

Virginia Town & City

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Number 4

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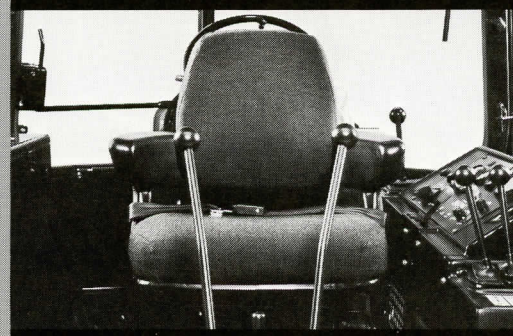
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Digging force, bucket cylinder in power dig	10,200 lb. (45 kN)	10,200 lb. (45 kN)	13,500 lb. (60 kN)
Loader			
Breakout force	7800 lb. (35 kN)	9200 lb. (41 kN)	10,600 lb. (47.1 kN)
Lift capacity	5000 lb. (2270 kg)	6180 lb. (2810 kg)	6900 lb. (3140 kg)
Raise to full height	4.4 sec.	4.5 sec.	3.8 sec.
Bucket dump	1.0 sec.	1.0 sec.	1.1 sec.
Bucket lower (power down)	3.0 sec.	3.0 sec.	3.0 sec.
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Virginia Town & City

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On The Cover

Alexandria City Manager and noted cartoonist Douglas H. Harman sketched the cover and the cartoon on page seven. He is a member of the VA Section Executive Committee. This month's issue is devoted to the council-manager form of government and to those managers and elected officials who so ably serve local government.

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People



Everson

Everson Joins VML

Christine (Christy) A. Everson became the League's publication assistant on March 7. She is responsible for advertisements and general writing assignments for *Virginia Town & City*. In the future, she will assume responsibility for LEAGUE LETTER, the VML newsletter. Other responsibilities include selling exhibits for the VML annual conference and serving as executive secretary for two affiliates of the League, the State Fire Chiefs Association of Virginia and the Municipal Electric Power Association of Virginia.

Prior to joining the League, Christy was editor of *Virginia Builder News*, the monthly newsletter of the Home Builders Association of Virginia. She also was a part-time editor of *The Late News*, the newsletter of the Home Builders Association of Richmond.

Christy holds a B.A. in English from Virginia Commonwealth Uni-

versity and has completed several courses in mass communications. She fills the vacancy left by Sandy Bacas, former staff assistant for advertising and exhibits.

Bedford Names Manager, Councilman

Jack A. Gross, former assistant city manager of Kingsport, Tennessee, is the new manager of Bedford. He holds graduate degrees in city management and communications from East Tennessee State University. Gross' appointment was effective April 1.

Walter Thomas Lazenby was appointed to the Bedford City Council. A semiretired production worker at Rubatex Corporation, Lazenby is past chairman of the city's Redevelopment and Housing Authority and currently serves on the authority's board. He also is a past member of the Central Virginia Mental Health Board.

Cook Named

Former Bedford City Manager **D. Keith Cook** is the new personnel officer for Roanoke County. Cook served as Stafford County administrator before becoming Bedford city manager in 1973.

Fire Fighter Honored

Norfolk Fire Fighter **David R. Francisco** was recently selected by the Virginia Jaycees as Outstanding Young Fire Fighter of 1982. He saved a shipyard worker who was overcome by toxic gas fumes in a tank at the bottom of a ship. He donned a chemical gas suit to reach the worker because the gas fumes were emitted by a chemical which is fatal

if absorbed through the skin. Norfolk fire fighters are first responders to life threatening medical emergencies.

Johnson Steps Down

Howard A. Johnson resigned as secretary-treasurer of the Virginia chapter of the American Water Works Association (AWWA). He helped start the organization 48 years ago and has served as secretary-treasurer for the past 17 years.

In stepping down, he was made "Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus" of the state chapter. Johnson retired from the Danville water and sewer department in 1970 as superintendent of production.

Downtown Revitalization Conference

J. Randall Evans, executive director of Richmond Renaissance, is the keynote speaker for the Downtown Revitalization Conference April 17-19 in Staunton at the Holiday Inn-Downtown. The conference is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development with program planning assistance from the Donaldson Brown Center for Continuing Education, Extension Division, Virginia Tech.

Other speakers include Tom Moriarity, program associate of the National Main Street Program, and Kent Moore, president of the International Downtown Executive Association (IDEA).

Registration is \$35, which includes some meals, coffee breaks, and a textbook. To register, contact Alexander D. Beattie, Jr. of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development at 804/786-4966. The workshop is limited to 125 persons.



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We Want News from your locality for **VIRGINIA TOWN & CITY** magazine. If you have recent appointments, a new facility or a project/program that can benefit other Virginia local governments, let us know. Contact Charlotte Kingery at 804/649-8471.

Starting the City Manager Form of Government

Giving a task to a committee usually results in delay, frustration and total loss of control.

This was evident to the Staunton City Council in 1905, when the city operated by no less than 15 committees. For a citizen to obtain a street light, he had to receive approval of the light committee and concurrence of the chairman of each legislative body. (The city had a bicameral system: a board of aldermen and a common council.) The light committee had to request the street committee to dig a hole to install the light. Payment material had to be authorized by the light, finance and audit committees, not to mention the two governing bodies.

