

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The City Council may consider applicant qualifications for the Council vacancy in executive sessions which are closed to the public, and then make the appointment in a public meeting. You have the right, however, to have your application considered in a public meeting by providing a written request to the City Clerk.

**CITY OF FLAGSTAFF
APPLICATION TO SERVE ON THE CITY COUNCIL**

RETURN TO: CITY CLERK VIA EMAIL AT STACY.SALTZBURG@FLAGSTAFFAZ.GOV

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT APPLICATION: MONDAY, OCTOBER 12 AT 5:00 P.M.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS PUBLIC INFORMATION
(personal identifying information will not be released)**

DATE: 10/08/2026

YOUR NAME: Stephen Puhr

HOME ADDRESS: [REDACTED] **ZIP:** 86001

EMPLOYER: Retired **JOB TITLE:** N/A

E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

PHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] **LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN FLAGSTAFF:** 9 1/2 years

Using additional pages, please answer the following questions in 250 words or less, per question:

1. What makes a good Councilmember?
2. What do you think is the biggest issue facing Flagstaff? Give specifics and ideas for addressing the issue.
3. What are your top three priorities for being a City Councilmember and why?
4. What method do you expect to use to make a decision when you believe that there is a segment of the Flagstaff population not being heard on a particular issue?
5. Please give an example of when you were in a position of responsibility and others disagreed with you on how an important matter should be handled. How did you help resolve the issue?
6. What is your leadership style, please provide an example of your style in use.
7. What is your understanding, awareness, and familiarity with the Flagstaff Zoning Code?
8. A key role of the Flagstaff City Council is to adopt the city's budget; how would you balance the seven key community priorities and the realities of the city's financial position with the Council's role of policy development?

I certify that I meet the statutory requirements of living within the corporate limits of the City of Flagstaff for at least one year, that I am over the age of 18 years, that I am a registered voter of the City of Flagstaff, and that I have read and understand the right to have my application considered in a public meeting by providing a written request to the City Clerk.

Stephen Puhr
Applicant Signature

The City of Flagstaff is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

Stephen Puhr

Flagstaff, AZ 86001

October 8, 2026

Flagstaff City Council
Flagstaff City Hall

RE: Flagstaff City Councilmember Appointment

Dear Flagstaff City Council,

I am pleased to submit my name for consideration for appointment to the City Council. As a Flagstaff resident who has actively participated in the City's budget retreats for the past four years, I bring both deep community commitment and over 20 years of executive leadership in finance, economic development, intergovernmental relations and building personal relationships.

My last sixteen years of my working career centered on building sustainable economies and strong partnerships. At Chukchansi Sovereign Enterprises, I managed \$38 million in revenues, implemented accountability policies, and negotiated business ventures including the first Sonic franchise agreement with a Native American Nation. With the Hopi Economic Development Corporation, I forged more than 70 key relationships, leading to a \$40 million solar project in partnership with NextEra and an MOU with the City of Flagstaff. At the Gila River Indian Community, I established a lending company that grew to a \$460 million loan portfolio while training and mentoring a Native American staff.

I bring a record of transparent budgeting, land use and development experience, and economic development strategies that align with Flagstaff's growth challenges. Just as importantly, I am recognized for unifying diverse perspectives, mentoring teams, and leading with integrity.

I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to partner with Council, support City staff, and serve the citizens of Flagstaff. I look forward to discussing with Flagstaff Council how my experience can advance the City's long-term prosperity and sustainability.

Sincerely,
Stephen Puhr

1. What makes a good Councilmember?

1. Ideally a good Councilmember possesses; a proven track record of relationship management, rudimentary understanding of financial analysis and budgeting, an understanding of economic drivers of housing affordability, an understanding of what contributes to be an attractive place for businesses and what contributes to affordability for families.

Councilmembers must also be respectful of differing approaches and opinions from City Staff, other Councilmembers and residents of Flagstaff. So having a successful record of relationship management provides important indications that one would be a good Councilmember.

A good Councilmember should be a quick study of issues that come before Council. Councilmembers need not be subject experts but rely on experts for laying out the positives and negatives of proposals brought before council. Councilmembers then must judge if the proposed action has a good possibility of accomplishing goals of the City of Flagstaff.

Three questions that are almost universally useful to answer before concluding anything are the following; 1. Compared to what? 2. At what cost? 3. What hard evidence do you have?

Given the volume and magnitude of issues that come before Council, Council members should be excellent listeners and readers who can quickly distill a subject down to key aspects.

