



CITY MANAGER'S WELCOME

Dear Colleague:

Since the founding of the City of Belmont in 1926, our "business" has been to provide a wide range of services, efficiently and effectively, with quality and courtesy. In this effort, all City employees should be guided by the following principles:

- ❖ The people of Belmont are our customers and our first priority. This organization was created to serve them, and without them we would not exist.
- ❖ Whether your responsibilities require you to work directly with citizens, or behind the scenes to support those who do, you fulfill a critical role in public service.
- ❖ High quality work and respect for the citizens and fellow employees who depend on you will always be expected.
- ❖ We focus on results, customer satisfaction and continuous improvement.
- ❖ The key to our success is the talent, integrity, dedication and positive attitude of City employees; each individual is part of the team and is responsible for the excellence of the entire organization.

Please remember these guidelines and take a personal interest in maintaining the City's high standards of service.

We hope this handbook will make it easier for you to begin your job. It answers some questions about what we expect of you and what you may expect in return. Please read it carefully. Of course, no handbook can answer all of the questions you may have, so I urge you to ask your supervisor or the Human Resources Department if you have concerns that are not covered here. In addition, I welcome input from employees. If you would like to talk to me, all you have to do is call *408 for an appointment.

I certainly hope your position will fulfill your personal and professional goals and that you enjoy being part of our dynamic organization.

Sincerely,

Jack Crist
City Manager

A BRIEF HISTORY

Belmont, first county seat of San Mateo County is a suburban community with a population of approximately 25,000 and is located on the San Francisco peninsula, midway between San Francisco and San Jose. The City was incorporated on October 29, 1926. Because Belmont lies east of the coastal mountain range, it is protected from much of the fog that rolls in from the Pacific Ocean, twelve miles to the west. The City covers an area of about 4.6 square miles.

The name "Belmont" means "beautiful mountain" in Spanish -- an appropriate name for the tree-covered rolling hills. The hills reach an altitude of about 750 feet, from which one can see Mt. Diablo and the San Francisco Bay on a clear day. This ideal location insures an even temperature with uniform low humidity. Summer temperatures range on the average from 53 to 82 degrees, and winter temperatures from 38 to 59 degrees. Normal rainfall, usually between October and March, is very light -- about 20 inches annually.

Belmont History

When the first Spanish explorers arrived on the San Francisco Peninsula in the late 1700s, they found a community of Native Americans. The Indians living in Belmont referred to what is now Ralston Avenue as "la Cañada del Diable", or Devil's Canyon. The name remained for many years. The Old County Road and Devil's Canyon became an important road intersection for early travelers.

One of the first Spanish land grants was to Don Luis Antonio Arguello from King Carlos III. Arguello was the first officer in charge of the Presidio in San Francisco, which was established to protect the Spanish settlements from the Russians and English. Arguello was offered any part of California he wished. In 1795 he chose the mid-peninsula area now known as Belmont, San Mateo, San Carlos and Redwood City.

When Arguello died in 1830, the Rancho was granted to his widow. In 1850 when California became a state, Mrs. Arguello hired Sidney Mezes, an attorney from Mexico City, to clear her land titles. Mezes later chose Belmont for his home.

Count Leonetto Cipriani bought a portion of the land grant in 1853 and lived here until he sold his estate to William C. Ralston in 1864. The Ralston home, an 80-room redwood mansion, became a landmark and is now located on the College of Notre Dame. The showplace Ralston Hall includes a mirrored ballroom reminiscent of the famed Versailles Hall of Mirrors. It is open for public tours.

After Belmont was incorporated as a city in 1926, the city was subdivided and sold in the smaller lots that remain today.

OUR FORM OF CITY GOVERNMENT

In the State of California, two alternatives exist for city incorporation: citizens may choose the general law framework or what is known as the charter (home rule) framework. Belmont incorporated as a general law city.

General law cities exist under general state laws that give guidelines for the local government. However, cities with this type of government have considerable discretion in the government forms and actions. On the other hand, the general laws under which they incorporated are subject to modifications by the State legislature. General law cities are governed by a city council of five individuals, one of whom is Mayor. Council members serve four-year staggered terms with all elections on a non-partisan basis. In a given election, the candidates receiving the highest number of votes are declared elected. The Mayor is selected from and by the Council.

The city council-City Manager form of municipal government is used in Belmont. This type of city government provides for an elective legislative body and appointed administration. Under this form of government, the Belmont City Council is elected to carry out the legislative responsibilities of the City. The Council, in turn, appoints a professional City Manager who serves as the chief administrative officer under the direction of the Council. The City Manager then appoints the necessary personnel to carry out the policies set by the Council.

