

NAPA HIRES TOP CANDIDATE FOR CITY POSITION



The Napa civil service system operated for nine months without having a permanent head but the city now has hired a permanent person for the job. Beginning on February 13, Nicole Bilich will become the city's personnel director and civil service manager. She will oversee the civil service system that Napa voters created back in the 1960s. The former director, Veronica Hodge, resigned from the position resigned back in September after serving just five months in the position. Hodge said that some reasons for her departure were problems with the human resources department for the city, which was created in the fall of 2010. Hodge claims that the new department superseded her duties and repeatedly violated the civil service system. She said this made it impossible to do her job to the best of her ability. The chairman of the Civil Service Commission, Bill Jabin, said that the commission hopes Bilich will fit in well with the city but did say that time will tell. "She has an extensive background in (human resources) and personnel," Jabin said. "It seems like she's going to get along well with everybody." Close to 25 people applied for the open position, with the top seven candidates interviewed by a committee that included city and county staff and a community member. The Civil Service Commission then interviewed the top three candidates for the job. The commission was never told how the top three candidates were ranked by the interview committee. But, after the hire, the commission found out that the committee ranked Bilich as its top choice. Bilich works in Sacramento in the human resources industry. She said that she is excited to bring positive change to Napa while updating policies and processes. Beginning in 2005, Bilich worked in human resources and the department of information technology for the city of Sacramento. She was promoted to run the city's department of utilities in 2010. At that time she worked on a merger with one of the department's divisions with another department within the city. "I think (Bilich) has the skill set that will make her a good fit for this city," said Paul Hicks, vice chairman of the Civil Service Commission. The human resources director for Napa, Karyn Ezell, said that she had not met Bilich yet but was hopeful that she will perform well with the city and the position. Ezell said that Dave Falk, the interim personnel director, has been working for the past couple of months to define the director position. "(Falk) took a lot of time to carefully define what the job entails and what is necessary for success," Ezell said. "We're really hopeful this is a good fit."

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