

COMMUNITY/COUNTY EMPLOYEE INPUT FOR NEW COUNTY MANAGER

Community/County employee input for the qualities of the next County Manager was gathered from multiple sources:

- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram);
- Let's Talk platform, which consists of an online form (and subsequent advertisements and articles leading people to use Let's Talk's online platform), phone line, and comment cards placed in County Buildings;
- Three Community Input meetings hosted by the Board of Commissioners;
- Finally, from a Women's Commission Assembly meeting.

Below is an aggregation of all comments received **as of noon on Friday, Aug. 31, 2018**. If you have any questions about how the data was gathered, please contact us at prteam@buncombecounty.org.

~*Buncombe County Communications Team*



Facebook Post (Published July 25, 2018 – Boosted – 7,140 reached)

Do you want a County Manager that...?

- has experience managing large complex organizations.
- Has knowledge of all county services.
- that has financial management experience.
- is community focused.
- has experience in economic development packages.

What personal characteristics and skills are most important to you?

- Interpersonal Skills
- Strategic Thinking
- Sound Judgement
- Honesty and Integrity

Give us your thoughts.

We will use your voice and input to build a profile of our ideal manager.

Tagged: City of Asheville; Town of Black Mountain; Woodfin, North Carolina; Weaverville, North Carolina; Biltmore Forest, North Carolina; Town of Montreat; Asheville, North Carolina.



COMMENTS:

COMMENT: I think we need new commissioners before we get a new county manager. They didn't do their job!! The Commissioners need to know that thier staff won't answer questions but instead refer everyone to lets talk.... No comments without a name to meet out retribution. NEW COMMISSIONERS ALL OF THEM!!

COMMENT: Isn't from North Carolina, has never purchased a gift card, and isn't acquainted with any of the current county commissioners.

COMMENT: Someone who doesn't steal a gizillion dollars and bring in family to do the same then retire after all that with huge retirement package and a pocket full of gift cards

COMMENT: Honesty, integrity, someone who is native to Asheville

COMMENT: Maybe someone that is from or has been living in this county, a person that knows the needs of Buncombe County and not just what Asheville wants.

COMMENT:

- has experience managing large complex organizations.
- Has knowledge of all county services.
- that has financial management experience.
- is community focused.
- has experience in economic development packages.
- Interpersonal Skills
- Strategic Thinking
- Sound Judgement
- Honesty and Integrity

Honesty & integrity are very high on the list.

Putting the needs & well-being of the people ABOVE making money.

Also, a good balance between head & heart in judgement-making.

Please consider women candidates equally.
No prejudices.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

COMMENT: Isn't from North Carolina, has never purchased a gift card, and isn't acquainted with any of the current county commissioners.

COMMENT: Someone to listen to the needs of the area communities the needs in Leicester are not always the same in Arden or Barnardsville.

COMMENT: Honesty

COMMENT: Honest! Not political! Good manager skills! Not a woman!

COMMENT: Rather have one that cares about the people and not the commissioners.

COMMENT: Someone who believes in God and has compassion for the needy

COMMENT: Let's keep religious litmus test out of this please, as per our constitution. But yeah, compassion towards the needy would be a nice plus!

COMMENT: You need someone who can come in with no previous government experience and fix the mess that has been created. Also, you definitely need to be accepting external applications ONLY for the budget position. It is utter nonsense that you'd only look at internal applicants after this scandal. THIRDLY - every Buncombe county citizen needs to be issued a tax refund for the past however many years they've lived here, in accordance with how much money was laundered and squandered by county officials over the past several decades. I think we are owed that much in the very least. Even if it's only 20 dollars per person, it's a gesture that shows you know you were in the wrong and you are willing to attempt to rectify the situation. My property taxes are outrageous to begin with, and increase because people are building bigger houses near me? Where are my taxes even going? Not to have my roads repaved, or parks built in my area. We have two youth baseball fields in the North Buncombe district, and can't get a youth softball field to practice on, and I'm paying taxes for what exactly? Have someone manage THAT and get back to me ok?

COMMENT: A county manager should be open, honest, trustworthy, accountable, not political, act with integrity, someone from the area, lives in the area, not related to anyone in the County/City Government, has no criminal background, has an open door policy/no secrets, and won't dodge questions asked by beating around the bush.

COMMENT: I want an accountable, fiscally conservative, honest, transparent Manager. One who works for the county as a whole.... who recognizes that the unincorporated portions of the county are the portions that need county services beyond those that are incorporated.

COMMENT: Honestly and good ethics

COMMENT: Experienced manager with knowledge of position offered... AND Honesty and integrity.

COMMENT: Is honest!

COMMENT: One that would pass a lie detector exam would be nice.

COMMENT: Someone who doesn't steal a gazillion dollars and bring in family to do the same then retire after all that with huge retirement package and a pocket full of gift cards

COMMENT: How about bringing someone in that is not from here, won't hire all their relatives, won't embezzle money from the taxpayers and is accountable to the people who employ them. Let's try that for a change.

COMMENT: Ethics and conservative financial management

COMMENT: Aka common sense and courtesy

COMMENT: Someone with experience to control and manage urban sprawl and plan our infrastructure accordingly. Honesty, integrity, and with critical thinking skills.

COMMENT: Someone who actually understands the role of government would be a nice change.

COMMENT: How about one that's HONEST, TRUTHFUL and eschews nepotism?? Preferably, one that understands the importance of saving money and getting the most for the money that is spent.

COMMENT: Integrity. Humility. Friendly.

COMMENT: Sound judgement, honesty and integrity.

COMMENT: Maybe someone that is from or has been living in this county, a person that knows the needs of Buncombe County and not just what Asheville wants.

COMMENT: No crooks

COMMENT: For starters how about one that isn't a thief. That would be great!!

COMMENT: Someone who won't steal from us would be nice.

COMMENT: 43:44 Not corrupt

COMMENT: 14:23 Concern for adequate local funding for our public schools and community college, effective, transparent administration of public funds, effective administration of planning for future growth and land use, protection of clean air and water, listening to the needs of our children and families, etc. Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.

COMMENT: Just hire a Republican who is exhausted of the Liberal bullshit agendas or pay the sad price other Liberal cities a having to deal with.

Instagram

Instagram Post (Published July 26, 2018 – Boosted with Facebook Post)

Do you want a County Manager that...?

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COMMENTS:

COMMENT: – Uh, honesty and integrity. Someone who won't balk at oversight.

COMMENT: – Honesty would be a refreshing change.



Twitter Post (Published July 26, Aug 7, Aug 9)

Give us your thoughts. We will use your voice and input to build a profile of our ideal manager.
@WLOS_13 @asheville @CityofAsheville @Weaverville #newmanager #managersearch #Buncombe
#Asheville



COMMENTS:

COMMENT: Honesty, Integrity, Accountability

COMMENT: Honesty, integrity, empathy, intelligence, and ability to listen and think critically. Tired of the blind lemming approach when it comes to party politics.

COMMENT: Just google @factsbymax and you'll be all set, gang.

LET'S TALK!

www.buncombecounty.org/letstalk

Let's Talk homepage changed for County Manager search (see below image):



The Buncombe County Manager search is underway.

What qualities are most important to YOU?

Submit your input below.

Buncombe County wants an open line of communication to give you a voice in how your government runs. We want to hear from you because we are fully committed to making sure your county government is responsive to your needs, concerns, and ideas. Our promise is to listen, learn and serve you to the best of our ability.

You can call and leave a message at (828) 250-4066, email us at letstalk@buncombecounty.org or fill out the form below. Your questions, concerns and comments will be responded to in a timely manner.

COMMENTS:

COMMENT: First and foremost, thank you for taking input. Whether or not anyone takes you up on the offer, it means a great deal when people feel like they can be heard. Some qualities that I EXPECT of our new county manager:

-Self-second/Servant Leader: Find someone who has a heart for SERVING others. This can look like many different things, but someone who willingly sacrifices themselves (their time, money, family, energy) for the betterment of others. This would be outside of their prescribed "job duties".

-Ownership: leaders should always be willing to delegate tasks, not responsibility. Find someone who will admit fault when something goes terribly wrong. Be willing to work in a decentralized fashion so that employees can make decisions based on trust (not fear). When things go right, have the capability to acknowledge them and take responsibility when things do not. Most people looking for a job will only give you THEIR highlights, I'd love to know what went wrong for them and why it was their fault.

-Candor: This person needs to not fear HARD truths and have the ability to express those truths. Easy truths do not require character.

-Mission-first: Someone who can check their ego at the door, be ok with accepting ideas from those below.

-Discipline: This is simply a matter of personal will. What processes have they established in their own daily life that allow them to execute in a variety of conditions without re-creating the wheel, or watching the wheels fall off.

-Contentment: can this person pursue joy over happiness. We've seen the latter and it's not pretty.

-Desire to learn: Does this person have desire to learn rather than a hunger for approval. Are they willing to admit their inadequacies, challenge themselves to grow. Proven this in the past?

COMMENT: I think we need the following qualities/ skills/ experience in a successful County Manager:

1) Servant- we need someone whose primary desire is to serve and benefit the citizens of Buncombe County

2) Leader- We need someone who can make wise decisions, and then influence others to implement them. the ideal leader is also adept at developing other leaders at various levels of the organization. A good manager must be decisive.

3) Organizer- A manager cannot do it all, but must be able to keep the "big picture" in mind. Ideally, they will be able to build a strong team around them.

4) Communicator- A successful manager must be a clear communicator to various groups such as staff, citizens and public officials.

5) Experienced- As the point leader for the county, the candidate should have a proven track record of county leadership, with NC experince ideal.

COMMENT: Hire a county manager who is not only good at managing money and county government, but fair and capable at managing people. Someone who realizes they are an employee too, someone who empathizes and is not out to cut extensively simply to make a public show. Please do not punish county employees for the alleged sins of previous county managers and assistant county managers. Keep benefits in place for current employees and, if you must, lower benefits for new hires. Merit raises never work in this kind of setting. This harbors the same kind of atmosphere we had under previous county managers of playing by their rules or lose your job- and where brown nosing pays off, rather than hard work and reliability. There appear to be plenty of redundant positions in upper management thanks to our previous HHS friendly county manager; streamlining should help with reducing costs. Fortunately Mr Wood seems to be clearing house. Be as thoughtful as possible in your management choice. In addition to serving the taxpayers of Buncombe County, please also be supportive and respectful of the people who actually do the work and have been doing the work of Buncombe County Government. I realize this is general, but for so long employees have not really had a lot of say, regardless of the brag of "transparency."

COMMENT: I am responding to the request for feedback on what to look for in a new county manager. The primary qualities I think a county manager needs are 1) an interest in improving life for ALL citizens of Buncombe County through our services, especially those from marginalized and underserved socioeconomic groups, 2) a commitment to honest dealing and transparency, 3) knowledge of and interest in ALL of the county departments, 4) a willingness to try to understand each department's needs and advocate for those needs to the best of the county's fiscal ability, rather than trying to cut costs and run the county on a shoestring budget, 5) a willingness to invest in county employees as assets and advocate for their interests.

COMMENT: County Manager search: Vested in transparency and code of ethics, ability to demonstrate innovation and commitment to community engagement and working with underrepresented populations. Can build upon existing infrastructure that will create more accountability.

COMMENT: Be sure to request a college transcript verifying coursework completed and degrees conferred. Also, look into the universities attended. This procedure is important because the university where Wanda Greene obtained her Ph.D was under federal investigation and was subsequently closed. Her university was one of those diploma mills where tuition is paid but there is not necessarily corresponding educational experience. Most business schools require a business ethics course. It is a possibility that she never took this type of course in light of the shady reputation of her university.

COMMENT: Someone genuine and down to earth who has worked with clients and done case management, with a good track record of integrity and honesty.

COMMENT: I would like to know the new county manager truly cares enough to be visible in county offices, takes employees opinions into consideration and values the work that each department does every day with dedication.

A county manager should oversee operations but not have full control over everything. They need to be held accountable by the commissioners as each employee is held accountable by their supervisor.

The transparency of the county should not only continue, but increase with as much information available. The employees should know what is going on within our own departments and upper management before it is made public. Many times we feel in the dark and see things in the commissioner's agenda which causes anxiety and angst among employees.

Our current benefits are one of the main reasons we have the great employees we have and it keeps the employees from seeking other employment. A lot of knowledge from dedicated employees will be long gone if our benefits are compromised by new management. Continue to show the employees they are valued and appreciated by not changing the benefits that many county employees depend on. If we lose those, what sets Buncombe County apart from any other employer?

Once hired, the new manager should be willing to meet with each department head and supervisors to listen to the needs of their department. What is best for them and the citizens of the county?

The candidate needs to be from a county around the same size of Buncombe, be able to step into a role of leadership and willing to put the work in to get us back to a place of trust.

COMMENT: I fear an over-correction is possible by the board. We know that some of the actions of former county officials were dirty and unforgivable. Please do not forget that the vast majority of the work done by staff was done in a way that we are proud of and in a way the people deserve. I hope that the next county manager (or the current interim) is not brought in to gut everything that existed during the tenure of previous leaders. Utilize the talent that is here, I can assure you we are furious and will work diligently to right what was done to this community.

COMMENT: I am an employee with Buncombe County for 10 years now and i have seen so much good that our county employees do every single day. I have also seen so much disrespect from our leaders in Administration. The majority of those people that had the power to dismantle the employee positions, the programs that were working along with the moral are gone now due to the corruption they brought to us and our reputation. It was obvious to me within the first month i worked here that some people that ran this agency had personal vendettas against some people or internal departments. It was the "Good ole Boy (Girl) Mentality". If you were not kissing butt and being a puppet to them you were retaliated against when it came to promotions, interviews for other positions and recognition for your work. This attitude is not productive for anyone, especially the people we serve. The administrators had so many outside connections that benefited from the power they had (some of those same people are still employed with the county). Unless our commissioners step up and clean house it will not change. I totally believe that if we can get a County Manager that is not here for a popularity contest and not from this area or even state it would be a step in the right direction. The reason i did not state my name is because of the past backlash an employee would get if they spoke their own mind. This is a problem and definitely still an issue. Good Luck in finding the person that help bring change to this wonderful place we call home, work, and agency.

COMMENT: I would like to see the new county manager who is above board, transparent, honest, has integrity. Someone who will move the county forward in a positive way & have the County's citizens as well as employees best interests at heart. Someone who is not afraid to stand up for what is right. Also the new manager would need to be approachable, have an open door policy.

