



Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published November 4th, 2015

A Wide Breadth of Knowledge

By Sophie Braccini

It did not take Town Manager Jill Keimach too long to find a new head of administrative services for the town to replace Stephanie Hom. Volunteer treasurer Bradley Ward filled the position in the interim, but Amy Cunningham, a multi-faceted public administration professional, now fills the seat and will focus on human resources, risk management and community outreach, while keeping an eye on the strategic plan and long-term financial health of Moraga.

Cunningham was the assistant to the city manager in charge of affordable housing and community service programs in the city of Dublin and was the city budget manager prior to that. She moved up through the ranks there over the past 16 years. Before she left the city of Dublin, Cunningham was working on an affordable rental project for veterans, financed by a \$6.5 million loan from the city's affordable housing fund. Unlike Moraga, the city of Dublin asks developers for affordable housing fees that it uses to contribute to the development of affordable housing projects.

"When I started in Dublin it was much more the size of Moraga today," she says. While working for the city of Dublin, Cunningham saw the population grow to 50,000 and the city now has a healthy sales tax base, relying on the commercial sector and services. Dublin also partnered with Livermore and Pleasanton to form the Tri-Valley entity, which manages different initiatives, such as a commonly funded community health facility extension.

As city budget manager for four years, Cunningham managed an operating budget of more than \$50 million, about six times that of Moraga, but she believes that the same philosophy of conservative fiscal policy applies. "We scaled back operating expenses significantly (when the economic crisis hit in 2008), over three to four years, including reducing staff and services and scaling back on initiatives, deferring maintenance and replacement of equipment, reducing and restructuring employees' benefits," she says.

But Cunningham goes beyond just crunching numbers and she says she particularly enjoys fiscal strategy and long-term planning. "Dublin was becoming more diverse, and there was always this need to maintain services at the level of the community needs," she explains. "With a budget you can be strategic." For example, she created a series of community fiscal strategy forums to set priorities for the city with the participation of the residents and businesses. "So, long term, we could be investing in the right places," she says.

Before managing the budget, Cunningham managed support services for the 40-plus-officer police department, contracted through the Alameda County Sheriff's Department. Prior to that, she was a caseworker for the San Mateo County District Attorney's office, where she enforced child support orders and conducted financial analysis to determine fair shares for child support. Cunningham remembers the positive impact she had on children's lives, making sure that they had what they needed. She earned a bachelor's degree in political science and obtained her master's in public administration while working in San Mateo.

"During high school and college I worked in Parks and Recreation in Pacifica and Daly City, and that's where my desire to become a civil servant started," she remembers. Her first full-time job was with a tax and accounting firm where she learned about financial statements and payrolls.

"Finance and staff development have always been of particular interest to me," she adds. In Moraga she will be working in different areas such as finance, risk management, human resources and information technology. "That's something I'm looking forward to."

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA