

Cook re-elected city clerk in Belmont

By Bill Silverfarb
DAILY JOURNAL STAFF

Incumbent Terri Cook beat out Belmont Vice Mayor Dave Warden for the city clerk position she has held for nearly 10 years.

It was the first time Cook faced any competition in the race since 2002.

Cook, 53, earned just less than 52 percent of the vote to retain her seat.

Warden ran for the seat to save the city money, he said, by refusing to take the clerk's \$95,000 a year salary. He also intended to streamline the office to make it more technologically savvy.

For Cook, the campaign was an opportunity to educate the public on what the city clerk's role is in the city.

"My focus was to run a positive cam-



Terri Cook

paign. This is a professional position and I wanted to maintain professionalism in the campaign," Cook told the Daily Journal last night. "It was sometimes hard not to knee-jerk react to my opponent's proposals."

Warden, 50, said the position should be more a voluntary one and advocated for making it an appointed position rather than an elected one.

Cook said that should be a decision left up to Belmont voters to decide.

Warden, however, will retain his council seat and is next in line to be

mayor in Belmont.

Warden wanted to significantly improve the efficiency of the office and to take council meeting minutes in real time on a laptop computer rather than the pen and paper Cook uses to take minutes.

Warden also does not think Cook's position is a full-time one and said he could get the job done in some weeks by working only five hours in the office.

He also said during the campaign that the clerk's office wastes a lot of paper.

Warden could not be reached for comment last night.

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CITY CLERK
THE DAILY JOURNAL
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Cook for Belmont city clerk

Races for city clerk are seldom compelling, or even contested, as the job is largely administrative with three components — serving the public with documents and assisting city staff and the City Council.

However, the city of Belmont is known for its unique personalities and sometimes politically charged atmosphere. That may be in play in this particular race pitting the incumbent, Terri Cook, against current Vice Mayor Dave Warden, who is willing to give up his seat on the council to take the position. Politics aside, the race should be considered in the context of the job itself. Cook has served as Belmont city clerk for nearly a decade. We haven't heard any official complaints about her in the job though she is known to be prickly at times. She points to her experience serving the city over the years on the Planning Commission and City Council, including serving as mayor. She contends she is independent and emphasizes the importance of keeping the job as an elected position to maintain that independence.

Warden wants to make drastic changes to the office — making it a part-time equivalent position and shuffling the administrative tasks to other city employees while promising not to take the job's roughly \$95,000 annual salary and instead taking an amount closer to \$6,000 a year. That would be the

Editorial

equivalent of what members of the City Council make in their part-time role. He also wants to move toward a more paperless office and use his experience in management and technology as a medical software developer to streamline the tasks of the office.

Cook said she has already begun the task of transforming the office to a paperless one and to provide for efficiencies. Those efforts accelerated in the past few months as this election approached.

Warden has provided some bright ideas and food for thought. Some of them could be introduced and discussed at the council level as a way to improve the efficiency of the entire city. In his time on the council, Warden has proven to be bold with his ideas and able to reach consensus in bringing them into action. Perhaps he should think about broadening his goals for the clerk's office to other areas of the city's administration.

His concept of making the position part-time, with a lower salary, is one that should be decided by the voters though any official has the liberty to do what they will with their salary. Many cities have successfully moved toward having the city clerk be an appointed position. Perhaps the voters should decide

Endorsements

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- San Mateo County Community College District
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- San Bruno Park Elementary School District
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that too, or conclude it should remain elected with lower pay or stay exactly as it is now. The council can place such a measure on the ballot. Or a citizen group can be formed with the same intent. Either would be a more appropriate path.

Warden is a key member of the City Council and is best suited for enacting change in his current position which would save the city the task of determining how he would be replaced — whether through an appointment or a special election that could cost the city money. Cook has proven to be a solid and independent city clerk, who deserves a chance to continue making changes to the office in a way that makes sense to the city and its citizens.

(OVER)

*City Clerk
Daily Post
June 22, 2009*

City Clerk refuses raise

BY JOSH WOLF
Daily Post Staff Writer

Belmont City Clerk Terri Cook has refused to take a pay hike in an effort to help ease the city's budget woes, she told the Post yesterday.



COOK

The elected clerk, who made \$93,276 last year, makes less than her peers in other San Mateo County cities but decided to accept only a 1.78 percent cost of living adjustment for the year that begins July 1.

Meanwhile the City Council approved pay raises as high as 9.76 percent for department heads at a meeting last month.

Police Chief Don Mattei, who made \$163,884 last year, was given a 9.76 percent raise. And Pub-
[See RAISE, page 19]

RAISE —————

lic Works Director Raymond Davis III, who made \$190,612 last year, was awarded a 7.28 percent raise at the City Council's May 26 meeting.

"I was really torn about what do," Cook told the Post. "I was having personal difficulty having the staff bring forward a resolution for equity. ... This maybe is my opportunity to make my statement."

Cook acknowledges that the money

she is forgoing won't have much of an effect on the city's budget woes, but said she wanted to do her part in sharing the sacrifices everyone in the city will feel from the shortfall.

If Cook hadn't refused the raise the council would've likely granted her two separate 4 percent raises over the next two months in order to continue bringing her salary in line with her counterparts in other cities, she said.

But even though she is refusing the money, she said it is still important that the clerk's wages are brought into line with neighboring cities so that the city can attract the best person for the position.

"While I am comfortable with my salary, there will come a time when I will no longer be the city clerk, and another qualified candidate will be elected," said Cook. "I don't want to lose sight of the fact that we should be keeping abreast of the market median situation."

CITY CLERK
SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES
NOV. 6, 2002

Cook wins Belmont clerk race

■ Councilmember wins city post that opened up after a resignation

By Tim Hay
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Two-term City Council member Terri Cook beat two newcomers and another political veteran for the coveted \$80,000-a-year post of Belmont City Clerk on Tuesday.

Cook garnered 2,119 votes, edging business consultant George Burgess by just 104 votes. Burgess got 2,015.

Former mayor Eleanor Hahn picked up 1,213 votes, and Christina Wagenseller, a 22-year-old who formerly worked as a courier in the clerk's office, got 654.

"I'm very happy," Cook said from T&B's Baja Bar and Grill on Masonic Way, where she was celebrating her victory Tuesday.

"I'm ready to jump in with both feet, and both arms, and my head," she said. "I'm very gung-ho. It's a great thing for Belmont, and a great thing for me personally."

Cook will fill the remaining year in Kathy Kern's term. Kern, who ran for the post unopposed twice, resigned when she moved from Belmont to San Mateo.

Cook said she did not know when her official first day on the job would be — nor when she would step down from the City Council — but that she was meeting with the city manager today to iron it out.

Belmont Mayor Dave Warden had endorsed Burgess, saying Cook would be difficult to replace on the council and that a special election would be costly for the city.

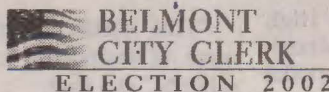
Burgess, who took his campaign door-to-door, said he was encouraged that, as a newcomer, he gave Cook a run for her money.

"I'm coming out of nowhere," he said, "and I'm excited that I did that well. But I'd be more excited if I won. I guess I'll enjoy the holidays, then start running for City



DONALD R. WINSLOW — Staff

BELMONT CITY CLERK ELECT Terri Cook mingles with supporters at T&B's Baja Bar and Grill on Masonic Way in Belmont. "I'm ready to jump in with both feet, and both arms, and my head," she said after her election. "I'm very gung-ho."



Clerk next year."

Tuesday's election was the city's first in years for the administrative post, which, among other duties, involves keeping a detailed record of all city business.

The deputy clerk generally steps into the post without opposition when the clerk steps down. But the current deputy clerk,

Sheila Harrington, is not eligible because she is not a Belmont resident.

Cook, 44, has said her previous city government experience — serving on the Planning Commission for three years before taking a seat on the council in 1997 — would ease Belmont's transition to a new clerk.

She currently works as an administrator for the San Carlos School District.

CITY CLERK
THE INDEPENDENT
NOV. 5, 2002

Clerk candidates spend big money on campaigns

Voters to decide who will fill Kern's seat

BY WES BOWERS
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT — In a bizarre race for the city clerk seat, the four candidates vying to replace former city clerk Kathy Kern have forked out thousands of dollars to gain voter approval.

It's the first time in the city's history that voters will choose between four candidates campaigning for clerk.

Candidates Christina Wagenseller, Terri Cook, George Burgess and Eleanore Hahn will find out today if the money they spent will pay off.

"I feel pretty good," said Cook, a current councilmember. "I've had a lot of great feedback from people I've run into, either walking



See expanded election coverage inside:

- 19th Assembly broadcast debacle ... page 5A
- Schools push parcel tax ... page 5A

precincts or just out in the community."

Cook spent \$4,000 to \$5,000 on the campaign, the same amount she spent on her two campaigns for City Council.

"It's a range I figured I'd be in when the campaign started," she said. "As I've said before, I like to do a grassroots

(OVER)

campaign and show people that you don't need to spend a lot for an election. I hope that history holds true to that on Tuesday."

The "fresh face," as Burgess calls himself, has spent about \$9,000 on campaign materials.

"Going door-to-door, I've been recognized a lot more by the residents," he said. "It's been a fun campaign for me and I've met a lot of people I never would have met if I lived here for several more years."

Burgess said it would be interesting to see which campaigning strategies worked for each candidate.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the results and seeing if all the effort we've put into the run has paid off," he said. "The four of us have taken different tactics to generate interest in our backgrounds and experiences, and it will be interesting to see how that all plays out."

Burgess said he feels very confident heading into Nov. 5 because he has been walking

the precincts and talking to as many people as he can, as often as he can.

"I've tried to convey the message that you need to tell well and tell often," he said. "And I think I've succeeded in that area without getting too involved with what the others are doing. Tuesday will be an exciting day for all of us."

Topping Burgess in dollars spent is former councilmember Hahn, who has spent \$12,000 on her campaign.

"I'm very positive about Tues-

day," she said. "I had a strategy early on in the campaign and I think my strength is there to win."

Although she would not reveal what strategies she took to gain her support, she did say that campaigning early and getting exposure as soon as possible is a huge factor in a candidate's success.

"I'm generally a quiet candidate," she said. "There seems to be a lot of frenzy in the other candidates' campaigns at the last minute, and I don't know why. The strength of a campaign is in an early one."

On the low end of the spending spectrum, Wagenseller shelled out a paltry \$660 on her campaign.

"I've had a lot of support from all kinds of people in town," she said. "There's actually more people supporting me than I first realized, and that's a positive sign."

Even though she has spent the least amount to promote herself, she still sent flyers and forms to more than 600 families, hitting nearly 2,000 registered voters.

"I'm excited," she said. "Hopefully this will be a starting point for me in a new career in politics. We'll see what the voters decide on Tuesday."

City clerk candidates run the gamut



Cook
Candidate

mont city councilmember

Background: Born and raised in Belmont, Cook served the community in volunteer roles for more than 30 years. She was elected to the council in 1997 and is currently serving her second term as councilmember. She was mayor from 1999-2000. She also served on the Planning Com-

Terri Cook

Age: 44

Occupation: San Carlos School District employee and current Bel-



Burgess
Candidate

Background: Burgess moved to Belmont five years ago and has owned several small start-up businesses, offering consultation to many large corporations in Nebraska, Missouri and the Bay Area.

