City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: George Sieburg Home Phone #: 8282797649

Street Address: 42 Alclare Court City: Asheville Zip Code: 28804

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: Homeward Bound of WNC

Position: Director of Finance, Operations & HR Office Phone # 8287859910

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

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

Race: White Sex: Male Age: 46

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)

Richard George Sieburg

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

GEORGE SIEBURG

42 Alclare Court • Asheville NC 28804

(828) 279-7649 georgesieburg@gmail.com

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Engaged executive experienced in developing and strengthening organizations through expertise in **financial management, operations**, and **supervision**. Skilled at setting and meeting **financial benchmarks, managing teams, building relationships** with organizations and among communities. Extensive background as manager, bookkeeper, and administrator; particularly experienced in **analyzing financial data, creating budgets**, and **overseeing accounts**. Recognized as an **effective leader**, a **diligent financial steward**, and a **competent multitasker**, who is thoughtful, collaborative, and who drives progress through a lens of equity.

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EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE

HOMEWARD BOUND of WNC – Asheville, NC **July 2020 - present**

Director of Finance, Operations & HR

- Compile and Implement annual operating budget
- Administer federal, state, and municipal grants
- Oversee HR functions and facilitation of strategic planning of HR initiatives
- Oversee Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives
- Partner across departments to promote clear communication, teamwork, and collective work
- Oversee operational contracts
- Supervise operational support staff
- Facilitate committee meetings and interdepartmental meetings

FUSION SITE SERVICES – Nashville, TN & Asheville, NC

Transition Consultant **January 2020 – May 2020**

- Prepare sales figure reports for CFO
- Manage collections through A/R aging reports
- Oversee transition cost allocation, including sales tax, A/R and A/P
- Administer benefits program for transition employees
- Supervise social media marketing intern

ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION – Asheville, NC

Interim Executive Director **April 2019 – July 2019**

- Managed transition between outgoing long-term Executive Director and incoming ED
- Approved all financial expenditures
- Created annual budget
- Strengthened relationships with school partners and community stakeholders
- Managed staff of 9 employees
- Negotiated salaries and job responsibilities
- Planned and led staff meetings and supervisors meetings
- Engaged in state-wide conferences and cohort meetings to further organizational knowledge
- Trained in Equity Literacy Institute

ABLE RENT-A-JON & WASTE SERVICES - Asheville, NC

President/General Manager **June 2005 to January 2020**

- Maintained balance sheets & monthly/quarterly/annual P&L
- Prepared financial reports for company officers and partners
- Worked with company owner to implement streamlined operations
- Created annual budgets

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- Set financial benchmarks for debt reduction
- Collaborated with area non-profit directors on event coordination
- Maintained rented property, including scheduling maintenance
- Managed daily operations, including invoicing, scheduling, accounts payable, strategic planning and marketing
- Designed and implemented five-year growth plan
- Spearheaded employee hiring, including interviewing and employee evaluation
- Processed weekly employee payroll

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

CAROLINA DAY SCHOOL - Asheville, NC
7th-grade Language Arts/Social Studies Teacher **2003 to 2005**

- Compiled multi-disciplinary and grade-level curriculum for five-year accreditation application
- Built curriculum to accommodate differentiated reading levels, single-gender classrooms, and cultural literacy
- Submitted monthly grade reports and benchmarking
- Collaborated with high school teachers on curriculum continuity

CENTRO DE EDUCACIÓN CREATIVA - Monteverde, Costa Rica
Assistant Director / 7th-grade Teacher **2000 to 2002**

- Designed and implemented middle school educational benchmarks with horizontal and linear outcomes
- Administered bilingual literacy exam, and assessed database of comparisons and baselines for school improvement
- Provided curricular, material and evaluative support for multi-national staff
- Served on school hiring committee
- Led monthly staff meetings
- Co-facilitated meetings with director and presentations to school board

TEACH FOR AMERICA
WEST BALTIMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL - Baltimore, MD
7th-grade Language Arts/Reading Teacher **1997 to 2000**

- Designed and administered cross-disciplinary end-of-grade assessment to comply with statewide assessment program
- Led Team G, including convening monthly meetings and liaising between team and school administration
- Served as acting English Department head, leading departmental meetings and connecting at district meetings
- Mentored first- and second-year teachers, including classroom observation and assistance in securing resources

EDUCATION

MS – Curriculum & Instruction (1999): MCDANIEL COLLEGE - Westminster, MD
BA – English in Creative Writing (1997): NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY - Evanston, IL

