

March 6, 2022

To: Mayor and City Council, City of Ann Arbor
From: Amy Cell
Re: Interim City Administrator Evaluation Summary

Overall

This feedback period covers the first five months of Milton Dohoney's service as Interim City Administrator. Feedback was provided by a survey to Council and key leadership. There was also an all employee survey that garnered input from 99 participants. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and in a short period of time Mr. Dohoney has provided a calm and stabilizing environment that stresses inclusion and respect. Mr. Dohoney's extensive experience, natural leadership and communication style is much appreciated and many Council and staff members have requested that he become the permanent City Administrator as soon as possible.

The 2022 review had two components:

1. A 360 degree performance review completed by Council and key staff.
2. An all employee survey.

Themes from Council

Themes: Mr. Dohoney is professional, proactive, solution oriented, fair, open, honest, accessible and a good leader.

Start: Provide weekly updates. Provide your opinions more.

Quotes: Mr. Dohoney has on numerous occasions, demonstrated the ability to bring conversations back to prioritizing the City's work with specific and actionable recommendations. The organization needs this level of professionalism and priorities to demonstrate integrity in action.

Themes from key staff

Themes: Mr. Dohoney is helpful, engaged, organized, flexible, decisive, listens well, responsive, makes adjustments based on feedback from staff, supports employees, supportive, models integrity, even tempered and good natured.

Themes from all employee survey

Employees appreciate his: manner, directness, push for a living wage, state of the manager's forum, honesty, thoughtfulness, calm approach, assertiveness, respectfulness, knowledge, sense of humor and that he is likable.

Response from Milton Dohoney

I have taken the time to review both the scoring and comments that have been provided by the staff, and Councilmembers. I am very encouraged by the reaction to the initial impression that I have made. Given that it has been such a short time, it is understandable that for certain areas

there simply has not been enough time/interaction for people to formulate a conclusion. Some of the initiatives I have brought forward will take more time to germinate. However, I am sensitive to the ongoing need for me to be open and communicative both vertically and horizontally within the organization.

I commit to remaining consistent with the element that have garnered early support. I also pledge to continue to exert effort and attention to broaden our organizational inclusiveness. I remain dedicated to advancing Ann Arbor working with and through a variety of stakeholders, and servant leaders. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this reaction to my early feedback from the staff, and policymakers. My goal is to deliver a stronger performance with each passing month.

Council Questions

1. Does the Interim Administrator exhibit a high degree of integrity?



Result 5.7

Comments

Response #1

I have not worked with him long enough to answer this question.

Response #2

Yes, but difficult to be certain without long length of time in this position and challenges that originate his watch.

Response #3

My work with the Administrator has naturally been time limited, but I value his rectitude in expression and purpose.

Response #4

Mr. Dohoney has on numerous occasions, demonstrated the ability to bring conversations back to prioritizing the City's work with specific and actionable recommendations. The organization needs this level of professionalism and priorities to demonstrate integrity in action.

Response #5

Hard to say, but I have no reason to believe otherwise

2. Anticipates and analyzes problems to develop effective approaches for solving them.



Result 5.4

Comments

Response #1

Incredibly grateful for the thoughtful re-evaluation of our strategy to improve road conditions and to proactively approach Council with an alternative plan to achieve better results, more quickly.

Response #2

Experience working in other municipalities on chronic public policy issues & policies has been shown in meetings with the limited experience I have had in working with Mr Dohoney to date.

Response #3

I have found that Mr. Dohoney is often a few steps ahead of everyone else. I appreciate his vision for the organization and the solutions to help get us there.

Response #4

I guess. I have not worked with him long enough to answer this question.

Response #5

I don't feel like Council has enough interaction with Mr. Dohoney to fairly judge if he anticipates problems. I have no concerns to date, but limited information to be able to answer this question.

3. Sets a professional example by handling affairs of the public office in a fair and impartial manner.



Result 5.7

Comments

Response #1

A believe this may be true, but much of his job has been delegated to others who do not exhibit these qualities so it's hard to assess his role as a professional example.

Response #2

While I have few examples to draw from in such a short period of time, I am impressed by Mr. Dohoney's ability to treat all members of council fairly.

