City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: Andrew R James Home Phone #: (828)284-6396

Street Address: 129 Charlotte St City: Asheville Zip Code: 28801

Mailing Address (if different): 129 Charlotte St Asheville, NC 28801

Employer: Beautiful Empire Initiative

Position: CEO Office Phone # _____

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

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

Race: HUMAN (BLK) Sex: M Age: 36

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
Andrew Raymond James
Key: 6d6965aaf5d01d33d35162fad62a43f

Applicant Signature
Date: 08/13/2020

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

Andrew R. James
(828) 284-6396
ajames1bus@gmail.com

Objective: To obtain a position allowing me to utilize my skills and experience in the, human service industry, and administrative services, to benefit an organization.

Areas of Expertise: Human Services (Transit)

•Work as Road Supervisor with CDL, class B, and P endorsement. Responsible for training new supervisors, covering dispatch shifts and bus operator shifts when necessary, enforcing company policies with bus operators, investigating accidents, assisting safety manager with supervisor reports, responding to passenger complaints, supervising the transfer of thousands of dollars in bus fare (cash) to the company safe at weeks end, closing transit building upon completion of shift (setting alarm) and more…
•Worked as 3rd Shift Leader and trainer at hotel front desk office
•Worked as an Emergency Department Tech/ CNA-Multiskilled with patient care responsibility including phlebotomy, OCL procedures, catheter placement, taking vital signs, and other tasks delegated by nurses.
•Worked as a Medical Records Coordinator with training responsibility, and receptionist responsibility when required, working on EHR system.
• Worked as Administrative Coordinator with secretarial responsibilities, not limited to collecting cash payments from clients, verifying and entering insurance information into the computer.
• Work as a Unit Leader(supervisor) /Counselor for a summer camp, daycare and after school program
• Responsible for the care and keeping of all children in assigned classroom
• Assisted children and adults with developmental disabilities to reach their individual goals
• Worked as a substitute classroom instructor for preschool aged children in child care setting
• Worked with children with autism to ensure they were supported and encouraged to meet their daily goals
• Worked with clients and observed and modified their behaviors, in order to enable clients to interact appropriately with others
• Communicated with parents, guardians, social workers and foster parents to receive feedback and provide support
• Experienced in working with adults with traumatic brain injuries and mental illness
• Facilitated rehabilitation programs including but not limited to job coaching, training and community integration
• Oversaw operations of residential facility for adults with developmental disabilities
• Observed behavior to facilitate person centered plan modifications
• Scheduled group home staff to ensure client coverage needs were met
• Cared for elderly adult, cooking, cleaning and assisting with basic care and ambulation
• Transported client to appointments and community outings

Volunteer Experience:
Volunteer Worker, Good Samaritan Hospital, Limbe, Haiti,
organized supplies, helped with inventory and computer data system

Work History:

• Road Supervisor, First Group (now ratpdev.) – ART-, Asheville, NC 10/2015- 3/2020
• Front Desk 3

rd Shift Leader, Country Inn & Suites, Asheville, NC 09/2014-10/2015 • Medical Records Coordinator/CNA, Mountain Medical, Burnsville, NC 10/2013-04/2014
• Unit Leader/Youth Development Teacher, YMCA, NC and PA 01/2013 -08/2013
• Emergency Department Tech/CNA-Multiskilled, Mission Hospital, Asheville, NC,04/2012 - 01/2013
• Counselor, Jewish Community Center for Kids, Asheville, NC, 2005 - 2013
• Medical Records Coordinator, Our Family Doctor, Asheville, NC, 2011 - 2012
• ABA Aide, WNC BEST, Asheville, NC 2010 - 2011
• In Home Care Giver, Audubon, PA, 2013
• Job Coach/CS Paraprofessional, Maxim Health Care, Asheville, NC, 2004 - 2006

Education:

• 66 college credits as of Spring 2020 in Business, Human Services and Hospitality courses (A-B TECH)
• CDL, Class B, P endorsement/ US Dept. Of Transportation courses: "Fatigue Driving Safety" and "Curbing Transit Employee Distracted Driving Safety, 4/2016
•CNA Certificate, Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College, Asheville, NC, Course completion date: 10-07-2011 (Registry Listing Number: 425257)
•Pastry Chef Certificate (Disciple De La Toque Blanche), The Business and Hospitality Education Division of Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College, Asheville, NC 2008
• Certified Archery Instructor, USA Archery and the National Field Archery Association, 2011

References:

Bernie Townsend (former GM, Asheville Transit): (404) 914-6322
Accem Scott (Safety Manager, Transit): (828) 280-7287
Seth Kellam (Jewish Community Center for Kids Manager): (828) 253-0701
Bobby Fisher (Country Inn&Suites Manager): (828) 670-9000
Annette Bryans (YMCA Manager): (610) 539-0900
Marilyn R. (Mountain Medical Arts Manager): (828) 678-9352

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.**

In order to explain whether or not I believe systemic racism exists, I must first explain myself that I might be understood. My name is Andrew James. I have been an Asheville resident for about 15 years. Before I came to Asheville, I spent much time outside of the USA. I was adopted as a child by a family of Caucasian missionaries who were working in the Caribbean. At the moment of adoption by my white family I became a citizen of the United States of America, which afforded me all of the rights of a citizen of the United States of America. Living on a missionary field in the Caribbean with my white family was a different experience than the typical American experience. The mission field had people of all colors from all around the world (America, Canada, Africa, India, Japan, etc.) working towards one common cause which was to help humanity improve it's worst situations so that humanity could improve itself. In my entire time on that mission field living with my white family I never personally experienced systemic racism, and so I had little reason to believe it existed. When I first came to North Carolina with my family I realized that systemic racism is very real. I noticed it in the school systems where some teachers treated my white siblings with respect, but did not afford me the same. I saw it in professional settings where being the only black employee meant getting paid less respect than my coworkers despite being equal. I heard it when I was told by an employee that the current safety manager of ART (where I once worked as a supervisor) was seen and photographed harassing peaceful protesters during one of the peaceful marches that I took part in.
In closing, while I do have love for all people, I understand that systemic racism is real. I support reparations, and I believe if the city of Asheville honors it's promises of reparations, it will set itself apart as a city on the right side of history.

