City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: James Vaughn Home Phone #: 9496164498

Street Address: 21 Chiles Ave City: Asheville Zip Code: 28803

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: Retired

Position: Retired but still consult Office Phone # _____

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

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

Race: Whgite Sex: M Age: 55

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)

James Vaughn

Applicant Signature
Date: 08/20/2020

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

# James Vaughn

21 Chiles Ave
Asheville, NC


**EDUCATION**

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**, Kennedy School of Government
Cambridge, MA
Master in Public Administration (MPA), 1999
Concentration: E-government technology, programs and policy including organizational reform, innovation, change management and distance learning

Additional course work at Harvard Business, Law and Medical Schools and Sloan School of Management at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

**UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**
San Diego, CA - Nairobi, Kenya
Bachelor of Arts in Diversified Liberal Studies, 1998
Concentration: Theatre and Arts Administration

## RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

### Nellie Gail Ranch Owners Association
Laguna Hills, CA

- Elected to professionally-managed HOA board of community of 1800 homes with a multi-million dollar budget and three public facilities.

### California State Bar Board of Governors Examining Committee
San Francisco, CA
Public Member Appointed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger

- As a public non-lawyer member, I served as an advocate for the public's interest in the oversight of California law schools and served as the Vice-Chair of the Moral Character Determination sub-committee. I lead the successful adoption after many years of effort of a minimum Bar passage standard for law school accreditation. I also lead an unsuccessful attempt to include transgender to the list of protected class for non-discrimination policies at law schools.

### Mayor Richard Riordan
Los Angeles, CA
Field Officer

- Served as Mayor Riordan's field officer for the San Fernando Valley City Hall responding to constituent concerns and related activities representing the Mayor's Office in that district of Los Angeles.

### Congressional Management Foundation (CMF)
Special Consultant

- Develop programming, research and training for The Partnership For a More Perfect Union, a program that helps train individuals and groups to have more effective meetings and develop successful relationships with Members of Congress

**General Service s Administration (GSA), USA Services (FirstGov.gov)**
Washington, DC
Deputy Program Manager

- Chaired an interagency task force of seventeen agencies to set performance standards for citizen contact center activities across the federal government. Granted special recognition award for my efforts.

- Served on the select government-wide Interagency Committee on Government Information (ICGI) Web Standards Group where I served on the Communications, XML and Usability Committees as well as Chaired the Marketing of Government Web Sites Committee

- Revitalized this presidential e-government initiative by adjusting its focus resulting in 20% funding and staffing increases as well as surpassing program goals for the year.

- Project managed the first ever attempt by government to baseline the level and quality of government to citizen communication across the entire federal government

- Managed multimillion-dollar contracts to baseline current government service activities, a survey of research of public expectations and benchmarking of private sector best practices for contact centers as a model for government agencies

**South Asheville Cemetery Association**
Board Treasurer

- Secured Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County grant to hire consultant to get this historic Black cemetery on the National Register of Public Places (in progress) and secure 501c3 status in order to pursue larger grants and funding to restore and replace headstones and markers.

**Asheville Community Theater**
Board Member

- Recently joined this board to assist them through the financial reconstruction that will be necessary due to the Covid-19 pandemic's effects on its operations and funding.

**Chiles House National Register of Historic Places**
Home Owner

- Successfully sought listing on the National Register of Historic Places for the James Madison and Leah Arcouet Chiles House in Kenilworth, which is the home of the founders of the Town of Kenilworth.

**Leah Chiles Park**
Advocate

- Successfully petitioned the Asheville City Council to rename Lakewood Park in honor of Leah Chiles, one of the first women elected mayor of a town in North Carolina as well as a civil rights activist, artist, businesswoman and community leader.

**Men Alive – Orange County Gay Men's Chorus**
Board President

- Managed the transition from founding artistic director to new director. Eliminated a budget deficit of several hundred thousand dollars and put the organization back on solid financial footing. Created new performance relationship with Orange County Fairgrounds resulting in the first LGBT performing arts group holding a concert on the fairgrounds.