COMMENT: The new County Manager should have an interest in the future of local government. Specifically, they should have experience in leveraging data analytics to improve local government. They should be familiar with quantitative problem solving and look beyond "the old way" of doing things. The old way got us into this mess. The new County Manager should have experience in places with data hubs, open government, and smart cities. That's the future of local government and what Buncombe County citizens deserve.

COMMENT: I think it's really important for the County Manager to understand the difficult balancing act that our departments have when dealing with or satisfying the public. Citizen expectations are often confused by a lack of understanding about how local government works, how funding is allocated, and how decision-making occurs. A new County Manager should be willing to listen to departments to understand what their limitations and needs are, and to be able to effectively educate the public about the County's process and state-mandated limitations. Also, with the

explosion of growth that is happening here, a County Manager needs to either have a good understanding of Planning themes, tools, and strategies, or needs to be willing to ask Planning staff for options to address some of the issues that we are still failing to address.

COMMENT: I want a County Manager that will hold the commissioners accountable to their duties and responsibilities. They can delegate authority but they cannot delegate their responsibilities. They weren't responsible and were really quite negligent with their oversight on Wanda Greene. Also, how stupid of them to hire a known confidant and close friend Wanda as the interim manager, it makes it hard to believe several of the commissioners were not complicit and I anticipate even more indictments in the coming months.

I remember when Mandy took over and she came to all the departments and even the commissioners with her presentation about righting wrongs and increased transparency and saving the reputation of county employees and it turns out it was all a bunch of bullshit. Were any of the commissioners brave enough to directly ask Mandy if she was complicit or corrupt before they appointed her? Everyone I work with is disgusted with county leadership. There is a big perception that the commissioners and county managers offices have not been transparent and forthcoming with information regarding the indictments as seen in the email exchange highlighted in the Citizen-Times a few ago between Mandy and several other decision makers.

I don't know if county leadership realizes how angry and upset their employees are. So as we work through this 'Lost Generation' of Buncombe County Government I am looking for a strong County Manager that will push the commissioners to uphold their oversight responsibilities and that has ZERO connections with existing leadership positions.

COMMENT: The new county manager should maintain constant and transparent communication with the Commissioners, the public, and County staff. It has to be someone who feels completely comfortable with oversight and being under a magnifying glass, providing continuous reports of their work, and undergoing regular performance evaluations. There must be a strong system of checks and balances in place and the new County manager should agree to perform their duties under this system, without attempting to create departmental or programmatic policies that will undermine the proper oversight of the position.

COMMENT: I would like to see a County Manager who cares about the employees at the bottom of the pay scale who are barely making enough to live in Buncombe County. Affordable housing for staff and other county residents should be more important than assisting the City in drawing tourists. The Manager should take the time to visit all of the County departments and acknowledge staff as people. They should be ethical and not misappropriate County funds. They should have experience managing city/county governments.

COMMENT: A county manager who is focused on the people above all else is paramount. Buncombe County has some of the highest taxes and cost of living in the state, and yet the pay of the employees does not match this cost of living. We need someone willing to pay a fair wage to those who are expected to pay to live/work here. We need someone willing/able to say "no." Please find someone with less of a risk to become crooked!

COMMENT: I am a County employee and would like the new County Manager to obviously be fiscally responsible. In addition to that they should be interested in their employees and what it takes to keep a strong and cohesive workforce...such as

-competitive salaries (with other like sized local governments and private sector employers in our area)

-benefits - don't try to strip all of our benefits (health, wellness and longevity)...these are the things that attract quality employees and keep ones that could probably make more money in private sector.

-have a broad knowledge of each County department and the services they provide both internally and externally

COMMENT: I think the County Manager should put things in the proper order. God, Family then Job. It works.

I am not sure that people who live on these large salaries understand how the others live, but I think they should try to. Both rich and poor support our county.

I think they need compassion and should be involved in the community in several different ways.

There are a lot of programs that are taken advantage of within our system and I would like to see them focus on fixing some of these, maybe some are not at a county level but they are willing to try to make changes for the good.

COMMENT: I would like to see a "job description" or something showing exactly what the County Manager position includes. What they report, who they report to etc. That would be helpful for me when thinking about questions/suggestions I might have.

Thank You

COMMENT: Re: new County Manager. Of course, INTEGRITY is everything. Some level of awareness and commitment to Public Health is also crucial for the well-being of our community.

COMMENT: The qualities most necessary in a county manager:

1. Honest interest in serving the county, improving both infrastructure and the lives of its citizens. We get plenty of promotion drawing new people in, now make it more liveable for those of us already here.

2. Intelligence and an ability to analyze coming trends and also possible problems that may arise in the future. Housing is one, environmental concerns, another.

3. A belief in both short and long planning. Consideration of the environment and how Buncombe county can become more self-sufficient and community needs driven. And with this: solar and wind power for all feasible county buildings, green building to lower heating and cooling costs further, and possibly local cell and/or internet as an alternative to costly private company plans.

