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# THE CLEAR VIEW

Vol. 1

## Cultivating Tomorrow's Public Managers

I recently retired after a 40+ year career in city management including serving in five different cities located in four different states. This included serving as the City Manager in Fredericksburg for the final 10 years of my career. This was a very fulfilling career that provided me the opportunity to make a positive difference in the cities that I served. While it certainly involved a lot of challenges, it is something that I look back on with a sense of personal accomplishment.

One of the emerging challenges that I recognized in our profession about 8-10 years ago was the fact that many city managers were approaching retirement age. As I looked around at TCMA and ICMA conferences, I noticed a lot of gray-haired managers, including myself, were present in the meeting rooms. I realized that many of these managers would soon be leaving their positions. This anticipated tsunami of retirements was a cause for concern because of the major loss of knowledge and experience that might impact many communities. I thought that this major trend would create the need to get more professionals interested, committed, and trained to assume these public management positions.

As I was making some initial plans to retire myself, I realized that our profession might suffer if certain steps were not taken to address this problem. I wanted to do my part to address this emerging problem before I left city management, so I decided to get involved with MPA students at UTSA. I volunteered to serve as one of the TCMA Managers in Residence (MIR) at UTSA and served in this position for about six years. This position created the opportunity for me to interact directly with MPA students who were considering a career in public service.

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## The Power of Authenticity

In the realm of leadership, we are fortunate to have access to amazing resources and influential authors. From Simon Sinek to Stephen Covey and Brené Brown, the illuminated path to growth and excellence in leadership looks like a runway. These luminaries have bestowed upon us a wealth of knowledge and insights, guiding us toward a better way of leading. Yet, despite the abundance of wisdom, there remains a persistent challenge: the tendency to regress into the same flawed leadership patterns that plagued us before our enlightenment.

It is within this context that the concept of authentic leadership emerges as a beacon of hope and a transformative force. In today's government landscape, where workplace cultures yearn for authenticity and employees crave genuine leadership, embracing authenticity is not just a choice; it is an imperative.

Authentic leadership is more than a buzzword; it is a profound paradigm shift. It compels leaders to strip away the veneer of pretense and embrace their true selves. It demands vulnerability, transparency, and a deep understanding of one's values and principles. Authentic leaders lead from the heart, not merely from a position of authority.

There is no greater leadership trait than authenticity. It is the cornerstone upon which trust is built. Authentic leaders inspire and empower their teams by setting a compelling example. They foster an environment where open communication flourishes, where ideas flow freely, and where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for growth.

Authentic leadership is not a destination but a continuous journey of self-discovery and growth. It requires unwavering commitment and a willingness to confront one's shortcomings. The result is a vibrant and thriving leadership outcome that elevates individuals, teams, and organizations to unprecedented heights.

Amidst the plethora of leadership philosophies and approaches, authentic leadership stands as a timeless and indispensable virtue. It is the antidote to the recurring cycle of failed leadership, offering a genuine path to excellence.

By Michael Boese MPA, President



**Kent Myers Ph.D.**  
**Vice President of Recruitment**

With over four decades of experience in city management, Kent brings a profound wealth of knowledge and an unwavering commitment to public service. As part of the Clear team, Kent has consistently delivered outstanding results in recruiting, successfully identifying top talent for cities such as Kemah, Clear Lake Shores, Jamaica Beach, Kerrville, and Murphy. His expertise in succession planning is unparalleled.

## Cultivating Tomorrow's Public Managers

Soon after assuming this role it became obvious to me that city government was competing with state government, federal government, and non-profits to attract the best and brightest students to our profession. So, I focused on getting directly involved with students and relating to them about the positive aspects of working for local governments. This included the variety of positions available, the many future promotional opportunities due to anticipated retirements, and the ability to make a real difference in local communities.

During my time serving as a MIR, I found that many students were losing interest in local government as a career choice. Based on informal feedback from students, I found that this was due to several factors including their lack of knowledge about local government. Many of the students did not understand the basic roles and responsibilities of a city manager and other local government management positions. So, we collaborated with TCMA, Emerging Local Government Leaders (ELGL), and other organizations to sponsor sessions with students to learn directly from employees serving in different local government positions in the San Antonio area.

Other factors deterring student interest in local government were covered in these sessions including the competitive salary and benefits that many cities provide including health insurance and retirement benefits. Other concerns that were shared by students during my service as a MIR included their views on the declining perceptions about public service employees. As someone who entered public service during the 1970s, I recall the years during the Kennedy administration when public service such as the Peace Corps was held in high regard. During this time, working for the government was perceived to be as exciting as working in high-tech is today. So, I found that the "thrill was gone" about public sector jobs in the minds of many students.

### ➤ Featured Opportunities:

Whitesboro Chief of Police  
Clyde Chief of Police

### ➤ Upcoming Recruitments:

Morgan's Point Resort City Manager

### ➤ Recent City Manager Placements:

Kendal Francis, City of Jamaica Beach  
Manuel De La Rosa, Village of Salado  
Aretha Adams, City of Murphy

During my meetings with students, I attempted to convey a message that there were many exciting opportunities available in local government that were still perceived by the public in a positive way. I consistently reminded them that, due to local government being close to the public, there is a real opportunity to impact individual lives. Also, I related that there are opportunities to make visible and lasting improvements in the delivery of services, and over time this can create a change in public perceptions.

Last, but not least, I learned that many students were becoming less and less interested in working in government as a career due to the increased polarization that was occurring at the federal, state, and, more recently, at the local levels. I found that students were getting disenchanted with government at all levels. They read and directly observed key policy decisions that were being made at the local level that were driven by hidden agendas, political party alignment, and personal interests rather than the public interest. They began to question whether they wanted to enter this arena since it might limit their ability to make sound recommendations and decisions based on their professional knowledge and experience. They rightfully questioned whether this discourse and division would offer them job stability in the future. While I offered them hope that things would improve in future years, I found that this was my biggest challenge as an MIR wanting to attract the best and brightest to our profession.

I am sharing this experience so that it might provide a better understanding of the challenges that our profession faces in encouraging a new generation of students to consider local government management as their career. We need to inspire, encourage, and enlist quality individuals to spend their careers managing both municipalities and city departments. Attracting these students to local government will be critical to the ability to continue to provide quality local services. We all need to do our part in working with groups of students, as well as mentoring individual students, so that they will understand all that local government has to offer.

## Big News: Clear's New Service for Fire Departments

### Promotional Assessment Centers

A comprehensive promotional assessment center solution. We excel in conducting promotional assessments for all ranks, meticulously identifying quality leaders. Dr. Daniel Kistner, a seasoned fire professional with over 40 years of invaluable experience, leads our efforts. Visit our website [clearcareerpro.com](http://clearcareerpro.com) to learn more.



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