

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 10

John "JJ" J. Murphy

*Port St. Lucie City Manager
Candidate Report*

Section 10

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Cover Letter and Resume

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Colin Baenziger & Associates
c/o Colin Baenziger
2035 South Atlantic Avenue, Suite 504
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

August 12, 2016

Dear Mr. Baenziger:

I hope this cover letter gives you a look into why I think my background will fit well into the desires of the citizens, business community, staff, and City Council of the City of Port St. Lucie, Florida. Having evaluated the desired traits for your next City Manager, I know most applicants would say they have those experiences. I would tell you the employees, residents and elected officials I have worked with in both New Mexico and Pennsylvania would say I regularly displayed those leadership traits.

I am interested in being the dynamic and ethical leader that tackles future challenges for Port St. Lucie and helps the elected officials and staff accomplish their goals. Having served the last 19 years as an officer in the military and 13 years in municipal government, I know firsthand the importance of a positive relationship between staff, elected officials, the community and their engaged, visionary and visible City Manager.

My story as a City manager changed three years ago after attending the Harvard Kennedy School's Senior Executive Program for State and Local officials in July 2013. This transformational experience provided me the opportunity to collaborate with leaders from around the world and I was able to learn from some of this country's best professors. I came back from this experience knowing that to move our community forward, I had to invest more time both internal and external to the organization. Internally, I committed to the professional development/training of our employees and empowered them to develop solutions to insure our organization was high performing. Externally, I doubled my efforts on stakeholder inclusiveness and actively engaged our citizens on multiple issues. These strategies have produced significant results.

As City Manager of Hobbs, New Mexico I changed our mission statement to "Our Mission is SERVICE." SERVICE is used as an acronym for Safety, Engagement, Responsiveness, Visionary, Inclusive, Customer Driven and Enhancing the Quality of life. Our employees have changed their mindset to a service-minded organization. We measured how the employees felt about the leadership team and our culture. I am fortunate to have proposed and implemented a plan to my current City Commission and have delivered multiple programs that have significantly improved employee engagement. In fact, our third survey of our employees rated my management skills 46% higher than the national benchmark of thirty other local government managers. While average public and private organizations have a 27% engagement rate of their employees, my team and I have been able to grow that number to 57% in Hobbs with some of my leadership initiatives.

The City Manager position in Port St. Lucie is an outstanding opportunity! I know living in Port St. Lucie would afford my family an amazing quality of life. We have five daughters who are our priority, and it is clear the city is a vibrant, friendly, safe, family oriented community with a very low crime rate. This is indicative of what a high priority public safety and quality of life are within this community. My hope is the City of Port St. Lucie is looking for a fairly young yet seasoned, vibrant leader who is dedicated to the municipal management profession and is prepared to make a long-term commitment.

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As the City Manager in Hobbs, New Mexico I have approximately 500 full time employees and am responsible for a budget of \$197 million. The City was recently ranked the 3rd fastest growing micro-city (population under 50,000) in the country for the second year in a row giving me experience in a high growth community. Solid planning and financial management has helped increase our cash position from \$65M to over \$116 million since my arrival and we have consistently managed to maintain AAA bond rating and a budget surplus of over thirty-four percent. While working for a fiscally conservative city commission in Hobbs, I have had the opportunity to serve a diverse community. It has been my pleasure to lead a team of employees who have made positive impacts such as implementing public-public and public-private partnerships to deliver significant quality of life improvements, enhancing public safety, reducing crime, increasing employee productivity, reducing employee legacy costs, improving customer service and implementing employee morale initiatives which all benefited the staff and our citizens. In addition, I have a history of working well with community organizations and collective bargaining groups and delivering significantly improved community and labor relations.

In Hobbs, I started a strategic plan to invest some of our surplus on programs which reduced legacy costs. We just completed a \$2 million LED lighting campaign converting the majority of our exterior and internal lights to LED. We also have computerized all of our mechanical systems for more energy efficiency. Shortly after arriving, I developed, with the employee's involvement, a transition plan to move employees from traditional vacation/sick leave plan to a paid-time-off plan. This move saved the community \$2 million upfront and \$500,000 per year moving forward in legacy costs.

Outside of inspiring our employees, my most significant accomplishment has been balancing multiple economic development projects simultaneously while working with external stakeholders. Collectively these projects, many with other private or public partners will deliver over \$100 million in quality of life improvements to our community. Some of these partners include a local family foundation, the county government, the local municipal school district, the New Mexico Junior College and the University of the Southwest, a local private university. In reading about your desires for your next City Manager, I have to share my experience with the synergy it took to take on a community project here in Hobbs. Together, with the partners listed above we worked on consolidating outdated facilities and agreeing to the design, construction and ongoing maintenance of a \$70 million dollar health, wellness and learning center. This approximately 150,000 square foot multi-generational facility will include an indoor water park, indoor competition swimming pool, indoor warm water therapy pool, indoor soccer and a state-of-the-art recreational center which will start construction in August 2016. I have worked on this effort for the last four years and have been recognized by our partners as the leader who has brought this project to fruition. I would relish the opportunity to bring my lessons learned in helping Port St. Lucie deliver future economic development projects.

The highlight of my economic development last year was opening our new municipal golf course, Rockwind Community Links, which was listed by Golf Digest in their annual "Top 10 New Golf Courses." Golf Inc. magazine just listed Rockwind in the Top 5 for "International Golf Developments of the Year." These accolades lead to the USGA asking me to be a featured speaker at their 2016 Pace of Play and Innovation Symposium in Pasadena, CA. The USGA just published a five-minute video on their website calling Hobbs a "model community" in growing the game of golf with unique solutions I helped develop.

I have had experience working with municipalities that are both financially stressed and financially sound. Both situations offer their unique challenges and opportunities. From 2002

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2010, I worked for the City of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, a community of approximately 45,000 residents in a college-city environment and \$40 million budget. The downtown is anchored by two private universities and provided me an opportunity to collaborate on their growth strategies within our community. During this period of time, I implemented a successful "wireless city" initiative, drove a comprehensive economic development program which delivered over \$150 million of new projects and was a catalyst for 56 new businesses opening. I also implemented a more hands-on approach of solid fiscal management which enabled Wilkes-Barre to see an audited \$57 million turnaround during my tenure. This experience has led me to always be fiscally responsible with government funds no matter what the project or budget. Also, my varied experience with public-private-partnerships will assist me in collaborative efforts with regional partners on beneficial community projects in Port St. Lucie.

In addition to having a Master's in Public Administration, my dedication to professional development led to my completion of the Harvard Kennedy School's Senior Executive Program for State and Local officials. I also attended the Senior Executive Institute at the University of Virginia where I was trained on turning municipal organizations into high performing organizations. I have sent almost fifteen senior managers to the LEAD training at UVA and three staff/elected officials to the Harvard Kennedy School. I also completed the ICMA Gettysburg Leadership Institute and many different leadership training courses in the military. I had approximately ten classmates in the Harvard and UVA programs that were either elected or appointed from the State of Florida. The experiences I shared with these governmental leaders will assist me in any regional collaborative efforts.

In January of 2014, I was one of 33 City/County Managers across the world selected to be on ICMA's Leadership Task Force which helped author a white paper on the complex challenges facing local governments over the next ten years. I have kept abreast of the most progressive options in organizational management, leadership and turning governmental teams into high performing organizations.

While the position in the City of Port St. Lucie will be sought after by my peers across the country, I believe my extensive military background and professional development coupled with my impactful governmental experience will give the elected officials, staff and residents the principled, community-oriented, and selfless leader they deserve. I am very excited about this opportunity and hope to demonstrate my organizational leadership skills in your community while inspiring the employees of Port St. Lucie.

Very Respectfully,



John J. Murphy, ICMA-CM

JOHN J. MURPHY, ICMA-CM

E-Mail: J.J.Murphy31@gmail.com

SUMMARY

More than 13 years in local government and 19 years as a military officer with expertise in the following areas:

Time Management	Media Relations	Labor Relations
Public-Private Partnerships	Budget Control & Implementation	Customer Service
Leadership & Teambuilding	Organizational Change and Development	Negotiation & Interpersonal Skills

Recognized facilitator and leader, with record of success in maintaining high levels of operational improvements. Known for enhancing productivity through a combination of business savvy and intuitive management skills. Experienced in managing change and delivering multiple economic development projects simultaneously. A motivated team player who is able to work independently within the organizational framework.

RELEVANT LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

CITY OF HOBBS, NEW MEXICO

SALARY – START \$140K, CURRENT \$180K PLUS \$50K BONUS

CITY MANAGER

AUGUST 2012-PRESENT

Hobbs was ranked the 7th fastest growing micro city (under 50,000) in the U.S. from 2013-2015, with a population of approximately 45,000 people covering approximately 20 square miles. The community sits in the middle of Lea County (pop 65,000) which is labeled the "EnergyPlex" as the local economy is being fueled by the diverse energy industry including nuclear, oil, solar and gas.

Exercised fiscal discipline during economic boom and increased financial surplus:

- Managed/lead city staff of 500 employees and \$230M budget
 - Started year one with projected 30% budgeted reserve - Ended first year with over \$16M budget surplus and 40% reserve
 - Preserved "AAA" bond rating and improved financial position; reduced audit findings from 9 to 3
 - Started year two with projected 30% budgeted reserve - Ended year with over \$20M budget surplus, 40% reserve and \$90M in fund balance
 - Started year three with projected 30% budgeted reserve - Ended year with over \$15M budget surplus, 47% reserve and \$120M in fund balance, maintained "AAA" bond rating
- Facilitated multiple public/private partnerships to move key projects forward that had stalled
 - Project coordinator whose consensus building efforts in the community despite political challenges on the city commission resulted in unanimous support from Commissioners on every meaningful vote to fund a new \$12M golf course and \$1.5M walking trail which enhanced our quality of life
 - Rockwind Community Links was named by Golf Digest "Top 10 Best New Golf Courses"
 - Golf Inc. named project in the Top 5 International Developments in golf industry for 2015
 - Collaborated with key community groups to support \$70M for a health, wellness, and learning center; partners' contributions equaled more than 50% of capital and operational costs
 - Fostered partnership with public school superintendent and private foundation to locate new elementary school in city park and also coordinated over \$4M upgrades to the park
 - Invested \$5M in new field turf for baseball with local school paying \$1.5M over three years providing an outstanding complex to host regional tournaments which increased hotel nights
- Generated support from various community groups to approve water restriction plan and a water rate increase of approximately 25% over an eight-year term
 - Rate increase will generate an additional \$13 million in revenue over the eight year term resulting in a positive fund balance beginning in the 8th year, water restriction plan has already reduced millions of gallons of water usage per month by city and residents

Motivated and displayed critical leadership during time when employee morale was low:

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- Initiated discussion and implemented policy changes moving employees to a Paid Time Off (PTO) plan
 - Inclusion of employees and labor unions in the policy design process resulted in overwhelming support for the change
 - Plan reduced 145,000 sick hours saving \$2M upfront and \$500k per year ongoing in legacy costs
- Created employee morale committee which addressed concerns and significantly increased morale
- Implemented job shadowing/training program in which I would leave City Hall and go work in individual departments (Operation SWITCH--Stop Working in the City Hall)
- Invested in employees' professional growth by initiating a citywide team building event
 - Established a team of stakeholders (employees) to help choose the leadership consulting firm
 - Efforts resulted in over 320 employees voluntarily participating in the daylong event
- Employed negotiation skills to manage and resolve potential litigation immediately upon hire
- Converted employee health insurance from a fully insured to a self-funded plan; savings were reinvested to defer future annual health care increases for employees; projected annual savings are over \$500k
- Above initiatives increased employee engagement from 27% to 57% as measured on a yearly basis
- Annual employee survey ranked my leadership abilities in the 96th percentile versus the benchmark of city/county managers across the country

Developed new avenues to improve partnerships for public safety initiatives:

- Increased police force by over 60% (62 to 107 sworn), which has resulted in a more effective, responsive and community engaged police force
- Crafted new hiring incentives which reward longer employment commitments for recruits
- Created unparalleled partnerships with county drug task force and New Mexico Dept. of Public Safety to boost numbers on drug task force and improved collaboration in state run crime laboratory
- Hired third attorney to work part-time assisting the District Attorney (County) in prosecuting drug cases
- Added fire department staffing to enable stations to respond to multiple incidents simultaneously

City of Hobbs Accolades/Awards:

Hobbs Express – Named 2014 Best Public Transit System in New Mexico

Utilities – 2015 & 2016 Wastewater Treatment Plant awarded “Best Managed Facility in New Mexico”

Streets – 2016 Asphalt Recycling & Reclaiming Association Award for “Excellence in Hot In-Place Recycling”

Fire Department awarded ISO Rating of 2 in 2015 – Top 4% in United States

Parks Department – New baseball complex was named 2016 USSSA Regional Complex of the Year

Rockwind Community Links – Named by Golf Digest “Top 10 Best New Golf Courses”, Golf Inc “Top 5

International Developments in 2015”

Requested to be a featured speaker at the United States Golf Association’s 2016 Pace of Play and Innovation

Symposium in Pasadena, CA to highlight our innovative approach to grow the game of golf

Featured speaker at the Michigan Association of Counties 2014– Topic – “Delivering Public-Private Partnerships”

CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

SALARY – START \$55K, FINAL \$83,000

CITY ADMINISTRATOR/DEPUTY CITY ADMINISTRATOR

JULY 2002-APRIL 2010

Wilkes-Barre has a population of 45,000 covering approximately 7 square miles, making it the 13th largest city in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and host to the 4th largest downtown workforce in Pennsylvania. It is the county seat of Luzerne County and one of the principal cities in the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton, PA Metropolitan Statistical Area. This Metro/Stats area is the 4th largest in the state with a population of 563,631.

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Skillfully maneuvered municipality through financial recovery:

- Implemented a five-year recovery plan, which led the city from the brink of bankruptcy and without a bond rating to being the 3rd highest rated ("A") city in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with a audited financial turnaround of \$57M from 2003-2009
 - This rating helped the city save over \$300,000 on their 2009 bond issue alone.
- Managed \$45M annual operating budget, \$80M in capital assets, and lead more than 300 employees
- Improved financial position from 2003 revenue of \$34.3M and year end negative fund balance of \$4.2M, to net revenues of \$55.9M and the positive fund balance of \$15.1M in 2009

Committed to developing new avenues to generate revenue for economic development initiatives:

- Coordinated over \$150M in new economic development projects over seven years in the city
- Fostered partnership with two downtown colleges which invested over \$100M in campus improvements
- Marketed building and settled sale terms with private university while releasing \$14M of city's financial obligations to Wilkes-Barre Call Center, which was listed as the Mayor's #1 goal of 2004 and 2005
- Spearheaded efforts to lead Wilkes-Barre from one of the least technologically advanced communities in Pennsylvania into one of the most advanced in the United States with little cost to the municipality
- Settled multiple public/private partnerships in technology, security and economic development delivering tangible benefits to Wilkes-Barre and the surrounding community
- Initiated, managed, and secured grant funding for a citywide camera initiative; added 250 cameras to transform the downtown and public parks into a safe 18-hour vibrant downtown
- Managed and promoted numerous economic development projects; 53 new businesses opened from 2004-09
- Negotiated a lease arrangement with AHL affiliate of the Pittsburgh Penguins that added stable revenue stream to offset the renovation costs of a \$15M state-of-the-art mixed-use recreational project

Recognized for being the labor negotiator who delivered tangible results:

- Served as the lead negotiator for four labor unions and negotiated multiple contracts during my tenure
 - Fair but stern approach which resulted in not going to arbitration once during my tenure
- Implemented labor/management quarterly discussions, which successfully reduced future grievances and costs related issues; utilized team approach to discuss the labor-management agreements

Developed and established stronger communication systems to improve the city in the post 9/11 phase:

- Managed the emergency operations center through five FEMA declared disasters; coordinated emergency personnel and employees to keep citizens safe and provide critical information to media and residents in a timely manner
- Utilized extensive background gained in emergency management to formulate a new emergency operations plan for the city in compliance with Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency standards
 - Efforts lead to Wilkes-Barre receiving a Level 7 FEMA Community Rating, which saved taxpayers approximately 15% on flood insurance premiums

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

GOALS CONSULTING, L.L.C, WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

SALARY - \$60,000

PRESIDENT/CEO

APRIL 2010-AUG 2012

Utilized government experience to assist public, non-profits and private sectors:

- Consulted with the Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce and YMCA to improve economic development
- Assisted multiple private industry clients in procuring grants in excess of \$5M combined
- Specialized in municipal surveillance; labeled as an expert in the field by a national security trade magazine
- Lectured nationally as a featured speaker on public-private partnerships at multiple conferences

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MILITARY EXPERIENCE

Watch Supervisor, Controller Air Force Rescue Coordination Center—Tyndall AFB, FL 2000-Present

- Granted top secret security clearance (TS/SCI) 16 years in a row; most recent approval Aug 2014
- Coordinates search & rescue operations throughout US in 24/7 Air Operations Center
- Credited with coordinating searches and/or rescues saving over 100 American lives and hundreds overseas

Volunteered for two post 9/11 deployments to coordinate critical search and rescue efforts.

- Deployed to Djibouti, Africa - Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa in 2008 to direct recovery operations across fourteen nations, two continents and three combatant commands in direct support of the Global War on Terrorism.
- Deployed immediately after the Haiti earthquake to stand up the first Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Recovery Joint Personnel Center in the United States Southern Command to help support the military response to Operation Unified Response.
 - Team coordinated successful medical evacuations saving over 2,000 severely injured Haitians

Vandenberg Air Force Base Spokesperson, Public Affairs Office—Vandenberg AFB, CA 1998-2000
Recruiter, University of Notre Dame, IN (Minority Recruitment Program) 1997-1998

CREDENTIALS

<i>Education</i>	Master of Public Administration, Marywood University, Scranton, PA: 1998 <i>Alpha Phi Sigma; National Criminal Justice Honor Society</i> Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, King's College, Wilkes-Barre, PA: 1993
<i>Affiliations</i>	Member, International City/County Management Association, Credentialed Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Selected Member – ICMA Leadership Task Force – January 2014- Appointed – ICMA Performance Measurement Team – December 2015 Board Member, New Mexico Municipal Managers Association—elected 2014 Founder, President & CEO, GOALS Foundation: 2001-2014
<i>Significant Professional Development</i>	Graduate – Senior Executive Institute – Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia – August 2014 Graduate – Harvard Kennedy School – Senior Executives in State and Local Government – July 2013 Graduate – ICMA Gettysburg Leadership Institute – May 2013 Completed— Dale Carnegie “Skills for Success” – September 2014 Completed— Karrass “Effective Negotiating” Seminar – February 2015 Completed – ICMA Leadership Institute and numerous ICMA courses– 2002— Present
<i>Awards</i>	King's College Leo Award for dedication to community service from an alumnus: 2005 Meritorious Service Medal: 2012, Joint Service Commendation Medal: 2008 Air Force Commendation Medal: 2000, 2002 and 2003, Joint Service Achievement Medal: 2010 Air Force Achievement Medal: 1998, National Service Defense Medal Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal: 2008 Humanitarian Service Medal: 2010, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal: 2004 Armed Forces Reserve Medal with 2 'M' Devices Volunteer of the Year (Director of Operations), Air Combat Command (ACC): 2001

Candidate Introduction

John J. Murphy, ICMA-CM

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, Marywood University, Scranton, PA
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, King's College, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School Senior Executives in State and Local Government.
Harvard University
Graduate of the Senior Executive Institute, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University
of Virginia
Completed – Gettysburg Leadership Institute

EXPERIENCE

City Manager, City of Hobbs, NM	2012 – Present
United States Air Force Reserve	2002 – Present
Management Consultant	2010 – 2012
City Administrator, City of Wilkes-Barre, PA	2004 – 2010
Deputy City Administrator, City of Wilkes-Barre, PA	2002 – 2004
United States Air Force	1997 – 2002

BACKGROUND

The City of Hobbs was ranked the 7th fastest growing micro city (under 50,000) in the U.S. from 2013-2015, with a population of approximately 45,000 people covering approximately 20 square miles. The community sits in the middle of Lea County (pop 65,000) which is labeled the "EnergyPlex" as the local economy is being fueled by the diverse energy industry including nuclear, oil, solar and gas.

In 2016 the City of Hobbs' General Fund budget was \$170 million and the total of all budgeted funds was \$230 million. We have multiple major projects in either planning, design or construction which will account for \$200 million in improvements in infrastructure, housing and quality of life projects. The City has approximately 500 employees and 15 departmental directors reporting to me.

The three most significant issues facing the City are:

- Addressing public safety. When I was hired the perception in the surrounding area was that Hobbs was an unsafe oil town. First, the Police Chief immediately announced he was retiring. I brought in a diverse group of community leaders to sit down on the interview panel which gave them a sense of inclusiveness while at the same time giving me a better understanding of external leader's impressions of the police force. I selected a new Police Chief and together we worked to make significant changes. Second, I received support from the City Commission to increase the number of patrol officers from 62 to a high of

107. We then created multiple local, county and state partnerships to improve operations and made an investment in training our officers in verbal judo and de-escalation techniques. We have also seen the perception of public safety in Hobbs improve drastically and our officers are more engaged in community activities.

In the Fire Department I made it a priority to responsibly grow and improve. We recently received an \$825,000 SAFER grant which will fund 7 new firefighters and improved to an ISO Rating of 2, which is in the top 4% of the country.

- **Improving quality of life.** We formed a group of public and private partners to address the need to both improve current facilities and increase the amount of quality of life amenities in our community. In total we have identified over \$150 million worth of desired projects. I have personally led the design and re-construction of our outdated municipal golf course into a \$13 million jewel which has won multiple golf industry accolades. This includes Golf Digest 2015 "Top 10 Best New Courses," Golf Inc. has ranked us in the Top 5 "Best New Golf Developments Worldwide" and we were given major national design awards. This project has led to the United States Golf Association creating a 6-minute video describing Hobbs as a model community in growing the game of golf and they invited me as a featured speaker at their 2016 Pace of Play and Innovation Symposium. I am also the point person on building a new \$65 million, 160,000 sq ft recreational center where our partners are contributing more than 50% of the capital and 50% on the ongoing operational costs. These partners include the local school district, the New Mexico Junior College, Lea County government, University of the Southwest, and the J.F. Maddox Foundation. There will not be a nicer facility within 500 miles and besides being an outstanding amenity for our local residents, it will also be a key economic development tool to bring in visitors.
- **Increasing Housing.** When I arrived the community was utilizing a housing study which showed the community was lacking over a thousand single family homes and apartments. Many oilfield workers were living in hotels as there was just not enough housing available for them or their families if they wanted to relocate. I developed a different approach to address this issue and in the last two years, for the first time in the City's history, we were awarded four affordable housing tax credit projects. These projects will result in over \$50 million in new construction and add over 284 new additional affordable housing options. In addition, we also leveraged another \$6.5 million in incentives for market-rate construction, which resulted in \$65 million in new construction last year alone. These incentives have resulted 288 new single family homes and 997 market rate apartments being constructed over the last four years.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

It is clear that Port St. Lucie is a vibrant, family oriented community which is exactly the environment I wish for my family. I know the priority the community places on public safety

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John J. Murphy, ICMA-CM

while at the same time allowing me the opportunity to lead an established high quality organization. As a nineteen year officer in the military, my leadership training and municipal management background will be a unique asset in dealing with relations with the Port St. Lucie City Council and the entire community. My hope is that Port St. Lucie is looking for an energized, vibrant, ethical leader who is dedicated to the municipal management profession and is prepared to make a long term commitment to the community.

My approach to management is building the team through a combination of coaching and leading by example through a servant leadership model. I believe like a sports team, good local government organizations have personnel who can do their jobs extremely well. I am there to inspire them, provide them the tools and training opportunities to be successful and build a culture of service. My military experience has shown me the most effective way to build that culture is through leading by example. In Hobbs, I started a program called Operation SWITCH (Stop Working in the City Hall) where I take turns working in the various departments approximately once a month. Not only does this give me the opportunity to learn the employees and their positions better, it lets them see that I value what they do and want to help them be more effective. It also gives me a chance to interact with the public in ways they rarely see the City Manager.

The feedback I have received as a leader has been extremely positive not only in calm times but also in crisis. I still get calls from department heads in Pennsylvania where I left my position six years ago asking for advice on how I would handle certain situations. My current staff would say that I deeply care about the employees and try to create a family atmosphere in our organization. Recently, my City Commission in Hobbs gave me an outstanding evaluation saying that I had real passion for my work and incredible support from the employees. They also commended me for communicating with them regularly and said one of my strengths is constantly being out in the public collaborating with various community groups.

In terms of weaknesses, I have received feedback from some members of my leadership team that they would like more one on one time with me. Consequently, I have been working on strategies to improve my time management skills. My goal has been to reduce the number of group meetings I hold, streamline the agendas and delegate some daily tasks that can be handled by others to allow me to shift my focus to the short and long term concerns of my leadership team. One step I have already taken is to participate in a Dale Carnegie Skills for Success course which had a major focus on improved time management.

In addition to the feedback I have received from coworkers, I have a personal goal to improve my work/life balance. For two summers I went to Harvard University and the University of Virginia for professional development opportunities. These opportunities limited the time I spent with my family during their summer break. My personal goal since has been to spend more quality time with them during their time out of school.

I have had success in performance measurement by requesting that each department report monthly on considerable measurable data. I then include this information as a key component of

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a report to my City Commission. I also challenge my team to find ways we can work more efficiently and improve customer service to the taxpayers of Hobbs. I have standardized performance evaluations for all employees and recently negotiated the collective bargaining agreements with the Fire and Police unions. These settlements resulted in both bargaining groups agreeing to merit based pay based on their evaluations, thus bringing them in line with the general employees and providing our leaders productive management tools. Recently, I was named to ICMA's Performance Measurement Task Force and look forward to collaborating with colleagues on this important endeavor.

As far as my biggest achievement, I am going to talk about a unique project which has been my personal inspiration in public service. I delivered a project that was a field of flags called a Healing Field. This project was to honor those who lost their lives on September 11th and afterwards fighting in the War on Terror. It was extremely well received and the Governor of Pennsylvania was our featured speaker at the dedication. At the time, it was the largest Healing Field in the country having over 4,000 flags spread across a few acres of beautiful city park land. About a month after the field came down, a lady came to the Mayor's Office to say thank you and give him a painting. He directed her to me indicating that I was the one who initiated and implemented the project. When I met with her, she hugged me and told me I did not understand what an impact that field had on her. She told me she was depressed and prepared to commit suicide but that the Healing Field had so much meaning for her that she was now committed to living. That interaction taught me that the great work we do in local government can positively impact community members in ways that we don't always see. I keep a picture of that field in my office as a reminder to stay motivated and energized because it's impossible to predict the direct or indirect impact of the project we are working on today.

I feel the biggest mistake of my career happened about 18 months after leaving my City Administrator role in Wilkes-Barre. I had started my own consulting firm and was asked by the Mayor to work toward privatizing the city's parking system. As a paid consultant for the Wilkes-Barre Parking Authority in 2012, I gave them a proposal that would have paid me an hourly fee plus a commission if the project was completed. The Parking Authority asked me to double my hourly rate as they did not want to pay a commission if the project was finalized. In the end, I agreed to their request, helped deliver three proposals higher than their baseline requirement. Regardless, the Parking Authority chose to not move forward with the proposal and used the hourly rate against me. There were local articles on this issue that did not have all of the information but I was asked not to comment publicly. To this day, I regret not more strongly defending my position.

Like any chief executive officer, I have had to fire people or request their resignation many times, including department heads. My philosophy is to praise in public and punish privately, therefore, today many people do not have the details of the dismissals. While it never feels good, it is healthy for an organization to make sure people know they will be held accountable.

While anyone coming into a new position will face challenges, I think my military background at

John J. Murphy, ICMA-CM

Tyndall Air Force Base, FL and my demonstrated experience working collaboratively with colleges and universities will make my transition easier than some of my peers. The greatest challenge I see is rebuilding the relationship between the elected officials and the staff. I will communicate with the elected officials and staff early on to understand our organizational strengths and see how I can incorporate some of my lessons learned and leadership skills into addressing Port St. Lucie's challenges. I am a builder, not a maintainer so I see my first six months focused on motivating the staff, dedicating myself to learning the nuances of the city government structure in Florida and immersing myself into the local community.

As a former public affairs officer in the USAF, I am comfortable with the media and public presentations. Having just received my updated top secret security clearance, I hope you will see you are getting an ethical leader who will work to inspire the staff to continually improve. I would hope to finish my military reserve requirements of approximately twenty-six days per year coordinating search and rescue operations. I have a projected retirement date in May 2017.

I am a huge proponent of utilizing social media to keep residents informed on the day-to-day activities in a community. I had our IT team in Hobbs and Wilkes-Barre update our webpage and our communications director and I speak daily about the messages we want to bring to the community. I am confident that the only people who would contact you from Hobbs would be telling you how disappointed they will be if I leave.

I am a dedicated father who is kept busy engaging in the activities that most interest my children. When I find spare time outside of that I enjoy running, golfing and reading.

Finally, it would be an honor and a privilege to be your City Manager!

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF

- Passionate
- Collaborative
- Accessible
- Caring
- Forward Thinking
- Knowledgeable

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT JOB

Some people may think I am crazy leaving a community with such promise and \$116 million in our fund balance. However, with five school-aged daughters, their development is my number one priority. I know the high quality education my children would receive at the same time allowing me the challenge and opportunity to lead an established high quality organization. We

John J. Murphy, ICMA-CM

want to make a long-term commitment to Port St. Lucie! The allure of leading your team, bringing new solutions to Port St. Lucie's challenges and raising my family long-term in a community the quality of the Port St. Lucie is very appealing.

I was just named the 2016 New Mexico City Manager of the Year. I ask you to please give me a chance to come interview. You will not be disappointed! I will be the person who collaborates with you to face Port St. Lucie's challenges and the leader who inspires the employees in creating a higher performing organization. I want to be the next long-term City Manager of Port St. Lucie!

CURRENT/MOST RECENT OR RELEVANT SALARY

Salary \$180,000, \$50,000 forgivable housing stipend, up to 5% 401a employer contribution, enrollment in New Mexico retirement system (PERA,) \$750 monthly car allowance, \$100 monthly cell phone stipend and professional development commitment.

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CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
JOHN "JJ" J. MURPHY**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Lea County, NM	No Records Found
Luzerne County, PA	No Records Found
Bay County, FL	No Records Found
Santa Barbara County, CA	No Records Found
State	
New Mexico	No Records Found
Pennsylvania	No Records Found
Florida	No Records Found
California	Records maintained by county of residence

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Lea County, NM	No Records Found
Luzerne County, PA	No Records Found
Bay County, FL	No Records Found
Santa Barbara County, CA	No Records Found
Federal	
New Mexico	No Records Found
Pennsylvania	April 2008 – Civil Rights Lawsuit filed against Wilkes-Barre including Mr. Murphy in his capacity as City Administrator. Disposition: May 2009, Terminated
	<i>* See page 3 for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>
	July 2011 – Civil Rights Lawsuit filed by Mr. Murphy against the Radnor Township. Disposition: March 2014, Terminated
	<i>* See page 2 of Personal Disclosure for Explanation of Records Found</i>

**Background Check Summary for
JOHN "JJ" J. MURPHY**

Florida	No Records Found
California	No Records Found
Motor Vehicle	
New Mexico	June 2013 – Personal Disposition: June 2017
Credit	Good
Bankruptcy	No Records Found
Education	Confirmed
Employment	Confirmed

**Background Check Summary for
JOHN "JJ" J. MURPHY**

From: J.J. Murphy
To: Lynelle Klein
Subject: Re: Background Check Records Found that Require an Explanation

Ms. Klein,

Thank you for your email.

I was named with multiple city officials and police officers in the Shotko v. City of Wilkes-Barre case because I was the City Administrator. I believe Mr. Shotko was arrested during the St. Patrick's Day parade. He lost his case in court.

I was listed in the Murphy v Radnor Township and I did address this in my disclosure answers.

Please let me know if you have any other questions. All other references were other John Murphy's.

Respectfully,

John J. Murphy, ICMA-CM

**Background Check Summary for
JOHN "JJ" J. MURPHY
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: John J. Murphy (JJ.)

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any "yes" answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account?
Yes No
10. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
11. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant

Attested to: *John J. Murphy*
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [redacted] or via fax to [redacted] no later than 5:00 PM EST 09/06/16.

(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

Property of Cisin Baenziger & Associates

**Background Check Summary for
JOHN "JJ" J. MURPHY
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

* 11 - In the past, I was involved in a case against Radnor Township, Pennsylvania. In 1995, I interviewed for a position of Township Manager in Radnor, PA. I was interviewed as a semi-finalist but then told I would not be brought back for a second interview because "some commissioners had serious concerns about my ongoing military obligations." As an active military reservist, I informed the township that decision was in direct violation of the USERRA Act. They then denied saying it and would not offer me a second interview. I filed in Federal Court to protect these rights and a jury unanimously agreed that Radnor discriminated against me but they awarded no damages.

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

Sam Cobb – Mayor, Hobbs, NM

Mr. Cobb was part of the Commission that hired Mr. Murphy in 2012. Mr. Murphy has done extremely well. Hobbs has experienced a very robust economic time and Mr. Cobb has been very aggressive in many areas as it relates to housing and quality of life. Mr. Cobb has given Mr. Murphy a tremendous task load, which he has handled and administrated well. He built a new golf course, finished the design and groundbreaking of a recreation facility, created a master plan, and begun a four-million-dollar city park rehabilitation. He also led a seven-million-dollar incentive plan for housing that generated \$150 million for new housing in a public/private partnership. He created a five-member partnership for the recreation center. The partners were the City, a private foundation, a four-year university, a two-year community college, and the public school system in Hobbs. Mr. Murphy has performed well in every scenario.

The decisions Mr. Murphy have made are good. He is innovative and a change agent while maintaining operations at a high level. He is often out in the community and he works well with residents. He takes the appropriate position when necessary. Because he is the CEO of the City, the appropriate position may not always be what the citizens want. He explains the reasoning when certain factions want something done or they want the process to move faster. He is not necessarily a yes man, but he properly explains his position.

Communication is something that Mr. Murphy excels at, he kept the elected officials very well informed. Hobbs experienced record breaking snow the week after Christmas in 2015, over 25 inches of snow fell in a single week. Given their location, they do not have much snow removal equipment. Mr. Murphy put together a team of City staff and individuals from the private sector who removed the snow in record time. He also made sure that the elderly and seniors received their meals on wheels. This incident highlights his ability to pull together a diverse group of individuals to address an unusual occurrence.

The Commission maintains a tight rein on the budget and Mr. Murphy manages it well. He has been willing and able to identify ways to cut costs. In Mr. Cobb's experience Mr. Murphy has accomplished tasks in a timely manner.

Individuals in the community have made numerous inquiries of public records. Mr. Cobb and Mr. Murphy have been subjected to requests for copies of emails and travel expenses. One instance was when Mr. Cobb approved travel for Mr. Murphy and some staff members to visit a manufacturing facility in Italy to look at pool options for their recreational center. The expenses were around \$8,000, which raised some questions. Mr. Cobb defends this expenditure as it was appropriate given the situation. This claim, nor any of the others, have substance but they seem to continue to create controversy.

A volunteer group called "Make Hobbs Beautiful" identifies areas in the community that could be improved from an aesthetic standpoint. They asked the city whether a recycling program would be feasible. Mr. Murphy knew a gentleman from Pennsylvania and engaged him on a consulting basis to evaluate the idea. The consultant gave a presentation of his findings. The

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

cost of moving the items to the recycling center was prohibitive because the closest recycling center is several hundred miles away. The process was properly done and well presented. Under New Mexico procurement codes and Hobbs current City ordinances, Mr. Murphy can engage professionals on a consulting basis for up to \$60,000 without consulting the elected officials. He engaged various consultants on behalf of the City. Because not every transaction goes in front of the Commission, some residents believe Mr. Murphy is abusing his power, but he has never done so. He has always followed proper procedure and kept the Commission informed along the way.

Mr. Murphy was involved in a controversy related to a parking project in Wilkes Barre but as the Administrator, he did not have the same level of decision making responsibility in that jurisdiction as he does as the Manager in Hobbs. Mr. Cobb has never seen an instance during Mr. Murphy's tenure in Hobbs where he acted unethically, abused his power, or failed to keep the Commission informed of his activities. A few people might disagree with him on subjective issues, but never on substantive issues related to work performance. When City Managers create change, they will always have naysayers. Hobbs has experienced a great deal of positive change under his leadership.

Mr. Cobb would hire Mr. Murphy. In August of 2016 he was selected as the City Manager of the year amongst all of the Managers in New Mexico, which is a great honor.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Intelligent,
- Innovative,
- Passionate,
- Responsible,
- Visionary, and
- Dependable.

Strengths: Good communicator, innovative thinker, addresses unforeseen issues well, responds well to pressure.

Weaknesses: As city managers go he may not have as much experience as some, but this should not be characterized as a weakness, he will gain more experience over time.

Joseph Calderon – Commissioner, City of Hobbs, NM

Mr. Calderon met Mr. Murphy when he was hired in 2012 as the city manager. As a member of the city commission and the school board, Mr. Calderon works frequently and happily with Mr. Murphy and is very pleased with Mr. Murphy's leadership.

Mr. Murphy is a visionary and knows what the city needs. He is heavily involved with and consistently out in the community. He likes to know what people need and answer questions for

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

them. He knows which projects to implement and which projects to put on hold. He has tabled projects in order to avoid layoffs, and because of his leadership, the city has increased its reserves.

The Commission is not involved directly with the day-to-day management of the city, so it is critical that Mr. Murphy keeps the Commissioners updated, and he has done so impeccably. In fact, the Commission is never caught off guard. He discusses problems with the elected officials, gets their input and makes good decisions. He accomplishes every task he is given and delivers excellent results.

Mr. Murphy is very innovative. He has a vision, involves multiple parties, and establishes partnerships. His staff highly respects him and will do anything for him. In 2014, he rallied the employees and put together donations for a Christmas dinner for the poor and homeless. Eventually, they decided to include everyone regardless of their circumstances. The dinner was a huge success, and the employees were very passionate about it due to Mr. Murphy's leadership.

When hiring personnel, Mr. Murphy makes excellent decisions. The Chief of Police that Mr. Murphy hired has been a blessing for the city. The departments are able to work well together because of his leadership and they have become a strong staff.

When Mr. Murphy came into the community, no affording housing was available which led to challenges. For example, teachers severed their contract when they could not secure housing. Mr. Murphy is one of the leaders who has been working extremely hard in conjunction with the mayor to create affordable housing. It has been very successful and much more housing is available now.

A dispute related to the school softball and baseball fields was contentious between the coaches, the school, the players, and the board members. It was a small problem that erupted into a larger problem. Mr. Murphy stepped in and worked with every party until a solution was reached and everyone was pleased with the outcome. Mr. Murphy is an excellent problem-solver and maintains good relationships with everyone, even during a dispute.

Because of Mr. Murphy's military work, he was initially absent more than the Commissioners had expected. However, because he is and was always reasonably available, the Commissioners are no longer concerned about his absences. He was also sent on a 6-week course, and although he was absent, he learned good information and has continued to be an excellent leader.

Local senators and politicians praise Mr. Murphy's work for the city. He has become well-liked and well-respected in his time as city manager. He shares ideas and learns from other leaders and has moved forward with good community projects, including a \$60 million recreation facility.

The Commission in Hobbs sets policy and Mr. Calderon does not like to micro manage. Even though he knows many of the employees because he taught them in school, he does not become

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

involved in city operations as that is not his role. As a Commissioner, he felt that Mr. Murphy hired experts to consult in areas where Hobbs had a need. Mr. Calderon is very comfortable with the consultants hired by Mr. Murphy and their expertise, his actions were appropriate.

Mr. Calderon met with Mr. Murphy and the Mayor to review an agenda. During that meeting they discussed a trip where Mr. Murphy would go to Italy with two employees to review the facility that builds the pools they were interested in for their recreation center. Mr. Murphy attained the Mayor's permission before the trip was scheduled. In addition, Mr. Murphy and some staff members had visited five or six locations in the United States to look at other pools without any complaints. The only reason that complaints were lodged about this particular trip is because Italy was the destination. A vendor wanted to pay the City to go along but they were still in the bidding process and it was not appropriate. In the end, the vendor paid their own way.

Currently a community member is filing multiple and extensive public records requests, some of them have resulted in 1,000 to 2,000 pages of photocopies, which he then did not even pick up. The City is spending 25% of their time trying to address these requests.

Mr. Murphy is not perfect and he sometimes makes mistakes, but when that happens he meets with the elected officials to talk it over and resolve it. Hobbs hosted a municipal league meeting for the first time in their history and several members of the league and community members told Mr. Calderon what a great job Mr. Murphy has done for Hobbs.

Mr. Murphy is an excellent asset and leader. Mr. Calderon recommends him very highly as an accomplished leader and would be sad to see him leave.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Humble,
- Pleasant,
- People-person,
- Energetic,
- Hardworking, and
- Big heart for everyone.

Strengths: Works well with people. Balances responsibilities well. Energetic. Visionary. Heads many large projects. Involved.

Weaknesses: Works too hard. Previously absent due to military responsibilities, but balances time well now.

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

Jonathan Sena – Commissioner, Hobbs, NM

Mr. Sena was part of the Commission that hired Mr. Murphy in 2012. One quality that Mr. Sena really liked about Mr. Murphy during the interview process is that he is serving in the Air Force reserve. He has an understanding for people and veterans. He created parking spaces where wounded veterans can park close to the destination, it was a very simple but a very kind gesture.

Mr. Murphy is willing to honor others. He has a warrior of the month award. Employees who earn this honor wear a centurion helmet for a picture, which is then placed on the wall near Mr. Murphy's office. He makes employees feel special and he has treated the residents in Hobbs as if he has lived here his entire life.

Mr. Murphy is an incredible City Manager. He is one of the most capable, qualified, hardworking individuals that Mr. Sena has ever met. He engages the community at every level no matter their race or culture, and has an incredible ability to bring people together. He really works hard to ensure that no one is left behind. Being a City Manager is a very challenging job but he has been able to accomplish things that no one else has. He helped improve the drainage in Mr. Sena's district. He worked with the community and the Commission to pass a traffic law that was years in coming. He did an amazing job leading infrastructure development in a very challenging part of the community. He helped them design a \$65-million-dollar recreation facility and secured financial partners to provide the capital. The recreation center was also 15+ years in the making, but he helped them move forward and they recently had the groundbreaking.

Because of Mr. Murphy's ability to engage residents and the local foundations, he took an old park with a great deal of history and is developing it into a new City Park. The project will cost \$4 million total, \$3.5 million is coming from the Foundation because they believe in the project. No one is perfect but Mr. Sena is grateful to have been part of the Commission who hired Mr. Murphy. He has been good for Hobbs.

Because of Mr. Murphy's military background, he is very task oriented. When given a task, even large complicated tasks, he will grab the bull by the horns and go with it. He is also the son of a police officer and has turned the morale around in their police department. He increased the number of officers from 60+ to 90+ and has really engaged with the first responders. He is focused and loyal. He really takes care of people in the community.

Mr. Murphy deals with many tasks and assignments. He cannot keep the Commissioners informed of every single item, but they are always informed on the items that matter. He also really helped the Commissioners achieve their financial goals. Hobbs has very healthy reserves while still moving forward on their goals and objectives.

Mr. Murphy's position contains an element of managing staff and processes, but he is a true leader. He has a program where he works in the trenches with the employees. He worked in the jail one day and did everything that jail employees do. He spent a day working at the fire

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

department with the maintenance crews. He leads by getting out among the people, he shows employees that he cares and is willing to work alongside them.

Some residents are upset with any given vote; it is just part of the job. City Managers have a very public record of their actions and with Mr. Murphy the pros far outweigh the cons. He is just really good. He helped them accomplish things they never would have achieved without him.

Hobbs is an oil and gas community. Mr. Murphy is currently the highest paid City Manager in New Mexico and the highest paid manager in the history of Hobbs and Lea County. Even so, they cannot pay him what he is really worth. They pay him very well but have received a return on their investment many, many times over. His work has been incredible; he has brought people to the table that did not participate before. He has inspired Mr. Sena to be a better leader. He has been very loyal to the community in Hobbs and will be loyal to any community he manages.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Compassionate,
- Kind,
- Genuine,
- Hard working,
- Driven, and
- Servant leader.

Strengths: Passionate, relational, driven, task oriented, greatly increased morale, willing to try new things.

Weaknesses: Passion is a double edged sword. You have to be passionate to gets things done at his level but not everyone appreciates it. However, Mr. Sena considers it more of a blessing than a weakness.

Lindsay Carter – Former Communication Director, Hobbs, NM

Ms. Carter reported to Mr. Murphy as the Communications Director from July of 2014 to October of 2015.

As a supervisor Mr. Murphy is very engaging and team oriented. Ms. Carter absolutely loved her time working under him. He is very visionary. She was allowed to bring ideas to him and received good feedback on whether to move forward.

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

When hiring personnel Mr. Murphy knew what type of employee he wanted in the position. He went through a good process so that it was not a one man show, he used a series of interviews and a panel to select the right person. Employees were very comfortable with his decisions in general. He made the right decisions and went through the proper channels.

Mr. Murphy is definitely innovative and a change agent. However, these aspects are all relative to him wanting high performance. He is well versed in high performance organizations and sent many of his Directors to training to ensure they were on the same page.

Mr. Murphy believes that he should be visible in the community and available to residents. He attends community functions as much as anyone in the organization. Even when residents are challenging he is willing to listen to what they have to say. He shares his passion and energy with the residents which creates a good rapport. He is a leader they can appreciate.

Keeping everyone informed is challenging in an organization with 450 employees, however if employees were not in the loop the information was most likely confidential. Mr. Murphy asked Ms. Carter to create newsletters and use email to communicate down to the boots on the ground in the organization. He values the idea of making sure people are aware and hear what is happening. He encourages others to feel like he has an open door to them, no matter what level they are at. Listening to the employee's thoughts and concerns was a priority to him.

Hobbs opened a new golf course that is revered around the world and has received awards and accolades. They were planning a grand opening worthy of the excellent facility it is. Everyone on the commission had different ideas of what the grand opening should look like, and it was a challenge to appease everyone. Mr. Murphy was implementing a plan when he was told to start over and go another direction. He took charge and helped everyone remain calm. He mediated between the staff and Commission. At one point it seemed the event was falling apart around them. He brought the employees together and kept them focused. Even though plans changed mid-stream, he developed a plan they could execute and the event was tremendously successful.

Budget is a priority in Mr. Murphy's discussion with the staff, it was something he focused on almost daily if need be. He can remember numbers off the top of his head in any facet. He also valued his relationship with the finance director and kept the lines of communication open.

Mr. Murphy is timely in completing tasks but some items take priority. When given a directive from the Mayor or Commissioners, he prioritizes those tasks and others have to wait. He was good about outlining what needed to be done and recruiting leadership to complete the tasks. He realized when priorities needed to change and was very effective.

Ms. Carter had never worked in the public sector before and was surprised that some people constantly critique every decision made. Hobbs was blessed with a great economy until the last year and a half. The growth in the community during the good economic times created controversy. Mr. Murphy handled it well by relaying factual information but some moments

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J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

were challenging because the public wanted to change the direction the Commission had set. The issues were not related to him personally; they seemed fairly standard in government.

Ms. Carter has only known Mr. Murphy since 2014 but in that time she has not seen anything in his personal life that would concern an employer. She would hire him; he has been a good leader for the city of Hobbs. They benefited by having him at the helm and his leadership greatly improved the organization. He has proven himself to be very capable.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Ambitious,
- Passionate,
- Strives to be the best,
- Confident, and
- Visionary.

Strengths: Motivated; energetic; leadership; rewards good performance; great about giving feedback; great administrator; savvy in marketing. One of his biggest strengths is reaching out to employees to make them feel they are in a team atmosphere.

Weaknesses: Ideas rapidly come to his mind and he sometimes forgets to slow down and analyze the concept. However, he empowers his team to pull him back in these situations and together they achieve the right result.

Joseph Cotton – Chairman, NAACP, Hobbs, NM

Mr. Cotton has known Mr. Murphy since 2012. On a scale of 1 to 10, Mr. Murphy rates a 10. He is very knowledgeable in everything he does and he is also very approachable.

While no one is perfect Mr. Murphy generally makes good decisions. The NAACP has a better working relationship with the City than they have had in the past because Mr. Murphy reaches out and participates in their events. He brings good ideas to the table and is very concerned with working and accountability. He is the go-to guy in the City. Mr. Cotton feels comfortable discussing matters with him, even sensitive issues like complaints against law enforcement officers. He investigates the situation and addresses any issues he finds. After sharing a concern with him, you do not have to call him check on the progress because he always follows up.

Mr. Murphy is an innovator, hands on leader, and a motivator. He is helpful when he can. He does not share confidential information, but always shares items that are relevant to the NAACP or the African American community. When someone is coming into town that he feels Mr. Cotton should meet with, he asks Mr. Cotton's availability to set up the meeting.

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

Everyone that Mr. Cotton knows, and he is very involved in the community, has good things to say about Mr. Murphy. He picks up trash at the local parks and works alongside residents on cleanup day. Some people in the community will not work with him because they did not get what they wanted at one point. Considering how the residents are in Hobbs, he has worked very well with the community and has a good rapport with residents.

Hobbs has an Arts Center. The Director is African American and someone vandalized the door of the Center in a hate crime. Mr. Murphy was the first person that Mr. Cotton called. Mr. Murphy had zero tolerance for that type of incident in the community. Everyone was upset about it. Mr. Murphy held a sit down meeting with the Manager, Mayor, and Attorney. Through Mr. Murphy's leadership they passed a hate crime bill. Anyone who commits a hate crime in the community will now be prosecuted. They also offered rewards up to \$5,000 for anyone who turned the perpetrator in. Many Managers would not have taken this stand. Also, a law enforcement officer lodged complaints about the department but no one would listen, including the Chief. Mr. Murphy investigated the issue and found that the Officer was telling the truth. He wants to represent the entire community and bring everyone together. He exhibited great leadership in Hobbs.

Mr. Murphy has done very well with the finances. He is a family man who wants the community to grow in a good way for young people. He is a visionary who has many great ideas.

Some people feel that Mr. Murphy is too diverse. He spoke out against hate crime and some in the community were offended. He went on a trip to Italy to look at a facility they were considering building in Hobbs, which became controversial simply because he was the City Manager. He was accused of misusing tax payer dollars. Mr. Cotton went on a similar tour to the same facility with other citizens and no one complained about their trip.

Mr. Cotton would hire Mr. Murphy. He is a good man with values. His departure from the City will be a significant loss. He would be an asset for any community.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Strong,
- Eager,
- Intelligent,
- Motivator,
- Encourager, and
- Organizer.

Strengths: Willingness to get people involved and pull them together.

Weaknesses: He wants everyone to do the right thing, which they do not always do. He has high expectations and can beat himself up when staff does not meet them.

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

Nicki Sweet – Former Human Resource Director, Hobbs, NM

Mr. Murphy hired Ms. Sweet in 2013. She resigned in 2016 for a career advancement opportunity.

Mr. Murphy was one of the more motivational managers that she has ever worked for. He understands how to communicate with employees at every level and actually cares about them. He spent time with the front line team. Even when the general budget began to decrease he did not want to cut the training budget. He encouraged Directors to push their team members to go to conferences and continue their education.

Mr. Murphy was only involved in executive team hiring. He promoted a Fire Chief who advanced to a larger city which indicates that he was a good hire. Mr. Murphy hired the Parks and Recreation Director and the Communications Director who are still with the City. He promoted the Police Chief who is still doing well. His decisions in general are good.

Ms. Sweet did not have a government background. Mr. Murphy took the City from entitlement and moved them to a high performing organization. He invested a great deal of time guiding the executive team through the process. His vision was not to just maintain roads but to move forward. The City is building a new recreation center.

If an event was happening in the community Mr. Murphy and his family were most likely in attendance. He has five little girls who performed at dance recitals and played soccer. He was also involved with the Chamber and in parades.

Mr. Murphy held weekly meetings with the executive team. He published notes so that employees could see a recap of what the team was working on. He held quarterly meetings with the employees. He was available; it was easy to meet with him. He was timely in meeting deadlines and he expects employees to do the same.

One concept that Mr. Murphy encouraged was public/private partnerships. He spent a great deal of time meeting with business leaders to get their buy in and support. The Maddock Foundation is a significant driver of grants and funds. He worked with them to gain funds for projects. For example, he secured a few million to build City trails.

Mr. Murphy is a visionary who sold whatever concept the Council gave him to the front line team members. He placed a quote up on the wall and gave the staff direction. The department heads then managed the processes to achieve the goals. He also did a "day in the life of...", where he spent a day as a fire fighter, or picking up trash.

Hobbs has two separate unions, one in the fire department. The fire department was having difficulty recruiting employees. They were short staffed and employees and citizens were complaining about inadequate coverage. The policy stated that employees had to live within five miles of the city to maintain a good response time to emergencies, and no one wanted to move to

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

Hobbs because it did not have the amenities of cities that were a short distance away. Mr. Murphy brought everyone to the table and created a program where fire fighters who live in Hobbs receive incentives and benefits. Those who live outside the community can still work for the fire department but they do not receive the benefits and incentives. The idea has worked well; the fire department was fully staffed when Ms. Sweet left.

Hobbs was in the middle of a financial boom from oil and gas. They had a good budget, but Mr. Murphy understands that the environment is very cyclical. The price was bound to drop, and it recently has. Because Mr. Murphy planned ahead and saved money for the eventual drop, they did not have to do any layoffs when the drop occurred.

Because Mr. Murphy is a public figure you will be able to find some in the community who have a different opinion of him. A large group of in-house employees did not agree with spending the money to build the recreation center. Newspaper articles were written about this controversy as well as the fact that he looked for employment elsewhere. Ms. Sweet is not aware of anything related to Mr. Murphy that is truly controversial.

Ms. Sweet would hire Mr. Murphy and would work for him again in a heartbeat. He truly cares about the employees and the welfare of the community.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Leader,
- Caring,
- Friendly,
- Powerful, and
- Tenacious.

Strengths: Positive; communicates well with everyone; very open door policy; really cared about employee development.

Weaknesses: He has a big heart and sometimes tried to find ways to save people that did not need to be saved. For example, he did not want to let an employee go two weeks before Christmas. However, you can talk him through it, which is a positive. Ms. Sweet helped him understand why the action was necessary.

Marie McCormick – Former Deputy Administrator, Wilkes-Barre, PA

Ms. McCormick and known Mr. Murphy since 1996 when he interned as the Mayor's assistant. Later she worked with Mr. Murphy as the Deputy Administrator.

Mr. Murphy is a great administrator. He introduced many innovative ideas and changed the way the staff handles reporting. He implemented performance measures and goal tracking. He

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

brought a city wide camera project to downtown Wilkes-Barre which has deterred criminal activity and helped solved crimes. He introduced a Wi-Fi network in the City. The City was not even computerized before his arrival. His drive and motivation moved the City forward.

Mr. Murphy has a wonderful personality. He has considerable experience working with elected officials. He is responsible for communicating with the congressional offices, the Senator's offices, the State Representatives, and local officials on a county level. He is very diplomatic. He was second in command to the Mayor and acted for the Mayor in many situations. He related to and communicated with over 300 employees in different unions with different job requirements. He worked very well with employees in every department. His approach was very different in that he reached out to all staff, not just those working in the main office.

Mr. Murphy managed his time well and was dedicated to his job. They had a very good working relationship. They divided up the work load. Occasionally they were involved in the same projects; at other times they worked on different projects. Mr. Murphy was easy to work with and supported Ms. McCormick whenever she had to take actions against an employee.

Mr. Murphy instituted a weekly senior management staff meeting to discuss all issues; so his senior staff was always well informed. He held lower level staff meetings every Thursday to garner input in preparation for Council meetings. These gatherings kept everyone informed and gave employees opportunities to share their concerns or ideas. He has an open administration.

Mr. Murphy dealt with the public daily and handled numerous public meetings. He attended bimonthly Council meetings where he answered the questions and concerns of the Council and residents. Beyond his normal responsibilities he worked with non-profit organizations on projects, had direct contact with citizens' advocate groups, and engaged others. He has a very good manner and does not fly off the handle when provoked. He forcefully supports his ideas when necessary but handles every situation professionally. He is responsive to the citizens.

Mr. Murphy makes good decisions. While working on a project, if he sees that changes need to be made, he revises his plans. He listens carefully to everyone's input. Wilkes-Barre has greatly benefitted from his decisions.

Mr. Murphy and the Mayor closed some city firehouses which was a controversial decision and they received many threats. Someone went to Mr. Murphy's house while his wife and small girls were home, saying Mr. Murphy had asked him to look at the pipes. Luckily Mrs. Murphy did not let him in. The Mayor decided they both needed protection and the Chief of Police suggested putting cameras on their home. Years later, one citizen lost a towing contract with the City during Mr. Murphy's tenure and was very angry. He used the installation of the cameras as an argument to discredit the Mayor and Mr. Murphy. The District Attorney exonerated both Mr. Murphy and the Mayor of allegations made against them. Mr. Murphy is completely forthright and his character is beyond reproach. He bases decisions on what he believes is right. Ms. McCormick does not believe anything negative exists in Mr. Murphy's background.

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

Ms. McCormick would hire Mr. Murphy and wants him to come back to Wilkes-Barre. He is a very responsive, dedicated administrator who introduced innovative ideas. He carefully managed the finances of the City while ensuring that services were provided and working at all levels of government.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Diligent,
- Committed,
- Analytic
- Decisive,
- Diplomatic, and
- Works well with everyone and any level or walk of life.

Strengths: Energetic, methodical and analytical.

Weaknesses: Mr. Murphy took on very complicated projects that required input from numerous sources, not only within the organization but also from vendors and contractors. He became frustrated if others did not meet the timetable or their obligations.

Paul Keating – City Administrator, Kingston, PA

Mr. Keating and Mr. Murphy met as college students in Kings College. They graduated the same year, 1993. Mr. Keating is the City Administrator of Kingston, which is separated from Wilkes-Barre by the Susquehanna River. They have worked on various projects together while Mr. Murphy was the city manager.

Wilkes-Barre has a very difficult time making ends meet because they have a land locked tax base. They have very high expenses for police and fire services. Mr. Murphy did a terrific job steering their finances. He revitalized the downtown area. Before his efforts the downtown public square and business hub was decaying and unsafe. Currently the downtown has many new businesses. He developed a vision to make Wilkes-Barre a college community with the hope of generating revenue. By partnering with the colleges, the City was able to experience much progress.

Mr. Murphy was instrumental in installing a large scale security camera system throughout the City. Mr. Murphy's administration focused on the downtown business area, parks, playgrounds, and troubled city districts. He brought many innovative ideas to Wilkes-Barre.

Mr. Keating tried to start a Wyoming Valley Municipal Association. His idea was to bring County leaders together to share thoughts and ideas. The concept did not work as Mr. Keating had hoped. However, Mr. Murphy was very supportive of his efforts and attended every meeting. They both share a philosophy of working together with surrounding communities. Whenever Mr. Murphy instituted an initiative beneficial to Wilkes-Barre he shared the idea with

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

surrounding communities. If he observed positive steps being taken in other communities, he asked for more information to see if their ideas would work in Wilkes-Barre. They mostly corresponded through email. Mr. Murphy immediately responds to requests for information.

Mr. Murphy has considerable experience working with the public. He was highly visible and accountable to the public. He always made himself accessible to the media.

Mr. Murphy worked in public service and always stepped above and beyond those responsibilities to serve his country. His military service speaks volumes about his character and integrity. Anyone would be impressed that he could run a city, with a large family at home, and still volunteer to serve his country.

Some decisions made by the Mayor and Mr. Murphy have been heavily scrutinized by the media, such as the decision to install security cameras on their homes. However, Mr. Keating has observed no situations which he considers derogatory to Mr. Murphy. The Mayor was reelected even after the media reports; so most constituents believed in what the Mayor and Mr. Murphy did for the City. Any allegations made were political in nature, brought by the Mayor's opponent during the elections. They were both exonerated by the Ethics Committee.

Mr. Keating would hire Mr. Murphy. He is a good administrator.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Good communicator,
- Energetic,
- Kind,
- Sharing,
- Dedicated, and
- Supportive.

Strengths: Good communicator; proven leader; accomplished tangible results for the City.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Bill Barrett - Chairperson, Wilkes-Barre, PA

Mr. Barrett has been with the City for 28 years and started working with Mr. Murphy in 2002. Mr. Barrett stepped out of a meeting for the interview and could not go into great detail due to time restrictions. However, he wished to give a recommendation for Mr. Murphy. They became personal friends through their work relationship. Mr. Barrett is on the board of Hawkeye, the company which provides the closed circuit camera system. Bringing the system to Wilkes-Barre was one of Mr. Murphy's projects and one the City is very proud of.

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

Mr. Murphy is consistently conscientious. He is easy to talk to, a commendable quality not often found in others. He listens to what you have to say then moves forward. Because of Mr. Murphy's leadership, Wilkes-Barre has a good bond rating.

Mr. Murphy works very well with his elected officials because he is very open and transparent. He is very accessible and returns calls immediately. They did not always agree on every issue, but they had a strong professional working relationship. Mr. Murphy is a people person, and he interacted well with all department heads. He kept Council informed by holding bi-weekly meetings with the staff before each Council meeting. He identified any problems or concerns the employees were having and brought those issues to the Council for discussion.

Mr. Murphy worked with the GOALS Foundation to fund community projects for groups which lacked financial resources. He handles the public well and is very customer service oriented. He is concerned about the end product. He ensures his city is doing its best for the residents.

Mr. Murphy solves problems by reaching out to others to find out what they think is the most appropriate solution. He then makes an informed decision. The new accounting system he adopted is a perfect example of his innovative approach. The City was not computerized before his arrival and now they have a new, fully operational computer system.