4. An understanding that county employees, for the most part, are honest and hardworking, deserve to be treated with respect and given compensation due to them for the jobs they do, without adding many layers of oversight, meetings and extra paperwork, which take them away from their actual duties and add to the stress of their jobs.

Thank you.

COMMENT: A competent county manager with an educational background which is germane to the position. Degrees from known quality educational institutions with reputations for rigorous curriculums. A proven track record of progressively more responsible positions leading to their application for this position is important. I'd like to see someone hired who is not from this geographic area but from a progressive area with a culturally diverse population. No internal hires should be considered for this position.

COMMENT: Priorities:

No. 1 Honesty (background check including criminal records and DUI's).

No. 2 Both government and private sector experience.

No. 3 Someone who has demonstrated vision and "out of the box" thinking, even if facing a stone wall.

COMMENT: The person hired needs to have proven experience in all areas of the government. Strong background in finances since they are dealing with budgets. Yes, each department has people who develop the budgets, but the county manager needs to be able to look at the budgets and know whether what they are budgeting is really needed to effectively perform the duties they are responsible for, or just a "wish list."

Without the knowledge of each departments' function & needs, the manager is useless!
Should have a proven track record of communication. If the County Manager can't communicate effectively & just "strong arms" everyone, you've wasted time & money.
The County Manager should answer to the Commissioners. The Commissioners should be able to hire & fire. That requires written Policies & Procedures & documentation of offenses. When hired, the County Manager should be put on a probationary period of not more than 6 months. If they have strong experience, it shouldn't take more time than that to get a handle on how the County Government works & if the department heads are doing what they are supposed to be doing.

If they fail to have strong knowledge of what is going on in All departments, then they should be terminated.

There are too many facets of the County Government that the Manager must be aware of.
Yeah, yeah, I hear you say, "but we have department heads that run the departments, & report to the manager." How did that work for us?

They need to be hands on & from what I see, Policies & Procedures need to be rewritten!
The County Manager should have strong communication skills & be willing to reach out to the people effectively.

It's not just about schools or elections. There is planning & Development, Fire/Rescue, Police, Permitting, etc., etc. The County Manager needs to have knowledge in all the areas of the County Government, & be able to respond to questions without "consulting" a department head.

There are so many areas that the County Manager should have knowledge in, & they are to numerous to state. Because I am disabled, I can't get out to go to the meetings on this subject. What knowledge of county government does this company that is leading the search have & what guarantee do we have that ALL suggestions submitted will be followed for the search?

COMMENT: It would be lovely to find a county manager who doesn't just comply with transparency but embraces it and regularly turns over records for inspection. It further would be lovely to improve the workplace culture in county government; no more demigods and prima donnas. Nobody appreciates being talked down to, and nobody appreciates their job being in jeopardy because they respectfully disagree with their manager(s).

In the same vein, I think it would be a tremendous misstep to eliminate the COLA and move strictly to a merit-based increase. I work in county government and have seen cliques develop in the upper echelons. It only takes rubbing one person the wrong way to have one's career shut down -- I've seen it happen to friends and colleagues. This move would give an unscrupulous manager the opportunity to shut down an employee's financial future as well. Further, does this mean only top performers would be able to afford living in our (rather expensive) area? "You're good enough to keep your job but not good enough to afford increases in the cost of groceries or rent." I'm gobsmacked. Our county stands for better than this. Certainly there are pros to performance-based increases, and I've benefited from a similar system in other agencies, but I think the cons are too great for it to be implemented appropriately and fairly.

My feeling is that these moves represent an effort at recouping the tremendous amount of funds that the BOC's missteps allowed Wanda Greene and her cohorts to steal from the citizens and taxpayers of Buncombe County. This is an example of penalizing the flock for the shepherd's sins.

COMMENT: I am sure you have heard a lot of similar input about qualities in a county manager from both County staff and the public. My hope is that they, staff especially, think beyond qualities that are simply the opposite of former county administrators and instead envision a manager that will lead our organization in a way that positions us a leader in the public sector. Below are some very specific characteristics that I would like to see in our next executive.

- ICMA credentialed manager (or aspiring to be one)
- committed to lifelong learning and professional development
- forward thinking and embracing of innovative ideas
- unafraid of taking calculated risks in the name of moving our community forward
- open to learning about, experimenting with, and implementing new best practices
- collaborative - with the public, nonprofits, other government agencies, and the private sector- in hopes of making our community a highlight beyond just our wonderful tourist attractions
- dedicated to using performance measurement in an effort to ensure we are operating as efficiently and effectively as possible and to drive continuous quality improvement
- encouraging of cross-departmental work, support, and transparency
- committed to ensuring that staff are seen as the MOST valuable resource the County has
- a strong but vibrant face of the organization who represents Buncombe County at local, state, and national events in an effort to put our name on the list of top performing and innovative

organizations

Of course, all of these are in addition to being financially responsible, competent, and ethical.