The ineffectiveness of the system caused city leaders to search for a way to apply business practices in city operations.

Three men—John Crosby, W.O. Syndor and Hugh C. Braxton—deserve major credit for initiating the manager movement. As clerk of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors, Crosby could not see why the business affairs of the city could

not be managed in the same manner as those of the county. His idea was to "simplify the governmental machinery and replace the committees with a general manager appointed by the council, and working under the council."

Syndor, an alderman and the local agent for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, was interested in applying business management methods to correct Staunton's mismanagement. He was the first to draw a parallel between the director of a business corporation and a municipal director or city manager. Braxton, a member of the common council and the street committee, was a practical man who, when faced with a difficult problem, embraced the manager plan as the most practical solution.

On April 2, 1908, the council appointed Charles E. Ashburner of Richmond as the first general manager of Staunton. Ashburner's success as manager was highlighted by the *Staunton Daily Leader*, which cited street improvements, bridge construction and water supply ex-

tensions as part of his accomplishments. He remained manager until July, 1911.

The success of the manager plan was due to the continued support of the councilmen and aldermen who had sponsored the plan, the appointment of Ashburner and the resulting economy and efficiency in municipal operations.

—Information and part of the text were taken from *The Origin Of The City Manager Plan in Staunton, Virginia*.

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The Elected Official and The Manager

A Former Mayor Reflects on the Council-Manager Form

By Charlotte Kingery

"Think of municipal government as a business," says Richard J. Davis.

"The elected officials are the board of directors, and the management team is the executive branch. The directors set the policy, and the manager runs the show. In private business, there is a certain income level and a certain expense level and the difference either goes to undivided profits or dividends. In public business, there are income and expense levels and the dividend is the quality and quantity of services."

Dick Davis, Virginia's lieutenant governor, thinks like a businessman and a banker, and perhaps always will. But if you listen to him, he thinks like a mayor, too. He spent seven years in Portsmouth as the chief elected official, and during his tenure the city undertook some of its hardest problems. He laughs when he talks of the small card he carried in his pocket listing six projects he wanted to fulfill during his term as mayor. At the time he would occasionally grab the card out of his pocket to review where the city was and touch base with other officials and staff if necessary. He either completed or started all six projects. A record to be a little proud of and one that took a lot of work. Davis is not quick, however, to take the credit himself.

When he reminisces about his mayoral days, he says the city accomplished much because of one thing: the council-manager form of government.

"It's difficult to balance the duties of mayor and not step into the manager's shoes."

He firmly believes the council-manager form of government is best for Virginia's local governments. The idea of two separate branches, policy-making (elected officials) and executive (the management team), has brought success and growth to the Commonwealth. Davis thinks the system will



Richard J. Davis

continue to bring growth to the Commonwealth as long as each branch knows its role.

The idea that some may not know their place bothers Davis. He knows how the system works but he knows some mayors who do not—those would have "driven my managers crazy." Davis wanted a manager to whom he could communicate his ideas and who, in turn, could make them work. He had that and he is grateful.

Making It Work

But how to make the system work? First, there are ways elected officials can help managers do their jobs.

"Advise managers on priorities," Davis says. "Then, once having advised them, leave them alone to carry out the responsibilities of their offices."

"Don't try to blame everything on the manager. Very frequently, officials are willing to hide behind that shield. The elected official sometimes tells a citizen he would have liked to have done something but the manager wouldn't let him do it," he concludes.

Davis also gives advice to managers on working with elected officials.

Managers should keep council informed of good news and bad news. Never let council be surprised.

"For example, maybe during the budget hearing the manager would say the city is \$18 million short. This does not give the elected official time to prepare what needs to be a proper response and it appears that the elected official doesn't have a

handle on what's going on," he explains.

The former mayor thinks managers should always alert council to things that are going wrong, and things do go wrong. Humans aren't perfect. He suggests that managers not only relay the situation but offer possible solutions. None of the solutions may be pleasant, but at least they are alternatives. Those in management, says Davis, are more qualified, more professional and more objective and therefore, better able to recommend answers.

In spite of good feeling for the council-manager form of government, the past few years have been rough on those in the profession. According to a recent survey by the International City Management Association, a number of managers are actively seeking to leave the field. Davis, however, thinks councils and boards of supervisors can help slow that movement down.

"Elected officials must be certain that the rewards of management responsibility are recognized through fringe benefits and they must insulate managers from most of the criticism heaped upon them by citizen groups and others," he says. "Localities can attract good staff if they are willing to pay, but the council-manager form of government will never survive if local governments won't pay the person."

Davis feels there has been too much blame placed on planning directors or public works directors and too much feeling that a particular locality has a "rotten manager." Local elected officials have been unwilling to say, "It's true this person goofed, but on the balance this person has been pretty good."

Davis wants managers and administrators to have a forward thrust and be professional, but he concedes it takes courage to be professional. When he last spoke to the Virginia Section, ICMA, he charged them with the responsibility of upgrading their own profession.

"There are bound to be some rotten managers, and managers themselves need to weed them out. When such a manager is applying for a job in East Kleenex," Davis told them, "Don't write a letter of recommendation; police yourselves."