Response #3

I think Mr. Dohoney's temperament and demeanor are incredibly professional and suggest impartiality.

Response #4

Has shown to fly above the fray with an open and seemingly honest way, but like most everything else that's being asked; too early to be certain.

4. Collaborates with external partners including the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Public Schools, local non profits, neighboring communities, county, regional, state, and federal agencies.



Comments

Response #1

I am grateful for the Administrator's initiative and creativity with respect to our external partners.

Response #2

Given the extremely limited time in the, it is not reasonably responsible to give an evaluation on this topic matter.

Response #3

I believe this may be true or it has been true for a few months. I have not worked with him long enough to have an informed opinion.

5. Communicates and responds effectively with the City Council while disseminating complete and accurate information, and reports equally to all council members in a timely manner.



Comments

Response #1

More formal weekly updates would be welcomed. Unfortunately, not all CM's have equal access to executive staff and information, this is at the moment no fault of the City Administrator but an area that needs improvement due to the unequal access to staff

Response #2

Not sure, it seems that some council members are willing to violate our council communication rules to gain access to staff and administration, he may not be aware this is happening

Response #3

I appreciate both the regular email communication, as well as the texts alerting council to emerging situations.

Response #4

It may be true that he does this but again, much of his job has been delegated to others who do not hold these values, so it is hard to determine where and how it is a priority.

Response #5

I appreciate Mr. Dohoney's planning in advance of severe weather and in response to emergent issues such as threats against our schools. He mobilizes responses quickly and clearly.

Response #6

I have been incredibly impressed with my interactions with Mr. Dohoney, he has been responsive, professional, and helpful, but I want to hear from him more often and hear his opinion more often. In meetings I have watched him lead he communicates effectively, with depth, and good follow through. He rarely speaks at Council meetings. While Council is the policy making body, I think good policy is informed by information. I think we will do our job better if it is guided by Mr. Dohoney's expertise.

Response #7

I greatly appreciate Mr. Dohoney's approach to communicating about urgent/emergency matters in a timely manner, to keep Council informed of developments in real-time. I have; however, felt that the RFI (Request for Information) system, which is designed for CMs to ask questions/seek information from high-level staff in a trackable way, has become less responsive and/or that I have needed to follow up on requests/questions more frequently to receive responses.

6. Assists in facilitating decision making without usurping authority.



Result 5.1

Comments

Response #1

Been hard to gauge with all the turmoil that was occurring when tenure began. Seems at times, the assistant City Administrator has too much influence on the office of City Administrator. Too much turnover and turmoil to make a clear assessment of this question, more time is needed know if the tail is wagging the dog.

Response #2

The wording of this question is very strange, given how much to the job of city administrator has been delegated in the last few months. I don't know whose authority he would be usurping. The actual job of city administrator includes more authority than he currently exercises.

Response #3

Mr. Dohoney definitely doesn't usurp authority, but I am concerned that he is so apolitical and deferential to Council, that we're lacking his guidance and insight in making good decisions. He brings incredible experience and knowledge to the City from his work in other communities. I assume that is shaping his work as City Administrator, but I'd like to see it also help inform our decision making as Council,

Response #4

I have found Mr. Dohoney to be easily accessible. He listens carefully, asks excellent follow up questions, and provides feedback that is helpful, but not heavy handed.

7. Implements City Council actions and policy in accordance with the intent of the Council.



Result 5.4

Comments

Response #1

I believe this is true, but we haven't had a great deal of time to judge implementation.

Response #2

Too early in tenure to answer with 100 % confidence, early signs are hopeful.

8. Appropriately monitors and manages fiscal activities of the City.



Result 5.8

Comments

Response #1

Can not respond reasonably or responsible to this question, much too early to tell.

Response #2


The ability to address our structural deficit is an accomplishment that comes with experience and executive leadership. Mr. Dohoney's work with our finance team is an excellent preview of what will be possible in the coming years and coming budget cycles.

Response #3

Not enough information to even evaluate.

9. Appropriately informs the council of the long term financial impact of proposals and initiatives.



Result 5.3 

Comments

Response #1

Again, I would like to hear more from Mr. Dohoney on all topics, including the financial impacts of proposals and initiatives.

Response #2

Too early to have a position on this, I hope to learn more in the coming weeks as we adopt the FY 23 budget

Response #3

Not enough information to even evaluate.

10. Provides oversight, leadership, vision, and direction to service areas resulting in the achievement of outcomes.



Result 5.4 

Comments

Response #1

Adhoc feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff have repeated, unsolicited, come out of their way to praise Mr. Dohoney's leadership, support, and vision to me. Mr. Dohoney seems to have the respect of his staff and is providing them with stability and leadership at a time when our organization desperately needs it.

Response #2

.

Response #3


Too early to have a firm assessment as time on the job has been short. No matrix in place or to measure outcomes.

Response #4

From what I've seen, I'm impressed with his leadership and oversight, but I'd like to better understand his vision. I recognize he's in an interim role and part of his job has been to stabilize the organization, but I would love to hear more about his vision.

11. Demonstrated dependability as defined by making clear and complete commitments to internal and external customers.



Result 5.4 

Comments

Response #1

I've heard excellent feedback on Mr. Dohoney's outreach to local government authorities from the federal, state, and local level.

Response #2

As far as the limited time on the job has provided the opportunity to demonstrate

12. Has the Interim Administrator been a stabilizing influence on the position?



Result 5.6 

Comments

Response #1

I have only received positive feedback from staff, including specific feedback regarding his impact on staff morale.

Response #2

Absolutely!

Response #3

Yes, the organization was/is under heavy turmoil, toxins and turnover and he seems not to be adding to the problems, just trying to understand them first

13. Does the Interim Administrator base decisions on rational analysis?



Result 5.6

Comments

Response #1

He has exceeded my expectations in stabilizing the organization in spite of the continued Council disfunction.

Response #2

Yes. Seems to approach contentious situations with a calm, honest response based on the knowledge he has on the issue. Does not seem to have an obvious bent or bias.

Response #3

I have been impressed by his rational and systematic approach to decision making in the limited interaction I've had with him, again I just want to hear more.

Staff

1. Holds employees accountable and addresses performance issues appropriately and timely.



Result N/A

Comments

Response #1

I don't know how to judge this.

2. Tracks and reviews work as appropriate, and takes appropriate action based on City of Ann Arbor procedures, rules, and regulations.