**Laguna Hills Term Limits Initiative/Local Animal Shelter Issue**
Co-chair Term Limits Campaign/Advocate

- Lead the effort to successfully qualify and pass a city council term limits measure in pursuit of the goal of electing city council officials who would enter into a partnership with a local no-kill animal shelter and withdraw from the high-kill Orange County Animal Control facility. It took ten years.

**America Online (AOL)**
Dulles, VA
Director, E-government and Politics

- Directed profitable division related to e-government and political programming and products including creating GovernmentGuide.com, the number one consumer portal of government information that generated over $5 million in revenue and Electionguide04.com with the highest traffic volume of any election site in 2004.

- Managed the technical, project, marketing, financial and strategic planning for seven products and projects including the first use of html and geocoding technology for personalization.

- Led the company into new opportunities for improved customer experience through monitoring and researching industry and technology trends and facilitating implementation into products and services that generated millions in revenue each year.

- Developed, negotiated, and managed relationships and partnerships with government (including one-of- a-kind White House partnership with the Clinton and Bush Administrations "Ask the White House"), non-profit and private sector partners and advised the AOL Time Warner Foundation and Government Affairs offices on e-government, implemented projects and partnerships, and represented AOL on industry and other committees.

- Advised government agencies and elected officials on consumer-focused e-government programming and how to better use the web to communicate and facilitate transactions.

- Oversaw and managed product budget of several million dollars, oversaw program and product financials, budgeting, revenue generation, business development and strategic management resulting in revenue growth of 22% and traffic growth of 1000% over projections.

- Negotiated content business deals for best of breed private sector content programming that both increased revenue by $4 million dollars and saved AOL $500,000 in costs.

**California Log Cabin Republicans**
Director

- Led the California office and served as Western Regional Director working with media, legislators and Republican Party officials to educate them about LGBT issues and educate the legislature and administration on issues of concern. Increased legislative advocacy activity by members 200% over previous years. Worked with Gov. Schwarzenegger administration to secure political appointments for thirteen of our members, the most of any group in the state. My husband and I were the first LGBT couple to serve as political appointees. (Note: I became an Independent approximately 2013)

**Capitol Advantage**
Fairfax, VA
Director, Business Development
Vice President, Business Development
Consultant

- Oversight and development of Congress.org, the public web site resulting in page view and message traffic increases of 135% and revenue increases of 90%. Developed plans for adopting social networking tools (Twitter, Facebook etc.) for public advocacy and education on current issues before Congress. Integrated the technical, marketing and other teams for strategic and other development.

- Co-developed "Power Rankings" of Congress, which ranked each member for power and influence based on 20 criteria resulting in significant media coverage and established our company as a major expert on Congress and power.

**Public Affairs and Political Consultant/Independent Contractor**

- Managed legislative affairs, serve as media spokesperson, strategic planning and management as well as organizing projects and campaigns to achieve measurable goals.

- Strategic planning and daily management for over twenty clients including state ballot measure campaigns, state legislative and local city council races, and private sector and non-profit groups on policy, legislative and election issues.

## Other Qualifications and Experience:

Rich Cook Community Bridge Award from Men Alive - Orange County Gay Men's Chorus for efforts in bridging the differences between the LGBT community and broader community on issues of social justice

National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) Steering Committee: Led workshops and assisted in the development of a report on best practices in managing legislators' web sites and e-mail

Congressional Management Foundation: Served on the Council of Experts, responsible for the Golden Mouse Awards and advised Congress on the use of web sites to serve constituents. Currently serve in an advisory/consultant role on the "Partnership for a More Perfect Union" and other projects.

AOL named "25 Changing the World of Internet and Politics" based on my work in the field.