2. What do you think is the biggest issue facing Flagstaff? Give specifics and ideas for addressing the issue.

2. The affordability of Flagstaff for families and businesses is the biggest issue facing Flagstaff.

Flagstaff has lost three of their top ten companies in the last ten years. The remaining seven entities are reducing their employee headcount except for municipal employers. The decline in Flagstaff's business environment is resulting in fewer well-paying jobs.

There are two actions Flagstaff Council can take to increase the affordability of Flagstaff for businesses and families. Council can formally place an amendment or question on the ballot themselves during an election cycle. Council should ask the citizens if they would like to repeal the Flagstaff Minimum Wage Act/ Prop 414 and replace it with a minimum wage law that mirrors the Arizona State minimum wage. This would make Flagstaff business environment more competitive with other locations in Arizona and bring back some of the over 4,000 jobs lost when Flagstaff adopted their minimum wage law.

Second, earlier this summer the National Association of Home Builders' 2,125 members were surveyed and their members noted that government regulations increase the cost of a typical new single-family home by more than \$131,000. This highlights potential cost savings for Flagstaff new home buyers. Flagstaff Council is in the process of approving new building codes that staff believes will add over \$20,000 to the cost of a new home. Before any new costly codes are adopted Council should first see how necessary the present codes are and adjust them to make housing more affordable.

3. What are your top three priorities for being a City Councilmember and why?

3.
 1. Ask the Council to place a measure on the ballot during an election cycle that would allow voters to decide whether to repeal the Flagstaff Minimum Wage Act (Proposition 414) and replace it with a minimum wage law aligned with Arizona's statewide minimum wage. This change would help Flagstaff remain competitive with other Arizona communities and could restore some of the more than 4,000 jobs lost after the city adopted its minimum wage law.
 2. After updating the Carbon Neutrality Plan's progress, direct staff to review residential housing codes to assess their future contribution to achieving the plan and their associated costs. This review would help ensure the codes support the plan's goals while improving housing affordability.
 3. Hold monthly town Hall meetings to allow for better dialogue with Flagstaff citizens. This would allow for Council to be more in touch with citizens and allow citizens feedback on their concerns in real time.

4. What method do you expect to use to make a decision when you believe that there is a segment of the Flagstaff population not being heard on a particular issue?

4. I would invite the segment to the Council's weekly meeting to inform the Council of their views. Prior to the meeting, I would advise representatives of the segment to provide a written report of their views to Council and staff leadership. Then I would recommend to staff to provide time for the segment to air their views. If that was not enough, I would suggest a town hall meeting to discuss their views and other topics of interest from the citizens of Flagstaff.

5. Please give an example of when you were in a position of responsibility and others disagreed with you on how an important matter should be handled. How did you help resolve the issue?
5. As CEO of the Economic Development company for a Native American Tribe, (a Sovereign Nation). I represented the only Nation that had their casino closed by the US government. Members of the Nation had robbed the Casino of millions of dollars. My assignment was to bring a restaurant on to the Nation's travel center. I negotiated to have a Sonic franchise granted to the Sovereign Nation. This was Sonic's first franchise on a Sovereign Nation's land.

At a weekly meeting with Council, I was prepared to report on three construction firms that I was tasked to research. We were hiring the firm to construct the Sonic franchise. Before I was able to give my report, one Councilmember spoke up and recommended which construction company to hire. This company was the least desirable firm I researched. The Councilmember's recommendation was clearly in coordination with the rest of the Council. What should I do? Remain silent and I would have to deal with subpar contractor or speak up?

So, I asked to be recognized. I asked if the Council would like to hear my report before they voted. They agreed to hear my report. I gave the highlights and the trouble I had found, if any, with all the contractors. My findings were factual not opinions. At the end, I recommended a different contractor than the Councilmember brought forward. The Council agreed with my recommendation and hired the contractor.

6. What is your leadership style, please provide an example of your style in use.
6. The following feedback from the Board of Directors reflects my leadership at a Native American economic development company that I established. Under my leadership, the firm grew to eight employees, generated more than \$13 million in revenue, maintained expenses below \$1 million, and oversaw a \$460 million loan portfolio.

The board's evaluation found that I exceeded expectations in delegating responsibility, supporting cooperative and independent work, following policies and procedures, making sound decisions, seeking guidance when outcomes were unclear, asking questions to align expectations, setting goals consistent with company priorities, and bringing important issues to the board for decision-making support. It also noted my ability to identify employees' strengths and weaknesses and provide appropriate guidance.

I would describe my leadership style as centered on effective delegation, collaboration, sound judgment, policy compliance, clear expectations, strategic goal-setting, and transparent communication with the superiors.