George Burgess

Age: 66

Occupation: Self-employed financial consultant

mission for three years and was a self-employed court reporter.



Hahn
Candidate

Hahn is a former councilmember and mayor and has experience in management with IBM. Hahn has lived in Belmont for 16 years, serving on the Mid-Peninsula Water District Board for four years.

Eleanore Hahn

Age: 60

Occupation: Real estate broker

Background:



Wagenseller
Candidate

Born and raised in Belmont, Wagenseller has worked part time in the Parks and Recreation and City Clerk departments. Her father serves on the Mid-Peninsula Water District Board.

Christina Wagenseller

Age: 24

Occupation: Office administrator

Background:

Clerk forum focuses on Cook's campaign

Warden endorses Burgess rather than co-councilmember

By WES BOWERS
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT — Councilmember Terri Cook's bid for the city clerk's seat is being called into question by some who fear replacing her current seat would be costly.

Cook is running for former city clerk Kathy Kern's office against four other candidates — George Burgess, Christine Wagenseller and former coun-

cilmember Eleanore Hahn.

Many at a recent city clerk candidate's forum — hosted by the San Mateo County League of Women Voters and the Belmont Heights Civic Improvement Association — feel that it would cost the city too much to hold a special election to fill her seat on the council.

That was a concern for Mayor Dave Warden who has endorsed businessman Burgess.

"When we held a special election for the library, it cost the city about \$40,000, and now I

hear holding another one to find a replacement could cost us nearly \$100,000," he said.

He also said Cook's council seniority would be sorely missed should she be elected city clerk. "I really think it's in the best interest of the city for Terri to remain on council," he said. "She's the only councilmember that has been on the council for more than three years, and the city needs her."

Warden said a better candidate is Burgess, who has a solid background in financial consulting, and has good ideas about increasing voter registra-

tion and centralizing city records.

"I believe that if George were elected, that it will be the best overall for the city," said Warden. "He is extremely qualified and has a lot of good ideas. We're fortunate to have someone who is extremely professional and competent running for the office."

Burgess was honored that the mayor endorsed him rather than fellow councilmember Cook. "I think he's endorsing me because of my business experience," he said. Along with centralizing city records

and increasing voter registration, Burgess hopes to generate more revenue for the city by offering passport services.

"I think he [Warden] sees my ideas as a contribution to the citizens," he said. "I guess my thoughts and approach to the position helped him decide."

Meanwhile, Cook has no ill feelings toward Warden's endorsement. "People should feel free to endorse who ever they want to," she said. "If he feels that someone is the better candidate than the others, well then that's his prerogative."

COOK: page 8A

COOK: Warden backs Burgess

Continued from 1A

Cook defended her decision to run, citing her background as a court reporter and former San Carlos School District employee. "Because I know the staff and the city pretty well, I can get up to speed pretty quickly," she said. "I'd obviously give myself a few weeks to get completely up to speed, but I like to learn new things so I don't think it would take long."

Besides questions over Cook's bid, candidates were asked how they would improve voter turnout and relations between City Hall and residents.

Wagenseller said it was important for the clerk to respond promptly to staff requests. "The relationship has to be a good one," said Wagenseller. "The council and city staff are always asking the city clerk for information, and the city

clerk must be willing to help out the staff."

Hahn said she would promote voter turnout by talking to high school students and passing out registration forms.

"I keep a stack of registrations with me all the time and have been able to get some people to register," she said. "But I too was encouraged when I spoke to high school kids about voting, while I was mayor. I was very impressed with how many wanted to become involved in government and took an interest in the voting process."

For more information on each of the candidates, visit the county's election website at www.smartvoter.org.

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city clerk
the independent
Oct 19, 02

CITY CLERK
SAN MATEO COUNTY TIME
SEPT. 20, 2002

Clerk race pits vets vs. newcomers

By Tim Hay
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — For the first time in years, there's a real race in November for the elected position of City Clerk.

Incumbent Kathy Kern has twice been unopposed for the \$80,000-a-year administrative post, which, among other duties, involves keeping records of all City Council proceedings.

But this year, Kern is ineligible, as she is moving to San Mateo. Deputy City Clerk Sheila Harrington isn't a Belmont resident, either.

This has opened the field, and four hopefuls have thrown their hats into the ring. Two are veteran city politicians, the third has worked at City Hall and the fourth would be a new face there.

City Councilmember Terri Cook and former mayor and councilmember Eleanore Hahn

both covet the job, and say that their experience in politics should be a major advantage.

But George Burgess and Christina Wagenseller, the newcomers, say it's time for the post to go to someone with no political experience — or agenda.

"I'm a fresh face and a fresh voice, and I don't have any preconceived ideas," said Burgess, who has lived in the city since 1996.

"The clerk position is a neutral position," said Wagenseller, a former courier in the City Clerk's office, "and I don't have a political view. I've never been in politics."

Burgess said that as clerk, he would work to increase voter registration and try to beef up the office's information technology. Wagenseller said she would run the office exactly as it is now.

Both Cook and Hahn said their knowledge of city operations

— as well as good working relationships with council and city staff — would ease the transition from Kern to a new clerk.

They also said they would refrain from jumping into council discussions, as one currently participates in them and the other used to.

Hahn said her recent arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol should not affect her election chances, as it was an isolated incident.

"I don't think it's going to have a huge impact," she said. "I have not denied it. I have accepted responsibility, and it will never happen again."

The candidates agreed that the City Clerk is, in a sense, the face of the city, as he or she is often the first person a citizen sees on entering City Hall.

The city's voters will decide which face to put on.