Result N/A

Comments

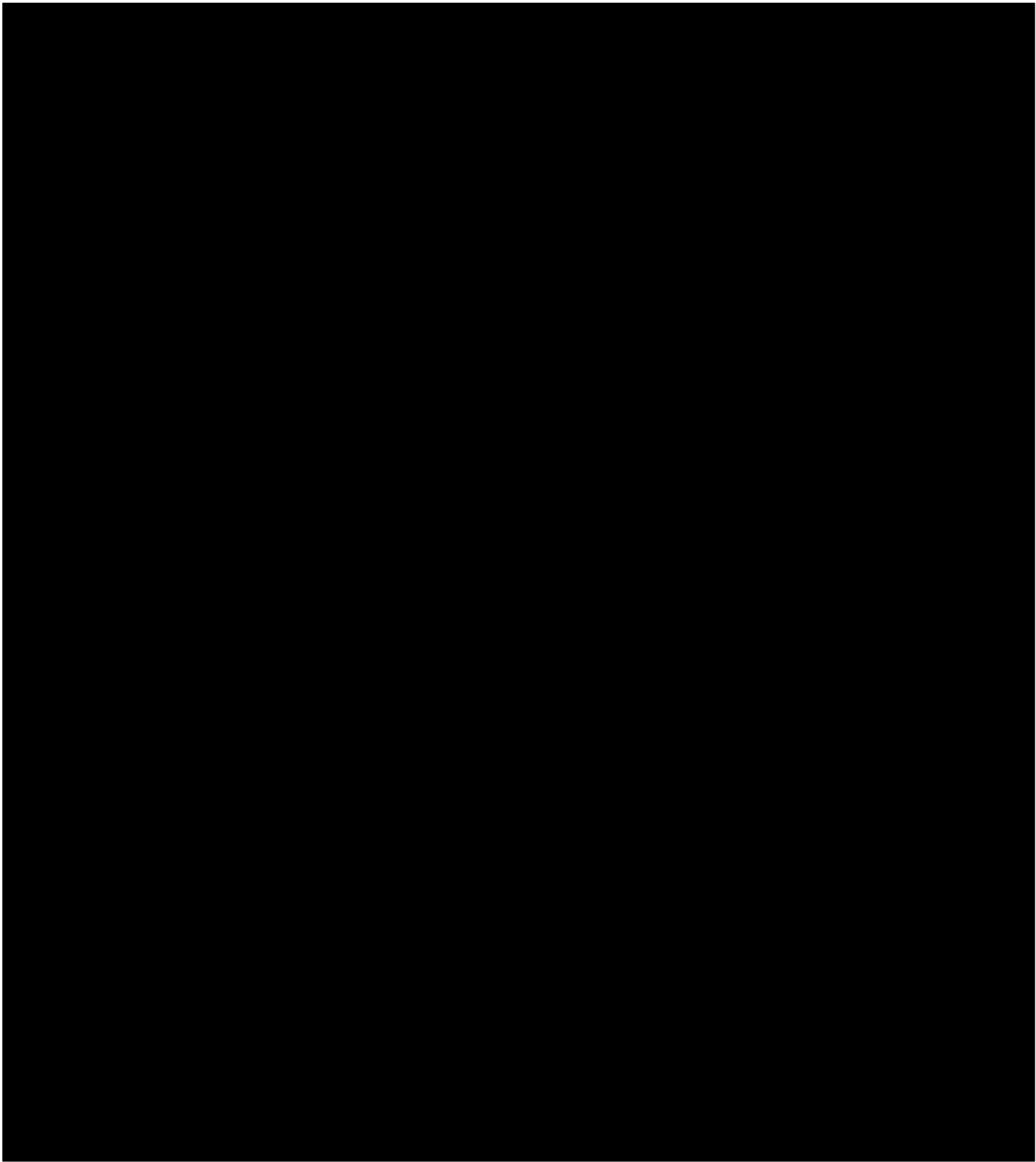
Response #1

I don't know how to judge this.

3. Listens and responds to employee issues and problems in a considerate and timely manner.




Result N/A



Staff

1. Holds employees accountable and addresses performance issues appropriately and timely.



Result 5.3 

Comments

Response #1

I haven't had enough interaction or time with Milton to fully answer this question.

Response #2

I've appreciated his willingness to discuss opportunities for growth.

Response #3

Yes, Milton will provide constructive feedback in a timely manner. He understands the importance of setting expectations, and providing diplomatic and timely feedback for keeping those standards up over time.

Response #4


Have not had to deal with this.

Response #5

Unable to score this item-have not been able to experienced his working with others in virtual environment/personal conversations.

2. Tracks and reviews work as appropriate, and takes appropriate action based on City of Ann Arbor procedures, rules, and regulations.



Result 5.5 

Comments

Response #1

I believe this to be true to the extent I've seen it in action

Response #2


Milton is always very engaged and provides helpful feedback. He is also very organized!

Response #3

Seems to be cognizant of procedures, rules, and regulation; however, is not limited by them.

3. Listens and responds to employee issues and problems in a considerate and timely manner.



Result 5.7 

Comments

Response #1

Milton has come to the City at a very difficult time when employee morale is relatively low. He has been very decisive in dealing with difficult issues, especially for someone who is here on an interim basis. I have noticed that he listens intently to others to understand their feedback and suggestions before responding and making decisions.

Response #2

Milton is always very responsive.

Response #3

He's definitely contemplative and appears to hear what employees are sharing. I've seen him make some adjustments in the limited time he's been here based on that feedback. That leads me to believe he will do well on this category with more time.

Response #4

Is responsive and timely.

4. Provides support, including training, to allow employees to effectively and safely perform their jobs.



Comments

Response #1

Milton has stated many times that he supports investing in employees, and that includes giving them fair pay and making sure they have the resources they need to succeed in their positions--training and professional development activities are among those resources.

Response #2

Not able to score/lack of direct experience

5. Provides resources to allow staff to perform their duties.



Comments

Response #1

As an example, Milton has started to address several projects and efforts that have stagnated or do not have sufficient council direction and has provided additional direction or sought clarification of their purpose.

