

Aaron Kraft, MPA

SUMMARY

Over 20 years of public and private utility expertise in the following areas:

- Team Leadership
- Project & Contract Management
- Financial Excellence
- Strategic Planning & Analysis
- Media Relations
- Customer Satisfaction
- Business Development
- Capital Improvements
- Technology Implementation
- Industry Networking
- Human Capital Mentoring
- Resource Conservation

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

VEOLIA

2009-Present

GM, Rialto Water Services (RWS) 2018 – Present (AGM, 2015 – 2017), Rialto, CA

Governed by the Rialto Utility Authority (RUA) and reporting to a five member Utility Commission, GM positively endorsed by all stakeholders for leading a union and management team of 54 providing best in class City water, wastewater and utility billing customer service functions for a city of 103,440 residents, commercial business and industries east of Los Angeles, CA with an annual \$14MM O&M budget and 23,000 billable customer accounts.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Leads all utility operations, services, and activities; plans, directs, manages, and oversees the activities and operations including Strategic Planning, Accounting, Budgeting, Procurement, Engineering, Asset Management, Human Resources, Customer Service and Public Affairs.
- Provides general direction to the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of all utility facilities; directs water production, treatment, storage, transmission and distribution services and activities, wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services and activities, reclaimed water distribution services and all associated administrative activities.
- Facilitates the development, implementation, and administration of RUA/RWS/Veolia goals and objectives; interprets and implements, through subordinates, goals, policies, rules and regulations set forth by the City Council, Utility Commission and regulatory agencies in a safe, compliant, efficient and cost-effective manner.
- Organizes and facilitates routine and critical utilities meetings and all communications with key community leaders and acts as the media and public relations rep for all things water.

Achievements:

- Championed \$41M in water and wastewater capital improvements in Rialto over the past three years.
- Led a water metering and technology replacement program, from planning through implementation, proven to save the City nearly \$1.5MM over 10 years. The effort used Veolia's international purchasing power, by increased metering accuracies and reduced water losses as well as overall labor, equipment and materials costs.
- Developed an internship with a local college to solve a shortage of certified operators – specifically, 25% of Rialto's team will retire within the next 3-5 years. RUA assists the college in teaching and provides needed on-the-job training to qualify students for testing and certification.
- Currently pursuing the NACWA Peak Performance Award (goal of Platinum) to galvanize team toward vision of being a nationally awarded Utility of the Future.
- Skillfully utilizing the *Core Value Index™* process to assess existing employees and incoming new hires to develop a better more cohesive, right-fitted team.

Project Manager III, Municipal, Commercial & Industrial Water/Wastewater, Vancouver, WA

2009-

2015

Led six award-winning WA & OR water/wastewater projects, the largest of which served a population of 183,012, under an annual \$16MM O&M budget with a team of 51 experts. Openly drove positive stakeholder interactions

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and became annually recognized and rewarded by the company and the state for exemplary operations that serviced a combined population of over 600,000 people in the various metro areas.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Directly managed a valuable hub and spoke system to provide long term O&M utility services for seven water and wastewater facilities located throughout WA and OR.
- Media and public service relations and communications for safety, compliance, major project groundbreaking ceremonies, utility rate adjustments, emergency responses actions for all water and wastewater infrastructure issues and annual earthquake preparedness exercises for presentation to the public and media.
- Directs and participates with management team in the development and administration of annual budgets; long-term capital improvement plans, including grant writing, financing, bidding and forecast of funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials, and supplies; approves expenditures and implements budgetary adjustments when necessary, but with the least amount of service and staff impacts.

Achievements:

- Negotiated and secured four, multi-year, contract extensions with City of Vancouver's three wastewater facilities.
- Multiple managed projects awarded with National Association of Clean Water Agencies Platinum Peak Performance Award every year during my leadership service.
- Multi year Veolia North America Gold Water/Wastewater project award recipient in small, medium and large class (competing against 400+ projects in the US and Canada).
- Facilitated multi-million dollar wastewater capital improvements including major headworks replacements, fluidized bed furnace and aeration basin upgrades, and four, 250 hp high-speed turbo blower replacements.
- Advanced water capital improvements that included a 2MG ActiFlo water filtration project installation and a chlorination/dechlorination and SCADA system upgrades.

