City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: Lawrence E. Pierce Home Phone #: 828-253-1443

Street Address: 26 Bayonne Trail City: Asheville, North Zip Code: 28804

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: None

Position: none Office Phone # _____

Resident of City of Asheville (required): ● Yes □ No

Registered Voter in the City of Asheville (required): ● Yes □ No

Race: White Sex: Male Age: 63

Residence location (check one) Central ____ North ● South ____ East ____ West ____

Additional Information Required:

1. Resume
2. ½ page response to the essay questions below: (not attached)

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com
Lawrence E Pierce
Key: 995995faaf5d01d33d35162fad52adcf

Applicant Signature
Date: 08/12/2020

All applications and attachments must be
Returned by **Noon, Thursday, August 20**, 2020 to:

Maggie Burleson, City Clerk
PO Box 7148
Asheville, NC 28802
Email: mburleson@ashevillenc.gov
Phone: 828-259-5601

RESUME

Lawrence E. Pierce
26 Bayonne Trail
Asheville, North Carolina 28804
301-537-1818
larrypierce921@gmail.com

Career Objective

A position in the public sector as a manager which would allow me to fully utilize my educational background and municipal experience.

Experience

1996 - 2016

Director, Department of Community Services, City of Bowie, Maryland - Population 54,727 (2010)

Responsibilities:
Daily management and supervision of ten department divisions within the Department of Community Services including Animal Control, Rental Housing Inspection/Code Compliance, Public Buildings and Grounds, Senior Citizen Services, Youth Services Bureau, Special Events, Parks Maintenance/ Storm Water Management, Historic Properties/Museums (5), Ice Arena and Gymnasium.

Preparation and administration of annual departmental budget. Annual Operating Budget $15M (FY16) and CIP $5M (FY16).

Coordination and oversight of Capital Budget Projects. Examples of prior projects: Bowie Senior Center ($3.5 million), Parks & Grounds/SWM maintenance facility - LEEDS Certified Silver ($4.0 million), Ice Arena Renovations ($1.4 million), Belair Stable Museum Renovations ($600,000).

Authored Construction Grant of $575,000 for new Senior Center approved by the Maryland Department of Aging (2001).

Recruitment, hiring and supervision of all division management staff.

Serve as liaison for nine Council-appointed volunteer committees.

Prepare Code/Ordinance amendments and additions to improve enforcement of local laws.

Signature approval for all purchasing requests.

Prepare correspondence for and represent the City Manager as directed.

1988 - 1996

City Administrative Officer
City of New Carrollton, Maryland - 12,002 population, $3.3 Million-Dollar Budget

Responsibilities:
Directly supervise daily operations of city government and attend all workshops and general meetings of the Mayor and City Council.

Preparation and Implementation of Annual Budget.

City Purchasing Officer and administration of all capital and professional services contracts over $2,500.00.

Coordination of a one million dollar bond issuance for the reconstruction of the City's Public Works Facility.

Automation of the City's accounting system.

Revision of cash investment policies to assure collateralization which increased interest income 79% over a two-year period.

Implementation of a business personal property and inventory tax and coordinated plans for an ongoing recodification of local ordinances.

Initiated the creation of annual capital and vehicle replacement funds to effectively address future building and fleet purchasing requirements.

1/84-7/88

Town Manager - November 1985 to July 1988
Assistant Town Manager - January 1984 to November 1985
Town of Capitol Heights, Maryland – Population 4,000, Annual Budget 1 Million Dollars

Responsibilities:

Preparation and Implementation of Annual Municipal Budget

State Enterprise Zone Administrator-Implement an economic redevelopment master plan for extensive office and retail development adjacent to the Capitol Heights Metrorail subway station.

Rezoning Coordinator -A 160-acre industrial park was created by this process and construction was initiated in 1988.

Community Development Block Grant Administrator-Administered 1.2 million in Block Grant funds for street and curb reconstruction, sidewalks, stormwater culvert improvements, property acquisitions, engineering/ design contracts and business expansion through restrictive deeds of trust.

