. Originally the Intergovernmental Relations Officer and Chief Communications Director were to report to this position. Since that time, I have modified the purpose of the position to place more attention and focus on strategic internal and external communications across the entire organization. To aid in further developing and growing this mindset, Michele Middlebrook-Gonzalez will be joining the organization as Chief Strategic Communications & External Relations Officer on Monday, July 3. Ms. Middlebrook-Gonzalez joins the City from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas, where she served as the communications consultant with one of the insurers' largest customers. She is a tenured communications professional with strategic communications experience with large non-profit and private sector organizations. I look forward to Michele joining the City and sharing her experience and skill with our organization.

Chief Communications Director Jessica King and her team will report to Ms. Middlebrook-Gonzalez and Brie Franco, Intergovernmental Relations Officer, and her team will report to Assistant City Manager Veronica Briseño.

Development Services Department Director

In January, José Roig was named Interim Director of the Development Services Department following the retirement of Denise Lucas. Since that time, Mr. Roig has integrated the Code Enforcement functions into the Department and embarked upon analyzing the development review and permitting process. Because of the solid groundwork he has established since January, I am appointing Mr. Roig as Director of the Development Services Department effective Monday, June 5.

José has focused his career on ensuring building safety, including 15 years with the City of Austin and 14 years in the private sector. He served five years in leadership roles at Austin Code Department, most recently as Director, and nearly 11 years at what is now the Development Services Department, where he began as a Commercial Building Inspector in 2007 and worked his way up to City Building Official in 2016. Before joining the City of Austin, José was an inspector in San Antonio, owned a building consultant company, and was an inspector at the Kennedy Space Center. Please join me in congratulating José.

Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Following his special assignment assisting Interim Assistant City Manager Bruce Mills in evaluating the City's Emergency Operations functions, I am appointing Ken Snipes to serve as the Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) effective Monday, June 19.

Ken has served as Director for Austin Resource Recovery since October 2019. Prior to joining us, Mr. Snipes held leadership positions at Seattle Public Utilities, including Chief Administrative Officer (Departmental Deputy Director), Director of Solid Waste Services, Citywide Homelessness Operations Director, and Interim Chief Financial Officer. Other roles that Mr. Snipes held while working for Seattle Public Utilities include Facility Operations Manager and Water Operations Director. Before working in local government Mr. Snipes was a member of the United States Air Force for almost 21 years.

I want to thank Juan Ortiz for his service to the organization as the Director of HSEM as he continues his career in other areas. Juan saw our organization through trying times with weather-related disasters and COVID-19.

Richard McHale, who has been serving as Acting Director of Austin Resource Recovery, will continue serving in the role as Interim Director.

Homeless Strategy Special Assignment

The City's response and action in support of addressing homelessness in our community is one of the most paramount issues that the City must address for the health and safety of our community and is a focus for our entire organization. As I have evaluated the many facets of our programming, support, and multiple funding sources for homeless services, I recognize that we must evaluate the entire organizational structure – spanning many departments – tasked with addressing this issue. To advance this work, I have asked David Gray, current Assistant Director in the Economic Development Department (EDD), to serve in a special assignment capacity. David will report directly to Assistant City Manager Stephanie Hayden-Howard and will be focused full-time on the broad spectrum of programs, policies, and funding the City utilizes to address this issue. David will work with the Homeless Strategy Office and all departments supporting the City's efforts to address homelessness to arrive at overarching strategies that cohesively advance the City's work. David will begin his assignment on Monday, June 12.

David joined EDD in 2020 and in addition to his current role as Assistant Director has served the department as Public Information and Marketing Program Manager and Economic Recovery Programs Project Manager during the COVID-19 pandemic. His tenure with the City of Austin has also included serving as the Interim Director of the Planning Department, Interim Assistant Director of the Housing and Planning Department, and Community Engagement Specialist for the Austin Transportation Department. David has held public administration leadership roles in Louisiana and California before joining the City of Austin.

I thank each of these individuals for their commitment to advancing our organization and look forward to working with them. I extend a heartfelt thank you to each of you for your dedication to our organization and community and for your commitment to ensuring we are continually looking for ways to improve our services.

xc: CMO Executive Team