AMERICAN WATER ENTERPRISES (AWE), Sioux City, IA

2007-2009

Central Region Operations Director

Accountable for full oversight of four water and wastewater contract utilities in IA, IN, KY and LA under an annual combined \$16.2MM O&M budget. Personally managed three project teams through extended project manager staffing vacancies during two labor union negotiations. Led four union and non-union crews totaling 147 with four direct reports serving a total combined population of over 500,000.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Similar duties and responsibilities as Veolia GM, AGM and PM above.

Achievements:

- Served as planning, design, construction, and operations administrator for a \$64M regional wastewater design, bid, build, and operate project serving the tri-state area.
- Developed retrofitted design plans for connection of two, custom-built, belt-filter presses that could not be used by a neighboring agency and packaged the improvements saving the client over \$500,000.
- Negotiated complex Collective Bargaining Agreement between two unions whereby American Water directly managed City employees under American Water and City of Evansville, IN human resources departments.
- Rescued a New Orleans wastewater project that was losing over \$1M/year. Project required major capital upgrades by the city in order to break even. Negotiated great pricing for equipment, securing other project equipment deals in return, and offered an annual energy savings plan. Project profitable after one year.
- Upgraded dozens of large pumps, motors, and blowers with new, high-efficiency equipment at a cost of \$1.5MM saving the client \$250,000 in annual electric costs.

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CITY OF SIOUX CITY, Sioux City, IA

1999-2007

Environmental Services Director

Mastered annual \$20+MM O&M budget for water (treatment/distribution), wastewater (treatment/collections), stormwater and solid waste enterprise utilities, including industrial pretreatment program, billing (29,000 customer accounts), infrastructure assets, 250-acre Brownfields site, policy/procedures, community economic development reviews, GIS and disaster hazard mitigation with 110 dedicated staff members serving a metro area of 169,405 citizens.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Served as lead spokesman for any and all water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, FEMA and Brownfields-related city matters. Made tri-state area presentations to city councils, COGs, boards, non-profits, chambers of commerce, utility agencies, regulators, and at neighborhood meetings. Communications were often controversial due to flooding damage, service interruptions, property loss, rate increases, traffic disruption, eminent domain cases, and lawsuits.
- Director for City Environmental Advisory Board, Public Works lead for Council of Governments, Strategic Planning, Economic, Community Development and Development Review Committees.
- Other similar duties and responsibilities as Veolia GM, AGM and PM and as AWE Operations Director above.

Achievements:

- Administered nearly \$100M in capital infrastructure improvement projects over my eight year tenure.
- Championed an 8,000" 36" water transmission main installation that impacted hundreds of residents and businesses for over one year. Many had no public access to their own driveways, needed to walk blocks to get mail, and had torn up yards and driveways. However, these residents received new paved streets, driveways, sidewalks, and landscaping all with minimal assessments. Skilled in utilizing the *Core Value Index™* process tool to assess team members and build better more cohesive teams.
- Continued tradition of AA bond rating for Outstanding Financial Enterprise Fund management throughout my City career in utilities.
- Led an ESRI geographic information system (GIS) implementation for all city utility needs, taking the city into the 21st century. Project was a four-year planning, proposal, bidding, and implementation inter-departmental effort. Outdated and missing underground utility information was digitized and uploaded from old paper plans, specs, and mylars. Trimble GPS units were used to collect geospatial coordinates representing hundreds of thousands of data points for more accountable asset management.
- Peer elected Chairman of the Iowa Recycling Association (largest of its kind at that time); honored by SWANA for Community Education, Single Stream Recycling, Comprehensive Planning and Unit Based Pricing Campaigns.

EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Masters in Public Administration, Iowa State University, Ames, IA

Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering, New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology, Socorro, NM

Human Resources Associates Certificate, Management Development Institute

Water/Wastewater Management Certified, Indian Hills Community College

FEMA National Incident Management System Certified, Emergency Management Institute

Public Management Graduate, Iowa State University Graduate School

Community Program Graduate, Rialto Institute of Progress

Educational Program Leader for Rialto Unified School District, GenSTEM

Past Chairman of the Board, Southwest WA American Red Cross

Sgt., USAF, Laboratory Tech and Emergency Med Tech, Disabled American Combat Veteran