Touching Base

While Davis was mayor of Portsmouth, he had the good fortune to work with a reputable staff, particularly managers. He reviewed what good managers are made of and what traits they have.

He expects good managers to recognize that all responsibilities are placed on the governing body and again, managers need to keep their governing body informed. Even during his tenure when Portsmouth had some unrest in the police department, no news reporter ever asked him, "Do you know so and so?" He always knew what was happening.

Good managers should have the ability to communicate to the mayor, whether the mayor is elected by council or by the people. Davis recalls that people were charmed by the way Portsmouth council meetings ran. All votes were 7-0 and not all council members were of the same political inclinations, but because they were informed and knew what was going on, no unexpected issues arose. Council members were also apprised about news such as the appointment of a department head—not that they had anything to do with the appointment—but as a matter of courtesy before they read it in the newspaper.

The council-manager form of government is a two-way street. Just as the manager has the obligation to keep the council informed, it is up to the elected local official to inform the manager, pointing out that this is where officials want to go, this is what officials want to do. It gives the manager the opportunity to aim his energies and direction toward accomplishing the plan, or to say these goals are beyond realization in the particular locality. Then

council has to tailor its "over-zealous ambitions."

Davis recalled one project in which he and other members of council were interested but on which nothing was happening. He had to tell the manager he was not bringing the subject up anymore, but the project was "a very important thing for the city that they must do." The manager dropped everything and pursued it. The outcome was much beyond Davis' expectations. *Good, direct communication.*

"The governing body should never ask the manager to do something for purely political reasons."

Not every manager, of course, has such a mayor as Dick Davis. He understood the lines of responsibility and communicated very well to the management team and they to him. But it's not unreasonable for elected local officials to work on their relationships with managers. Davis feels the two can build a quality relationship by first having respect for each other.

"Both have to have respect. My advice is that if respect is not mutual, then the association should be dissolved. If I were a manager, I would never accept a job offer on a 5-4 or 10-9 vote. Likewise, if the manager doesn't have general respect for those on the governing body, then he should not accept the offer. There have been exceptions where the vote was close and the relationship was good, but not many."

Davis feels the relationship must include candor. The local elected official and the manager must share a dialogue that is open and above board.

One Weakness

"From the citizen's perception, the lack of citizen participation is one weakness we've not been able to accommodate in the council-manager form of government. Citizens complain when they call their council or board member the member simply turns the complaint over to the manager to correct. The citizen, however, is frustrated that he can't get the political person for whom he voted to directly respond. He is more frustrated by not being able to go directly to the manager but insulation is something the elected official must provide for the manager so he can do his job," says Davis.

In concluding his thoughts about the council-manager form, Davis summarizes three beliefs: "First, I believe it is the best system yet devised to deliver the services to the people at the prices they can afford to pay. Second, local elected officials should very carefully scrutinize both the responsibilities and obligations of their office. Third, managers must continue their vigilance to preserve the system. There are several places where the system is not regarded as highly as I've just graded it. Their performance of excellence is the best argument for the perpetuation of the system."

VBOA Holds 1983 Mid-Year Meeting

President Edward J. Weld, building official, Culpeper County, presided over the 1983 Mid-Year Meeting of the Virginia Building Officials Association.

Approximately 75 members attended the one-day meeting February 28, 1983 in Richmond.

The VBOA Meritorious Service Award, given annually during the business session of the Mid-Year meeting, was presented to Joseph Bertoni, chief building inspector of Fairfax County, for his outstanding service in the building code profession.

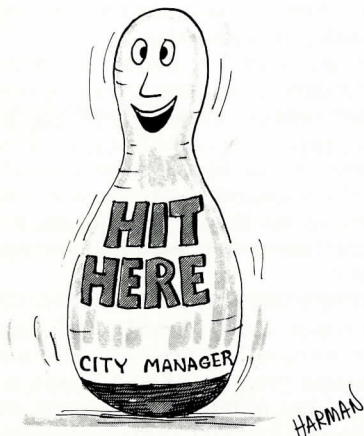
Bertoni, chairman of the VBOA Code Change Committee, gave a presentation on the proposed code changes.

Jack Proctor, building code director, Department of Housing and Community Development, led a discussion on the ETS examination. James R. Lowery, construction engineer II, Fairfax County, and Robert Gregory, state building code supervisor, Department of Housing and Community Development, offered attendees helpful information on how to take a test.

The VBOA endeavors to promote the interest and welfare of the building construction code enforcement agencies, and to promote a closer more informed relationship among those engaged in the profession of building construction code administration and enforcement within Virginia.

Membership applications can be obtained by writing Joni Terry, Executive Director, VBOA, P.O. Box 753, Richmond, Virginia 23206 or calling 804/649-8471.

The 1983 VBOA Annual School and Conference will be held December 4-7, 1983 at the Holiday Inn, Hampton, Virginia.



CITIZEN ASSISTANCE ROLE

Which Way Is Up?