(OVER)

Candidates for Belmont City Clerk

Eleanore Hahn



Age: 60

Education: degree in liberal arts and business from Katherine Gibbs School, New York.

Experience: Licensed real estate broker. Served as Belmont mayor from 2000-01, vice mayor from 1999 to 2000 and on City Council from 1997 to 2001. She has also served on a number of County panels.

Council from 1997 to 2001. She has also served on a number of County panels.

Christina Wagenseller



Age: 24

Education: Bachelor's in liberal studies from San Francisco State University.

Experience: Administrator for a general contracting firm. Worked for Parks and Recreation mentoring children and as a courier in the clerk's office.

in the clerk's office.

Terri Cook



Age: 44

Education: Associate's degree from Cañada College

Experience: Administrator for San Carlos School District. Has served on the Belmont City Council since 1997 and prior to that was a planning commissioner for three years.

sioner for three years.

George Burgess



Age: 66

Education: Degree from Columbia University in economics and business.

Experience: 35 years as a manager and business consultant.

City Council debates starting salary for clerk

Officials disagree on whether \$80,000 pay is too high

By Wes Bowers
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT — The city clerk's salary could be lowered if one Belmont councilmember succeeds at garnering support for his initiative.

Mayor Dave Warden wants to lower the Belmont clerk's pay from the hefty \$80,000 a year that the position pays now.

"Anyone who gets elected will be a first-time employee of the city," Warden said. "And because they will be a first-time employee, I think it's only right that we look into what a good

starting salary would be for a new employee."

But some councilmembers don't think it's necessary.

"I think what the city clerk does is really worth the salary they're paid ... the hours a week, they have to set up meetings and run elections. They do quite a lot," said Councilmember George Metropulos.

Former councilmember Eleanore Hahn, Councilmember Terri Cook, businessman George Burgess and resident Christine Wagenseller are all running in the Nov. 5 election for the city clerk seat.

As the longtime city clerk, Kathy Kern earned \$80,000 before she stepped

down in May.

"Kathy earned that salary and she deserved it," Warden said. "But she earned that salary through raises and working as a deputy and city employee over the years. She didn't start at \$80,000."

Warden said once a new city clerk is elected this November, he would like to conduct a salary survey of other clerks in the county to establish a starting salary in line with the rest of the county. San Mateo's city clerk earns \$91,665 annually, and Redwood City's makes \$89,796 a year.

When former city clerk Dottie Hall was elected in the 1980s after Jim McLaughlin retired, the city lowered

the clerk's salary and Hall was given raises during the course of her tenure as clerk, Warden said.

"A lot of former city clerks worked as deputies and in other parts of the city," he said. "And most of them had been doing a service to the city or had worked for the city for years."

Clerk candidate George Burgess agrees with Warden's thinking. "I think the council should lower the salary," he said. "Kathy has earned the amount she's getting because she has worked for the city for 16 years or so and deserved every penny."

Any of "the four of us would be first-time clerks," he added.

SALARY: page 10A

SALARY: Pay issue debated

Continued from 1A

"And I think in government, as in any industry, rarely does a new person to the job command the same salary as someone who has worked there for several years."

Although the issue to lower the salary most likely won't arise until one of the four candidates is elected and settled into their new position, other councilmembers don't believe it's necessary.

However, they are willing to consider the idea if it becomes an issue. "If there's enough people that want to talk about it, I think it would be worth looking at," said Metropulos.

While he is open to looking at the possibility of lowering the salary, Metropulos pointed out that the clerk does

more than just sit in the office from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"I think what the city clerk does is really worth the salary they're paid," he said. "They do a lot of work outside the nine-to-five routine. Besides working their 40 hours a week, they have to set up meetings and run elections. They do quite a lot."

However, Councilmember Dave Bauer believes the city should not consider the issue after electing a new clerk.

"I think it's pretty much a moot point right now," said Bauer. "We had the opportunity to look at the issue when Kathy resigned and we didn't do anything then."

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copy the Independent
Sept 17, 02

City Hall project back to square one

Council chooses another architect to generate plans

By WES BOWERS
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT — Despite pleas from a concerned Finance Commission to once again delay the City Hall project because of cost, the City Council approved a contract with yet another architectural firm to draw some new plans.

San Francisco based architectural firm Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz was hired by the city last

week to revamp the 2-year-old City Hall retrofitting plans created by EKONA.

The city scrapped the plans after bids for the project came in \$3 million over the city's \$5 million budget.

Instead of having EKONA scale back the old plans, the city will spend \$500,000 for Kaplan to redesign the original renderings to retrofit City Hall to house city services and the police station.

But the Finance Commission believes that retooling the original plans won't save the city any money.

"To date, the city has spent over \$750,000 on plans," said City Treasurer Howard Mason. "This proposal asks for \$499,000 and now we're at \$1.2 million in costs and that's before construction. No time in our city's history have we had a project that cost so much."

Other city officials have faith in Kaplan, because of the firm's track record for bringing down the costs of expensive projects.

"KMD has extensive experience in designing public safety and justice facilities, as well as

taking over projects that had not gone so well," said Assistant City Manager Dan Rich.

The firm just recently completed a public facilities project in Berkeley that was very similar to Belmont's City Hall/police station plan, said KMD Executive Director Jim Mueller.

In that project, Mueller said the city planned to build a public facilities structure that ended up being \$2 million over budget. The firm redrew plans and brought the project under budget so the city

could build it.

"We did that project in a month and a half," said Mueller. "The project was bid on a few months later and got built within a year. We like to think that we can produce the results the city desires."

While KMD will only revamp the old EKONA plans, some worried the project would have to go through the whole design process again.