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/AFFILIATIONS

Board Member: Asheville City Schools Foundation (Aug. 2016 – June 2020) (Board President 2018-19) (Treasurer 2017-18)
Lead Facilitator: "Seeing White" Lenten Equity Series, All Souls Cathedral (spring 2019)
Co-designer and Co-facilitator: Asheville City Schools Foundation's Equity Conversations (Spring 2018)
Community Cohort Member: Institute for Emerging Issues (November 2018 – present)
Member: Asheville Home Builders Association (2005 – 2020)
Member: Asheville Downtown Association (2017 – 2019)

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Volunteer DJ: WNCW-FM (88.7), Spindale, NC (December 2014 – December 2018)
Board Member: Cathedral of All Soul's Kay Falk Literary Project (May 2009 – April 2013)
Contributing blogger: ashevillegrit.com (June 2016 – June 2018)
Founder & Facilitator: Evening with an Album (2013 – 2015)
Teacher of the Year finalist: West Baltimore Middle School (1998-2000)

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Intermediate Spanish, Fluency in Microsoft Office Suite, Fluency in QuickBooks Accounting Software, Proofreading

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.

Not only do I believe that systemic racism and oppression exist, I know they do. Proof is in the City historical record - from the enslavement of Black men and women and children by the patriarchs for whom much of our town is named (Pack, Merrimon), to the dismantling of historically black neighborhoods and communities during the 1970s. The fact that Black students had to move from their school to Asheville High School - to leave their teachers (many of whom held advanced degrees) and integrate an all white school, as opposed to the opposite, shows that the white men in charge during this time ascribed to the racist belief that the "white" way was the accepted way. This belief and practice that whiteness equals "the normal" is the very definition of systemic racism and oppression. The effects of white supremacy are still felt today, with policies geared toward perpetuating white success and freedom, such as AIG programs in Asheville City Schools, and the proposal for the I-26 connector cutting through black neighborhoods. Black and brown families have not had the privilege of building generational wealth over the century-plus of life in Asheville. They have been denied owning property; they have been denied equal access to jobs and education, and have been targeted for criminal behavior at a rate disproportionate to white people. For this reason, I fully support reparations as a way to build the generational wealth that Black and brown families were denied. Increasing property ownership, eliminating the opportunity gaps in business and education, and providing access to health and wellness will be the start of creating financial, social, economic, and educational equity. It is necessary that I, as a white male, do not come up with the framework for reparations; that framework should be created with input from Black citizens. It will be my job as City Council member to support it and champion it.

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 do support Black Asheville's calls for defunding the police. One thing I have learned about White Supremacist culture is that doing something the way it has always been done usually is an indication of White Supremacy. Policing as an entity was born from government sanctioned slave patrols, and the mindset of policing, while it has tried to reform, is still based on arresting, jailing and prosecuting. In Asheville, police more often patrol Black communities than white communities. When police are dispatched to a situation, police have been trained to expect confrontation. This leads often to escalation, even though policing in the 21st century includes de-escalation training. But therein lies the issue: training in de-escalation implies that every situation is one that is escalated. While it is important the police are present and trained to handle dangerous situations, many situations are not dangerous (and in fact, may only become dangerous because of police presence); they demand a more nuanced approach. Oftentimes we need social workers, or care givers, or other first responders to be on the scene. A program like CAHOOTS provides for response from mental health professionals, case workers, and other people trained in handling situations and crises without a weaponized or militarized component. It is important to understand that the term defunding can be misconstrued as a lack of faith in policing. Instead, defunding the police means that we recognize that police have a specific intervention task within a ctiy and that funds and other resources need to be redistributed to other professionals trained in other interventions. This holistic approach does not need years and years to implement. Already there are skilled professionals in social services working within our city. City Council can re-appropriate funding (or access new funding through grants, etc) to provide for a variety of intervention specialists who can be ready to answer a crisis call.

