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City of Kennesaw Cemetery: Preserving History

Whit Long

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City of Kennesaw Cemetery: Preserving History

Whit Long

An Internship Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the

Master of Public Administration

Kennesaw State University

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Executive Summary

In 2007-2008, the City of Kennesaw received a grant from the United States Department of Natural Resources to begin underground imaging of their cemetery. The City contracted with Virtual Underground to do the imaging, plotting, and photography of headstones. The purpose of the underground imaging was to clarify where burials were made and in what section. Many of the burials in the cemetery were during the Civil War area when casual burial practices were employed. Since then, many of the cemetery lots have been sold to families to inter their deceased. To accurately identify the amount of space available to the families for safe burial, the City needed to elucidate by means of the underground imaging. Moreover, this being a historic cemetery, the Cemetery Preservation Committee wanted a photograph of each headstone to preserve its original order and catalog the history of the cemetery. After Virtual Underground commenced imaging, funds became unavailable to complete the plotting and photography on the entire cemetery. Virtual completed imaging on the entire cemetery, plotting, and photography on the older Sections A, and B.

The purpose of my internship at the City of Kennesaw is to begin plotting and photography were Virtual Underground stopped. Furthermore, because of unsound recordkeeping in the past, the City is currently operating off three maps and two databases when selling cemetery lots. The completion of this project will allow the City Clerk's Office to work off one map and one database. The expected benefits will save both personnel time and City funds.

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Introduction to Organization

My internship, this summer, will be fulfilled at the City of Kennesaw, Georgia. Kennesaw, incorporated on September 21, 1887, has a population of 21,675 as of the 2000 U.S. census; the average family income was \$65,000 with 20 percent of its residents as college graduates. In 2007, *Family Circle* magazine named Kennesaw as one of the “10 Best Towns for Families”. The city government of Kennesaw consists of roughly 225 employees, some part-time. For fiscal year 2008-2009, which runs from October 1 to September 31, the City of Kennesaw’s general fund budget totaled \$23,089,039.00, with the largest revenues coming from the property tax.

A Council-Manager form of government, the city presently has four councilmember’s and a non-voting Mayor who are responsible for appointing a City Manager and the City Clerk. A fifth councilmember will be selected from a June 16 special election to fill a current vacancy.

I find it pertinent to delineate the duties and responsibilities of the chief officials (Mayor, Council, Clerk, and City Manager) in Kennesaw’s city governance, because governance can take many forms depending on municipality and their charter. As mentioned above, the Mayor is non-voting; however, the Mayor of Kennesaw does have various important powers:

The Mayor shall preside at meetings of the Council; shall have a vote only in the case of a tie vote by councilmember’s; shall have veto power, and the Mayor shall have five (5) business days after the meeting with the Council in which to file with the Clerk, in writing, this dissent, but the Council may, at the same meeting or at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Mayor and Council, pass any such ordinance, order or resolution, notwithstanding the veto, by a vote of four-fifths (4/5) of the total number of councilmember’s, to be taken by ayes and nays, and entered upon the minutes; shall be the chief executive officer of the city...(Sec. 2.06).

The Council has substantial power as prescribed by their charter:

(a) The governing body of said city shall be composed of a Mayor and five councilmember's, in which is vested all corporate, legislative, and other powers of the city, except as otherwise provided in this Act. The Mayor and Council shall hold regular public meetings at a stated time and place as provided by ordinance.

(b) Special meetings of the city Council may be held on call of the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem and two members of the city Council. It shall be the duty of the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, and/or the City Manager to present, personally, in writing, by telephone, or by electronic communication, such notice of a special meeting at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Such notice to councilmember's shall not be required if the Mayor and all councilmember's are present when the special meeting is called. Such notice of any special meeting may be waived by a councilmember in writing before or after such a meeting and attendance at the meeting shall also constitute a waiver of notice on any business transacted in councilmember's presence. Only the business stated in the written call or stated as being the purpose in the oath or affidavit required in special sessions convened under the telephone notice provision of this charter may be transacted at a special meeting, except by unanimous consent of all members of the Council.

(c) All meetings of the Council and of the committees and of every agency, board, commission and authority, or similar body of the city, shall be public in the same manner and to the same extent as required by the Chapter 14 of Title 50 of the O.C.G.A., relating to open and public meetings...

(d) Four members of the governing body of the city shall constitute a quorum.

(e) The Mayor and Council shall exercise their powers in public meetings. The Council may by ordinance adopt rules and bylaws to govern the conduct of its business; including procedures and penalties for compelling the attendance of absent members. The Mayor and Council may provide by ordinance for punishment of contemptuous behavior conducted in their presence (Sec. 2.05).

In addition to these duties, the Mayor, along with the Council are responsible for appointing the City Manager and City Clerk, as mentioned above. The City Manager, by way of Kennesaw's charter: "...serves at the pleasure and direction of the Kennesaw Mayor and Council and shall assume the position and duties as the chief administrative officer of the city, and such other duties as may be assigned by the Mayor and Council from time to time..." (Sec. 2.13). Furthermore, the City Manager appoints all department heads, hires, and fires as needed, directs and supervises all administrative departments, enforces the charter, prepares and submits a

budget to the Mayor and Council, and publishes a finance report. It is imperative to note that the Kennesaw Charter forbids the Council to approve, by way of line item, but must approve the budget as a whole (due to the recent economic recession, the City Manager has asked that each department head closely monitor their budgets and make any appropriate cuts).