Response #2

I think he's still trying to find his feet, understand the organization, and identify strategic opportunities. That's obviously understandable given the limited time he's been here.

Response #3

To date, no resources have been provided

6. Follows up on issues presented and reports back to employees.



Comments

Response #1

So far this seems to be something he does. The challenge is that there might be long time periods in between so you're not sure what is happening or if the issue is still on his radar. I think this speaks to the last of transparency. Also, reporting out doesn't appear to be the problem, engaging with employees in getting to a decision seems to be less of a strength.

7. Supports staff as appropriate in interactions with other administrators and Council members.



Comments

Response #1

Milton appears to have the backs of staff when they are dealing with attacks from Councilmembers. There are certain Councilmembers who make it difficult for City staff and Milton has been addressing it head on.

8. Consults appropriate staff before making decisions.



Comments

Response #1

Milton always reaches out on issues related to my department.

Response #2

As mentioned previously, decision making is a bit of a black box.

Response #3

I have seen several examples where Milton seeks advice from a broad range of staff prior to making decisions. From my interactions with him, he has a very broad base of knowledge regarding city administration, but he also asks important questions about how a particular problem has been resolved in the City previously and why, before making a decision.

9. Treats staff with dignity and respect.



Comments

Response #1

Models integrity. One of the best I have ever worked for in this regard.

Response #2

He is even-tempered and good-humored, and seems genuinely concerned about the welfare of City staff.

10. Fosters a professional working environment.



Result 5.9

Comments

Response #1

Milton leads by example. He is a true professional and leads with respect and integrity.

Response #2

Incredibly professional.

Response #3

He is a superb professional.

11. Demonstrates commitment to advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the City.



Result 5.6

Comments

Response #1

Helping to move DEI work forward - although, again, I don't know much about what specifically we are planning to do other than hire the DEI officer.

Response #2

Have not experienced directly

12. Displays knowledge of relevant municipal issues.



Result 5.6

Comments

Response #1

He is outstanding in this regard. A2 is lucky to have someone of his pedigree.

Response #2

He's a seasoned professional with exceptional experience.

Response #3

The breadth and depth of Milton's knowledge about city administration is clear in the way that he approaches problems. The questions that he asks, and the decisiveness of his actions are testament to this deep understanding. He has identified several issues that needed to be resolved, including extending living wage to the City's temporary employees, and have addressed them quickly.

13. Provides leadership and stability for the City.



Result 5.7

Comments

Response #1

The City is in need of stable leadership and Milton has brought that.

Response #2

I have heard others comment that they feel that the way Milton has managed City affairs over the last few months makes it seem as if he is permanent. I agree. He thoughtfully and actively addresses problems and seems genuinely interested in the best long-term solutions despite being in an interim role.

Response #3

YES - MAKE HIM PERMANENT.

I cannot advocate enough for Mr. Dohoney to be the permanent City Administrator. We would be lucky to have him.

14. Does the Interim Administrator exhibit a high degree of integrity?



Result 5.9

Comments

Response #1

Yes. Milton is very decisive and seems genuinely interested in reaching the best decision that will serve the City.

Response #2

Given everything that has happened, integrity is one of the more important features of the leader of the organization and Milton exhibits the utmost integrity.

15. Does the Interim Administrator base decisions on rational analysis?



Result 5.5

Comments

Response #1

Again, I can't answer this based on the black boxed nature of decision-making.

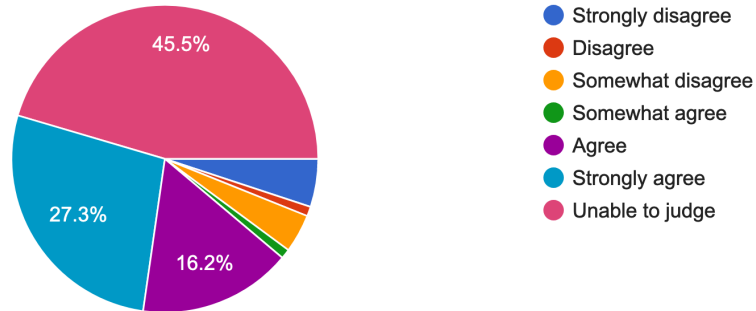


Rating scale:

