

COLE ENTERPRISES

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Re: Letter of Recommendation
Nancy Kerry

To Whom It May Concern

I served as City of South Lake Tahoe City Councilmember and City Planning Commissioner off and on between 1993 and 2016. I was elected to City Council each of the five times I submitted my name to the voters for a total of 20 years as Councilmember. I was elected to serve as Mayor by my colleagues six times. I worked with six different City Managers and a number of City Attorneys. I participated in both the hiring and termination of people in those positions. I fully understand the pressure placed on City Councilmembers in hiring the right person for those positions. I have made good hiring decisions and other decisions I think we could have chosen better. I have participated in 20 years of evaluations of City Managers and City Attorneys. I have seen political pressures placed on people in these positions and the difficulties they also encounter trying to balance the demands placed on them. It is in this context, I am providing a recommendation for Ms. Nancy Kerry, something I would not ordinarily do.

Ms. Kerry was the last City Manager I hired and had the pleasure of working with at the City. While Nancy was City Manager, I was twice Mayor and two years as City Councilmember. Without hesitation, I would recommend Nancy as City Manager for a comparably sized City. I was on City Council when we hired Nancy for her first CM position. As Interim City Manager, she demonstrated a high degree of professionalism when confronted with unique and extraordinary situations in those first few months. Over the years in working with Nancy, I found her to clear about her role while offering meaningful and effective recommendations. In my experience, it was unusual to have the City Manager not try and become the "sixth City Councilmember," and even more unusual to involve all Councilmember equally. I observed and worked with Ms. Kerry in a myriad of public meetings and listened to many of her presentations on a variety of subject matter. Nancy was often able to answer nearly any question presented to her and maintained a depth of knowledge, yet presented in an easy-to-grasp manner. I learned more about City operations while working with Nancy than I had in my previous 16 years.

When Ms. Kerry was hired as City Manager, the City was in need of rebuilding the organization after the impacts of the Great Recession. She brought a new, collaborative and performance based culture to the City employees. I attended a number of her employee meetings that appeared to be something you'd more likely see in a private sector organization team-building event. She was quick to recognize and congratulate employees for their efforts, while simultaneously focusing on performance and accountability. Her resolve in improving the daily worklife of employees was only comparable to her resolve to tackle tough issues. I asked all previous City Managers to address the rising cost of legacy retirement benefits, each told me, "nothing can be done;" Nancy said, "let's do it." I didn't actually think she'd get anything changed, but she did. I know she spent countless weekend and late night hours researching the matter, developing solutions, meeting with hundreds of employees and retirees (none of whom wanted to make any changes), and then methodically and respectfully brought forward the necessary changes, which were *accepted by all labor groups*. What she accomplished saved our City over \$40M and solved an issue in 3 years that no other City Manager was even willing to discuss. Because of her resolve, coupled with other financial decisions she implemented, our City's reserves and annual net balance is in excellent shape.

Myself and other Councilmember often acknowledged both publicly and privately, Ms. Kerry's excellent performance as City Manager. Her evaluations were thorough and balanced; she was eager to meet the Council's expectations and sought accountability and goals. She always made herself available to Council, employees and the public. I observed her to be consistently fair and steadfast in her commitment to the City.

It is therefore my pleasure to recommend her service to another City Council. You will find her to be dedicated to your City, the Council, employees and community. If I had the opportunity today to re-hire Ms. Kerry, I would do so.

If you have any questions or would like further information and specifics, please feel free to reach me through my email or phone number.

Sincerely,



Hal Cole
20-year South Lake Tahoe City Councilmember
Former Six-term Mayor
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