I will be specifically working for City Clerk, Debra Taylor and Assistant City Clerk, Marilyn Shoaf. Their department, along with the Mayor and the Council has an FY 08-09 budget of \$521,249.00. Debra has been a City Clerk for approximately 16 years with four and one half years of service at Kennesaw. She received her certification as a municipal clerk from the University of Georgia. The Mayor and Council appoint her annually. Her primary duties as prescribed by the Kennesaw Charter are to be:

...responsible for keeping and preserving the city seal and all records of the Council; attending meetings of the Council and keeping a journal of its proceedings at such meetings, including the names of members present and absent, the vote of each member on each question, each motion considered, and the text of each resolution or ordinance considered; preparing and certifying copies of official records in his or her office, for which fees may be prescribed by ordinance; and performing such other duties as may be required by law or in writing those duties or tasked as directed by the Mayor and Council (Sec. 2.10).

Although the charter is not specific as to the day-to-day duties of the Clerk, I will go into some detail as to the responsibilities and tasks of a City Clerk and their importance to city governance later in this paper. In the interim, it is important to summarize the basic duties of the Clerk. Duties incorporate recording and maintaining the Council's official actions in the minutes, coordinating and distributing the agendas, maintaining contracts, ordinances, resolutions, and agreements for the City. The City Clerk also attests signatures of the Mayor and Council and is the official keeper of the City Seal. The City Clerk oversees the adoptions and publishing of the Code of Ordinances and helps to ensure that all open record requests are in accordance to the Open Records Act. Furthermore, the City Clerk provides the professional link between the

citizens, the local governing bodies and agencies of government at other levels; and are neutral and impartial, rendering equal service to all. Additionally, the Clerk serves as the information center on functions of local government and community.

My Learning Objectives and Internship Description

The goals for my internship are wide-ranging; I will expect to display knowledge and skills essential to operate in a complex network of public agencies. I will illustrate the nature, structure, formal and informal institutional arrangements that exist within a political setting. Additionally, I will analyze and evaluate how the City of Kennesaw is organized and the interrelationships between different departments. I will scrutinize agency procedures and operations to determine their impact upon the agency, the public, and society in general. I aspire to practice good written and oral communication; explaining policymaking, implementation, and administrative procedures. Furthermore, I will use analytical methods to create research designs and to engage in scholarship, evaluate public policies and write reports and evaluate concepts such as efficiency, equity, empathy, responsiveness, and effectiveness. After completion, I will have an enhanced understanding of the field of general governmental administration. One of my foremost goals will be to assess the nature of several pressing problems in the City Clerk's office and the difficulties of governing in a politicized environment. Another of my goals is to learn and understand information systems technology and apply technologies to solve administrative problems and construct project management strategies to solve data and service delivery problems in public agencies.

My primary function will be to update the City of Kennesaw's existing cemetery files and database. The Clerk's office is responsible for selling cemetery lots, issuing burial permits, maintaining, selling deeds, updates to the database, and maintaining historical records. In 2007

and 2008, the Cemetery Commission contracted to have underground imaging performed in the cemetery in two phases; there was only enough money for phase I. “With good research and determination, a substantial grant was awarded by the United States Department of Natural Resources to commence mapping the cemetery for phase II” (Taylor, 2). This is a historic cemetery and not all of the lots have headstones or footstones, especially in the pauper section or from burials during and immediately after the Civil War. This was the rationale for the underground imaging work. The reason this is a historic cemetery is that many of the families interred there are veterans of the Civil War and founding members of the City.

The objective to be achieved with my assistance is to update portions of the information provided by the contractor of the underground imaging (Virtual Underground) with existing maps and records. This includes database updates to add platted map information from one set of maps, photograph and log headstones for Phase I, plot lot sizes in one or two sections of the cemetery, and work with Kennesaw’s GIS department to create accurate maps of the cemetery. With this work, I will enable the Clerk’s office to work from one database and not three sets of maps and two databases. I will update historical information, and prepare records for the City to provide the underground imaging contractor with the necessary information so Kennesaw can become a beta site for a web based software program they are creating. “Incorporated correctly, this data would create comprehensive, reliable, and understandable information to maintain the historic elements of the cemetery and to serve our citizens in a timely matter”, says Taylor (2). “The final goal of this cemetery database project is to have historically accurate information, combined with the above ground/ below ground classifications, and aerial map integrated into a format that will ultimately be used on the worldwide web” (Taylor, 2).

Administrative Problem

Many of Kennesaw's records are greatly lacking in detail, many of the older residents are passing away, and Kennesaw needs to update and maintain the historical aspects of the city cemetery. With this sense of urgency, my work will consist mostly of maps, databases, records, and onsite visits to photograph and catalog headstones. My supplementary duties will include the broader aspects of the Office of the City Clerk. This will consist of many of the day-to-day activities.

History of the Kennesaw Cemetery

The Kennesaw Cemetery lies on the property of Camp McDonald, a former confederate training ground for Georgia volunteers. Many of the city's founding fathers are buried in the Kennesaw Cemetery. The earliest known burial is the infant Lucius B. Summers, who was interred in 1863. Other grave markers date as far back as the 1860's to the 1890's. The Shumway family is said to have donated a one-acre tract to the town for burial purposes before 1891, but town records prior to that date do not exist, and there is no deed for the conveyance on record at the Cobb County Courthouse. This original tract possibly began to reach capacity by the turn of the century, because the town purchased an additional 4 1/2 acres in December of 1900. This included the Shumway's one-acre portion, which was sold to the town for \$100. This new part of the cemetery was designed in 32-foot square lots, which sold in 1901 for \$6 each. The price per lot was raised to \$10 in 1913. An additional tract of approximately one-half acre was acquired for the cemetery in 1903. L.C. Chalker purchased a 1 1/4-acre tract of land adjacent to the Kennesaw Cemetery from J.W. Ellis in 1934, which was sold for burial purposes as well. Chalker purchased another acre adjacent to the first parcel in 1948, which was also to be used for

a cemetery. The Chalker family managed these portions of the cemetery until 6.1 acres were deeded to the City of Kennesaw in the 1989. “The City formed a Cemetery Preservation Commission to oversee the care and maintenance of the property...” (Taylor, 1). Again, the exact date that the Kennesaw Cemetery was established is not known, but the earliest know burial dates back to 1863.