Town Pension Plan Administrator/and Insurance Benefits and Compensation Administrator

Coordinator - A 325 townhouse unit development which began construction in Spring 1988, completed Summer 1991.

User fee program introduction for waste disposal

Opening of a National Church Residences 84 unit senior citizen apartment complex, January 1987; also served on facility's Board of Governors.

Revision of municipal code of ordinances

1981- 1983 Administrative Aide to the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks City of Rockville, Maryland

Responsibilities:

Administrator - Rockville Civic Center Complex - This 100 acre facility is utilized for conferences.

Administrator - Rockville Senior Center - This position required the coordination of an 800-member facility which provided a variety of recreational and social services to senior adults in Rockville. Duties included the oversight of staff, the development of operating regulations and rental fee structures and serving as staff liaison to Center Commissions and committees.

Author - Proposed Ten-Year Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space for the City of Rockville, Maryland.
Supervised the 1983 installation of a new security alarm and fire detection system for City owned buildings.

Coordinator - Courthouse Square Park Grand Opening Festival 1982. This 1.5 million dollar facility is an example of an urban renewal program which has become the site of continuous arts and crafts shows, flea markets and antique shows.

1978- 1980 Part-time employment with Sears, Roebuck and Co. in the Delinquent Accounts Division, fulltime from May 1979 to August 1980.

1977 Half-year internship with the Environmental Policy Institute, 317 Penna. Ave. S.E., Washington, D.C. Attended Congressional hearings, met leading experts in the nuclear field, familiarized myself with the files of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission pertinent to nuclear safety and prepared and presented a manuscript entitled Low Level Radiation Effects in Humans.

1975- 1976 David Taylor Naval Ship Research and Development Center, Carderock, Md. Stock Manager

Introduced a technique to facilitate the reordering of supplies which was endorsed and implemented by the department.

Education

1980- 1981 The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania
Master of Public Administration, M.P.A.

3.5 cumulative average. Relevant coursework includes such areas as Theory of Public Administration, Government Manpower Management, Government Fiscal Decision-making, Administrative Law, Labor Relations in the Public Sector, and Methods of Program Analysis.

1975- 1979 The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
B.A., major in International Affairs, minor in International Politics

Memberships International City and County Managers Association - Full Member Maryland City and County Managers Association
Maryland Municipal League
Former member, Maryland Public Finance Officers Association
Former Board Member, Gateway Village; an 84 unit Senior Citizen Housing Project in Capitol Heights, MD
2001 Recipient of an ICMA Award in recognition of twenty years of Local Government Service.

References Available upon request.

The following questions may be answered directly on this form, or responses uploaded as attachments upon form submission.

1. **With the death of George Floyd the country was thrust into a new civil rights movement. Policing in America was scrutinized even more and even here locally reparations were passed. Please explain if you believe that systemic racism and oppression exist, if yes do you or do you not support reparations and what it all means in the context of equity and Inclusion.**

Regrettably yes.

Both the City Council and Buncombe County Board of Commissioners have recently passed resolutions regarding reparations. The focus of the reparations is aimed at improving educational opportunities, Black home ownership and business ownership, and disparities in health care and the justice system. Some of these issues are included in the City's strategic priorities and in the County's strategic plan.

There exists some debate as to whether reparations are the responsibility of Congress or local jurisdictions. Evanston, Illinois is the only other example I am aware of that has undertaken this issue and will have a final plan available for legislative action later this year. Certainly this plan will be of interest to the City of Asheville. Until federal legislation occurs, it is incumbent on the City of Asheville to implement the creation of the Community Reparations Committee which will make much needed concrete recommendations for programs and resources to be used for reparations implementation.

The past several months have brought increased awareness to citizens of repetitive systemic issues related to police. I believe the atmosphere exists now to make these bold initiatives. This is evidenced in the removal of civil war monuments/statues and numerous protests. We need to recognize and acknowledge where we are as a nation falling short of where we want to be and more importantly where we need to be.