Certified government "Contracting Officer Technical Representative" (COTR)

Finalist – Andrew Heiskell Community Service Award 2003 from the AOL Time Warner Foundation

Awarded Kentucky Colonel membership for service to the Kentucky State Legislature

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.

I firmly believe that systemic racism and oppression exists. Unfortunately, I encountered what that was like while living in Kenya prior to attending graduate school I discovered it is more subtle than generally believed and that microagressions and selective enforcement of the rules and the law are applied to people, especially African-Americans. As a member of the LGBT community I also know the direct and indirect discrimination that exists, especially when applied via laws and exemptions to laws.

I support reparations and hope that it can be implemented via existing organizations and venues. For example, the South Asheville
Cemetery suffered decades of neglect and if not for the valiant, tireless efforts of a handful of local residents, this former slave cemetery that became one of the few places the Black community could bury their loved ones, would have been lost forever.

Reparations should be viewed in the same context as we have helped any group that has faced disasters or situations that were beyond their control - recessions, natural disasters, Covid-19 etc. We wouldn't claim those acts whether in our own community or elsewhere were not our responsibility because we "weren't there" or "didn't personally contribute" to the harm. We need to rebuild the infrastructure of the Black community both physical and people to make them whole again. You won't have equality of outcome until you have equality of opportunity and resources. And that means helping the Black community get a head start over others they will compete with for jobs, resources, etc. The important factor will be to develop an additional set of talking points that helps people who may be hesitant or even mildly opposed understand the issue in a way they can relate to, even if it is not an argument that resonates with those who already support reparations. The GOP Congress under Pres Clinton INCREASED the requested funding for the National Endowment of the Arts because groups advocated for increased arts funding as economic development funding that assisted local small businesses. We need to consider persuasion that appeals to a variety of groups to generate greater support or at least reduced opposition.

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?

I support defunding the APD to levels that pragmatically make the best use of financial resources that achieve the goals of Black Asheville. I genuinely do not have the level of detail on the police funding yet to know if 50% accomplishes the goal or if it is an arbitrary figure. I am a pragmatist who thinks we should focus on the goals and be flexible on the tactics to achieve them.

For example, one of the legitimate grievances is the treatment of Black community members by law enforcement. I would examine ways to disarm the police more than defund them. A select number of officers would be armed to respond to situations where it is clearly needed, including being called in for backup if a seemingly routine call requires it. Compelling officers to depend more on de-escalation tactics and feeling themselves in the same vulnerable circumstances the community feels in encounters with the APD may help repair the damaged relationship with the community. A focus on where resources of time spent by officers can help determine how those tasks might be transferred to other departments along with the appropriate funding. Law enforcement should "earn" the right to weaponry after a period of supervision and field training. Too many rookies are responsible for tragedies and many veterans don't experience real consequences for violations and act with impunity.

The key will be to do this so that empathetic Asheville residents and businesses still feel protected because a backlash could undo any progress and set back efforts and cause greater animosity in the community. But when push comes to shove, we should prioritize the needs of the Black community first at this time.

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

I am pragmatist and political independent. I come from a Republican background so I understand the philosophy even though I vehemently disagree with its current incarnation. I believe we should focus on goals rather than tactics. I think creative out of the box thinking needs to be brought to problem-solving. Example:

- Housing: Use historic home and grounds as central point for tiny housing communities where the historic home is preserved but used as a community center and enhancement to the needs not met by tiny homes (larger kitchen, guest rooms, laundry facilities). Instead of demanding parking from hotels, eliminate most parking and use the space for affordable housing for employees much the way cruise ships use space. And we don't have a housing problem as much as a transportation problem in getting people from where housing can be cheaply constructed and the jobs within Asheville.

- Jobs: We need more pragmatic messaging to Asheville residents about why companies relocate and what skills and infrastructure we need and how to develop it. Partnerships with local colleges and educational institutions to develop the skills set companies that may consider relocating here are seeking. Conduct a skills and education census on the unemployed, under-employed and those seeking to change jobs so we know what we can offer companies.