Obstacles to Public Administration

As part of my internship, I have analyzed the difficulties, trials, and tribulations faced in public administration. In Cayer and Weschler’s *Public Administration: Social Change and Adaptive Management*, they describe this difficult profession as “life in a swamp”. “Life in the swamp” is complex and is often full of “alligators”. After interviewing the City Clerk, she reiterated that the most common internal obstacles come in the form of interruptions. As the starting and ending point for most of the City’s business, the Clerk’s office is inundated with various departmental staff throughout City Hall either needing assistance or clarification. These obstacles require skill and professional judgment, something learned over time. As mentioned in the text, there are seven general “alligators in the swamp” as listed: political climate, volatile social issues, political power relationships, a fish-bowl environment, no clear line of authority, the stress of developing programmatic goals in a fish-bowl environment, and the challenge of having fiscal responsibility while being held accountable to elected officials and the public. The details of public administration and city government are equally perplexing. In this environment, one must deal with internal forces as well. Common to any public administrator are employee concerns, interagency conflict, and the bureaucratic wall. To this extent, the administrator must also confront what the text refers to as “internal dynamics”; administrators are responsible for a large number of employees within the given organization and must accomplish objectives while

taking into account the workplace environment. Employees differ and often have different needs, conflicting expectations, and ethical dilemmas and, occasionally, personal values in conflict with the duties of their role within the organization.

External issues are most common and can be equally distressing. External factors are frequently the influence of elected officials, agendas differing within the bureaucracy, dissimilar interpretation of policy, the public interest, interest groups, and administrative regulations. The most convoluted of the above are the common differing desires of the administrator and the elected officials. Elected officials often have different desires and agendas, the result of promises made during the campaign and the influence of their constituents. I have established this to be true at Kennesaw. The Clerk's office most common obstacles are public interest groups, public complaints, and to a lesser extent, elected officials. However, the extent of the conflict with elected officials is not great. For example, in addition to the duties as described by the charter, the City Clerk is responsible for planning community events that are often initiated by elected officials. The planning of these events falls outside of the official duties of the Clerk. Nevertheless, the Clerk is accountable to the Mayor and Council, and, therefore, must complete all tasks they are asked to do. This takes considerable time and effort, often without the assistance of the elected officials. Most importantly, this takes time away from the official duties of the Clerk, which are significant.

Moreover, the best policy may not always prevail and, even if it does, implementation faces many hurdles to external factors. To make things more difficult, a public administrator must confront all of the above-mentioned issues while adhering to strict rules and regulations of the office. Administrators are trusted with the "faithful execution of public trust". Therefore, one must use self-conscious, educated judgment and, at the same time, resist political pressure. I have

discovered through talking with the City Clerk, that the most efficient ways of resisting political pressure are to remain neutral, refuse to take sides, and follow the law. Another solution is to be programmatic in application of policy.

There have also been many arguments as to whether public administration is a craft or science. Public administration as a science will have defined boundaries and “universal laws or tendencies that could be applied in a situation”. The other side of the dichotomy is public administration as a craft. Public administration as a craft would require skill and ability as an administrator. The City Clerk at Kennesaw considers public administration to be both craft and a science. She replicated my assumption that public administration as a craft incorporates skill set and legal knowledge and scientific aspect of public administration involves understanding human nature and dealing with each person individually. However, one could have both science and craft via the use of the scientific method, as we have done on the cemetery project, to make educated decisions and to measure the consequences of certain policy. Nonetheless, public administrators must use intuition and adaptation to make up for the limits of science.

I have also discovered that public administrators must be rational and efficient in the pursuit of goals and objectives. Yet, there too are many obstacles to overcome in the quest for rationality. Barriers to rationality include multiple goals, ill-defined goals, conflicting goals, changing goals, conflicting aims, time restraints, limited resources, lack of information and political pressure. These problems can also be compounded by the revolving door of elected officials and top management, who often have contrary agendas. For example, many of the projects I am working on concern correction of past practices. I had to face these issues and use intuition in order to maintain rationality and make the best decision to remain efficient in the achievement of goals and objectives.

While I am familiar with many of the harsh factors faced by public administrators, via education and my internship, it will be more difficult when I actually confront these obstacles. The toughest factors, in my opinion, are the juxtaposition between policy creation and implementation by managers and top officials. Elected officials often make promises they cannot keep or propose policy that is unrealistic; creating conflicting goals and standards placed upon government.

Despite efforts to reduce the political nature of public administration, many reformers acknowledge that complete removal of politics from the administrative system is not feasible. The most common obstacles faced by administrators are objective versus subjective components. The fundamental quandary faced by administrators is to find resolution between the two value-laden components. This requires administrators to be political managers as well, as these value-laden conflicts will be forever present.