Everything in Wilkes-Barre seems controversial, but nothing Mr. Murphy has ever done was unethical. Mr. Barrett would hire Mr. Murphy. He is a great administrator.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Honest,
- Conscientious,
- Easy to talk to,
- Respectful to others,
- Considerate, and
- Concerned.

Strengths: Cares about public service; and sincere in his beliefs.

Weaknesses: Works too hard.

Rick Cronauer – Former Councilman, Wilkes-Barre, PA

Mr. Cronauer has known Mr. Murphy since 2002. He was a Councilman when Mr. Murphy was hired. Mr. Cronauer is an electrical contractor by trade, and worked with Mr. Murphy in that capacity. Mr. Cronauer thinks the world of Mr. Murphy and only has good things to say about him.

Reference Notes
J. J. (John Joseph) Murphy

Mr. Murphy's job performance was beyond excellent. He works extremely well with his elected officials. Their interactions were exceptional. The potential for conflict always exists between a Council and its City Administrator. However, their Council never had any conflicts with Mr. Murphy. He corresponded through email, telephone, and in meetings. He requested personal meetings with every council member to keep each of them equally informed.

Because of his military background Mr. Murphy is quite good at working with the public. He is customer service oriented. He tries very hard to solve problems while considering budget restrictions and the decisions made by Council. In discussions Mr. Murphy only references positive aspects of a situation or idea; he does not dwell on the negative circumstances.

Mr. Cronauer asked personnel in the Department of Public Works to address a situation with a constituent, but they were unresponsive. Mr. Cronauer called Mr. Murphy to ask for his help. The situation was resolved within 24 hours.

Mr. Murphy makes good decisions. He labors over them if he has to. He gathers as much information as possible to properly judge the situation. He does investigative research when needed. He makes good personnel recommendations and accomplishes tasks in a timely matter.

The political body in Wilkes-Barre is always under the microscope. Controversies often occur. Allegations brought against Mr. Murphy were investigated, and he was cleared of any wrongdoing. Mr. Cronauer is not aware of anything controversial in his personal life.

Mr. Cronauer would hire Mr. Murphy without question and respects him very highly. Mr. Murphy is a very qualified Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe J.J. Murphy:

- Respectful of others,
- Military background,
- Knowledgeable,
- Positive,
- Organized, and
- Good communicator.

Strengths: Organization skills, communication skills, and delegates well.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

CB&A Notes on J.J. Murphy’s Internet

Two articles appeared recently in the press that caused us some concern. The first (see pages 49-50) represents that Mr. Murphy lied about being considered a finalist in the Las Cruces, NM, City Manager search. We asked Mr. Murphy about the article and he provided the following as documentation of his claim:



J.J. Murphy [REDACTED]

Las Cruces, New Mexico - City Manager Search

3 messages

Catherine Burton [REDACTED]

Mon, Apr 11, 2016 at 8:21 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Good Morning,

I am contacting you on behalf of The Mercer Group and the City of Las Cruces, New Mexico. You have been selected as a finalist for the Las Cruces City Manager position.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you are still interested in pursuing this opportunity and if you would be available to interview in Las Cruces on Friday, April 29.

After I receive your response I will send you additional information to continue the process.

Congratulations and have a great day!

Catherine Burton
Senior Associate
The Mercer Group

Consequently, we believe you can disregard that article. As an aside, reading the press coverage surrounding the Las Cruces search has been very confusing so this situation does not surprise us.

The second article (see page 47-48) seems to imply Mr. Murphy abused his position to hire a firm from Pennsylvania to conduct a legal review for the City of Hobbs. It also states the matter is being investigated by the New Mexico State Auditor’s Office. We asked the Mayor of Hobbs and two of the Commission Members about the matter. They all spoke extremely highly of Mr. Murphy (see the reference notes) and said that, even though Mr. Murphy had the authority to hire the consultant without Commission approval (up to \$60,000), he had informed the Commission of what he was intending to do. The person hired is an expert in constitutional law and the City was pleased with the results. We also learned the State Auditor is investigating which is what

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. “J.J.” Murphy

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

they do when they get a complaint. In fact it is the second of two complaints. The Office has investigated the first and found nothing wrong (see page 44). Mr. Murphy fully expects the same result with this investigation. Based on our conversations with the elected officials, we believe that will be the result as well.

One final note is apparently Hobbs has two bloggers, Nicolas Maxwell and Byron Marshall, who do not like the City or Mr. Murphy. It is our understanding that Mr. Maxwell (who filed the complaints mentioned above) has requested an enormous number requests for city records (over 70 since the beginning of the year). Mr. Murphy tells us Mr. Maxwell was pulled over December 31, 2015 and arrested for driving a car without insurance and not having valid registration. At the time, it was also found that he did not have a valid license due a previous DWI. Mr. Maxwell asked the City Attorney to drop the charges and when the City refused, he began filing public records requests. The City complied with all requests and then Mr. Maxwell then filed the two complaints with the state. Mr. Murphy’s assumption is Mr. Maxwell is trying to pressure the City into dropping the charges. The other blogger, Mr. Marshall, is mentioned in the article ending on page 48 (see the highlighted portion). We have been told he is a convicted felon.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)



COPY

The Disciplinary Board
AN AGENCY OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

20 First Plaza, Ste. 710
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Phone (505) 842-5781 • Facsimile (505) 766-6833

CONFIDENTIAL

July 28, 2016

Nicholas Ray Maxwell


Re: Complaint against Alan F. Wohlstetter

Dear Ms. Maxwell:

The office of disciplinary counsel has looked into your complaint against Alan F. Wohlstetter, alleging that Mr. Wohlstetter is engaged in the unauthorized practice of law in New Mexico. The Board has determined that Mr. Wohlstetter has not violated the provisions of New Mexico law pertaining to out-of-state attorneys nor the rules prohibiting the unauthorized practice of law and, for that reason, is dismissing your complaint.

Mr. Wohlstetter's work in developing policies and procedures for the City of Hobbs consistent with the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution arise out of or are reasonably related to his law practice in the jurisdictions in which he is licensed. *See* Rule 16-505(F)(2) NMRA. Moreover, when any issues on which Mr. Wohlstetter is working involve New Mexico law, Mr. Wohlstetter associates and consults with counsel admitted to practice in New Mexico, specifically Hobbs City Attorney Michael Stone. *Id.* Consequently, Mr. Wohlstetter appears to be in compliance with the rules applicable to his work in the matter about which you complain.

Accordingly, the Disciplinary Board will be taking no further action. I do, however, want to thank you for bringing this matter to the Board's attention and allowing me to look into it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William D. Sleaze".

William D. Sleaze
Chief Disciplinary Counsel

cc: Disciplinary Board Chair
Alan F. Wohlstetter

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
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EverythingLubbock.com
Published 09/12 2016 10:02AM
Updated 09/12 2016 10:04AM

Hobbs Collaborates on \$63.5 Million Recreational Facility in Unique Public-Private Partnership

By News Release & Posted By Staff

HOBBS, NM (NEWS RELEASE)

It has been 4 years now since the joint concept was conceived. That is exactly what it started out as, a concept. Then many meetings with private and public entities were made, hours were spent, input was received, volunteers contributed, experts were contacted, and days were lengthened. After thousands of hours of dedicated work and evaluation, it is now time for execution of this state-of-the-art facility. On Monday, August 1st, 2016, at the Hobbs City Commission meeting, the Commission passed the grant agreement between the J.F Maddox Foundation, the construction contract with Haydon Building Corp, and the authorization for construction administration services from Barker Rinker Seacrat Architecture. This gives the City of Hobbs the authority to move forward on constructing this \$63.5 million multi-generational recreation center.

This \$63.5 million recreational facility will be like no other in the region and will supply the area's economy with up to 300 jobs during construction. It will include numerous meeting areas, an indoor soccer field, a multi use indoor court, an indoor lap pool that meets NAIA, NCAA, and high school regulations, an indoor therapy pool with 1,100 square feet of water surface area, an indoor track that will wrap around the inside of the facility, and an indoor recreational pool with 3,300 square feet of water surface area. The recreational pool will have 2 water slides. The body slide will have a 32" diameter and be 262' long. The tube slide will have a 52" diameter and be 425' long – that is longer than a football field! The two slides will start from the concrete tower 40'-3" above the pool deck, making it the highest indoor slide in New Mexico. All this activity will revolve around a central core in the facility, where the indoor play area will be. This core symbolizes the synergy of so many individuals that made this entire project possible.

It was the synergy that the City of Hobbs, Hobbs Municipal Schools, New Mexico Junior College (NMJC), the J.F Maddox Foundation, University of the Southwest (USW), and Lea County created in order to improve the quality of life in our community. Here, children will have a place to gather and participate in numerous extra curricular activities together. The community's quality of life as a whole will be largely increased. This investment will make the area more attractive for companies to expand as their employees will benefit from our recent investments in affordable housing, quality of life initiatives, and multiple investments in public safety.

The president of NMJC, Kelvin Sharp, who recently entered the position after the retirement of Dr. Steve McCleery, stated on Monday, "What a tremendous asset this facility will be to the

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

community. Its unique design and features will truly support and enhance the wellness of our citizens.”

City of Hobbs Mayor, Sam Cobb, stated at Monday night’s City Commission meeting. “The recent downturn in the oil patch has reminded us all of the need to diversify our local economy. We are well on our way to creating a destination for Hobbs and Lea County that will be the envy of not only small towns in our country but many of the metropolitan areas as well. The proposed facility will provide recreational opportunities for all ages both for visitors and residents and will be a powerful recruiting tool for our economic development efforts. It will truly put Lea County on the map for a special place to ‘Live Work and Play.’”

Hobbs City Manager, J.J. Murphy, stated, “This facility is a game changer in our community. This public-private partnership embraced the vision of making this the community’s multi-generational recreation facility in every step of the way. After all the success of Rockwind Community Links, I am humbled to be a part of another impactful project which will be a model for other communities to follow. We stand together and redefine the term ‘public-private partnership’ where six public and private institutions came together to collaborate on a true center of recreational excellence.”

Following the statements from Cobb and Murphy, Murphy gave a PowerPoint presentation of the facility spread out on 12 acres. He displayed photos of the interior and exterior of the facility. At the end of the presentation, he played a video of a virtual experience around the outside of the facility, at the end of which the individual traveled down the entrance road and arrived at the front doors where the flag of the United States of America and the flag of the state of New Mexico are waving in the wind.

The date of groundbreaking will be announced once scheduled. Construction will last approximately 22 months from the start date.

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Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
September 9, 2016

Former W-B administrator's business dealings with attorney receive scrutiny in N.M.

Former Wilkes-Barre City Administrator **J.J. Murphy** is under fire in New Mexico for his continued business dealings with a Philadelphia attorney who he worked with on several controversial projects in Wilkes-Barre — including one that led to federal subpoenas being served. The New Mexico State Auditor's Office confirmed Thursday it has launched an investigation into **Murphy**, who has been city manager of Hobbs, New Mexico, since August 2012. A citizen of Hobbs recently filed a complaint asking for the probe into **Murphy** for authorizing the cross-country hiring of attorney Alan Wohlstetter in 2014 as a \$475-per-hour-consultant for a surveillance system in Hobbs.

Wohlstetter held a similar position years ago in Wilkes-Barre — making \$510 an hour — when **Murphy** was city administrator there. “We knew we'd have to pay his family to relocate here. We weren't expecting to pay for his friends to come here too,” Nicholas Maxell, the 27-year-old Hobbs resident who filed the complaint, said Thursday in a phone call. “He decided to get his old friends down here involved in Hobbs city business. We're trying to get the state to look at this.”

Justine Freeman, a spokeswoman for the New Mexico State Auditor's Office, confirmed the investigation into the complaint against **Murphy**, but declined further comment.

Murphy and Wohlstetter have a long history of working together on public-private partnerships. One included Hawkeye Security Solutions, a board which managed the Wilkes-Barre surveillance camera network. **Murphy** had been paid an annual \$3,000 stipend — in addition to his nearly \$80,000 salary — to serve on the Hawkeye board, while Wohlstetter charged \$510 an hour to be the organization's solicitor.

Murphy later recommended former Mayor Tom Leighton hire Wohlstetter's law firm — Fox Rothchild — to help the city explore the possibility of leasing the city's parking assets. **Murphy**'s brother, Patrick — a former U.S. congressman, was a partner in the law firm at the time and was running for state attorney general. After **Murphy** stopped working for the city, he signed on as a consultant for Fox Rothchild for the parking deal and got paid \$300 an hour. Wohlstetter charged \$535 an hour. After paying Fox Rothchild and its consultants about \$145,655, the city's parking authority in June 2012 abandoned plans to lease the city's parking infrastructure, claiming it was misled, intimidated and overcharged during the process.

The U.S. Attorneys Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania in April 2014 issued subpoenas to the parking authority for all records involving Wohlstetter and **Murphy** regarding the ill-fated deal. No charges were ever filed. A representative for the office on Thursday declined to say whether the investigation remains active. “The U.S. Attorney's Office has no comment,” spokeswoman Dawn Mayko said.

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Months after the subpoenas, Wohlstetter joined a new law firm — Zarwin Baum in Philadelphia — and inquired with **Murphy** about helping with the surveillance camera system in Hobbs, the complaint filed in New Mexico said. Hobbs hired Wohlstetter for \$475 an hour up to \$50,000 according to the complaint, which includes a copy of the contract. Wohlstetter did not return an email and call on Thursday. He declined comment earlier in the week when reached by a reporter for a New Mexico political news website.

Murphy told the site he's confident that he and the City of Hobbs "have been compliant with all local, state and federal procurement policies." He was not in the office Thursday, a staffer said. **Murphy** later returned an email, saying he was not available because he was traveling.

The complaint filed against **Murphy** also criticizes him for approving a contract with Medico Consulting Group in Forty Fort for waste and recycling consulting services in Hobbs. The business was paid \$28,500, the complaint says.

The complaint points out that Pennsylvania Department of State records indicate the business was created on May 20, 2014, a day after Hobbs, New Mexico, issued a request for proposals. Interested parties only had 10 days to submit proposals, the complaint says. Documents found on Hobbs' website indicated the city only receiving two proposals, and Medico was awarded the contract.

No one answered a call placed to a phone number for the business and the voice mail was full and could not accept messages. Byron Marshall, a New Mexico blogger who has extensively detailed his gripes with **Murphy**, said the City of Hobbs got little for their money. "No consultant was needed," he wrote. {CB&A highlight}

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Las Cruces Sun-News (NM)
July 12, 2016

City manager falsified info on job application
Murphy said he was 'finalist' for position
Author: Heath Haussamen; NMPolitics.net

J.J. Murphy claimed to be a “finalist” for the open city manager job in Las Cruces earlier this year when applying for another city manager position in Dunedin, Florida. But officials in Las Cruces have not named finalists for the job, Mayor Ken Miyagishima confirmed. The mayor said he had “never met with, spoken to or interviewed Mr. Murphy, ever.”

The contradiction revealed by public records may be relevant to the current debate in New Mexico about whether applications for high-profile public jobs like city manager should be kept confidential.

Murphy, currently the city manager in Hobbs, was clear in an April 18 email to The Mercer Group, the private firm that is running the Las Cruces city manager search and also ran Dunedin's search. “Attached please find my cover letter and resume for the Dunedin City Manager position,” **Murphy** wrote in the email. “While I am currently a finalist for Gainesville, FL and Las Cruces, NM right now, I do not want to miss your deadline in case I am not selected for one of the above positions.”

The email was provided to city officials in Dunedin, who posted it online along with **Murphy's** resume and cover letter and applications submitted by others. At the time, **Murphy** was a finalist for the job in Gainesville, though he was not hired. Dunedin decided to put its city manager search on hold until after November's election, saying it wasn't happy with the applicants The Mercer Group's search produced.

Officials in Las Cruces similarly weren't satisfied with their initial applicant pool. The Mercer Group received 51 applications and forwarded 11 to city officials for consideration in March – including **Murphy's**. Las Cruces officials interviewed three candidates – not including **Murphy** – before saying they were continuing their search, which is ongoing.

Murphy refused to answer questions about why he called himself a finalist for the Las Cruces job. “I am on vacation and will not be discussing anything with you but my award-winning work in Hobbs,” **Murphy** wrote in an email to NMPolitics.net. “Have a nice day!”

The importance of transparency

In New Mexico, state law requires disclosure of all applications for most high-profile public jobs. An exemption allows secrecy in the case of applications for a public university president job except those submitted by finalists.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Las Cruces has released the 11 applications it received from The Mercer Group but has refused to release dozens more, arguing that the private contractor, not the city, has possession of them so they don't have to be released. NMPolitics.net has sued the city and The Mercer Group, arguing that the city can't avoid transparency law by outsourcing government services. The case is pending.

Some argue that public disclosure discourages people from applying for public jobs. But Murphy's claim may provide an example of why releasing applications is important. If Las Cruces hadn't released Murphy's application, the public might not know he had applied for that job. And if Dunedin hadn't posted Murphy's email and application online, the public might not know that he said he was a finalist in Las Cruces when he was not.

Citizens of Hobbs and elected members of that city's commission – Murphy's bosses – might be interested to know about his claim. So might citizens and governing officials in cities including Las Cruces and Dunedin where Murphy has applied for other jobs. "When it's a public job, there are certain privacy rights you give up when you apply," said Susan Boe, executive director of the nonprofit New Mexico Foundation for Open Government. "If you're a public official you've just got to expect that anything you do is going to come out."

Boe said people have a tendency "to always put a good gloss on our applications for jobs." Disclosure, she said, "may force applicants for public jobs to be very careful about what they say and how they present themselves."

'A red flag'

Boe also questioned The Mercer Group's role in the Las Cruces and Dunedin searches. Were they aware that Murphy claimed to be a finalist in a search they were running when he was not a finalist? "That's what they're supposed to do, is be on top of stuff like this," Boe said. "If I'm running a search firm, which I haven't, that would immediately set off a red flag."

NMPolitics.net emailed officials with The Mercer Group who were involved in the Las Cruces and Dunedin searches to ask why the company didn't catch Murphy's claim. W.D. Higginbotham Jr., a Mercer Group senior vice president in Florida, responded to say his only comment was that NMPolitics.net's email "presents some assumptions and conjecture as fact when in 'fact' they are not."

Higginbotham didn't respond to a follow-up email asking what was not factual.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

NewsWest9.com
March 14, 2016

Hobbs officials spend thousands visiting Italy to examine pools
Author: Julia Deng

HOBBS, NM (KWES) - Taxpayers questioned city spending after public records revealed three Hobbs officials spent nearly \$8,000 traveling to Italy. "I'm a little disappointed I wasn't invited," one Hobbs man joked. Mayor Sam Cobb insisted the four-day, four-figure trip last month was "fiscally responsible" and said he approved the travel expenses so city employees could examine pools designed by Myrtha, a company headquartered in Italy.

City Manager **J.J. Murphy**, Parks and Recreation Director Doug McDaniel and General Services Director Ronny Choate were tasked with studying the products and determining whether or not to recommend them for the planned Health, Wellness and Learning Center in Hobbs, Cobb explained. "They followed their itinerary, they got on the plane and they came back," he said. "So it was certainly not a 'fun and games' activity for the city staff." The three men spent their time in Italy shadowing Myrtha teams, examining pool operations and exploring the products' safety functions, according to Cobb. He said the nearly \$8,000 travel expense was a "drop in the bucket" compared to the \$61 million allocated for construction of the health center. About \$12 million will be spent on the facility's multi-pool aquatic center, the mayor added.

The Health, Wellness and Learning Center is a joint collaboration between various public and private entities including the city of Hobbs, Lea County, Hobbs Municipal Schools, New Mexico Junior College, University of the Southwest and Albuquerque-based Dekker/Perich/Sabatini. Groundbreaking is scheduled for July. Construction is expected to last approximately 18 months, according to the mayor. "At the end of the day, the city of Hobbs is ultimately responsible for the operation of the facilities, so we just really wanted our staff to have more of a hands-on [experience] with the manufacturing process and the installation process," said Cobb. "That's money well spent in my mind."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

KRQE News 13
August 24, 2015

Hobbs City Manager turns down raise
Author: Chelo Rivera

HOBBS, N.M. (KRQE) – An unusual move by a city official. The Hobbs City Manager is turning down a raise. **J.J. Murphy** declined the three-percent merit raise for his job performance saying others needed the money more. **Murphy** tells the Hobbs News-Sun that others are being laid off and that his kids aren't going to go hungry if he doesn't take the raise. **Murphy** did take the two-percent raise all city employees got this year. He gets paid about \$177,000 a year.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
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<http://www.securityinfowatch.com/article/12104169/oil-boom-fuels-surveillance-overhaul-in-hobbs-nm>
August 18, 2015

Oil boom fuels surveillance overhaul in Hobbs, N.M.
Author: Joel Griffin On

Located in southeast New Mexico near the Texas border, the City of Hobbs is home to a population of about 45,000 people. Fueled by a boom in the oil and gas industries, the city has also experienced a tremendous amount of growth over the past seven years. With that growth, Hobbs has also enjoyed additional financial resources, which is one of the reasons why the city recently decided to overhaul their existing video surveillance infrastructure.

According to Hobbs City Manager **J.J. Murphy**, one of his goals when he was hired by the city three years ago was to take the disparate camera systems that existed within various departments and the school system and integrate them together. Including the school’s surveillance assets, **Murphy** said the city has close to 1,000 cameras. “My intent was to collaborate with the schools and make sure all of our systems moving forward were going to be on the same network and all going to our intelligence center,” explained **Murphy**. “We had multiple, independent systems that didn’t talk to each other where the police would have to go out to various locations just to even get copies of footage. There was no one centralized data collection point.”

In addition to enhancing the safety of students in schools and residents in public spaces, **Murphy** said they wanted to be able to quickly and efficiently provide police officers in the field with more information as they respond to calls for assistance. “Having seen some of the national incidents involving active shooters, specifically in school environments, I wanted to give our officers better situational awareness and a tactical advantage,” added **Murphy**. Both the city commission and police department were unified in their desire to invest in video technology, according to **Murphy**, as they realized it could serve as a force multiplier like it has done in so many other jurisdictions across the country. The biggest challenge would come on the technical side in streamlining the various systems together into a single, unified solution and also upgrading out of date technology.

Although it took about a year to bring everything online, all of the city’s cameras have now been consolidated into a single monitoring facility know as EAGLE IC, short for Emergency Action General Law Enforcement Intelligence Center. Unlike municipal surveillance initiatives that have been criticized by privacy advocates in some pockets of the country, **Murphy** said that they have received a lot of support from the community in Hobbs.

“The community has rallied behind it and we have had community groups that have taken tours of our intelligence center,” he said. “We recently had an attempted murder where the assailant’s car was captured on some of our camera feeds and some of the other camera feeds in the community. With good police work, our officers were able to find his location, which was over 100 miles outside our community.”

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Murphy said they hope to grow the system in the future and to incorporate cameras from the private sectors as a part of that effort. “The current stage of our deployment only includes governmental agencies. We do have a partnership with the county sheriff’s office and the state police where they have access to our intelligence center. We have rooms setup where if there was an operation with our drug task force that they could go in there and utilize our camera system,” he added. “We have multiple public partners on this project. Eventually, we may also look to partner with some private entities. Our community passed a resolution to mandate that any housing project built with over 10 apartments is required to put in a surveillance system that feeds back to our command center. The first couple of projects are going to be built out this year and they will be our first private partners. “

With the financial reserves Hobbs has been able to accumulate in recent years, **Murphy** said the city has allocated more funding to public safety, not just in terms of acquiring technology but also putting more officers on the streets. “We’ve been able to use this oil boom to conserve over 40 percent budget reserves and, in the last three years, we’ve gone from 62 police officers to 98 officers so we’ve had a 40 percent increase in patrolmen,” said **Murphy**. “That has helped us see a 20 percent reduction in the overall crime. We are putting our fortunate budget reserves into improving the community’s public safety.”

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hobbs News-Sun
January 21, 2015

**Commission approves budget adjustment
\$7.3 million unanimously slashed due to drop in oil prices, cuts are to ‘cosmetic’ projects**

Faced with the continued plunge in oil prices, and its probable impact on the local economy, the Hobbs City Commission voted unanimously during its meeting Tuesday to slash \$7.3 million in expenditures while projecting a stable fiscal outlook through June. The vote to adjust the city’s spending plan at mid-year was an anti-climatic formality that followed an hour-long work session where City Manager J.J. Murphy and Hobbs Finance Director Toby Spears briefed the commission about expected changes in gross receipt taxes — and how it would affect Hobbs’ general fund. The precautionary review was aimed at reducing expenditures by \$10.5 million as revenues decreased for fiscal year 2014-2015 by \$3.1 million. This amounted to a drop in spending, or a budgetary cash increase, of about \$7.3 million, Spears explained. Thirty-four city positions need to be filled, but Spears said he couldn’t say where the vacancies were.

On Monday Murphy revealed the city will hold back on planned improvements on Joe Harvey Boulevard and delay requesting bids to improve Green Meadow Lake, which are projects Murphy described as “cosmetic” wants, but not dire necessities. Any more budgetary reductions could be addressed in March or April but Spears said he doesn’t foresee any more changes. The GRT was originally budgeted at \$72 million. Despite the volatility the oil and gas market has shown, the actual gross receipt taxes in Hobbs amounted to \$49.8 million for the general fund during the past seven months. This means that Hobbs received a monthly GRT of \$7.1 million, which is higher than the \$6 million in GRT the city budgeted for this fiscal year. In general, Hobbs received 69.2 percent of those budgeted funds through that seven-month period so far, Spears said. “We got nine months of GRTs in seven months,” Spears said. Hobbs is going to need a monthly minimum of \$4 million in GRTs for the next five months but Spears said after the meeting “we’re pretty confident that the city will meet its budget.”

Commissioner Jonathan Sena praised the work Murphy and Spears put into their Powerpoint presentation, adding that the need to readjust Hobbs’ budget “doesn’t come as a surprise to us.” “But I believe we’ll be alright,” Sena said. Mayor Sam D. Cobb said Hobbs won’t “crawl up into a fetal position” over the issue as the “the economy will come back, as well as the price.” In other news, the commission voted 6-0 to revise the admission prices for all three city-owned public swimming pools by charging adults \$2 and requiring children under the age of 7 to have a parent or adult guardian with them in the water. Commissioner Joe Calderon left the meeting early.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hobbs News-Sun
October 4, 2014

City manager gets good evaluation
Author: DENISE MARQUEZ

Hobbs City Manager **J.J. Murphy** may be getting a \$5,000 raise thanks to the city commission’s good evaluation of his annual performance. Mayor Sam Cobb and city commissioners met Thursday in a closed executive session and evaluated **Murphy**’s past year’s performance as city manager. **Murphy** has been the Hobbs city manager since August 2012.

Cobb said **Murphy** will receive a three percent merit raise, which he said is in accordance with the city budget for any city employee that meets or exceeds the goals that have been places before them. Last August, **Murphy**’s annual salary was raised from about \$142,700 to \$165,000. Cobb and the commissioners said they are pleased with the job **Murphy** has done in the past year.

Commissioner John Boyd said **Murphy** is performing well and appreciates his hard work. “I think the commission is in agreement that J.J. is doing a fine job as the city manager,” he said. “He’s being very aggressive and he’s a hardworking young man and doing what a city manager should do. I think we have a good, open communication with him. I have the highest regards for him in his position as a city manager. I think he’s doing find.”

“I have a lot of experience (with city managers),” Commissioner Joe Calderon said. “This is the fourth city manager that I’ve worked with. There is seven of us on the city commission and it’s difficult for a person to work with seven bosses. We see the good that he’s doing. He’s a people person and the work that he’s doing for the city is just great.” Cobb said **Murphy** has been a great asset to the City of Hobbs and has helped the commission in growing the community. “His desire to be part of a vibrant and growing community and his desire to be here for the long term and raise his family here always helps the commission in the decision making process as we look at numerous multi-year projects,” Cobb said. “We (the commission and **Murphy** will continue to work together to identify areas where we both can be better in serving the public and continuing to make the city an organization that its employees are proud to be part of.” **Murphy** said the main reason for the commission’s approval goes back to the City of Hobbs employees. “I feel like any good championship coach who is surrounded by a great team and I appreciate their hard work and feel blessed to lead them,” **Murphy** said.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hobbs News-Sun
September 24, 2014

System using cameras across Hobbs goes online
Author: TODD BAILEY

The City of Hobbs got a little safer on Tuesday. The police department’s Emergency, Action and General Law Enforcement Intelligence Center (EAGLE IC), officially went active. The center can use security cameras from throughout Hobbs, including those at each of the Hobbs Municipal Schools, to help HPD, fire department and emergency medical services in any emergency situation. The system was tested in early August when HPD officials ran active shooter scenarios for about a week at the Hobbs Freshman School. “This gives our first responders critical and real-time information on what’s going on as they are getting (to the site of the potential incident) and when they are in the building by tying all of the interior cameras together and giving them information they can’t see,” said City of Hobbs Manager J.J. Murphy.

The system is located at the former HPD dispatch area. When the dispatch was moved to a county-wide dispatch system at the Lea County Communications Authority, the HPD dispatch area was vacated. In late 2013, the Hobbs City Commission approved a \$2 million budget to renovate the area for the EAGLE IC system. The system was created by TSG Solutions and was built in nine months. Murphy said Tuesday that he believes the renovation of the project costs around \$1.3 million. “In looking for a place to house an intelligence center, this place fit the bill,” said Tom Newton of TSG Solutions. “With its raised flooring and other items, the dispatch room was a great place to move put this center in.”

In January the commission approved to dedicate the EAGLE IC to 2014 Hobbs High graduate Tori Kleinsteuber, who died from a rare form of cancer called sarcoma. A plaque dedicating the center in her honor is on display outside the main entrance. Her father, Mark, also attended the opening. “It’s pretty awesome to have something named after Tori and allow her legacy to continue to live,” said Mark Kleinsteuber. “She really did love Hobbs and was really a big positive influence on safety and concern for safety for this city. She loves this city and only wanted good things for Hobbs.”

The system, to start, will primarily be active during the school hours. HPD Lt. Brian Belyeu is assigned to head the system with a staff of four HPD officers. During Tuesday’s opening, staff gave an example of how EAGLE IC works. Sgt. Joe Wall and Officer Isaac Martinez were in radio contact with a resource officer at the freshman school. Through Wall’s instructions, the officer walked around the school while constantly being monitored through the system. The system will also be used for a number of security measures outside of the schools. Belyeu said EAGLE IC is hooked in with cameras at many busy intersections, parks and business areas.

It can be used to deter all types of criminal activity, from identifying shoplifters who have left a department store to wreck-less driving. City of Hobbs attorney Mike Stone inquired on whether an incident, like a car accident at a major intersection, can be recorded and used as evidence.

Section 10

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

“Depending on the angle of camera at the intersection it is possible to do that,” said Newton said. “The system is capable of recording items. We have a stack of DVDs or any other things needed for a chain of custody.”

Belyeu said there is a phased plan of expanding the reach of EAGLE IC. Currently it is located at all the schools, city buildings, areas along Joe Harvey Boulevard, Grimes Street, Bender Boulevard and Turner Street and at five parks. “We are limited in some areas like along Broadway, where we want to add cameras in future phases,” Belyeu said. “From a public safety aspect, I’d like to focus on getting more cameras in our parks, especially like Del Norte and expanding that coverage, as well as expanding coverage at other parks, even along the walking trail along the Lovington Highway.”

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
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Hobbs News-Sun
September 24, 2014

Hobbs sets another GRT record
Author: TODD BAILEY

Another month, another record-breaking gross receipts tax amount. Such is the case for the City of Hobbs and its thriving economy. July’s booming business activity resulted in a September GRT revenue distribution of \$7.87 million from the State of New Mexico. The amount breaks the previous record of \$7.3 million set last month. Gross receipts are defined by the state as the total amount of money businesses receive through selling or leasing of property or goods in New Mexico, or through performance of services.

It is the fifth time in the past two fiscal years that Hobbs has collected more than \$7 million in GRT revenues. That’s the kind of statistic that puts a smile on many city officials’ faces. “When we get news that the GRT numbers have once again increased, we can’t help but be excited about the positive conclusions that can be drawn from this,” City of Hobbs Manager **J.J. Murphy** said. “However, we still remain focused on our priorities and maintaining our vision, which includes continuing to plan for what the community needs now, and into the future.” City officials have stated that GRT revenues go directly to help fund city projects in housing and infrastructure, public safety and quality of life initiatives. While the state requires an 8 percent cash reserve, the City of Hobbs keeps its reserve at 30 percent.

While the growth is mostly due to the increased business from the oil and gas industry, city officials believe there is something to be said of the other sectors of business in Hobbs. “We are seeing growth in a broad array of services and industries that are Hobbs based businesses,” said City of Hobbs Mayor Sam Cobb. “We are focused on continuing to encourage businesses of every type to be based in Hobbs. In the next few weeks and months, our residents will see our strategy evolve in improving the quality of life in the community and continuing broad based, diversified economic growth in the Hobbs and Lea County economy.”

The state Taxation and Revenue Department reported there was \$383 million of gross receipts in Hobbs across all industries in July, and 35 percent, or nearly \$133.6 million, is directly attributable to oil and gas. “But not all of those gross receipts are taxable,” said Hobbs Chamber of Commerce Executive Grant Taylor. “Of the nearly \$7.9 million distribution, 41 percent came directly from oil and gas companies. That’s as high a portion of Hobbs GRT in one month for oil and gas as I’ve ever seen. July and August were 38 percent, for example. Retail paid about \$1,021,000, accommodation and food service paid about \$626,000, and construction and wholesale were about even at roughly \$525,000.”

Taylor said when he moved to Hobbs in 2008, the GRT distributions to the city topped \$4 million six times. Now Hobbs is on the threshold of an \$8 million distribution. All while the city’s gross receipts tax rate stands at 6.8125 percent — the lowest of any city of considerable size in the state.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

From a skeptic's point of view the question is obvious, how long will the boom continue? “Of course, every business visitor asks me that question,” Taylor said. “We’re optimistic that the price of oil will remain elevated for years, not months, as it has for the last six. Whether it’s wishing for it, talking about it or lobbying for it, if we can cause the United States to ease – or altogether lift – the 40-year ban on crude-oil exports, this thing will blow wide open and we’ll all be more confident in the longevity of this elevated pricing.”

With the exception of 2013, the GRT growth in the month of September has shown a steady increase since 2010’s amount of just more than \$2 million. “From a finance perspective, Hobbs continually has record-setting gross receipts tax due to the economic activity as it relates to increased capacity for labor, construction and services,” said City of Hobbs Finance Director Toby Spears. “The first quarter of this fiscal year shows the city is trending higher from the previous year.” Taylor said he spends each day talking with representatives from outside companies who are interested in Hobbs. As commerce continues to grow, so does the need for housing. “The more multi-family housing we can get on the ground, the more accessible the pricing becomes for service-industry workers, and the more we can satisfy the workforce needs of our retailers and restaurants,” Taylor said.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
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Hobbs News-Sun
June 19, 2014

Quality of life is city’s focus

Manager: Parks and recreation upgrades were focus of 2014 fiscal year

Author: DENISE MARQUEZ

The City of Hobbs has invested four times the amount of money in its parks and recreation projects this year than most municipalities across the country. During Wednesday’s Hobbs Police Department’s Coffee with Cops, City Manager J.J. Murphy discussed the current state of the city with residents in attendance.

According to Murphy, about 29 percent of the 2014 fiscal year’s general fund was budgeted for parks and recreation needs and projects. “Most communities throughout the country invest 3-8 percent on their parks and recreation (of their budget),” Murphy said. “We’re talking over \$100 million of projects to increase the quality of life in our community. While we still have to come up with solutions and go out to the community and find out what they want, we have things (going on) like our golf course, the event center and the potential upgrades there and the equine facility we’ve talked about.”

The \$10 million golf course renovation project that is in the works will include an 18-hole course and a nine-hole, par three course. The golf course is planned to be complete by spring 2015. The equine facility project is part of the countywide Quality of Life Initiative that was developed by the city, Hobbs Schools, New Mexico Junior College and the Lea County Commission. Throughout the past year, city officials, staff and residents have toured many equine facilities around the country to get an idea of what kind of facility to build in Hobbs.

Murphy said city officials and staff have focused on three major improvements for the city. “We have really turned our surplus and have focused on three primary areas — our public safety investment, our quality of life investment and our infrastructure to continue to improve what we have and build out for the future,” he said. The city has put an effort in recruiting staff for Hobbs Police and Fire departments. Throughout the year, the city offered a hiring incentive for HPD and HFD to help in employee recruitment. The incentive included a \$50,000 housing incentive for a 10-year commitment and a \$25,000 housing incentive for a five-year commitment for certified personnel at HFD and HPD.

Murphy said Hobbs also saw an impressive amount of gross receipts tax funds in the past year that is used to fund many of the city’s projects. “Our 10 year trend has gone from \$21 million to \$65 million,” he said. “This year we budgeted \$58 million and we are already at \$72 million. We have a \$14 million surplus in gross receipts. It continues to diversify our economy.” Murphy said there are more improvements in store for the city. “It’s exciting for me as I’m talking to developers who are coming in and are talking about what they are going to build next year and the year after. You will be amazed,” he said.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hobbs News-Sun
May 21, 2014

City to develop downtown block
Author: DENISE MARQUEZ

New housing, a medical center and public recreational areas may be in the works for downtown Hobbs. During Monday’s City Commission meeting, commissioners approved two real estate purchase agreements totaling about \$135,000 as part of the city’s downtown redevelopment project. Mayor Sam Cobb and Commissioners Jonathan Sena, Crystal Mullins, Marshall Newman and Joe Calderon voted, “yes” to purchase \$60,000 worth of property and Commissioners John Boyd and Garry Buie voted, “no.” Boyd, Buie and Newman also voted, “no” to purchase \$75,000 of property for the project. After the purchases, the city will own a city block bordered by White and Dunnam Streets and McKinley and Fowler Streets. The city’s ideas for the area include housing, a medical facility and some sort of recreation project. “The next step is we’re going to put in a request for proposals in the next couple of months for developers,” said J.J. Murphy, city manager. “We want to have mixed-use (project) — a housing component, maybe a medical center component and a recreational component.”

Originally, the \$60,000 real estate purchase agreement was voted down in a three to three vote during an April 7 commission meeting. The city also approved a \$830,000 purchase agreement for other properties on the block during a Nov. 18 commission meeting, which included the American Legion building at 204 E. Dunnam. Boyd said he voted against the purchase agreements because he said he thinks the city is paying too much for the properties. “I feel like when the city is paying twice what something is worth it’s not a good business move,” he said. “The American Legion (appraisal) came in at about \$250,000 and, of course, the initial deal came in at about \$500,000. We gave them about \$475,000. These properties’ appraisals aren’t coming in for what the city is willing to pay them. In my business, I would not pay twice for what it’s appraised for.” Murphy said he understands where the commissions’ votes come from and respects their decisions.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
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Hobbs News-Sun
May 14, 2014

Hobbs city budget could grow to \$200 million
Author: DENISE MARQUEZ

The Hobbs City Commission could be looking at a \$200 million budget next year. City commissioners discussed and reviewed the fiscal year 2014-15 preliminary budget during a Monday work session. Toby Spears, City of Hobbs finance director, anticipates the budget to come in at \$123 million, but could go higher. “Currently the preliminary budget is around \$123 million but the budget will probably go to \$200 million based on what I am seeing,” he said. Toby proposed the city continue on a 30 percent cash reserve. The budget also shows a 19 percent increase in the general fund revenue from \$65 million to \$77 million and a 6 percent increase from the general fund expenditure from \$66 million to \$70 million. “Those are indicators of how this fiscal year has gone,” Spears said.

The commission is scheduled to approve the preliminary budget at a July 21 commission meeting. The commission also reviewed the funding requests from organizations exempt from a city ordinance \$250,000 funding cap for community social service agencies for the fiscal year’s budget. About \$450,000 is set aside from the city’s general fund budget. Exempt organizations include the Economic Development Corporation, Hobbs Chamber of Commerce, Hobbs Hispano Chamber of Commerce, Hobbs Juneteenth Committee and the Community Drug Coalition of Lea County. “The funding levels of the exempt agencies will be on the commission agenda meeting on May 19,” J.J. Murphy, city manager, said.

According to city ordinance, the CDC has been allowed to be exempt for three fiscal years since 2011. The CDC’s exemption ended this year, which commissioners discussed allowing the organization funding through a special projects provisions city ordinance. The ordinance allows the city to fund social service agencies on a case-by-case basis. “The CDC put in a dual request for permanent exemption and a funding level,” he said. “This funding would fall under the special projects provisions in the ordinance, which would be allowable. We asked them for specific projects and where their money would be spent.” The commission plans to discuss the CDC’s permanent exemption at the May 19 commission meeting.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
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NewsWest9.com
May 7, 2014

Hobbs Investing Big Money in City Employees, Hosts First Ever Leadership Program
Author: Alicia Neaves

HOBBS - The City of Hobbs is setting the bar for other city governments. They have invested thousands of dollars on their employees. Thus far, the City of Hobbs has invested \$70,000 on their employees. For the first time in history, they are hosting a three-day leadership program for not just one, but all city departments. "City services, police departments, fire departments, parks and rec, the teen center, so we have about 120 people a day," Venture Up Leadership Program Managing Director, David Lengyel, said. The reality is employees in any city don't know everyone in other departments. It's exercises like Venture Up's critical thinking, communication, problem solving and team building that make that a possibility. "Their team isn't just the people in the police department or in this teen services or fire department. It's everybody," Lengyel said.

City Manager, J.J. Murphy, says the after-effect of programs like these is that everybody can better themselves. Even himself, city commissioners and the mayor participated. "I think the greatest impact is that everyone, no matter if you've been an employee for 20 days, 20 months, 20 years, can learn," Murphy said. "If you come out with a positive attitude, you'll walk away with the things they'd like you to have," Shelly Raulston with Accounts Payable for the Hobbs Finance Department, said. They have the frame of mind that by investing this much money in their employees, it will result in better service to the city. "They're the ones that touch our residents on a daily basis. They communicate inter-departmentally and this experience today (Wednesday) shows them that they learn a little bit more about each other, some of their interpersonal skills and communication. If we're improving that, we're providing better service to our residents," Murphy said. The city manager is optimistic that the three-day program could actually serve as an example for other cities who wish to invest a little bit more in their employees.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Times Leader
April 15, 2014

Parking Authority records subpoenaed

Author: Bill O’Boyle

WILKES-BARRE — The investigation into the city took another turn Tuesday when the FBI subpoenaed all records of a \$20 million deal discussed in 2012 to lease the city’s parking assets that did not materialize. The subpoena was delivered to City Hall, commanding compliance by April 22. The city’s Parking Authority has been ordered to hand over all records concerning the plan. They are to be turned over to the grand jury that has been convened in the U.S. Middle District Court in Scranton. To comply, the authority must turn over all of the records to FBI Special Agent Joseph Noone in a week. Those records, from 2009 to the present, include all invoices, contracts, meeting minutes, correspondences, e-mails and electronic fund transfers concerning all business associated with the proposed plan to lease the city’s parking assets.

The contracts asked for include those entered into with attorney Alan Wohlstetter of the Fox Rothschild law firm in Philadelphia and with **John J.J. Murphy**, a former city administrator who had a consulting company called Goals Consulting. In June 2012, the parking authority ended the process aimed at leasing its parking assets and terminated the contracts of the Philadelphia law firm it hired and all other consultants, including **Murphy**. The Parking Authority met Tuesday and was informed of the subpoena.

Authority Executive Director Tom Torbik confirmed the subpoena was received and said no authority members have been ordered to testify before the grand jury. He declined further comment. Attempts to reach the authority’s solicitor, Murray Ufberg, were unsuccessful. Mayor Tom Leighton, who proposed the plan to lease the parking assets, declined comment. Drew McLaughlin, the city’s municipal affairs manager, said the Parking Authority is an independent municipal authority, not a city department. “The subpoena was only delivered to City Hall because they (the parking authority) do not have permanent offices,” McLaughlin said in an email. “The city facilitated service to their solicitor. That is all. Any comments regarding what documents are being sought and who requested them should be answered by the authority itself.”

At that June 2012, meeting, the authority decided it was not in its best interest to continue the process that could have resulted in a private firm leasing city garages, surface lots and parking meters for 30 years. The city operates the Intermodal Transportation Center and the parking meters. The authority has control over the other city parking garages and open lots. The plan had been controversial from the outset. On April 9, 2012, Leighton announced the plan as a revenue-raising initiative. He wanted to look into leasing the city’s 2,113 garage spaces, 160 surface lot spaces and 800 parking meters. He hoped to secure a \$20 million payment up front from the successful bidder.

Fox Rothschild had been retained by the parking authority to lead the process. **Murphy**, whose brother is a partner at Fox Rothschild, was hired by the firm as a consultant. Wohlstetter was

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Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches John J. “J.J.” Murphy *(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

paid \$400 per hour by the Parking Authority; **Murphy's** rate was \$300 per hour. Both had said that these were lower rates than normally charged. **Murphy**, through his Goals Consulting firm, had submitted invoices in excess of \$34,000 for work done since January 2012. **Murphy** now is city manager for Hobbs, N.M. It was also noted during the process that Fox Rothschild had donated to Leighton's mayoral campaign.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Abqjournal.com
April 2, 2014

Hobbs is 8th –fastest-growing ‘micropolitan area’
Author: Richard Metcalf

The oil patch city of Hobbs in southeastern New Mexico, riding high on the energy boom, was the eighth-fastest- growing “micropolitan area” in the country from mid-2012 to mid-2013, according to a recent report by the Census Bureau. Hobbs, whose population grew by 2.9 percent over the 12-month period, was among cities in or near the Great Plains that dominated the fastest-growing lists of metropolitan and micropolitan areas. A common thread among most of these cities was their connection to extractive industries, primarily oil and gas. “The energy boom on the Plains ... (has) attracted job seekers from around the country,” said Census Bureau Director John H. Thompson in a prepared statement in the report.

“While the city of Hobbs is blessed with a booming economy right now, what makes us thrive is the human energy and the collaboration between public and private entities,” Hobbs City Manager **J.J. Murphy** said in an email about the high ranking. “We are investing in our public safety, infrastructure, education and quality of life to build a stronger community. Our leaders are committed to a pro-business attitude to diversify our economy as well as investing some of our surplus in incentives for housing growth.”

Although the only New Mexico city to make the fastest-growing rankings, Hobbs was joined on the lists by other nearby cities in the Permian Basin, an oil- and gas-bearing geological formation that spans southeastern New Mexico and part of West Texas. The nearby city of Andrews, Texas, ranked ahead of Hobbs as the fourth- fastest-growing micro area – defined as an area with an urban core of 10,000 to 50,000 people – with a growth rate of 4.1 percent. The fastest-growing micro areas were the North Dakota oil boom cities of Williston and Dickinson. In the larger metro category, or areas with an urban core of 50,000 people or more, the Permian Basin cities of Odessa and Midland, Texas, ranked as the second- and third-fastest-growing metros, with identical rates of 3.3 percent population growth. Six of the 10 fastest-growing metros were in the Great Plains. The extraction sector, which also includes mining and quarrying, showed “tremendous growth” from 2007 to 2012, the Census Bureau reported. The sector’s revenues grew by 34 percent over the five-year period, while the number of establishments grew by 26 percent and the number of employees by 23 percent.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hobbs News-Sun
April 3, 2014

Murphy finds justice in lawsuit
Author: DENISE MARQUEZ

Despite losing the case, City of Hobbs Manager **J.J. Murphy** got the answer he was hoping for from the federal jury in Philadelphia in his lawsuit against the Radnor, Penn., Board of Commissioners. The jury said “yes” they believed **Murphy** was not hired as a township manager because of his military obligation. **Murphy** has been in Philadelphia for the past couple of weeks for a lawsuit he filed in 2010 against the Radnor Township Board of Commissioners. **Murphy** claims he was not hired for a city administrator position there because of his commitment with the Air Force Reserve.

Murphy’s trial ended Wednesday, and he said he feels justice was served. “This has been a four-and-half-year journey,” he said. “They got to hear my side of the story and they got to hear conflicting evidence from the Radnor Township officials. Sometimes the cover-up is worse than the crime.” In order for **Murphy** to win his case he had to prove there were no other reasons he was not hired. The jury’s answer was they believed there were other reasons for **Murphy** not to be hired based on the evidence presented during the trial.

Murphy applied for the manager position of Radnor Township in 2009. **Murphy** contends that the town’s commissioners discriminated against him because they were worried that his involvement with the Air Force Reserve would require him to be away too often. **Murphy** said the alleged incident is a violation of the federal Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, which bans employers from using an applicant’s military commitment against them during hiring decisions. **Murphy** posted on his Facebook page on Wednesday his thoughts of the outcome of the trial. “I have good news,” he wrote. “I was vindicated today when a jury agreed that Radnor Township violated the federal law against a veteran. Specifically, they unanimously voted “yes” when asked, ‘Do you find that plaintiff **John J. Murphy** has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that his obligation for service in the military was a motivating factor in Radnor Township’s decision not to hire him for the position of Township Manager?’ This is what they tried to deny all of this time.”

Though **Murphy** did not receive the back pay and damages he was seeking from Radnor, he said he feels he accomplished what he set out for. “It’s always about justice,” he said. “I was not awarded damages, but I’m one of the lucky ones. There are veterans that can’t find work that are qualified, who give up hope and commit suicide. It’s an epidemic.” **Murphy** said the bigger picture was to bring awareness of the unfair treatment of military veterans and their injustice in the American job market. “It’s hard to explain why military veterans come back from any of their duties — highly trained and highly skilled — but yet have a higher percentage unemployment rate than the average American,” he said. “There are some companies and communities that want to say they are patriotic but don’t act very patriotic when it comes to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

hiring qualified people. This case has never been about money for me. This case was about (fixing) a wrong. Radnor Township will always go down as discriminating against a veteran.”

Murphy said he normally takes about three tours a year and tries to schedule them during holidays. He also has a handful of weekend assignments that take place during the year. Murphy coordinates search and rescue missions throughout the country and said he serves the military about 35 days a year. Federal law states that an employer must provide 15 days of paid military leave. When Murphy was hired as the Hobbs city manager more than a year ago, he said city commissioners and administration had no issues with his desire to serve. Murphy said he is blessed to be a leader in Hobbs and will continue to work hard for the city. “I’m lucky I have a good job and Hobbs has a better economy than Radnor,” he said. “I truly feel blessed and my family is happy. Every decision I have made in my life, good, bad or indifferent has led me here to the City of Hobbs. I am honored to lead the city employees, who are great public servants to this community. I’m a blessed American and proud citizen airman.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
 John J. “J.J.” Murphy
 (Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Publication: Hobbs News; Date: Oct 27, 2013; Section: Front Page; Page: 1

Manager adopting Operation S.W.I.T.C.H

DENISE MARQUEZ
 NEWSMAN

For one day out of each month the Hobbs city manager will suit up or suit down and step into the shoes of different city employees.

Operation S.W.I.T.C.H., also known as Operation Stop Working In The City Hall, is a plan **J.J. Murphy** came up with so he could work with his employees and learn about different city departments.

“For one or two days a month I’m going to be leaving the office and I’m going out in every city department,” he said. “My department heads are going to try and identify some of their

better employees so I can work side-by-side with them and let them know how much I appreciate what they are doing and learn a little bit more about what they are doing.”

Murphy has already completed his first mission with Operation S.W.I.T.C.H. by participating in the Performance Agility Test the Hobbs Fire Department applicants took at HFD’s Station



City Manager **J.J. Murphy**

One on Oct. 28.

Murphy must insert to throw on a firefighter suit and climb four flights of stairs while carrying a section of a 3/4 inch hose, crawl under and over obstacles, pull a fire hose about 25 feet and drag a 175-pound “dummy” another 25 feet.

“Doing things like I did with the fire department the other

day was really day one of Operation S.W.I.T.C.H.,” **Murphy** said. “It’s to get out of my comfort zone and learn a little bit and show my employees that I’m not just going to talk about how I support them I’m going to go out there and act out my support.”

Fire Chief Tim Kent said **Murphy** is the type of guy to get involved and try something different.

“He’s the one who likes to get in there and learn from the top down,” he said. “He’s not afraid to put it out there.”

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Manager

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Mission two of Operation S.W.I.T.C.H. is in the works.

“I think my next Operation S.W.I.T.C.H. is on the clutter clean-up,” **Murphy** said. “I’m going to be out there picking up the junk throughout the city with our employees. They’re so appreciative when you do little things because it’s time away from their family and people put not-the-most-pleasant-smelling things that they find in their attic out there.”

The citywide community clean-up is an annual project where city workers dispose of items for residents in the city limits. The final phase of the clean-up is planned for Nov. 2, which will be from Sanger north for residents living east of Fowler.

Though Operation S.W.I.T.C.H. may seem like a one-man challenge, **Murphy** has asked city department heads to get involved.

“I’ve asked my department heads for four hours a month to do some cross-training so they follow each other,” **Murphy** said. “We all work hard, but I think four hours a month isn’t too much to ask for them to get out of their com-

fort zone and try to grow individually and help other organizations grow.”

Kent said this is an opportunity for each department to understand how other departments handle their jobs.

“We rely on each other a lot of times and I think it will give an overall perspective of every angle within the city so you’ll

have a better understanding of the city,” he said. “I think it’s a great program. I’m excited to go to some departments and some I don’t know, but you got to experience it all and it gives you a little more respect for each department.”

Denise Marquez can be reached at 391-5437 or at reporter@hobbsnews.com.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Golfcoursearchitecture.net
September 18, 2013

Staples debuts Community Links concept at Ocotillo Park
Author: Adam Lawrence

Golf architect Andy Staples is set to launch his first ‘Community Links’ concept in the city of Hobbs, New Mexico. Named Ocotillo Park Community Links, Staples says the project aims to invigorate the city’s golf course by implementing design practices that reinforce the link to the surrounding community. The primary focus of the plan is to attract young people and beginners to golf by redesigning the existing eighteen hole course to incorporate family tees, expand the practice area and add a nine hole executive course with a Starting New at Golf (SNAG) facility. Other elements such as walking trails, trail heads with rest areas and other outdoor spaces within the property have been included to increase use by non-golfers. A complete rebranding is also planned.

“This course is not unlike many older municipally owned courses across the country,” said city manager JJ Murphy. “The course is deteriorating before our eyes, and, people are just not playing golf like they did in years past. This concept provides a complete paradigm shift as to how the city’s course will be viewed within the community and how it will be used by its residents.” City authorities knew something had to be done, but had little support from around the community since the facility continued to lose money. “When we heard the vision that Andy had for how our golf course could be transformed into something other than your regular ol’ local municipal golf course, we immediately became intrigued,” Murphy said. “Now we’ve had a chance to see the vision begin to come to life, there’s an excitement for this course I have not seen before. I love how this golf course will begin to bring our community together around golf.”

Staples was hired by the city to explore ways to improve the facility which included a full analysis of the course and its infrastructure. After a full inventory of the course was completed, he presented the City with series of proposals that supported the need for improvements. Among his ideas was the concept of using the golf course as a focal point for community development. “Many courses are looking for reasons to upgrade their facility, but for a variety of reasons, aren’t able to garner the support to do it,” said Staples. “The concept of a Community Links gives a municipality a verifiable reason to invest in their facility. If it improves the life in a particular city and increases use in a deteriorating asset, why wouldn’t they do it?”

Set to begin construction by the end of 2013, the plan keeps overall turf acreage to a minimum, integrates a minimal irrigation delivery system, created by irrigation designer Don Mahaffey, that uses the city’s effluent water system. “My focus is to create an interesting, fun golf course that feels dramatically different than other courses in the area,” Staples said. “And, by fully integrating the community aspect into the plan, it only gives the project a better chance to succeed. I firmly believe golf should be shared by more people in the country, and we plan to make as large an impact as possible for the city of Hobbs. When we pull it off, it’ll be pretty cool.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

NewsWest9.com
November 1, 2012

Hobbs Police Department in Need of Police Officers
Author: Sylvia Gonzalez

HOBBS, N.M. - In the past decade, the City of Hobbs has nearly doubled their population. There seems to be new construction going up everywhere and employers are constantly looking for new hires. One organization is looking as far away as the West Coast to recruit the workers they need. According to Interim Chief, Chris McCall, the department is taking a strong stance on recruiting new police officers for the City of Hobbs. "We added an additional sergeant, another officer to our recruiting efforts. We've been reaching out to regional academies throughout Texas and New Mexico trying to bring them to interview and see if they are a right fit for us," McCall said.

McCall tells NewsWest 9 they want to be able to serve the community in a timely manner and not being fully staffed is hurting them at times especially in the time it takes to respond once a call comes in. "We have seen a slight increase in response calls, that's something that you never want to see. You want to be able to respond effectively in a timely manner, that is one of our concerns, one of the reasons we are looking to add more personnel to try to reduce that time," McCall said.

City Manager **J. J. Murphy** says he knows the importance of hiring new police officers for not only for the department, but for the community as well. That's why they are working hand in hand with the Police Department. "I started a task force three weeks ago in the Police Department just concentrating on new recruiting efforts and seeing what we can do here locally to attract more people to Hobbs," **Murphy** said.

Just like other employers, Hobbs Police is also offering a hiring bonus to those wanting to be a police officer. "If you are certified Police Officer and you come to us after a five year period, you are qualified to receive \$25,000 bonus directly paid to you and that \$25,000 can be utilized as a down payment for a house on the front end," **Murphy** said. The department is not only seeking recruits in Hobbs and surrounding areas, they have also been looking as far away as the West Coast to fill the positions that are needed.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
 John J. “J.J.” Murphy
 (Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Publication: Hobbs News; Date: Sep 4, 2012; Section: Front Page; Page: 1

Hobbs police chief put on leave

TODD BAILEY
 NEWS-EN

City of Hobbs police chief J.D. Sanders is on administrative leave following an incident with a police officer at a public event.

Newly hired city manager J.J. Murphy placed Sanders on paid leave last Thursday while the investigation takes place. Murphy said the incident took place within the

last 30 days and that the Hobbs officer also involved was not placed on administrative leave.

“(Chief Sanders) was put on paid administrative leave for the sole purpose of allowing the investigators to give the best, most unbiased investigation possible and to quickly remedy this situation,” said Murphy. “I can’t give any specifics into what



Sanders



Murphy

happened or where it happened, for the simple reason that I don’t want to compromise the investigation in any way.”

While the investigation takes place, Murphy said Deputy Chief Chris McCall is in charge of the Hobbs Police Department.

Murphy said he placed no timeline with the City of Hobbs legal department in

doing its job, however he feels the matter should be resolved within a week or two.

“I want to make sure they have enough time to talk to the officers and witnesses who need to be talked to,” Murphy said. “This has to be resolved through the process. This is not the time for rumors to escalate. That

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Police

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could be a disservice to Chief Sanders and to the officer in question.”

Requests for comment left on Sanders’ phone were not returned as of presstime Monday.

Sanders has more than 30 years of experience in law enforcement, having worked in Mississippi and Tennessee. He was hired in March 2008, replacing former chief Johnny Gonzales.

Murphy, who was hired Aug. 23, is still in Pennsylvania and plans to move to Hobbs later this week. He said that since his hiring, he has not gone a day without talking to a representative of Hobbs.

In regards to this situation, Murphy said he made sure he was in constant communication with Hobbs city commissioners and Mayor Sam

Cobb, so that they know and understand Murphy’s decisions.

“I approve of the way he has handled this situation,” city commissioner Gary Buie said of Murphy. “Even though he isn’t here, physically, I have been in contact with him on a daily basis and I feel he has handled this in a professional manner.”

Cobb agreed saying that despite packing boxes and planning his move, Murphy knows of the day-to-day issues in Hobbs.

“He’s leaving Wednesday and bringing his belongings on a 1,900-mile drive,” Cobb said. “He’s got all this stuff going on just to get here and he is still taking care of the city issues.”

Todd Bailey can be reached at 391-5434 or managing-editor@hobbsnews.com.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizens Voice
August 29, 2012

Former W-B administrator lands job in New Mexico

Author: Denise Allabaugh

Former Wilkes-Barre Administrator **J.J. Murphy** has landed a new job as city manager in Hobbs, N.M. **Murphy** said he will leave Wilkes-Barre and move almost 2,000 miles away to New Mexico, where he will earn \$140,000 a year. He will replace Eric Honeyfield, who retired in June.

Murphy, 41, a married father of five daughters, said he plans to move to Hobbs right away to find housing. He said his children are his No. 1 priority and his family will move there after the school semester is over.

Murphy said he was chosen following a national search with more than 50 candidates. "Over the last two years, I have been afforded the opportunity to travel around the country and talk to people about various public-private partnerships," **Murphy** said. "I saw this opening and I applied and I was fortunate to be selected. It's a great opportunity. The success we had in Wilkes-Barre has enabled me to be put in a position to help other communities do some of the same things and some different things."

Hobbs Mayor Sam Cobb did not return phone calls seeking comment Tuesday. **Murphy** said Hobbs is a similar city to Wilkes-Barre in some ways, such as its size. Hobbs has a population of about 43,000, while Wilkes-Barre has a population of more than 41,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. "From a budgetary standpoint, there will be opportunity to do some really progressive things," **Murphy** said. "Some of the challenges they have right now are with housing and economic development issues, and that will be my focus initially."

Murphy served seven years as city administrator under Mayor Tom Leighton and two years as deputy administrator under former Mayor Tom McGroarty. He was the center of controversy on some city issues, such as being paid \$300 an hour as a consultant for the Wilkes-Barre Parking Authority and recommending the city hire the Fox Rothschild law firm to put together proposals and oversee the process. One of the firm's partners is his brother, Patrick Murphy. **Murphy** also faced criticism after the city spent more than \$14,000 to install security systems at his home and in Leighton's home. In February, state prosecutors threw out four private criminal complaints about the matter, and the state Attorney General's Office determined that Leighton and **Murphy** would not face criminal charges. **Murphy** called the complaint a "campaign issue" during an election year and would not comment further. "There are always going to be issues that separate people," he said.