"The city has a record of long development projects," said Mayor Dave Warden. "It typically takes two to three years

CITY HALL: page 2A

CITY HALL: New architect

Continued from 1A

to get a project done, from the application to construction. The fear I have is how far back through the design process are we going to have to go?"

Mueller said the project would go through two Planning Commission reviews before construction began.

"We need to move forward on this project," he said. "When we looked at this project earlier we looked at everything

from cost, to parking to building materials and other things. I understand this may not be the most optimal plan, but we need to get this done."

KMD hopes to complete the project by May 2003, and the city hopes to start taking bids from construction firms by summer.

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City Clerk
The Independent
Sept 10, 02

Clerk candidates prepare for campaigns

Some plan to spend thousands to win contested election

By WES BOWERS
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT — As Nov. 5 approaches, candidates for city clerk are pounding the pavement in an unusual campaign for a seat that generally receives little publicity.

Former councilmember Eleanore Hahn, Councilmember Terri Cook, businessman George Burgess and resident Christine Wagenseller are vying for the post of city clerk — an \$80,000-plus job that includes keeping minutes at city meetings, signing and approving ordinances, and applying the city seal on official city documents.

With so many campaigning for a position that usually only draws one candidate, name recognition will be key, candidates said.

That will require some money.

Burgess figures that costs for campaigning could be anywhere between \$5,000 and \$10,000. "I'm going to try to do a little bit of everything without spending too much," he said. "But you can spend an awful lot of money if you want to be the most effective. Everyone is saying that if I'm going to be effective I might have to spend that much."

This week, Burgess hopes to have advertisements and flyers in local newspapers, as well as implementing a direct mail program. As November draws closer, he expects to probably put signs

up around town.

"For the most part, my goal is to talk to as many people as I can, face-to-face between now and November," he said. "No matter how a candidate puts their name out there, I think the most effective way is to look people straight in the eye and tell them about yourself."

Although Hahn hasn't started her campaign yet, she said spending upwards of \$10,000 is average in any election.

Hahn would not go into the details of how she plans to put her name out there, except to say that she is working on some literature she might hand out or mail to residents.

"The strategy for this campaign is pretty much the same as a council campaign," Hahn said. "Getting the message out about the position and why we're running is the main goal."

While Hahn and Burgess expect to spend quite a bundle, Wagenseller hopes she can be just as effective without spending as much.

"I'm hoping I can spend less than \$1,000," she said. "Right now I'm trying to get endorsements from people, and soon I'll be handing out flyers and going to as many community events as I can."

Although her name is not as well known as Hahn's or Councilmember Terri Cook's, Wagenseller said many people still recognize her.

"I'm really amazed," she said. "I haven't done a whole lot of campaigning, but a lot of people have come up to me and have wished me luck after seeing my name listed as a candidate."

Cook is still undecided how much she'll spend this election.

"I have a history of keeping my campaigns as low-key as possible," she said. "And I'm trying to keep this one low-key. Last year when I ran for council I could have spent about \$5,000 to \$6,000, but this time I just don't know how much it will be."

This year Cook said she plans to mail brochures explaining her qualifications, rather than what issues she plans to tackle.

"This campaign will be fairly similar to the way I've campaigned for council but I'm trying to take a different approach because it's a differ-

ent office," she said. "Before, I was appealing to people for a place on a policy-making body, and this is more like applying to the residents for a job."

While Cook admits she does not like going back to her supporters just one year after campaigning for the council and asking for donations, she said it's all part of the process.

"The part of campaigning I hate is asking for money and spending it, but that's part of the process," Cook said. "And so far, people have been supportive and I'm appreciative of that."

Wes Bowers can be reached at 556-1556, Ext. 6 or via e-mail at wbowers@smindependent.com.

CITY CLERK
THE INDEPENDENT
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Saturday, September 7, 2002

City clerk candidate Hahn charged with DUI

Former mayor stopped in Belmont during Labor Day

WES BOWERS
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT— City clerk candidate and former Belmont Mayor Eleanore Hahn was arrested on charges of driving under the influence of alcohol this past Labor Day weekend during one of the county's heaviest crackdowns on drunk drivers.

Hahn was halted in the 1500 block of Ralston Ave. for a routine traffic stop at 9:45 p.m. on Aug. 30.

"She did something that brought her to the attention of the officer," said Belmont police Sgt. Robyn Pitts.

Hahn did not cause an accident and was very cooperative with the officer, Pitts said. After being taken to First Chance, Hahn spent a few hours at the Belmont Police Station, filled out the proper paperwork and was released.

How much alcohol Hahn had in her blood was unknown at press time. Pitts said Hahn was not taken to San Mateo County Jail.

"I had some friends over, they left and I went out to get a paper," said Hahn. "I thought I could get a paper and drop one off for a friend of mine. I came back up Ralston and they stopped me."

Hahn, 60, is a real estate broker and a candidate in a four-person race for city clerk. Also running for the position are Councilmember Terri Cook, office

administrator Christina Wagenseller and businessman George Burgess.

Hahn does not believe that the sudden publicity of driving under the influence will hurt her chances at winning the upcoming election for city clerk.

"I've called all my supporters and they are still 100 percent behind me," she said. "I think everyone knows someone that this has happened to, and I was one of the many that were stopped during a heavy weekend of checkpoints."

Hahn was elected to the City Council in 1997 and served as mayor from 2000



Hahn
Former mayor

to 2001. She did not seek re-election. A 15-year resident of Belmont, Hahn has also served on the water board — which is now known as the Mid-Peninsula Water District.

While Hahn was not stopped at an Avoid the 23 DUI checkpoint, Belmont police did have a checkpoint at the northern border of the city along El Camino Real in cooperation with San Mateo police.