7. What is your understanding, awareness, and familiarity with the Flagstaff Zoning Code?
7. I have read the Flagstaff Zoning Code. Hence, I would suggest that I have a modest understanding, awareness and familiarity with the Code.

8. A key role of the Flagstaff City Council is to adopt the city's budget; how would you balance the seven key community priorities and the realities of the city's financial position with the Council's role of policy development?
8. The City of Flagstaff's priority-based budgeting process contains seven Priorities and Objectives. These Priorities and Objectives are constrained by the financial resources deemed available to effectively and efficiently provide the required services to the residents of Flagstaff.

It is my understanding that the City of Flagstaff's staff utilizes ResourceX software to balance the values of the seven Priorities comparatively to other Priorities. I look forward to seeing this software in action and give it proper consideration.

Since every objective does not "cost" the same to achieve every Priority and Objective, one should not expect the same level of funding for each Priority and Objective. That said, every Priority and Objective should be treated as equally important and valued.

As the budget is allocated, two standards should be applied. First, a budget decision should not take away from the level of commitment of any other Priority and Objective. Second, a budget decision should enhance the level of commitment to at least one Priority and Objective.

Budget allocations decisions should be weighed to the allocation that enhances the most Priorities and Objectives.



STRATEGIC FINANCIAL MANAGER

SUMMARY

- I have over 20 years developing budgets forecasts, analyzing capital projects and 16 years developing economic strategies for Native American Nations. I established the first business lending company for Gila River members with most employees being Gila River members, grew portfolio to over \$460 million in loans. My work with the Hopi Tribe included negotiating with NextEra to build a \$40 million solar field and the signing of a MOU with the City of Flagstaff to buy the solar power. Over the past four years, I am the only Flagstaff resident that attended the vast majority of Flagstaff's Budget Retreats.

CEO, Chukchansi Sovereign Enterprises (CSE), 2019-2022

- As head of Economic Development, negotiated Sonic's first franchise agreement with a Native Nation.
- Analyzed the market feasibility for three new businesses: Health Clinic, Sonic and dispensary.
- Established budgets and produced monthly financial reports for four businesses with over \$38 million in revenue to Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indian Tribal Council.
- Developed Investment Policy Statement, Due Diligence Policy, Reporting and Personnel policy.
- Established CSE as a Certified Community Development Entity, which gives access to New Market Tax Credits. Implemented NMTC strategy and application.
- After the CARES Act, established a new banking relationship that gave CSE entities access to PPP loans/grants which totaled over \$324,1000.

Director of Finance, Hopi Economic Development Corporation 2017-2019

- Established over 70 working relationships covering; Hopi Tribe's elected officials; Office of General Council; BIA; Economic Development Administration (EDA); Bureau of Reclamation; CDFI; APS; SRP; City of Flagstaff; CAP; ASU; HDR; NREL; Hopi Department Directors.
- Relationships resulted MOU with the City of Flagstaff to establish a +\$40 million Solar facility on Hopi land. Established the Hopi Business CDFI, authored of founding financial policies.
- Received Community Development Entity status thus opening HTEDC up for New Market Tax Credits (NMTC). NMTC shall be used to attract investment/development to Hopi land.
- Partnered with solar developers for two bids on 30 MW solar plants; finishing 2nd and third.
- Wrote three year HTEDC Business Plan and Strategy for 2019-2021. Developed the pricing strategy for Hopi Travel Plaza and Days Inn Sedona that significantly improved cash flow.

Board Member, Hopi Economic Development Corporation 2014-2017

- Lead the establishment of financial benchmarks, financial analysis and strategy for eight Hopi business entities, resulting in \$1 million improvement in cash flow the first year.
- Researched funding for new investments businesses including; New Market Tax Credits, Community Development Financial Institutions, Financial Institutions CRA and Hopi capital.
- Developed dividend policy to Hopi Nation in collaboration with Hopi Tribal Council.

Sr. Director of Asset Liability Management & Investments, Arizona Federal Credit Union 2014-2015

- Responsible for tax and regulatory audits.
- Managed the Credit Union's \$700+ million fixed income portfolios.
- Produced with department heads a three-year forecast of earnings and balance sheet. Reviewed and analyzed monthly budget variance analysis in conjunction with senior management.
- Administered and responsible for the following policies covering financial and management processes; Investment Policy, Loan Participation Policy, Liquidity Policy, Interest Rate Risk Policy, ALM Policy and Enterprise Risk Management Policy.