With this viewpoint, one must take the initiative in government. Turning your head to trouble within government and accepting the idea that “this is how things are done” will get you nowhere. You must recognize weaknesses in government and programs and take the initiative to fix them. If not, the predicament may go unattended for years due to the lack of initiative by public servants not at the managerial level; it’s not that the rank and file don’t want to take risk and face troubles directly, but that they are reluctant to resist the system, possibly losing their jobs and facing alienation. We have taken a comparable course of action with our records retention program. Due to careless past practices, many of the City’s files are incomplete or in a non-storable form. It is of high importance that these records be safely established for two reasons. First, they establish the City’s heritage. Secondly, the accurate records must be kept in compliance with the Open Records Act. Therefore, I have scanned all Mayor and Council

Minutes, from the 1980's backwards, into the Laserfiche system. This will permit easy access and secure storage of all minutes, which are part of the permanent record. The same idea pertains to the cemetery project; past practices have disabled our ability to have complete data. When I asked the City Clerk about this problem she replied, "I inherited a barely functional database of names with dates of birth/death and a well plotted set of maps...struggling with imperfect data, an antiquated system and corrupted files..." (1). Taylor said, "...the current system was totally ineffective. It was taking a couple of hours to complete the process to find the lot, update the maps, create a deed, contact Public Works to mark the grave, create the file, agendize the deed for Council approval, create a burial permit, and update the database" (2). After this project, we will have accurate maps that illustrate where burials have taken place and who was buried. This allows the city to sell additional lots without interruption. It also allows the city to make available, updated, and accurate death records to interested citizens. "The point here is that...you need to learn to be a risk taker in government...to recognize opportunities when they come your way and be prepared to grab them" (Ashworth, 78). Using the grant from the Department of Natural Resources, this is what we have done, taking on a long-term project with haughty goals.

Ways to Cope

After discovering the obstacles to public administration, I embarked on methods to control for such obstacles. To control for pressures and obstacles one must be strategic, control what you can, establish common goals, develop high-quality information and knowledge, develop and implement new management theories, and become sensitive to the political environment. This must be done all the while facing limited financial resources, human resources, and service reductions. I have experienced this with the cemetery project. Ideally, I

must complete this project before the end of my internship. This creates immense pressure to complete a complicated project in such a short period.

We must also employ program evaluation. Evaluation of programs serves three purposes: (1) it helps to identify if a program is successful in reaching its objectives; (2) it highlights all consequences of the program; (3) it gives administrators a gauge on the level of public satisfaction with the program. All of this will provide administrators the information they need to evaluate whether to prolong a program or to deem a program unproductive. If evaluation is not used, an unsuccessful program can be carried on for years and funnel limited resources away from more useful programs. “Managers need to be even more aware of and more skilled in strategic activities that permit them to tie together internal management of agencies with increased and more effective linkages with the public and better communication and relationships with external authorities” (Cayer and Weschler, 163). In keeping with this suggestion, we will complete a program evaluation of the cemetery project upon completion and the Cemetery Preservation Committee will take formal acceptance of the final project.

As administrators, we must rely on strategy and risk estimation. “Managers must make the organization more efficient. Managers must become more adept at building and using community support. Managers must ensure the organization provides substantive value to authorities, citizens, customers, and other beneficiaries; managers must actively mobilize political support for the organization and its goals” (Cayer and Weschler, 190). I think I would have served to educate to the public if we had agendized the cemetery project. This would have also garnered public support. However, it was unnecessary to agendize. Nonetheless, the Cemetery Preservation Committee was informed of the project and its benefits.

In the public sector, one must learn to rely on others to guide in their particular area of expertise. Particularly as a manager, one must be a generalist; the experts who are on tap should be consulted when needed. You must also face the brutal facts. Our job, as managers, will be to make allies and convey the need for change. We may never achieve our ends but we hold firm in our beliefs that we will eventually get there. In the public sector, one cannot focus on a particular or single service. It is our job to provide multiple services, expectantly at the same level of success; successes being judged by the level of satisfaction citizens feel they received.

The use of technology accelerators can help achieve this (technology was pertinent to my work at the Clerk's office and will be discussed in detail later). Social sector leaders can judge success by the level in which they effectively and efficiently meet the goals in their mission statement and the distinctive impact made. The goal we have set here at the Kennesaw Clerk's office is to provide entirely open government and a precise compilation of records, accessible to the public. This included the minutes from every Mayor and Council meeting and the cemetery project. Once in compromise, these records are now established and maintained; we have met our goal. It is the job of the manager, if he or she wants to lead a great organization, to harness and concentrate power to effectively achieve the goals of the organization. For this reason, one must possess both legislative and executive leadership skills.

Contradictory requests, conflicting messages, demands for public accountability, loss of public trust in the bureaucracy, and diminished resources are all factors that administrators must maneuver in the "administrative swamp". In order to circumvent the difficulty of these obstacles administrators must create crafty responses to maintain faith in the public system. One way to do this is through Open Government forums. Open government has become an important topic in the United States. The Georgia Municipal Association published a guide by which all

municipalities must abide by. *Government in the Sunshine: A Guide to Georgia's Open Meetings and Open Records Laws for Municipal Officials* provides local government officials with a framework to provide open government. At the City of Kennesaw, the City Clerk is charged with the principal duty of ensuring open government, or, government in the sunshine.

“The Open Meetings Act provides specific exceptions to the general requirement that meetings be open. Even if a meeting appears to fall within one of these exceptions, we suggest that a municipality obtain guidance from local legal counsel before closing a meeting. Guidance from local legal counsel is particularly important since the Open Meetings Act subjects individuals who conduct or participate in closed meetings in violation of the Act to criminal penalties” (Sumner, 1). The statute requires that “the public at all times be afforded access to meetings” (Sumner, 5). Furthermore, “ every agency shall prescribe the time, place, and dates of regular meetings of the agency...and a notice containing such information shall be posted and maintained in a conspicuous place available to the public at the regular meeting place of the agency” (Sumner, 5). Any change to the meeting schedule must also be made available to the public. If not, no action may be taken as prescribed by law. The agency must make any changes to the time, date, or place available to the public and provide due notice. “Due notice shall be the posting of a written notice for at least 24 hours at the place of regular meetings and...published in the county where the meetings are held or at the option of the agency to a newspaper having a general circulation in said county...” (Sumner, 6). Not only must the place, time, and date of the meetings be published, but also the agenda of each meeting should be published. The agenda should be made available to the public at the regular meeting place at a reasonable time before the meeting. “Failure to include on the agenda an item which becomes necessary to address during the course of a meeting shall not preclude considering and acting upon such item”

(Sumner, 7). Again, if an item was not on the published agenda, it cannot be acted upon by the council or agency.

One of the primary responsibilities of the City Clerk is to publish the minutes of each meeting; “a summary of the subjects acted on and those members present...shall be written and made available to the public for inspection within two business days of the adjournment”

(Sumner, 8). This must include the name of each person voting, any proposals made, and a record of all votes. As mentioned above, there are exceptions to the Open Meeting Act.

However, “...the specific reasons for such closure shall be entered upon the official minutes...”

(Sumner, 13). A meeting cannot be closed except by a majority vote of a quorum, which, in the case of Kennesaw, is four votes to close. As was outlined earlier, criminal penalties do exist if one does not follow these rules. “Any person knowingly and willfully conducting or participating in a meeting in violation of this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500.00” (Sumner, 15). The same rules and procedures apply for committee and commission meetings.

The City Clerk is also responsible for ensuring all records are open and can be made public. “...The term “public record” shall mean all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, computer based or generated information, or similar material prepared and maintained or received in the course of the operation of a public office or agency” (Sumner, 38). At Kennesaw, all public records are sent to a private agency (Adams Data Management) each October. This provides Kennesaw with a vast amount of safe storage and easy access. However, these records are held to the same standard as the records kept at City Hall and “...shall be subject to disclosure to the same extent...” (Sumner, 38). This includes any record created while performing a duty for the city, such as private contracting. Therefore, “all public records of an

agency...except those which by order of a court of this state or by law are prohibited or specifically exempted from being open to inspection by the general public, shall be open for a personal inspection by any citizen of this state at a reasonable time and place..." (Sumner, 39). At the City of Kennesaw, Debra Taylor (City Clerk) and Marilyn Shoaf (Assistant City Clerk) are responsible for the control and dissemination of such records. Their duty is clear; provide the public with these records at their request. This is an immense contractual obligation and one that must be carried out dutifully. They must provide the material requested by the public within a timeframe designated by law. "In no event shall this time exceed three business days. Where responsive records exist but are not available within three business days of the request, a written description of such records, together with a timetable for their inspection and copying, shall be provided within that period" (Sumner, 40). If records are maintained via electronic means, they must be to the requester in that format. However, the public retains the right to extract and make copies of all official or original public records, except by exemption. The fee per page must not exceed 25 cents. "In addition, a reasonable charge may be collected for search, retrieval, and other direct administrative costs for complying with a request...The hourly charge shall not exceed the salary of the lowest paid full-time employee who, in the discretion of the custodian of the records, has the necessary skill and training to perform the request; provided, however, that no charge shall be made for the first quarter hour" (Sumner, 43). As mentioned above however, some records are exempted from public disclosure. This includes records that are "specifically required by the federal government to be kept confidential; medical or veterinary records and similar files, the disclosure of which would be an invasion of personal privacy; records compiled for law enforcement of prosecution purposes...and individuals social security number and insurance or medical information in personnel records, which may be redacted from such

records...” (Sumner, 53). Like violation of open government requirements, violation of open records requirements also carry criminal penalties of a misdemeanor and...a fine not to exceed \$100.00” (Sumner, 66).

Political Affairs

As I have witnessed, Managers must also be adept and comprehend the process and influence of politics. If an administrator is successful in constructing political allies, the organization can eliminate some constraints and boost its capacity to serve the citizens effectively. Managers must “...accomplish four interrelated political outcomes for their organizations: 1. Secure political mandates from political executives and legislatures to act in the public interest, 2. Build continuing political support for the organization and its actions, 3. Develop authorization for making changes and innovations, 4. Mobilize decentralized political coproduction relationships in all of the organizations networks” (Cayer and Weschler, 198). If managers can do all these things, they can be successful. No matter innovations and adaptation, the career of a public administrator will be long and arduous, as the task gets no easier. “It remains...a stressed profession and a rapidly changing field of study. The swamp is not getting easier to manage” (Cayer and Weschler, 199).

The relationship between the City Clerk and the City Manager’s office is close. Due to the current lawsuits, the City is under, and the paralegal responsibilities of the Clerk, the Clerk, and the City Manager meet frequently to define updates. Lines of communication between the City Manager and the Clerk are open. Any complaints received usually are handled by the Clerk’s office. If the problem is outside of the Clerk’s purview, the situation is directed to the appropriate channel, usually the City Manager.

Working with politicians can be a complex experience for public service officials. Politicians tend to be more flexible than bureaucrats are and at times, this can be to the detriment of public policy. "...Administrators tend to be more concerned than legislators about what is required to give greater predictability and stability to...activities...and rulings that affect people every day" (Ashworth, 11). According to Ashworth, "elected officials move the public agenda differently than...career public servants" (Ashworth, 12). It is apparent that public servants must find methods to work cordially alongside politicians in order to provide for an effective government. I questioned the City Clerk for her methods to work cordially with elected officials and other public administrators. Her advice was to do your job well, remain neutral, inject humor when appropriate, refrain from gossip, and maintain professional and respectful nature. Perhaps Ashworth grasps the magnitude of this relationship best, espousing that "efficiency and consistency are worthy goals, but so are change and accommodation" (Ashworth, 12). Thus, differences will abound but those differences are pertinent to the way our government works. The key, is to meet with your opposition and reach productive policy decisions via mutual concessions, "...a way of finding a public course of actions in your area of responsibility that is keeping with the sentiments of the people, those you serve, those who speak for those you serve...and...those who have no one but you to speak for them" (Ashworth, 21). At the Clerk's office, concessions and accommodation are a daily occurrence. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk serve as a safeguard to the Mayor and Council, often taking the brunt of the public indignation. Likewise, the appreciation of policy outcomes is often directed at just the Mayor and Council, leaving out the Clerk and the grueling duties. Every day at the Clerk's office is an experience. Filled mostly with complaints, the phones ring constantly. To diffuse the state of affairs, the

Clerk can often only resolve to accommodation and concessions, offering support to the citizen and helping to alleviate their problems.

Skills Required

To make it to the zenith of any given agency you must be a generalist in addition to having policy areas of your specialty. In addition, often public servants enter into a specialized career and focus solely on their area of expertise. This is sufficient for an individual who does not aspire to attain an executive level position. On the other hand, if one does aspire to these positions they must be familiar with various policy areas, as is the Clerk's office. You must self-analyze, communicate well, write well, learn quickly, and have no trouble reading and understanding large amounts of information. With any position of responsibility in government will come a hefty workload. Your workload will be amplified by making it to a position of leadership. My day-to-day duties at the Clerk's office were wanting for leisure time. The workload was immense and pressing. Consequently, to balance time and workload you must delegate work to your subordinate. Thus, the majority of my workload was devolved from the City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk, to myself. This goes hand in hand with reducing bureaucratic behavior. To accomplish this you should trust your subordinate and their capabilities. Delegation of duties will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of your given agency. Of course, "this type of delegation of authority...will require more consultation by you with your staff...you have to be more accessible to them for advice and counsel...or they may just need reassurance..." (Ashworth, 147).

Ethics

Without reservation, the most significant landmine you will face is ethics and morality in public service. Ethicality is one thing that, if lost, can ruin a program or organizational validity

and starve the agency of respect among government and in the eyes of the public. From the start, we at the Clerk's office have worked diligently to provide open government and ensure that ethical standards were rigorous; especially in the wake of the lawsuit, the City is currently facing. There are imperatives one can turn to discover ethics: religion, purpose of state and nation, historical imperatives, and reason. Individuals living in a community will, over time, build on private impulses, concerns, and needs to formulate a plethora of agreed upon rationales that best portray their needs and the most efficient way to attain those ends. These desires and requirements are the consequences of life in the general masses. In the face of everyday issues and restraints, the citizenry has delineated what morals and values matter most to them and have entrusted elected and appointed officials to go forth and confront frequently faced troubles, keeping near them the morals and values of the populace they represent. According to Woodrow Wilson, these common interests "...must be principles which have democratic policy very much at heart" (Lewis, 696). At Kennesaw Clerk's Office, we endeavor for full compliance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the Kennesaw Charter, the Kennesaw Municipal Code, and the Municipal Clerk Code of Ethics.

The Public Interest

"Serving the public interest is the fundamental mission of governments and public institutions" (Lewis, 694). Despite the fact that many if not most public administrators confirm that the major precept of their duties is to serve the public interest; the impasse we as public administrators face is defining the central tenets of what the public interest really is. Walter Lippmann purports that the public interest "...may be presumed to be what...[people] would choose if they saw clearly, thought rationally, acted disinterestedly and benevolently" (Lewis, 694). Perhaps the most generic and widespread definition as offered by James Madison in

Federalist No. 10 is that the public interest is the "...common impulse of passion, or of interest, adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community". The essence of public administration in America, and at Kennesaw, is to define the public interest and to implement this interest in the most democratic way possible. This implementation must be the product of policy that is responsible, efficient, effective, and equitable. As Woodrow Wilson points out, "...administration in the United States must be at all points sensitive to public opinion....The ideal for us is a civil service cultured and self-sufficient enough to act with sense and vigor, and yet so intimately connected with the popular thought, by means of elections and constant public counsel, as to find arbitrariness or class spirit quite out of the question" (Lewis, 696).

It is inherently obvious, at least to me that the public interest evolves from private, individual concerns. This thought derives from an economic theory by Adam Smith in the *Wealth of Nations* (1776), that one who "...intends only his own gain..." is "...led by and invisible hand to promote...the public interest". Thus, the drive for self-fulfillment will naturally produce the best idea of the public interest. Nevertheless, some scholars disagree, as Carol Lewis purports "a calculation of the public interest from private interests alone is not enough" (697). A workable, practicable definition of the public interest is in my opinion the set of private concerns of an individual and shared by a common citizenry of which they have no control over and, thus, must rely on an organized body to address these issues with adherence to higher morals and values. No matter the differences in belief, it is unambiguous that the dilemma with defining the public interest is a direct result of the ambiguity between the public interest and the private or individual interests and the application of both by public administrators. As Carol Lewis notes, "...public interest evokes democratic values, and it is the sum of individual, private interests

articulated as political demands that the political system, including the public manager, must aggregate into public action” (696). Therefore, it is the duty of public administrators to decipher the public interest; in conjunction with elected officials, we must design and implement policy to address the shared concerns of the citizenry we serve.

Importance of Record Keeping

The importance of recordkeeping, especially in government, is monumental. Not only are the records themselves important, but also the recordkeepers. “Recordkeeping professionals support societies, communities, and organizations as they try to make meaning out of decisions, actions, and memories. Recordkeeping professionals provide an essential bridge between the past, present and future dimensions in which records and their contexts belong; through understanding the environments that generated the records and the way records act as evidence of those environments” (RMMA, 3). Furthermore, through their profession, recordkeeping officials “...enable accountability and governance; preserve memory and identity; and provide information, according to the RMMA (3). What's more, they “establish, manage and maintain recordkeeping processes and systems that: capture, maintain and provide authentic, reliable, accessible and trusted records of social and business activities; and meet the needs and expectations of individuals, organizations and society” (RMMA, 3). In local government, records capturing and records retention is a vital part of the organization. Complete and accurate databases of records allow citizens, elected and appointed officials, and staff to review past policies and decisions. It also adds legitimacy to the decisions made by officials and provides tangible support in case of dispute or lawsuit. It also serves as a record of what actions were taken and can be useful to persons not attending meetings. Furthermore, in the midst of a

complicated meeting, records (minutes) allow officials to clarify and implement policy. It is imperative to review different recordkeeping theories, past and present.