- Transportation: Reduce parking and push for increased use of transit and ride-sharing services. Encourage downtown restaurants and bars et to have their own Uber/Lyft accounts and include transportation to and from as part of the check.

I believe my background and skill set provides me with the experience to be of service to the City Council. I believe my personal experiences provide me with insight to help others understand how systemic discrimination happens and the toxic effect it has. I believe diversity includes different mindsets, experiences, and backgrounds including geographic to help bring new insight to old problems.

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.

I would seek to find out the goals of the others to see if there are ways to find consensus via different tactics and strategies. I haven't had the chance to review rules related to what is allowed in communicating with council members outside of open session. Other localities don't allow you to collaborate in quorum-size groups or act seriatim. I believe in doing my homework and being prepared to discuss the issue thoughtfully and knowledgeably. I believe in compromise and settling for short term wins towards longer-term progress.

- In seeking to adopt a minimum Bar Exam passage rate as a requirement for law school accreditation on the CA Committee of Bar Examiners, I pushed for a 50% passage rate but compromised to 40% to secure the votes and reduced opposition of the law school deans. I had to find a balance between holding schools accountable because many of the struggling schools served under-served populations and were leaving many with heavy debt loads and nothing to show for their efforts on one hand; while understanding the struggles of what were essentially small businesses with good intentions.

- In leading the GSA inter-agency team to adopt government-wide service standards I needed to use persuasion to get agencies, especially independent agencies to adopt programs like misdirected communications program. (No "wrong department" mentality when a constituent called the incorrect agency regarding their issue. I created the "Didn't Duck Award" to encourage creative customer-service focused best practices.

- I consulted with international, federal, state and local governments in advising them on how to improve their web sites, which often involved finding tactful ways of telling them all the things they were doing wrong, despite obvious pride in their work.

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?

I think the biggest issue is growing pains. I have seen this in the tourism-economy based cities I have lived in before (which were most of them). Balancing the needs of existing residents and the needs of the increasing population in everything from housing to infrastructure to traffic/congestion and crime. Change is hard, especially for people who feel insecure financially and culturally.

I would analyze Asheville spending, programs and resources and try to highlight those that benefit existing residents. Identify any gaps and seek to identify resources - financial, staff, community or other to address needs gaps. The budget planning process will be a key time to help raise the profile of the existing programs and the plans for helping existing residents.

I'd create a commission comprised of long-term and newer residents to generate dialogue and a way for each group to find consensus and understanding on the needs of newcomers and the concerns of existing residents. That will help generate support for each other's needs. Many of the issues identified in the recent council race by candidates ultimately can be traced back to the issue of growth. I have repeatedly seen the growth vs no-growth political battles. The key has been finding ways for the two sides to communicate about their goals/needs to seek out programs or compromises that both can live with, even if not entirely happy. People should be educated that this is a marathon, not a spring and progress comes in small steps not revolution.

In addition, the public perception of government and elected officials is toxic and needs to be challenged head on. People need reminded that city councilmembers are their neighbors and should be treated with the same respect as they'd expect in we came into their workplace. In my work with the Congressional Management Foundation that is the number one source of frustration for officials and their staff. Most feel they aren't allowed to clap back. I think that is wrong because you won't change government the perception of it until we educate the public. People need to be asked directly what they would cut or if they are willing to bear higher costs to meet their demands. I had a staff member tell me "When people demand higher funding for their deadly disease I want to ask them 'Who should I let die to fund yours?'" Frankly, I'd use the fact that I would not be elected and absolutely will not run for re-election to be the one to bear that candid message on behalf of elected officials everywhere. Contempt of government is what brought us to where we are and is the biggest threat to democracy because voters turn to people with no experience in the hopes that will make things better.

Above all, we need to be creative and become much more experimental to adapt in the 21st century. Let me try.