Executive Director, PLFC, Gila River Indian Community

2010-2013

- Established Pima Leasing & Financing Corporation (PLFC) founding documents, including financial policies and personnel policies. Grew PLFC one employee to eight employees, six Native Americans. Developed economic development loans to over \$460 million.
- CDFI Fund certified PLFC as a Certified Native American Community Development Financial Institution in 11 months vs the average time frame of 3 years. Prepared and presented financial reports and analysis to Board and Gila River Council. Underwrote loans for low-income housing.
- Trained diverse team members in business loan underwriting without using individual credit scores, business plan development (26), lease valuation and negotiations (\$60 million).
- Established Internship Program & Junior Achievement in GRIC schools. Supervised the leasing of GRIC land for business and farming opportunities. Established first internship program.

Investment Manager, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

2006-2007

- Established investment policy statements and asset allocations for Tribal endowments.
- Conducted the search for a custodian and investment managers for over \$500 million in assets.
- Established treasury policies and procedures that improved the management of the Tribe's liquidity and investments. Instituted performance benchmarks and performance measurement techniques.
- Maintained relationships with financial institutions and rating agencies.

Wealth Manager, Redondo Beach, CA

2003-2006

- Designed the investment plans for high net worth clients. Implemented plans along modern portfolio theory, asset allocation & manager selection. Identified economic and industry competitive trends, analyzed companies' competitive position, established an investment case for companies.

Regional Investment Manager, Santa Rosa, CA

2000-2003

WELLS FARGO BANK, PRIVATE BANK, \$64 BILLION IN ASSETS UNDER MANAGEMENT

As part of Senior Management, lead the implementation strategies that increased Investment Management, Trust, and Private Banking sales and profits. Devised and implemented asset allocation and manager selections for high and ultra-high net worth clients. Managed \$300 million in assets.

- Mentored a twelve member cross discipline team of Trust, Private Banking, Mortgage and Investment Management in investment and relationship management techniques.
- Lead the six-person Financial Services equity research team. Identified and analyzed a company's competitive position within their industry's economic and business trends. Expertise in valuing competitive positions of banks and utilities for Value Portfolio.
- Forecasted earnings and provided variance analysis quarterly and established discounted price targets. Maintained performance benchmarks and calculations for diverse portfolios.
- Implemented re-allocation of assets in a bear market that resulted in the office being rated in the top 5% in client retention and portfolio performance.

The Dow Chemical Company, Treasury

Managed \$500 million equity portfolio for Company pension, returns exceeded benchmark.

- Taught team members how to gather, analyze and companies financials to value stocks.
- Trained team on Asset Allocation and Economic Value Added, executed trades.
- Provided attribution analysis on equity managers responsible for \$6 billion of pension assets.

Portfolio Manager, Birmingham, MI

1992 – 1995

MUNDER CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Managed investment portfolios for key corporate and high net worth clients, \$35 billion under management. Investment Committee member with primary responsibility to analyze financial services equity investments, \$800+ million in assets. Portfolios' performance was in top third of managers.

- As Bank analyst, completed due diligence, analyzed business models, competitive positions and industry trends. Forecasted earnings and analyzed variances. Establish price targets.
- Business Development responsibilities for non-profits, pensions and high net worth.
- Stockval and Baseline complemented qualitative analysis to uncover superior risk adjusted returns of sectors and stocks. Utilized Barra Analytics' to perform attribution analysis.

Bank Analyst, Detroit, MI

1987 – 1992

RONEY & COMPANY

- Covered over 40 regional financial institutions as the financial services equity analyst. Opinions and reports appeared in *Wall Street Transcripts*, *American Banker*, *Barron's*, *Crain's*, *Detroit News* and *Free Press*.
- Performed due diligence on companies, analyzed business models, competitive positions and industry trends. Utilized a discounted cash flow model to establish price targets.
- Called the recovery in bank stocks in 1990. Recommendations outperformed bank index in 20 out of 21 times.

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION: Finance/Corporate Strategy

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI

BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION: Finance

Marquette University

Milwaukee, WI

HISTORICAL LICENSES & CERTIFICATIONS

Series 7, 65 & 66, Insurance License MI & CA, Arizona Real Estate License,
Certified Investment Management Analyst

ASSOCIATIONS & RECREATION

Flagstaff Running Series, Team Run Flagstaff, Flagstaff Family Food Bank

Northern Arizona Volunteer Medical Group

Redondo Beach Leadership Class 2006

Junior Achievement

Native American Finance Officers Associations, CFA Institute

Detroit Financial Analyst Society

Cycling, Running, Skiing, Sailing and Hiking