To date, there are four primary theories: records continuum theory, life cycle theory, respect for original order, and respect for provenance. An introduction and examination of the former and their contributions to recordkeeping as a practice are significant. The life cycle model was fashioned by Ira Penn. Penn, through his model, identified stages in which records are usable. The stages are known as the birth, maintenance, and death. Later, Jay Atlerton further identified four phases of record life: record creation, maintenance, management, and disposal. This theory assumes that records have a determined life cycle or period of life, after which they can be disposed of. Furthermore, this theory assumes that records are only reliable and authentic at the records original physical location. Frank Upward viewed this theory detrimental to the life and importance of records. Therefore, Upward produced the records continuum model. Using four axes (recordkeeping, evidence, transactional, and identity) Upward implemented his model. Disputing Penn's beliefs, Upward espoused the reliability and authenticity of records despite their physical location. The records continuum model also "affirms the role of recordkeeping in relation to organizational, legal and social accountability; provides for building alliances with different disciplines concerned with organizational, legal, social, cultural and historical accountability; acknowledges multiple uses for records over time, identifying a range of customers for records and archives services" (Arkivrad, 22). The three primary uses of the continuum model are recognized as contemporary, regulatory, and historical. Contemporary recordkeeping is the "current recordkeeping actions and the structures in which they take place" (Arkivrad, 23). The regulatory recordkeeping is the method of "...regulation and the enabling and controlling structures for action such as policies, standards, codes, legislation, and

promulgation of best practices” (Arkivrad, 23). This application is extremely important for all levels of government. Historical recordkeeping explores the “...provenance in which action and structure are examined forensically as part of the data sought about records for their storage, recall and dissemination” (Arkivrad, 23). Here in the Clerk’s office, the regulatory and historical uses of recordkeeping and record recall are extremely important and are used on a daily basis. At Kennesaw, we employ a blend of all of the above theories. For example, per the Council’s action, we no longer must maintain audio tapes of the minutes. Instead, a paper and electronic copy are sufficient. This is in keeping with the life cycle theory. Perhaps the most important theory we use at the Clerk’s Office is respect for original order. “Original order is a fundamental principle of archives. Maintaining records in original order...preserve existing relationships and evidential significance that can be inferred from the context of the records” (SAA). For example, all papers or records received at the Clerk’s Office are copied and then filed electronically. The original record is then archived with the copied version and maintained in storage. If the original was received during a Council meeting, the documentation becomes a part of the permanent record, never to be destroyed. This has been a practice at Kennesaw since inception. As part of my duties, I am currently making electronic files of all original copies received during Council or committee meetings, preserving their original order.

In review, the importance of recordkeeping and record keepers is obvious, especially in government. As mentioned earlier, many of the daily duties of the City Clerk are not enumerated in the charter. Below is an inventory of just some of the recordkeeping duties we are responsible for at the Clerk’s office.

Recordkeeping processes and practices include: defining recordkeeping roles and responsibilities; documenting context, including administrative change; designing and implementing recordkeeping processes and systems; determining records to be captured into a recordkeeping system; defining how long to retain

records; capturing records; registering records into a recordkeeping system; classifying business functions, activities and transactions; storing and handling records; protecting and preserving records; maintaining persistent links between records and other entities through recordkeeping metadata; enabling access to records; implementing disposal; documenting recordkeeping processes and practices; and establishing and maintaining recordkeeping capabilities via arrangement, description, preservation, custody and storage of data (RMMA, 7).

Record Management and Cumulative Records

Priscilla Emery, records management expert, defines records management as “a professional discipline that is primarily concerned with the management of document-based information systems. The application of systematic and scientific controls to recorded information required in the operation of an organizations business. The systematic control of all organizational records during the various stages of their life cycle: from their creation or receipt, through their processing, distribution, maintenance, and use, to their ultimate disposition. The purpose of records management is to promote economies and efficiencies in recordkeeping, to assure that useless records are systematically destroyed while valuable information is protected and maintained in a manner that facilitates its access and use” (2).

At the Clerk’s office in Kennesaw, records management is our principal task. As the official keeper of minutes, the Clerk’s office is charged with the task of collecting and protecting all permanent records. We do this in three stages. We have the original minutes taken as annotations, we have typed minutes transcribed from the meeting’s audio tape, and we store the minutes at an offsite location. The typed minutes are held in reserve in a secure vault at City Hall. Adams Data Management manages our minutes off-site. Their protected services allow for secure fortification of permanent records. Additionally, ADM’s systems allow us to recall any record without respect to physical location. One of the grave problems we are presently experiencing at Kennesaw is the complicatedness of transferring older minutes to an electronic

