

# City of St. Helens

**Job Title:** COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER  
**Department:** Administration and Community Development  
**FLSA Status:** Non-Exempt  
**Union:** Yes  
**Date Revised:** January 24, 2012

## GENERAL PURPOSE

Responsible for planning and implementing an effective communications plan; timely production and dissemination of communications materials related to City news, services and events; maintenance and assessment of various print, electronic and social media outlets; and facilitating a seamless flow of internal and external communications.

Performs a variety of routine and complex clerical, secretarial and administrative tasks in keeping official records, providing administrative support to the City Planner and Department and assisting in the administration of the standard operating policies and procedures of the City in its planning and related functions.

## SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Works under the close supervision of the City Recorder and the City Planner.

## SUPERVISION EXERCISED

None.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** include the following, but are not limited to:

- Works with City staff and departments to write, edit, publish, and distribute a quarterly print newsletter, monthly electronic newsletter, press releases, media advisories, social media posts, radio spots and other communications media as necessary.
- Increases public awareness of and community engagement in City events, operations, news and services.
- Develops and implements yearly communications goals consistent with the City's strategic plan and Council goals.
- Stays in contact with department and division heads to ensure communications needs are addressed in a timely and professional manner. Stays abreast of City operations and is visible and accessible to staff, Council and Commissions.
- Coordinates production and distribution of special communications projects as needed.
- Maintains effective media relations by providing reporters with timely and accurate information. Fields media inquiries to correct staff person(s).

- Coordinates with staff to ensure that external communications have a consistent, professional tone and reach the intended audience.
- Performs the duties of a Public Information Officer (PIO) during an emergency situation. Keeps PIO tools updated, including media kits, go kits and contact lists.
- Monitors and assesses media coverage. Keeps management informed of significant media coverage that may require a response from the City.
- Identifies appropriate communications vehicles.
- Occasionally attends major City-related events or meetings for communications coverage. Events and meetings may or may not be during normal working hours.
- Remains informed of current issues affecting communications and newly emerging trends in the field.
- Composes, transcribes, types, and edits a variety of reports, correspondence, and other materials requiring judgment as to content, accuracy, and completeness.
- Attends Planning Commission, Historic Landmarks Commission, and other planning related meetings to take notes and record meeting, as well as prepare any mailings. Meetings may or may not be during normal working hours.
- Acts as custodian of departmental documents and records. Establishes and maintains filing systems, control records, and indexes using moderate independent judgment.
- Obtains information from the County and other municipal deed, survey and similar records, as necessary.
- Sends notices for land use actions and Planning Commission, Historic Landmarks Commission, City Council, and other planning related Public Hearings and meetings.
- Receives the public and answers questions on land use matters; responds to inquiries from employees, citizens and others on land use matters and refers, when necessary, to appropriate persons.
- Maintains and operates City website as pertains to planning.
- Operates listed office machines as required.
- Photocopies forms, agendas, correspondence, minutes, etc.
- Daily balance of cash drawer.
- Distributes land use/planning related documents (e.g. plans and maps) as needed.

## **PERIPHERAL DUTIES**

- Provides clerical support and back-up to the Building Department and other related positions.
- Processes City licenses (e.g. business, dog, parks)
- Serves as cashier for various payments.
- Answers phones when needed.

## **DESIRED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Education and Experience:**

(A) Bachelor's Degree or higher in communications, public relations, journalism, English or related field.

(B) Three (3) to five (5) years of increasingly responsible related experience in public relations, communications, journalism or a related field, with an emphasis in print production and circulation, publication editing, graphic design and professional social media management.

(C) Training and certification or related experience as a Public Information Officer (PIO) in emergency management situations.

### **Necessary Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

(A) Professional level skills in graphics and knowledge of desktop publishing for in-house design and publication.

(B) Excellent written and spoken communication skills.

(C) Skill in writing press releases, media advisories, articles and advertisements. Ability to write and edit in a variety of writing styles. Ability to draft materials on a wide range of topics. Strong editing and proofreading skills.

(D) Knowledge of photo-editing, document-design programs, web page editing and social media maintenance.

(E) Ability to analyze complex or technical information from different sources and synthesize the information into communications documents that are accessible to the general public.

(F) Familiarity with local and state media.

(G) Strong interpersonal skills.

(H) Work effectively under pressure to meet strict and/or sudden deadlines.

(I) Working knowledge of computers and electronic data processing; working knowledge of modern office practices and procedures; some knowledge of meeting processes and minute taking.

(J) Skill in operation of listed tools and equipment.

(K) Ability to perform cashier duties accurately; ability to effectively meet and deal with the public; ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing; ability to handle stressful situations.

## **TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT USED**

Phone; personal computer including word processing, publishing and spreadsheet software; copy machine; postage machine; fax machine; transcriber; and calculator.

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to sit and talk or hear. The employee is occasionally required to walk; use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools, or controls; and reach with hands and arms.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision and the ability to adjust focus.

### **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. Evening work is required.

The noise level in the work environment is usually quiet, but can be otherwise given close proximity to other employees' work areas and an area with periodic exposure to the public at large and other City personnel.

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Reviewed by LGPI: 3/20/12  
Approved by Council: 3/21/12  
Attested: Kathy Payne, CMC

**EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.*

*The job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.*

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Communications Officer job description. I understand that it is my responsibility to adhere to the guidelines of the expectations, hours of work and essential duties outlined within this job description.

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_