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?**

In order for me to conclude whether or not I support the Black Asheville Demands call for de-funding the APD by 50% I would need to see the data reports collected from both the city of Asheville and the Black Asheville Demands group, including detailed plans for de-funding, and the organizations that would be involved. Without further information it would be impossible for me to ascertain the time line in which such an initiative could be implemented with optimal results, not to mention how effective those results would be. It's pretty common knowledge that the environment of a population will have a direct affect on the crime rate. If funds are used better as a preventative measure (poverty prevention) instead of a response method, less police would be needed to address crime. Also the local police activities of late have not spoken well for the department. Time would of course be needed to implement the new programs that would be replacing the extra police force.
If Asheville dedicated time to laying the foundation for the theoretical new programs and re-education of remaining police, I believe the city could accomplish this goal eventually. However, without details as to how many operations would be in place to support this initiative, and what those operations would be, it is not really possible to give a time line.

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

I would serve on the city council that I might bring about the change I wish to see, by being the change I wish to see and encouraging others to do the same via said position. I think it's a common misconception that one must be a saint in order to take a position to help his fellow man/woman. On the contrary, I am no saint. I am simply a human being who has made mistakes and knows how to learn from his mistakes, and use that knowledge in an attempt (hopefully a successful one) to make the world a better place. I want to make this city a better place and by extension, the world will become better place. Make no mistake, the world is watching.
As someone who has traveled to different places over the world, I see Asheville as a unique city with an opportunity to show the country and the world at large how to take the next step for humanity. 'A large step for mankind' so to speak. I want to serve on the City Council because I want to help make Asheville the great, diverse, successful, freethinking city that it advertises itself to be; the same way America calls itself the 'Land of the Free'. If Asheville takes the right steps, it could be a major move in showing America how to truly be everything that it claims to be. I have worked serving the people of Asheville on the ground level for many years through Asheville businesses like Mission Hospital and Asheville Transit, (ART) and have been a citizen of this city for quite some time. I believe that my past experience working in and with this city will be beneficial when considering this new position of serving the people of Asheville, NC.

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.**

As a black man with a white family and black culture, I understand that one's humanity is decided by the content of one's soul and not the color of their skin. I also understand that humanity at large has a desire to be at peace with itself, and because I understand this, I am able to navigate the confusion that sometime arises in modern human attempts to communicate.
I plan to communicate and work with the other council members the same way I always have with other professionals. With respect. The importance of communicating and working with respect cannot be understated. One example of me working collaboratively is when I worked in the Mission Hospital Emergency Department, a patient was brought in on helicopter for heart failure. I communicated with the team to get the man off of the helicopter and into the ER. When we got the patient on a table, the person who was meant to do CPR couldn't find gloves, so in the heat of the moment I communicated respectfully, suggesting that I take over the CPR as it was a time sensitive issue. I took over and gave the responsibility back over when my coworker communicated to me that he or she was ready to resume. Another example of me working collaboratively would be when I volunteered on a hospital mission field in the Caribbean. Working with my white family on a third world mission field meant that sometimes I would find myself communicating between the new missionaries and the third world locals to avoid confusion when accomplishing certain tasks. Understanding multiple cultures assisted me in bridging that gap when confusion occurred. Another example would be working as the Unit Leader at the YMCA. As the unit leader I had to communicate with four child groups with two adults in each group who reported to me. Throughout the program various tasks had to be accomplished. I made the tasks easier by getting to know my coworkers and their skill sets. After communicating with everyone, establishing their strengths, and giving due respect, I distributed responsibilities according to skill and enthusiasm, and as a result the team that started off shaky became a tight knit group of respectful professionals who had no problem communicating with each other because I made it understood from the start that my only real rule was and is respect. Respect for yourself, respect for the job you promised to do when you accepted the position, and respect for the people you agreed to serve upon taking the position.

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?**

When attempting to solve any problem, I am always reminded of the 'Order of Operations'. The order of operations is a collection of rules that basically explain what problems to solve first in order to successfully evaluate a mathematical expression. (solve a problem)
When I look at Asheville, I see that the city's biggest problem, need, or cause for the people is the same around the world. The city has a need to be at peace with itself. Everyone from the richest to the poorest in this city has the need to be at peace with each other and with themselves. So the problem is finding peace with and within the city. In order to solve the problem, I would use order of operations in this scenario to point out that the first problem America ever had was and still is systemic racism; and that is also Asheville's first, and biggest problem that must be dealt with if any other problems are to be solved successfully. For if you fail to solve the first problem, it will eat away at the foundation of your entire system and all with fall.
Having identified the problem, I would champion the cause the same way all champions do. At a round table with fellow citizens who would also champion the cause of the people. I also play music for profit and charity events. There is a song that asks the question, "¿Did you exchange a walk on part in the war for a lead role in a cage?" When I champion the cause of the people, I intend to do it with the people by my side, not above the people, because I serve the people. If my stage was too far from the people that I claim to serve, how could I even hear their requests? I would approach the resolution of the problem of systemic racism like it was something that could be resolved.