Leighton called **Murphy** a "proven leader and effective administrator who served the Wilkes-Barre community with distinction for years." "His achievements extend beyond his service to the city government," Leighton said. "GOALS Foundation, which he founded, played significant

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

roles in the construction of two playgrounds in the city and the organization has broadened access to sports for countless area youth through grants. J.J. was a trusted adviser as my administrator and Wilkes-Barre's loss is certainly Hobbs' gain. I wish him well in the next phase of his career."

Murphy is a 1993 graduate of King's College in Wilkes-Barre, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science. He earned his masters degree in public administration from Marywood University in Scranton in 1998. He served in the United States Air Force and was deployed to Africa in 2008 and Haiti in 2010. He continues to serve in the U.S. Air Force Reserves. He and his wife Colleen live in Wilkes-Barre with their five daughters, Katie, Erin, Emma, Ryan and Reese. "I have been educated here and really found it to be a great place to raise a family. I lived all over the country in the military and decided to come back here,"

Murphy said. "Unfortunately over the last couple of years, there were some things done in county government that really put government service in a negative light. Since then, there has been this perception that all government employees are painted with that same brush. I think it's going to be a real challenge locally to motivate good people to want to get involved in government ever again."

Murphy's accomplishments as city administrator include technological advances in city hall. "When I took over, there was no email and secretaries were still using typewriters," he said. He was project manager for a \$3 million initiative to install more than 250 surveillance cameras throughout the city. The cameras have been used to catch criminals, **Murphy** said. He said he hopes the cameras will help bring closure to the family of hit-and-run victim Rebecca McCallick, who was killed July 24 on Hazle Street. "I don't think you can put a price on public safety," **Murphy** said. **Murphy** also coordinated the Healing Field at Kirby Park in 2004, which consisted of more than 4,000 flags which honored people who died on Sept. 11, 2001, and military members who have died fighting since.

Internet - Newspaper Archives Searches
 John J. "J.J." Murphy
 (Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Publication: Hobbs News; Date: Aug 24, 2012; Section: Front Page; Page: 1

Murphy hired as next Hobbs city manager

HELENA RODRIGUEZ
 NEWS-ON

The City of Hobbs has a new "head honcho." He's called "J.J." and this Air Force reservist plans to bring a little bit of his military leadership style with him.

On Thursday morning, the Hobbs City Commission unanimously voted to hire **J.J. Murphy** of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., as the new city manager. **Murphy** replaces Eric Honeyfield, who retired at the end of June.

Murphy's employment with the City of Hobbs begins immediately.

"I'm not somebody who is going to be sitting in a chair long," said **Murphy**, who was still in Hobbs Thursday after interviewing with the commission on Tuesday. "I



Murphy

will be out and about in the community."

Murphy's annual salary will be \$100,000. He was hired following two rounds of searching.

The first round had 55 applications and four men were interviewed. Jared Hunt Miller of North Richland Hills, Texas was selected in June, but turned down the position due to retirement benefit issues.

That launched the second round,

which netted 50 applications and three finalists. The other two men who were interviewed on Tuesday were Ronald W. Fogain of Lehi, Utah, and Curtis Schrader, the current city manager of Jal.

After the announcement, **Murphy** visited to Lubbock to catch a flight but promised to return to Hobbs in two weeks.

"I have inherited a great position

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Manager

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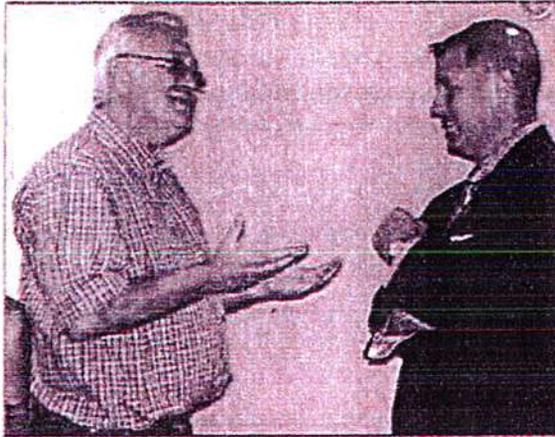
because of the people before me and because of the staff and people in Hobbs." **Murphy** told the city commission Thursday. "You have my commitment that I will work hard for the city, the staff and community."

Hobbs Mayor Sam Cobb was happy with the commission's decision and praised **Murphy** as the chosen candidate.

"We are excited about J.J. coming to our community," Cobb said. "He is very young, excited and energetic and has a great background. I think this is a great opportunity for Hobbs. Hobbs has had a great past and has an extremely bright future and we are looking forward to him playing a role and making a positive impact."

Murphy said that he and his wife, Colleen, a stay-at-home mom, have already started house hunting for their family, which includes their five daughters.

Murphy said he did a lot of investigating and research on the community and said that he "interviewed Hobbs" as



Hobbs City Commissioner Garry Buie, left, visits with new city manager J.J. Murphy shortly after Murphy was named to the position on Thursday morning.

much as he was interviewed by the city commission. He talked to local residents and even contacted Miller.

"I called Miller and he had nothing but positive things to say about the mayor, the city commission and the community of Hobbs," **Murphy** said. "I really focused on learning the background of the community

and what sold me on the job was the great city staff and community and their attitudes."

Murphy said that he will use some of his military leadership skills to help "pull different groups together."

Murphy is currently president and CEO of Goals Consulting Inc., and was city

administrator of Wilkes-Barre from 2004 to 2010. He has a master's degree in public administration with a focus in criminal justice from Marywood University in Scranton, Pa., and a bachelor's degree in political science from King's College in Wilkes-Barre.

He was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal by The Air Force in 2010 and has been decorated with numerous military medals including a Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, a Humanitarian Service Medal and Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.

Hobbs Fire Chief Manny Gomez, who has been serving as interim city manager since July, said that he will be a "foot soldier" and remain in the position until **Murphy** returns.

"It was great to have a candidate respond so quickly," Gomez said. "Sometimes, when you wait, you identify a great opportunity and a great candidate, and that is what happened here."

Helena Rodriguez can be reached at 391-5437 or reporter1@hobbsnews.com.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice
April 13, 2012

Parking consultant raises eyebrows in W-B
Author: Josh Moyer

Residents are paying former city administrator **J.J. Murphy** \$300 an hour as a consultant while the city explores whether to lease its parking assets, according to the Wilkes-Barre Parking Authority. **Murphy** has already received \$8,130 for 27.1 hours of work and has billed the Parking Authority for times ranging from 12-minute periods to seven hours, according to a March 19 time sheet that was obtained by The Citizens' Voice.

Murphy, who left the city in January 2010, said he recommended to Mayor Tom Leighton that Wilkes-Barre hire the Fox Rothschild law firm to put together proposals and oversee the process. One of Fox Rothschild's partners is Patrick Murphy, **J.J. Murphy's** brother who is running for the state attorney general. Leighton denied responsibility for the law firm hiring **Murphy** as a consultant, saying the Parking Authority ultimately approved hiring Fox Rothschild. But one Parking Authority board member pointed the finger at Leighton. "He was pushing us, pressuring us to do it," board member Ed Katarsky said Thursday. "And we just kind of gave in."

Board members at Thursday's Parking Authority meeting expressed frustration at the snowballing costs of the consulting fees. Initially, the total cost was expected to be in the range of \$175,000. Now, Katarsky and others worried the authority could be on the hook for more than \$300,000. "It's not right," said G. Terry Madonna, Franklin & Marshall's director of the Center for Politics and Public Affairs. "I hate to say this, but it sort of sounds like business as usual in cities and governments across the country." Leighton acknowledged Thursday afternoon he talked with **Murphy** last winter about leasing the city's parking assets, but he said he was not responsible for hiring his friend. "It's an absolute coincidence," **J.J. Murphy** said in a telephone interview, explaining his brother is not involved in the project.

After getting the contract in January, Fox Rothschild turned around and hired **J.J. Murphy**, who formed GOALS Consulting, and they settled on a \$300-per-hour fee. The Parking Authority, which gets its funding from the city's parking garages, is paying that fee. Asked whether his law firm had ever before hired GOALS Consulting, the attorney representing Fox Rothschild, Alan Wohlstetter, paused for 15 seconds before saying no. **J.J. Murphy** said he would have recommended any law firm that employed Wohlstetter. It is purely a coincidence his brother works at the same firm, he said.

Fox Rothschild has hired as a second consultant Shelly Communications and on Thursday tried to hire a third consultant. After a small uproar from the board, the attorney representing the firm instead settled on a \$5,000 retainer for DESMAN Associates, who would work on the valuations. "They're hiring all these consultants," Katarsky added. "We knew they had the right to do it, but it's kind of getting out of hand here a little bit." Wilkes-Barre's City Council voted Thursday night to continue to the second phase of the project, which would solicit proposals. Council

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

members Bill Barrett and Tony George expressed surprise after the meeting that **J.J. Murphy** was hired as a consultant.

But, they said, they had no control over that. City council will face a more important vote later this year on whether to actually lease the city's parking assets to a private entity. Thursday's vote just gave the Parking Authority approval to seek more information. "If it's not going to benefit the city," George said, "I'm not going to vote for it." Leighton said he, too, would not recommend the city approve a lease if it wouldn't be beneficial. He also believed **J.J. Murphy's** hiring wasn't unusual because the city hires former Department of Public Works employees to plow snow and mow lawns. This situation, he said, is similar. "This wasn't hidden," Leighton said. "If there was a conflict, I would not have done it. If (J.J.) retired last month and we're doing it now, that's a conflict. He was on his own for two years now."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
February 9, 2012

No charges for alarms in homes
Author: Bill O'Boyle

WILKES-BARRE - The state attorney general has determined no criminal charges will be filed against Mayor Tom Leighton or former city administrator **J.J. Murphy** regarding the installation of alarm systems at their homes that were paid for with city funds. According to a letter sent to Luzerne County District Attorney Stefanie Salavantis, the case "has been closed and four private criminal complaints have been disapproved." Sam Sanguedolce, first assistant district attorney, provided The Times Leader with a copy of the letter, dated Jan. 6, that identified Linda Urban as the complainant.

According to the letter - signed by Frank G. Fina, chief deputy attorney general, and Anthony W. Furray, senior deputy attorney general - the determination that no criminal charges would be filed was made "after careful review of this matter." The letter states that on Oct. 21, 2011, former Luzerne County District Attorney Jacqueline Musto Carroll wrote to the AG's office and requested the AG assume jurisdiction of the matter because of a conflict of interest. "On Nov. 1, 2011, our office assumed jurisdiction of this case," the letter states.

No reaction from Urban

When contacted at her home, Urban said she didn't have much to say about the AG's decision. "I guess the attorney general doesn't feel this particular criminal complaint was valid," she said. "I really have no comment; it's the way it is. There's nothing to say." In November, Urban sharply criticized Leighton and **Murphy** for spending more than \$15,000 of public money to equip their homes with security systems. Urban filed private criminal complaints against them alleging theft and misappropriation of taxpayer funds.

At the time, Urban said she contacted the Attorney General's Office to look into whether the city's tax-exempt status was illegally used in the purchases from Torbik Safe & Lock Inc. She said "there seems to be a criminal conspiracy issue between **J.J.** and the mayor." In her complaints filed on Oct. 14 at the office of District Judge Andrew Barilla, Urban accused Leighton of misappropriation of taxpayer funds by an elected city official, unlawful taking, illegal disposition of funds and criminal conspiracy to commit a crime of larceny. Against **Murphy** she filed charges of larceny, criminal conspiracy illegal disposition of public funds and theft by unlawful taking. The complaints were forwarded to then-Luzerne County District Attorney Musto Carroll for review and a decision on whether to approve the charges. When contacted Wednesday, Carroll said she forwarded the charges to the AG's Office for consideration. Leighton said Wednesday he was not aware of the letter sent to the DA's Office and he expressed relief to learn of the decision.

'Baseless allegation'

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"I have been consistent from the beginning that these complaints were frivolous and would be dismissed as such," Leighton said. "We fully cooperated with this inquiry, and I am happy to see that these allegations were rightfully dismissed. "This is yet another baseless allegation from critics of my administration that has been dismissed in recent days. They are nothing more than attempts by some in this community to distract the city from completing the important work that the people sent us here to do. They will not succeed. My administration has been and remains an honest and open one."

Murphy, who left the administration in early 2010 to start a private consulting business, said the charges have had a direct impact on his business. "I've said all along anybody can file whatever they want - valid or not," he said. "In the end, justice prevailed. And I hope she (Urban) has a good attorney." Murphy said he "found it interesting" that Urban removed several posts on social media sites that he says defamed his name. Murphy said the alarm systems were installed after "multiple events" at his home. He said he feared for his safety and his family's safety. Leighton has stated in the past that he received numerous threats as well prior to the alarm systems being installed. "This is a warning to anybody who wants to slander public or private individuals and should make them think twice," Murphy said. "All they are doing is discouraging good people from getting involved in government."

Murphy said the incidents at his home are all documented. He said the Pennsylvania State Police were involved and investigated some of the cases. "It was all part of a campaign to negatively affect Tom Leighton," he said. "Mrs. Urban thought it was important to also defame my character."

Alarms recommended

In 2005, after several incidents were reported, city Chief of Police Gerard Dessoie recommended the alarm systems be installed at the homes of Leighton and Murphy. The reports said both men received threats, verbal attacks and intimidating letters when the mayor decided to close firehouses. The city paid for monthly monitoring and reinstalled the system at Murphy's home at a cost of \$6,500 when he moved in late 2007. In filing the complaints, Urban cited the city charter that she said prohibits gifts to oneself. Urban, a Republican, lost her bid for City Council in District D, to former city police Chief Bill Barrett.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice
January 24, 2012

Wilkes– Barre resident uncovers city's phantom credit card statements
Author: Andrew Staub

WILKES-BARRE - They do exist. Much to the surprise of Wilkes-Barre officials, resident Joseph Wielgosz on Monday produced 15 city credit card statements that city Administrator Marie McCormick said were among dozens of records that could not be retrieved from Bank of America in October. Wielgosz obtained the documents using subpoena power granted to him by a Luzerne County judge in November as part of his ongoing open-records battle with the city. He has been trying to gather a full accounting of city credit card usage since last year. The New Grant Street resident clutched the statements during a hearing before Luzerne County Judge Joseph F. Sklarosky Jr.. Afterward, Wielgosz said the statements proved city officials lied when they said dozens of statements connected to McCormick, Mayor Tom Leighton and former city administrator **J.J. Murphy's** credit card accounts did not exist. "You can't continuously lie to the public and get away with it," Wielgosz said. "It's not going to go away. It's going to get worse."

City officials, caught off-guard by Wielgosz's find, spent most of Monday searching for answers of how a city resident could retrieve more documents than they did. They stood behind McCormick's original assertion, outlined in three sworn affidavits dated Oct. 20. The affidavit relied upon a letter Bank of America sent to the city that stated dozens of statements didn't exist because there were no balances due in those months. "We're trying to get an explanation from them on how they would produce a letter to us stating unequivocally that there's no statements, and yet under subpoena, they produce them to someone else," said Drew McLaughlin, the city's spokesman. As of Monday afternoon, the city was waiting for more information from the bank, McLaughlin said. A Bank of America regional spokesman did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Wielgosz intends to file a private criminal complaint alleging McCormick perjured herself in the sworn affidavits, he said. He stopped by the Luzerne County District Attorney's Office on his way out of the courthouse, but a secretary directed him to contact a magisterial district judge. While McLaughlin said McCormick is "beyond reproach," city Attorney Tim Henry added that she simply relied upon Bank of America's information. "I certainly don't believe Marie McCormick lied in those affidavits," Henry said.

Monday's hearing proved another twist in drawn-out Right-to-Know dispute that began when Wielgosz filed an open-records request for the city's credit card statements last year. Wielgosz has continually refuted the city's assertion it provided him all the available credit card statements and didn't believe the explanation outlined in the affidavits. He found several examples of city credit card statements that suggested payments were made on outstanding balances, though no subsequent statement confirming the payments was issued. Wielgosz appealed to the state Office of Open Records, which in September ordered the city to retrieve more statements.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Unsatisfied with 13 additional statements the city obtained from Bank of America, Wielgosz filed a petition in Luzerne County Court to compel the city to retrieve more documents. As part of the petition, Wielgosz received subpoena power. Working without an attorney, Wielgosz within 20 days obtained 15 phantom statements from FIA Card Services, a subsidiary of Bank of America, he said. Six of them included charges for a total of \$5,329.25.

The fact Wielgosz obtained the documents made his Monday hearing on the petition moot, a point Sklarosky made when he realized Wielgosz had already obtained the statements. Wielgosz withdrew the petition, but couldn't resist a wry crack as he held the credit card statements in the courtroom. "They don't exist," he said facetiously.

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John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
January 22, 2012

Travel costs since '04 stun activists
Author: Terrie Morgan-Besecker

WILKES-BARRE - One month before they voted to raise taxes 31 percent in 2008, three city council members and the city controller spent five days in Orlando, Fla. on a taxpayer-funded trip that cost more than \$3,000 in hotel fees alone. The trip to the annual convention of the National League of Cities was among dozens of excursions city council members and other city officials have taken over the past seven years that have cost taxpayers more than \$113,000 in hotel and conference fees, according to a review of credit card statements of four city officials from 2004 to 2011.

The majority of the money -- \$74,139 -- was charged to the credit card of City Clerk Jim Ryan for 43 separate hotel stays of council members and other officials in cities across a wide section of the United States. The charges ranged from single-day stays in Charlotte, N.C., Virginia Beach, Va. and several cities in Pennsylvania, to week-long stays in San Antonio; Reno, Nev., New Orleans, Denver, and Phoenix. Mayor Tom Leighton, meanwhile, racked up travel-related charges totaling \$14,720; City Administrator Marie McCormick, \$12,030 and former city administrator **J.J. Murphy** \$12,318. None of the trips by council were ever publicly approved at council meetings. They didn't have to be. The money came from a from a \$10,000 line item for travel that's included in each year's budget, which means no public vote was required. There also was no vote required to approve the hotel and conference fees charged to credit cards held by Leighton, McCormick or **Murphy**.

Activists riled the lack of public disclosure riled city resident Joseph Wielgosz, who along with Charlotte Raup obtained the credit card statements earlier this year through a request filed under the state's Right to Know Act. Raup and Wielgosz said they expected to find some questionable charges, but were stunned by the amount of travel-related expenses on the cards. "The people don't know about this. This is outrageous," Raup said. "I see people every day who are working so hard and struggling. They should not have to fork out money for people to travel all over." "They travel more than the governor," Wielgosz said. "These people are living it up on our money. It's ridiculous."

Current Councilman Bill Barrett and former council members Kathy Kane and Tony Thomas, who took part in most of the trips, adamantly defended the travel, most of which was to conventions held by the National League of Cities and Pennsylvania League of Cities. Barrett, Thomas and Kane said information they picked up at the conventions led to numerous worthwhile projects and has resulted in cost savings that far outweigh the cost of the excursions. Thomas and Kane, who now serves as city controller, left council in December. Leighton, who primarily took short trips to Philadelphia and Washington D.C., said his travel involved numerous meetings with legislators and other government officials that helped him obtain funding for multiple projects that have improved the city. "Most of the time I was getting

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funding and going down and making presentations," Leighton said. "Grant money does not fall in your lap. You need to really sell the project. You go down and lobby for the money."

The bulk of the travel-related charges on McCormick's card appear to be for seminars and training for other city employees, according to notations on the statements. Most of Leighton's and Murphy's charges relate to meetings in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. with various officials regarding projects within the city, including the Wi-Fi system, Intermodal Transportation Center and the Coal Street renovation project. Ryan personally charged a total of \$1,915 in hotel charges to Virginia Beach from 2004 to 2010. The trips were for annual training so that he could retain his master certification as a city clerk, he said.

Cost/Benefit ratio Raup and Wielgosz said they understand some travel is necessary, but they questioned whether the cost of some of the trips - particularly those taken by council members to out-of-state conventions -- outweighed the benefits, particularly given the financial struggles the city is facing. "We pay a 3-percent earned income tax. If you take away this credit card nonsense, maybe we'd only be paying 1 percent," Wielgosz said. "This whole administration is about spend, spend, spend, yet you don't have a decent road to drive on."

A review of Ryan's credit card statements show the total amount spent on hotels and conference/membership fees ranged from a low of \$4,059 in 2004 to a high of \$16,945 in 2007. Expenditures in the other years ranged from roughly \$6,500 to \$9,700. The actual cost of the trips was likely significantly higher, however, as the figures do not include the cost of airfare, meals or ground transportation, which were not charged on the cards. Council members and other officials paid those fees up front and were later reimbursed by the city, Ryan said.

The Times Leader filed a Right-to-Know request seeking receipts submitted by council members for reimbursement of travel expenses. The request, which is pending, could not reasonably be filled by the city within the several-day time frame prior to the publication of this story. A review of available records through June 2011, which were provided to the Times Leader by Wielgosz and Raup, showed Barrett, Kane, Thomas and former controller Bernie Mengerlinghausen traveled to conventions an average of two to four times per year. The four attended the 2008 National League of Cities convention in Orlando, as well as NLC conventions held in 2006 in Reno, Nev.; 2007 in New Orleans; 2009 in San Antonio; 2010 in Denver and 2011 in Phoenix. A fifth person, Shirley Morio-Vitanovec, now a former council member, also attended the 2008 Orlando convention, Ryan said.

Council members were free to take their spouse with them, but the city paid only for the council member, Ryan said. All expenses for spouses, such as airfare and meals, were their personal responsibility. Constituents benefit Barrett said he understands people might be skeptical of the benefits the city gets, but he's convinced the cost of the conventions are far outweighed by the savings the city sees as a result of what members learn. "A lot of people picture these as if we are going on some sort of vacation. It is not like that," Barrett said. Barrett, Kane and Thomas said they spent their days attending numerous seminars and meetings that allowed them to interact with officials from across the nation, gaining valuable information on how to address problems

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all cities face. They also cited numerous projects that came out of the conventions that benefited city residents.

Thomas was the key person behind the "Healing Fields" 9/11 flag memorial that was held in Kirby Park in 2004. The flags were sold after the display ended, generating about \$74,000 the city donated to various charities. In 2010, the city obtained playground equipment at virtually no cost that was installed in the Iron Triangle section. Ideas for both projects came from National League of Cities conventions, Thomas said. Barrett cited several examples of projects he learned about at conventions, including a prescription drug discount card and a water and sewer line protection insurance program offered to city residents. The prescription discount card is available to any city resident who does not have prescription coverage. It entitles them to a 25 percent discount on all prescriptions purchased at CVS pharmacies, he said. "I just got a report on it. Our residents have saved over \$10,000," Barrett said. The sewer and water line protection plan provides insurance to cover the cost if there is a malfunction within the lines. About 2,000 households have signed up for the program, he said. The city, which gets a small administration fee, earned roughly \$10,000 off that program this year, he said.

Wielgosz and Raup questioned if information on those projects could have been obtained in other ways. Many organizations now offer seminars through video conferencing, they noted. "Anything you can learn, you can learn on the Internet. There is nothing they learned that they could not have learned here," Raup said. They also questioned why so many council members, plus the controller, needed to attend the conventions. "I was a union president. When I sent someone on a trip, I sent one person who came back and discussed with everyone else what they learned," Wielgosz said.

Barrett, Kane and Thomas acknowledged the city could send fewer people, but said they would miss out on a lot of information because they could not possibly attend all the seminars, many of which are going on simultaneously. "None of us would go to the same seminar. We'd split up. One would go to public safety, one would go to public works," Thomas said. Council Chairman Mike Merritt has never taken any trips, but said he believes the conferences are worthwhile. Council members have brought back information that has saved the city money, he said. But Merritt said he understands concerns that are being raised, and suggested it may be time for council to revisit how many people should attend. "I'm not saying cut it altogether, but does it need to be three? Maybe two is the number. Times are tough. We need to watch spending where we can," Merritt said.

Barrett said he also understands the concerns, but he thinks it would be a mistake to eliminate the conferences. "I can understand why it would be questioned, but to not take advantage of these opportunities, I think we would be remiss. The alternative is to stay in Wilkes-Barre, don't belong to organizations, don't learn anything new or bring anything back and stay stagnant," he said.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
October 28, 2011

Alarm bill received in error, city says
Author: Bill O’Boyle

WILKES-BARRE - At Wednesday night's Times Leader Mayoral Forum at Wilkes University, Republican candidate Lisa Cope produced copies of bills that she said showed the city paid for monitoring fees at former city administrator J.J. Murphy's home. Cope was right, but the city said Thursday that it received those bills erroneously and Torbik Safe & Lock Co. has agreed to reimburse the city for the charges. "Torbik will refund the city \$169 for paying the erroneous bills," said Drew McLaughlin, the city's administrative coordinator. "The bills were paid between February and July of 2005. Torbik invoiced the city instead of J.J. Murphy personally."

Murphy attended the Mayoral Forum and said he had paid all of his bills for monitoring of the home security system that was paid for by the city at a cost to taxpayers of \$4,000 and installed at his former home on Plymouth Avenue. The city also paid to move the system to his new home on Reliance Drive in 2007 at a cost of more than \$6,000. The city also paid for installation of a home security system for Mayor Tom Leighton at a cost of around \$4,000. Leighton said he has paid for all of his monitoring fees. Murphy said Wednesday that Torbik would corroborate his claim that he paid all of the monitoring fees. Lee Torbik, owner of Torbik Safe & Lock, declined to comment on Murphy's account, citing a confidentiality agreement he signs with all of his customers. Murphy denies that, saying Torbik Safe & Lock has confirmed his claim. Lee Torbik said he can't release information due to confidentiality agreements with his customers. The city said it will produce the bills and prove that the city did not pay the monitoring fees.

"Mayor Thomas M. Leighton and J.J. Murphy have always assumed personal financial responsibility for the monthly costs of the system which Torbik Safe & Lock confirmed two days ago," a city release stated Thursday. "The city requested Torbik to inspect their own records this morning while the city conducted a thorough internal review of city financial documents which confirmed the \$169 discrepancy. The city requested a refund and Torbik readily agreed."

In a letter dated Oct. 27th from Lee Torbik to Leighton, the South Main Street company initiated an inquiry into the monitoring records for the security system at Murphy's residence. Torbik said that when a job is completed, the company's system "automatically produces a monitoring fee each month" that is sent to the address provided for the equipment invoice, which was the city. Torbik said that when it was determined the bills for the monitoring service were being sent to the city "incorrectly," the matter was rectified and the bills were sent to Murphy's residence.

At Wednesday's forum, Cope produced copies of bills from Torbik that she said proved the city has been paying for monitoring fees for Murphy's home security system - a system for which the city paid more than \$10,000 in 2004 and later transferred to Murphy's a new home. Cope said she is still waiting for copies of the remainder of the bills for monitoring. She has submitted right-to-know requests for the bills, but the city has not yet provided them, if they exist, she said.

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"We haven't heard anything back from the city on the second right-to-know request," Cope said. "We will wait until we get those back."

Frank Sorick, Cope's campaign manager, wondered if the city would have done anything to correct this "error" if it wasn't brought to its attention by Cope's campaign. "Who's watching our money at City Hall?" Sorick asked. Cope showed photocopies of bills that were initialed by **Murphy** and Marie McCormick, the current city administrator who was assistant to **Murphy** during his tenure. The bills appear to have been logged in by the city and paid. The city also paid \$4,000 for the mayor's home system. Leighton has come under fire since it was revealed that the city paid for the installation of the two systems after he and **Murphy** received threats from unknown people.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice
October 17, 2011

Credit card statements shed light on city spending
Author: Andrew Staub

Tony Thomas has been a driving force to bring a splash pad to Wilkes-Barre's Coal Street Park since he and other council members learned about them during a 2008 National League of Cities meeting in Orlando, Fla. Without that first-hand knowledge of projects such as the splash pad, Thomas said it'd be difficult to evaluate their validity for Wilkes-Barre. "I want to know what it does," Thomas said of recreational amenities he's thinking of bringing to the city. "You can't do that on the Internet, and you can't do that in the City of Wilkes-Barre."

While Thomas said trips like the visit to Orlando and visits to amusement conferences across the country have uncovered ideas like the splash pad, brought a Sept. 11 memorial to Kirby Park in 2004 and even conjured thoughts of a polymer skating rink for Public Square, they've come under increased scrutiny in recent months. The trips are usually paid for using one of the city's five charge cards, and a slew of Right-to-Know requests has shed light on Wilkes-Barre's credit expenditures like never before. Joseph Wielgosz, a longtime city Crime Watch volunteer, has been gathering the credit card records since last spring. He said city residents deserve to know full details of all the credit card expenditures, which include the \$3,096 spent for hotels during the trip to Orlando. "I want the people to understand why they're paying 3 percent taxes," Wielgosz said. "There's a whole lot of spending going on in the city that nobody knows about."

Wielgosz's open-records requests show a pattern of thousands of city dollars spent on hotel stays, conferences as far away as San Antonio, Texas, and occasional working lunches at downtown eateries. Wielgosz, though, worries about what he doesn't yet know.

While Wielgosz has secured dozens of credit card statements from the city, he and Jim Hayward, a former city administrator, collectively have won orders from the state Office of Open Records compelling the city to release 65 unaccounted for credit card statements for Mayor Tom Leighton, city Administrator Marie McCormick and former city Administrator **J.J. Murphy**.

An appeal on 12 missing credit card statements for city clerk Jim Ryan is due to be resolved later this month. City officials have maintained they're hiding nothing and are trying to obtain as many statements as possible from the credit card company. Wielgosz wants to see the proof himself. Wielgosz believes the city has hidden something, he said, and has grown frustrated with constant Right-to-Know request extensions and even an occasion when the city gave him the incorrect statements. "If they came out and those credit cards would be squeaky clean, I'd be the first one to apologize to them," Wielgosz said. Expenditures charged to Wilkes-Barre's credit cards, city spokesman Drew McLaughlin said, are thoroughly vetted through department heads, the city administrator, the mayor and the controller. McLaughlin said residents should know expenses such as council travel are not "recklessly" charged. The council approves its travel expenses each year as part of the budgeting process, McLaughlin said.

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The city budgeted \$10,000 for council travel in 2012, an amount that's remained the same since at least 2010. Over those same years, the city administrator's travel budget has remained at \$5,000, the controller's at \$3,500 and the mayor's at \$3,000. Attending seminars and conferences help city officials keep current with changing governmental policies, McLaughlin said, saying he recently learned about blight-fighting strategies during a seminar in Allentown. The trips also helped form relationships that have led to projects such as the recently built Iron Triangle playground, McLaughlin said. Still, visits to San Antonio, New Orleans and Indianapolis for conferences have raised questions from Wielgosz. He wonders if Wilkes-Barre, a city of about 7 square miles, needs to rack up tens of thousands of dollars in travel costs in difficult economic times.