Over the Labor Day weekend there was only one fatal accident reported and 22 collisions throughout the entire nine-county Bay Area. A total of 528 arrests were made during the entire weekend.

"I should not have been out," Hahn said. "It was a mistake, and I should have stayed home that evening."

CITY CLERK
SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES
AUGUST 10, 2002

BELMONT

City clerk race could raise rancor

By Amy Yarbrough

STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — The job of city clerk is suddenly popular in Belmont, as four people, including two with a political history in the city, are running for the spot.

Councilwoman Terri Cook, former councilwoman Eleanor Hahn and residents Christina Wagenseller and George A. Burgess have all filed campaign papers to fill the one year remaining on the four-year term left vacant by the resignation of former clerk

Kathy Kern.

Kern resigned in May because she planned to move to San Mateo, making her ineligible to hold the \$80,000-per-year elected position. Only the sixth city clerk ever in Belmont, she was uncontested both times she ran for office.

Relations between Cook, who announced her intention to run for the vacant slot in May, and Hahn have been icy in the past over a binder of e-mails authored by Cook, some containing unflattering comments about Hahn, while the

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aggrated.

"I think it was blown out of proportion in the press," she said. "I don't think we'll see any more of that."

Hahn and Cook both said they decided to run for the position because it's something they wanted to do for some

two were on the council together.

But Hahn said problems between the two were ex-

time.

Hahn said she considered running in 1995 but didn't want to run against Kern. A former deputy city clerk, Kern moved to Belmont so she'd be eligible to run for the elected position.

Hahn said she believes interest in the position was not only generated by Kern's departure, but because there's no city employee who lives in Belmont interested in running.

"There was no one to back-fill," she said.

City Clerk
The Independent
July 21, 02

New face in city clerk race

Financial consultant files for seat in unusual election

By WES BOWERS
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT — A man with no prior experience or background in city politics has decided to run for the city clerk position in November.

But it is not for the great pay or because he wants a new job.

He simply wants to give back to the community.

Last week, financial consultant George Burgess took papers out and is currently in the process of getting his petitions signed for a fall campaign.

"I decided it was about time to give

my time to the community and to city government," said Burgess. "I haven't been very active in the community since moving here a few years ago and just thought it was time I get involved."

Burgess is the latest in a growing pool of unusual candidates, which include past and present councilmembers. According to most longtime Belmont residents, this is the first time so many candidates have chosen to run for the city clerk's job.

Other residents who have taken out papers include former councilmember Eleanore Hahn and current Councilmember Terri Cook. Both have said in the past that they had been

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RACE: Several candidates for city clerk's job

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interested in running years ago, but decided not to because former city clerk Kathy Kern held the position.

A fourth possible candidate, Christina Wagenseller, took out papers last week as well. She did not return phone calls as of press time.

Two weeks ago, former councilmember Nancy Levitt said she was considering taking out papers, but has not come to a final decision.

"I think it's good that all kinds of people with different experiences and backgrounds are interested in this position," said Mayor Dave Warden. "I think the more people we have running, the more choices the voters will have."

With so many candidates with various skills and knowledge of city government, Councilmember George Metropulos said those differences will make for an interesting campaign.

"I think it's great," he said. "Certainly a candidate's background lends themselves to the job and some don't. But I think a bigger variety in terms of background and experience brings a wider array of choices for the voters."

If elected, Burgess hopes to consolidate all city records into the City Clerk's Office, rather than direct residents to various departments within the agency.

"All the city records aren't really centralized into one area in City Hall," said Burgess. "It would certainly help all residents if they could find the records or data they need in one centralized location, and I think I can get things like that done in the city and help them out."

After a few visits to City Hall to obtain information from some departments, Burgess said he had a hard time finding everything he wanted without running all over the building.

"I have been down to City Hall once in a while to look at records and have tried to use some of the services available to residents," he said. "I won't say the state they're in is disap-

pointing, but I think they could use some improvement."

His experience helping firms and individuals consolidate their financial records will help him show voters that he is qualified for what many have called a very technical position, he said.

Before moving to Belmont five years ago, Burgess had been a consultant to several cities in Southern California, helping them trim their budgets.

"I've helped several cities and agencies understand how the post office works to help reduce shipping costs and make sure they can more efficiently and effectively better

serve the community," he said.

While he doesn't plan on retiring from his current job, Burgess said he looks forward to serving Belmont citizens a full 40 hours a week.

"The way I look at this position is that it is one of the few elected positions that must be there on a full-time basis, and I'm committed to serving the public on a full-time basis," he said. "Being the voice of the electorate, I look forward to representing the people and being accessible to them when they need me."

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City Clerk
The Independent
May 7, 02

City to hold November election for new clerk

Pro tempore to be appointed for seven months

By **WES BOWERS**
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT — Former city clerk Kathy Kern will not be appointed to fill the remainder of her term as she had requested after announcing her resignation last month.

The City Council was recently presented with two options for fulfilling the vacant position after Kern announced her resignation, effective May 1.

The council had one month to either change a city ordinance to allow the council to appoint someone to fulfill the term until November 2003 or hold a special election this November to replace Kern.

The council voted during a special meeting last week to hold a special election in November to replace Kern.

However, the council did

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CLERK: City decides to hold election

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direct city staff to negotiate entering into a professional or fixed-term employment contract with Kern until the new clerk is elected and fully sworn in.

"One thing we've been talking about for the past several months is how to better serve the community," said Councilmember Terri Cook. "And I think this is one way we could better serve the community by hiring Kathy as a consultant. I think we should entertain this idea."

Kern had requested an appointment to her position, but councilmembers, staff and residents were adamant about following city code, which states a city clerk must be a registered Belmont voter. Kern resigned from the position to move to San Mateo, making her ineligible for appointment.