The City government is composed of various organized departments and divisions, which work to attain the total goal of the City -- to serve the residents of the City of Belmont. In order to meet this goal, the functions of the Belmont municipal government are varied and extensive.

The City Manager is responsible for the impartial enforcement of all laws and ordinances, keeping the Council advised of the City's financial condition and future needs, and preparing and submitting the annual budget to the Council. Further, the City Manager is responsible for keeping the Council informed of City activities and programs through regular reports. He/She provides direction to all departments and provides the organizational structure to provide the most efficient means of operation. Communications with the City Council concerning management of the City are prepared as written recommendations in an agenda and summary report prior to each regular City Council meeting.

The City Council meets at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

Citizen Advisory Bodies

City commissions play an important role in city government by assisting and advising the City Council in formulating policy. These advisory bodies submit recommendations and supporting information to the Council for its consideration. The responsibilities of commissions are usually broad in scope and these bodies are established by ordinance. Committees and/or task forces are generally formed by resolution to handle specific projects or areas of concern.

In compliance with state open-meeting laws (the Brown Act), the meetings of commissions, committees and task forces are open to the public. No business is transacted if a quorum of the membership is not present.

The **Planning Commission** makes recommendations to Council on the maintenance of the General Plan for the physical development of the City as mandated by State law. It exercises control, as provided by the municipal code, over subdivision of land and zoning.

The **Parks and Recreation Commission** interprets community parks and recreation programs to public officials and to the general public. It ensures that these programs receive adequate financial and community support, makes policy recommendations with regard to community parks and recreation, and advised the Council on capital improvements for public leisure resources.

Based on financial considerations, the **Finance Commission** evaluates proposals and programs for both the long- and short-term financial consequences, assesses alternatives and makes appropriate recommendations to the Council. In essence, its purpose is to assist the Council so funds (money) are available for the continued success of the City's goals.

The **Arts Commission** acts as in advisory capacity to the City Council in all matters pertaining to visual arts, theatre arts, music and dance. It advises the Council on the formulation of policies on the arts and the selection and placement of public art. It also assists in the coordination of art-related programs and events with other civic and governmental agencies.

Department Functions

The **City Manager's Office** provides comprehensive direction to all City departments, as well as, coordination and administration of City activities, to attain effective and efficient municipal services. Information Services is part of the City Manager's Office.

The **City Clerk's Office** provides information to the City Council, staff and citizens, assists with elections, and keeps official records of City Council actions and City business. The City Clerk is directly elected by the voters, but acts as a department head with line responsibilities.

The **City Attorney** provides legal counsel and services to the City Council, its Commissions and the City departments.

Public Works provides inspection and engineering services to public rights-of-way and private development projects; maintains the present system of City streets, sidewalks, storm drains and traffic control devices; and ensures the safe and dependable performance of the sanitary sewer system and pump stations.

Planning and Community Development develops, administers and enforces ordinances, building codes and standards relating to the community's present and future development and construction; and provides resources to accomplish the Redevelopment Agency's goals as outlined in the Agency Plan, the Downtown Specific Plan and the Housing Element of the General Plan.

The **Police Department** provides a sense of security for the community through its patrol services; furnishes information and support to citizens with respect to police service and crime prevention; recovers and returns property to its rightful owner; conducts both criminal and non-criminal investigations; and protects the public in the event of disaster or unusual incident.

Parks and Recreation improves and maintains the quality of life in Belmont through the provision of educational, athletic and cultural activities in the City's parks and open spaces.

Finance provides fiscal support services to other City departments, boards, commissions, and South County Fire Protection Authority. Its roles is to enhance the City's decision making process by giving sound fiscal information and direction, to administer the City's risk management program, to maintain the payroll, accounts payable systems, and to provide programs and assistance which help define City services and fiscal requirements.

The **Human Resources** Department provides personnel services for employees, City Departments and South County Fire Protection Authority including employee benefits administration, classification and compensation, labor and employee relations, recruitment and selection, organizational development and training, and workers compensation administration.

South County Fire Protection Authority is a joint enterprise with the City of San Carlos. South County Fire provides fire protection and services to the residents and business of the Belmont, San Carlos and the unincorporated area of the Harbor Industrial District. (It's not on the organizational chart because Belmont is only half partner/owner.)

Organizational Chart