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

I want to serve on City Council because engagement in civic life is necessary for the fulfillment our the democratic ideals of our country and our city. I believe that everyone has time, talent, or treasure to give to the betterment of our community. While this manifests itself in a variety of ways, Public Service is how I feel called to give my time and talents. Like all communities, Asheville is challenged in ways that are universal to city life and ways that are unique to our corner of the country. Within the last month, Council has committed to pursuing reparations for Black Asheville, for example; and while as a white man I can't say what reparations should look like, I can use my talent of being an engaged and thoughtful listener to hear the needs and desires of the Black community. City Council engages is decision-making that affects not just our current citizens, but those who have yet to arrive here, and the children of those who are already here. So when Council must vote on allocation of funds, or decide on the proper use of a piece of property, or put resources behind economic policy, it needs to be doing so with the needs of current and future Ashevillllians in mind. I would like to be a part of that process, not to be a part of the decision-making process for my children, but for all the children of Asheville. Finally, in addition to time, talent, and treasure, some of us are endowed with privilege. Decisions in municipalities big and small have been too long made my people in order to perpetuate, protect and prove their power - and Asheville is no exception. As a middle-class white cis-gendered man, I would want to serve on Council with my white privilege not as a tool for self-promotion or self-preservation; instead, I would use my privilege to give voice to those whose voice have not been heard at the table of government for too long. I believe strongly in the concept of the democratic ideals of our country and our city; my role on council would be to use my time, talents, and privilege to move us closer to those ideals - where every voice is valued, and important, and necessary; where every life is treasured and important; where power is distributed in a more equitable way; where wealth, and security and peace and prosperity are not concentrated in one community but are distributed equitably citywide.

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.

If selected for Council, I plan to communicate with fellow council members in the way that other members of Council feel most comfortable. Serving on Council holds awesome responsibility, but in essence, is it any different than serving on a non-profit board, or engaging with staff and other employees in an organization? To get the work done, it is important to communicate with people in the way that best works for them. When I served as Board chair and then interim Executive Director for the Asheville City Schools Foundation, we had a board member who had little if any time to check email. So whenever I needed to communicate something to the board as a whole, I sent out an email and then followed up with a personal phone call to that board member. Doing so allowed that member to stay informed, and it also allowed the two of us to connect more personally. As vice president and general manager of Able Rent-A-Jon & Waste Services, I communicated with my employees in a variety of ways, depending on their preferences. For some, a personal memo was the best way for them to digest and process information. I had one employee who wanted everything sent to him via text. Preferred means of communication are just one facet of collaborative work, though. For work as important as that of serving on City Council, it is important to develop relationships with fellow council members. This means asking question not just about the task at hand, but also asking questions that lead to an understanding of each individual. It's imperative to know the narrative behind someone's opinion, the experience that is leading to a certain decision, the situation a fellow council member is currently facing that may influence their response to a need. In my time at Able Rent-A-Jon & Waste Services, I implemented not only monthly staff meetings to engage in important work within the organization,but I also instituted bi-annual staff outings, to connect on a more personal level. It was important that I know, for example, how Eddie's son was doing in school; it was important that I hear how Frank's wife was faring with her chronic illness. At the ACSF, when I became interim ED, I started meeting weekly with staff, and we began each meeting by checking in with each other with cheers or jeers about life both personal and professional. How was Tiffany's granddaughter doing, for instance, or where was Copland going on her next adventure with her daughter Annie. Making these personal connections made it much easier to engage in the challenging work that presented itself throughout the year. There were going to be disagreements; there always will be. But disagreements are much easier to digest and work through when you have a foundation of personal respect and understanding of someone else's life. I would expect the same on Council. And I would be intentional about connecting with council members.

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?

Asheville is faced with many needs right now. The needs discussed in the first two questions of this application are pressing indeed. Add to them the economic decisions facing the city, and the future impact of those decisions as discussed in question 3. All of these fall under the existential cause of income and opportunity equity. Asheville's rising property values, Asheville's focus on tourism dollars, Asheville's lack of high-paying manufacturing jobs - all of these are contributing to a tale of two Cities: one in which people from the upper class, people with the benefit of generational wealth, people for whom the system was created to enrich them continue to prosper; and a city in which people of color, and people from the LGBTQIA+ community, and people of limited resources, see their opportunities narrowed to traditional roles in the service sector, for example, or are valued for their opinion only a tokens representatives of their community. We are seeing our once diverse city become whiter and more affluent, as people who have been marginalized are forced further to the margins and even out of the city and into surrounding counties. Meanwhile, more and more wealthy developments spring up just outside City limits, and high-income earners move here from the coasts and gentrify neighborhoods. While this migration might do temporary wonders for the bottom line (it's hard to complain about rising property values bringing more revenue into city coffers), the long-term consequences of this inequity are dire. Cities and communities that thrive over the long-term do so because of the varied voices and experiences that a diverse populace bring to civic life. It is imperative that we work to eliminate opportunity inequities, and income inequities, and educational inequities that make such a dynamic civic life impossible to achieve. I will approach eliminating these inequities by expanding the table of Civic discourse, by engaging with the citizens most affected by these inequities and uplifting the voices necessary in sustaining a dynamic and vibrant and diverse community. I will use my position not to perpetuate my power and privilege, but to reallocate that power and privilege. it is in the collective sharing of resources - of time, of talent, of treasure, and of privilege - that helps create a more equitable Asheville.