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Administrative Services Director Paul Rankin retires

By Sora O'Doherty



Retiring Administrative Services Director Paul Rankin Photo Sora O'Doherty

After a career in government that spanned 42 years, Paul Rankin, Orinda's administrative services director, is retiring. Rankin was hired by Orinda as finance director in August 2017, and became the city's administrative services director about a year and a half ago. The change acknowledged the role Rankin was playing in other areas of the city, including such diverse areas as IT, risk management, and human resources.

City manager David Biggs reported to the city council on Dec. 14 that Rankin's last day would be Dec. 20. Biggs praised Rankin as a "true professional," who plays a much broader role than just finance director. Rankin had announced his retirement earlier, but agreed to stay on longer than he had originally intended to allow the city to hire a new finance director. The city has hired Doug Alessio, formerly from the city of Livermore. (See article on Page A7.)

Rankin is a native Californian who grew up in Pico Rivera in the San Gabriel Valley. He attended Claremont Men's College (now Claremont McKenna College) before taking an MA in public administration at Cal State Long Beach.

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Looking back over his 42-year career in local government, Rankin noted, "That's a lot of meetings!" He has actually enjoyed the switch to Zoom meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic because he finds them to be efficient and to generate opportunities for people who perhaps can't get out to participate in government. "It's an interesting change," he observed.

Among the highlights of his long career, Rankin enjoyed the more than 17 years he spent working for the city of Dublin, California. He served in a number of capacities, including being the project manager overseeing the building of Dublin's new civic building in the mid-'80s. He wound up in Dublin's finance department following budget cuts and the departure of the city's finance director.

Dublin and Orinda are the two cities Rankin worked longest for, and he finds similarities between them. Both are small cities with small staffs who must do a variety of things to make things work. In between, Rankin also worked as the CFO of the East Bay Regional Park District, which he also enjoyed. He speaks with affection of the agency as having a "portfolio of little gems," unique to the Bay Area.

In Orinda, Rankin says, he truly enjoyed the city council, finding them really focused on being there to serve and to make things better, willing to spend their attention on what matters. In preparing for city council meetings, Rankin presents information like an onion, so folks can see the overview on the outside, but can dig as deep as they like.

Rankin found his education at Claremont really helped him with communications. "Sometimes you are stuck with the required way," he observed, "but you can always tell the story differently."

Rankin lives in Dublin with his wife, who is also retiring from her job as secretary to a school principal. Their three children are grown and out of the house, but are all employed and live in the Bay Area. He looks forward to having time to pursue travel when the world opens up again, and his hobbies, including photography which he hasn't touched in a while.

Rankin noted that in 42 years of public service, he'd made a lot of sacrifices - all the late evening meetings, for example. Now he definitely wants to spend more time with family. "We're excited," he concluded, "definitely excited."

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