database called Laserfiche. Current problems include, but are not limited to outdated fonts not translated by Laserfiche, aged paper such as onion paper, and the lighter ink used by older typewriters. In order for Laserfiche to interpret these documents, we must scan each page using a darken feature. Additionally, we must exercise extreme caution as to not damage the older paper. Still, the transcription is not a hundred percent and will take the effort of a full-time employee to complete exact transcription. All of the above tasks are taking a lot of time and precaution. I have spent the majority of my time at Kennesaw carrying out these tasks as well as the cemetery project. However onerous this task may be, it is vital. Citizens, via the Open Records Act, can request to see all permanent documents. Due to the historical significance of these documents, it is important to give the citizen an unoriginal document and not the original document in order to preserve their character. However, if the exact document is requested, we must provide them that. As mentioned, these are historical records. “A historical record is a record which, because of its importance to government...has enduring value and is retained permanently. Historical records include... records dating back to the establishment of the government, board minutes, birth, death, marriage, and divorce records, wills, and estates. Examples of other records deemed historical are property records, election records, policy and procedural manuals, evaluations of governmental operations...just to name a few” (Georgia Archives, No. 10). All of these records are kept by the Clerk’s office, save school records. This is an enormous undertaking and calls for a complex management system and the use of technology. From time to time, someone asks why records are so important. According to the Georgia Archives kept by the Secretary of State, “they protect your rights...they preserve memories...they help build the future” (No. 10). Custody of these records requires a lot of effort. First, you must conduct an inventory of all records, both paper and electronic. Subsequently, you must arrange them by units if they are related in some

way. To obtain a complete inventory, you must be systematic. “Begin with modern/active office files, use one inventory form per series, continue with files in storage (in-house or off-site), and do not leave any records out because there is pressure to complete the inventory” (Georgia Archives, No. 10).

I can speak from experience and declare that this onerous assignment is exhausting. During my internship, I have electronically preserved thousands of pages of permanent documents, being careful not to exclude one. These records are so important because they serve four purposes or values: historical, legal, fiscal, and administrative. The historical value of records document past events and commonly comprises a very small portion of records generated. Legal records “...are required by law to be kept...in case of litigation or for investigation by the government” (Georgia Archive, No. 10). Fiscal records encompass financial transactions, kept in case of audit or for tax purposes. Finally, administrative records “...enable the organization to carry out day-to-day business functions” (Georgia Archive, No. 10). No matter the level of sophistication and the successfulness of your records management program, if the records are not secured, they are endangered. “Records need to be kept in a cool, dry, clean, and secure environment that protects them from theft, fire, flood, mold, and unwarranted destruction. Proper storage of records also, regardless of media, facilitates the retrieval process” (Georgia Archive, No. 10). This is what we have done at Kennesaw. We have permanent records stored on our computers, in paper form in the secure vault, and off-site at Adams Data Management. This ensures the documents security but also facilitates retrieval.

Importance of Systems

Data management and records keeping is made easier by our use of information systems. At Kennesaw, we currently employ the Laserfiche system to electronically store documents. This

system enables us to permanently store original records that are scanned into the system. Once items have been scanned and archived, we can recall specific items of interest using a search key. Each mention of the item of interest is retrieved from thousands of other documents with a provided summary of the article. This allows us to recall documents that are requested from either citizens or public officials. Without the use of Laserfiche and the search option, document retention and recall would be a deliberate and burdensome practice and would necessitate an official to page through thousands of documents and examine each one to discover the item of interest. The use of this product is essential to the duties of the City Clerk and all public officials and supplements the framework of Open Government and the Open Records Act.

Cemetery Project and Outcomes

The in-depth portion of my internship was focused on the cemetery project. Virtual Underground, the contractor for the cemetery project as mentioned previously, has selected Kennesaw as a beta site for its new software program, comparable to Ancestor.com. In order for Kennesaw to develop into a beta site, we must have comprehensive records of our cemetery. There are no known risks to the City for this project. As is discussed in a later section, the benefit is enormous, saving both time and money. This includes precise birth and death records, and a coded photograph of each headstone. The Kennesaw cemetery is divided into two phases, a first and older phase, and the newer second phase. Within each phase are two categories of graves, open area, and terraced. Each must be coded differently and transferred from our maps to Virtual's maps. Since Virtual used dissimilar codes and acronyms for their project, I transferred our data into their existing systems so the maps and codes link. Virtual's codes are more contemporary, in line with common mapping practices; the City's codes, established long ago are antiquated.

Virtual was awarded the contract to plot both phases; however, they only produced photographs for the second phase. Therefore, as part of my internship, I photographed every headstone in phase I using their codes, and then transferred their codes onto our existing maps (see *Appendix A*) Once this was completed, I worked with Kennesaw's GIS department to illustrate new maps using both our codes and Virtual's codes. Afterwards, the finished project was sent to Virtual and they will soon enter our data into their new system. "This will reduce the response time to customer service needs by 25% and will make 100% of the information available to anyone..." says Taylor (3). Furthermore, the projected return on investment is sizable. Estimated savings in personnel time is 1-3 hours per week and an estimated annual savings in dollars of \$1,352-\$4,056; the importance of maintaining these historic records is immeasurable.

An additional aspect of the project was clarifying existing space within the older phase I. The City no longer sells lots in this phase. However, there is additional space owned by families that can be used as burial space. The underground imaging and our accurate maps have made clear exactly how many deceased can be interred in each lot (see *Appendix B*) This will help to resolve future disputes with family members as to their existing space; many believe they have more space than they truly do. This is due to unsound practices by burial contractors and lackadaisical plotting methods used by the families themselves. For example, bodies have been buried sideways, etc, and not following the usual east-west pattern. This has reduced the amount of space available to the family.

In summary, the difficulty in this project lied with accurately plotting individual lots within the cemetery blocks themselves. We adopted Virtual Underground's square method of plotting each block. However, most blocks were not a square, which hampered our attempts at a

scientific map. Nonetheless, in conjunction with the Kennesaw GIS department, we were able to create mostly accurate maps. In the end, we met our ultimate goal of reducing cost, time, and providing accurate cemetery maps to the public. The completion of this project has enabled the Clerk's office to work off one map, hyperlinked to pictures of every headstone. This system now allows the Clerk's office to systematically sell additional lots and to fill remaining lots owned by families and preserve the history of the cemetery.

Appendix A



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