



Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

MEMORANDUM

To: City Councilors
From: Mayor Miro Weinberger 
Date: May 1, 2013
Re: Appointment of Chief Administrative Officer

I respectfully submit for your consideration and approval Bob Rusten as the next Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for the City of Burlington. I am requesting City Council approval of this appointment at your May 6, 2013 meeting.

Bob is exceptionally qualified for the CAO position and will bring exactly the skills, experiences, and character to the office that Burlington needs right now.

Bob has 17 years of experience in municipal and state government.

- For the past 2 and 1/2 years, Bob has served as the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer, and for the last year as City Treasurer of neighboring South Burlington.
- For 4+ years, Bob served as the Town Manager of Wilmington, Vermont. While in Wilmington, Bob lowered the town tax rate three years in a row while investing in town infrastructure and growth. Bob helped create and lead the "Tri-Town Economic Development Committee" - three towns working together to create and implement economic development strategy.
- In 1996, Bob successfully ran for the Vermont State House, getting elected as the Representative from Halifax. Bob won re-election four times, opting not to run for re-election in 2006 after 10 years of service as a State Representative. While in the Legislature, Bob served on the Ways and Means Committee from 2001-06, serving as the Vice Chair and Ranking Member, and on the Governmental Operations Committee from 1997-2000.
- For 15 years (the last 10 overlapping with his time in the Legislature), Bob had his own management consulting company. His practice involved work with many local and state public sector clients, including the Vermont Secretary of State's Office, Brattleboro Area Middle School, Windham South West School District, and the Vermont Labor Department Management Team.

Bob has successfully led financial turnarounds.

- When Bob began his service in South Burlington, the City was experiencing a period of financial strain and turmoil. Together with the City Manager, Bob was part of a team that successfully unearthed the severe nature of South Burlington's financial troubles. Bob co-led the development of a plan to restore the City's fiscal stability after cumulative fiscal problems exceeding \$17 million and skillfully co-led the implementation of that plan which turned the City's finances around. Within two years, the City had gone from running deficits to running surpluses, while resolving an over \$6 million cumulative deficit in the City's General Fund and Enterprise Funds budgets. Additionally, for the first time in South Burlington, Bob created ten-year capital and seven-year debt service plans to promote the long-term fiscal stability of the City. The finance team instituted internal controls that addressed previous audit findings, leading to the most recent audit finding no "Significant Deficiencies" or "Material Weaknesses."
- Bob performed another turnaround in Wilmington, where he served as Town Manager for more than four years. There too, he inherited significant financial challenges. Within the first year of his service, Bob created a more transparent and understandable budget that reflected accurately the Town's true expenses and revenues.

Bob has valuable experience with pension reform and leading union negotiations.

- In South Burlington, Bob co-led a management contract negotiating team with all four City bargaining units. This experience included working with bargaining unit leadership to identify ways to reduce costs and to modify membership benefits that saved the City money, while holding harmless unit members.
- Bob co-negotiated an \$8.2 million refunding of an underfunded pension program. Stabilizing the pension fund involved both long-term benefit changes to lower the cost of the plan and a City Council-approved pension obligation bond.
- Bob has had the valuable experience of sitting at both ends of the collective bargaining negotiating table. Bob worked as a laborer in a steel mill early in his working career and was a member of the United Steelworkers of America, serving as a union officer who participated in collective bargaining negotiations on behalf of the union.

Bob has served his communities with distinction and has an ability to work across partisan lines.

- In 2004, Bob was recognized as the Legislator of the Year by the non-partisan Vermont League of Cities and Towns.
- After voting in favor of Civil Unions in 2000, Bob was re-elected to his House seat in 2001 although his district included two towns that opposed Civil Unions, one in an official Town Meeting vote and the other in a non-official vote.

Further details of Bob's career can be found in the attached resume. If confirmed, Bob would be appointed at Step 7 and receive a starting annual salary of \$121,506, and would begin his service to the City on June 3, 2013. As Bob has shared with those of you whom he has met, he will establish residency in Burlington and become a Burlington voter, fulfilling the City's residency requirement for a CAO, while also retaining his recently-purchased home in Hinesburg.

Thank you for your consideration of Bob Rusten as the next Burlington CAO.