From Manager To Assistant

By W. Robert Herbert

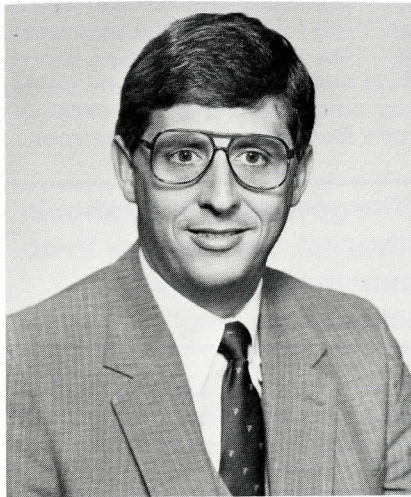
Career development is a result of both opportunity and individual decisions. While the decision to enter the field of municipal management may have been made in college, the decision of how to advance is made each time a job change is considered. If the decision is strictly one of taking or making an opportunity, the groundwork of solid experience may contain gaps. If the decision is made on the basis of building extensive experience to be prepared for greater opportunities, the decision is one of planning for the future.

A career move which leaves behind both status and title as the head of the chain of command should not be presumed to be a move downward. An outward movement, the widening of horizons, may be more significant in developing a career.

In my case, I had been an assistant to the city manager in Bowling Green, Kentucky (population 36,000), and later became city manager of Covington, Virginia (population 10,000). I then moved to director of administration and public safety for the City of Roanoke (population 100,000+) and later to assistant city manager. I regard this as a step outward... as a means of gaining breadth of experience which ultimately will allow me more freedom to develop my career. My career potential is greater because my urban city experience will complement my small and medium population experiences. Other benefits of the change were in salary and lifestyle but the main factor was the option to be master of my future. Growth comes from new experience, not from repetition.

From Small To Large

The problems of a major full service city are vastly different from those of a small city. Moving to an urban environment required me to replace my direct hand of administration with one of delegation of re-



sponsibility. One of the hardest lessons I have learned is the delegation of management, which differs vastly from delegation of detail. In management, accountability rests with the delegator and decisions rest upon the quality of those to whom one delegates. I've not only learned to deal with the infrastructure but in greater measure with human behavior and motivation. I've learned to recognize the differing agendas, the myopic view of some technical specialists, the search for power among others, and the departmentalized structures' vision or lack of vision of the total city. These factors are not peculiar to Roanoke but universal, and learning to allow for them is an essential part of management.

An additional layer of the decision process also exists. As assistant, my decisions must be affirmed by those above and below me. The group process becomes reality since a consensus is required to assure that all objectives are met. Also, anticipation of alternatives becomes vital to the process.

While I must deal primarily with the workings of the city, I must also deal with the media because issues featured in the headlines can create imbalances and force attention to factors not always in the best interest of good management. In a small jurisdiction, the media is not such a concern because three television stations, a full-time newspaper reporter and several radio stations are not analyzing and reviewing everything management does. But effi-

ciency can be influenced by public interest created in response to the news.

Whatever the problem, I must be both proactive and reactive. Part of the role of an assistant city manager is to test proposals for change. Another role is to refine issues by assuring that all possible contingency plans are made prior to effecting change. Unlike the private sector, government usually does not encourage innovation be tested or promoted.

Budgeting has become less a matter of funding essentials and more a matter of optimum use of resources. Sometimes the gain in interest from investment will provide a better use of funds than expediting project timetables. Sometimes the project resistance must be weighed against the benefits to be accomplished. Thus the use of funds becomes a matter of judgment rather than of achievement. Developing an orderly and meaningful budget system has been one challenge I can attend to in detail. Furthermore, the process expands my comprehension of the urban city infinitely.

Ego Impact

The psychological impact of my outward versus upward move (as usually defined by one's peers) has involved many adjustments. High visibility allows for a certain amount of ego stroking. I've gone from prominence to low visibility. I no longer get credit outside of the organization for my ideas (good or bad). I was formerly recognized on the street; I am scarcely known outside the staff today.

In addition, my sense of having an impact on history through local government has been eroded by the fact I no longer make the final decisions. I must be satisfied with the innate knowledge of my contributions rather than by footnotes and signatures giving credit to my perception.

Where once my personality could dominate, today I must mesh mine with others. The restrictions could frustrate me, but I know I have enlarged my options. I am using my skills and increasing my knowledge to enable my future. My career development is in my hands.

About The Author
Mr. Herbert is assistant city manager of Roanoke, Virginia.

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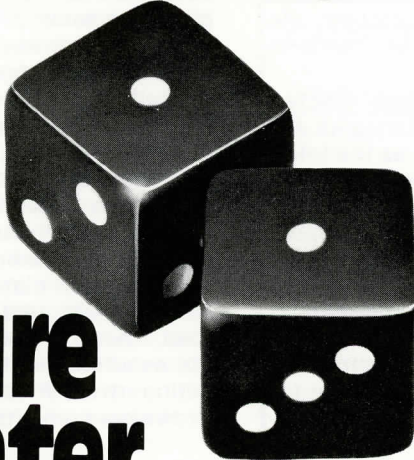
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Louis Brownlow

A Giant in Public Administration

By Edward A. Wyatt

The first city manager of Petersburg was one of America's outstanding persons in the field of public administration. "Brownie," as Louis Brownlow was affectionately called, came to Petersburg from Washington, D.C., where he had served as president of the Board of Commissioners. He was appointed to this post by President Woodrow Wilson, whom he knew while working as a newspaper reporter.