Hotels for the five-day National League of Cities' exposition in San Antonio cost the city more than \$5,000 alone in 2009, according to city credit card statements. "We can't pave roads, we can't take care of people's concerns, we can't take care of the walls for the flood," Wielgosz said. "There should be a huge outrage." Wielgosz and Hayward, with help from Leighton's opponent in the Democratic primary, Charlotte Raup, have spent months compiling the credit card data.

Among the bulk of travel expenditures, they've pinpointed specific concerns, such as \$185 spent for a two-night stay in Clarks Summit for a multi-day building inspection seminar, about \$2,000 charged to Murphy's card for working lunches and occasional late payment fees. The overnight stay at Clarks Summit, which is 28 miles from Wilkes-Barre, was deemed necessary because the seminar began early in the morning and ran through the evening, McLaughlin said. "There's always an explanation for why a trip would be an overnight stay versus a day," he said.

Murphy, who left his post as administrator in early 2010, defended charging lunches to the city. His credit card statements often defined the meals at places such as Rodano's, the former Lowe's Restaurant and the Chill Grill as working lunches for the city's senior staff or as meetings for city initiatives or development plans. The former city administrator also bristled at the increased scrutiny on the lunches, saying such expenditures were common practice even when Hayward worked for the city. "This is nothing more than election politics," Murphy said.

Wielgosz, who has clashed with city administrators since a property he was trying to purchase was bought by a city contractor last year, denied having political motivations. He pointed out his initial open-records request for the credit card statements was filed in late May. Since then, the city has dragged out the process by extending their response period, failing to retrieve the statements and, on one occasion, providing statements for the wrong person, Wielgosz said. While details of credit card expenditures have been available upon request, they are not included on council meeting agendas. Asked if the city would consider attaching them in the future, McLaughlin said there are no such plans at the moment. "There's a new city controller who's going to be elected one way or the other," McLaughlin said. "That city controller has full freedom to have new policies and procedures, but we feel very confident that the level of oversight of public expenditures is airtight." Raup said seeing more transparency in the future would be "wonderful," but she cringed at how long it has taken her, Wielgosz and Hayward to

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collect the information so far. "Shame on them," she said. "Shame on them for making the citizens go through all these hoops for the Right-to-Knows."

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John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice
October 13, 2011

Threats to W-B officials prompted purchase of home security systems
Author: Andrew Staub

An attempted break-in, a menacing note stuffed in a mailbox and the destruction of potted plants led Wilkes-Barre police to believe recently elected Mayor Tom Leighton and his city administrator were in danger in 2004. At least that's the justification for two security systems installed at the men's homes on the city's dime. According to an invoice obtained by The Citizens' Voice, the city paid \$4,075 in March 2005 to install an alarm system and security cameras at J.J. Murphy's home when he was city administrator. A similar system at about the same cost was installed at Leighton's Reliance Drive home, a city spokesman confirmed Wednesday.

Linda Urban, a critic of the Leighton administration and a Republican candidate for city council, pointed out the expenditure and said she worried "somebody has overstepped their boundaries in spending \$4,000 of taxpayer money." "I'm married to the county commissioner (Stephen A. Urban)," she said. "If somebody called here and said, 'Hey, Linda, I'm going to come over there and break in your house and tonight somebody tries to break in, would I then call the county in the morning and tell them you need to pay for my security system? No."

A series of incidents that began Nov. 17, 2004 prompted the installation of the security systems, Murphy said. A man who identified himself as a city employee told Murphy's wife that Leighton had sent him to examine the pipes in their home, police said. When Murphy's wife said she wanted to check with her husband and locked the door, the man tried to force his way inside, police said. The next day, a handwritten note was stuffed in Murphy's mailbox, police said. "They dropped off a note saying, 'J.J. and the mayor, you will pay for this,' Murphy said, paraphrasing the letter. A few days later, Murphy discovered potted plants that were smashed around his home, he said. At the time, police Chief Gerard Dessoie said he believed the incidents were intended to disrupt city government. The chief recommended the security measures, which were installed by Torbik Safe & Lock, Inc., Murphy said. "I have no problem with it because of what my family had to go through," Murphy said.

While police launched a full investigation, calling in a composite artist to help identify the suspect, Murphy said he took his family away for a week after the incident. "That played a part in my decision to leave the city," said Murphy, who left to start a consulting firm for municipalities. "Ultimately, at the end of the day, I had to do what was best for my family." City police believed it was necessary to take protective measures after the threats and incidents at Murphy's home, said Drew McLaughlin, the city spokesman. He said the threats to Murphy and Leighton came during a "very volatile" time as the mayor took over a city saddled with fiscal problems and made decisions such as closing firehouses.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The case is still open and no suspects have been charged, McLaughlin said in explaining why the security systems have remained. "There is no statute of limitations on what a person may or may not do," he said, citing incidents such as the attack on U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords. **Murphy's** system was originally installed at his Plymouth Avenue home and transferred when he moved to Reliance Drive, he said. **Murphy** pays the monthly service charge, which has ranged from \$27 to \$35, but he said it "would have been justified" for the city to pick up the fee. "But I picked those up," he said. "I think I went over and above what was necessary." McLaughlin said he believes Leighton also pays his own monthly service fees.

Because the cost of the security systems fell below \$10,000, city council would not have needed to approve the expenditures. City Controller Bernard Mengerlinghausen, though, would have needed to sign off on the purchases, McLaughlin said. **Murphy** questioned the timing of the release of the invoice confirming the city paid for his security system's purchase. **Murphy** tabbed the development as a political diversion set up by Leighton's critics just weeks before an election. "They've had these documents for months," **Murphy** said, "but they're waiting until now (to release them) because it could be the next controversy to try to take people's eyes off their inefficiencies." Leighton declined to comment.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Mainlinemedianews.com
June 29, 2011

Air Force reservist files discrimination suit against Radnor
Author: Richard Ilgenfritz

A Northeastern Pennsylvania man who is also a military reservist has filed a lawsuit against Radnor Township claiming that he was not hired for the open position as township manager in 2009 because of his reserve-military obligations. An attorney for **John J. Murphy** of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County filed suit against Radnor in Federal Court in Philadelphia earlier this week. In the suit, **Murphy** says the township violated the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, a law designed to protect military personnel who have served or are serving in the Armed Services of the United States from being discriminated against in their civilian careers. He is also citing the violation of a similar state law.

According to the complaint, **Murphy** has served as an Air Force officer since 1997 and is currently holding the rank of major. Since 2002 **Murphy** has been a member of the Air Force Reserves. During his time as a reservist, **Murphy** has been deployed overseas including time in Djibouti, Africa as part of a Combined Joint Task Force in the Horn of Africa in 2008. In the suit, **Murphy** says he applied for the position of township manager along with 60 other people. In July of 2009, **Murphy** says he was contacted by the interim township manager to arrange an interview date. At the time, **Murphy** said he was told, “Radnor needed a leader. Someone with your military background and integrity would be a perfect fit,” or words to that effect.”

But during the interview, **Murphy** described the questioning he got as being grilled about his military commitments and the time he could spend away on military duty. **Murphy** goes on to say that he was told he was one of the top four candidates from the 60 people who initially applied for the position and that the top four candidates would return for a second interview. However, he says he was later told that only the top three candidates would be called back for another interview. **Murphy** goes on to say that he was told the reason why he was not called back. “... [T]he reason he would not be hired or called back for a second interview was that ‘Some of the board members have serious concerns about your ongoing military obligations,’ or words to that effect,” the suit claims.

Reached at his office in Wilkes-Barre, David P. Tomaszewski, the attorney representing **Murphy**, declined comment saying the complaint speaks for itself. In the suit Tomaszewski lists Radnor as being in Montgomery County. When told that it was in Delaware County he said that didn't matter. Township Manager Robert Zienkowski was away and unavailable for comment Friday. He is expected to return Monday. **Murphy** is asking for back pay among other things. The exact dollar amount was not mentioned. He is also asking to be made township manager or to a similar position of pay.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
May 12, 2011

Candidates roast each other, themselves at comedy night
Author: Andrew Staub

WILKES-BARRE - So Mayor Tom Leighton walked into a bar Wednesday night - and he was pretty damn funny. Leighton didn't pull any punches during the inaugural Northeastern Pennsylvania Candidates Comedy Night at Rodano's, poking fun at the Urban family's political ambition, the barrage of criticism he takes from a city tow-truck operator and deputy city Attorney Bill Vinsko's choice of clothing. The mayor didn't even spare himself from a punchline. Leighton owned his biggest political criticism - that's he's been too focused on turning around the city's downtown - when he told a joke about his heyday playing baseball for King's College. "I was known to hit some home runs, and my teammates started calling me 'Downtown Tommy Leighton,'" he said. "Unfortunately, that name stuck with me."

The mayor headlined the event sponsored by former city administrator **J.J. Murphy's** GOALS Foundation, completing a five-minute set that had many in the crowd chuckling. Leighton joked that **Kathy Kane** was closely monitoring the time he spoke - a jab at the city council chairwoman's insistence that individual speaking at council meetings be limited to five minutes - and reminded **Murphy** that the city's multimillion camera system could keep tabs on him to make sure he counted all his strokes while golfing.

The show offered a refreshing and fun take on this year's election season, which has carried a serious tone as 16 judicial candidates try to convince voters they can clean up a corruption-stained court system and dozens of county council candidates vie to become the first 11 to hold office under Luzerne County's new home-rule charter. It also offered a chance to support charity, as a majority of the proceeds from the \$40 tickets for the event will go toward supporting youth sports in the county, **Murphy** said. The GOALS Foundation has already donated thousands of dollars to youth sports and announced a \$250 contribution to the GAR field hockey program during Wednesday's show.

Judicial candidates **John Aciukewicz** and **Jim Haggerty** also performed, with Aciukewicz reciting a humorous poem about the trepidations of golfing and Haggerty taking a shot at Leighton's nearly \$80,000 salary when he asked if a chauffeur was around. Casey Evans, a 24-year-old candidate for county council, joked about his young age when he said his parents had given him permission to campaign late into the night. Taking potshots at the Urban family proved popular, as Leighton and **Murphy** both joked about the many political offices Urbans are targeting this year. County Commissioner Stephen A. Urban is running for district magistrate and county council, while his wife, Linda Urban, and his son, Stephen J. Urban, are both running for city council and county council. "We have county council candidates, we have city council candidates and we have magisterial candidates," Leighton said. "And that is just the Urban family."

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Murphy also alluded to Linda Urban's infamous brush with police last summer, when she was charged with swiping newspapers from a neighbor after they were tossed onto their shared porch of a home on George Avenue. The charges were eventually dropped. Drawing early laughs, Murphy lamented that Linda Urban might not have known about Wednesday night's event. Only The Citizens' Voice previewed the show, and she "only steals - er, reads - the Times-Leader," he said. But perhaps the line of the night belonged to Haggerty. If he wins a spot on the bench, he'd have to give up his law practice and his job as Kingston's mayor, he said.

"I called the state Ethics Commission, and I said, 'If I win the judge race, what can I do to raise money?' Haggerty said, setting up his punchline. "They said, 'Well, you can run a juvenile detention center.'" Before laughing at the joke, the crowd let out a loud "Ohhh," almost as if they expected someone to finally mention the scandal in which two former county judges were accused of accepting millions of dollars in kickbacks in exchange for stocking a juvenile center with kids. As they laughed, the moderator Murphy walked onto stage. "Someone went there," he said.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice
April 5, 2011

Greco suit targets W-B city, King's College
Author: Michael R. Sisak

Wilkes-Barre restaurateur/felon Thom Greco accused the city, county and King's College officials Monday of a racially charged conspiracy to drive his North Main Street nightclub out of business two years ago because it catered to the "wrong crowd." City police routinely harassed black and Latino patrons as they walked to and from The Mines nightclub in April and May 2009 and embellished or fabricated police reports to portray the establishment as a haven for crime, Greco said in a lawsuit filed Monday in U.S. District Court.

One weekend, according to the lawsuit, police positioned six cruisers and 15 officers, including a K-9 drug unit, outside the nightclub - located across the street from the King's College campus. A week later, the phalanx grew to 30 law enforcement officers, including a SWAT team, eight Luzerne County sheriffs' deputies and three state liquor control agents. "Black and Latino patrons from The Mines were targeted, harassed and in one case," Greco said in the lawsuit, "beaten up by the police." Despite the "unprecedented" police presence, Greco said, no arrests were made and no citations issued. The only effect, he said, was to drive business away. The Mines, which had thrived on a Thursday through Saturday schedule before the police action, now opens once every 10 days or so to maintain its liquor license and cater to private parties, Greco said.

City spokesman Drew McLaughlin declined to respond Monday to the allegations in the lawsuit, saying in an e-mail, "The city has no comment on pending litigation." Mayor Tom Leighton and Police Chief Gerald Dessoie, who were named separately as defendants and portrayed in the lawsuit as key cogs in the conspiracy, did not return telephone messages. Seven other current and former city officials were also named in the lawsuit, including the five members of city council. They all declined comment, did not return messages or could not be reached. Former city administrator J.J. Murphy said, "The city will have its day in court." Luzerne County solicitor Vito DeLuca said he would review the lawsuit today and notify the county's insurance carriers. Former sheriff Michael Savokinas, whom Greco said dispatched vehicles and personally participated in targeting The Mines, could not be reached at two cell phone numbers that were active during his time in office.

King's College's spokesman John McAndrew, speaking for the college, himself and the college's three other named defendants, declined comment. According to the lawsuit, the police action against the Mines commenced a week after King's College President Thomas J. O'Hara told Greco the nightclub was not a "good mix" with the King's College community and that its clientele, estimated to be 30 to 40 percent black or Latino, was the "wrong crowd." O'Hara, according to the lawsuit, told Greco he was under pressure from parents threatening to remove their children from the college because of its proximity to The Mines and would push to have the club closed down. O'Hara subsequently met with Leighton and Dessoie, sparking the police

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

action, according to the lawsuit. Police did not target other bars in the area that had a predominantly white clientele, despite those establishments having "significantly more" criminal activity and nuisance complaints, Greco said in the lawsuit. Greco did not include statistics comparing arrests and complaints linked to The Mines with other bars in the area.

The Citizens' Voice on Monday requested police incident reports for The Mines and other North Main Street bars. Under the state's right-to-know law, the city must respond within five days. Greco, the owner or co-owner of nine properties in Wilkes-Barre with a combined value of \$1.75 million, first threatened to sue the city and King's College in May 2009 - a month after he said the city started targeting his nightclub. "It has to be uniform enforcement and uniform oversight," Greco said at the time. "They have targeted and harassed our business so they can turn our business away." Murphy said at the time that police increased patrols in response to complaints from King's College students and parents and a rash of crimes in the area, including two stabbings and a shooting. "We have deployed police officers in that area up and down Main Street," Murphy told the Voice after Greco first threatened the lawsuit. "There was a girl who was murdered on North Main just a few weeks ago. I thought Mr. Greco would advocate, as he has in the past, for a safe downtown."

Greco sparred with city officials over safety procedures at The Mines prior to its grand opening in October 2008, according to a letter Greco wrote to U.S. Attorney Peter J. Smith last December. In the letter, Greco described a "City of Wilkes-Barre shakedown" in which high-ranking city officials threatened to shut down a party at the nightclub unless he hired two off-duty firefighters as safety officers. Greco told Smith he was reporting the alleged shakedown in an "abundance of precaution" to prevent another criminal charge after failing to tell investigators that former county Commissioner Greg Skrepenak had refused to pay him for more than \$14,000 worth of televisions he obtained for Big Ugly's, a now-defunct Wilkes-Barre sports bar owned by Skrepenak's father. A day after Greco's letter surfaced in late February, the U.S. Attorney's office debunked his shakedown allegations saying the information provided, "does not provide a basis to open a federal investigation."

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
March 15, 2010

Italian American Veterans receive 'Healing Field' flag

Air Force Major **J.J. Murphy** has presented a 'Healing Field' flag to Italian American Veterans Post 1 of Luzerne County. **Murphy** made the presentation during his role as guest speaker at a meeting of the Post. **Murphy** relayed his recent work with the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center in the region of Haiti that was ravaged by an earthquake. **Murphy**, former Wilkes-Barre city administrator, is member of Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida and CEO of GOALS Consulting in Wilkes-Barre. At the presentation, from left, are Vincent E. Aleo, commander; **Murphy**; Thomas DeBartoli, junior vice commander; and Joseph A. DeLuca, senior vice commander.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
February 24, 2010

Murphy happy to be back home from Haiti mission
Author: Bill O'Boyle

WILKES-BARRE - Air Force Capt. **J.J. Murphy** returned Saturday from three weeks in Haiti with a greater appreciation for his family and his country. **Murphy**, 38, was in charge of a unit that worked with the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center in Port-au-Prince - the city that was devastated by an earthquake on Jan. 12. He helped set up the Joint Personal Recovery Center, which coordinates all search and rescue efforts in Haiti. There are 20,000 U.S. military personnel in Haiti, he said. For three weeks, the departing Wilkes-Barre city administrator said he was face-to-face with the destruction of buildings and lives and he said the experience changed his perspective on everything from politics to life in general.

"My role was strictly setting up the infrastructure for personal recovery and putting a system in place," **Murphy** said. "Whenever Americans are on the ground in a foreign country for an extended period of time there are inherent risks. If they are captured, it's our job to get them returned in a timely manner." He said he was directly involved in the rescue of four Americans when their ship sank off the coast of Cuba. **Murphy** and his unit got all four to safety.

Murphy said some of the people he was with took photos of the scenes in Port-au-Prince, but he didn't keep any of them. He said there are plenty of disturbing images etched in his memory. "It's mass destruction," **Murphy** said. "For every structure that remains standing, there are 50 that have been leveled. The last figure I heard had the death total at 240,000 people. "It certainly puts everything else in perspective," he said. "When you see people trying to do anything they can to get to American soil, it makes you think about our perceived problems. People are standing in lines for blocks to try to get a visa; they want to come to America, or at least get their children here, so they can have a chance at a better future."

Murphy said the experience gave him a sobering perspective on American politics. "Today everything seems to be so partisan," **Murphy** said. "Maybe we should all take a step back and realize that the majority of us agree on most issues and maybe we should use common sense to resolve issues more often." **Murphy's** last work day at City Hall will be Monday. His new business - GOALS Consulting -- will operate out of his South Wilkes-Barre home for the time being helping other communities make improvements. "It will be a solo endeavor at this point," he said.

When **Murphy** returned, one of the first things he did was take his family to the new playground at Coal Street Park - a playground that was built with \$200,000 from **Murphy's** GOALS Foundation. **Murphy's** four daughters -- Katie, 9, Erin, 8, Emma, 5, and Ryan, 4, -- were treated to a day at the park with **Murphy** and his wife, Colleen. His wife is expecting the couple's fifth child in July. The foundation was formed eight years ago to help youth sports and to make them

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John J. "J.J." Murphy

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more affordable for kids of all ages. "The last month or so has been very emotional," he said. "For a lot of reasons. I'm just glad to be back home."

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
January 26, 2010

Departure from city position delayed
Author: Bill O'Boyle

WILKES-BARRE - J.J. Murphy has rescinded his resignation as Wilkes-Barre city administrator until he returns from his deployment to Haiti. Mayor Tom Leighton said **Murphy** has not completed his work at City Hall and will use accrued vacation, sick and personal time until his deployment is over. The mayor said it is not known how long **Murphy** will be in Haiti helping with the relief effort there, but his deployment could last until March. "**J.J.**'s resignation has been postponed at his request, and I accepted it," Leighton said. "He still has work to complete in the city and he will take care of that when he returns."

Murphy announced in October that he would leave his post at the end of January to begin a private consulting business. "**J.J. Murphy**'s dedication as a city employee and his dedication to the country as a major in the U.S. Air Force are second to none," Leighton said. "The city supports **J.J.** and looks forward to his safe return." **Murphy**'s salary with the city is around \$81,000, Leighton said. "I am very appreciative for all he is doing and has done at this time of war and need," he said.

The mayor announced last week that **Murphy** had been mobilized to deploy to Haiti in support of Joint Task Force-Haiti, which was formed to assist in the aftermath of the earthquake of Jan. 12. The mayor said **Murphy** will be a key member of the search-and-rescue effort, which is part of the U.S. military's disaster-relief effort, Operation Unified Response. **Murphy**'s deployment began Jan. 20, and is scheduled to continue through early March. Just before he left, **Murphy** said, "The world has rallied around helping both the Haitian population and those affected by this devastation. As an Air Force major and an American, I am proud to be called upon to contribute to these disaster relief efforts. As a husband and father, I look forward to returning home more appreciative of the blessings I have every day."

Murphy was a driving force in establishing the city's surveillance-camera system and the establishment of Hawkeye Security, the not-for-profit company formed to handle the system. **Murphy** has been the city administrator since Leighton was elected mayor in 2004.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
October 17, 2009

Administrator to leave W-B City Hall post
Author: Jen Marckini

WILKES-BARRE – City Administrator J.J. Murphy announced Friday that he will be leaving his position with the Leighton administration effective the end of January. Murphy said he informed Mayor Thomas M. Leighton this week of his resignation. He said he plans to pursue his own consulting firm and will remain in Wilkes-Barre. “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed my time with the administration,” he said. Leighton did not return calls Friday evening. Murphy said he is leaving because he is missing spending time with his four daughters with the demands of his city position. His daughters are ages 9, 8, 5 and 4. “I’m doing it so I can spend time with my four girls,” said Murphy, 38. “I’m gone before they get up in the morning and many times they’re in bed before I get home.”

Murphy was a driving force in establishing the city’s surveillance-camera system. Part of the system is to be activated next month. He is the second to leave the Leighton administration within a month. Former city administrative coordinator Bridget Giunta left her post Sept. 30 to accept a position as associate director of alumni relations at Wilkes University. On Oct. 2 Leighton asked the FBI to look into the conduct of a city employee. Murphy said Friday his resignation had nothing to do with the federal probe and that he was on military duty when the mayor’s request was made. “I’ve been debating this move, and Mayor Leighton has been aware of my desires for the last three months,” Murphy said. “I love the city. I love city government. I’m passionate about it, but I’ve decided I have to dedicate more time at home.”

Murphy, who has been with the administration for the five years Leighton’s been in office, said he submitted his resignation now because he wanted to give the mayor enough time to hire a replacement. He listed accomplishments, which include helping to establish a city Web site, update office technology in City Hall and aid the mayor in sorting out multiple financial issues. Murphy had served as deputy administrator in July 2002. He had two other stints with city government: He was an intern while a student at King’s College in 1992 and then served as mayoral assistant in 1996-97 when he was a grad student at Marywood University. He left in 1997 to go on active military duty for five years.

Murphy said one of the projects he is going to keep involved in is the plan for citywide surveillance cameras. Monitoring of the system will begin in mid-November. The system will be based in a command center in the city police station.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
September 25, 2009

A point of pride
Author: Bill O'Boyle

WILKES-BARRE -- Katie, Erin, Emma and Ryan Murphy were among the first children to utilize the new playground at Coal Street Park on Thursday, and deservedly so. Their father, city administrator **J.J. Murphy**, founded the GOALS Foundation in 2001, and eight years later the group provided most of the funding to build the \$220,000 playground. **Murphy**, his wife, Colleen, his four children and his father, Jack, were on hand for the dedication of the playground that is part of the \$14 million renovation of Coal Street Park. **Murphy** cut the ribbon as his boss, Mayor Tom Leighton, looked on. "This is the culmination of an eight-year dream for me," **Murphy** said. "We formed the foundation to help youth sports and to make them more affordable for kids of all ages." **Murphy**, with emotion in his voice and tears in his eyes, thanked his family for their support as he toiled for the foundation and the playground. "I want to applaud **J.J.** for his dedication to this fantastic community project," Leighton said to a crowd of onlookers. "This beautiful playground replaces slum and blight that was here for far too long."

With children playing in the background, **Murphy** and Leighton thanked representatives of the law firm Hourigan Kluger and Quinn and the Luzerne Foundation for partnering with the GOALS Foundation and the city to build the playground. Attorney Michelle Quinn said her law firm paid for a safety study to ensure the equipment and materials used for the playground were the safest. "Playground injuries have increased significantly over the years," she said. "We wanted to make sure any injuries here are minimal. That's why we brought in a safety expert to conduct the study."

Murphy said the GOALS Foundation gave around \$173,000 for the project. He said the city secured a grant for \$7,500. The balance came from the Luzerne Foundation. **Murphy** presented a check for \$5,000 to the South Wilkes-Barre Teeners' League. The league raised money to match the GOALS donation, he said. The league's vice president, Nick Marino Jr., said the money will be used to buy batting cages for Christian Field along Gordon Avenue and dugouts will get an upgrade. The playground is handicap-accessible and is one of the many new public features at Coal Street Park. The city began comprehensive renovations at the 31-acre park in the fall of 2008. The project includes the construction of a new 500-seat ice rink, training facilities and office space. The rink, which will open to the public this fall, will offer opportunities for the public to ice skate, as well as to participate in organized youth and adult ice hockey leagues, tournaments and sports camps. The Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins will use the ice rink as a practice facility and the team's corporate offices will be housed in a new two-story building to be built next door.

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John J. "J.J." Murphy
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Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
July 8, 2009

Dog owners, experts growl at proposed vicious breed ban
Author: Nicholas Sohr

Wilkes-Barre's renewed effort to crack down on "vicious" dog breeds in public areas is too much bark and not enough bite when it comes to the real offenders, local dog experts and owners said Friday. "Sometimes these things are fear driven," said Cindy Stark, a member of the governor's Dog Law Advisory Board and shelter manager for the Luzerne County chapter of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "I understand legislators and heads of municipalities are concerned for the safety of their citizens. But the bottom line is the owners are responsible for their animals."

Indeed, other advocacy groups and owners of the dogs whose breeds are consistently labeled "vicious" or "dangerous" agreed with Stark's assessment. Arden Fahey, an accountant from Wilkes-Barre, adopted her pit bull Gunner in early 2005. A college student renting a room in Fahey's parents' apartment building left the puppy behind when her parents wouldn't let her take it home. "I understand a lot of people's fear," Fahey said. "But if there's a problem with a specific person who has that breed, or a particular dog is causing a problem, then you have to address it. There's a lot of people who are not responsible dog owners." Gunner, Fahey said, has never been a problem for her three children, ages 11, 10 and 7, and even tolerates the other residents in the house, including dogs, guinea pigs, rabbits and a hamster. "It's the way you train the dog, she said. "Granted, there are a lot of things that are bred into dogs. But it comes down to how you train a dog."

Susan LaMontagne, of Swoyersville, pointed to the dogs rescued from property owned by former Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick, who pleaded guilty in 2007 to dog fighting charges. "Look at the Michael Vick dogs," she said. "Those were dogs that were fighters and they were retrained and now they're living with families with little children. "There are no bad dogs, just bad owners. So why punish responsible owners by banning an entire breed?" LaMontagne's Bear, a 2-year-old American Staffordshire Terrier - one of several breeds known as pit bulls - is more of a "licker" than a fighter, as the stereotype goes. "Years ago, I would have been the first to say 'ban them,'" she said. "Then I fostered one and I fell in love with them."

City officials argue any breed-specific laws would only be a part of their effort to ensure the safety of residents and visitors in public areas. "It's a great theory," City Administrator J.J. Murphy said of the nurture over nature contention. "But in reality, we've got a very dangerous situation here." The city's push, announced Wednesday by Mayor Tom Leighton, follows a much publicized incident in the River Common. A man's leashed dog was attacked by two loose dogs and injured so severely it had to be euthanized. "With the influx with all these vicious dogs, the next thing that's going to happen is it's going to be a child," Murphy said. "We're trying to be proactive. With all due respect to all these dog-lovers who think (some breeds are) not a very vicious dog, I have to disagree."

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
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Blanche Williams, of Wilkes-Barre, has already had enough. In December 2003, her 2-year-old pug named Cuddles was killed on her front porch by a pit bull that escaped its owner's leash. "I just turned around and I saw his ugly face at the bottom of the steps," Williams said. "And before I could get her up in the house, he was up and at her, like it was his duty. My little dog didn't have a chance. "They're born to kill. I'm sorry. That's how I feel about them. They're bred to kill." **Murphy** said the city officials hope to increase fines for owners who break leashing and other dog laws.

The American Kennel Club, one of the loudest voices decrying "breed specific" laws, advocates laws that "judge the deed, and not the breed." The club recommends towns take action only against specific animals and their owners using a tiered system to determine if dogs are dangerous, or could be dangerous, based on the severity of their transgressions. "I think that politicians think that banning a certain breed sounds good. It sounds like definitive action," club spokeswoman Daisy Okas said Thursday. "You're punishing the responsible people who own dogs and don't cause a problem."

Leighton has tried twice before to institute restrictions on "dangerous dogs." In 2001, when Leighton was a member of city council, he pushed to ban pit bulls, Rottweilers, German shepherds and Doberman Pinschers from city parks after authorities shot a pit bull during a raid at a Woodward Street home. A state law stymied the measure because it prevents municipalities from enacting laws that single out dogs based solely on breed. In 2005, Leighton pushed new legislation to ban pit bulls from the entire city. He was backed by police officials, who said the dogs were often kept by criminals, and were a danger to police officers. The effort was thwarted by the same state law. City officials plan to meet with state legislators after the state budget is approved. "We just can't sit idly by and know that we have a bad situation here," **Murphy** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
July 3, 2009

Payment of firefighters' settlement delayed pending city's appeal

Wilkes-Barre City and its firefighters union agreed Tuesday to delay payment of an up to \$1 million contract settlement until the matter has made it through an appeal in a state court. As part of the deal, the city will place the money in escrow to ensure it will be available should the firefighters ultimately win the legal tussle. "If we do have to pay it, the money is there. If we don't, the money comes back to the city," said attorney Don Brobst, who is representing the city in the matter. Luzerne County Judge Hugh F. Mundy approved the deal at the conclusion of a brief hearing Tuesday morning.

Wilkes-Barre Firefighters Association Local 104 filed a grievance in 2007, alleging contract violations that stemmed from yearly payments to police officers that started in 2002. The firefighters contract at the time required the city to equally pay members of the union and their police counterparts. Officers received between \$1,300 to \$1,500 annually, contingent on their maintaining state certifications. An independent arbitrator decided Sept. 12 the city owed firefighters back pay equal to the bumps given to police officers, which would cost the city more than \$737,000, and possibly up to \$1 million.

The city appealed the ruling in county court on Oct. 14, and the day after Mayor Tom Leighton unveiled his 2009 budget. At that presentation and during the months following, Leighton repeatedly harangued the firefighters for seeking the hefty settlement, claiming the majority of the city's 13-mill property tax hike would go to paying off the award. Brobst said during a court hearing in April the city has evidence that shows union President Tom Makar filed the contract grievance outside the statute of limitations. The city's evidence includes statements from City Administrator J.J. Murphy and Director of Human Resources Christine Jensen, and a letter from Makar to Jensen. Mundy, who ruled the evidence could not be admitted during the hearing, decided against the city in May. The city has appealed the ruling to Commonwealth Court but a hearing has not yet been scheduled.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
June 13, 2009

Wilkes-Barre officials put Hawkeye feud to rest
Author: Nicholas Sohr

WILKES-BARRE - City officials buried their Hawkeye hatchets Thursday night, ending - or at least cooling - a long-running and very public feud surrounding Hawkeye Security Solutions, the non-profit organization heading the city's surveillance camera network project. "I have been a critic of the way things were being handled with Hawkeye," said council Vice Chairwoman Kathy Kane, who has engaged in several terse debates with city administration surrounding the secrecy she said shrouded Hawkeye's creation and operation. But, Kane said, all that changed during a recent meeting with City Administrator **J.J. Murphy**, Kane's most frequent foil during the Hawkeye debates. "I am comfortable right now with the way things are going," Kane said. "We had a very informative meeting, we had a very personable meeting."