In the meantime, the council also opted to appoint a city clerk pro tempore, who will be a councilmember, for the next seven months until a new clerk is elected.

"I think it's relative to have a pro tempore to perform statutorial duties," said Mayor Dave Warden. "It doesn't take a whole lot of time to do, and it doesn't have to be one person. We

[councilmembers] could rotate for a couple weeks or so and it seems like a simpler process than changing an ordinance."

Duties for the pro tempore will include signing and approving ordinances, filing the minutes from council meetings and applying the city seal on official city documents, which according to city staff, takes about a day.

Former city clerk Jim McLaughlin said there was more to the position than just signing ordinances and stamping the city seal.

"I feel sad about the decision council has to make, but in reality the government must go on," said McLaughlin. "The fact is, in addition to attending meetings, there's publishing notices and permits, attesting to documents and preparing agendas. All these are day-to-day duties of the city clerk. The important thing is the council wants to have an election in November and get the ball rolling to fulfill this term."

The City Council will approve a resolution authorizing a special election for Nov. 5 at its May 14 meeting.

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PENINSULAPeople

Clerk position may turn into appointment

Belmont to decide if the issue will go to voters in November

By WES BOWERS
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT — The city may ask voters to change the city clerk to an appointed position, making it one of the only cities that doesn't hold an election for the office.

Currently, the city clerk is an elected position, but at the council's April 23 meeting officials discussed asking voters to change it to an appointed position in light of the resignation of the city's current clerk, Kathy Kern.

Kern announced her resignation from the position effective May 1 when she moves to San Mateo. However she requested to be appointed to the position for the remainder of her term, which expires in November.

But a city ordinance states that the city clerk must be a registered voter residing in Belmont, and to appoint her for the remainder of her term would require a change to the ordinance.

The city must now decide whether to ask voters in November to allow the council to appoint the next city clerk, or hold an election to fill the seat.

"Throughout the state, city clerks are appointed, elected or selected," said City Attorney Jean Savaree. "In Belmont the clerk is elected unless the voters state they would rather have the position be an appointed one. Council could hold a special election in November and ask the voters if they would rather have an appointed clerk, appoint someone or hold an election to elect another clerk."

Savaree said to hold an election would cost about \$1.50 per ballot. With approximately 14,406 voters in town, it would cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000 to hold an election this November.

Councilmember Terri Cook said although she is a firm supporter of a full-time position, she would consider asking the voters if they wanted a change.

"I value the fact that the position is an elected one," she said. "And my long-term hope is that the position remain a full-time elected position. Secondly, if we end up going to an election this November, we could ask the people what they would like, I think there's value in asking them."

However, former city clerk

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Kathy Kern
The Independent
April 30, 02

CLERK: Appointment

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Jim McLaughlin said to appoint Kern would circumvent the law, and the council should appoint a city clerk pro tempore.

"If the city clerk is absent, the deputy city clerk shall act," he said. "If there is no deputy, the mayor shall appoint a councilmember as city clerk pro tempore. There is no clerk, no deputy (now), and the mayor must appoint a city clerk pro tempore until either this November's election or until council selects some citizen for appointment until November 2003."

McLaughlin said in Belmont's 75-year history as a city, it has only had six city clerks, all of whom were elected by the people. He added that because all six served for 10 years or more with devoted efficiency, proposing a change to how the position is chosen would not pass among voters.

"If you want to put a measure on the ballot this November to see if the people want to change how the clerk is select-

ed, you can," he said. "But I think it has as much of a chance of passing as a snowball in Death Valley this summer."

However, Dotty Hall, another former city clerk, said it would be better to just appoint someone for the time being.

"I think it would be wise to have someone fill in her term," she said.

Cook said although it would be easy to find a resident to fill the term for the next 18 months, the position requires specific qualifications and know-how.

"It's easy to appoint someone to this position, but it's a highly skilled technical job and Kathy does a great job," she said. "We're not talking about a part-time position where someone comes in every once in a while to work. I'd like to know if we have more options so the city can be run in the manner it has been."

The council will decide at the next meeting whether to appoint someone or hold an election this November.

CITY COUNCIL
SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES
MAY 3, 2002

Belmont to retain former city clerk as consultant

Special election in November
will provide replacement

By Amy Yarbrough
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Officials here may have found a way to keep — and gain — a city clerk.

On Wednesday, the City Council agreed to call a special election in November to fill the vacancy created by the resignation Thursday of City Clerk Kathy Kern.

Meanwhile, they are also considering entering into a contract with Kern that would allow her to stay on as a professional consultant until a new clerk is elected. Both matters will be formerly voted on at the council's next meeting, May 14.

In another unusual step, the mayor ap-

pointed four City Council members to share the clerk's statutory functions, tasks such as signing ordinances and proclamations and applying the city seal, until a new clerk is seated.

"I think the intention is, we're trying to follow the spirit of the law," said Mayor Dave Warden, who won't be sharing in the clerk responsibilities.

Because it's an elected position, Warden explained, the community expects certain duties of the city clerk to be carried out by an elected person. Deputy City Clerk Sheila Harrington can't take on that role because she is a city employee, and not a resident of Belmont, he said.

The council also had the option of letting the voters decide whether to keep the city clerk as an elected position or to appoint a resident to fill Kern's remaining term. They decided against both.

Kern, whose resignation was effective at

5 p.m. Wednesday, said she forfeited her position because she can no longer afford to rent a residence in Belmont. She had been paying for it by renting out her home in San Mateo, but that home currently sits empty. Now, Kern says she has to move back into it, because she's been having trouble finding a new tenant.

Kern, who had more than a year left on her term, will continue to work with Harrington to carry out the administrative duties of the job.