During his service in Petersburg, he was responsible for developing a number of positive programs. His success in Petersburg was largely due to his ability to establish a rapport with the leadership in the community. In his autobiography, *A Passion for Anonymity*, Brownlow demonstrates how a manager can establish effectiveness in a community.

Petersburg

Under his leadership, Petersburg established a health center and initiated a number of new programs, including a well-baby clinic which helped to reduce infant mortality. He was instrumental in creating the first Petersburg public library and through his efforts, a summer recreation program was developed in coordination with the public schools and the 700 acre Lee Park was brought about.

Many public works improvements were made during his tenure, such as the construction of nine and one-half miles of sewer collection lines and the laying of eight miles of water mains. Surface toilets were reduced to 400 from 1900.

In the area of internal functions, he developed a centralized purchasing system and established a modern accounting system. Brownlow was responsible for major changes, including the creation of the Department of Public Safety and the position of student assistant to the city manager, to emphasize a professional approach to municipal management.

About the Author

Mr. Wyatt is the city manager of Fairfax City. He gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Hirst Sutton of Falls Church, a member of the Northern Virginia Planning Board.



Brownlow was Petersburg's first city manager, a founder of the Virginia Municipal League and served as its president in 1921. The above photograph is of an oil painting of Brownlow in 1945.

In 1921 he was elected president of the Virginia Municipal League and was responsible for locating the League's permanent office in Richmond. At the same time, Morton L. Wallerstein, an attorney and public-spirited person, was appointed permanent secretary. He later offered his legal assistance to the VML.

In 1922 Brownlow was elected president of the City Managers Association (known today as the International City Management Association) at their annual meeting held in Kansas City. Elected in a close race, he defeated an opponent who was a trained engineer. Engineers at that time were by far the predominant discipline in the profession. While president, he was responsible for establishing a permanent home for the association in Lawrence, Kansas, in connection with the University of Kansas and appointing the association's first director.

Brownlow became the first city manager of Knoxville, Tennessee in 1924. The political environment was extremely difficult as the community had experienced problems with

corruption. Some of his major contributions included reorganization of municipal offices and functions, improvement of the municipal hospital and an unprecedented refunding of 10 percent of the tax levy. But the tremendous demands of his work caused him ill health. He resigned his post in 1927 and briefly resumed his career as a journalist. He later served for several years as a municipal consultant for Radburn, New Jersey.

During his local government and association work, he saw the need to improve information in the public administration field. Through his relationship with the Spelman Foundation, Brownlow prepared a plan for a governmental information clearinghouse. The Public Administration Clearinghouse (PACH) was started in 1931, and "Brownie" served as its director from 1931-1945.

One of his initial tasks was to encourage associations of state and local officials to "cluster" in Chicago. His leadership resulted in the construction of a center for these organizations, referred to as "1313," at the University of Chicago. Later the various public associations relocated in Washington, D.C.

He was appointed chairman of the President's Committee on Administrative Management by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936. Brownlow believed that the president must be given the tools with which to manage the government, and his committee's recommendations were drafted into legislation in 1937. Even though the legislation was defeated, the Reorganization Act of 1939 included many recommendations from Brownlow's committee. In particular, authorization was given for the president to submit reorganization plans to Congress which would take effect if not vetoed. The first such plan called for the establishment of the Executive Office of the President, one of the Brownlow committee proposals.

Influencing the Manager Profession

Brownlow's influence on the city manager profession was treated in Richard J. Stillman II's book *The Rise of the City Manager*. He commented:

"As Richard Childs had played an important role in fostering the council-manager plan, perhaps no individual was more instrumental than Louis Brownlow in creating the city manager's professional identity. As ICMA president, he had campaigned for a professional focus to the organization's work."

Throughout his lifetime, Brownlow was active in ICMA affairs and he participated regularly in ICMA conferences. He worked on behalf of ICMA to develop working relationships with foundations and the academic community. These relationships were valuable to ICMA in research projects and in its efforts to foster professionalism in local government.

A Missouri native educated at home by his parents, "Brownie" received honorary degrees from both American University and Syracuse University. Besides his two-volume autobiography, he wrote *The President and the Presidency*, reflecting his interest in, and understanding of, the job of national chief executive.

Brownlow died in 1963 at the age of 84 while addressing a meeting of Northern Virginia city and county managers at the Army-Navy Country Club in Arlington. He had requested the opportunity to talk with them, just one example of his interest in local government managers. Bert W. Johnson, who at that time was manager of Arlington County, presided over the meeting.

Louis Brownlow's contributions to the emerging field of public administration were far reaching. He enhanced the development of professional administrators in the public sector, facilitated the exchange of information in public administration, encouraged the growth of public associations, and, of course, provided great leadership in the establishment of a modern executive branch of the federal government.

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A Whale Has Beached in Luray Caverns

Managing With a Sense of Humor

By Don Smith

Did you ever think you might be taking yourself too seriously? Consider this: It's your first day managing in a new town and you are determined to create an image of total efficiency. The town clerk informs you that there are three building inspections, four electrical inspections and two plumbing inspections due. The sewer superintendent wants grade stakes set to lay the new sewer line on Third Street.