The emphasis contrasted the May 5 council work session, during which Kane claimed **Murphy** treated her "like a military prisoner" during a private meeting to discuss Hawkeye. Mayor Tom Leighton, **Murphy** and Hawkeye, which is run by board members picked by the mayor, have taken steps in recent months to open themselves to outside eyes, including holding open meetings and adding Councilman Bill Barrett to the board at Kane's suggestion. The \$2 million project will in coming months install more than 150 cameras around the city in parks, high-crime areas, parking garages and the downtown business district.

During Thursday night's meeting, council approved state and local tax breaks for 90 parcels in the city. The Keystone Opportunity Zone status must still be approved by Wilkes-Barre Area School District and Luzerne County before they can be sent along to the state Department of Community and Economic Development, city Deputy Administrator Marie McCormick said. The properties will be exempt from property, business privilege, mercantile and earned income taxes when developed and occupied for 10 years, as long as they are occupied before 2016. Council added 37 properties to the list holding the KOZ designation May 28.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
May 22, 2009

Businessman set to sue city, college
Author: Nicholas Sohr

A North Main Street nightclub owner alleges his business and clientele are being unfairly targeted by the City of Wilkes-Barre, which has stepped up police patrols in the area following a rash of high-profile violent crimes nearby. Thom Greco, the owner of The Mines and a long-time restaurateur, said he sent a letter outlining his complaint to city officials and King's College, located across the street from the bar at 105 N. Main St. City Administrator J.J. Murphy confirmed he had seen the Greco letter, which threatened a lawsuit against the city and King's, alleging The Mines has been singled out from the rest of the Main Street bar scene because of the customers there on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Murphy denied Greco's club was the target of discriminatory policing tactics. He said the city increased patrols at the behest of students and parents worried about crime in the area. "We have deployed police officers in that area up and down Main Street," Murphy said after Thursday night's city council meeting. "There was a girl who was murdered on North Main just a few weeks ago. I thought Mr. Greco would advocate, as he has in the past, for a safe downtown." Greco said the incidents in question could not be tied to his club. The Mines is being targeted because 25 percent to 30 percent of his customers are minorities, he said. The lawsuit will probably be filed within 45 days, Greco said, and he will "absolutely" be seeking monetary damages to make up for lost business. "It has to be uniform enforcement and uniform oversight," Greco said. "They have targeted and harassed our business so they can turn our business away." "What they've done is they've killed our crowds," he added later. "There's five bars, and they're leaving the other bars alone and targeting me."

Since March 27, a King's student was stabbed at Jackson and Washington streets, another claimed he was shot at in front of the Mines and another claimed he was held at gunpoint at North Main and Union streets. On April 18, a woman was stabbed to death a little more than two blocks up North Main from the club. There's no evidence any of the recent incidents were linked to The Mines. "My understanding is that the officers have been in front of all the establishments because of the rash of crimes in that area," Murphy said. "And I know for a fact that the other businesses in the area have complimented the city on the (police) presence." Greco said some of the policing has gone above and beyond the necessary presence, citing a "seatbelt checkpoint" complete with flashing lights on police cruisers stationed outside The Mines on Friday and Saturday night, and more than 30 city, county and state officials patrolling his block on a night earlier this month. "You can't harass and turn people away," he said. "You can't deprive us of enjoying the benefit of our building and the investment we've made." In an alert sent in early April to King's College students about ongoing crime around campus, college officials said they had been in contact with the state Liquor Control Board about "problems" associated with the club. When reached by phone Thursday, King's spokesman John McAndrew said he could not

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Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

comment as he had not seen Greco's letter. Bob Kalinowski, staff writer, contributed to this report.

Internet -- Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Times-Tribune
May 12, 2009

Judge dismisses Scranton man's civil rights suit against Wilkes-Barre

A federal judge has dismissed a civil rights suit filed against the city of Wilkes-Barre by a Scranton man arrested while carrying a sign critical of then-President George W. Bush during the city's 2005 St. Patrick's Day Parade. In a ruling issued Monday, U.S. District Judge James Munley rejected the arguments of Kurt Shotko, 41, that the arrest violated his First Amendment rights and that police had no grounds for the arrest. In rejecting the First Amendment argument, Judge Munley ruled Mr. Shotko filed his federal complaint more than two years after the arrest and the statute of limitations had run out on that claim. In dismissing the wrongful arrest argument, Judge Munley noted that a Luzerne County jury found Mr. Shotko guilty of four counts of disorderly conduct and one of resisting arrest and that the state Superior Court upheld all of the convictions except one. The defendants in the suit were the City of Wilkes-Barre, its police department, Mayor Thomas Leighton, police Chief Gerry Dessoie, city Administrator John J. Murphy and three city police officers.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
May 6, 2009

W-B councilwoman questions ‘conflicts of interest’ in Hawkeye leadership
Author: Nicholas Sohr

WILKES-BARRE — City Council Vice Chairwoman Kathy Kane accused a high-ranking city official of treating her “like a military prisoner” when the two previously discussed the city-sponsored, nonprofit corporation overseeing the design and installation of the citywide surveillance-camera network. The accusation came in a tense exchange with City Administrator **J.J. Murphy** during Tuesday night’s work session after Kane again raised questions about Hawkeye Security Solutions — the nonprofit — citing concerns over potential “conflicts of interest” in the group’s leadership. She did not elaborate further, and said she would soon submit questions regarding Hawkeye to city attorneys. “I don’t think city council should have been left out of it from September to February,” Kane said after the meeting. “I don’t think the city solicitor should have been left out of it. “I worry about conflicts of interest, that’s all.”

Murphy and two members of the city IT department, Lou Lau and Frank Hershberger, have served on the board of Hawkeye since early April. Before that, they were consultants who were originally paid \$6,000 total in stipends, but agreed to return the money after questions were raised. “Is there a reason you need three city employees on the Hawkeye board?” Kane asked **Murphy**. “The reason is Lou and Frank are IT guys,” **Murphy** replied. “They bring expertise. It’s a multi-million dollar project and I think you want that expertise.” “OK, that’s Frank and Lou. What about you?” “We need city people to sometimes be involved” in such projects, **Murphy** said later. Mayor “Tom Leighton asked me years ago to make sure Wilkes-Barre joined the communities across the country taking advantage of the (surveillance) technology.”

Kane first publicly raised concerns over Hawkeye at the April 7 council work session, voting against a resolution to allow the group access to \$2 million in state grants awarded to the camera project. That measure, which was passed on the votes of the other four council members, also made Hawkeye a “local agency,” opening its meetings to the public and subjecting it to open records laws, part of a recent effort to make Hawkeye’s actions transparent to city residents, and council. Council Chairman Tony Thomas Jr. said he asked **Murphy** in February to set up meetings with all the council members to explain Hawkeye’s existence role.

Hawkeye was created in September to insulate the city from potential legal and financial liability associated with the camera project. “You sat behind your desk and treated me like a military prisoner,” Kane said of the meeting. “And I don’t need that from you.”

“Don’t disparage people in the military because you don’t like me,” **Murphy**, a major in the Air Force Reserve, said later. “Don’t put that on me,” Kane said. “You brought it on yourself, Kathy,” **Murphy** said. **Murphy** accused Kane of launching the attacks because of a personal bias against him, a notion both Kane and Councilman Bill Barrett rebuffed later. “He thinks I hate him,” Kane said after the work session. “I’ve never hated him. We just have issues.”

Section 10

Internet -- Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City police, Frontier Communications, the Internet provider powering the citywide wireless network, and engineers with TAC, the company awarded the camera contract, have been scouting locations for the more than 150 cameras. City officials expect the network to be in place and operational in the early fall.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
April 24, 2009

W-B OFFICIALS STRIKE BACK ON CRIME-FIGHTING COMMENTS

Author: Bill O'Boyle

WILKES-BARRE - The city administrator took sharp exception to allegations made by a Crime Watch member who questioned the mayor's commitment to crime fighting. **J.J. Murphy** defended Mayor Tom Leighton and the city administration after Ray Arellano made the claims before council Wednesday night. Arellano said that at the last two Crime Watch meetings there has been no representation from the police department. "This is the first I'm hearing about this," **Murphy** said. "It is my understanding that the Crime Watch leadership has been pleased with the level of cooperation between the city, the police and Crime Watch. Make no mistake about it, there are some issues, but the statistics show that Wilkes-Barre is safer than most other towns of the same size."

Murphy said crimes are being solved in the city and there has been a significant investment in crime prevention. He cited the recent contract awarded for the installation of 150 surveillance cameras throughout the city and the application for a grant to hire five more police officers. City police representatives, along with **Murphy**, were meeting with Crime Watch representatives Wednesday night to discuss issues. Council approved the mayor's request to file an application with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services Hiring Recovery Program. He said the \$500,000 grant would pay for five new police officers' salaries and benefits. Councilman **Bill Barrett**, a former city police chief, reiterated a comment he made at Tuesday's council work session, when he said that if the application is approved, one of the five new officers should be designated as a full-time crime-prevention officer. "I'd rather prevent crimes than investigate them," **Barrett** said. Councilman **Mike Merritt** agreed, saying the lack of a crime-prevention officer is the "missing piece" in the city's crime-fighting approach.

Lou Weibrecht, owner of **Outsiders Bar** on South Main Street, asked council for permission to "make noise." **Weibrecht** said he has received about 16 citations from the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board enforcement division for loud noise at his bar. He said he has live bands that play inside. **Weibrecht** said the LCB advised him to contact the city for a permit to allow for the loudness at his venue. **Bill Vinsko**, assistant city attorney, said he will contact the LCB and look into the matter.

Murphy announced the dates of the citywide white goods cleanup will be May 8 and 9. **Murphy** said there will be eight drop-off locations: Gordon Avenue and Willow Street, Franklin and Sullivan streets, High Street Fire Station, Mayflower near Stanton lanes, Coal Street Park, the city Department of Public Works garage, Scott Street Fire Station and the BOG parking lot. White goods are old metal household items like cabinets and desks, lawn mowers and major appliances. Electronics, box springs, fabric furniture and non-metallic items will not be collected, he said. Items must have a sticker supplied by the city to guarantee its pickup, **Murphy** said.

Internet -- Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
April 21, 2009

Judge to rule on city's appeal of arbitrator's award to firefighters
Author: Nicholas Sohr

Luzerne-County Judge Hugh F. Mundy will rule within a month on Wilkes-Barre's appeal of a \$1 million arbitrator's award due to the city firefighters' union, the judge said at the conclusion of a Monday afternoon hearing. But, that ruling may not bring about the end of the legal battle. Wilkes-Barre Firefighters Association Local 104 filed a grievance in 2007, alleging contract violations that stemmed from yearly payments to police officers that started in 2002. The firefighters' contract at the time required the city to equally pay members of the union and their counterparts on the police force. Officers received between \$1,300 to \$1,500 annually, contingent on their maintaining state certifications.

An independent arbitrator decided Sept. 12 the city owed firefighters back pay equal to the bumps given to police officers, which would cost the city more than \$737,000, and possibly up to \$1 million. The city appealed the ruling in county court in October. Attorney Don Brobst, who is representing the city, spent much of the 30-minute proceeding on Monday introducing evidence that Mundy had already declined to consider twice. Mundy, in a March 9 ruling, wrote including the evidence would "be a giant step toward conducting a de novo (new) hearing," which falls outside the scope of the appeal.

The city's evidence includes statements from City Administrator J.J. Murphy and Director of Human Resources Christine Jensen, and a letter to the city from union president Tom Makar that the city argues shows he filed the contract grievance outside the statute of limitations. Those documents could be considered in Commonwealth Court should either side appeal Mundy's forthcoming ruling, said Stephen Holroyd, attorney for the firefighters' union.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
April 8, 2009

City employees return money received for consulting on city camera project
Author: Nicholas Sohr

WILKES-BARRE - Three city employees will return \$6,000 in stipends they received for consulting work done for the city-sponsored, nonprofit entity created to oversee the city-wide surveillance camera project, city officials said Tuesday night.

“This project is too positive,” said City Administrator **J.J. Murphy**. “If there’s going to be a cloud over it because of the stipend, it’s not worth the stipend.” **Murphy** said the contract for the network will be awarded and presented to the public Tuesday, April 14. **Murphy** received \$3,000 from Hawkeye Security Solutions, the non-profit overseeing the project. **Murphy’s** 2009 salary is \$78,757, according to city documents.

City IT Director Louis Lau and IT Engineer Frank Hershberger were both paid \$1,500 stipends by the Hawkeye board of directors. Lau’s 2009 salary is listed as \$62,832, and Hershberger’s, \$39,338. **Murphy**, Mayor Tom Leighton and Council Chairman Tony Thomas Jr. said the decision to return the stipends to Hawkeye was made before Vice Chairwoman Kathy Kane requested that the city’s legal counsel investigate “the legality” of Hawkeye’s existence. Kane voted against a resolution on Tuesday night’s agenda to allow Hawkeye access to \$2 million in state grants awarded for the camera project. The city must provide receipts to the state for completed work before the money is released. “Something about this just doesn’t seem right to me,” she said after the meeting. “There are pieces missing.”

Hawkeye was incorporated Sept. 12, according to state records, and its address is listed as 40 E. Market St., which is city hall. Hawkeye is run by five board members: former Deputy City Controller Laura Brace, Wilkes-Barre Vo-Tech Principal Frank Majikes, former Councilman Phil Latinski, former police Chief Joseph Coyne and police Patrolman James Fisher, whose 2009 salary is \$49,689. Leighton said the non-profit was created on “advice from the (city) attorneys” in the vein of city boards and authorities to insulate the city from legal liability. “It was determined we would create another entity to run this project because if you look around the country, most camera networks aren’t run by cities for legal reasons,” Leighton said.

The network will include more than 100 cameras throughout Wilkes-Barre, including in the downtown, neighborhoods and parks. On Tuesday, Hawkeye board members will choose a contractor to design, install and maintain the system from four IT companies: CDW-G, a subsidiary of CDW Corp.; T.A.C., a subsidiary of Schneider Electric; GTSI; and Let’s Think Wireless.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
March 17, 2009

Wilkes-Barre will re-examine county-wide records program
Author: Nicholas Sohr

Flush with state and federal funding, Wilkes-Barre is re-evaluating its role in a county-wide police record sharing program after learning the project has fallen out of favor with Luzerne County officials. In the last year, the city has seen \$1 million come its way for the project — \$500,000 in state gaming tax revenues awarded last March and another \$500,000 earmarked by U.S. Rep. Paul E. Kanjorski, D-Nanticoke, in a spending bill passed earlier this month. The ultimately successful gaming grant application submitted to the state Department of Community and Economic Development says the program would “give law enforcement officers unprecedented and immediate access to local, state and national data and will facilitate data sharing and reporting between Luzerne County’s many police departments ...”

The project, estimated at \$3 million, included 150 computer workstations at 54 police and county agencies to allow them to share information on warrants, police reports and other filings. Luzerne County was to fund half, but informed the city of its intention to back out of the records portion this fall, City Administrator J.J. Murphy said Monday. “Because they seemed to be going away from the records management piece, they wanted us to take that on,” Murphy said. “We’re evaluating what we can do with the money. Whatever system we use, it will be one that can be used by other communities in the county.”

The scope of Wilkes-Barre’s project could also change, with the unexpected federal dollars making their way to the city’s coffers. “We’re going to have more money than we need for the Wilkes-Barre records management system,” Murphy said. “Ultimately, the mayor will have to talk to the police chief and decide what the best use for the money would be in there’s some remaining.” Murphy said the city is crafting a new proposal to send to the state for the use of the gaming money. When the local share of the revenue from gaming taxes is divvied up each year, the state enters contracts with municipalities receiving awards to control how the funds are used. DCED spokeswoman Janel Miller said her department does work with towns to redeploy grant funding if the scope of their project changes, as long as the project meets the same criteria. The funds are doled out as reimbursements, not in up-front lump sums. Thus far, Wilkes-Barre has not drawn any money for its records management program from the state allotment, Murphy said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
April 9, 2008

PARADE PROTESTER SHOTKO SUES

Author: Terrie Morgan-Besecker

A political protester who was convicted of disrupting the 2005 St. Patrick's Day parade in Wilkes-Barre filed a federal lawsuit Monday against the city and several police officers, alleging they violated his First Amendment right to free speech. Kurt Shotko, 40, of Moosic Street, Scranton, claims he was peacefully protesting against President George W. Bush when he was accosted by several officers who arrested him without just cause. Shotko and a co-defendant, Victor Bobrzyk, were convicted in January 2007 of three counts of disorderly conduct in connection with a protest on Public Square during the St. Patrick's Day parade on March 10, 2005. Shotko and Bobrzyk were carrying signs that were critical of the Bush administration. Police said Shotko and Bobrzyk became unruly after police asked them to move away from the crowd because the wind was blowing their signs into spectators. An appeal of the conviction is pending before the state Superior Court.

The lawsuit, which Shotko authored and filed himself, claims the men he and Bobrzyk were not disrupting the parade in any fashion. The suit says police were summoned to the area by City Administrator **J.J. Murphy**, who approached Shotko and demanded that he stop walking on the sidewalk near the reviewing stands. The suit says **Murphy** refused to allow Shotko to move forward, then made a call on his cell phone. Within a minute, police arrived and arrested the men. Shotko says police received no complaints from spectators, and that officers made no effort to speak to Shotko or Bobrzyk before arresting them.

The suit seeks unspecified compensatory and punitive damages. Named as defendants, in addition to the city and **Murphy**, are Mayor Tom Leighton, Police Chief Gerry Dessoye, Capt. Donald Crane and Officers Albert Rodriguez and Dwayne Price.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
January 26, 2008

CITY WORKING TO EASE PARKING CRUNCH

Author: Bill O’Boyle

WILKES-BARRE - Parking is at a premium in the downtown area since demolition began Wednesday at the Park & Lock Central. The city opened a vacant lot at South Washington and East Northampton streets to accommodate some of the displaced parkers. The lot at the site of the former Old Fell House contains an estimated 50 parking spaces. **J.J. Murphy**, city administrator, said the parkade remains open, but with reduced capacity because of the project. Vehicles can enter and exit the parkade from South Main Street. "The parkade is temporarily two-way, and that's caused a reduction in parking spaces." **Murphy** said the situation is temporary to allow for the Intermodal Transportation Center. The \$25 million project is expected to be completed by the end of this year, he said.

Patrons of Movies 14 can still use the parkade, **Murphy** said, and are allowed to use the Old Fell House lot after 5 p.m. daily. **Murphy** said the city is looking for other available parking to accommodate theater patrons and downtown workers. An additional 30 parking spaces will be available along South Main Street between the Army-Navy Store and Bell Furniture. "We have been talking to displaced parkers and we are continuously trying to find more available spaces," **Murphy** said. "We understand this is an inconvenience and we are trying to ease that pain." **Murphy** said about 100 parking slots will be lost during the construction project.

Kristen Dallaverde, house manager at Movies 14, said patrons have been coping with the situation. She said she has heard a few complaints, though "not many." When the Intermodal project is finished, **Murphy** said an estimated 752 parking spaces will be available. Additionally, all public transportation vehicles will be moved from Public Square, creating additional metered parking there. "We understand this is an inconvenience and we are trying to ease that pain."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News-Item, The (Shamokin, PA)
January 19, 2008

More News
Author: Staff

WILKES-BARRE - City Administrator **J.J. Murphy**, a major in the U.S. Air Force Reserves, will be deployed to Djibouti, Africa, for a six-month tour starting in March to serve as a search and rescue controller. **Murphy**, a father of four girls, has spent over 10 years in the Air Force, more than six of which have been on active duty. The 36-year-old has never been deployed to a combat area overseas until now. After talking it over with his family and Mayor Tom Leighton, **Murphy** agreed to go to eastern Africa after his commander asked him. "The reaction by this patriotic community has been overwhelming thus far," **Murphy** said. "I know some people are confused about why I would want to go overseas and help in this global war. Maybe the great Thomas Paine said it best when he said, "If there must be trouble, let it be in my day that my child may have peace'."

Murphy and his wife Colleen have four daughters, ages 2, 3, 6 and 7. He said the most difficult part of his deployment is that he won't be able to see his family. "I am excited to help my unit and serve side-by-side with some great Americans, but I will be sad to leave my family and friends," **Murphy** said. "I think some people were shocked that I'm going, but everybody who has found out so far has been very positive and willing to help. They have been very supportive and that has been a source of strength for me."

Murphy, who is originally from Philadelphia, came to Wilkes-Barre in 1989 to attend King's College, where he received a bachelor's degree in political science in 1993. He later received a master's degree in public administration from Marywood University. While he was at King's, he completed an internship working with former city clerk Bill Brace. He later worked as former Mayor Tom McGroarty's assistant and was named deputy administrator in 2002. He has served as city administrator since Leighton took office in 2004. He became a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force after completing two years in Wilkes University Reserved Officer's Training Corps while attending graduate school. His Air Force career has taken him many places across the country. He said he looks forward to working alongside some of America's "bravest" men and women in Djibouti, Africa, which is bordered by Eritrea in the north, Ethiopia in the west and south, and Somalia in the southeast.

"There are active military operations in various locations throughout the world and this is one of those hotspots," **Murphy** said. "The war on terrorism is a global war and we have brave men and women on duty answering this country's call. I would much rather be overseas than having another Sept. 11. This is just **J.J. Murphy** doing his part. I'm honored to be asked and I'm proud to stand up and answer our country's call."

Murphy coordinated the Healing Field at Kirby Park in 2004, which consisted of more than 4,000 flags which honored people who died on Sept. 11, 2001 and military members who died

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

fighting the war on terror. He has been an integral part of such initiatives as establishing wireless Internet service and setting up surveillance cameras. "I will continue to move projects forward on a daily basis until I leave," **Murphy** said. "We have a good team here and I'm confident that they're going to continue Mayor Leighton's initiatives." Deputy Administrator Marie McCormick will fill in as acting administrator while **Murphy** is in Africa. A policy enacted during Leighton's administration allows **Murphy** and other employees who serve in the military to use accrued sick leave and continue to receive pay. The policy also establishes a bank for employees to donate sick or vacation days to military members. **Murphy** said he will use his accrued sick leave and still will receive a military paycheck when that time runs out. "This deployment will be more of an emotional hardship on my family," **Murphy** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. "J.J." Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
June 5, 2007

**W-B OFFICIAL: CITY'S DEAL FOR WI-FI REMOVES RISK
W-B HAS NOT HAD TO PUT ANY TAX DOLLARS INTO BUILDING THE SYSTEM.**

Author: Bill O'Boyle

WILKES-BARRE -- As far as wireless Internet projects go, Wilkes-Barre is no Lompoc, Calif., and residents of the city can thank the mayor and his staff for that. **J.J. Murphy**, Wilkes-Barre city administrator and chief executive officer of Wire Free Wilkes-Barre, says Lompoc's approach to become a wireless city was not the model to follow. **Murphy**, who lived in Lompoc while he was stationed at Vandenberg Air Force Base from 1998 to 2000 -- before the wireless project began there -- said he feels Wilkes-Barre's deal with Frontier Communications removes the financial risk from the city and assures a safer and more efficient operation.

Lompoc, a central California city of about 42,000, invested \$3 million to blanket the city with a wireless Internet system, promising a quantum leap for economic development in the remote community near Vandenberg. Hard hit by cutbacks at the Air Force base, the Lompoc Net project is limping along, with a few hundred subscribers signed up, far less than the 4,000 needed to start repaying loans from the city's coffers, according to an Associated Press story. Securing a minimum requirement of subscribers doesn't apply to Wilkes-Barre's plan, **Murphy** said, because Frontier will own and operate the system and solicit subscribers.

"The difference here is that we partnered with Frontier," **Murphy** said. "It's their system. They will market the system and they will sign up subscribers. The success of our system is based on the business model that Frontier lays out. But the key component is that we already have four anchor tenants committed to the project." Those anchor tenants are Wilkes-Barre City, Luzerne County, Wilkes University and King's College. Unlike Lompoc, the city has not had to put up any tax dollars into the building of the system. The city will pay \$75,000 per year for use of the system once it's up and running, a cost **Murphy** feels any city would gladly accept. "This system will aid our police department, fire department and other city services," **Murphy** said. "There are so many opportunities available through wireless that two years ago weren't even on the drawing board. Wilkes-Barre will be one of the most technologically advanced cities in the entire country. That's something we all can be proud of. Any city would jump at this deal."

Murphy said the city's downtown will be completely wireless by Aug. 18. He said traveling around the country to research wireless systems enabled the city to put together a plan that will provide wireless access at the least cost to taxpayers. "We looked at so many systems," **Murphy** said. "We took all that information and decided the best way to go was to find key partners and reduce the financial risk to the city and its taxpayers. We've done that and the entire county will benefit."

Lompoc and some other U.S. cities are finding their Wi-Fi projects are costing more and drawing less interest than expected. According to an AP report, more than \$230 million was spent on Wi-

Section 10

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. “J.J.” Murphy

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fi projects in the United States last year and the industry Web site, Muni Wireless, projects \$460 million will be spent by the end of 2007. Municipal Wi-Fi projects, AP reported, use the same technology behind wireless access in coffee shops, airports and home networks. Hundreds or thousands of antennas are installed atop street lamps and other fixtures. Laptop computers and other devices have Wi-Fi cards that relay data to the Internet through those antennas, using open, unregulated broadcast frequencies. In theory, one could check e-mail and surf the Web from anywhere.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen’s Voice
December 10, 2006

Always someone watching
Author: Denise Allabaugh

WILKES-BARRE — Everyone on Public Square is being watched through a tower of surveillance cameras. Many people say the cameras make them feel safer and deter crime downtown, while civil liberty advocates argue they are an invasion of privacy. The cameras on Public Square were installed as a test system at a minimal cost to the city to increase security downtown, said City Administrator **J.J. Murphy**. The city only paid for the shipping costs for these cameras, he said.

Elsewhere in the city, nine surveillance cameras were installed in city hall and nine in the Department of Public Works Garage. The city purchased the cameras earlier this year from Interlogic Technologies for \$9,850. Mayor Tom Leighton said he can monitor the cameras in city hall from a television in his office. Wilkes-Barre Police Chief Gerry Dessoie and **Murphy** would not say who else is watching the surveillance tapes. Hidden cameras also were installed in other city locations, which **Murphy** and Dessoie would not identify. “We will not disclose all the locations and who is monitoring them. That’s why it’s a security system,” **Murphy** said. “We don’t want people to know who’s looking at them, when and how often. If people aren’t doing anything wrong, they have nothing to worry about.”

Signs in city hall inform people that surveillance cameras are in place, but there are no signs in “troublesome” neighborhoods where cameras were installed, **Murphy** said. “There are some cameras you see, but some you don’t see. It’s the same way in banks,” **Murphy** said.

Wilkes-Barre resident Tim Grier recently attended a city council meeting and submitted written requests asking for the locations of surveillance cameras. He also asked who can view images captured by the cameras, how long the images are stored and what measures are being taken to ensure the images are not “misused.” City officials were “evasive” in their answers, said Grier, who created the Web site www.unamericanluzernecounty.org. “While bringing new business to the city is important for revitalization, ignoring the civil liberties of the average citizens, who make up the bulk of the tax base, most likely repels as many individuals as these pro-business policies attract,” Grier said.

Larry Frankel, legislative director for the American Civil Liberties Union, argues there is no clear evidence that surveillance cameras improve security. When cameras are in public places, that limits people’s rights to privacy, he said. He asked who decides where the cameras should be. “There are those who say they aren’t accomplishing what they’re supposed to,” Frankel said. “The government ought to study if they really are helpful for how much they cost or can other measures be taken to make people feel safer.” Although no statistics were available showing surveillance cameras improve security, Dessoie said he has been an investigator long enough to know the first thing police check at a crime scene is surveillance cameras. “I think the more

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

cameras, the better. If you commit a crime and you're on camera, it's a lot easier to identify you and prove the crime," Dessoye said. "I wish the whole downtown was covered with them. I wish the whole city was covered with them. If I don't want someone to see me, I won't go where the cameras are and I hope criminals think the same way."

Robert Finlay, president of Humford Equities, pays for surveillance cameras at the downtown locations he owns, including 15 Public Square, 39 Public Square, Midtown Village and the state Labor and Industry Building. Signs tell the public that these surveillance cameras are in place. Finlay has turned over many tapes to police. Thanks to these tapes, police were able to nab juveniles who desecrated the state Department of Labor and Industry building with graffiti. Cameras helped police catch two purse snatchers, Finlay said. Detectives are reviewing Finlay's tapes to look for a man who has been stealing laptop computers from downtown office buildings, he said.

Downtown Wilkes-Barre business owners interviewed said they are in favor of surveillance cameras. Ron Romanoski, owner of the new Fuse martini club, said he feels secure with Midtown Village covered in surveillance cameras. "I personally believe a system has to be set up with Big Brother watching," Romanoski said. "It brings a sense of security to residents, but we also need to watch crossing boundaries of people's private lives." Joseph (Tex) Clauss, owner of Campus Square Billiards, was unaware that surveillance cameras were on Public Square until a reporter told him about the tower. He doesn't see cameras as an invasion of privacy, but he was quick to add, "If the bad guys know they're there, they're a good thing." "Basically, they patrol the streets," Clauss said. "They should act as a deterrent."

More cameras will be installed in the future when the city establishes wireless Internet service, Murphy said. "It's a different society we live in today," Murphy said. "We are going have an extensive camera network set up in the city so people have an additional safety mechanism. Ultimately, this is what is going to separate Wilkes-Barre from other towns our size. "Scranton is following in Wilkes-Barre's footsteps. Installation of security cameras in Scranton is expected to begin early next year, city officials said. Siemens Building Technologies, of Buffalo Grove, Ill., was awarded a \$219,985 contract for installation work.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
November 22, 2006

**CITY PURCHASES PROBLEM STRUCTURES DURING COUNTY TAX SALE
OFFICIAL: PROPERTIES ON HANOVER AND RIVER STREETS BOUGHT OUT OF
FEAR NEW OWNERS WOULDN'T PROPERLY REPAIR THEM**

Author: Jennifer Learn-Andes

WILKES-BARRE - Arthur Ward had it all planned out. He would live the rest of his days in the well-kept Hanover Street row home that he and his wife shared for 53 years. "Our vacation was our front porch. That house was our pride and joy," the 80-year-old said on Tuesday. But that changed at 1 a.m. March 22, when fire in an adjoining property forced him to move to an apartment. The fire had followed months of loud noise, round-the-clock traffic, code violations and crime problems at the adjoining 148 Hanover St., he said. Wilkes-Barre officials hope the city's purchase of the eyesore property for around \$5,000 at Monday's Luzerne County back-tax sale will give some relief to Ward and other neighbors who have complained repeatedly for more than a year.