Warden said it made sense to maintain normalcy and keep Kern on.

"It retains a sense of continuity," Warden said. "She's been the clerk for six years, and she's worked in the office for more than a dozen."

Belmont loses city clerk to economy

Soft rental market forces official to resign from post

By Amy Yarbrough
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — After almost two decades of taking minutes at meetings, watching over tense election nights and helping visitors to City Hall, the sleepy rental market is forcing City Clerk Kathy Kern to bid Belmont goodbye.

Kern, known both for her frankness and many years of service to the city — 16 to be exact — has handed in her letter of resignation, explaining she could no longer afford to live in Belmont. Moving from the city would make her ineligible for the elected position under state code.

"It was economic — there's no other reason," said Kern, who admits she still loves her job and hopes that she can stay on with the city in some capacity.

Kern's last day is Wednesday, although there's more than a year left of her term.

Only the sixth city clerk ever in Belmont, Kern first got involved with the city when she was appointed to the position of deputy city clerk under then-clerk Dottie Hall.

After serving in that role for 10 years — about six years ago — Kern rented out her San Mateo home and moved to Belmont so she'd be eligible to run for the elected position.

Now, Kern says, the tenants have moved out of her San Mateo home and it sits vacant because she can't find anyone new to rent it. That rent money had been paying for the home she's been renting in Belmont.

"I just hope they find a way that I can stay, help out for the rest of my term," said Kern, a Montana transplant, elected twice to the office, running both times unopposed.

"I really do like serving the people."

“*It was economic — there's no other reason.*”

Kathy Kern
Belmont City Clerk

rejected several times by voters.

The council is scheduled to make a decision at a special meeting Wednesday.

Whether it's City Clerk or another position, Kern said she'll have to have a job.

“I'm definitely not retiring to the rocking chair,” she joked.

Kern said she's enjoyed presiding over elections, and has never minded sitting through council meetings — even the more contentious ones that stretch late into the night. One of the best things about the job, she said, is the variety in it — especially seeing new faces get elected to the council over the years.

“It really is an opportunity to serve people on a personal and ongoing basis,” Kern said. “We see them all.”

Kern's departure leaves the city with a number of options, according to City Attorney Jean Savaree. The council could either appoint a Belmont resident to fill out the rest of Kern's term or call a special election. But such an election could cost as much as \$3.50 per voter, and wouldn't likely take place until November, according to city and election officials.

The city could also opt to create a bifurcated office — where an elected clerk and a hired professional share duties, allowing Kern to stay on. Another possibility is making the clerk's position appointed rather than elected, but that idea has been considered and

Belmont may change residency policy to retain city clerk

Kern resigns, but asks officials if she can keep her position despite plan to move out of city

By **WES BOWERS**
Independent Newspapers

BELMONT — City Clerk Kathy Kern has resigned after 15 years of service to Belmont, leaving the City Council to decide how to replace her.

Kern, who has been city clerk for the last 10 years and was assistant city clerk for five years prior to that, resigned after announcing she was moving to San Mateo. Kern has asked to be appointed to the position until her term as city clerk ends,

which is this November.

However, Belmont city ordinance states that the city clerk must be a registered voter living within city limits.

Councilmember Terri Cook said, "We could appoint her for the rest of her term, but we'd have to change the ordinance, and that would take about 30 days to go through the changes and approvals."

Other options for the city include holding a special election after Kern departs on May 1, or to

appoint someone to fill the remainder of her term and then hold the regular election in November.

"I've always been very vocal that the city clerk must reside in Belmont," said Cook. "And another thing we have to look at is do we appoint someone from town? I don't know if we really want to do that because this is a job with a lot of qualifications and responsibilities and I don't know if I'd feel comfortable to just appoint someone off the street."

Kern said if the council were to create a special election, it could be a while before a replace-

ment is chosen.

"Once the position is vacated, council can either appoint someone or set an election," said Kersnar. "However, to have an election, you have to allow so much time to publicly announce the vacancy and the election, and then accept applications and prepare."

Kern did not want to comment about her resignation or move from Belmont to San Mateo, but Cook and Kersnar had nothing but praise for Kern's years of dedication to the city.

"She's one of the breed of professional city clerks," said

Kersnar. "She and her office perform a lot of duties for the city. It's not just drawing up staff reports for meetings or keeping financial records on hand and answering phones. There's an awful lot of stuff that has to be done at City Hall and it's Kathy that's been able to do it."

Kersnar had recently presented Kern with a 15-year service recognition award earlier this year. He said with all the changes in technology and city procedures, Kern has adjusted with the times.

"There are a lot of things that have to be done and she's been

CLERK: page 3A

Belmont city clerk to depart

KATHY KERN, who has been Belmont city clerk for more than a decade, has submitted her letter of resignation. She will be moving into her San Mateo home and leaving Belmont, with more than a year left on her term. City Manager Jere Kersnar is talking of appointing her to fill the unexpired term — but that may present some legal problems and ruffle some feathers. The job pays \$70,000 plus and must be filled by May 30.

CLERK: Kern resigns

Continued from 1A

dedicated to keeping up with the changes," he said. "It will be a real loss to the city."

Cook added Kern has always been there to assist the community when it has questions or problems and has been unable to reach their elected city officials.

"She has really helped evolve that job as it has grown technologically," said Cook. "She's been a good set of eyes and ears for City Hall and the entire community. Because the City Council is not at City Hall eight hours a day and five days a

week, she's the person that's there to help the community when they have concerns.

"She's always there for us too," Cook continued. "She's extremely responsive. When anyone needs information right away, either during a council meeting or during the day, she's always there to get whatever council and city staff needs."

Kersnar will present a report of options council can take to replace Kern on Tuesday.

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