You say, "Fine and dandy. Get the building, electrical and plumbing inspectors on it right away and tell the town engineer to set the stakes. Give this agenda to my secretary to type up for council."

At this point the clerk lets you in on the scheme of things. You are all three inspectors AND the town engineer. Furthermore, the council hasn't seen the necessity for an executive secretary during the past four administrations and is not about to set a precedent for you. The clerk quickly leaves muttering something about your having a good day.

When I came to Luray, I learned the layout of the town. So everyone would marvel at my total recall, I memorized the location of streets and landmarks and even carried a town map home at night.

Longtime residents didn't hesitate to call with complaints but they seldom gave a street address. Therefore, my knowledge of streets and landmarks didn't help when they said they lived next door to "Hotshot Housden", right across the street from Ida Mae Dovel who has that three-legged dog. They were shocked I didn't know that. I usually replied, "If you ever get to Roanoke, look up my sister. She lives next door to the Scotts out by Cave Spring."

People who live in small towns are creatures of habit. Luray installed a sophisticated new traffic system at a busy intersection placing signals on three streets and a large, brightly-colored stop sign on the fourth street. Pictures and diagrams were published in the local



Don Smith tells the officer, "I was only doing 75!"

paper two weeks prior to placing the system in operation. The new stop sign was promptly run over and destroyed eight times in four days. One lady even ran over it twice. I'm afraid to change the intersection back to its original design now that they seem to have the hang of it.

One time when I arrived in a new town, neighbors on my street dropped by to tell me how glad they were to have me as a neighbor. Now they would get the improvements they deserved. I explained that, due to my position and a possible conflict, the street would be last on the priority list. The next night they showed up at the council meeting to complain that they have problems the manager wouldn't correct. Worse, my wife had volunteered to be their spokesperson.

Survival

A survival technique I have used over the years is to develop some standard answers to fit most occasions. Here are some useful hints:

1. An irate citizen calls to complain he is out of hot water and demand I turn it back on so he can finish his shower. Answer: "The power company let Washington borrow our electricity today—call them."

2. A local attorney calls to say one of his clients got a radar ticket and, since the attorney is in Rotary with me, he wants the police chief to "fix" it. Answer: "I can't, he's already fixed his quota for this month."

3. A council member asks why the watertank can't be placed down in the valley next to the water pumps "to save money on all that expensive pipe to pump water way up on that hill where a tank will be an eyesore." Answer: "A brilliant idea; unfortunately, we have already bought the pipe from your cousin."

4. The garden club asks that town crews trim the shrubs the club planted around town because the members have arthritis. Answer: "We'd love to, and since we have a surplus of weed killer, we'll spray them next week."

5. A senior citizen suggests that since there is no taxi service in town, the police could take older folks shopping in the cruisers "because all they do is ride around town, anyhow." Answer: "I'm afraid our high band radios will stop their pacemakers."

6. A citizen asks that I make a neighbor move his fence back 20

About The Author

Mr. Smith is town manager of Luray, Virginia. Luray, located about 90 miles from Washington, D.C., has about 4,000 citizens.

feet because his cows stare at him when he eats. Answer: "I'll turn that over to the cow committee."

Speaking of committees, I've learned in small towns that what some thought were the manager's functions are now handled by council committees. Some resent this but committees can be useful to managers.

For example, a group approached me about an infestation of cats in their neighborhood. The cats were owned by a sweet old lady whom everyone liked so I thanked them and told them I turned the problem over to the "cat committee."

In another instance, a homeowner wanted the town to cut down a tree she thought would fall on her house but her neighbor was a tree lover. The solution? I told both that council had appointed them to a two-person tree committee and when they reached a decision, report it to council.

There are times, obviously, when managers should not have a ready answer. Never, never tell an irate citizen:

- The water tastes strange because two snakes got ground up in the water pump.
- The garbage didn't get picked up this week because town employees went deer hunting.
- The snowplow closed their driveway after they cleared it because the driver is the wife's ex-husband.
- The neighbor's tax bill is lower than their's because the neighbor's brother is the commissioner of revenue.
- The mayor's driveway got cleaned by town crews because he has to attend the town office party.

The main thing to remember is never get too serious and try to keep a low profile. I forgot this cardinal rule some years back when I entered and won VML Achievement Awards two years in a row. Now council keeps asking what I've done lately, and I am stalling until I can think of something. I certainly hope I can stall until my retirement.

One last thing to remember is this. When all else fails, managers

should act as if they are really busy and don't have time to handle the problem. For example, the mayor says the State Water Control Board is on the telephone demanding to know why the sewer plant violated regulations five times last week. Answer: "Tell them not to bother me right now with their petty questions. Our town drunk has quit and gone on to a promotion in Winchester's downtown mall. Now I have to develop an affirmative action plan to hire a replacement,"

or

"A whale has beached in Luray Caverns and we have to get him back to Hawksbill Creek."



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Managing Human Services

Putting The Job In the Manager's Office

By Charlotte Kingery

The clients now are the "new poor," and there aren't less of them but more of them. Helping them deal with not having a workplace is one hurdle but the problem of unemployment leads to others like child abuse, divorce and the humiliation of applying for food stamps. Eligibility workers don't have time to adequately assist every client—less staff for one thing, more paperwork for another. So, how are Virginia localities managing?

Many managers are creating a new slot in their offices to oversee what most agree is the most complex function in local government: human services. Some are deputy managers while others are assistants. Although some are not physically in the manager's office, they are nearby and considered a key member of the management team.

Currently only a handful of Virginia local governments have assistants in the manager's office for this function, but the position is widely used by large urban counties throughout the country. In Virginia, the first known position of this type was created in Norfolk in the early 1970's.

Linking the job to the manager's office gives the person top management support and direction needed for success. According to *Managing Human Services*, being in the manager's office gives the position leverage and power to "effectively pull together the locality's human services efforts." The assistant needs access to the manager and the manager should delegate enough authority to help the assistant get things done.

Reaganomics and the new federalism, which eliminated a good portion of the human services funds and partially contributed to unemployment, has made human services more visible. Citizens are talking to their elected officials about the situation, and management, with a reduced budget, is trying to meet the needs of new clients.

"In the past, localities concentrated on the infrastructure but now there has to be a proper balance among the needs of the communi-



Roanoke's Human Resources Director James Ritchie and City Manager Bern Ewert review the city's latest plans.

ty," explains James City County Assistant Darlene Burcham.

Changing Direction

Responding to the unemployment dilemma, most localities are getting their manpower programs in gear. They believe that employment is a major factor in helping the individual. This is especially true for those seeking assistance from the mental health department.

Last year, the Virginia General Assembly mandated a employment services program for each locality requiring those in the Aid to Dependent Children and General Relief programs to look for work to receive benefits. Obviously, some clients in these programs are exempt but still Virginia localities must assist about 25,000 people seeking jobs.

Recently Henrico County publicized its new program to help unemployed parents who, for the first time, abuse their children because of their own joblessness. Other localities are conducting classes to help the juvenile who can't find work.

Coupled with unemployment are health problems. A person often finds he is out of work, has no medical insurance and is ineligible for certain assistance because of the new eligibility requirements of federal and state governments.

Robert Masden, Chesterfield County's human resource director, is surprised at the line outside the health clinic everyday and at the backlog of mental health department patients who previously went elsewhere for assistance which they can no longer afford. Still other local governments are putting emer-

gency services—food, clothing and shelter—first and trying to aid the clients lacking the essentials and in life threatening situations.

Ironically these problems are making human services visible in another way. Human service agencies, both private and public, are taking notice of one another. Out of necessity they are sharing resources to reach the "new poor," and maintain basic levels of services.

George Drumwright, Henrico County's deputy county manager for human resources, talks about "cross services" like the school system working with the health department, social services sharing responsibilities with mental health and the courts, and schools joining parks and recreation. The team concept is used more and more. If one department can't do it, maybe another one can.

Darlene Burcham created a council in James City County that looks at social problems. In Hampton, where George Wallace is the assistant city manager, the city located its human service agencies in a vacant school building. Here residents visit social services, health, the employment commission, clinics and dental facilities and CETA in one trip. Communication among agencies makes this arrangement attractive, too. Every two months Wallace holds a meeting of the human resources coalition so staff can exchange information on a formal basis in addition to the daily communication from working in the same building.

Portsmouth's Wayne Orton believes there is a greater amount of

(Continued on page 16)

About The Author
Ms. Kingery is editor of *Virginia Town & City*.

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sophistication among departments; networking existed but not to the degree it does now. Eligibility workers in the health department now take applications for ADC and food stamps, which cuts unnecessary trips to the department of social services for clients. Also, the city has assigned workers, who determine eligibility for state and local hospitalization, to its two municipal hospitals.

Reaching Out

Most of these assistants are in a changing role. Previously they were tied to their prospective offices but now they are coming out from behind their desks and going into the community.

While Roanoke Human Resources Director James Ritchie's involvement in job training was to supervise social services and other city agencies in the matter, recent changes in the CETA program and the unemployment problem have put him in contact with private agencies and companies. Now the problem is handled with a partnership approach.

Henrico's Drumwright frequently trades information with groups in the metro Richmond area and feels the need to cooperate.

"It's good to know what is being provided in the area and to let others know we'll do this if you'll do that," he notes. Last year, Richmond area localities worked with Metro Richmond Chamber of Commerce and United Way to assess the impacts of funding cuts on social service agencies and to relay that information to corporations and businesses that wanted to steer corporate contributions to agencies in need.

"It doesn't hurt to be a politician."

Even though strides have been made in human services and people are beginning to work together, the position still holds much frustration for assistant managers or human resource directors. In *Managing Human Services*, the question is asked, "How much can be accomplished by a single individual?" Most agree people in these positions must be exceptionally talented and creative and have highly developed diplomatic skills to survive.

In fact, the main headache of the job is evaluating the human services rendered. Human services cannot be judged by how many miles of road are paved, or how

many buildings are built or how many businesses are established. Sometimes public assistance rolls decrease, but the locality never knows what happens to these people. Once off assistance, the file is closed and not reopened unless the person needs help later.

Also, human service people are dictated by rules and regulations beyond those other municipal staff follow. The number of policies not only baffle them but the regulations create clients who "fall through the cracks." They need help but the locality can't assist them because they aren't eligible. Additionally, regulations hinder the potential of localities sharing information and eliminating duplication.

While everyone else seems to be going to the computer age, this area of local government is behind. Hampton's Wallace suggests that if all the information could be put in a computer and management techniques applied, the whole system may work better.

"It would be great if Hampton could put their in-take system in a computer so staff could punch out the information they need to assist a client," he says, "but there are too many laws, regarding privacy and freedom of information, that preclude it."

Hampton tried to devise a system years ago but gave up when it appeared it could not be accom-

Hiring The HS Assistant

Some localities have asked the League about creating an assistant manager position in human services. While it may be good that the person has experience in social services, or a related field, some think that it is unnecessary since the main skill needed is management. In fact, one person thought it was better that the assistant not have a background in social services since researching the in's and out's of the field caused him to ask questions that led to a better way to do things. Also, knowledge of telecommunications and experience in computers and finance are helpful.

Traditionally counties have played a larger role in direct delivery of human services than have cities. What is good for one, may be inappropriate for the other. According to *Managing Human Services*, though, a small city with relatively scarce funding resources may be wise to go for the "human services coordinator operating out of the manager's office."

plished. Other localities have experienced similar problems, although Roanoke may explore it later this year.

"Because we are strapped for manpower, there isn't time for creative thinking—like how can we do this job better?" George Wallace

Although human resource managers are now working with others in the community and enhancing their own communication with department heads, most concede it was a long road getting to this point. Often the assistant had to consider the personalities and backgrounds involved in order to accomplish the goal of delivering the best services. In fact, these assistants are managing groups that have traditionally stood separate because each was created by a categorical grant or a public law. These groups often fight being coordinated or consolidated because they would lose their identity. But there have been some victories.

One assistant tells how he worked with the community services board to help merge 14 programmatic budgets into one so that by merging budgets, they would merge services, too. The board then had the maximum ability to provide services.

Future Changes

Along with meeting budget restraints, human service assistants will continue to assist those who are unemployed. Chesterfield has recently asked area employers to try to keep those with alcoholic problems employed. The purpose was two-fold. First, by keeping the person employed, no additional problems should arise and, second, the county can collect a fee on a sliding scale basis if the person continues to work. In times of funding shortages, more people will be served if the county charges a fee and, more important, the client is likely to be committed to the assistance he receives if he pays for it.

Localities are directing their efforts toward educational programs, not only for parents in child abuse and juvenile situations, but also for the private sector as to why it should get and stay involved.

Prevention programs will expand. After finding that research shows it costs government approximately \$1 million to care for a severely mental-

(Continued on page 18)



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(Human Services, from 17)

ly retarded person, Chesterfield is stepping up its efforts to teach expectant mothers about health and screen small children to detect any problems that may be corrected early in life.

Summary

Despite the frustrations and curtailed funding, localities will continue to solve social problems in their localities and work with groups—from the manager's office.

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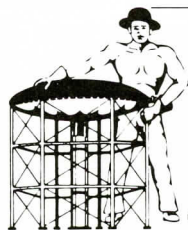
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Response to New Procurement Act

In January of this year, the Virginia Municipal League surveyed approximately 50 localities of all sizes to determine their response to the new Act. The following summarizes some of the findings:

- 1) A few towns under 3,500 in population have adopted procurement ordinances since passage of the Act although these towns had no obligation under the Procurement Act to do so. These ordinances largely embody competitive principles and frequently incorporate or parallel the policy provisions of the new Act. In most cases, the ordinances represent the first comprehensive procurement ordinances of the locality.
- 2) All localities surveyed over 3,500 in population except one have adopted or are in the process of adopting alternative policies to the nonmandatory provisions in the Act.
- 3) All localities over 3,500 in population (which have adopted a new procurement ordinance) now have procurement policies that at least generally parallel the nonmandatory sections of the new Act. Several of these localities adopted ordinances with procurement policies nearly identical to the new Procurement Act and some incorporated by reference specific sections in the new Act. The new Act thus will result in considerable uniformity in purchasing procedures at the local level.

- 4) Eighty-nine percent of the localities between 3,500 and 20,000 in population indicated that they did not have a comprehensive procurement ordinance prior to the adoption of the new Act—that is more than three or four paragraphs in their code or charter. But only 59 percent of the localities between 3,500 and 30,000 in population indicated that passage of their new ordinance would substantially revise their purchasing practices. For localities over 20,000 in population, the percentages are 50 percent and 11 percent respectively. These figures suggest that although a majority of localities did not have comprehensive procurement ordinances prior to the adoption of the 1982 Procurement Act, many of these same counties, cities or towns practiced competitive purchasing policies.
- 5) A number of localities adopted provisions somewhat more stringent than the policies set forth in the Act. Roanoke and Hampton, for example, require publication in an official newspaper to advertise purchases over \$10,000. The Procurement Act simply authorizes newspaper publication as one alternative method of notice.
- 6) Several localities took advantage of establishing a debarment policy by which prospective contractors may be debarred from contracting with the locality. The establishment of debarment policies at the local level is relatively new to Virginia. The inclusion of such policies is not surprising in light of recent revelations of bid rigging schemes involving procurement at the local level.



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