Thank you for your time in gathering these opinions. I look forward to the days when we can make great strides as employees and residents of an excellent local government.

COMMENT: Why are we not questioning the selection process (which didn't conform with the county policy) of upper management under the previous county manager who's managerial decisions now lack credibility?

COMMENT: I am concerned that the commissioners and other county leadership positions are not going to see the raw, unfiltered submissions from across the county. The process makes it sound as if the hiring agency will synthesize and summarize all the inputs.

I think it is important for the commissioners to read through all the inputs unfiltered, so that they realize the true extent of anger, disgust and disappointment that all the employees are feeling towards them.

COMMENT: A good County Manager should be a person of integrity and transparency. They should have a proven track record of being able to lead a multi-faceted agency and handle the stress that comes daily with that position. They should be known as a person of integrity, not only in their work but in their personal life as well. They should expect intense scrutiny and inspection, in light of recent events. Transparency and an ability to admit, and then learn from, mistakes is necessary. An ear to listen to those they serve and those who serve them is also essential. They should be a person of wisdom who can make calculated decisions after receiving input for those affected and concerns.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide input on this very important position.

COMMENT: Someone with a racial analysis, who understands the history of racism in the US and the impact today particularly regarding institutional racism and can articulate a clear vision to address and dismantle institutional racism in order to truly meet the needs of all people in Buncombe County communities.

COMMENT: One of the major differences I've noted between working for a governmental entity and working in the private sector is that government tends to force objectivity...perhaps to the point of overlooking the obvious. I hope that the next County Manager comes with a great deal of experience in managing a LARGE organization and, of course, all the required credentials to support decision making capabilities (and proof of good decisions made!)...but I also hope that the next County Manager can assess a situation both analytically and with intuition without bias—the kind of intuition that comes with experience, the kind you know when to trust.

COMMUNITY INPUT SESSIONS

There were three community input sessions hosted by the Board of Commissioners; one for each district. Below are transcripts of audience comments along with comments from Facebook Live as the event was broadcast live.



COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- What we need is a CE who has the skills to interact with the Board and to hire and empower a staff that will work together collaboratively to do the citizens work in this community. Emphasize importance of collaboration - get rid of silos, can't have department heads working in isolation. Staff meetings that cross government agencies. Transparency - now more than ever - we must continue it - and have CM that can demonstrate their ability to be transparent with the community all the time. Trust is important. A CM who has a resume that speaks to their integrity as well as their effectiveness. Someone who aspires to be a civic manager. Someone to work with our engaged and active community. Don't settle. We need someone who is going to hire effective managers and empower them, delegate authority to them, to do the work of the community.
- The next CM - there should be a cap on how much control that they can have. There should be more checks and balance. If that comes more from County Commissioners to be more focus on how much control CM happens - that needs to happen. More teamwork. If one person is not part of the team (based on their power - not a rulership) we need to move away from that. A lot of weight is on CM shoulders - we need transparency, teamwork, delegating power, so everyone works together. More accountability. Someone who can work under those conditions.
- Unsure if you're ready to hire a CM. Never met CM (someone who gets out into the community). Suggest that you do more transparency (website: salaries). Question salary amount. Someone compassionate and open about community.
- Honest, integrity, who has experience, MPA, or significant amount of experience. The most important thing is we need someone who has public service at their heart - who is honest and willing to work hard. We have to do better with hiring someone who is honest and then watch over them.

- A CM who doesn't rule by fear and intimidation - it takes a special leader to undo the culture of the organization from what it was. We need someone who comes in and knows from day one "we have to change this entire place, the way people think, the way people look at doing their jobs."
- Importance in changing the culture. Promote interdepartmental/community cooperation. Have a macro view of the community.
- Someone who is totally qualified - willing to step in and say "i want to see this community/area - and the growth of it." Someone who promotes communicating and working together with the community. Get someone from the outside - unbiased input about our area. With a huge population of transplants - we want someone who can keep our community base - and someone who can protect us and help us do better. Make sure they care about the community and the people. Transparency is the most important thing - and communication.
- Someone who can change the atmosphere from intimidation. Someone that will protect the taxpayers and run an operation with the leadership to make sure that nothing underhanded is going on. Someone who can run the county successfully and save the taxpayers money.
- The next CM should have an open-door policy and who is willing to meet with members of the public. Find a CM and open their doors to be more open to the "common people."
- It's hard to know what the next CM will do till you hire them.
- What will the deciding factor be for the next CM? (for Commissioners?)
- Looking for someone with community service - how do they spend their time?
- Avoid nepotism - make sure they have a history of not hiring friends/relatives

LIVE STREAM FACEBOOK COMMENTS

- What oversight changes are you going to make so what the former county manager and her friends did won't happen again? - buncombecounty.org/transparency



COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- This has to do with finances, I would like to see someone who wants to have the board of elections in a building which the county owns. The building where it is now is not only inaccessible to anyone without a car - but it costs taxpayers 8k a month to a private company that leases government buildings all over the South. So, we're getting into 80k a year and that doesn't count storage. Also, Wanda Greene's name is on the contract. My biggest thing in life is voter turnout. 30 year public school teacher. Importance of civics education. Voter ID discussion - want an easier time for voters to vote - to get to the board of elections. This will also help save money.
- The County Commissioners/people in Gov. they need to pay attention to poor folks who can't even cross the street in time - without being worried of getting hit by a car in that location. Discussing 35 Woodfin - which was accessible to just about everyone. Who said it would be alright to put it on Asheland Ave. (Election Services)? This is a nonpartisan issue. Question about how long the lease.
- What oversight does the County Commission have over the County Manager? Honesty is important in the next County Manager. How do you screen for honesty and integrity?
- There is a potential lack of understanding of how government works - if we look at the 450mil+ budget - the County is a corporation - Council/Commissioners are the board of directors, and taxpayers are the stockholders. We hold stock and elect commissioners to be on the board. Problem 1) it's a popularity contest. They may not be qualified. We're looking for a CEO - financial background - without a functioning strong board - it doesn't matter who you hire. Whether it's someone from private sector (doesn't have to be public sector) - You don't have to hire a finance expert again. You don't want to be "tricked" by another "finance director." There should be a good balance on the board for decision making - so a manager who can reach across party lines.(question about County benefits for transparency)
- 1) Having no prior connection with the government (county) is going to be positive (normally the opposite is true), however here - given the cloud of distrust - someone not having prior contact is a plus. 2) proven track record of working with Democrats

and Republicans. Having both sides think they lean to the “other” side. 3) Find someone who can thread the needle between law enforcement and the community - and have both sides feel like they were both listened to. 4) Someone who is able to reach out to small towns (like Weaverville and Black Mountain - it’s not just Asheville and Buncombe County) make them feel like more of a part of Buncombe County.

- There needs to be a balance of power between Commissioners and the County Manager. Agree with “maybe we should look with someone who is a very different kind of person.” Not connected previous. With government being corrupt now, even the word “expert” has become a bad word.
- Someone with military experience
- It’s about honesty, integrity, and having the guts to say “something doesn’t feel right.” Courage. Mutual respect - respect for the board (and the Board has to respect the Manager). Communication is important (being able to hear each other). Search firm is expensive. Looking for someone who can be unbiased, have someone with quantifiable data that shows they did well at their previous job.
- Manager who encourages greater collaboration between local governments. When big projects come up - it will be nice to work collaboratively with the County Manager.

LIVE STREAM FACEBOOK COMMENTS

- Concern for adequate local funding for our public schools and community college, effective, transparent administration of public funds, effective administration of planning for future growth and land use, protection of clean air and water, listening to the needs of our children and families, etc.
- Not corrupt.



COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Transparency, accountability
- 1) Focus on cultivating an economy on responsible tourism - current model is unsustainable. Create a balance for call BC home and those who don't. 2) Environmental responsibility. 3) Create opportunities for locals to be involved in decision making.
- Committed to receiving and utilizing public input. Understanding of racial equality and history. They need to value and understand our local community and not just tourists. We need a CM with a heart - someone who cares about us, who works with us, and for us - to create a healthier community, and not just a wealthier one. Need a CM who is going to interpret their responsibilities for everyone, not just the wealthy.
- CM who understands how to communicate with the community. Who can go to Commissioners in planning sessions with community recommendations. CM who listens to community and not developers. Someone nonpartisan. Someone who will listen to multiple voices around the community. Someone who can communicate their stance and listen to other stances. Fairness. Someone who can advocate for different areas of the county. Someone who will talk and listen to the people. Someone who can work efficiently, care about the employees who work for BC, and who is fair with distribution choices, and not be scared to tell commissioners if something isn't fair - and be fair to the people they work with.
- Someone who is financial-based. CM needs to know how every working part of the county operates. Someone willing to put the extra hours in, with a proven track record of fixing budgets. Someone who needs to know what happens and is ready for that.
- someone like Mr. Wood
- Someone who knows how to make something out of nothing. Someone not salary-oriented. Someone ruled by people instead of money.

LIVE STREAM FACEBOOK COMMENTS:

- *(not Facebook - but online comment)* Support for water/sewer study so that the county can be the applicant for federal grants to expand MSD in Candler. 2) Support for Parks and Rec

department to build/complete projects at Enka Campus joining the soccer fields/softball fields to include Enka Heritage Trail. 3) Partnership (or a push) with the City to offer public transportation to the city line which happens to be at the Enka red light. 4) For my manager to understand he/she has a greater responsibility to the unincorporated parts of the County. These are the parts that don't have representation by way of towns or alderman. If the manager isn't looking out for these parts of the county, then no one is.

- Need a leader that places integrity, character, and duty to the community above partisanship, special interests or personal gain. Leadership with honesty, poise and grace is a must, and far more important than prior experience or personal/political connections.