1 = Strongly disagree · 2 = Disagree · 3 = Somewhat disagree · 4 = Somewhat agree · 5 = Agree · 6 = Strongly agree · N/A = Not applicable

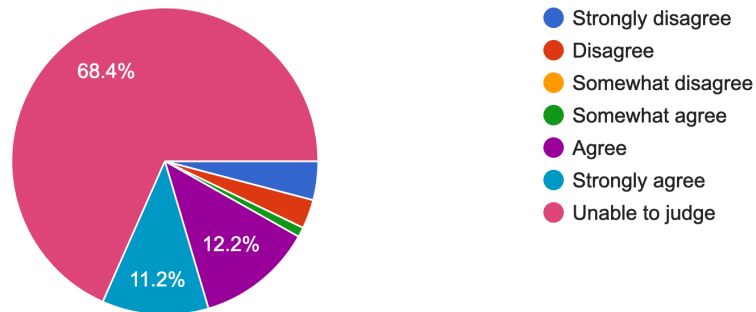
1. Listens and responds to employee issues and problems in a considerate and timely manner.

99 responses



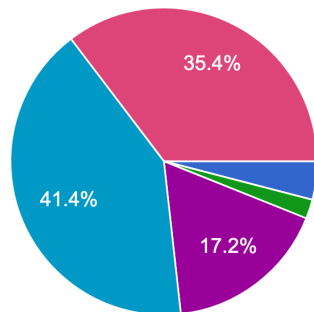
2. Provides support, including training, to allow employees to effectively and safely perform their jobs.

98 responses



3. Treats staff with dignity and respect.

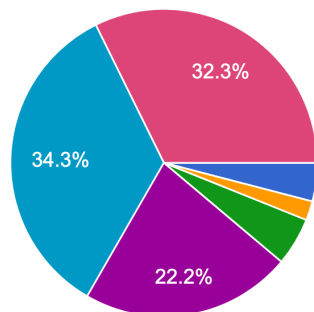
99 responses



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Unable to judge

4. Fosters a professional working environment.

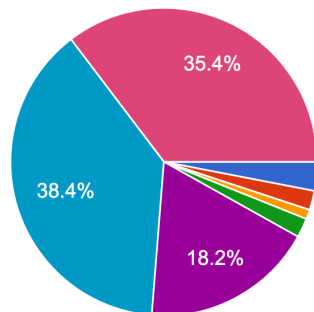
99 responses



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Unable to judge

5. Demonstrates commitment to advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the City.

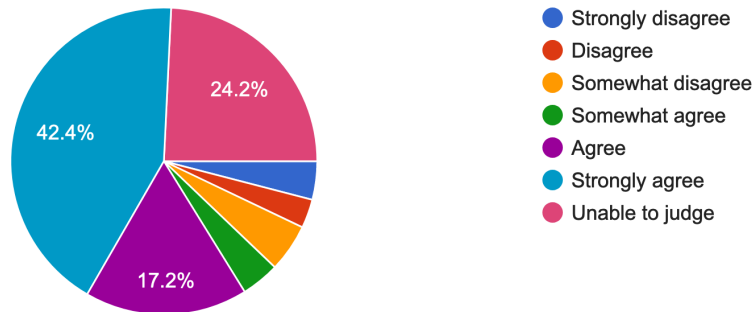
99 responses



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Unable to judge

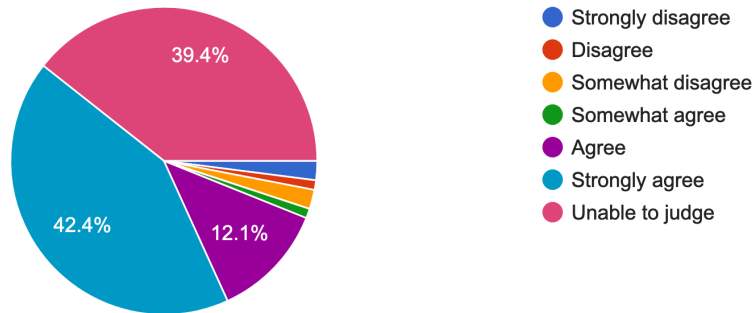
6. Provides leadership and stability for the City.