The county sold the property because owner Renee Morinelli owed taxes from 2004 or earlier. City officials plan to hire a demolition contractor to figure out a way to cut out the charred remains while leaving the adjoining properties and the entire façade intact, said city Administrator **J.J. Murphy**. The city also purchased an eyesore property at 445 S. River St. with an adjoining lot for around \$20,000 from Monday's back-tax sale. The city bought the properties fearing that they would be snatched up by people who buy them cheap without the funds or desire to properly repair them, **Murphy** said. He cautioned that city inspectors will keep tabs on absentee landlords who bought these properties to make sure they bring them up to code. "If they think this is the Wilkes-Barre of old, they are wrong. It's not a place where you can come in and take advantage of our residents," **Murphy** said.

The 445 S. River St. property has been written up for code violations for at least five years. **Murphy** said the owner, James Morrison, is in prison. City officials visited him in prison encouraging him to sell it to the city, but **Murphy** said he wasn't interested. **Murphy** and other city representatives checked out the property after Monday's sale to make sure it was secure, and he doesn't think it will be cost efficient to fix it up for habitation because "it's falling over." The city will figure out what funds are available and explore possible uses for the property, **Murphy** said. "I'm sure the mayor will talk to residents. The residents down there are some of the most active people in the community and aggressive in their crime-fighting," **Murphy** said. Morinelli said the city's work may allow him to sell the old homestead. He said he doesn't have the energy to redo the place and move back. "My house is completely gutted. My house still stinks of fire," he said. "This ruined our lives."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
April 23, 2006

More News

Author: Denise Allabaugh

WILKES-BARRE - The city's newly formed Community Action Team will not be the "media circus" the former Neighborhood Impact Team was, Mayor Tom Leighton said. The Neighborhood Impact Team, an initiative of former Mayor Tom McGroarty, often alerted the press before condemning problem properties. Leighton, who disbanded the NIT when he took office, announced the creation of the Community Action Team at a press conference last month. He said although the goal of cleaning up neighborhoods remains the same, the new initiative will be more low-profile.

Leighton said it's not a tenant's fault if a landlord fails to keep a property safe, and he doesn't want to make the resident's problems public. He said he will not tell the media before the city shuts down problem houses. "We want to make sure that we're not violating anyone's rights," Leighton said. "I'm not out to embarrass tenants." The team consists of officials from the mayor's office, building inspector's office, health department, legal department, police department, fire department and zoning office. They inspect properties two to four days a week, the mayor said.

Since March 30, about 50 homes have been inspected, said Greg Barrouk, who serves as community revitalization coordinator and Leighton's assistant. Since Barrouk was named the contact for the Community Action Team in March, he has been fielding a steady stream of complaints about nuisance properties around the city. Three homes have been posted unfit for human habitation, Barrouk said. Six tenants were evicted from an apartment building at 40 Irving Place on Friday, and the city kicked three people out of a condemned property at North Washington and Bennett streets that had no running water. "Major complaints from people are about trash build-up in backyards or siding falling down on houses," Barrouk said. "We are going through the legal process about the more serious complaints."

Some homes that city officials condemned were already vacant, Barrouk said. When occupied homes are shut down and families need to be re-located, city officials contact the Commission on Economic Opportunity to provide shelter, he said. City Administrator **J.J. Murphy** said the team's ultimate goal is not to displace residents, but to clean up neighborhoods. "Although sometimes a family must be evicted if the property is uninhabitable, it at least sends a message to the rest of the neighborhood that we're serious about cleaning up the city," **Murphy** said.

Murphy also stressed the differences between the Community Action Team and McGroarty's Neighborhood Impact Team, which was the target of several lawsuits. Landlords claimed the city violated the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which protects rights of property owners. The lawsuits were settled out of court. Assistant Solicitor Bill Vinsko said the new team is "making sure the legal avenues are covered so that we can really make an impact." Team members can only enter a home if they have the property owner's permission or if they have

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John J. "J.J." Murphy

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"probable cause" to be there, Vinsko said. If a police officer responds to an incident and spots code violations, he can notify the code enforcement department, he said. "You can't just walk in and start inspecting properties without being invited in or permitted in without a search warrant," Vinsko said.

The media is not notified every time the Community Action Team inspects properties, although the media was notified of every Neighborhood Impact Team inspection. **Murphy** said it will not be the "spectacle" the Neighborhood Impact Team was. "The TV cameras and the media are not going to be with us in a way that they intimidate people or embarrass them," **Murphy** said. Tenants cause some problems and landlords cause some problems in blighted properties and "the problem infests itself into the neighborhood," **Murphy** said. He feels it is not "appropriate" to notify the media every time a home is being posted unfit for human habitation and a family is being evicted. "You can't go and take pictures and videos of kids getting thrown out," **Murphy** said. "Although the action might be appropriate, putting that family on the news or putting a picture of them and their home in the paper is not appropriate. We're trying to clean up the city without all the glamour and glitz."

Sally Healey, who headed up the Neighborhood Impact Team, said she believes "working with the press is of paramount importance." "You can't embarrass an errant landlord or a drug dealer too much," Healey said. The press can show the conditions of the houses in blighted condition and when they are cleaned up, Healey said. "The Neighborhood Impact Team was very visible. I believe the visibility of the team gave people hope and gave them knowledge that we were out there posting homes," Healey said. "I welcomed the presence of the press. We had nothing to hide."

McGroarty was known to accompany the Neighborhood Impact Team and often badgered landlords with questions about when they planned to clean up their properties. Leighton has not accompanied the Community Action Team in the field. "I have confidence they can do the job without me leading them and without my interference," Leighton said. "They're responding to problem properties and we're following up on them. They're not just hitting them and going on to new properties. They're repeatedly going back to make sure they (problems) are corrected."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
March 1, 2006

**W-B TIGHTENS RELEASE OF INFO TO MEDIA/ REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS
WITH OFFICE HOLDERS OR DATA MUST NOW GO THROUGH A
COORDINATOR.**

Author: Jon Fox

WILKES-BARRE - The city has enacted a new media inquiry policy that requires reporters to go through administrative coordinator Bridget Giunta for requests for information or interviews. City Administrator **J.J. Murphy** said the policy is an effort to streamline communication with the media and more quickly disseminate information. "We're hoping it improves the process," he said. The policy is something Mayor Tom Leighton and members of his administration have been discussing for a few weeks, and it was officially put into place this week, **Murphy** said. "There's been too many instances where the media has been trying to get into touch with us, and we either didn't know about it or didn't get back to them in a timely manner," he said.

Murphy said there have been times he didn't get a message from a journalist until after 5 p.m., and he would have been able to easily respond to the question had he gotten word earlier. Funneling requests for information through Giunta, a former intern hired in January 2005, should minimize situations like that, he said. As part of the new procedure, the city fire department will make press releases about incidents available at its headquarters on Ross Street. Such press releases were previously not produced. Police or fire officials will be able to provide basic information such as would be provided in a press release at the scene of an event or after hours, **Murphy** said. A recent situation where a reporter standing next to a city official at the scene of a partial building collapse was unable to interview the official until Giunta was contacted was a mistake, **Murphy** said. The policy should not have prevented the official from discussing the situation, he added.

In the first two years of Leighton's tenure at City Hall, **Murphy** said the administration has had its hands full addressing problems lingering from the previous administration. The new media policy is something they finally got around to, he said. Since the policy's implementation, there have been instances of city officials declining to speak to members of the press until the request went through Giunta. But **Murphy** says the policy is not an attempt to hinder the media or filter comment from key city officials. "If you see a department head they don't need to get permission to speak," he said. "People are going to have the freedom to express how they're going to implement Mayor Leighton's vision in their departments."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
February 22, 2006

A CAMPAIGN OF HIS OWN?

LEIGHTON'S RIGHT-HAND MAN J.J. MURPHY IS CONSIDERING A RUN FOR KEVIN BLAUM'S 121ST DISTRICT SEAT

Author: Jon Fox

WILKES-BARRE - During a lengthy city council meeting earlier this month, Mayor Tom Leighton leaned over to whisper in **J.J. Murphy's** ear. The young city administrator, seated to the mayor's right, silently rose and walked out of council chambers. When he returned, he handed a cup of water to the mayor who would go on to talk at length with residents voicing their concerns about what seemed to be escalating crime in their neighborhoods.

Murphy's was a small task, but it shouldn't belie the increasingly important role the 34-year-old has come to play in Leighton's administration. In the mayor's absence, **Murphy** fields complaints and requests from city council. **Murphy** has also taken the reins of both the city's Wi-Fi initiative and a move to install security cameras across the city.

And as administrator, it's **Murphy** who manages the day-to-day operations of Wilkes-Barre. He's assumed the mantle of the mayor's right-hand man, but with a possible run for state Rep. Kevin Blaum's seat, where does that leave Leighton and the city? "My number one focus is going to be continuing to push forward the initiatives as city administrator," **Murphy** said Monday.

While he hasn't yet made his official announcement to run, **Murphy**, a Democrat, said a series of meetings last week resulted in a "very positive" response from local business and political leaders. He expects to decide this week. If he does run for Blaum's 121st District seat, **Murphy** said, "I'd be doing my day-to-day city job like I do now and would be running a campaign mostly at night." Blaum announced that he would retire at the end of 2006. The opening has tempted a host of possible candidates to test the waters for their chances at what will be a hotly contested seat. **Murphy's** tenure with the city spans two mayors and includes two breaks for active-duty service with the Air Force.

A 1993 graduate of King's College, **Murphy** worked for the city in 1996 and 1997 as part of a task force focusing on increasing occupancy rates downtown. **Murphy** left the area to serve as a public information officer at the Vandenberg Air Force Base in Southern California and was hired under Mayor Tom McGroarty as a deputy city administrator when he returned in 2002. For about six months he worked on smoothing over the city's then-rocky relationship with Wilkes University and King's College before being recalled to active duty coordinating search-and-rescue teams at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Va. He remains an active reservist.

When he returned at the end of 2003, he was tapped by then-mayor elect Leighton to serve as city administrator. **Murphy** said he has discussed a possible run with the mayor and that Leighton encouraged him to go out and get a sense of how much support he could expect. "We

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. "J.J." Murphy

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

talked about a lot of issues, and I told him before the final decision was made we'd sit down and talk about all the pros and cons," Murphy said. "I relish the job I have now," he said. If Murphy does launch a campaign, it could mean a lot of busy evenings in the three months leading up to the May primary. With four small children that's something he said he and his wife have thought quite a bit about.

His brother Patrick's bid for the U.S. House of Representatives is another factor complicating his decision. Patrick Murphy, a 32-year-old former Army captain and West Point professor, served in the 82nd Airborne in Iraq from 2003 to 2004. As one of a number of Iraq war veterans running for public office, his campaign has been the focus of some national media attention, appearing on MSNBC's show "Hardball" last week. He's running in Pennsylvania's 8th District, in the Philadelphia suburbs, in an attempt to bounce freshman Republican Michael Fitzpatrick from office. In the Democratic primary, he faces Andrew L. Warren, a former Bucks County commissioner and Republican who switched parties 10 months ago. J.J. Murphy had hoped to help his brother in his suburban Philadelphia race, but if he's running a race of his own, that could be all but impossible. "That's what's making this decision difficult," he said.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
November 19, 2005

**COPY FEES IRK W-B COUNCIL CRITIC
PROPOSED CITY BUDGET FOR 2006 NOW ONLINE**

Author: Jon Fox

WILKES-BARRE - Residents interested in taking home their own copy of the city's proposed 2006 budget must pay \$33 in fees at the city clerk's office. "I think that's a crime," Walter Griffith said after Thursday night's council meeting, where he criticized the copying fees. "I feel the residents of the city should have access to the information at no charge," said Griffith, who speaks frequently at council meetings. Residents can view the budget and other public records for free. The city charges 50 cents per page for copies of public records, \$1 for double-sided copies. City Administrator **J.J. Murphy** and Mayor Tom Leighton have described the 50-cent fee as covering not only the copying cost, but also the time spent by employees searching for records. "If a hundred people come and ask for copies, it just doesn't happen over five minutes. You have to take someone off whatever other job they have," **Murphy** said. "We just don't have extra employees that don't have anything to do that can make copies all day."

The state law governing open records states that the cost of copies must be "reasonable" and based on "prevailing fees" for copying at local businesses. Staples, an office supply store in Wilkes-Barre Township, charges 6 cents per page. Making copies of documents "takes away from other work that could be done," **Murphy** said. As the city proceeds with a plan to modernize its copy machines, the cost to the city of making a copy could drop to as little as a penny per page, **Murphy** said earlier this month. "In my opinion that fee is excessive and inconsistent with the Right to Know Law requirements," said Teri Henning, an attorney with the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association. Henning added that a recent state Commonwealth Court ruling in April determined that a copying fee of 25 cents per page was reasonable and allowable. County offices charge 25 cents per page. Part of the function of public employees is to serve the public, Henning said. Although she said she doesn't expect an employee's entire day to be filled with copying documents, "it's not unreasonable to suggest that a portion of their duties include responding to public inquires."

City Clerk Jim Ryan said his office does not keep records on the number of requests for documents or the number of copies made for residents, but recalled that several people asked about obtaining copies of the proposed budget. Griffith was the only person who paid the fee to get the budget, Ryan said. In the past, residents have made numerous requests for documents that they never picked up from City Hall, **Murphy** said. "Is that fair?" he asked. "When there are taxpayers out there abusing the system, then maybe that 50 cents is not high enough for someone like that," **Murphy** said. The city, he said, will make an effort to post more documents to the city's Web site. During an interview on Friday, he said he would attempt to put the budget online by the end of the day. But that doesn't change an agency's obligation to produce paper copies at a reasonable cost in line with the state's Right to Know Law, Henning said. "I feel the residents of (Wilkes-Barre) should have access to the information at no charge."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
November 17, 2005

**W-B OFFERS DIRECT POTHOLE PATCH
RESIDENTS CAN FILE COMPLAINTS ONLINE**

Author: Jon Fox

WILKES-BARRE - Cold winters are a fact of nature in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Cycles of freezing and thawing churn roadways to rubble. Water seeps into pavement, freezes and expands, forming skull-jarring, alignment-fouling potholes. It's nothing new. But now the city is offering pothole-dodging motorists a novel way to complain: on the city's new Web page. Since the site's launch in June shortly after Mayor Tom Leighton's highly publicized "I believe..." speech, the city has received about 50 pothole complaints via the Internet. Navigating from the site's main page, visitors can click on a link to "city services" and then "road maintenance" to fill out a form pinpointing a pothole's precise location. After an initial rush of tips, pothole notifications filed on the site have dropped off since the summer, said Greg Barrouk, an aide in the mayor's office. "I haven't got one in a while," he said.

And after a peak of more than 70,000 hits in June, traffic to the site has tailed off to slightly more than 21,000 visits in October. For a mayoral administration that has stressed technology in its bid to rev up the local economy and awaken a slumbering downtown, the Web site is a basic tool. "The mayor really wanted the public to have the opportunity to see Wilkes-Barre on the Web," said City Administrator **J.J. Murphy**. What people see when they visit the site designed by the city's in-house information technology department is an "I believe..." logo slung across an image of the city skyline on a sunny day. Peppered with exclamation points, the site's copy is drenched in the unbridled optimism characterized by Leighton's "I believe..." speech. In fact, the entire text of the speech can be found on the site along with links to aging press releases.

Murphy acknowledges that "it's just a very bad time" for the slightly out-of-date Web site. The information technology department, assembled during Leighton's tenure, only has three employees and is struggling to make due with limited staff, **Murphy** said. The city is pursuing a municipal wireless Internet network and preparing to install a municipal software package that will computerize many of the paper records housed in endless filing cabinets. "We could probably use 13 (employees) in the next couple of months," he said.

Murphy said there are plans to add other services to the city's "baseline" Web site. The city "is not taking requests for snow and ice removal," but that will be added soon, according to the site. "Please check back at a later date. Thank you!" the reader is reminded. People appreciate the around-the-clock convenience and the ability to interact with the city administration on their schedule, **Murphy** said. "They seem like little things, but the residents really like that," he said. "Some people work the third shift, and they don't live in the 9-to-5 world."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
September 18, 2005

W-B officials defend trips
Author: Denise Allabaugh

Wilkes-Barre Mayor Tom Leighton has traveled 3,800 miles at the cost of \$4,079 to taxpayers since taking office 20 months ago. The trips have been well worth the miles and the dollars, Leighton said, since they've helped him dig the city out of the more than \$10 million debt inherited from the previous administration. But critics, including former city council candidate Walter Griffith Jr., believe these expenses are high. He calls the travel reimbursements "expense gouging," and plans to address city council about the costs at a meeting Thursday at 6 p.m. Records show since 2004, Leighton made two trips to Washington, D.C., eight to Harrisburg, two to Philadelphia and two to New York. He used his own vehicle. "I hate to travel, but it has to be done. These are not fun trips. These are trips we prepare for weeks," Leighton said. "On all these trips, we came back with some really great results."

Financial records show Leighton, three members of his administration and city council members were reimbursed a total of \$16,651.33 in travel expenses since 2004. City Administrator **J.J. Murphy** was reimbursed a total of \$2,281 for one trip to Washington D.C., five to Harrisburg, five to Philadelphia and two to New York. **Murphy** used a city car. Since 2004, city Planning and Development Director Butch Frati was reimbursed \$1,265; Leighton's administrative assistant Greg Barrouk was reimbursed \$763; city council members were reimbursed a total of \$8,263.

Griffith complained the mayor and city council members continually say the city has no money to repair roads or dilapidated fire stations, "but they continue to abuse the taxpayers by their ability to take reimbursement for travel even though the budget is tight." When asked about travel expenses, Leighton and **Murphy** said they are small compared to the millions of dollars generated for the city as a result of these trips. Leighton, Koval and **Murphy** said it is difficult to quantify the amount of money generated from their travels, but they provided documentation of several trips that saved the city money:

Soon after Leighton took office in 2004, he, **Murphy** and Koval traveled to New York to meet with the bond assurance firm AMBAC to help re-finance the city's pension bond. That saved \$14.4 million and helped offset a 24-mill tax increase projected for 2006, Koval said. Trips to Harrisburg to meet with the representatives of the firm of Public Financial Management also helped with pension bond refinancing and helped the city sell the vacant call center on South Main Street, Leighton, **Murphy** and Koval said. On a July 21, 2005, on a trip to Washington D.C., Leighton and **Murphy** met with Congressman Paul Kanjorski, Sen. Rick Santorum and a top official for Sen. Arlen Specter to lobby for \$50 million for the Solomon Creek flood control project. Kanjorski recently announced the House approved that \$50 million. The Senate and president still must approve the money.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Other trips helped the city obtain funding for the South Main Street redevelopment project, the streetlights, the proposed intermodal transportation center and the Hotel Sterling project, Leighton, Murphy and Koval said. The primary goal behind the trips was to rebuild the city's financial structure, Leighton said. When the mayor took office in 2004, the city faced \$10.1 million in unpaid bills, a checking account balance of \$37,881 and a projected budget shortfall of \$3.89 million, Koval said. Now, the city has an \$830,000 surplus in the general fund.

"These trips had a large impact on the future of the City of Wilkes-Barre and where we are going on the financial side," Leighton said. "The city was in financial distress. I'm very proud that we paid all our bills and our vendors." Of the seven Wilkes-Barre council members, Councilwoman Kathy Kane spent the most for travel with a total of \$2,800. Kane, a member of a Human Development Committee, said she attends conferences dealing with health care and education and brings back information to the city. Many are National League of Cities conferences. "You can go to a convention and do nothing. I don't do that," Kane said. "They're not joy rides at all. Some involve 9 to 5 meetings and working through lunch."

Councilman Jim McCarthy, chairman of the Northeast Region of the Pennsylvania League of Cities, was reimbursed \$2,510 for travel since 2004. He said conferences help the city obtain grants. "They are learning experiences," McCarthy said. "You find out what other cities are doing to improve their government and you find out what grants are available. You get to talk with other council members and mayors to see what they're doing to make things better." Councilman Tony Thomas was reimbursed \$1,401 for travel expenses, including \$517 for a National League of Cities conference in Nashville, Tenn. and \$594 for the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions Convention Show in Orlando, Fla.

At the National League of Cities conference, Thomas said he learned more about the \$52 job tax. Thanks to the IAAPA conference, attended by 8,000 vendors, Thomas learned about the Healing Field, the Sept. 11, 2001, tribute that graced the lawn of Kirby Park. The city made \$55,000 from the Healing Field, Thomas said. Thomas said he learned how the city could repair the Coal Street Park pool instead of building a new pool. He estimated that saved about \$800,000. He found benches for Kirby Park and a company to repair the fountain on Public Square. He also learned more about playground equipment for Kirby Park. Thomas said he paid half the cost for the IAAPA conference since he also learned about ways to help his own business, Tony Thomas Deli and Catering on South Main Street, which operates snack bars at Kirby Park and Coal Street Park. "I will stand by these expenses 100 percent because of how much we saved by going to these conferences," Thomas said.

Since 2004, Councilman Mike McGinley was reimbursed \$961. Councilman Bill Barrett was reimbursed \$589 for airfare and the fee to attend a National League of Cities conference last year in Indianapolis, Ind. Council Chairwoman Shirley Vitanovec and Councilman Phil Latinski received no travel expenses since 2004, records show. Barrett said the National League of Cities conference had a very good program designed to teach newly elected officials how to deal with the media. "I learned how to do the most for constituents and how an ordinance is constructed. Just that information alone for me was worth the expense," he said. Griffith complained,

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however, that city council members travel to these conferences "on taxpayers' money year in and year out and the city still seems to be in a state of disrepair and disorganization." Christine Katsock, president of Wilkes-Barre Taxpayers Association and a former candidate for mayor, also feels travel expenses are high. "Knowing that he (Leighton) raised every tax possible against the taxpayers, to spend money that way seems a little irresponsible," Katsock said.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
June 7, 2005

NAMES AND FACES

Wilkes-Barre City Administrator **J. J. Murphy** will be honored by King's College with the Leo Award during Reunion Weekend at the College's Sheehy-Farmer Campus Center. The Leo Award is presented to an alumnus/alumna within 15 years of graduation who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in his/her professional or community activities. The award is named for the King's College mascot; it suggests the energy, pride and sense of purpose which the recipient personifies.

Murphy of Wilkes-Barre is a 1993 graduate of King's College. He has distinguished himself in military and civil service, while spending many hours volunteering in the communities in which he has lived. As a military officer, **Murphy** volunteered over 3,000 hours and received the 2001 Volunteer of the Year award. In civilian life, he is currently the youngest city administrator in the history of Wilkes-Barre. As founder and president of GOALS Foundation, he is dedicated to helping children afford youth sports programs. He has coached, tutored, refereed, trained hockey officials and coordinated visits to multiple Department of Veterans Medical Centers.

King's College is honoring Elmer "Tippy" Kozick and Lucy Wujcik Baloga with the Robert J. Ell Award for Service to Alma Mater during Reunion Weekend at the Sheehy-Farmer Campus Center. Named for Robert J. Ell '50, the first director of Alumni Affairs who served in that position until his retirement in 1991, this award is conferred upon an alumnus/alumna for extraordinary service, dedication and commitment to King' College. Kozick of Wilkes-Barre graduated from Coughlin High School and served in the U.S. Navy during WW II. He transferred from Villanova University to King's College in his sophomore year and quarterbacked the fledgling football team. He was captain of the team and also vice president of the first graduating class in 1950.

Baloga, a certified school psychologist and Pennsylvania licensed psychologist, is a private practitioner as well as a guidance counselor at Hanover Area High School. She is active in many educational and counseling associations, and has dedicated much time to Special Olympics, officiating at track and field meets, and to King's College. Baloga volunteered in almost every Alumni Phonathon, usually serving as class or section chairperson. In 1994, she served as chairperson, raising \$365,693. She is the 1985 American Business Women's Association Community Woman of the Year and also is an active member of Holy Redeemer parish, serving 13 years as a CCD teacher and lector. Baloga, of Plymouth, is a 1975 graduate of King's College.

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Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
December 14, 2004

TOW CO. OWNER SUES W-B OVER REPAIR BILL

Author: Lane Filler

WILKES-BARRE - City Wide Towing owner Bob Kadluboski says the city owes him nearly \$8,000 for repairs done to a work truck, but refuses to pay, according to a lawsuit. The suit alleges that City Wide repaired truck No. 181 in 2003 and sent the bill in September 2003. After receiving no payment, City Wide resent the bill two months later. Filed in July, Kadluboski's suit says he next hand-delivered the bill to then-Mayor Tom McGroarty's desk in December, sent another bill in January 2004, and mailed yet another in February to City Finance Director John Koval via certified mail. Kadluboski alleged that when he talked to Koval, he was told the bill had been lost. He faxed a copy of the bill, which was also lost, the suit says. Kadluboski then hand-delivered a copy of the bill to Koval, and was later told by City Administrator J.J. Murphy that the bill was "padded."

Kadluboski is in the center of several feuds with the city. His company recently lost the city's exclusive towing contract, for which he paid no fee. City Purchasing Director Ronnie Trimble, acting as arbitrator, ruled the city could end the contract. Kadluboski had been accused of being rude to customers and refusing to present them with itemized bills. He is also crusading for the state to take a harder look at the city's finances and claims the pension system for elected officials is wrong and illegal. Contacted about the suit, Kadluboski had little to say, commenting only that, "We're trying to get it settled." Asked how much money he would take to settle it, he answered, "All of it."

Murphy said he believes the truck was 10 years old or older and that the city has questioned what Kadluboski did to it, adding, "We have no paper work on it." Mayor Tom Leighton said he could not comment on the matter because it is in litigation. The case is scheduled to be heard before District Justice William Amesbury on Jan. 13.

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Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
November 19, 2004

**W-B OFFICIAL'S HOME TARGET OF INVASION ATTEMPT
THREATENING NOTE LATER FOUND**

Author: Jon Fox

WILKES-BARRE - A man tried first to talk his way into the home of city Administrator **J.J. Murphy** and then tried to barge in Wednesday afternoon, police said. It appears the unidentified man was motivated by animosity toward **Murphy** and Mayor Tom Leighton. Police, who are investigating the incident, say a man who identified himself as a city employee approached **Murphy's** wife in the yard of their South Wilkes-Barre home at about 4 p.m. and said he had been sent by the mayor and **Murphy** to check the water pipes in the house. The man also said he had just left the mayor's home. **Murphy's** wife, who was home alone with her three young daughters, locked her door and called her husband to verify the man's story. **Murphy** then called police. The man then tried to open the locked door, shouted an obscenity and left the property. On Thursday an unsigned handwritten note was found in **Murphy's** mailbox indicating the man had been harmed by a decision made in City Hall and that the mayor and the city administrator would get "our just due," **Murphy** said. "I'm not going to be intimidated," **Murphy** said Thursday. "I'll be at work bright and early tomorrow morning."

Chief Gerry Dessoie said an attempt of this type perpetrated on any resident would be a serious matter, but added "I'm looking at this differently." "This is more than just a threat against an individual," he said. This appears to be an attempt to terrorize public officials and affect the government of the city, he said.

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Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
April 8, 2004

**CITY HALL VISITS TO GET A BIT EASIER
WILKES-BARRE REORGANIZING OFFICES TO MAKE BUILDING MORE
CUSTOMER FRIENDLY.**

Author: Kasia Kopec

WILKES-BARRE - Securing a building permit from City Hall for home improvements has meant getting plenty of exercise climbing steps, or punching a lot of buttons on the elevator. For starters, permit-seekers had to visit the code enforcement office on the second floor to fill out an application. Next, they ascended the stairs to the third floor to obtain approval from the city's zoning officer. Then it was back down to the first floor to pay, and yo-yo back up to the second floor to pick up the permit. Then back down to the first floor to leave the building. That will soon change.

"Things weren't set up in a very customer friendly way," said City Administrator **J.J. Murphy**, who is coordinating a building-wide reorganization aimed at simplifying traffic patterns for residents and others with city business. The code enforcement office is among those in the process of relocating as part of the ongoing reorganization, said **Murphy**. It will now be housed on the third floor, adjacent to zoning. In addition, the controller's office will move down from the third floor to the second, nearer to the city's finance office. **Beatrice Bolacker Reiss**, who mans the mayor's helpline on the fourth floor, heads to the first floor. "Having **Beatrice** on the first floor will make it easier to get information in person, especially for seniors," said **Murphy**.

But even with the tweakings, City Hall visitors will still find they have to go somewhat out of their way. For example, those in need of building permits will be able to accomplish most of their business on the third floor. However, they will still have to make a trip to the first floor to pay, and then return to the third floor to collect permits. **Murphy** said the city's new computer system, expected to be up and running within six months, will enable staffers to print permits in the same place payment is taken, eliminating the need to trek or ride back upstairs.

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John J. “J.J.” Murphy
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)
November 13, 2003

**ACTIVATED ARMY RESERVIST J.J. MURPHY'S JOB IS SLATED TO BECOME
HALF-TIME NEXT YEAR.**

Author: Michael McNarney

WILKES-BARRE - Deputy City Administrator **J.J. Murphy** was in town Wednesday to close on the sale of his Parrish Street home, but says he wants to come back and serve in the administration of Mayor-elect Tom Leighton once his Air Force tour is finished. "I certainly think it's a very exciting time in Wilkes-Barre," **Murphy** said. "As for as what my role is, I guess it's open." **Murphy**, a Air Force Reserve captain, was called to active duty in April. He helps coordinate search-and-rescue operations from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. He said he'll remain on duty until April, at least. **Murphy** got Election Day off and wore a "Leighton for Mayor" button at Leighton's headquarters. He also donated \$125 to Leighton's campaign. "I have not talked to him about my position, but I hope he considers me for a position within his administration," **Murphy** said.

Murphy technically remains a city employee, though he is not paid his \$51,900 annual salary. He and his family still take city health benefits; federal law requires employers to continue benefits while reservists are on active duty. **Murphy** sold his home at 295 Parrish St. because it was getting too hard to keep it as well as the apartment he took in Langley because of the lack of on-base housing. His wife - who is expecting - and their children split time between her parents' house in New York and his folks' house in Hershey. **Murphy** said he will take an apartment in Wilkes-Barre to maintain a residence here.

Murphy's situation is unique because federal law requires employers to hold open the jobs of reservists who are on active duty. However, the law doesn't keep an employer from eliminating the position outright. McGroarty, in his proposed 2004 budget, reduced **Murphy's** position to half-time. "If the job was going to be going away regardless of his military situation, then he has no comeback" said under federal law, Army Lt. Col. William DuPont. DuPont works with Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Virginia-based group that advocates for reservists.

Leighton said he'd talk with **Murphy**. "I would definitely encourage him and anyone else interested in working in my administration to apply. He possesses some talents and experience and I'd be willing to sit down and listen to hear how he can be an asset on my team."

Research Compiled by: Cara Slade and Tammie Gardner
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