FULL SPEECH FROM ONE SPEAKER (*next page*):

Meeting

2 messages

Thu, Aug 30, 2018 at 12:48 PM

To:

Hello, my community.

My name is [redacted] and I might've helped you out with your art-related projects over at your local art store, [redacted]. I'm on closing shift tonight, so my partner has agreed to read this letter aloud on my behalf.

The qualities our new county manager needs are:

- 1) A focus on cultivating an economy of responsible tourism. What does that mean? It means that our current model is unsustainable. I work a job that doesn't pay living wage, and I, like many others who call Asheville home, am finding it difficult to afford housing each year with prices constantly on the rise. We need a county manager who will create a balance for those who call Buncombe County home and those who don't.
- 2) Our county manager must push us towards environmental responsibility and develop jobs and resources to address this issue. Our region is the second-most biodiverse in the world, and once it's gone, it's gone for good. We must create a clean and sustainable human existence.
- 3) Our county manager must create more opportunities for locals to be involved in decisions. The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, for example, has important "public" meetings in the middle of the day, at times which are inaccessible to me and many people like me. These "public" meetings are also not advertised well at all. This does not serve the community it claims to serve.

We all know there's a lot of money coming into Buncombe County, but that benefit to the county has not transferred to the community. Whether it's through embezzlement and extravagant vacations or spending on ever-increasing

county. I guess if you live in Fairview, Enka/Candler, or Swannanoa, you're out of luck.

Since the County Manager carries out some of the duties that used to be duties of the Commissioners, we need to demand the same accountability and responsibility we would of any elected official. Our next County Manager, in addition to not embezzling public funds, needs to be committed to receiving and utilizing public input for the same reasons I've already stated. This person needs to have a thorough understanding of racial equity and of our local history, because our community is suffering. My neighbors, my friends, and my family members are suffering, and because they are suffering, I am suffering.

Our County Manager needs to value and understand our local community and not only tourists and the wealth they represent. I think we can build a city with something to share instead of only something to extract. I grew up here. I have never lived in any county other than this one, and I can tell you from experience how badly we need affordable housing, environmental justice, meaningful work at a living wage, and food. We are the third hungriest region in the nation. Our people are starving, and our last County Manager went out joyriding on the public dime.

Finally, we need a County Manager with a heart. If they're in it for the \$200,000 salary, that's not the right person. We need someone who cares about us--who will work with us and for us, who researches our problems and reads our history books and sets out to make a *healthier* community--not just a wealthier one.

Thank you for listening.

[Quoted text hidden]

numbers of outsiders, the decisions made by Buncombe County administration consistently hurt the existing community and make our county less livable.

Thank you for your time, peace, and love.

Thu, Aug 30, 2018 at 4:27 PM

Me:

First off, I want to be clear and honest about the fact that I am a Buncombe County employee. I'm a librarian. Obviously, I'm not here representing Buncombe County. I represent only myself tonight--and maybe my partner. I bring it up not because I believe it affords me some special status (because it doesn't), but because the only reason I knew this meeting was going on in the first place is because of an email ~~was~~ sent out to all Buncombe County employees. Other than that, I'm told that there was a press release (I looked it up--it's the size of a footnote) and a Facebook event to advertise this meeting. A poster--just one--was sent to the library where I work *after* I inquired about it. So you could find out about this meeting if you *happen* to hang out on the County Facebook, *happen* to have read the very tail end of that particular paper, or *happen* to have walked into my library recently.

This is pretty messed up. The County Manager is an vastly powerful position within our county government: this is a person in charge of (and I take these words directly from Buncombe County's own website):

- Implementing county programs and services
- Carrying out the day-to-day administration of county government
- Providing a clear vision of Buncombe County government's purpose
- and preparing the countywide recommended budget

...amongst other things. This is not an elected position. It's a hired position. A hired position in charge of "providing a clear vision of Buncombe County government's purpose," which seems enormously undemocratic to me. It's a hired position wielding a huge amount of authority, and the only sway we--the citizens--get over this decision is this public comment period, which is barely a blip on the radar. Particularly in light of the current embezzlement fiasco, this is inexcusable. To echo my partner's sentiment, the county *must* be more public and transparent in its dealings, and part of that means holding meetings at accessible times and advertising them thoroughly. It also stands out to me that this is a County issue, not a city issue, and the three public input sessions have all been held in the northern part of the county, which is also the wealthier part of the

WOMEN'S COMMISSION ASSEMBLY – AGENDA ITEM

Let's Talk comment cards were passed out at a recent Women's Commission Assembly. The following is the feedback received.

- **COMMENT:** Female of color motivated to end violence against women (via Domestic Violence, sex trafficking, poverty, prostitution...)
- **COMMENT:** Collaboration with the community has been B.C. strong suit – it is important that new County Manager be willing to make investments to strengthen those partnerships (i.e. Family Justice Center)
- **COMMENT:** The County serves as the provider of social safety net. I would like a County Manager who has a strong background in social service delivery.