The City has established a Department of Equity and Inclusion that is providing guidance and direction. These concepts of equity and inclusion are being integrated into the organizational culture and are critical elements for our future growth.

2. **Do you support Black Asheville Demands call for defunding the APD by 50%? If no, please explain why and if yes, what sort of timeline do you envision to reach that goal?**

With increased awareness of civil rights and the role of police in our communities, "defunding the police" has become a popular demand from people and communities across the country. "Defunding" used as a term relates to a call for a decrease in funds used for police service and encourages their reallocation to other areas, primarily focusing on support services that divest/invest/ as stated by City Manager Campbell.
The greater issue is the reallocation of funds, and not specific percentages. The 50% number is not achievable without understanding the police budget as a whole. At 179 fte's and a budget of over $30 million proposed for the current fiscal year, elected officials and the public need to understand the scope of services provided. Although the budget provides data on calls per sworn officer, percentages cleared and the percent responded to within 20 seconds, I do not believe that provides sufficient information for residents. A more reasonable approach would be to evaluate current staffing levels by police district, each shift level staffing, and call taken by each shift. This would identify the most effective staffing levels and allow for the proper number of investigation and support staff. I have seen this done by the International City and County Management Association located in Washington, DC, and recommend this as an option for the City of Asheville.
Performing an analysis of what we are providing versus the actual demand/need and perception of such services would help provide a road map for the City and its residents.
The budget document needs to do a better job in documenting the police department's efforts via the use of workload and performance indicators, clearer objectives within the year and deadlines, not just a blanket statement for the year, and include a breakdown of personnel services (fte's), contractual services and commodities within the budget document by fiscal year. There is no data showing items such as residential burglary, commercial burglary, assaults, auto thefts, robbery reports, theft reports, moving violation tickets, etc.
Addressing the public's concerns is critical, but a road map and better information is needed. Reductions in police expenditures using the CAHOOTS method in Portland and Eugene Oregon, for example, is one proven way to address problems dealing with non-violent situations not requiring a police response. Their efforts focus on a first response for crises dealing with mental illness, homelessness, addiction and suicide while applying a de-escalation approach. These are not law enforcement officers, and do not carry weapons yet can handle non-emergency medical issues avoiding transport and emergency room treatment. Last year, out of 24,000 CAHOOTS calls, police backup was only requested 150 times. Their budget of 2.1 million allowed them to answer 17% of the Eugene Police Department's calls, saving the City

3. **Explain why you want to serve on City Council.**

My interest in serving the citizens of Asheville is based on my 30 plus years as a local government manager/employee in Maryland where I worked for 4 municipalities. At two of those, I was hired as the Town Administrator and the City Administrative Officer, and a third as a Department Head in charge of the newly developed Department of Community Services, My education background includes a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the Pennsylvania State University. During these experiences, I had the unique opportunity to serve and work with elected officials on a wide variety of projects and issues.

My background includes experience with federal and state grants, major capital project design, development, funding and construction, human resources, risk management, health and benefits programs, standardizing capital equipment acquisitions, addressing facility deficiencies, providing staff reports, the preparation of the annual budget and the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. I have worked in municipalities that had their own police department, contractual county officers assigned to the municipality, and finally a community without police that subsequently established one that had an adopted budget of $12.8 million in 2020. I have supervised Animal Control, Code Compliance, Recreation, Parks and Park Facilities, Stormwater Management, Historic Properties, a Youth Services Bureau, a Gymnasium, a Senior Citizens facility and Special Events.

I have been a resident of Asheville since December of 2015. It is evident that the Council vacancy has occurred at a critical time in the City of Asheville's history. It is imperative that someone with considerable background that understands the role and importance of this position be appointed as soon as possible. I believe my background and knowledge is consistent with the needs of the City Council.