99 responses



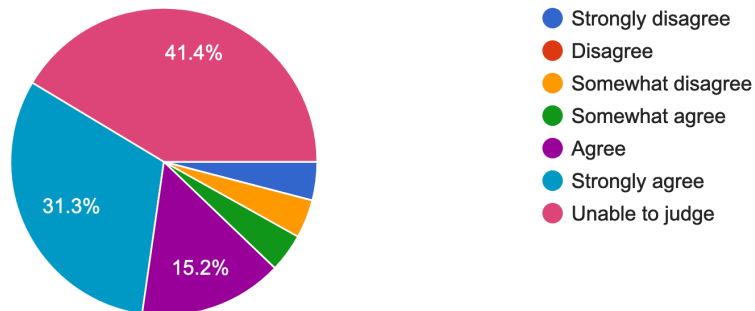
7. The Interim Administrator exhibits a high degree of integrity.

99 responses



8. The Interim Administrator bases decisions on rational analysis.

99 responses



9. Do you have other feedback that you would like to share about Interim City Administrator Milton Dohoney? 60 responses have been summarized below.

Themes:

- People appreciate his: manner, directness, push for a living wage, state of the manager's forum, honesty, thoughtfulness, calm approach, assertiveness, respectfulness, knowledge, sense of humor and that he is likable.
- Keep: State of the City videos. Prioritizing DEI. Prioritizing climate action. Sound and consistent leadership.
- Start: Provide updates during Council meetings - it is a nice opportunity to be reflective, ceremonial and to demonstrate leadership. Gather input from additional staff on key issues.
- Requests: Managers to be back onsite. Clean restrooms. Be firm with Council when needed.
- Employees would like more contact with Mr. Dohoney.
- There are a variety of deeper issues that need to be addressed including morale, DEI, some departments are fear based. Managers can be more approachable. (Admin and some managers continue to promote fear based work and only appear to get negative feedback on what wasn't done. Not the 1000 things you did get done.) Desire to have managers onsite.

Quotes:

Mr. Dohoney is an excellent leader. He is committed to making decisions that are best for the City and community. He is also patient and understanding of challenges sometimes faced in meeting goals.

He is the kind of leader we have needed for a long time and i truly hope he is able to stay and help us evolve as an organization.

He seems to really care about the staff and listen to their concerns and needs.

I recommend that Mr. Dohoney be made permanent City Administrator as soon as possible. I do not think the Council should wait until the fall as there is a substantial void with the City Attorney retiring next month. There are many positions to fill.

It is refreshing to have a leader that focuses on the "us" and "we" as opposed to the "I" and "me". Administrator Dohoney seems to be a stable, competent person working hard to move the City in the right direction.

He is in a tough spot being interim during a pandemic. But it seems that at a time when employee morale is very low, there is almost no attention to rebuilding the team. Major issues are being addressed only at the highest level with little to no input from anyone other than the folks at the top of the org. chart. As a result, polices are being changed that will, in the long term, be detrimental to the City organization as the top decision makers often do not understand

the ramifications and are making no attempt to solicit input from the people who have to implement the changes.

I appreciate the stability and professionalism that Mr. Dohoney brings to the City. I would highly encourage that the City Administration look at employee moral and start making efforts to increase moral. This may be a good opportunity to survey all staff to see how they feel and what would the recommend could improve employee moral.

Best communicator we have had in this role. No slight to his predecessors, however, Mr. Administrator is on another level. His experience is invaluable, his reasoning sound and just. Please do what you can to keep him as our leader. The City deserves leadership like that offered from him. With Department Heads leaving and having left in recent years we have a bit of a void that the remaining SAAs cannot file alone. As a famous fictional character once said, "the force is strong with this one." He is the Jedi we have been waiting for.

I appreciate how quickly Mr. Dohoney gets things done. He really cares about making a positive impact on the City and listening to concerns. Raising temporary wages to match living wage is a huge victory for the City and it's dedicated staff.