Since arriving here, I completed the Leadership Asheville for Seniors program at UNCA's OLLI program which provided an excellent opportunity to learn about the pressing issues in our community via hands-on service projects, discussions with community leaders and visits to key facilities. I currently volunteer at Habitat for Humanity in South Asheville; Homeward Bound in Woodfin, and with Manna on Sweeten Creek Rd. I am also a reserve employee at Biltmore in their Engineering Services Division.

I believe that my background and experiences are an excellent fit for this position at a critical time.

4. **If selected, how do you plan to communicate and work with the other Council members? To help us understand, please give examples of your working collaboratively in the past.**

Communication is the key to an effective organization. The City of Asheville has a clear organizational chart and responsibilities are evident. As the appointed administrator of two municipalities, and department head of a third, I have had extensive experience communicating with elected bodies on a recurring and consistent basis.

1) The ability to communicate must be achieved by the written word in documents and resolutions prepared for agenda consideration and in oral presentation to the City Council. In these roles, being consistent in any conversation is critical. I believed the same information must always be provided to each City Council member. I have experience in providing weekly updates distributed to Council, the preparation of Memorandums for Council consideration, agendas and being a consistent resource for officials requesting information or clarification on issues of the day.

2) At the City of Bowie, MD., The City Council desired to construct a senior citizens facility to replace an existing location which occupied 3 former public school classrooms and a prep kitchen in the former City Hall. The City Council appointed an 8 member citizens committee to determine needs and location. I was assigned as the staff liaison. I met regularly with this group through the concept phase, a preliminary design phase, property acquisition phase and the final construction phase. The members of this group were satisfied that their needs were met and in the end a 45,000 sq. ft. facility was opened. The Chair of the Committee commended me at a city council meeting for my communication skills, leadership in keeping the project on track and including all the recommendations of the committee in the final design. The facility has been a major success and key facility in the community.

3) As a supervisor of Animal Control and Code Compliance issues, I have often had direct requests made of me by elected officials to look into enforcement issues taken by staff. I have always treated those inquiries promptly and explained the situation to the official who may not have been getting the full story from a resident. Consistency in the application of the Code was needed and outcomes shared with officials.

It is imperative that Council members remain civil and respective of their colleagues opinions. It is the collective will of the politic body that must prevail for the good of the community.

5. **What do you consider the most pressing problem, need, or cause for the citizens of Asheville today? How would you approach its resolution or champion the cause?**

Given the variety of issues to pick from in 2020, my submission would be affordable housing/homelessness.

The fair market monthly rental price for a two bedroom apartment in the Asheville Metropolitan area is $1,255. In North Carolina, the same size apartment averages $919, as reported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Further I have learned that it would take 97 hours per week of work hours at minimum wage ($7.25) to afford a two-bedroom apartment in Asheville or the equivalent of 3.3 full time jobs.

Living wages have become a significant public issue. Currently 36% of Asheville's population is currently renting representing 38,821 out of 107,093 households. Some area businesses advertise that they offer living wages, but a considerable number of workers commute from outside Buncombe County on a daily basis. The pandemic has magnified this problem as it effects small businesses and the hospitality industry negatively.

The issue of affordable housing becomes more pressing since these households are not eligible for the forbearance offered to those with mortgages. Adding to this problem is that minority households are more effected since their home ownership percentage is less than white households.

My concern is that the issue (lack of income and lack of work) noted above, will escalate when the eviction restrictions instituted by the federal government are lifted and local governments and non-profits will be asked to intercede with assistance.

Buncombe County already has approximately 500 homeless veterans, and about 125 school age children living in automobiles before the virus. This couples with the existing homeless estimates of around 500 in Buncombe County will surely rise and strain available services.

Efforts to combat this are in place with groups like Homeward Bound. The effort to house the homeless at the former Cellular Center worked well and the City continues its relationship with them at the Red Roof Inn in West Asheville providing housing and food for about 50 persons. The City needs to continue its close working relationship with local organizations such as this to provide basic housing for its residents. The use of federal grants, private donations and third party grants are critical in addressing this issue.